Chapter Nine:

Power and Influence in the Workplace

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the dependence model of power and the five sources of power in organizations.

2. Discuss the four contingencies of power.

3. Explain how people and work units gain power through social networks.

4. Describe eight types of influence tactics, three consequences of influencing others, and three contingencies to consider when choosing an influence tactic.

5. Identify the organizational conditions and personal characteristics associated with organizational politics, as well as ways to minimize organizational politics.

The Meaning of Power

The capacity of a person, team, or organization to influence others.

- Potential to change attitudes and behavior (not actual attempt to change).

- Based on target's perception that powerholder controls a valuable resource.

- Requires a minimum level of trust by both parties.

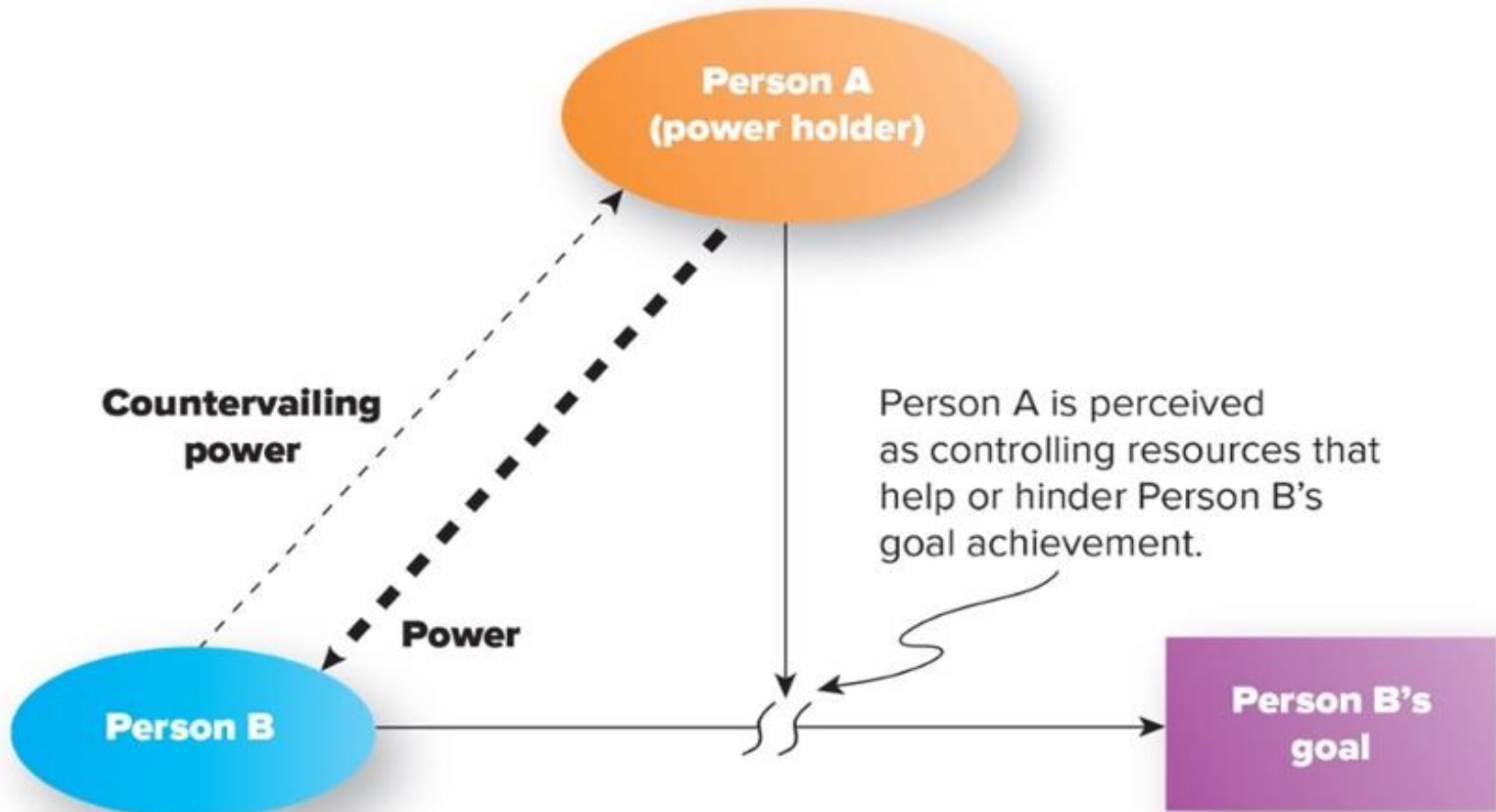- Power involves unequal dependence.

