

Business Line

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Nurturing ethical influence

The New Manager

Pradeep Chakravarthy

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At the workplace or at home, in the small company or the large conglomerate, influencing others will be on everybody's list of skills to be acquired and excel at.

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Influencing in today's highly competitive and globalised world requires a scientific approach that is evidence-based. It cannot be an approach that is based on personal experience and anecdotal details that work sometimes and fail at other times. An eminent social scientist, Dr Robert Cialdini's book, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, is based entirely on proven empirical research. What's more, the style is eminently readable and focussed on the practitioner.

Dr Cialdini who is Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University, has his own firm, Influence At Work, that seeks to educate others in practising the six principles of ethical influence. His colleague, Dr Gregory Neidert, a Director with Influence At Work, is also a faculty member in the Department of Psychology, Arizona State University, and a consultant for many Fortune 100 companies.

While on a recent visit to India for a research partnership with the Infosys Leadership Institute, Dr Neidert said, "The Six Principles of Influence are as relevant to India as they are to other countries and it is exciting to see this interest here."

He adds: "As competition for products, services and talent increases, it is incumbent on organisations to find ways to help them retain and expand their competitive edge in these domains. This is one such vehicle to do so and has been proven by studies over more than 70 years."

Stocks

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Listed briefly, the six principles are —

Reciprocity: Individuals feel an obligation to give back to others the form of behaviour that they have received.

Commitment and consistency: When we have committed to something, especially in public, we experience inter- and intrapersonal pressures to act and think in a way consistent with it.

Foreign Exchange

- Rates

Social proof: When we are uncertain about what to do, we determine what is correct by looking at what others in similar situations are doing.

Shipping

Liking: We want to say 'yes' to people we know and like and find it very difficult to refuse a friend or someone we like.

- Ports

Authority: We tend to follow a person to whom we ascribe superior knowledge, wisdom or experience.

Archives

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Scarcity: When something is rare or dwindling in availability, it becomes more attractive to us.

(The writer is with the Infosys Leadership Institute.)

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