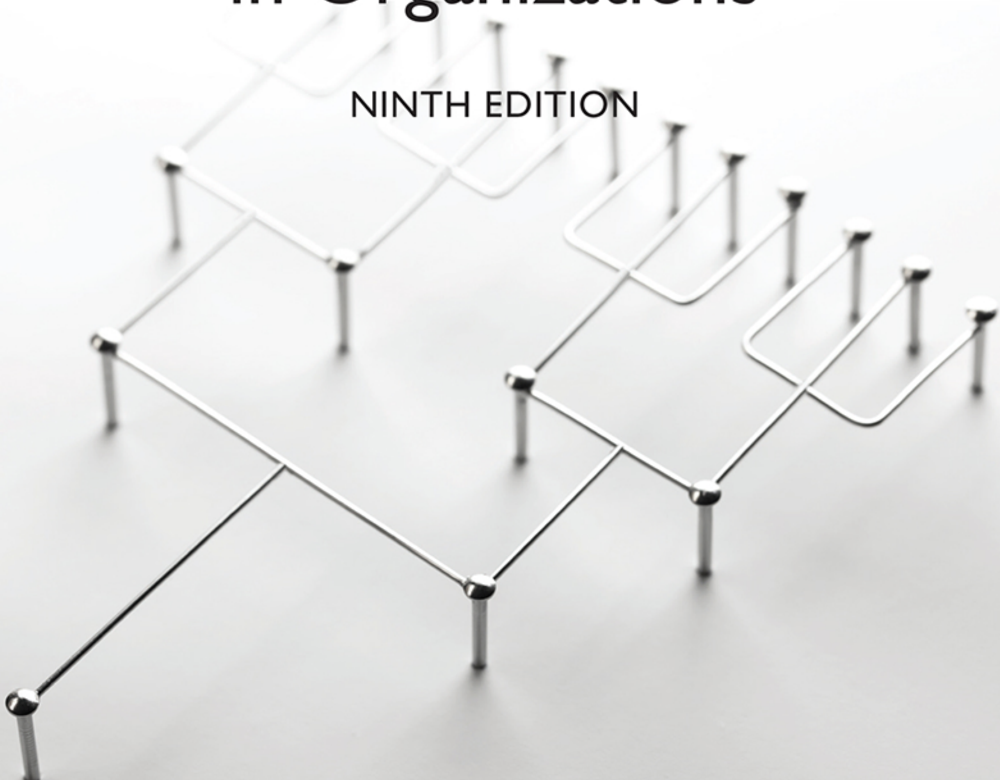
GLOBAL EDITION

Leadership
in Organizations

NINTH EDITION



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Leadership in Organizations

TABLE 6-1 Guidelines for Using Legitimate Authority

- Make polite, clear requests.
- Explain the reasons for a request.
- Don't exceed your scope of authority.
- Verify authority if necessary.
- Follow proper channels.
- Follow up to verify compliance.
- Insist on compliance if appropriate.

especially important for people who are likely to be sensitive about status differentials and authority relationships, such as someone who is older than the agent or who is a peer rather than a subordinate.

Making a polite request does not imply you should plead or appear apologetic about a request. To do so risks the impression that the request is not worthy or legitimate, and it may give the impression that compliance is not really expected. A legitimate request should be made in a firm, confident manner. In an emergency situation, it is more important to be assertive than polite. A direct order by a leader in a commanding tone of voice is sometimes necessary to shock subordinates into immediate action in an emergency. In this type of situation, subordinates associate confident, firm direction with expertise as well as authority. To express doubts or appear confused risks the loss of influence over subordinates.

The order or request should be stated very clearly using language that the target person can understand. If the request is complex, it is advisable to communicate it in writing (e.g., work order, memo, email) as well as orally. Oral requests should be made directly to the target person rather than relying on someone else to relay it to the target person. An intermediary may misinterpret the message, and you also lose the opportunity to assess the target person's reaction. If there is any question about your right to make a request or assignment, then it is important to verify this authority, which is a type of "legitimating tactic" described later.

Instances of outright refusal by subordinates to carry out a legitimate order or request undermine the leader's authority and increase the likelihood of future disobedience. Orders that are unlikely to be carried out should not be given. Sometimes a subordinate will delay in complying with an unusual or unpleasant request to test whether the leader is really serious about it. If the leader does not follow up the initial request to check on compliance, the subordinate is likely to conclude that the request may be ignored.

