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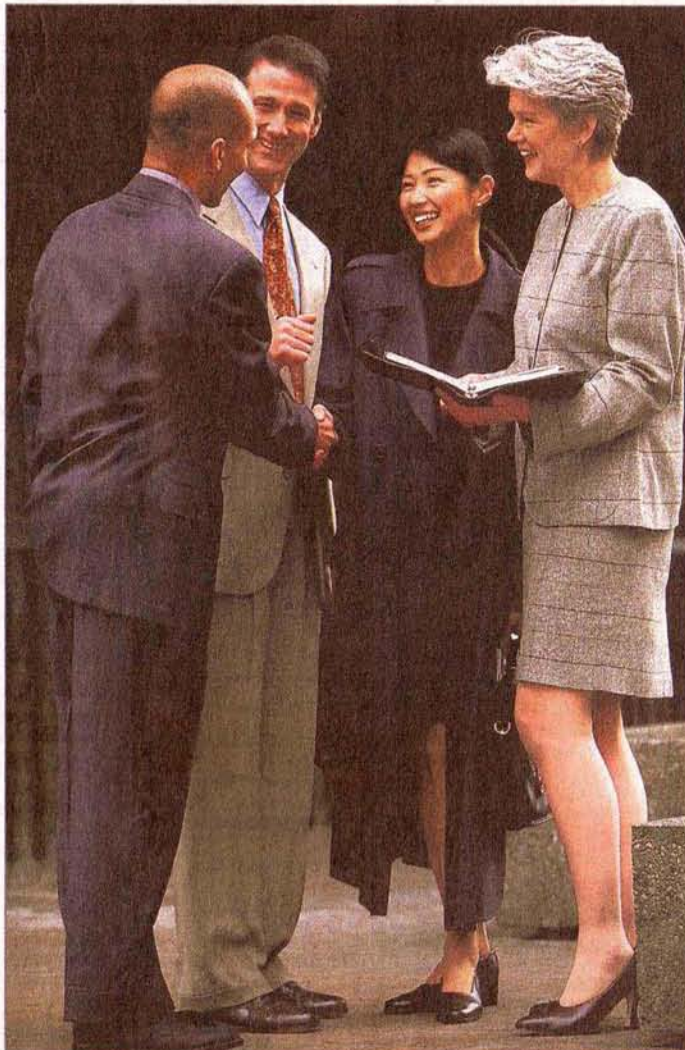
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Be a **positive** influence

Knowing what words and tone to use can help you win people's confidence and get them to do things your way



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THE ability to influence people requires more than just assertiveness. You can get others to do things your way by being assertive, but it may be against their will. The best way around it is to get them to do it willingly.

Influencing skills require a combination of great people skills, excellent communication techniques and some amount of assertiveness. Of course, the ability to be inspirational helps as well.

People skills

You have a higher chance of getting people to follow your decision if they like you. They may go out of their way to please you, such as trying to accommodate your requests and suggestions.

Here are two ways to help you in the popularity stakes:

- **Avoid being too opinionated.** Forcing your views across on every discussion topic shows that you like to have the last word on every subject. Avoid disagreeing and pointing out other people's wrong views if the situation does not require it. It is smarter to find common ground and agree on issues. Agreement creates bonding, disagreement

creates division.

- **Compliment others readily.** Look out for opportunities to compliment others. People love being praised and love the people who offer compliments. Instead of looking out for people's mistake and criticising them, do the opposite. Compliment them and they will be on your side.

Communication techniques

The choice of words is crucial in great communication. When a view put forth by a colleague is incorrect, it is unwise to say, "you are wrong".

People are likely to take such comments personally. No one likes to be told they are wrong because their pride is wounded.

A better choice of words would be, "I have a different opinion" or "let's see if my suggestion makes sense". This way, your colleague can agree with you without having to admit that he is wrong.

Be inspirational

People like being around inspirational individuals. It may be attributed to the individual's enthusiasm towards life, his posi-

tive spirit, his achievements or his motivating nature. Whatever the reason, being inspirational means that people like you and want to be with you.

Be assertive

Another key component of being influential is to be assertive without being commanding. If you are in the position to issue a command without the need for a buy-in from your peers, it just means that your peers are required to follow orders whether they like it or not.

Being an assertively influencing person means that you stand by your beliefs and provide sufficient facts and figures to win over your peers. You let them share their views but eventually you have your reasons for the eventual decision.

Be flexible

If you have the ability to place people you meet under the correct profile type, you will be flexible enough to adapt your approach towards them.

For example, a quick-thinking, fast-acting person likes to make decisions quickly and decisively. As long as you are able to provide the necessary information and reasons, this character type may agree with

your opinion swiftly.

On the other hand, a person who is deliberative will require more time and space to think through his decision even before responding. To demand a quick response from him will put him on the defensive.

There are also people who make decisions based on feelings or emotions. They may have strong empathy for certain issues and causes. If you can show why your decision can help others and improve their well-being, they will readily support your plan.

Article by Christian Chua, a member of the Asia Professional Speakers' Association and the Association of Professional Trainers Singapore and also a trainer, speaker and author of three books.

If you want to know more about this topic, attend the workshop, Critical Influencing Skills To Achieve Work Goals, on June 15 organised by ST701. To register, log on to st701.com ST701 members enjoy special prices (Membership is free). Sign up before June 8 for early bird special prices.

Dish out the compliments and avoid criticising people needlessly if you want to win the popularity stakes.