



**W**e all influence on a daily basis be it at home or at work. Wherever you have personal objectives to meet you have opportunities to influence those around you. It can be said that any communication that has an intended outcome can be considered an attempt to influence. In business, task focus and the achievement of outcomes with and through others is a continuous activity. Influence is pervasive, whether we are conscious of it or not and regardless of the label applied to it.

Excellent influencers fulfill their personal objectives while maintaining and nurturing important relationships. That sounds simple, but in practice it can be extremely challenging. Many people achieve their influence objectives only at the expense of important relationships. Others habitually avoid challenging influence situations, at the expense of fulfilling their goals.

Ultimately, personal skill levels determine the effectiveness in any attempt to influence. Success depends on the ability to personally and positively influence others – to achieve one’s personal objectives while building, or at least maintaining, productive relationships with others.

Different individuals represent different influence situations. This is also true for the same individual at different times depending on the content and context of the work. As we move from one work or personal situation to another our influence objectives change, and the way we influence to reach those objectives changes as well. Influence is a focused application of behavioral skills that we employ in order to change the way things are. These behavioral skills are within our control; we are capable of making strategic decisions about how we wish to behave, and we are capable of altering our behavior through our own choices, **if we have adequate alternatives – an influence “tool kit”**.

Building flexibility in using different styles of influence is the key to achieving personal objectives while building or maintaining relationships.