Power and Dependence

Exhibit 9.1 Dependence Model of Power

Access text alternatives for slide image.
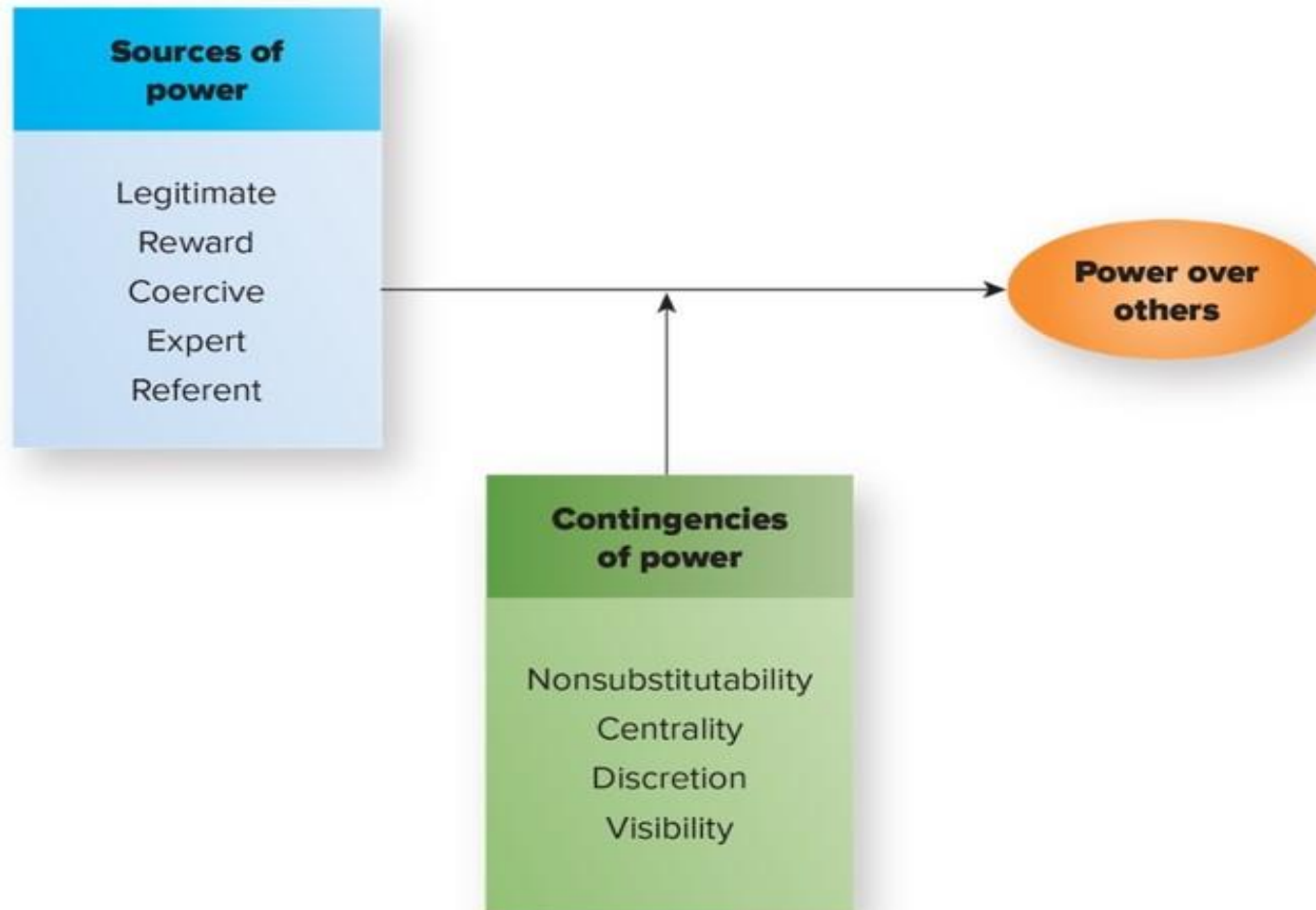
Model of Power in Organizations

Exhibit 9.2 Sources and Contingencies of Power

Access text alternatives for slide image.

