INFLUENCING TACTICS

Research conducted by Robbins looked at the ways in which those in possession of influence use it. [1] The conclusions showed that there were a number of common strategies:

- reason – logical presentation of ideas
- friendliness – creation of goodwill
- coalition – getting the support of others to back up requests
- bargaining – negotiating
- assertiveness – a direct approach, ordering and demanding compliance
- higher authority – getting the support of individuals higher up in the organisational hierarchy
- sanctions – use of rewards and punishments

The research also found that when dealing with superiors, managers used (in descending order of frequency): reason, coalition, friendliness, bargaining, assertiveness and higher authority. When dealing with subordinates, unsurprisingly, the order changed: reason, assertiveness, friendliness, coalition, bargaining, higher authority and sanctions. It is important to note that all of these tactics revolve around communication.


FACILITATION SKILLS

A facilitator guides a group through the process in addition to reaching the desired outcome.

A facilitator needs to remain neutral and resist the temptation to step out of facilitator role. You need to be self aware of your biases and unconscious behaviours.

The basic process of facilitation can be distilled into three points:

- Ensure that everyone works on the same problem with the same approach.
- Ensure that everyone participates.
- Ensure that participants are protected from verbal abuse.

Some techniques to help the discussion:

Reflecting – feeding back the content and feeling of the message “Let me see if I’m hearing you correctly...”

Clarifying – restating an idea or thought to make it more clear “What I believe you are saying is...”

Summarising – stating concisely the main thoughts “It sounds to me as if we have been talking about a few major themes...”
**Shifting focus** – moving from one speaker or topic to another.

“Thank you, John. Do you have anything to add Jane? We’ve been focusing on views 1 and 2. Does anyone have strong feelings about other views?”

**Using silence** – allowing time and space for reflection by pausing between comments.

**Using non-verbal and verbal signals** – combining body language and speech to communicate – for example, using eye contact to encourage or discourage behaviours in the group. Be aware of cultural differences.

**Hints and Tips to improve outcomes**
- Be prepared
- Set a relaxed and open tone
- Establish clear ground rules eg one person talks at a time, everyone listens, respect others point of view.
- Assist the group to keep focus
- Ensure everyone gets a chance to talk
- Allow participants to respond or answer questions, do not always step in
- Try to use open questions to encourage discussion

Remember facilitation is a skill and an art. Practice and reflection on how well it went always helps.

**Reference**
GoodPractice.net [http://www.goodpractice.net](http://www.goodpractice.net)

**PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING**

To support practitioners understanding of importance of knowledge management NHS Improving Quality have produced useful animations.

To build an understanding of what it means to have ‘better knowledge’ in health and care, this short animation series takes viewers on a journey explaining key concepts along the way and giving practical examples of how small changes can deliver big improvements.

The four animations are:
- **What is knowledge?**
- **Knowledge through the ages**
- **Introducing knowledge management**
- **Better knowledge, better care**