

# OFFICE INFLUENCE ATTRIBUTES

## Definitions and Importance

### PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES: INTERNAL

#### Builds respect

##### **Confidence**

A belief that you can do something well/succeed.

Your level of internal confidence allows you to speak with conviction and act with purpose. When you inspire others to feel this internal strength and conviction, they will want to follow you. Being humble is also an important attribute.

##### **Trustworthiness**

Deserving of trust as observed through actions or deeds.

Those who do not trust you will not follow you because they are unsure of your true agenda. Also, they will continue to watch their backs in fear that you may turn on them or take advantage of their good nature.

##### **Being Respectful**

Treating others with courtesy and showing you value their thoughts and opinions.

Respecting others' opinions, advice, and issues helps build loyalty toward you. This has the benefit of making you more approachable. People will want to approach you with ideas, ask for your assistance, or meet you. This personal connection makes it easier for you to influence them when needed.

##### **Being Humble**

Being confident, without excess pride and being willing to listen to others.

Being humble makes you more approachable and likeable, enhancing your ability to influence others. Being humble is not a sign of weakness; being humble is a sign of confidence, competence, and strength.

##### **Being Optimistic**

Having confidence about the future and in the successful completion of important tasks.

Optimism is a key ingredient in influencing others because it illustrates your belief in success, and everyone wants to be on a winning team.

##### **Being Open Minded**

A willingness to listen to the opinions and suggestions of others.

Being open to other points of view allows you to enhance the quality of your vision, the effectiveness of your tactics, and the success of your change management. From an influence perspective, remember, people who are not part of the solution often become part of the problem.

#### Builds trust

##### **Having Empathy**

An ability to understand the feelings of others and think about things from their perspective.

Being able to understand the perspective of others has two primary advantages. First, it provides you the insights to treat them as they would like to be treated. Second, by understanding people's perspectives, motivations, and needs, it's easier to influence them toward required business goals and objectives.

##### **Loyalty**

Showing loyalty to your company, manager, team and others

Showing your loyalty to others, generally causes them to be more loyal to you. It also enhances your reputation as a team player and increases the trust in others toward you.

## **Transparency**

Being perceived as honest and open and not holding secret business or personal agendas.

If people think you are honest and open regarding your business decisions, you have a greater ability to influence people because they believe they can understand things from your perspective.

## **Being Authentic**

Allowing your true personality to be seen by others in the workplace.

If you are true to yourself by acting as you are, people feel it, and as a result, they will be more likely to trust you. If people think you are not acting authentically and have some type of hidden agenda, they will have their guard up at all times when speaking with you, and they will try to avoid you when possible.

## **Builds admiration**

### **Calmness**

Keeping your emotions under control during times of anger, stress, and other business or personal challenges

Being calm during challenging times allows you to think more clearly and make better decisions. Also, a person who is calm in the face of challenges is respected by those around them, providing the opportunity for greater influence.

### **Being Courageous**

Having the willingness to make difficult business decisions, take on an appropriate level of calculated risk to meet an important objective, and show a willingness to stand up for your values and ethics.

People see courage as a virtue. If you are thought of as being courageous in challenging times, you'll be the one they want to follow when times get tough.

## **Creates reputation as a change-agent**

### **Having Vision**

Ability to define an organization's future direction, or conceptualize a new potential business opportunity, product, process, or other future-based idea.

Vision provides the context for what needs to be done and how you will interact with the people you want to influence. Your vision provides direction and a picture of what you want to achieve.

### **Being Motivational**

An internal willingness and drive to act.

Internal motivation is what causes you to act. If you are not internally motivated to produce a specific outcome, you cannot (or will not) influence others to move toward your defined goal.

### **Being Proactive**

Initiating an action, activity, or task rather than waiting for instruction or something to happen.

You are proactive when you are the driving force trying to influence others. When you are influenced by others, you are reactive.

### **Being Creative**

The ability to think of innovative ideas to solve business issues and identify potential business opportunities.

If you have a reputation for out-of-the-box thinking, correctly assessing industry trends, and/or finding new potential revenue streams, people will seek out and follow your advice.