Legitimate Power

Agreement that people in specific positions can request behaviors from others.

Zone of indifference:

- Domain of behaviors that power holder can ask of others—deference to authority.

- Several factors influence size of the zone of indifference.

Norm of reciprocity: Obligation to reciprocate favors.

Information control:

- People need legitimate power in order to distribute information.

- Generates power through gatekeeping and framing.

Expert Power

Capacity to influence others by possessing knowledge or skills that they value.

Coping with uncertainty:

- Organizations operate better in predictable environments.

- People gain power by using their expertise to:

  - Prevent environmental changes.

  - Forecast environmental changes.

  - Absorb environmental changes.

Other Sources of Power

Reward power: Control rewards valued by others, remove negative sanctions.

Coercive power: Ability to apply punishment.

Referent power: Capacity to influence others through identification with and respect for the power holder—associated with charisma.

Problem: Deference to power.
- Human tendency to mindlessly follow the guidance of people who are charismatic (i.e., have referent power) or claim to have legitimate or expert power.

Power Contingency: Nonsubstitutability

Power increases with nonsubstitutability.

- Resource has few/no other sources.
- Resource has few/no substitutes.

Increasing nonsubstitutability:

- Control access to the resource.
- Differentiate the resource.

Developing a personal brand.

- Nonsubstituability through unique and valuable abilities.

Other Contingencies of Power

Centrality:

- Interdependence with power holder.
- How many and how quickly others are affected by you.

Visibility:

- Others aware that you control a valued resource.
- Social interaction, power symbols.

Discretion:

- Freedom to exercise judgment.
- Rules limit discretion.

Artem Furman/Shutterstock

Consequences of Power

Effect of power depends on type of power.

Type A: Feeling empowered.

- Perceived power over themselves and freedom from others' influence.

- Higher motivation, but less mindful thinking, less empathy, more reliance on stereotypes.

Type B: Power over others.

- Produces sense of duty/responsibility.

- Less stereotyping, more empathy, more mindful of how their actions affect others.

Power Through Social Networks
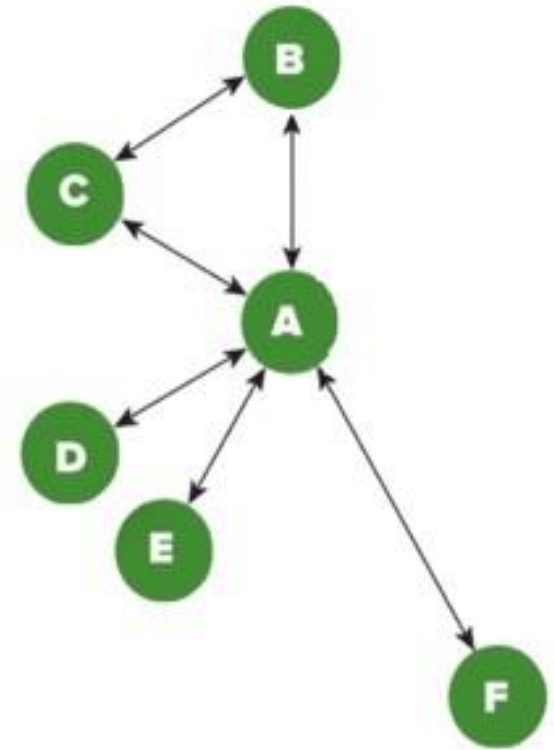
Social networks:

- Connecting through forms of interdependence.
- People join networks to fulfill drive to bond, social norms, acquire resources.

Social capital:

- Sharing knowledge, opportunities, and other resources in a social network.
- Mutual support, trust, reciprocity, coordination to facilitate resource sharing.

