

Value Analysis & Standardization:

Systematic steps to support system-wide change

Issue 8 **AUGUST 2004**

Letter from Carol Stone

With this issue, I welcome the new members of our editorial board, and thank the departing members of the editorial board who have served the newsletter since its inception three years ago. The input of the editorial board, comprised of individuals who are working in the value analysis environment every day, enables us to target the content of the newsletter and highlight those issues that are most important to the value analysis profession.

Rotating off of the editorial board are Barbara Bala, Sue Jacobs, Judy Springfield, and Kris Walker. Once again, many thanks and good wishes to each of you. Gina Thomas, RN, CMRP, Value Analysis Officer, Via Christi Medical Center, Wichita, Kansas, will remain on the board to provide continuity during the transition. Joining Gina will be: Cindy Abele, RN, Clinical Standardization Manager, Covenant Health System, Knoxville, Tennessee; Michelle Allender, RN, MS, Corporate Director Clinical Resource Management, Bon Secours Health System, Marriottsville, Maryland; Deborah Alsante, MHA, FACHE, System Director, Supply Chain, Memorial Hermann Healthcare, Houston, Texas; and Barbara Morton, RN, BSN, CNOR, Clinical Product Manager, Baptist Health, Montgomery, Alabama. This group has extensive experience in contracting and value analysis. We look forward to sharing their expertise with you through the newsletter.

I'm open to hearing from our readers about your reaction to the newsletter, including topics you'd like to see addressed. Any comments, questions, or advice... contact me via email at carol.stone@crbard.com.

Carol Stone
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INFLUENCE AND PERSUASION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The ability to effectively influence others is a critical skill in today's business environment. Those with superior communication skills are seen to flourish, while others flounder as a result of their inability to work in a changing environment operating with more cross-functional teams, less formal hierarchical management structures, and the ability to reach out to anyone, at any level, through email, voice mail, and other technologies. Being skilled in influencing others is especially valuable in positions like value analysis, where you get things done through influence, rather than through direct managerial authority.

Experts' views on influence and persuasion have changed as organizations' structures and management philosophies have changed. The traditional model of persuasion had four parts:

- 1) State your position,
- 2) Offer supporting arguments,
- 3) Provide data to defend your argument,
- 4) Close.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Experts in influence and persuasion all have a common perspective about how to effectively influence others. Gathered together in a room, they would state simply "there is only one way to get someone to do something – make them want to do it."

How often we all forget this basically simple idea. Many practice the idea daily with our children. A two-year-old is pretty stubborn unless you are asking them to do something they want to do.

Dale Carnegie, whose book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* has remained well known and well read for over 50 years, used a great line. He stated:

"bait the hook to suit the fish."

What's missing from this model? There is no interaction with another individual. At no point in the process is there a consideration of another person's views or position. This model worked just fine when organizations operated with very defined, pyramid-shaped layers of management. When you had an idea, you went to your immediate boss to present your thoughts. He or she considered your supporting arguments and facts, and then made a final decision about whether to accept or reject your proposal. Simple. Done.

The modern model of effective persuasion considers today's more complex organizations.

Less is accomplished through direct manager / subordinate interaction. Support for an idea may be needed from many different parts of the organization. Individuals or groups with disparate goals and values

Sometimes we forget that in our haste to get things done in a very busy world. Often, we use the bait that we like, but that is distasteful to others.

Also important, consider everyone's desire to be important. Some of the great leaders of our time recognized this simple idea and used it to help motivate others and accomplish great things.

Sigmund Freud noted humans have two motives, "sexual gratification and the desire to be great"

Abraham Lincoln observed "everyone likes a compliment"

Henry Ford determined "if there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as your own"

may be needed to accomplish an objective. As a result, modern theory stresses that effective persuasion is based on two-way interaction. This updated model suggests that to persuade another, one must:

- 1) Establish credibility,
- 2) Identify common ground,
- 3) Reinforce your position with compelling evidence – ensuring that data is meaningful, and
- 4) Develop relationships and connect emotionally with people.