## **Helps you get the job done**

### **Having Commitment**

Showing dedication to a company, project, or cause. Commitment to a company, project, or cause provides multiple influence-related benefits, including opportunities to be proactive and gain the support of those looking for a cause and/or a leader. Build your resume by working on and completing self-directed tasks. Build your reputation as someone who follows through on their commitments.

### **Flexibility**

Willingness to change or compromise based on new data, opinions, or experiences.

If you are flexible, you are able to accept change, and you are willing to change your tactics if a better idea comes along. From an influence perspective, your flexibility shows those you are

trying to influence that you are willing to consider another point of view, make adjustments for the good of the project, and be a role model. As a role model, you show others that they should also be flexible and follow your suggested direction.

### **Determination**

Purposefulness and tenacity in completing tasks and activities.

Determination illustrates your ability to overcome obstacles for the good of the project. This builds others' respect for you because you are not seen as a quitter. From an influence perspective, when people see you are personally committed to reaching a goal, they want to help. This help is the result of you influencing them to act on your behalf.

### **Accountability**

A willingness to act and take responsibility for your actions, accepting the results, good or bad.

Accountability is a combination of demonstrating integrity, being proactive, being willing to admit your mistakes, and accepting how you are judged on your actions. From an influence perspective, people appreciate the personal toughness and leadership that personal accountability illustrates. As a result, they will respect and admire you and, therefore, be more willing to follow you.

### **Responsiveness**

Acting quickly to address an identified issue, opportunity or challenge.  
It could also be quickly replying to a client, manager, or customer's request.

Responsiveness shows your interest in the other person and/or issue being addressed?

## **YOUR PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES: EXTERNAL**

### **Your social connections**

#### **Delegated Authority**

Having power based on the authority of another person or organization. For example, a police officer has delegated authority from the governing municipality.

Delegated authority allows you to act based on others' authority. Within a business context,

gaining the support of a senior executive allows you to influence others by using the executive's internal clout, rather than having to rely on your own. In essence, your level of internal influence is elevated to that of your executive sponsor.

### **Friends and Allies**

Your personal and professional contacts that raise your organizational stature within the workplace.

Your friends and allies can dramatically enhance your office influence if they have the ability to effect, positively or negatively, your fellow coworkers and/or enhance your organizational assess, provide relevant information, or help attain needed resources.

### **Academic Contacts**

Your level of industry activism, your reputation, and your contacts outside your company.

From an influence perspective, connections to academia show culture and knowledge, to the media show fame, to politicians show power, and to industry show thought leadership. The reality may be different, but to those you are trying to influence, perception is reality.

## **Your social activities**

### **Providing Thought Leadership**

Providing thought leadership, business and/or technical vision, inspiration, knowledge, and/or insight to those you want to influence.

From an influence perspective, teaching others builds loyalty, provides you with a platform of influence, and illustrates your ability and willingness to help others. These characteristics help raise your clout among your peers and others, making it easier to influence them.

### **Industry Activism**

Involvement in industry conferences, associations, and/or user groups, writing for professional publications, or providing input into industry standards and best practices.

This type of activism has many influence-related advantages, including expanding your professional contacts, staying up-to-date on industry trends, and being viewed by your peers as a thought leader.

## Your actions

### Follow Through

Keeping your promises, completing agreed-upon tasks, keeping your commitments, and working diligently toward your vision and objectives.

Having a clear vision is a key component in influencing people initially, but to keep them engaged and following your direction, you must continue to hold up your part of the deal.

### Showing You Care

A willingness to have empathy for others and demonstrate empathy in your conversations and actions.

There is an old expression, People don't care what you know until they know that you care.

### Leading by Example

Influencing people to act based on your actions.

One of Steve Jobs most famous quotes is Leaders lead by example whether they want to or not. Never underestimate the effect your actions have on others.

## PROFESSIONAL STATURE

### Your credentials

#### Degrees

A degree indicates your level of academic achievement, including associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. It may also include university-sponsored post-master's and post-doctorate designations.

Has great value from many perspectives, including connections to your college friends, potential to network with alumni, college reputation value, knowledge gained, etc.