Networks offer three power resources:

1. Information (expert power).
2. Visibility.
3. Referent power.
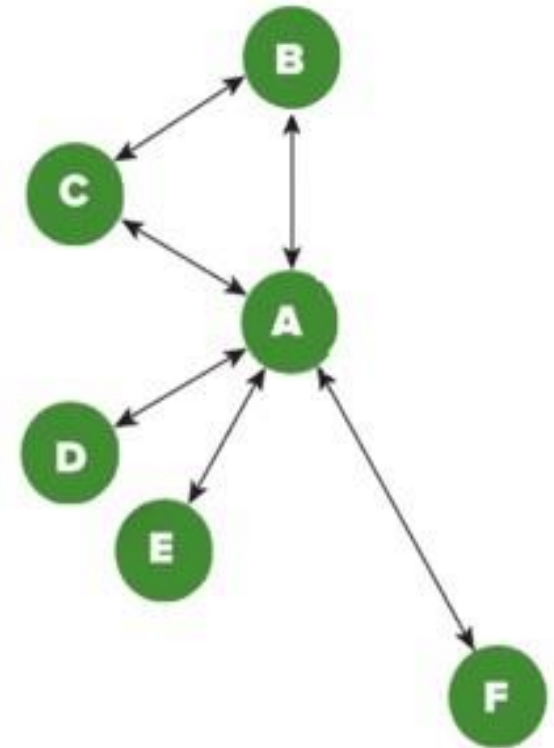
Social Network Ties

Strong ties:

- Close-knit relationships.
- Offer resources more quickly/plentifully, but less unique.

Weak ties:

- Acquaintances.
- Offer unique resources, but more slowly.

Many ties:

- Resources increase with number of ties.
- Information technology helps, but still a limit.

Social Network Centrality

Person's importance in a network.

Three centrality factors:

1. Betweenness: connected between others.

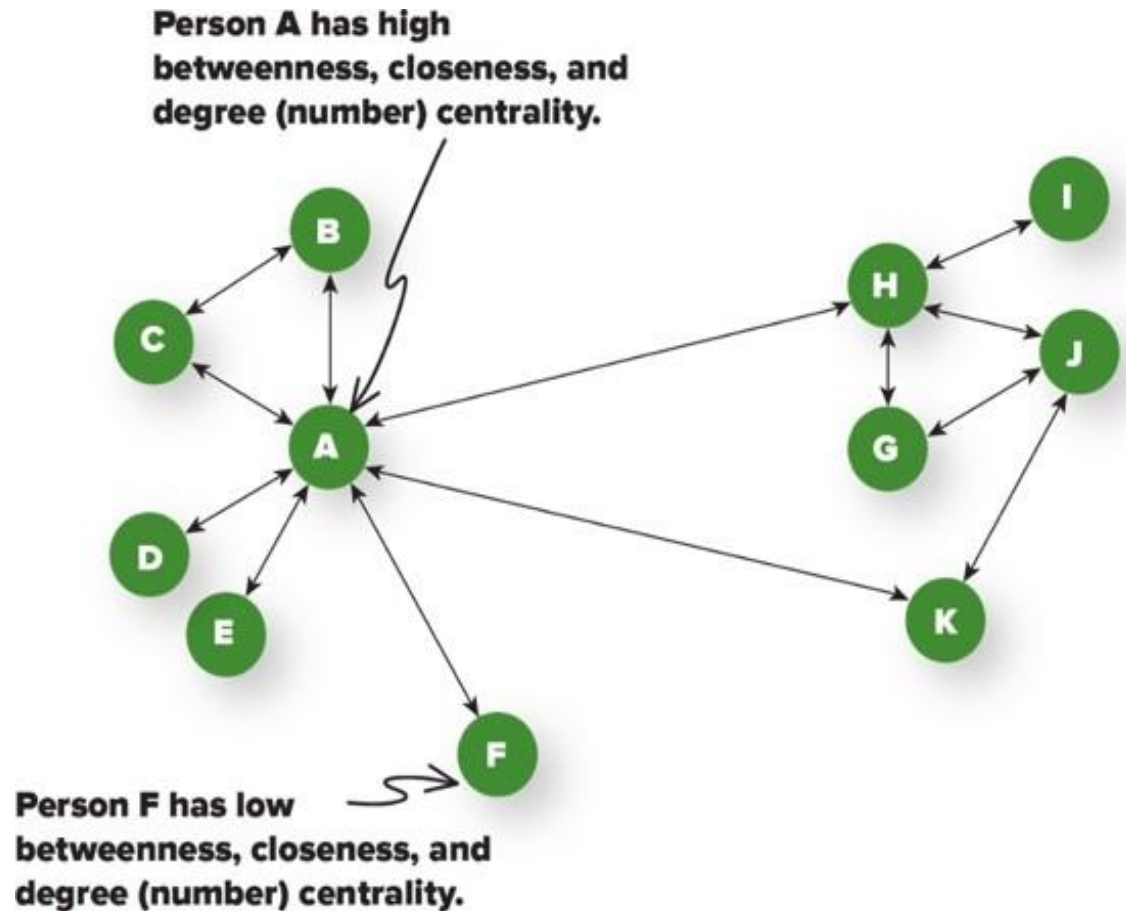2. Degree centrality: number of connections.