How do you do this? Take the time to get people you work with to know you, and get to know them. Remember that you are not feeding data into a computer, expecting to get the right answer. You are dealing with people, who are coming into your interaction with lots of preconceived notions, thoughts, values, problems, and opinions that all impact how they view your proposal.

So, the next time you are preparing to present a new item, or change a product in your institution, in addition to thinking about your facts and data, think about how you can make those responsible for supporting your position feel important.

By considering their point of view, values, and opinions, you may find it is easier to get them to see your perspective than you thought. Bait the hook to suit THOSE fish.

Ever think about inviting others to lunch, or joining a different group at lunch? Sometimes talking in an informal atmosphere is the best way to really learn what is on others' minds.

INFLUENCE AND PERSUASION: PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

Value Analysis professionals must work their magic, every day, in a variety of situations. Some of you must be powerful enough to influence all of the “right” individuals across your multi-hospital system one day, and then be friendly enough, and down to earth enough, the next day to influence your colleagues in a small, rural hospital.

Wouldn't your job be easy if everyone believed “we must do what is best for the organization” and “what is good for one is good for all”? As you well know from experience, it usually doesn't work that way. Each hospital feels their needs are different. Each physician feels his or her situation is unique. Too often, many voices are proclaiming all of the reasons why change won't work. But, your job is to guide the organization through change to achieve the standardization and cost savings objectives that are critical to your institution's financial success. In the spirit of David Letterman, here's our “top 10” list of tips for becoming better at influencing others.

Be prepared...

Taking the time to prepare not only arms you with the facts you need, but gives you the self-confidence to participate fully in the discussion, both in initially presenting your arguments, and then in overcoming resistance from others. However, as you are getting ready, don't allow yourself to take sole ownership for the project; and

Preparation is key

don't let yourself present the project as yours. When you ask for support or data, use the approach, “Mary, I'd appreciate your input on the overview we're preparing about the hospital's use of disposable scalpels,” not “Mary, I need your needlestick injury data for my plan to switch the hospital to use of disposable scalpels.”

Think about the other person's perspective...

Successful, persuasive communication with colleagues requires that everyone feels like a winner at the end. Your goal is to find a way to get everyone to reach a point where they can live with the final decision. When you hear, “that will never work,” ask why, and listen. There is likely an opportunity in what you hear to pursue the person's point further, and then work toward a win / win situation.

Take time to interact with colleagues

Focus on dealing with disagreement...

As you champion a project, you will often get dissent from others. Identify and separate areas of agreement and areas of disagreement. Then, transform the disagreements into a new set of alternatives upon which you can both agree. And, most importantly, don't ever let the points of disagreement become personal.

Make sure you are debating issue versus issue, not personality versus personality.

Do this through words and actions. If a colleague says: “You are wrong. Even though price is better, I know we should not use that vendor for linens. Their quality is terrible. I can't believe you would even think of going with the low price bidder” he or she is getting close to a personal

attack. Don't fall into the trap of responding “no, you are wrong, I've done my research.” You'll be headed down a pathway that will lead only to hard feelings, and likely no

Work toward a win / win situation

resolution about the issue. Ask questions instead. Understand what the issues are regarding quality, and go from there in an attempt to find common ground.

Stay calm...

Don Gabor, in his book *Words that Win*, lists five ways to stay calm when someone challenges your opinion. He recommends:

Know your argument's weak spots... anticipate and prepare for objections.

Don't panic if you lose a point or make a mistake... stay calm, acknowledge the point, and move on.

Don't be rushed into a hasty response... pause, give yourself a moment to think, and then reply.

Don't overreact... never lose your temper.

Minimize your opponent's challenges... move on from the objections and repeat your conclusion.

Managers... allow for social time...

Managers, when you see your employees chatting away in an office or in the hallway, do you sometimes feel a little annoyed? Why aren't they being more productive? Although you definitely don't want people talking the day away, appropriate time to interact with colleagues will actually make your team stronger. The more people know each other, and know about each other, the better they are able to work together. Let this type of interaction happen naturally, as long as it is not excessive.

Be patient...