#### Certifications

There are many types of certifications. Generally speaking, a certification requires an exam and is associated with a specific skill or product. For example, a certification in IT management would include the general skills needed to lead technical

professionals. Alternately, a certification in Microsoft Windows 10 shows competency on that particular operating system.

The value is profession specific. From an influence perspective, the benefit is questionable unless the certificate is highly regarded within the profession of those who are certified. Outside this professional area these certifications, generally, carry little influence value because people don't see the value beyond a particular skill.

#### Job Title

This is, well, your job title. I don't know how else to describe it.

From an influence perspective, your job title carries significant weight if your level of responsibility matches the title. For example, being the vice president of marketing in a three-person company is very different from having the same title in a \$100 million company. On the downside, having major responsibility and a poor job title can hurt your influence. For example, being the IT security manager would not be as marketable as being the Chief Information Security Officer.

## Your achievements

#### Awards

These are company, professional, industry, and non-business awards that have a positive effect on you personally or professionally. Company awards may include Employee of the Year or Top Salesperson. Professional awards are generally related to a professional association, for example, the National Speakers Association has the Speaker Hall of Fame. Entertainment industry-related awards include the Emmy, Oscar, etc. Personal awards are not work- or career-oriented, but illustrate your great character, charitable nature, civic contribution, etc.

These awards illustrate your abilities, character, or success recognized by others. These types of awards are of great value to you professionally, even if they are not for professionally-oriented accomplishments. The value is not in saying how good you are; it is in other people saying how good you are. This single distinction gives these awards weight and credibility.

## Accomplishments

These are noteworthy achievements performed both inside and outside the workplace. In the workplace, this could be a scientific discovery, writing a bestselling book, or some other hard-to-achieve accomplishment. Outside the office, it could be climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, being an Olympic athlete, or another personal endeavor that would bring the admiration of others.

Your accomplishments, whether they be inside or outside the workplace, say something about you as a person. As a result, they can elevate people's opinions and respect for you as a person. This, in turn, enhances your ability to influence them.

## Your knowledge Experience

Your professional experience related to your current job. This may also include personal experiences and wisdom gained through age if it is relevant to your work-related decision making.

This is of great importance only if your past experiences have allowed you to learn from your mistakes, widened your perspective, and enhanced your professional craft.

## Learned Skills

Learned skills are skills of value to your current job. Other skills, such as learning to play piano as a child or having been a COBOL programmer in the 1980s, while of personal interest, are only of value in the workplace if they provide some type of professional value.

Your learned skills are the basis for your professional craft. From an influence perspective, your level of influence will be heavily based on your skills relative to the skills of those whom you are trying to influence.

## Learned Information

Learned information is the information you have acquired throughout your life, both professional and personal.

The more relevant to your current role, the higher the value. This learned information could also include knowledge that is of value building personal relationships with coworkers. For example, if you and your boss both have a strong interest in sports trivia, this common bond could increase your friendship, thus increasing your influence with both your boss and your peers.

## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

### Builds understanding and empathy

#### Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EQ) has two key aspects. First, it is the ability to understand yourself in a way that allows you to properly manage your actions and emotions. Second, it is the ability to understand others using empathy and organizational awareness with the goal of influencing them to aid in obtaining your objectives. EQ is of great importance. If you take away only one concept from this book regarding influencing others, it should be about emotional intelligence.

#### Body Language

Body language is nonverbal communication using unconscious or conscious body movement, posture, and gestures.

The importance of body language is twofold. First, people judge your sincerity, strength, confidence, competency, and other attributes based on their interpretation of your body language. Second, you can gain insight into how others feel about you by understanding their body language.

### Enhances fact finding and builds rapport

#### Asking Purposeful Questions

Purposeful questions are questions specifically asked with the intent of causing a desired outcome. For example, a leading question, like, 'Do you have any additional questions before we sign the contract?' is really a polite way of saying, Sign the contract. When trying to influence others, asking a good question is often more effective than making a statement. A question makes people come to their own conclusion, which allows them to feel more in control of the situation.

#### Active Listening

Active listening is a technique of listening to others in a way that maximizes understanding between the speaker and listener while simultaneously, through comments and/or body language, shows the speaker that the listener is paying attention.

The better you can understand a person's perspective on a topic, the easier it is to influence them in a way that is consistent and/or related to their point of view.

