

# The Key to Influence

Getting a win-win outcome with less resistance

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**“Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It’s the only thing.”**

**-Albert Schweitzer**



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One of the keys to moving our negotiation efforts toward a win-win outcome is influence. While the perception is that influence takes place toward the end of a negotiation, it really starts before we even sit down at the negotiation table.

Influence is the power and ability to personally affect others’ actions, decisions, opinions or thinking. Your opportunity begins with your very first handshake with a property owner. Here are some tips to help you influence others, moving them from resistance to compliance.

**Demonstrate genuine interest.** To make a good impression, show an active interest in the other person and what they are saying. Ask probing questions about their opinions and concerns. Then actively listen to their answers so you can respond in an appropriate and thoughtful manner. This will create rapport and a sense of trust.

**Consider opposing beliefs.** Empathy is a powerful tool that shows property owners that we understand where they are coming from. Ask yourself, what drives them to do certain things? By identifying their motivation, we can pinpoint their sweet spot. This will increase your influence.

**Respect other opinions.** Relationships are built on mutual respect, so it is important to recognize and accept each other’s differences. Even if you disagree with what is being said, give the other party a chance to express their opinions without contradicting or belittling them. If we can find a grain of truth in what others are saying, we have something to build on.

**Give others credit.** Oftentimes people will be critical of an idea if they didn’t come up with it. Yet, if they feel like they were part of the problem-solving process, they will have a certain amount of buy-in. You can help plant an idea by dropping clues and hints. This will allow the



other party to reach your intended conclusion, while thinking it was their idea.

**Maintain a willingness to learn.** Although having firm beliefs is an admirable trait, it is also important to keep an open mind. Be willing to try new things and learn from your experiences. Attend chapter meetings and engage in thought-provoking discussions with other right of way professionals. Make a commitment to take at least one IRWA course a year. If someone offers to teach you something new, take them up on it.

**Praise others.** Praise is an effective motivator. If you are genuine about it, you can have a major impact on another person’s behavior. So if you have worked together to resolve a problem, let the owner know how much you appreciate their efforts and ideas. Just be sure to mention specifically what you are praising. Giving praise just to give it will come off as being insincere.

**Share your expertise.** Who isn’t proud to be considered an expert? Becoming one is simply a matter of focusing on your goals and taking advantage of ongoing learning opportunities. But the key isn’t just attaining new skills and knowledge. It is sharing what we have learned and helping to educate others so they can make better decisions.

The best way to use your influence is to help others. The property owner will likely become more collaborative, and you will benefit by getting to a mutually beneficial outcome with less resistance. Then at the end of the day, you both can say, “We make a good team!” 🌟