

INFLUENCING SKILLS FINDER

Identify and leverage
your most powerful
influencing skills



Name	Date
Organization Name	

Introduction

The ability to influence and persuade others is key to success. People who lack influencing skills tend to be powerless and undervalued in the workplace.

The Influencing Skills Finder is useful for those of all ability levels who are interested in enhancing or accelerating their personal development at work or in their everyday lives. This assessment will highlight your influencing styles and enhance your ability to leverage them to your best advantage. In addition, you will learn to recognize a variety of influencing methods, some of which you may wish to employ in your business affairs.

Those in positions of power or influence who have benefited from using this assessment include:

- Managers – both line and staff
- Professionals
- Consultants and advisors
- Change agents and developers
- Social and community workers
- Teachers, lecturers and instructors
- Political and community activists

By employing the easy-to-use self-assessment materials (questionnaire, scoring and categories of influencing skills), you will be able to create:

- A framework to analyze your influencing skills.
- An influencing skills profile that specifically indicates how you influence others.
- A plan to help you develop your ability to influence and persuade others.

The Influencing Skills Finder – A Quick Overview

- The Influencing Skills Finder assessment is user-friendly. It does not require a sophisticated understanding of applied behavioral sciences principles.
- The assessment is self-scoring and offers a subjective assessment of your skills.
- The scoring system does not assess the strength of influence – only the styles used.
- You can expect practical, highly useful outcomes from the assessment.
- This is not a measurement of your intelligence or aptitude. There are no “norm” tables – just the six style categories, one of which will best apply to your skill set.
- Once you establish your influencing style, we encourage you to create a personal action plan. Your plan should:
 - Set personal development objectives
 - Identify areas where improvement is possible
 - Establish precise behavioral goals
 - Break down complete tasks into subtasks

Step 1: Review Styles

Below are the six possible styles of influence and their key attributes. Read and consider the attributes of each style before moving on to the questionnaire.

1. **The Asserter**
“I stand up for what I want.”
2. **The Expert**
“I know my subject.”
3. **The Politician**
“I am influential in the circles where decisions are made.”
4. **The Preparer**
“I research topics before forming an opinion.”
5. **The Presenter**
“I convey my ideas persuasively.”
6. **The Client-Centric**
“I meet my audience’s needs.”

Step 2: Complete Questionnaire

The art of persuasion is key to success and a communication skill worth studying and enhancing. This questionnaire will help you determine your persuasive influencing style. Knowing and focusing on your style will give you a leg up on the competition and a clear business advantage.

Consider each pair of statements below. Think about the situations when you are with other people and seek to influence them. (*Choose either a work situation or a social situation – you must decide on one or the other – not both.*) Allocate points to the boxes on the right to indicate which of the statements is most true for you. You should allocate exactly three points to each pair of statements – 3 being the most true for you and 0 being the least true for you. Points may be distributed in one the following ways:

3	2	1	0
0	1	2	3

The “paired statements” may or may not seem to relate to you. Regardless, make the best possible choice. Take as much time as you need to complete the questionnaire.

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| <p>1. I never take “no” for an answer.
I never try to understand others’ viewpoints in depth.</p> | <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">A</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">F</td></tr> </table> | | A | | F |
| | A | | | | |
| | F | | | | |
| <p>2. I insist on making my point.
I prepare carefully for meetings.</p> | <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">A</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">D</td></tr> </table> | | A | | D |
| | A | | | | |
| | D | | | | |
| <p>3. I present my views logically.
I am a pushy person.</p> | <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">A</td></tr> </table> | | E | | A |
| | E | | | | |
| | A | | | | |
| <p>4. I make friends with people who can help me.
I refuse to be sidetracked.</p> | <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">C</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">A</td></tr> </table> | | C | | A |
| | C | | | | |
| | A | | | | |
| <p>5. I know exactly what I want.
I only talk about what I really understand.</p> | <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">A</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="font-size: 10px;">B</td></tr> </table> | | A | | B |
| | A | | | | |
| | B | | | | |

