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**Push/Pull Approaches to Influencing and Persuading**

There are many different styles of influencing and it is important to recognise which styles will work for different situations.

Two different styles are:

1. **Push**
2. **Pull**

Push Styles

Push is more about moving or forcing someone to change rather than motivating them to want to make the change. Push styles tend to involve logical reasoning, threatening punishment, or offering rewards or incentives. They seek to increase the ‘forces’ and rationale **for** change. They can often be referred to as the ‘stick and carrot’ approach. Push styles can be effective in achieving compliance but may not achieve commitment, they may bring back quick results.

Pull Styles

Pull is generally about motivating the individual to want to change. They tend to involve personal disclosure, involvement and showing possibilities that will result in change. They tend to work on decreasing the forces or rationale **against** change. Insincere pull styles can however be seen as manipulative and dishonest. Pull styles can be effective in gaining commitment and high quality but they may be slower in achieving results.

There are pros and cons for both Push and Pull styles and it is important to understand the uses of each.

The following tables outline the different types of Push and Pull styles and how they may be useful.

Push Styles

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|  | Descriptions | Uses | Comments |
| Force | ‘Do X or the consequences will be…’  Threat of punishment, costs, damage. Power source: Position, moral, expert, coercive. | Turnaround situations. Where there is no option. Where individuals are in danger or at risk. | Effective but short-lived. May produce resentment, lack of commitment. People can become dependent and unimaginative or they may fight back (sometimes covertly) |
| Rules and Standards | ‘It is a rule that you must do X’  Establishing and enforcing a regulatory framework e.g. rules, procedures, standards, principles, contracts, agreements. Power source: Position, personal, expert. | Where there is a risk to staff, clients or the organisations business if things are not done in a certain way. | Efficient. Relies on a perceived right to institute and enforce rules. Can result in mindless rule without real thought for consequences, alternatives or challenging change. |
| Exchange | ‘Do X and I’ll give you Y’ Bargaining, negotiating, bribing. Use of sweets, money, promotion, friendship, favour, inclusion. Power source: All sources. | Where there is opportunity to negotiate or ‘trade’. | Effective short term, but rewards get progressively less desired and the price of agreement tends to increase. |
| Persuasion | ‘It is logical for you to do X’  Argument based on information, logic and reason.  Power source: Expert, personal | When in an advisory or specialist position. | Requires credibility. Fails if there is a conflict of interest. Requires low emotion. Potential for blame/creating a ‘scapegoat, if it does not work out. One person’s logic is often another person’s prejudice. |
| Assertion | Statement of personal wishes in a non-aggressive manner acknowledging the other persons rights, wishes or viewpoint.  Power source: Personal, position | When there is a clear course of action easily identified by both parties, When there is a good relationship or when there is obvious rank / hierarchy. | Effective in achieving compliance but not commitment. If influencer compromises then it can become negotiation or joint problem solving. |

Pull Styles

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|  | Descriptions | Uses | Comments |
| Personal Magnetism | Using charm, personality, personal attractiveness, enthusiasm, trust, love, respect. Power source: Personal, moral, social. | Where there is scope for individuals to choose to follow you. In fluid or open situations. | Liable to produce dependency. Committed white personal needs are met. Can feel let down when influencer is not there. |
| Visioning | Using language and imagery to ‘paint a picture others can see’. Identifying common purpose, areas of agreement, shared goals. Power source: Personal, moral, position, expert. | Where there is a clear idea for the future e.g. Martin Luther King: ‘ I have a dream’ | Effective – adds meaning and purpose for others, draws people together, motivates and inspires. Picture must reflect shared values to be effective. |
| Bridging | Listening to, involving and supporting others. Finding connections with others where you can join your energy with theirs. Power source: Personal. | Where there is scope for exploration, time to achieve change. In consulting or counselling situations. | Usually used to support other styles e.g. Persuasion. Some people, who will not be pushed, will talk themselves into changing their position when bridging is used. |
| Environmental | Adjusting the environment (physical and psychological) to encourage the desire behaviour e.g. target setting, praising, involving, consulting, facilitating, harmonising. Also seating patterns, temperature, use of noise and so on. Power source: Any. | Where there is a clear desired outcome and time and resources are available. | Effective in supporting the other influencing styles. Unlikely to succeed on its own. |
| Joint problem solving | Working together to define the problem, the goals and the best solution. Power source: Personal, expert. | Where time and energy and motivation to change exists. | Highly effective. Requires high trust and skill. Can lead to best decision and high commitment. Can be more time consuming and uses more emotional and physical energy. |

Summary

* We all may need to develop influencing skills whatever our role or position.
* Everyone has a source or sources of ‘power or authority’ and these will have an impact on our approach and ability to influence.
* There are a variety of influencing styles, however, Push and Pull are often viewed as the two main styles.
* Push styles are generally about ‘moving’ a person to another viewpoint or position.
* Pull styles are generally more about motivating a person to see the possibilities of changing to another viewpoint or position.
* Push and Pull styles have many different uses, and leaders will draw on aspects of both styles dependant on the situation and circumstances. There is no right or wrong but it is fair to say that Pull, when combined with the minimum amount of Push needed to achieve compliance, are most effective in developing commitment and attitude change.

Source: CTRTraining.co.uk