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Introduction to Influence

To influence effectively you must be adept at getting your opinions and ideas heard, recognized and considered by others. Influence inherently means that you are able to impact the ideas, opinions and actions of others. Influence strategies can range from reliance on position and power to education, encouragement and collaboration. When you influence effectively you increase trust, support and ownership for your priorities. When you influence ineffectively you increase mistrust, intimidation and resentment. A key behavior of effective leaders is the capacity to influence those around them towards acceptance of beneficial outcomes. From the perspective of the Influence Style Indicator we are defining influence as the interpersonal behaviors that we use to have a positive impact on another party's choices.

Why Influence Matters

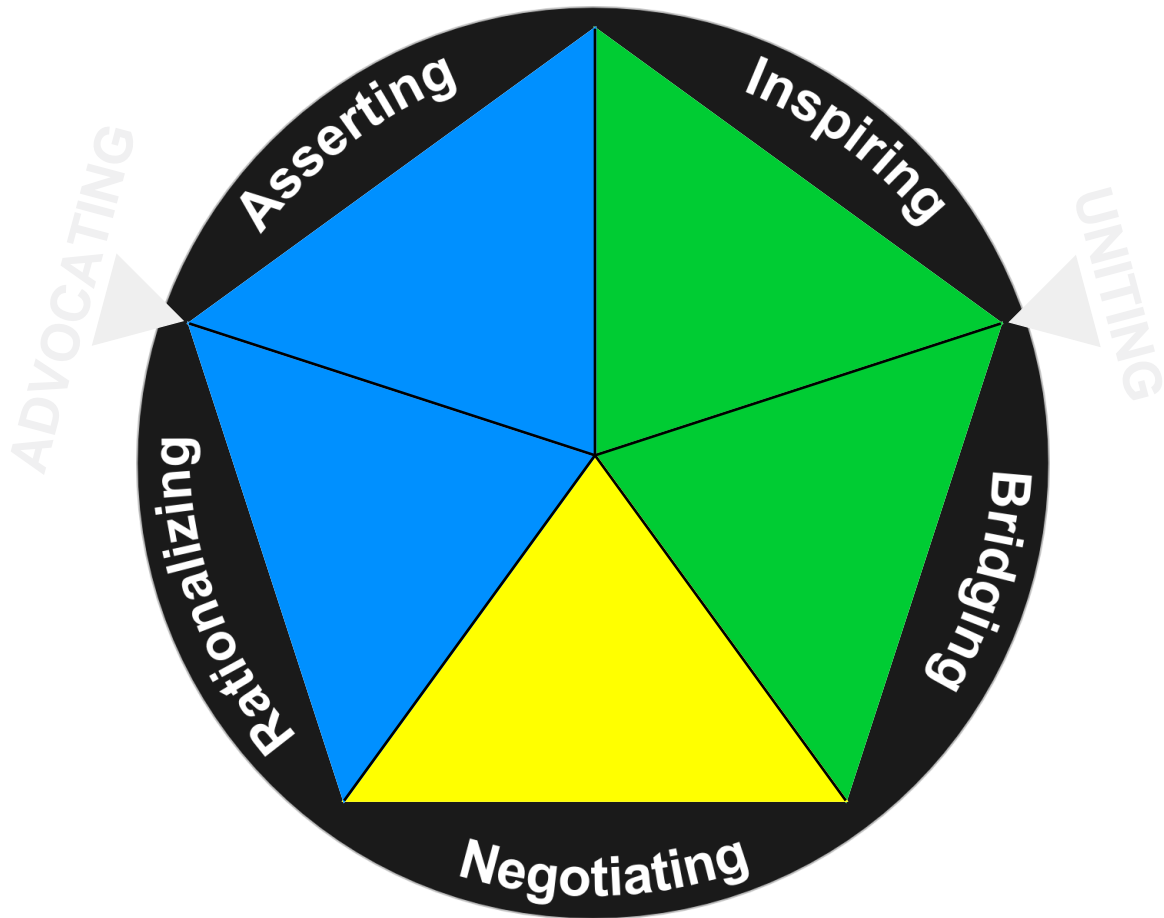
Today's workplace is characterized by levels of change and complexity that are unprecedented. Workplace realities such as identifying shared goals, leading complex and often dispersed teams, boundary spanning, coordinating matrixed projects and integrating diverse people and interests require the capacity to influence others. Good leadership involves influence that has a positive and unifying impact. Whether you are leading, following, and/or collaborating, chances are you need to influence others to be successful. The ability to influence effectively is emerging as a key leadership skill for a new generation of leaders.