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| 6. | I take care to always speak from in-depth knowledge
I find out precisely what concerns others have. | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">B</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">F</td></tr> </table> | | B | | F |
| | B | | | | | |
| | F | | | | | |
| 7. | I rehearse what I am going to say.
I carefully research topics I discuss. | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">D</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">B</td></tr> </table> | | D | | B |
| | D | | | | | |
| | B | | | | | |
| 8. | I do not pretend to be an expert when I am not.
I use well-prepared visual aids in presentations. | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">B</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">E</td></tr> </table> | | B | | E |
| | B | | | | | |
| | E | | | | | |
| 9. | I lobby people to persuade them to my point of view.
I only make statements that I can defend | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">C</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">B</td></tr> </table> | | C | | B |
| | C | | | | | |
| | B | | | | | |
| 10. | I adapt my arguments to the person I am talking to.
I seek to influence the person who has the power to make decisions. | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">F</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">C</td></tr> </table> | | F | | C |
| | F | | | | | |
| | C | | | | | |
| 11. | I gain positions of power and influence.
I make sure that my presentations are well prepared. | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">C</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">D</td></tr> </table> | | C | | D |
| | C | | | | | |
| | D | | | | | |
| 12. | I put a lot of energy into presenting my views.
I secure the authority to make decisions | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">C</td></tr> </table> | | E | | C |
| | E | | | | | |
| | C | | | | | |
| 13. | I persuade others to accept my ideas.
I carefully listen to others' views. | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">F</td></tr> </table> | | E | | F |
| | E | | | | | |
| | F | | | | | |
| 14. | I express myself clearly.
I think through potential pitfalls in advance. | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">D</td></tr> </table> | | E | | D |
| | E | | | | | |
| | D | | | | | |
| 15. | I make sure that I can produce strong evidence to support my proposals.
I strive to understand what others want to achieve. | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 50px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 2px;"> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">D</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 40px; height: 15px;"></td><td style="width: 10px; height: 15px;">F</td></tr> </table> | | D | | F |
| | D | | | | | |
| | F | | | | | |

Step 3: Review the scoring process

Before you score your questionnaire, review the example below, in which the participant's strongest influencing style is as a "Presenter." After reviewing the example, score your assessment.

Example of a Completed Scoring Sheet

	Transfer Scores	Totals	Influencing Style
A	1111 1	6	The Asserter
B	1111 111	8	The Expert
C	1111	4	The Politician
D	1111 1	6	The Preparer
E	1111 1111 1111	14	The Presenter
F	1111 11	7	The Client-Centric
Final Total		45	Note: If your scores do not total 45, you have miscalculated and should double-check your figures.

Step 4: Score your own assessment

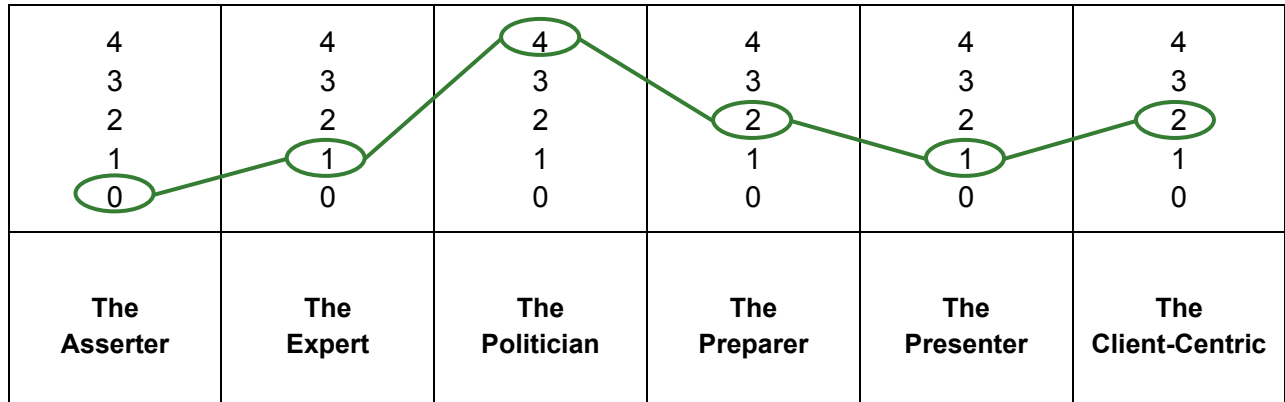
Add the five scores for A items, the five scores for B items, and so on. Transfer your scores from the assessment questionnaire to the table below and then complete the exercise.