Reward Power

Reward power can be used in several ways (see Table 6-2). When the agent offers to give the target person a reward for carrying out a request or performing a task, it is called an exchange tactic, and the use of such tactics is described in more detail later in this chapter. Another way to use reward power is to create a formal incentive system that provides tangible rewards for good behavior or a monetary bonus for performance that exceeds standards.

How reward power is used affects the outcome. Since compliance is most likely if the reward is something valued by the target person, it is essential to determine what rewards are valued, which will not be the same for everyone. Another essential condition is that the agent must be perceived as a credible source of the reward, and credibility is undermined by making unrealistic promises or failing to provide a promised reward.

TABLE 6-2 Guidelines for Using Reward Power

- Offer the type of rewards that people desire.
- Offer rewards that are fair and ethical.
- Don't promise more than you can deliver.
- Explain the criteria for giving rewards and keep it simple.
- Provide rewards as promised if requirements are met.
- Use rewards symbolically (not in a manipulative way).

Even when the conditions are favorable for using rewards, they seldom motivate someone to put forth extra effort beyond what is required to complete the task and get the reward. The target person may be tempted to neglect aspects of the task not included in the specification of performance criteria or aspects not easily monitored by the agent. If rewards are used in a manipulative manner, they may result in resistance rather than compliance. The power to give or withhold rewards may cause resentment among people who dislike being dependent on the whims of a powerful authority figure, or who believe that the agent is manipulating them to his or her own advantage. Even an attractive reward may be ineffective if it is seen as a bribe to get the target person to do something improper or unethical.

When rewards are used frequently as a source of influence, people may come to perceive their relationship to the leader in purely economic terms. They will expect a reward every time they are asked to do something new or unusual. It is more satisfying for both parties to view their relationship in terms of mutual loyalty and friendship. Rather than using rewards as incentives in an impersonal, mechanical way, they should be used in a more symbolic manner to recognize accomplishments and express personal appreciation for special contributions or exceptional effort. Used in this way, reward power can be a source of increased referent power.

Coercive Power

Coercive power is invoked by a threat or warning that the target person will suffer undesirable consequences for noncompliance with a request, rule, or policy. The threat may be explicit, or it may be only a vague comment that the person will be sorry for failing to do what the agent wants. The likelihood of compliance is greatest when the threat is perceived to be credible, and the target person strongly desires to avoid the threatened punishment. Credibility will be undermined by rash threats that are not carried out despite noncompliance by the target person. Sometimes it is necessary to establish credibility by demonstrating the will and ability to cause unpleasant consequences for the target person. However, even a credible threat may be unsuccessful if the target person refuses to be intimidated or believes that a way can be found to avoid compliance without being detected by the agent.

It is best to avoid using coercion except when absolutely necessary, because it is difficult to use and likely to result in undesirable side effects. Coercion often arouses anger or resentment, and it may result in retaliation. In work organizations, the most appropriate use of coercion is to deter behavior detrimental to the organization, such as illegal activities, theft, violation of safety rules, reckless acts that endanger others, and direct disobedience of legitimate requests. Coercion is not likely to result in commitment, but when used skillfully in an appropriate situation, there is a reasonably good chance that it will result in compliance. Table 6-3 has guidelines for using coercion primarily to maintain discipline with subordinates (Arvey & Ivancevich, 1980; Preston & Zimmerer, 1978; Schoen & Durand, 1979).

TABLE 6-3 Guidelines for Using Coercive Power to Maintain Discipline

1. Explain rules and requirements, and ensure that people understand the serious consequences of violations.
2. Respond to infractions promptly and consistently without showing any favoritism to particular individuals.
3. Investigate to get the facts before using reprimands or punishment, and avoid jumping to conclusions or making hasty accusations.
4. Except for the most serious infractions, provide sufficient oral and written warnings before resorting to punishment.
5. Administer warnings and reprimands in private, and avoid making rash threats.
6. Stay calm and avoid the appearance of hostility or personal rejection.
7. Express a sincere desire to help the person comply with role expectations and thereby avoid punishment.
8. Invite the person to suggest ways to correct the problem, and seek agreement on a concrete plan.
9. If noncompliance continues after warnings have been made, use punishments that are legitimate, fair, and commensurate with the seriousness of the infraction.