Building influence takes time. What you put into it every day in terms of building relationships with others will determine what you reap in the future. It takes hard work to gain influence in any organization. And, influencing others takes much more time than making a decision on your own. When you develop your change plan, allow time for the process side of the work, then you won't become frustrated when you see time, and possibly deadlines, slipping. With experience, you should be able to estimate the time needed for different types of efforts, from changing a commodity item to changing a critical item in the OR.

Work through others...

Use other influencers to help you get your job done. Inform and convince other key individuals or small groups, and then ask them to reach out to their colleagues, especially if their colleagues are people that you may not routinely have a chance to interact with. When you plan your change project, identify and include this step as part of your plan. Determine who to meet with, and at what point. Revisit those influencers that were not convinced initially at a later point in time.

Work one-on-one with those few individuals that you know are leaders within the organization. Ask them to work with you on the project.

You may ask them to present some data, make a motion, or suggest next action steps in a committee meeting so that their support is evident. With this approach you still move the project forward, but you don't necessarily need to be the one who is most visible. Sometimes, you can get more done behind the scenes. Decide what you want, who can make it happen, get them on your side, and then let them do what they do best.

Connect with people...

Your ability to influence is built on who you are and who you know and have relationships with. You need to know your colleagues so that you know what data will be important

to them. You need to understand their values so that you can better perceive why they support or reject a position. When you stand up in front of one of your committees, remind yourself that they

You can get more done behind the scenes

are not the "supply chain committee," but that they are a collection of 12-15 individuals, all of whom have different life experiences, different perceptions, different goals and different needs. Take the time to get to know this background for each individual. You'll be amazed with how that changes your relationships and your ability to work together.

Don't shortchange the process...

Even when things are going well, or when a decision seems easy, don't make unilateral decisions. Going through the entire process of informing others and getting them to agree with your plan is important every time. Lay out the plan, present your data, answer any questions, let people feel a part of the process... then make the decision. Otherwise, if people begin to feel that you are not including them, even on the small stuff, you will begin to lose their trust in you. Even commodity items make a difference to someone. Gloves may seem all the same to you, but a surgeon gets a particular "feel" for the gloves he or she uses daily. A new glove appearing in the OR one day may not be a good surprise.

Influence is really all about you...

The influence process is about you... not about the ultimate decision to be made or process to be changed. People don't do something because they recognize it is good for the organization.

Everyone has a different opinion about what is good for the organization, anyway.

People will agree to do something because they believe in you – believe you presented

the idea because it is the right thing to do, believe you are presenting the facts clearly and fairly, believe you listened to their ideas and considered their thoughts before implementing a plan of action. The take home message: get out of your office. Your job is more than paperwork and reports. You will make things happen, and build your personal success, by working through others. Get out there with them.

What NOT to do...

The four ways NOT to persuade:

- 1) **State your position, and then exuberantly, logically, and persistently defend it;**
- 2) **Refuse to compromise;**
- 3) **Believe it's all about the facts and the data; and**
- 4) **Expect your desired outcome after one try.**

It's easy to fall into this trap when you have the data and the facts to PROVE that your position is the right position. However, others may not interpret those data the same way you do.

Don't assume that if your request is good for the organization everyone will be eager to help.

Not everyone views "good for the organization" in the same way. And, what is good for the organization is not necessarily good for every individual in the organization. To successfully persuade, find out what appeals to the person you are trying to convince.

SHARE *Your* VIEW

Susan Lindeman is Director of Materials Management. She was promoted to this position three months ago. Prior to the promotion, she was a Value Analysis Coordinator responsible for OR supplies. She was a nurse in the OR for fifteen years prior to moving into value analysis. As a result, she was friends with everyone in the OR. She knew about their lives, both professional and personal. When a standardization project was proposed, she sat down and spoke with the OR staff. She knew what to say to convince them the change was good both for the hospital and for the staff, because she had “walked in their shoes.” Now, with broader responsibility, she is dealing with people across the hospital, and failing miserably. So far, she’s tried to use her director title to get her in to see people, and then to convince them that her plans are the right way to go for the hospital. She’s accomplished none of her cost savings objectives for the year. Her boss is getting complaints.

What’s wrong, and how does she fix it?

