

## Importance of Relationships in Influencing

Influencing is the means by which you bring alignment of people, with the vision or strategy that you are implementing. There is more to influence than just persuasion. Successful influencing involves having a range of skills to communicate and shape emotions, not just bring people along with logic.

To be effective at influencing, you need to use the most appropriate style of influence to the situation and the person or group you are trying to influence.

The following framework categorises the person or group you are trying to influence on two dimensions – the extent of trust in the relationship, and the extent they agree with your proposal.



Adapted from P Block, *The Empowered Manager: Positive Political Skills at Work*, 1991.



### ALLY

Be careful about how much and what type of information you share but always treat them well.

- Note that they have indicated their support and affirm this.
- Acknowledge any reservations you have had in the past.
- Be clear about what you want from them “I would like you to let me know if you feel like you don’t have enough information from me”
- Ask them what they want from you in working together and use this information to strike an agreement.



### SUPPORTER

Treat as trusted team members, encourage them to act, and engage them in dealing with your adversaries.

- Affirm the areas of agreement and acknowledge their support.
- Reaffirm the quality of the relationship. “I trust what you tell me, and I will be honest with you.”
- Acknowledge any doubts or difficulties you might have and be honest about adversaries.
- Ask for their support and advice on specific matters.



### ADVERSARY

Only treat people as if they are from here if your attempts to negotiate have failed.

- State your position clearly and in a neutral way.
- Seek more specific understanding of their position by asking questions without judgement.
- Acknowledge any ways in which you might have contributed to the problem.
- State how you intend to proceed and why – explore their reaction. End the discussion without demands or requests.



### CRITIC

Use these people to bring out the best in you.

- Reaffirm the positive relationship and trust.
- State your position – what you are trying to do and why. Seek their advice and support in moving the issue forward.
- Ask them to outline their position on the issue. Discuss the pros and cons openly and non-defensively.
- Negotiate alternatives. Seek ways of incorporating their requirements into your position.