3. Closeness: stronger connections.

Person A has high betweenness, closeness, and degree (number) centrality.

Person F has low betweenness, closeness, and degree (number) centrality.

Exhibit 9.3 Centrality in Social Networks
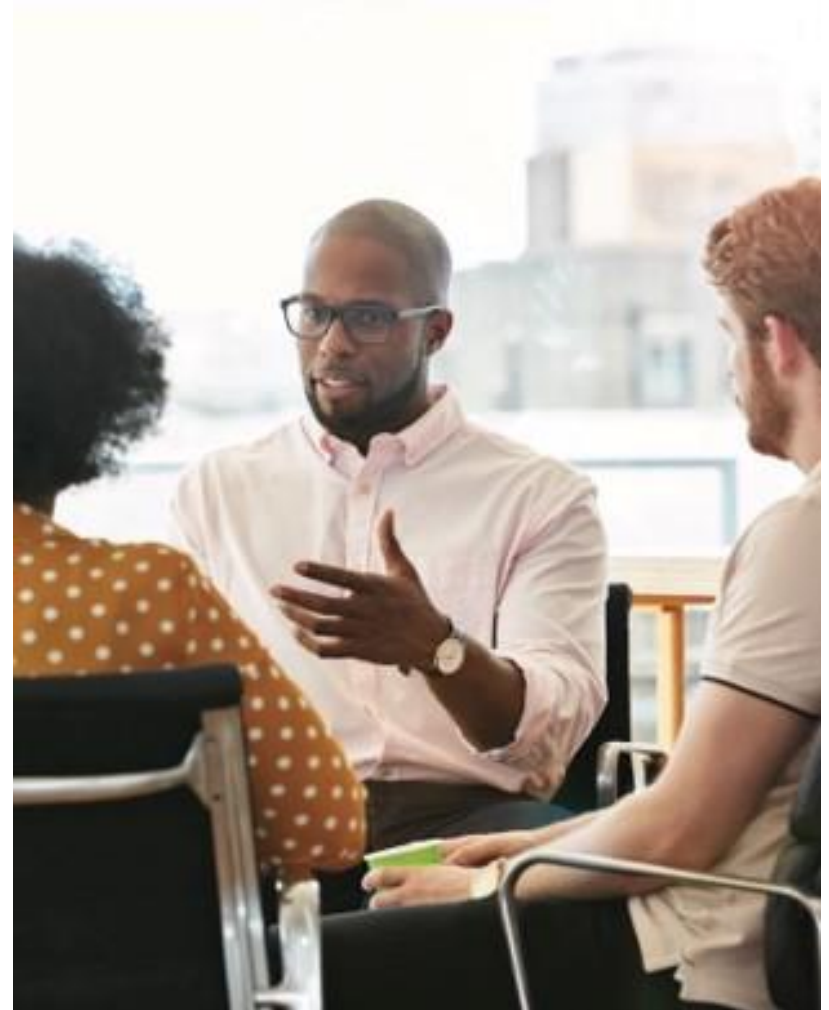
Access text alternatives for slide image.

Influencing Others

Any behavior that attempts to alter another person's attitudes or behavior.

Applies one or more power bases, depending on power contingencies.

Essential activity in organizations:

- Coordinate with others.
- Part of leadership definition.
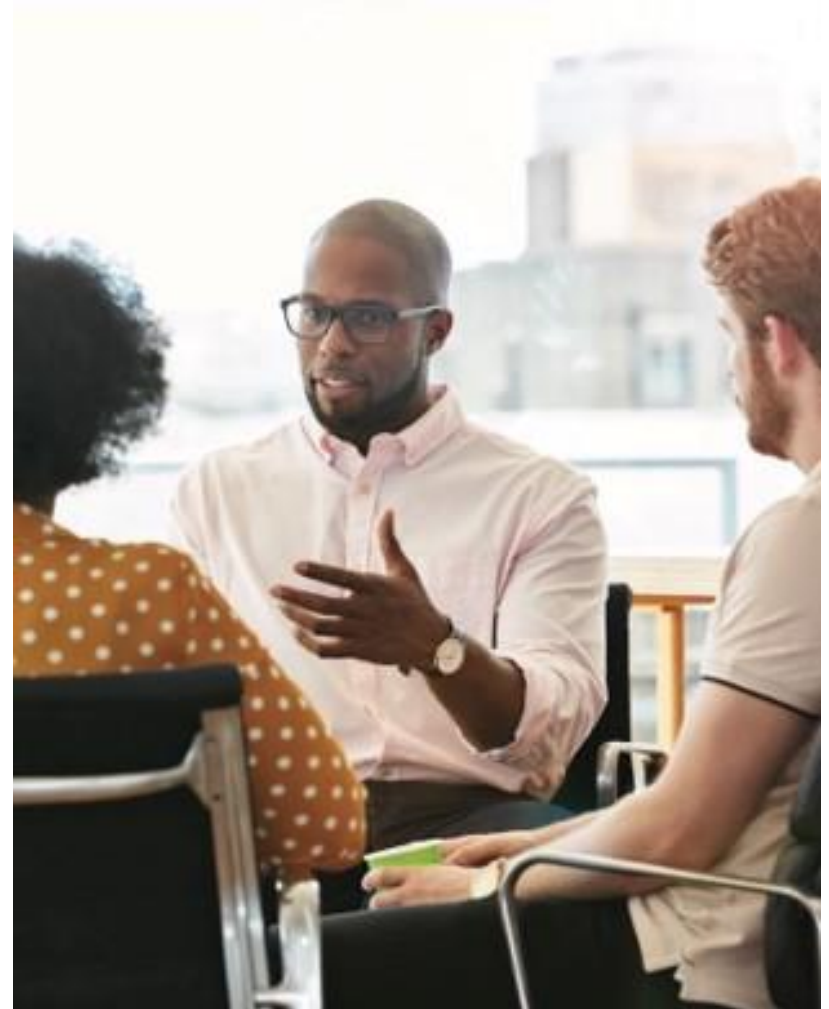- Everyone engages in influence.

Types of Influence [1]

Silent authority.

- Power holder's request or mere presence influences behavior.

- Legitimate power (subtle).

Assertiveness.

- Vocal authority: Reminding, checking, bullying.

- Legitimate/coercive power.

Types of Influence [2]
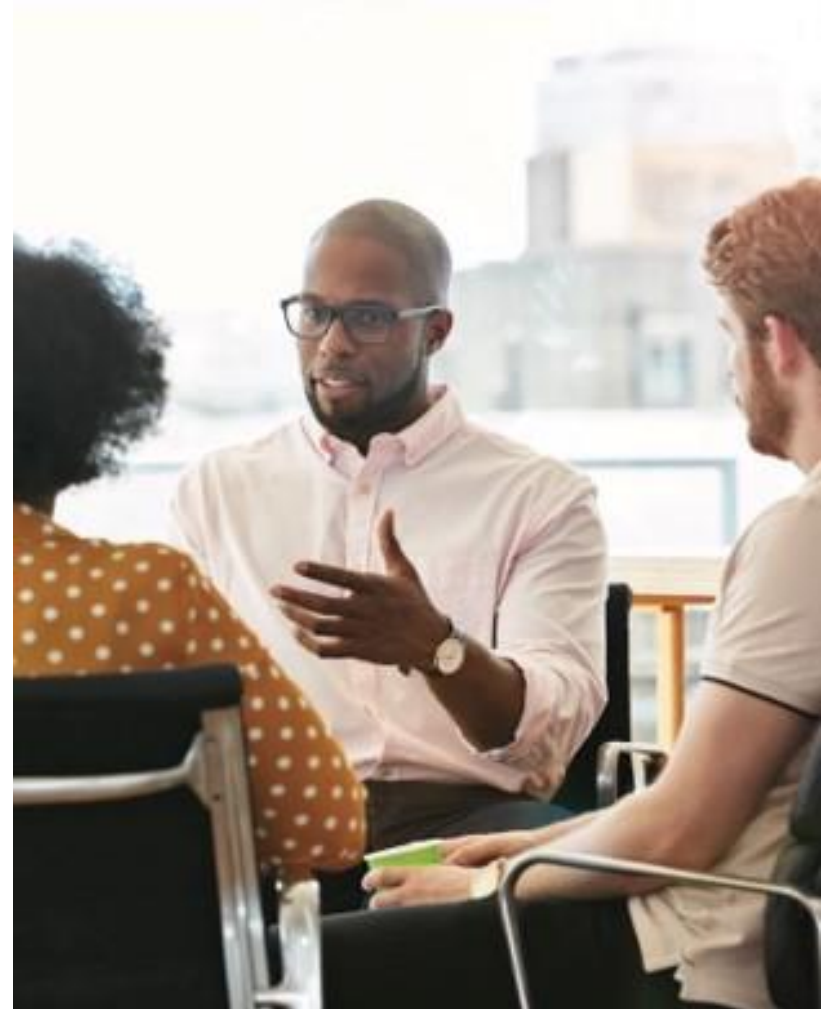
Information control.