Influence Preferences

We are all aware of the distinctive influence styles that people demonstrate. Some of these styles we instinctively understand and appreciate and others we may find confusing, unclear and frustrating. Our research has definitively identified five styles of influence. These five distinctive styles are Rationalizing, Asserting, Neutralizing, Inspiring and Bridging. You can improve your leadership effectiveness if you know when to modify your style, understand what situations your style works best in, and when it may prove ineffective.

Background Research

In 2009 and 2010 Discovery Learning, Inc. and Innovative Pathways conducted research to identify and measure influence preferences. This research clearly identified five influence styles and resulted in an assessment tool, Influence Style Indicator, which effectively and efficiently measures an individual's preferred influence style or styles. The complete Influence Style Indicator Research and Development Report is available from Discovery Learning, Inc.



- Rationalizing**

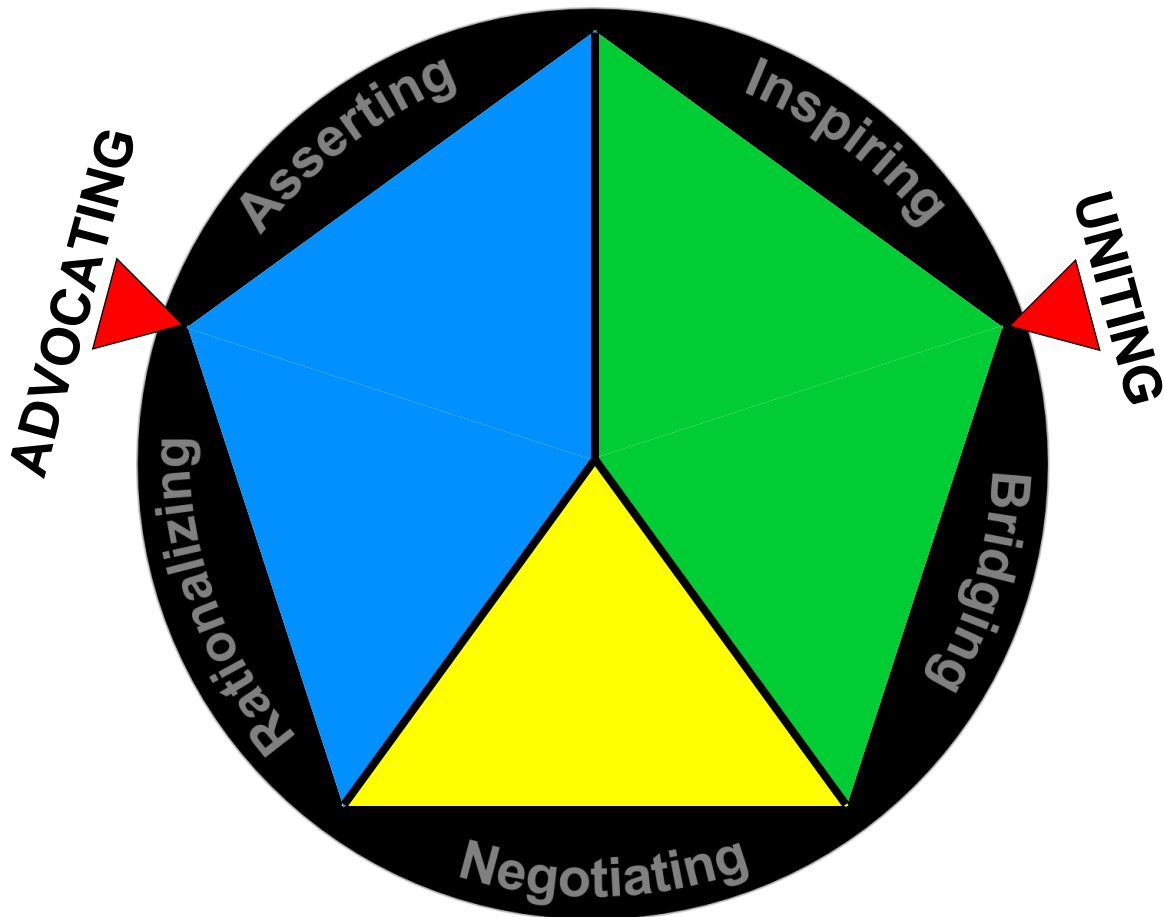
You put forward your ideas and offer logical, rational reasons to convince others of your point of view
- Asserting**

