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Personal Reflection Journal: Influence Module
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Of all the 3 modules discussed, the Influence Module was the most interesting to me since I have witnessed firsthand how someone can use their influence to change a decision, a value or a behavior. As I had mentioned in the Discussion Board, my dad was a politician and reading the articles reminded me of how my dad used his influence to advance his political career and push for his political agenda. I did not realize this until I read the article but in order to garner support, my dad used two of the three ways to project influence: framing the issue to influence the outcome and influence through information. (Harvard Business School, 2006) By framing the issue, my dad was able to show the people the problems plaguing the community such as lack of infrastructure, rising gas prices and corruption. My dad backed up the frame with information eloquently outlining his track record of serving the community and his plans to make it better. Just like any other politicians, my dad also learned to know his audience and cater his speech based on that. When he was campaigning in remote villages, my dad would first seek the support of the village leader. Much like in the article's example on persuading a skeptic, enlisting the help of the village leader, whom the villagers trust, allowed my dad to gain their trust and support. (Williams & Miller, 2002). I doubt if my dad even read Robert Cialdini's *Harnessing the Science of Persuasion* (2001) but he was a big fan of Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1937) and he applied Cialdini's six basic principles whenever he could. I remember him telling me that the sweetest sound to a person is the sound of his name so he always made it a point to remember someone's name and acknowledge when he ran across him or her. People got a kick when he mentioned them by name and were always amazed that he remembered them. Because times were hard, people would come up to my dad asking for financial assistance and he would never turn them away. I remember one gentleman could not afford to bury his daughter so my dad gave him money so he could give her a proper burial. From then on, that person was one of my dad's staunchest supporter (an example of the Principle of Reciprocity). Little things my dad would do, like making coffee for his constituents, made them see him as a regular Joe (no pun intended) just like them that when he spoke, people actually listened (an example of the Principle of Liking). When he campaigned, he would invite some of the people on stage and get them to commit to his cause (the Principle of Consistency) in public, he presented himself as an authority in local government (the Principle of Authority), he was the first to roll his sleeves up when there is a disaster (the Principle of Social Proof) and when he campaigned for office, he relayed how the people should not pass the opportunity to elect the officials who are proponents for change because four more years of the incumbents is a long time to wait (the Principle of Scarcity). Unfortunately as Cialdini mentioned in his article, these qualities are not passed on to others, so even though I had seen my dad work his magic, I could not replicate it and become a charismatic influencer like him.

What were my key learning from this module?

My key learning from this module was how interconnected Personal, Positional and Relational Power are. I thought that they operate independently but after reading the article on Power and Influence

(McGinn & Lingo, 2007); it would be difficult to separate them. A person's skills, position in the organization and relationships in the organization gives that person his individual power, which he or she can use to gain cooperation and support from his or her peers. An example would be my Medical Director whom everyone in the hospital knows is a good physician and diagnostician (Personal power). As the Medical Director, her Positional power allows her to push or pull when she needs her colleagues to comply whenever new policies are introduced in the organization. However, because she has been associated with the hospital since her residency years, her Relational power is well established and her persuasion option mostly centers around attract since she shares a common ground with the other physicians.

Another key learning for me is finding out that there are effective decision-makers who are considered "Followers." (Williams & Miller, 2002) I always thought that in order to be an executive, your decision-making ability should always be innovative and revolutionary. This is very helpful because I consider myself a follower and was starting to doubt if I had leadership capabilities. Maybe if I could identify an executive in my organization that falls under the "Follower" category, I could learn from them and become more comfortable in seeking upper management positions.

What beliefs and understandings were confirmed?

This module confirmed that there are different types of decision-making and different ways to approach these decision-makers. I always thought you have to cater your presentation based on who your audience are and Williams and Miller's article Change the Way You Persuade confirmed that.

Another belief that was confirmed for me was that people are only persuaded if they like the person doing the persuading, or that they see that person as an authority, one that they should emulate and listen to. (Cialdini, 2001)

What theories or practices did you disagree with?

I had trouble agreeing that Skeptics and Controllers are two different types of decision-makers. (Williams & Miller, 2002) I think someone who is a Controller is a Skeptic as well because they are suspicious of any information presented to them hence they are demanding and disruptive when the presentation is going on. I used to work for a manager who responded to new ideas with skepticism and she was such a control freak. She had no problem disrupting you mid-sentence, in front of the whole staff, and if she does not like the way you do something, she would just take over so it could be done her way. The strange part is, she did not behave that way outside of the hospital setting.

What are your personal strength and challenges in this area?

My personal strength in this area is my Individual Power, which I can use in my organization. My assessment skills, my position as a Case Manager, and the network of friends I have at work are all part of my Individual Power. By being aware of this power, I could use it to gain the cooperation and support of my co-workers. This would be helpful especially if I decide to go into the Clinical Informatics arena where I would be mostly dealing with the physician offices in getting them to be comfortable with their new EMR. My other personal strength would be my awareness of the different types of decision-makers and the ability to identify them. This would help tremendously especially if I am doing a presentation on

the benefits of our case management program or if I am trying to persuade them to change a process that is no longer working.

My challenge would be learning to be articulate in order to convey the information I want to share to my co-workers or the physicians that I work with. Because English is not my primary language, I am very insecure especially in my ability to pronounce words correctly or when my accent gets in the way.

What key concepts and/or tools will you apply and how?

I really like Cialdini's Six Principles of Persuasion and I did not realize it at that time but I have influenced someone's actions using a few principles here and there. As a floor nurse, if you do not get along with the phlebotomist, your regular blood draws would be the last one drawn. One Christmas, I handed each of the phlebotomist a pair of socks. Because it was so unexpected, they were very grateful for that little gesture. As a result, whenever our floor would need some blood draws at the end of the shift, one of my new friends would come up and draw the blood which means, we did not have to wait for the next shift and our results are available sooner. Out of that gesture, I earned the friendship of the phlebotomists and they responded in kind-by being available when I needed someone's blood drawn. And because my fellow nurses saw what was happening, they too developed friendship with the phlebotomists resulting in a more collaborative relationship.

Although Dale Carnegie wrote his book How to Win Friends and Influence People some 74 years ago, the same principles still apply. According to his book, there are six ways to make people like you: becoming genuinely interested in them, smiling, remembering the other person's name, being a good listener, speaking in terms of the other person's interests and making the other person feel important. Once you have earned their friendship, it is easier to influence them as a bond is already shared. Perhaps there is still hope for me in becoming my father's daughter. I probably will not get into politics but then running an organization is as political as it can get.

Bibliography

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