Expert Power

Some guidelines for using expert power are shown in Table 6-4. When an agent clearly has much more relevant expertise than target persons, the effects of the expert power will be automatic. For example, a renowned expert physician recommends a form of treatment, and the patient accepts the recommendation without any doubts. However, in many cases an agent will not have such an obvious advantage in expertise, and it will be necessary to use the expertise to provide information, explanations, and evidence that support a request or proposal. If there is any question about the agent's expertise, it is helpful to verify it by providing appropriate documents and evidence, or by describing prior success in dealing with similar problems.

Proposals or requests should be made in a clear, confident manner, and the agent should avoid making contradictory statements or vacillating between inconsistent positions. However, it is important to remember that superior expertise can also cause resentment if used in a way that implies the target person is ignorant or helpless. The agent may lecture target persons in an arrogant, condescending manner, rudely interrupt any attempted replies, and dismiss any objections or concerns without serious consideration. Even when the agent is acknowledged to have more expertise, the target person usually has some relevant information, ideas, and concerns that should be considered.

TABLE 6-4 Ways to Use and Maintain Expert Power

- Explain the reasons for a request or proposal and why it is important.
- Provide evidence that a proposal will be successful.
- Don't make rash, careless, or inconsistent statements.
- Don't lie, exaggerate, or misrepresent the facts.
- Listen seriously to the person's concerns and suggestions.
- Act confident and decisive in a crisis.

TABLE 6-5 Ways to Gain and Use Referent Power

- Show acceptance and positive regard.
- Be supportive and helpful.
- Use sincere forms of ingratiation.
- Keep promises and commitments.
- Make self-sacrifices to benefit others.
- Lead by example (use role modeling).
- Explain the personal importance of a request.

Referent Power

Some specific ways to gain and use referent power are summarized in Table 6-5. Referent power is increased by showing concern for the needs and feelings of others, demonstrating trust and respect, and treating people fairly. However, to achieve and maintain strong referent power usually requires more than just flattery, favors, and charm. Referent power ultimately depends on the agent's character and integrity. Over time, actions speak louder than words, and someone who tries to appear friendly but manipulates and exploits people will lose referent power. Integrity is demonstrated by being truthful, expressing a consistent set of values, acting in a way that is consistent with one's espoused values, and carrying out promises and agreements (French & Raven, 1959).

One way to exercise referent power is through "role modeling." A person who is well liked and admired can have considerable influence over others by setting an example of proper and desirable behavior for them to imitate. When there is strong personal identification, imitation of agent behavior is likely to occur even without any conscious intention by the agent. However, because people also imitate undesirable behavior in someone they admire, it is important to be aware of the examples that one sets.

An agent with limited referent power may find it useful to remind the target person of favors done in the past or events when their friendship was very important. Finally, when relying on referent power as a source of influence, it is important to ensure that the target person understands how important a request is for you. An example is to say: "I would really appreciate it if you can do this, because it is really important to me."

Influence Tactics and Outcomes

Knowledge about effective leadership is also provided by studying influence processes involving managers and their subordinates, bosses, other members of the organization, and outsiders (e.g., clients, customers, suppliers, government officials). This introduction describes three general types of influence tactics and three distinct task-related outcomes for an influence attempt involving proactive tactics. The final part of the chapter describes eleven specific types of proactive influence tactics, their likely outcomes, and guidelines for using the tactics.

General Types of Influence Tactics

The type of behavior used intentionally to influence the attitudes and behavior of another person is usually called an influence tactic. Three general types of influence tactics can be differentiated according to their primary purpose. Some specific influence tactics can be used for more than one purpose but may not be equally effective for the different purposes.

Impression Management Tactics. These tactics are intended to influence people to like the agent (e.g., provide praise, act friendly, offer assistance) or to have a favorable evaluation of the agent (e.g., describe past achievements). Impression management tactics can be used by leaders to influence followers, or by followers to influence a leader (see Chapter 10).

Political Tactics. These tactics are used to influence organizational decisions or otherwise gain benefits for an individual or group. One type of political tactic involves an attempt to influence how important decisions are made and who makes them. Examples include influencing the agenda for meetings to include your issues, influencing decision makers to use criteria that will bias decisions in your favor, and selecting decision makers who will promote and defend your interests. Political tactics are also used to defend against opponents and silence critics. Some political tactics involve deception, manipulation, and abuse of power, and ethical aspects of power and influence are discussed in Chapter 9.

Proactive Tactics. These tactics have an immediate task objective, such as getting the target person to carry out a new task, change the procedures used for a current task, provide assistance on a project, or support a proposed change. The proactive influence tactics are useful when a simple request or command is unlikely to have the desired outcome. Eleven types of proactive tactics are described later in this chapter. Some of the eleven tactics can also be used to resist or modify a request from someone who is attempting to influence you.