SCENARIO 1

Susan’s influencing skills are weak. She should meet with her boss and ask to attend an influencing seminar.

SCENARIO 2

Susan should go to a few friends in the OR and talk to them candidly about her issues. She should try to understand why she is able to work well with the OR staff, but not others.

SCENARIO 3

Susan should identify 3-5 key leaders across her institution. She should schedule a 1-1 appointment with each one and have a conversation about her goals, and the obstacles she is facing. Then, she should LISTEN.

Email your thoughts on this case to gardner@gmced.com. A sample of responses will be published in the next issue.

INFLUENCING TIPS

- Present ideas supporting your argument as benefits, not facts
- Ask for and build on suggestions while a proposal is still tentative
- Describe what can be accomplished by everyone’s support
- Appeal to each individual’s underlying values
- Understand what motivates the people around you
- Listen without interrupting

To improve your influencing skills, work in a volunteer capacity. When you volunteer, others don’t have to follow you like they do in a business situation. Therefore, you need good influencing skills to present your ideas and have others follow you. Constant practice will build your skills.

What’s Your Reality?

Suggestions for dealing with daily issues...

In past issues of the newsletter, we’ve identified “challenges” that seem to be universally experienced by value analysis professionals, and suggested some alternatives for dealing with your reality. We continue that practice in this issue, with the spotlight influencing and persuading in what may be two of the most difficult situations.

Physicians and Nurses

Their issues and priorities are different from yours. Communication is key. The value analysis professional must develop solid relationships with a core group of clinicians and talk to them frequently. Value analysis staff can’t just wait for committee meetings and expect the work to get done and the relationships to gel. The more you know about the person, the easier it is to work together.

CFO

The CFO may be harder to get to, but it’s still critical to do it. Perhaps you can get on the agenda of a routine meeting held by the CFO to do a short 3-4 minute presentation on your goals and status. Or, perhaps you can work through the staff of the CFO. If they are informed, they can keep the CFO informed on your behalf.

Consider posting a sign in a prominent place in your office:

**MBWA – OR
MANAGEMENT BY
WALKING AROUND.**

Remind yourself how important “walking around” is to your success.

SHARE YOUR VIEW...

In the last issue, we introduced Allison Grove, Value Analysis Manager for a hospital system with five different locations. Allison had just received her mid-year performance review, and was rated low on communications skills. Allison was surprised, because she felt she was a good communicator. She noted she spends hours in her office each week preparing a variety of reports that go to a broad distribution list of hospital staff. We offered three scenarios of the problem, and potential actions for Allison.

1) People are probably not reading Allison's status reports because they are too long. She should continue the reports, but shorten them.

"Allison should talk to people, and find out what kind of information they need from her reports. Perhaps she can shorten them, or perhaps do a shorter "executive summary" highlighting critical points, with a more detailed report behind the summary for those that want more information. Also, Allison could consider the format of her report. If she is doing a long narrative summary, perhaps she could do a Thermometer or Dashboard format to visually show progress toward goals. She might also consider using PowerPoint or Excel presentations. Also, short emails work well."

2) Allison's manager doesn't understand her job. Allison is very busy, and doesn't have time to be talking to people all day. Allison should explain to her manager why communicating through status reports is the best way to communicate.

"Allison definitely needs to talk to her manager, but not to explain how busy she is. Allison and her manager need to reassess her job tasks, and determine which are highest priority and critical for the success of the organization. They need to structure her job tasks so that she has time for the process side of her job, which is just as important. She must get to know and connect with colleagues."

3) Allison is not communicating, because all of her efforts are one-way. She needs to get out of the office and talk to people.

"Definitely. Allison will never be successful if she isn't out working with others in the institution. She must have 1-1 and small group meetings, in addition to committee meetings, to understand opinions and objections about her change goals for the year. Plus, no one will ever listen to her if she has no relationship with them."

“To the degree that you are able to translate I and you into we, you will become persuasive and your point of view will become compelling to the other person.”

How to Say it at Work, Jack Griffin

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2. Gabor, Don. Words that Win. New York, Prentice Hall. 2003.
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