You insist that your ideas are heard and considered and you challenge the ideas of others
- Negotiating**

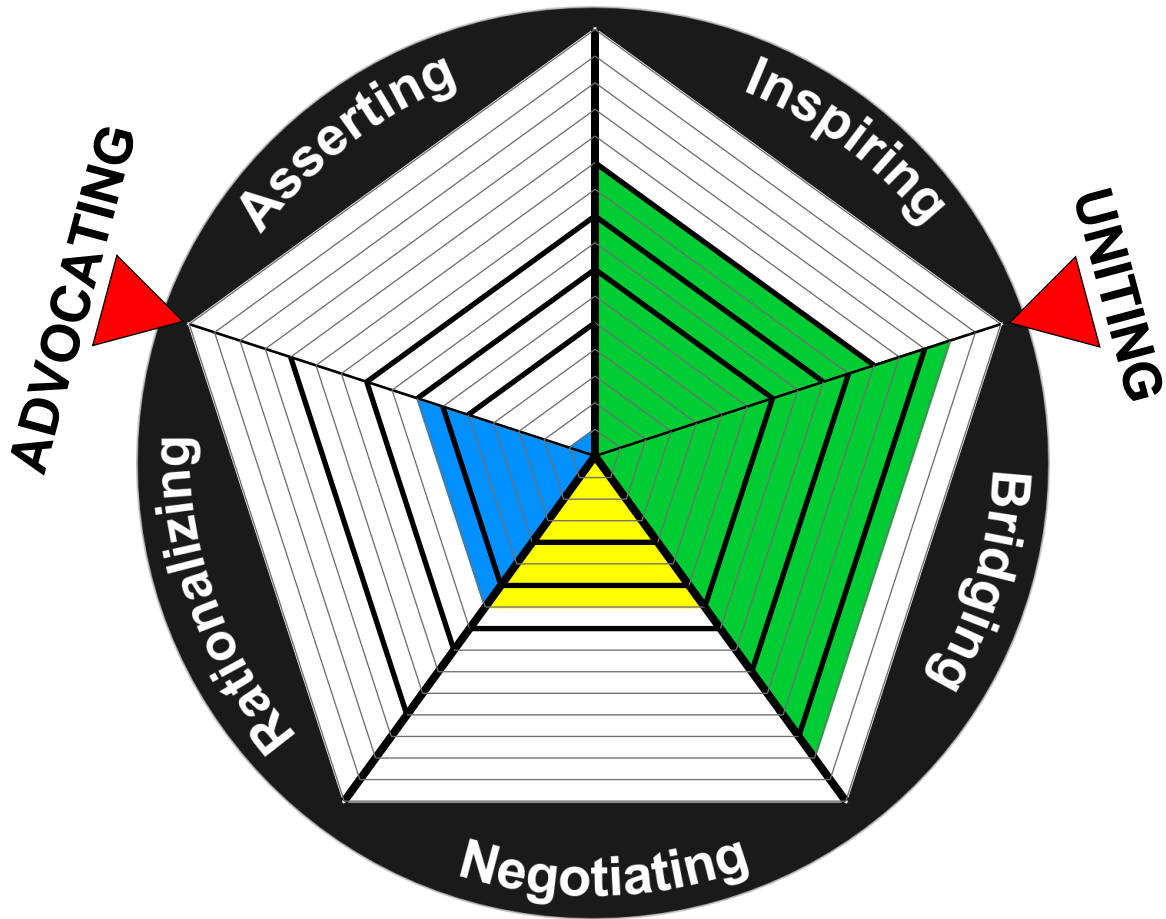
You look for compromises and make concessions to reach outcomes that satisfy your greater interest
- Inspiring**

You advocate your position and encourage others with a sense of shared mission and exciting possibilities
- Bridging**

You build relationships and connect with others through listening, understanding and building coalitions