Influence Outcomes for Proactive Tactics

One useful basis for evaluating the success of an influence attempt involving proactive tactics is to examine the outcome. The agent may achieve the intended effects on the target, or the outcome may be less than was intended. For an influence attempt that involves a single target person, it is useful to differentiate among three distinct outcomes that involve the target person's willingness to carry out the agent's request or proposal.

Commitment. The target person makes a great effort to carry out the request or implement the decision effectively. This outcome is usually the most successful one for a complex, difficult task that requires enthusiasm, initiative, and persistence by the target person in overcoming obstacles.

Compliance. The target person is willing to carry out a request but is not enthusiastic about it and will make only a minimal effort. With compliance, the target person is not convinced that the decision or action is the best thing to do or even that it will be effective for accomplishing its purpose. However, for a simple, routine request, compliance may be all that is necessary to accomplish the agent's task objectives.

Resistance. The target person is opposed to the proposal or request, rather than merely indifferent about it. Resistance can take several different forms: (1) refuse to carry out the request, (2) explain why it is impossible to carry out the request, (3) try to persuade the agent to withdraw or change the request, (4) ask higher authorities to overrule the agent's request, (5) delay acting in the hope that the agent will forget about the request, and (6) make a pretense of complying but try to sabotage the task. Resistance is usually regarded as an unsuccessful outcome, but it can be beneficial if it helps the agent avoid a serious mistake. For example, you develop a detailed plan for a new project, but people find some serious flaws that need to be fixed before they will implement the plan.

The target person's reaction to the agent's request is not the only basis for evaluating success. The proactive tactics can also affect interpersonal relationships and the way other people perceive the agent (e.g., ethical, supportive, likable, competent, trustworthy, strong). A few of the proactive tactics (i.e., ingratiation, collaboration, consultation, apprising) may improve the agent–target relationship, and the use of hard-pressure tactics can weaken the relationship.

Types of Proactive Influence Tactics

As explained earlier, behavior used intentionally to gain acceptance of a request or support for a proposal is called a proactive influence tactic. Two research programs used inductive and deductive approaches to identify distinct types of proactive tactics.

In an early research program (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980), a preliminary taxonomy was developed by analyzing critical incidents that described successful and unsuccessful influence attempts. Then, the tactics identified with this inductive approach were used to develop an agent self-report questionnaire called the Profiles of Organizational Influence Strategies (POIS). The POIS was used in a follow-up study by Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) with samples of agents who rated their own use of the tactics in upward influence attempts with their boss. The study found support for six of the proposed tactics (i.e., rationality, exchange, ingratiation, assertiveness, coalition, and upward appeal). Limited support for a revised version of the questionnaire was also found in a subsequent study of upward influence (Hochwarter, Pearson, Ferris, Perrewe, & Ralston, 2000). The original and revised versions of the POIS have been used in many studies on proactive tactics (see Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002).

A more recent program of research was carried out to identify proactive tactics used to influence subordinates and peers as well as bosses (Yukl, Chavez, & Seifert, 2005; Yukl, Lepsinger, & Lucia, 1992; Yukl, Seifert, & Chavez, 2008). The research program involved a series of studies conducted over a period of more than a decade using several different research methods (i.e., critical incidents, diaries, questionnaires, experiments, and scenarios). The eleven proactive influence tactics identified in this research program are defined in Table 6-6. Five of the tactics are similar to ones in the POIS (rational persuasion, ingratiation, exchange, pressure, and coalition), and upward appeals are treated as a type of coalition tactic. Seven other tactics were also identified in the critical incidents or suggested by theories about leadership and power. The Influence Behavior Questionnaire (IBQ) was developed in the survey research to measure target ratings of agent influence behavior. Target ratings are usually more accurate than the type of agent's self-ratings used in the POIS. The remainder of this section describes each type of tactic and how it is commonly used in organizations to influence a subordinate, peer, or boss.

Rational Persuasion

Rational persuasion involves the use of explanations, logical arguments, and factual evidence to explain why a request or proposal will benefit the organization or help to achieve an important task objective. This tactic may also involve presentation of factual evidence that a project or change is likely to be successful. A strong form of rational persuasion (e.g., a detailed proposal, elaborate documentation) is much more effective than a weak form of rational persuasion (e.g., a brief explanation, an assertion without supporting evidence).