## **Reduces stress, enhances productivity, facilitates teamwork and lowers attrition**

### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution is turning unhealthy conflict into a workable solution through brainstorming, negotiation, compromise, common goal setting, and other related activities.

The ability to resolve, or at least reduce, conflict allows you reduce stress, enhance team morale, accelerate organizational change, increase job satisfaction, and reduce employee attrition.

### **Difficult Conversations**

The ability to calmly and effectively talk one-on-one to another person with whom you have a conflict to make the situation workable and comfortable for both parties.

Success at facilitating difficult conversations can reduce conflict, increase the cooperation and enhance the performance of employees, vendors, contractors, internal business partners and others.

## **Enhances visibility and upward mobility**

### **Public Speaking**

Delivering a public speech or giving a presentation within your organization.

Presentations are given to an audience you are trying to influence, impress, secure agreement from, motivate, inform, and/or educate. The ability to present well in front of others is not the goal-it is an important tool needed to meet your business and professional objectives.

### **Written Communication**

Written communication, within this context, is your ability to deliver your message to others via email, status reports, formal documentation, blogs, and other business-related, written artifacts.

Your ability to write well has three primary business advantages. First, it helps you meet your business objectives by clearly explaining situations and needed results. Second, it allows you to document your success in status-type reports that will be used to assess your job performance. Third, it allows you to influence the reader to follow your recommendations, instructions, and/or requests.

## **BUSINESS SKILLS**

### **Helps build your team**

#### **Team Building**

Your ability as an official or unofficial leader to bring a group together as a cohesive and functional team.

If you build a spirit of teamwork within the group, you will be viewed as a group leader, thus increasing your level of influence within the group. This enhanced level of influence increases the likelihood that the group will take your advice and direction at a future time.

#### **Running Meetings**

The ability to herd cats. Sorry. The ability to get strategic or tactical value from a meeting in an orderly and appropriate manner, given the situation, group, content, and objective.

Running a high-quality meeting has many influence advantages during and after the meeting. During the meeting, you drive the agenda and, by definition, control the room. After the meeting, you can use the meeting's momentum to continue this control at a lesser level.

#### **Mentoring**

Mentoring takes many forms: technical instructor, career coach, professional advocate, protector, resource provider, role model, and, sometimes, life coach.

The more you mentor your team and others within the company, the wider your scope of influence because mentoring others builds loyalty in them toward you. Then, as time goes on, those you have mentored will move to other parts of the

company at different organizational levels. This network can provide you influence well beyond your specific area of responsibility, even beyond your company, as those whom you have mentored seek opportunities in other organizations.

## **Increases productivity and effectiveness**

### **Negotiation**

From a business perspective, negotiation is the process of working with others to define the terms of a contract, business deal, conflict resolution, resource allocation, project delivery schedule, or other related items.

The ability to negotiate well has many positive business benefits, including gaining favorable business terms and getting the internal resources to maximize the potential of a project's success. From an influence perspective, a reputation for negotiating well enhances your professional reputation and causes people to be on your side of a deal or office discussion.

### **Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is the process of systematically envisioning a desired future state (strategic thinking), translating this vision into broadly defined goals, and then defining a sequence of steps (project plan) to achieve the overall goal.

The strategic planning process includes various influence-generating activities, including the creation of a vision (strategic thinking), articulation of the vision (writing and presenting), and project planning. Each of these individually enhances your influential appeal. Combined, they position you as an internal agent of change and a thought leader.

### **Goal Setting**

Goal setting is the combination of identifying a needed objective and defining its timeframe, attributes, and how success will be measured.

Goal setting is a form of actionable vision. Its creation gives people a purpose to accept as their own and move forward toward its completion. The timeframe, attributes, and measurable results allow you to steer peoples' energy in the proper direction toward your objective.

### **Time Management**

Time management is the process of prioritizing your time (and/or the time of others) in a way that best helps you meet your goals and objectives.

Time management is a key component of influence because it:

- Gives you the time to influence others.
- Allows you to achieve more, which enhances others' respect toward you.
- Illustrates that you will not be wasting people's time.
- Shows that you are organized and can meet your work deadlines.

