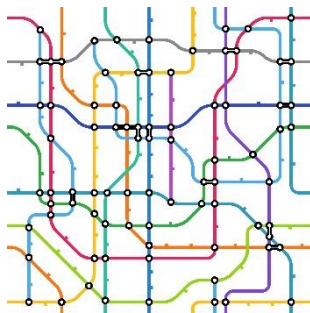


### Impact and Influence in Negotiation – Listen to How They Describe Things



Having impact and influence in negotiations is likely to lead to you getting more of what you want, achieving your objectives or goals and reaching a wise outcome. This does not mean, and must not mean, at the expense of the other side or using some kind of trick to get them to say “Yes” and then regret it. A successful negotiation means they will not feel cheated, overruled or tricked – and they are more likely to work with you again. Personal impact and influence is really only successful if it lasts.

In a previous article you were advised to notice how they tend to operate in interactions – where their focus and energy are directed. That gives you the foundation for how to work with them and how your behaviour should adapt to their style – either lots of interaction at a faster pace or slower, more reflective considerations.

In this article the focus is on how the other person works with data and information. This could be the very content of what is being discussed or items and issues that arise as discussions continue. To be a successful negotiator and have lasting impact and influence you will need to provide information in a way that the other person understands and can absorb. If not, you lose their attention and interest. They can become bored by too much detail or distracted by your apparent lack of commitment if there’s too little.

In general terms people either work with attention to “the here and now” with facts, reality and data in detail or they prefer to capture the essence of what’s being described and move quickly to talk and think about the implications, the future and change.

With some people, conversations last longer with them giving lots of details and perhaps asking lots of questions. With others, they get to the point quickly with just enough to describe the situation and then stop. They also seem more interested in thinking about the future than focussing on the past and present.

If you haven’t met before and you want to have the right kind of impact and lasting influence then you’ll need to engage in active listening. That means not just *what* they are saying but *how* they are saying it. Asking them how they see the situation will give you a good example. The number of words they use and the amount of detail they go into will be your biggest clue. Do they explain things several times in different ways or do they give short descriptions just once and move on?

Detailed, pragmatic talkers want detailed information. The more instinctive talkers need headlines so that they can work it out for themselves. Your job is to match your delivery system to theirs – since they will want to receive information that way too. From your active listening you will know which is more like them and will be in a position to change the way you present your ideas, views and thoughts.