	Transfer Scores	Totals	Influencing Style
A			The Asserter (See Page 8)
B			The Expert (See Page 9)
C			The Politician (See Page 10)
D			The Preparer (See Page 11)
E			The Presenter (See Page 12)
F			The Client-Centric (See Page 13)
Overall Total			Note: If your scores do not total 45, you have miscalculated and should double-check your figures.

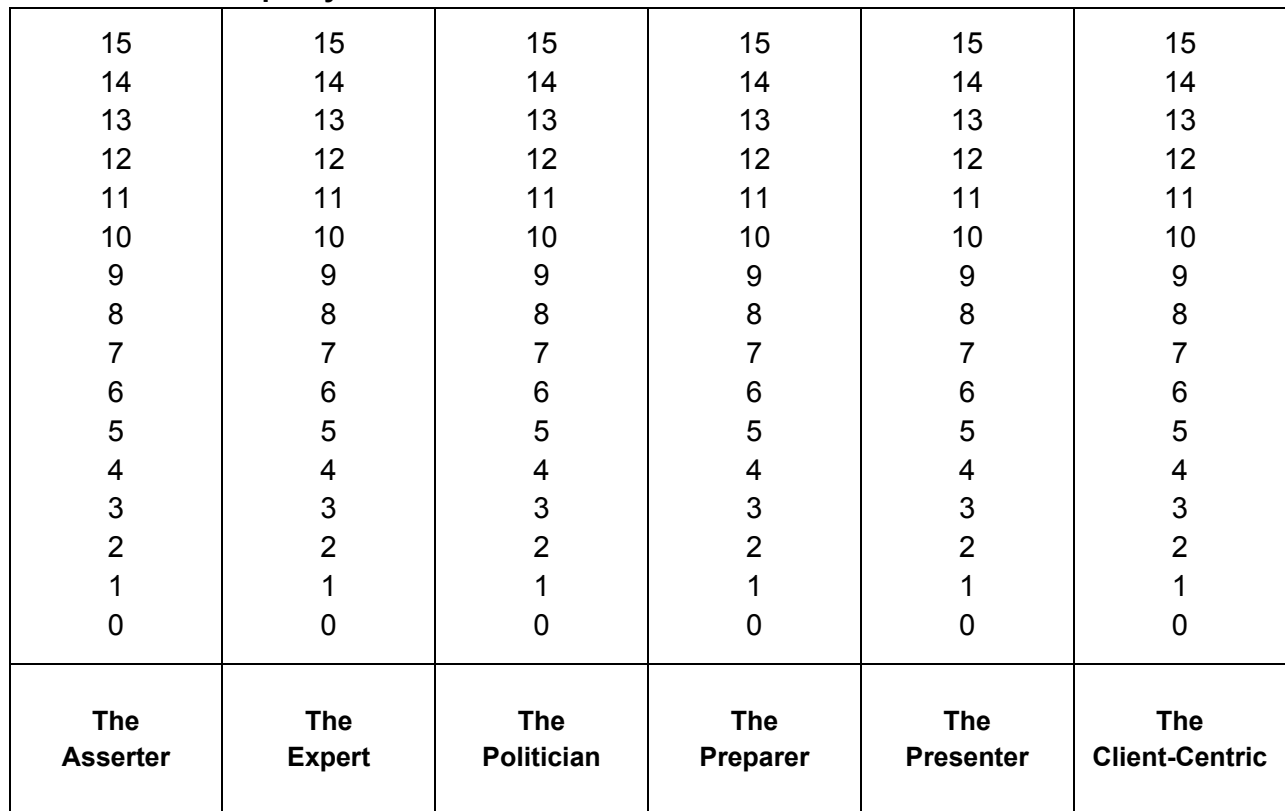
Step 5: Create your Influencing Skills Profile

It often helps to show the pattern of your scores as a profile. Do this by circling the appropriate numbers and then joining the circles.

