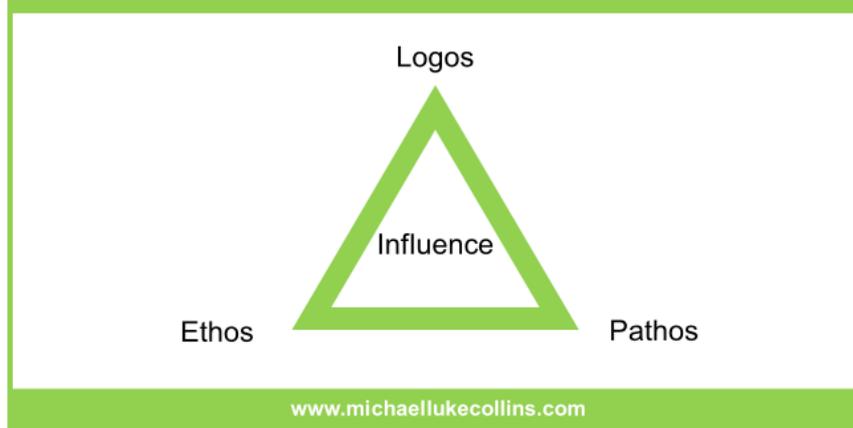


HOW TO INFLUENCE



If you need to persuade an individual or a group you might consider Aristotle's approach by engaging: ethos, pathos and logos.

ETHOS

Ethos refers to character. Your idea or argument can be more persuasive if you have established your character based on a reputation built on solid foundations. Your experience over a period of time can enhance your credibility to advocate a certain position. If you have many years' successful experience in a particular industry sector, then your opinion will matter more than others with less demonstrable experience. If you have exercised good moral judgement to guide your behaviours and "walk the talk", others will be more inclined to listen to your propositions. If you have dedicated time and effort to amass specialist qualifications or insight into a particular subject your reputation as an expert will intertwine with your character, enhancing your potential to influence.

In order to maximise the benefit derived from ethos, you need to communicate your credentials and character of good standing. For some their reputation will precede them, for others it may be necessary to promote them.

Your ethos can take many years to amass, so care should be taken to guard it. Foolish or flippant remarks or behaviours can destroy ethos in an instant. Once ethos has been damaged, it is difficult to repair. Ethos is credibility and those who have credibility are more likely to be listened to, resulting in a greater likelihood to persuade others.

PATHOS

Pathos refers to stirring emotions. If you can appeal to peoples' emotions, it can override logic and influence their thinking. Ekman and Friesen (1975) identified six primary emotions: surprise, anger, sadness, happiness, fear and disgust. Consider how each of these could advance your argument or position. Using stories to paint a picture can be a very powerful tool to evoke emotions. Careful use of emotive and provocative language can trigger emotional responses from your audience.

Gain the attention of people by surprising them with a startling statistic. Evoke happiness by sharing a humorous story. Create anger against a particular course of action you seek to avoid by sharing an injustice experienced by yourself or others. Instil fear by explaining the consequences of action or inaction. Generate disgust by illustrating something appalling. Each emotional reaction can sway others to buy into your viewpoint.

LOGOS

Logos refers to reason or logic. Oftentimes, the starting point of influence is to engage logic to convince others. Evidence supporting a particular position can be highly persuasive. However, it should be noted that firstly engaging ethos and pathos prior to the introduction of evidence can be more powerful. Once you have your audience accept you are a person of good character and have engaged them on an emotional level, then introducing evidence can be highly effective.

The source of your evidence is very important, so seek evidence from people or institutions that will have immediate credibility with your audience. Alternatively utilize evidence that is self-evident. If you can demonstrate your evidence to be correct in real time, then the persuasive effect escalates considerably.

Don't overload your audience with large volumes of evidence as they will tend to be overwhelmed and switch off. Instead, select one to three pieces of the most powerful supporting evidence you can find and explain it in a way that it is difficult to dispute or dismiss.

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