**Influencing positively around hybrid working**

When we think of influencing we often see this as influencing positively, but in fact influencing that is not positive is generally not influencing at all, but rather consists of aspects of persuasion, manipulation or coercion.

- Persuasion can be used to spur someone to action or to make a decision without actually earning their sincere buy-in.
- Manipulation is the act of getting others do your bidding by unfair means so as to serve your own purpose, or by exerting devious influence over a person for your own advantage. The goal is to introduce stress, anxiety, or discomfort to their target in an effort to achieve their desired goal – hence it is not a sustainable approach.
- Coercion is to force someone to do something against their will.

Influencing is when we help someone change their thinking and behaviour with the intention of achieving a mutually beneficial, positive outcome. We may change our own thinking and behaviour as a result of having a better understanding of their need. At the end of our interaction, we both feel an inclusive and collaborative approach has contributed to this beneficial outcome in line with the Universities values. There is no hidden agenda!

It is having a vision of the optimum outcome for a situation or organisation and then, without using persuasion, manipulation or coercion, people are motivated to work together toward making it a reality.
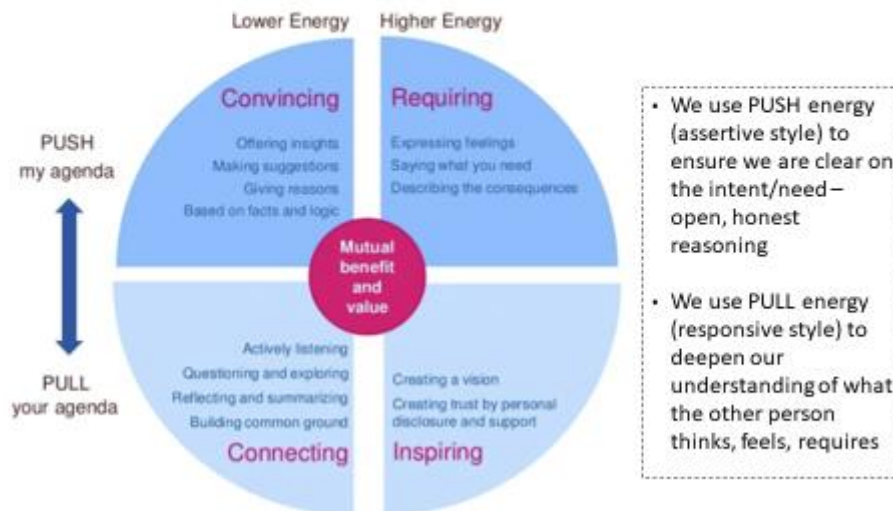
A key point when considering influencing is to recognise what areas in your life and/or work you can and can't control or influence.
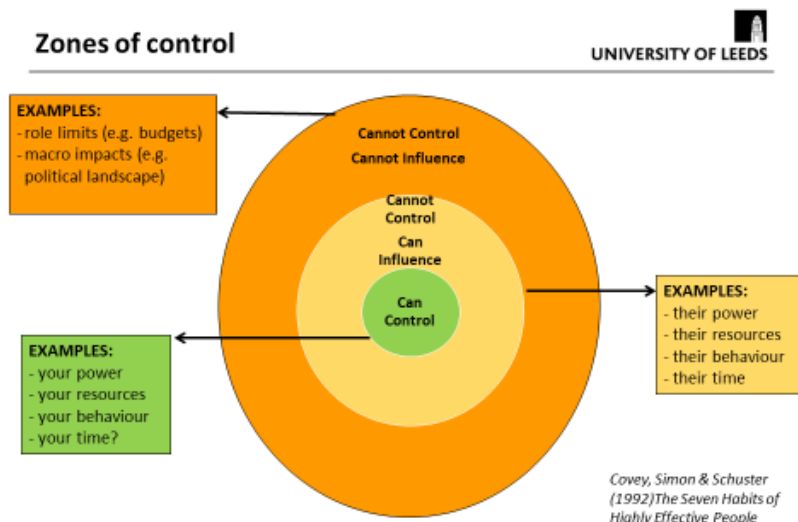
A useful model might be the push/pull influencing model when considering where to place your energy. Originally coming out of cold calling research by Sheppard-Moscow in 1983, although there have been various iterations over the years.

Through this model we bring together convincing, requiring, connecting and inspiring for the purposes of mutual benefit and value.

Push/Pull influencing model

Lower Energy   Higher Energy

Convincing
Offering insights
Making suggestions
Giving reasons
Based on facts and logic

Requiring
Expressing feelings
Saying what you need
Describing the consequences

PUSH my agenda

Mutual benefit and value

PULL your agenda

Actively listening
Questioning and exploring
Reflecting and summarizing
Building common ground
Connecting

Creating a vision
Creating trust by personal disclosure and support
Inspiring

- We use PUSH energy (assertive style) to ensure we are clear on the intent/need – open, honest reasoning

- We use PULL energy (responsive style) to deepen our understanding of what the other person thinks, feels, requires

There are 4 quadrants. Convincing and requiring are where we push our own agenda in a more or less assertive style. Connecting and inspiring are where we seek understanding and common ground in a more or less responsive or collaborative style.

1. The Push (My Agenda), with what is referred to as Lower Energy, offering insights, suggestions, reasons, based on FACTS – useful when there is only one clear/right answer, but can be seen as bullying otherwise
2. The Push (My Agenda), using more High Energy, offering feelings, connecting to what you perceive as the consequences of not getting what is required – your STORY – useful when there is a 'best' answer and you have research to back this up, but can be seen as inflexible otherwise
3. 3. The Pull (Your Agenda), where we actively listen, ask questions and seek explanations (ASK from STATE) where we build common ground, useful where there is no clear answer/right way, can be seen as a push over otherwise
4. 4. The Pull (Your Agenda), where we create a common vision and build mutual trust, useful at the start of a complex change process, can be seen as idealistic if overused

In a conversation around hybrid working this can be significant where we are trying to balance the needs of the university with the needs of the local area, the role, and the individual for mutual benefit. It is worth stating here that this is strongly based on bringing a balance between facts and story (see how this connects to Crucial Conversations) and so a balance between what is needed and what is wanted.

- You may want to come back to campus, but is it needed?
- You may want to stay at home, but does the role need you to be on site?
- You may want to bring your team all back on campus, but does the function need this?

Thinking through your rationale will help separate fact from story.