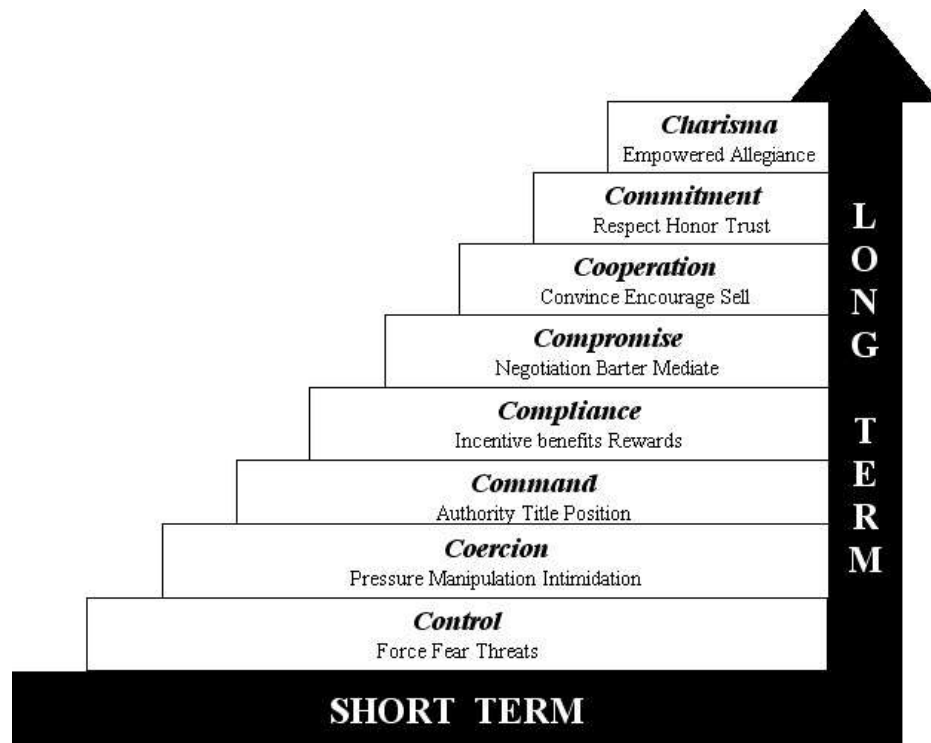


Hierarchy of Persuasion



Obviously, the attributes at the top of the diagram are more desirable, but you cannot hope for instantaneous respect and rapport on this level if it is not something you've taken the time to cultivate all along. For example, imagine you are the sales manager for a large company. You are in line for a vice president position, and you feel things are running well. The CEO invites you in for a meeting about the company's goals and future. You feel excited because you smell a promotion coming. The CEO is not in the mood to chitchat, so he gets right down to business. He appreciates your hard work and knows you are in line for this big promotion that will take place in the next six months; however, sales performance is not as high as he would like it to be. He wants to increase sales by 25 percent in the next three months. When this happens, the promotion will be yours. He doesn't care how you do it; he tells you to "just make it happen." He doesn't

want to be bogged down with the details. He just wants you come back with the job successfully done. Do you think you'll be able to pull a team together and make it happen if you don't have a solid relationship with them already? In this scenario, it would be quite late in the game to start thinking about how to get your team members to make this work, particularly if they feel like they'd just be doing it so you can get your promotion.

Look through each of the eight levels of persuasion and influence in the preceding diagram and assess whether they would be effective or not. Also, determine what the results and long-term consequences of each strategy would be. You could force or manipulate your team with threats of poor evaluations, loss of Christmas bonuses, loss of a shot at a raise or even loss of their jobs. Or maybe you could get them to do your bidding by asserting your authority over them: "I'm the boss; you have to do what I say." These are probably the easiest motivational methods, and they probably will get you the results you desire, but it's a double-edged sword. You may get the results you need for your promotion, but you'll also "gain" people who hate you, a nasty reputation, a loss of trust, etc. Hence, you have to decide if it's worth the trade-off.

Suppose you rule these options out and move toward a more negotiation-oriented approach. You could meet with each team member one-on-one and discuss possible incentives or rewards. Let's say you offer two extra weeks of paid vacation. Wow!—you see your team start hustling. The downside to this motivation is that it's external. Once the reward is given, your workers go back to normal. It is highly unlikely that your team will maintain their heightened activity once the incentive is removed. Furthermore, a danger exists that rewards will become expected. Rewards become crippling when they are required to produce any movement rather than being the occasional perk. Yet another downside to this motivational approach is that you may get what you want, but it may also cost you the kitchen sink in the process. Offering incentives also communicates to your employees that they can control you.

Hopefully, you've been more long-sighted and realized that having a great relationship with your team is the best way to motivate them. With this kind of work atmosphere, you can be up front with them about your promotion without worrying about what they'll think and say about you when you're not directly over them anymore. You also won't have to beg or bargain to get their help. You always seek a win-win situation, but the ultimate commitment from your team occurs when they'll step up to the plate, no matter what, based solely on the relationship of trust and respect they have with you. This kind of allegiance takes time and trust to develop.

To be an effective leader, always seek to build these kinds of connections with your team, even when you're not under pressure for them to perform. The ideal situation is to pursue this kind of team unity not necessarily because of what you hope it will ultimately get you, but just because you care about your team and consider them worth investing your personal energy and interest in. Because your team members trust that you truly care about them as individuals, they can feel free and empowered to really give it everything they've got and to be an enthusiastic part of the team. Under such conditions, they're not worrying about where they stand or what your motives are. Always be concerned about the success of your team as a whole rather than how you will professionally benefit. In the long run, you will have both.