<p>Advocating Orientation</p>	<p>This Orientation involves influencing by pushing your perspectives, ideas and beliefs. The techniques include logical reasoning, rational persuasion, insistence that your ideas are considered and willingness to challenge the ideas and opinions of others.</p>
<p>Neutralizing Orientation</p>	<p>This Orientation involves influencing by negotiating and compromising. The techniques used include making smaller concessions to satisfy one's greater interest, identifying areas of quick agreement and making tradeoffs that are mutually beneficial.</p>
<p>Uniting Orientation</p>	<p>This Orientation involves influencing by pulling people together and toward your point of view. The techniques include communicating excitement, building a shared vision, building coalitions and thoroughly understanding the interests of other parties.</p>



Category	Strength of Preference																
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Rationalizing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Asserting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Negotiating	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Inspiring	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Bridging	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Underutilized				Slight				Moderate				Dominant				

Style Preference

Your dominant influence style is Bridging. Your secondary style is Inspiring.

Dominant Influence Style(s)

Your dominant influence style is Bridging. With this preference you will almost always pull people together and toward your point of view. You influence outcomes by building coalitions and communities of interest based on common, mutual interest. You listen to what others have to say and work to establish a climate of trust. By acknowledging the needs and concerns of others you show appreciation for other people's issues and interest.

Value of Bridging Style

- ▶ Draws out the intentions, goals and positions of others
- ▶ Shows appreciation for others' problems, difficulties and needs
- ▶ Ensures clarity and mutual understanding
- ▶ Builds trust through open communication and acceptance of feelings

Bridging is best used when...

- ▶ The situation is complex and the perspective of all stakeholders is needed.
- ▶ There is no apparent right answer and you welcome insights from others.
- ▶ You respect and are open to the involvement and collaboration of others.
- ▶ You need the commitment of others to move forward.
- ▶ You have time to build a power coalition.

When Bridging is used effectively

- ▶ You facilitate collaborative problem solving.
- ▶ You show sincere interest in the positions and concerns of all stakeholders.
- ▶ You strive to ensure that everyone is heard and understood.
- ▶ You seek out all relevant stakeholders.
- ▶ You help stakeholders see how their larger, common interest can supersede smaller interest.

When Bridging is used ineffectively

- ▶ Lack of time: Time and discretion are important considerations in building openness, confidence and trust.
- ▶ It can be perceived as manipulative and dishonest if you are not really sincere about others' involvement or their position.
- ▶ You may cause feelings of impatience when time is of the essence.
- ▶ You use what you learn from others to manipulate the situation.
- ▶ You start by listening/communicating and then run out of time and/or interest.
- ▶ If you are not sincere it can look like manipulation.
- ▶ There may be frustration when there is a lack of time for consensus.

Secondary Influence Style(s)

Your secondary influence style is Inspiring. With this preference you will usually pull people together and toward your point of view. You advocate your position by encouraging others with a sense of shared purpose and exciting possibilities. You are enthusiastic about your ideas and you help others see their exciting possibilities. You can effectively communicate your vision for the best outcome and you appeal to people's hopes and dreams to gain their support. Stories and metaphors are used to support your position.

Value of Inspiring Style

- ▶ Builds solidarity by fostering awareness of higher goals and objectives
- ▶ Leads to increased appreciation of shared interests between opposing parties and lays the groundwork for joint problem solving

Inspiring is best used when...

