

French and Raven's 6 bases of power

When it comes to organizational communication, influencing plays an important part. French and Raven identified 6 bases of power and being aware of them, enables us to have a positive influence on how we lead and manage people around us to achieve the highest performance.

Coercive power - Force

Coercive power uses the threat of force to gain compliance from others. The main idea behind this concept is that someone is forced to do something that he/she does not desire to do.



Reward power – Carrot and Stick

Reward power is based on the right of some to offer or deny tangible, social, emotional, or spiritual rewards to others for doing what is wanted or expected of them.

Legitimate power - Elected

Legitimate power comes from an elected, selected, or appointed position of authority with the ability to administer to another certain feeling of obligation or the notion of responsibility.



Referent power – Shared vision

Referent power is rooted in the connections we make and/or the groups and organizations we belong to. Our affiliation with a group and the beliefs of the group are shared to some degree.

Expert power - Specialist

Expert power is based on what one knows, their experience, skills or talents. Expertise can be demonstrated by reputation, credentials, expertise, and actions.



Informational power – Data controller

Information power comes as a result of owning knowledge that others need or want. Such influence or persuasion would generally be favorable but not best suited if timing and effort lacks.

Apply This to Your Life

1. Read through each power base and write down when and how you've used it in the past.
2. Ask yourself if you used that power appropriately. Consider the possible and unforeseen consequences and decide what you'll do differently in the future.
3. Think about those around you who have power and influence over you. What bases of power do they use? Do they use it appropriately? If necessary, think of a strategy to reduce someone else's illegitimate use of power over you.
4. When you feel powerless or overly influenced, think about how you could reclaim your own power and control. After all, you're never without power. Aim to be more aware of the power you have and use it to get what you need – humanely.