



# Foster Influencing Skills In Unpopular Department

## *Rebecca's level of responsibility*

Having sole responsibility for the design and implementation of this program, I worked closely with the Executive.

## *Duration of the engagement*

1 month

## *The problem(s) presented*

In her quarterly departmental off-site, the client wanted to increase the influencing skills of her 50-person department. They often had to communicate company-wide changes to uncooperative staff in other departments

## *Steps in solving the problem*

After interviewing the Executive, I learned that her staff lacked skills in how to engage and influence people in other departments. This was critical as her team was responsible for implementing new company-wide changes that affected every employee, and often these changes were met with resistance.

I designed a series of experiential (e.g., "low ropes") exercises to help the staff feel what it was like to be in situations similar to those of the staff from other departments. From going outside and leading a blindfolded team, to having everyone try to lower a tent pole to the ground simultaneously, these exercises and the debrief helped them understand their work situation better. I even designed a group process for their lunch discussion.

After lunch, I shared specifics on how to influence different types of people, including video vignettes, a self-assessment profile, and tools for analyzing the style of their most troubling colleagues.

## *Results achieved*

Attendees left with insights and information to improve their communication within their department and with other departments.

The Executive said, "Your session at our off-site was spot on and received positive feedback from the team. It energized people to take a different approach in assessing their audiences and positively influencing them to arrive at collaborative decisions."

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