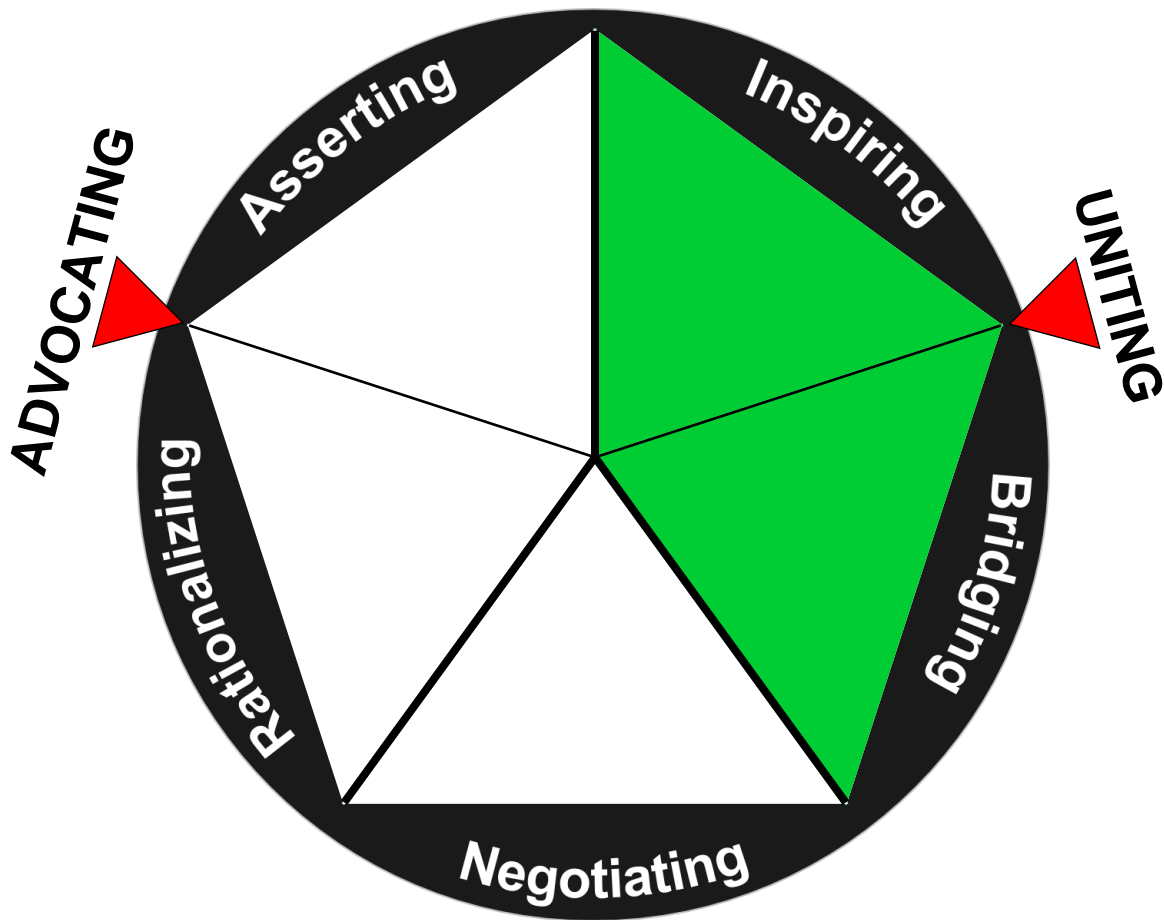
- ▶ There are values and aspirations that appeal to all stakeholders.
- ▶ There already exists a basic foundation of trust and there are no hidden agendas.

When Inspiring is used effectively

- ▶ You appeal to the common aspirations and hopes that all shareholders hold in common.
- ▶ You use personal enthusiasm to build support for your position.

When Inspiring is used ineffectively

- ▶ If trust does not exist, it can be seen as a smoke screen or an attempt to mislead.
- ▶ It can be disastrous to influence people toward a common ground, only to discover there is none. Trust will erode.



Uniting Orientation

Your overall influence orientation is to pull people together and toward your perspectives, ideas and beliefs. The techniques you use typically include: rallying support, communicating possibilities, clarifying shared interest, building coalitions and understanding the positions and interest of others. You can be a catalyst for building support for your position through excitement, common interest and shared purpose. You may be seen by others as a leader who is an enabling facilitator and motivator.

Underutilized Style(s)

You may avoid using the Asserting style. You may improve your influence flexibility by learning to use this style. Here are some suggestions for developing this style.

Ways to develop your Asserting Style

- ▶ Practice challenging the status quo. Back up your opinions by researching the issues thoroughly, talking to the parties involved and understanding the purpose behind the decisions. After assuring yourself that your perspective is valid, present your findings to the appropriate individuals in a well-thought-out manner.
- ▶ Learn to ask clarifying questions. Use What, Why and How to frame your questions. Good questions can challenge your adversary's position without appearing aggressive.
- ▶ Once you've stated your position, check in with others to ask if they understand. Ask them to repeat what you've just stated.
- ▶ Be willing to act on your views, even though your views may be unpopular. Try to lead with your ideas rather than merely responding to others' ideas. Take more opportunities to be the first to put your ideas on the table rather than listening for a long time and eventually adding something to an already developed consensus.
- ▶ Interview others who are faced with pressure to make decisions constantly. Ask them what methods they use to make a decision, the criteria that they use to evaluate the quality of a decision and the lessons they have learned.
- ▶ Force yourself to make decisions within a specified time period even when all data may not be available. Think about what information may not be necessary or may be impractical because of resulting delay. Think about the consequences of not making the decision today.

