



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

# The Psychology of Influence Course

*Centre for  
Continuing Education*

# The Psychology of Influence Course



Influence is the ability to guide someone's thinking, decisions or actions. Although some people seem to be 'born' influencers, it is possible to learn how to influence. Doing this can help you change others' minds, shift the direction of a conversation, get your point across and have an impact in situations where you don't have formal authority. Discover what it takes to be a skilled influencer. See how to apply principles from applied psychology to real-life influencing situations. Hear how to create a persuasive message and deliver it in written or spoken format. Suitable for professionals who manage relationships, interact with customers, work in teams, provide consulting services or need to 'manage up' effectively.



## Course duration

1 session, 8 hours total



## Time

9am - 5pm



## Format

Face-to-face  
or  
Online in real-time



## Dates

Browse available  
[course dates](#)

## Intended audience

Suitable for professionals who need a basic understanding of how to frame an influential message.

## Prerequisites

None



## Upon completion

Every participant receives a University of Sydney certificate of completion.



## Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- understand how key concepts from social psychology can be used to improve the persuasiveness of your communication
- take an ethical approach to influencing in business contexts
- apply six principles of influence to everyday work situations
- use a four-step process to structure and present a compelling message
- identify and match motivational drivers to increase receptivity to your message
- use influential language patterns to speak persuasively
- handle objections and resistance by using principle based negotiation tools.



## Content

This is an introductory course. It presents a range of robust, evidence-based techniques from social psychology in an accessible, experiential format. The presenter will introduce you to theory, principles and processes using mini-lectures and video examples. You will also participate in written exercises, group discussions and small group activities. The aim of this approach is to give you practical experience in using positive psychology techniques. You will gain the most from this class if you are prepared to participate, ask questions and learn from you classmates.

### Topic 1: What is influence?

Learn what influence is. Understand how social and individual factors impact on your ability to exert influence. Explore models of influence proposed by key thinkers such as Aristotle, Harold Lasswell, Carl Hovland, William McGuire, Phillip Zimbardo, Dale Carnegie and Robert Cialdini. Understand how these models can be applied in today's business world. Discuss the difference between influence and manipulation. Consider the importance of ethics when influencing in professional situations. See how to apply principles of ethical influence in business contexts.

### Topic 2: Six principles to boost your influence

Discuss practical ways you can apply Professor Robert Cialdini's research on influence. Learn how effective influencers use six key principles to persuade and engage. These principles are reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority and scarcity. Watch examples of these principles in action. Develop a plan for using each principle in your work context.

### Topic 3: Steps for success

Turn theory into action with a simple four step process for planning and implementing an influencing approach. Learn why structured planning will boost your effectiveness as a communicator. Discover the benefits of actively building rapport before seeking to influence. Hear why changing the wording of your message can make you more persuasive. Find out why preparation will help you handle objections and resistance to your message. The remainder will be spent learning practical techniques for applying these ideas.



## Content contd...

### Topic 4: Planning your approach

Influence is like public speaking: you'll get better results if you plan before you speak. Try out a simple template for planning your influencing strategy. Define your outcome for an influencing attempt. Identify the motivational drivers which impact on how someone make decisions. Design an argument which will align with an individual's drivers and make it more appealing to them. Identify potential objections and plan to pre-empt or address them.

### Topic 5: Building rapport and linking to needs

Explore the art of using verbal and nonverbal behaviour to build rapport. Rapport is a state of mutual understanding. It enhances receptivity during communication. Discuss ways of applying Cialdini's principle of liking when connecting with others. Experiment with using coordinated movement to enhance rapport. Use active listening techniques to detect others' needs and concerns. Use cognitive and affective matching techniques to address those needs - so that your message becomes more compelling and gets through to your listener.

### Topic 6: Using persuasive language patterns

Learn how concepts from psycholinguistics and cognitive linguistics can boost your ability to influence and persuade. Use the principles of 'persuasive argumentation' to structure a compelling message. Discover why some figures of speech are more persuasive than others. Then learn how to apply these figures of speech to real-life situations such as public speaking or one-to-one influencing attempts. Language patterns you'll cover include repetition, rhetorical questions, anecdotes and metaphors.

### Topic 7: Handling objections and resistance

It's normal to encounter resistance or objections when you're influencing at work. In this section, you'll learn how to respond constructively when this happens. See how to use discovery questions to uncover the needs or concerns beneath objections. Hear how to use principle-based negotiation techniques to build consensus and move beyond 'no'.



## Delivery style

This interactive course covers the why, what and how of influencing skills. You'll learn through a variety of methods including:

- small group discussions
- role plays or simulations
- written exercises in which you will apply key concepts
- question and answer sessions with the trainer.

You will get the most from this if you are:

- willing to contribute to group discussions
- confident communicating verbally in English
- comfortable participating in role play style activities.

## Materials

Course materials, including a course booklet, are provided electronically.



*“A fantastic teacher who made the content easy to understand, and the practical exercises helped to apply it. Thank you!”*

**Claire Robinson**

*“Thank you to the tutor who ran the course very well. We all learnt a lot in one day.”*

**Nick Sandrejko**



*“Wonderful facilitator and full of knowledge. The information I learned will hold me in good stead for my career. Many thanks.”*

**Rebecca Rey**



### **Organisational training and development**

This course can be delivered as a private session for groups, and tailored to meet the needs of your business. Contact us to discuss our range of organisational training solutions.

[Learn more](#)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities – past, present, and emerging – of the lands that the University of Sydney's campuses stand on. For thousands of years they have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations for the benefit of all.

Empower ambition,  
*inspire leadership*

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