

Power and Influence in Leadership

Definition: Ability to get someone to do something they otherwise wouldn't

Key Point: Power is relational, situational, and based on perception

Functional: Motivates, inspires, and advances goals

Dysfunctional: Manipulates, threatens, or creates unfair advantages

Building and Enhancing Power

Build Position Power Demonstrate ability to meet urgent needs (criticality)

Show relevance of your work to organizational goals (centrality)

Expand communication networks and task relevance

Enhance Personal Power Build Expertise: Gain advanced training and education

Enhance Likeability: Be agreeable, supportive, and approachable

Develop Political Savvy: Learn to negotiate and persuade effectively

Power Types and Reactions

Power Type	Source	Best Used For	Likely Reaction
Legitimate	Formal position/-title	Enforcing rules, structure	Compliance
Reward	Ability to give rewards	Motivating performance	Compliance
Coercive	Ability to punish	Enforcing discipline	Resistance
Expert	Knowledge, skills, expertise	Solving complex problems	Commitment
Referent	Charisma, likability	Inspiring and motivating	Commitment

Sources of Power

Organizational Power	Personal Power
Legitimate Power: Authority from position/title	Expert Power: Knowledge, skills, or expertise
Reward Power: Ability to give rewards (e.g., bonuses, promotions)	Referent Power: Charisma, likability, or admiration
Coercive Power: Ability to punish or impose consequences	

Guidelines for Using Power

Type of Power	Guidelines
Legitimate	- Be polite and clear - Explain reasons for requests - Don't exceed authority - Follow up to ensure compliance
Reward	- Offer fair, ethical rewards - Don't overpromise - Explain criteria for rewards - Deliver rewards as promised
Coercive	- Clearly explain rules and consequences - Respond to infractions promptly - Investigate before acting - Use fair, proportional punishments
Expert	- Explain why requests are important - Provide evidence for proposals - Avoid rash or inconsistent statements - Act decisively in crises
Referent	- Show acceptance and positive regard - Be supportive and helpful - Do unsolicited favors - Keep promises and defend your team

Key Takeaways

Power is Relational: Depends on leader-follower dynamics.

Power is Situational: Different types of power work in different contexts.

Ethical Use: Inspire and motivate, don't control or manipulate.

Reactions Matter: Commitment (best), compliance (neutral), resistance (worst).

The Dark Side of Power

Misuse of Power	Manipulation, threats, or unfair advantages
Consequences	Loss of trust, resistance, low morale, and organizational dysfunction