Example:



Use this chart to plot your scores:



The Asserter

You influence others by knowing what you want and voicing your requirements persuasively and persistently. You don't take "no" for an answer until you have thoroughly tested the other person's determination. You don't need to win every time, but you expect your views to be fully considered.

The assertive person typically has the following set of personal qualities:

- **Boldness.** Assertive personalities enjoy taking the initiative to introduce new elements into social or political situations. They demand time to assert their key points. The assertive person looks at situations where he/she is either disregarded or unwanted as challenges and opportunities.
- **Clarity of Purpose.** Clarity of speech or writing is an asserter's great asset.
- **Energy.** This is a significant attribute for two reasons. First, an energetic presentation is persuasive – others are attracted to a person with bounce and verve. Second, energy is needed to overcome inter-personal difficulties and go on to win, despite opposition.
- **Persistence.** This is one quality every assertive person needs. The assertive person is willing to "try, try and try again."
- **Forcefulness.** This is an element of personal style with both strengths and weaknesses. On occasion, the forceful person will provide resistance that decreases his or her effectiveness. More frequently, forcefulness will overcome objections and, in fact, is persuasive in itself. The assertive person must be able to be forceful when the situation demands it.
- **Resourcefulness.** This strength helps the assertive person because he/she frequently adapts to others' expectations and requirements. The resourceful worker finds clever and innovative ways to overcome setbacks and resistance. Sometimes, the asserter finds a new strategy when it is clear that the old method has failed.

The Expert

You use your subject matter knowledge to influence others. Other people believe that your advice is reliable, but not necessarily because you use strong social or inter-personal skills. The person who exercises influence through expertise has the following qualities:

- **Technical Competence.** This is the foundation of this style. The “Expert” demonstrates broad expertise and makes a “state-of-the-art” assessment of the subject.
- **Balance.** The “Expert” takes a dispassionate and objective view of the technical issue. The “Expert” must be seen as an unbiased source of technical or professional opinion, as those who are partisan tend to lose their potency as influencers.
- **Communication Skills.** These skills allow the “Expert” to debate technical or complex issues with precision. For an expert to be influential, she needs the ability to translate complex information to those who are unqualified in that particular discipline.
- **Perception of Need.** This attribute enables the expert to relate his/her contribution to the needs of the situation, rather than pursuing an individual interest.

The Politician

You influence by lobbying, building networks and taking on important roles. You target the center of organizations where decisions are made. You hope to play a significant role in decision-making processes and pursue influence within a framework of powerful individuals and teams. Your political skills can be summarized under five headings:

- **Detecting power networks.** This is an important first step. Knowing who has power and being willing to build necessary contacts and friendships requires acute sensitivity to the way human affairs are conducted.
- **Building coalitions with others.** This takes time and requires a combination of desire and honesty. Coalitions are, at least partly, based on authentic relationships and trust.
- **Developing arguments.** This skill helps you present a persuasive case to a group of people, each of whom may have different concerns or viewpoints. Challenges from others add sharpness and precision to your argument.
- **Winning arguments.** Winning is key, but you ensure that the loser does not feel disadvantaged or demeaned by the experience of being defeated. Winning an argument does not mean simply displaying superior logic. It is important to persuade others that a particular argument is correct and should be supported.
- **Obtaining significant support.** This is an important political skill because winning an argument is meaningless unless objectors withdraw their concerns and offer concrete support. Support is a kind of psychological contract in which the supporter agrees to invest energy in the persuader's cause.