Tips for influencing other styles**Rationalizers**

- ▶ Provide evidence-based facts and figures in a clear and concise manner.
- ▶ Ask questions to understand what relevant data, facts/figures are important to the subject at hand.
- ▶ Demonstrate understanding of statistical and financial information.
- ▶ Identify critical themes in large quantities of information and explain what the themes point to.

Asserters

- ▶ Be direct and decisive in your approach.
- ▶ Demonstrate your competence and expertise by articulating your knowledge of the issue at hand.
- ▶ Be solution oriented when raising an issue (steps, timelines, costs, etc).
- ▶ Be transparent and open about where you stand on an issue.
- ▶ Demonstrate that you understand their position by summarizing your understanding of their position.

Negotiators

- ▶ Look for win/win solutions and ways to help the other party in some way.
- ▶ Be willing to give something up in order to move forward to a mutually agreeable solution.
- ▶ Point out where there are areas of agreement.
- ▶ Be willing to follow through on tradeoffs or concessions made.
- ▶ Avoid win/lose language and attitudes.

Inspirers

- ▶ Tell stories or use metaphors to demonstrate your position or why something is important to you.
- ▶ Connect on an emotional level.
- ▶ Point to the positive outcome that can be achieved that you and others care about.
- ▶ Understand what is important to others in the situation and demonstrate that you see it as important too.

Bridgers

- ▶ Find ways to involve people in the development of the solution.
- ▶ Listen carefully, ask lots of open-ended questions and summarize what you have heard.
- ▶ Show you understand the needs and concerns of others.
- ▶ Recognize others' contributions in getting to a solution and give credit where credit is due.
- ▶ Attempt to understand others before you attempt to be understood.

Rationalizing Style - Using logic and reasoning to present your ideas**This style looks like...**

- ▶ Pushing your perspectives, ideas and beliefs
- ▶ Putting forward your ideas and offering logical, rational reasons when convincing others of your point of view
- ▶ Suggesting logical solutions to problems
- ▶ Presenting arguments that are analytically based
- ▶ Creating a logical flow to your arguments
- ▶ Using relevant facts and accurate data to persuade
- ▶ Using research, expert views and historical data to build a convincing position

Asserting Style - Using logic and reasoning to present your ideas**This style looks like...**

- ▶ Pushing your perspectives, ideas and beliefs
- ▶ Insisting that your ideas are heard and considered even when others disagree
- ▶ Putting forward ideas even if they are not popular
- ▶ Challenging ideas or suggestions with which you disagree
- ▶ Ensuring your position is heard
- ▶ Letting people know exactly where you stand
- ▶ Using power, rewards and consequences to get resolution

Negotiating Style - Compromising and making concessions to find common ground**This style looks like...**

- ▶ Orientating toward trade offs and compromising
- ▶ Willing to make concessions in order to reach an outcome that satisfies your greater interest
- ▶ Getting support for your ideas by offering to help others in some way
- ▶ Bargaining to reach agreement when something is important to you
- ▶ Making concessions to get something that is really important to you
- ▶ Exchanging favors in order to get something accomplished
- ▶ Pointing out where there is agreement and mutual benefit

Inspiring Style - Influencing others through shared purpose and higher possibilities

This style looks like...

- ▶ Pulling people together and toward your point of view
- ▶ Advocating your position by encouraging others with a sense of shared purpose and exciting possibilities
- ▶ Communicating your vision for the best outcome
- ▶ Helping others see the exciting possibilities in a situation
- ▶ Enthusiastically presenting your ideas
- ▶ Appealing to people's hopes and dreams to gain their support
- ▶ Using images and metaphors to appeal to the emotions of others

Bridging Style - Engaging and connecting with others

This style looks like...

- ▶ Pulling people together and toward your point of view
- ▶ Connecting with others through building coalitions and communities of interest based on common ground
- ▶ Working hard to establish a climate of trust
- ▶ Listening carefully to what others have to say
- ▶ Acknowledging the needs and concerns of the other party
- ▶ Showing appreciation for other people's issues and needs
- ▶ Asking questions to seek understanding of another's viewpoint