- Manipulating others' access to information to change their attitudes/behavior.

Coalition formation.

- Pooling members' resources and power to influence others.

Upward appeal.

- Relying symbolically or in reality on higher authority support.
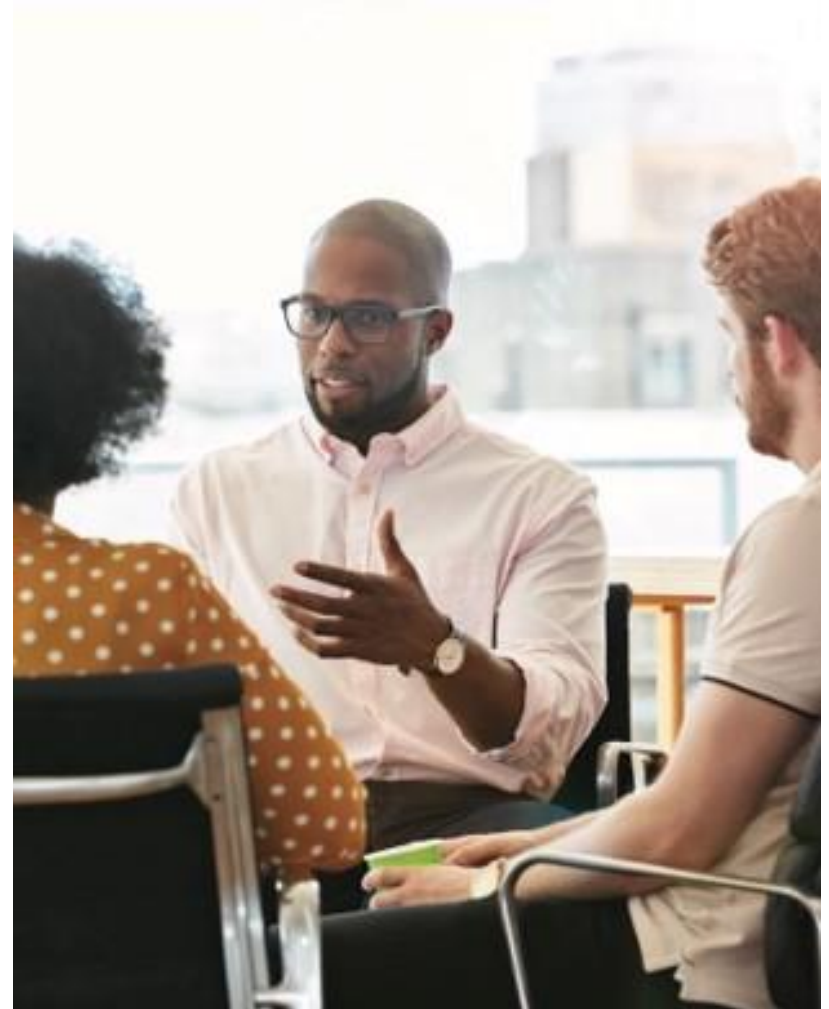
Types of Influence [3]

Persuasion.

- Logical arguments, emotional appeals.
- Effects of persuader, message, channel, audience.

Coalition formation.

- Actively shaping others' perceptions and attitudes of us.
- Includes self-presentation, personal brand, ingratiation.

Exchange.

- Exchange of resources for desired behavior.
- Exchange is used in negotiation, reciprocity, social networks.
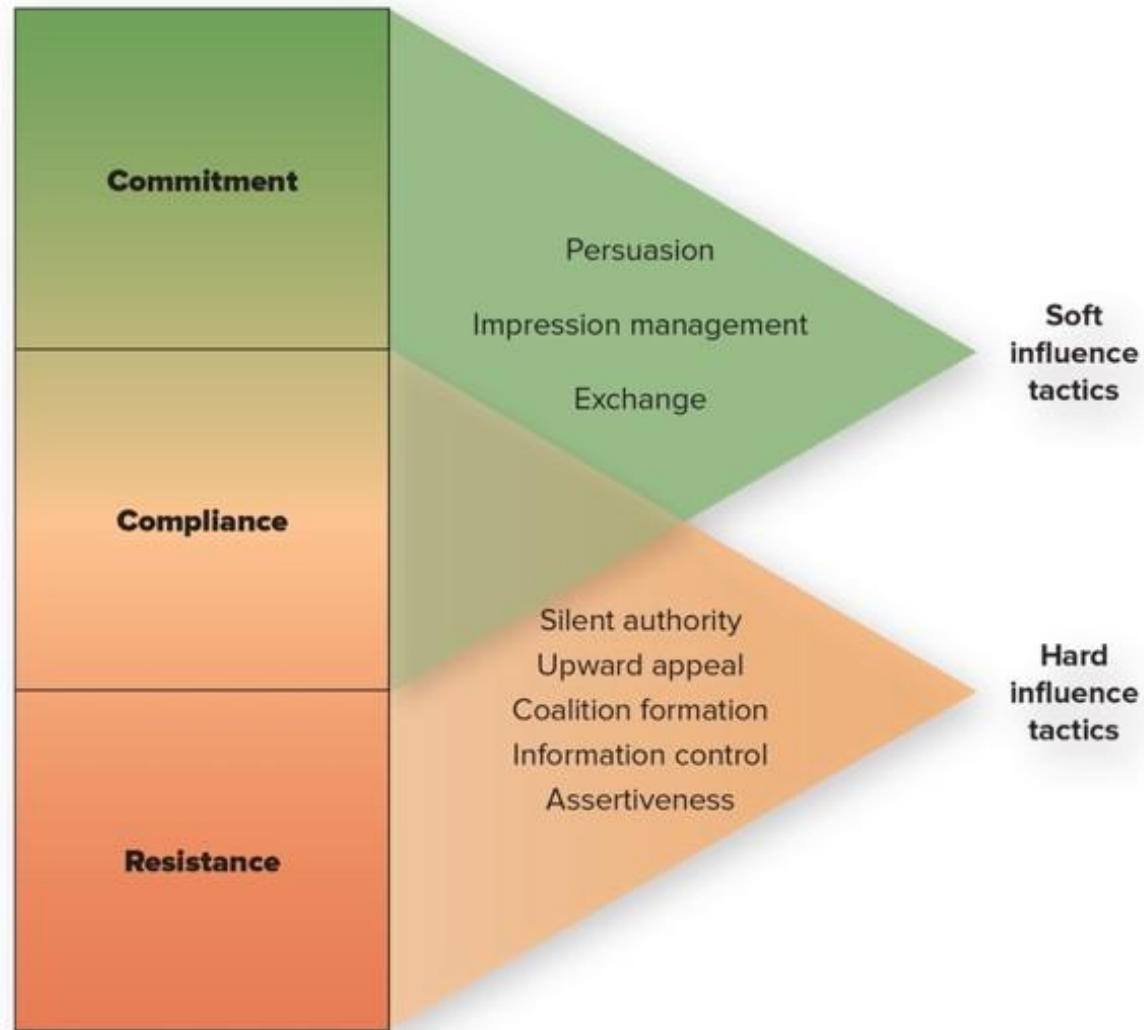
Consequences of Influence

Exhibit 9.6 Consequences of Hard and Soft Influence Tactics

Access the text alternative for slide images.

Contingencies of Influence

"Soft" tactics produce more commitment; "hard" tactics produce more compliance and resistance.

Appropriate influence tactic depends on:

- Influencer's power base.

- Organizational position.

- Personal, organizational, cultural values and expectations.

Organizational Politics

Using influence tactics for personal gain at perceived expense of others and organization.

Negative consequences, not beneficial.

Minimizing organizational politics:

1. Provide sufficient resources.
2. Clarify resource allocation rules.
3. Manage change effectively.
4. Discourage political behavior.

Because learning changes everything.®

www.mheducation.com