The Preparer

You try to be well-briefed and analyze situations in advance. You attempt to master your topic.

The “Preparer” is influential because his or her command of the situation earns respect. Someone who is a “Preparer” tends to approach influence in the following ways:

- **Taking time to prepare.** The pressure of everyday work often leaves little time for preparation, but “Preparers” make the time. They set priorities and clarify objectives for success.
- **Considering potential opportunities.** You gain an advantage, even in the most unpromising situations. The effective “Preparer” recognizes possibilities where other people do not.
- **Minimizing unexpected events.** Contingency planning is a way of life for the effective “Preparer,” who always thinks about what might go wrong and how to address the situation if the unexpected happens.

The Presenter

You influence others by conveying your views in a structured and persuasive manner. You attract others to your point of view by your choice of words and the techniques that you use for communication. You project a viewpoint that appeals to others. Effective presenters excel in these four areas:

- **Clear presentation.** Obviously, no one can successfully influence others unless he or she presents a clear, coherent and lucid case. Everyone must understand the arguments and conclusions the same way as the presenter. All presentation techniques (including use of audio/visual aids) are relevant.
- **Arguing a logical case.** This skill is important to the influencing process because people intuitively respond to logic, which translates as “rightness.” Sometimes, the presentation focuses more on values than intellect but requires a logical structure that is both coherent and defensible.
- **Dealing with audience reaction.** Members of the audience must adapt the message as their own. All objections or questions should be answered to the audience’s satisfaction.
- **Personal strength.** The concept is hard to define; the word “charisma” is often used to describe those who possess this extraordinary quality. The ability to gain respect by winning the hearts and minds of the audience is quite valuable; those who influence successfully give the audience a sense that they “earn” personal significance by lending their support.

The Client-Centric

You influence others by understanding and caring about their needs and desires. You acquaint yourself with the people whom you seek to influence and adapt your approach to their specific needs. You relate effectively to your audience. “Client-centric” is a term created by psychologists to describe a dedication to identifying and fulfilling the needs and wants of the “audience.” The Client-Centric’s most important influencing skills include:

- **Listening.** Listening builds bridges. When we know what others think and believe, we can establish trusting relationships, which are crucial in the process of influencing. The active listener empathizes with others and relates his or her case to their specific needs.
- **Understanding others’ perspectives.** The influencer must probe, question and collect information about the thoughts and mental frameworks others use to interpret the world. Psychologists call these mental maps “constructs” – they guide our actions. Once the influencer understands how others think, he or she can design interventions for greater impact.
- **Direct relationships.** Politicians – masters of the art of influencing – know that meeting face-to face helps them persuade and influence constituents of their view points. Hewlett-Packard pioneered an approach to business management based on this concept: MBWA (management by wandering around). People must feel that they can communicate openly and directly -- this builds a bridge of influence.

Step 6: Leverage your Influencing Skills

1. What are your key influencing styles? (highest score first)
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

2. When do you use these styles most frequently? Be precise. Think of actual situations in your work and social life.

Styles:	When used: (Give several examples under each heading)
a)	
b)	
c)	

3. What are the influencing styles that you use least often? (lowest score first)
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

4. How would things improve for you if you practiced the influencing styles mentioned in question 3 “more often or better”? Be precise. Try to think of as many benefits as possible related to both your work and social life.

Style	Possible Benefits
a)	
b)	
c)	

5. How might you build your influencing strengths and lessen any influencing weaknesses in the next six months? Again, be detailed and exhaustive. Try to think of at least three points under each heading.

Style:	Possible Development Actions:
The Asserter	
The Expert	
The Politician	
The Preparer	
The Presenter	
The Client-Centric	

6. What would a more influential “You” look like? Project six months ahead: Assume that you have implemented all of the good ideas you listed in your answer to question 5.

In six months, I will:

Be engaged in these new things:	Have stopped (or reduced) these things:	Be focusing on these things more:	Be doing these things better: