



STARBUCK ACADEMY

Influence and Communication

Influence and Communication

Building presence, emotional intelligence and the ability to influence without authority

Ten short video lessons, one practical tool for each. About 6 learning hours in total, including your workplace tasks.

Name

Date

STARBUCK & ASSOCIATES

COACHING & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

How to use this workbook

This workbook goes alongside the ten video lessons in Influence and Communication. The course is for anyone who wants more impact at work, whether or not you manage people. It covers three connected strands: emotional intelligence, presence, and influencing without authority.

Watch a lesson, read its page here, answer the reflection questions, then use the tool during the week that follows. The course takes about 6 learning hours in total, including the workplace tasks. It works best spread over ten weeks, so you can try each tool on real conversations before you move on.

By the end of the course you will be able to

- Understand why people listen to you, and where your impact could grow
- Notice, name and manage your own reactions, especially under pressure
- Read others more accurately and show that you understand them
- Show up with calm presence in the room, online and in writing
- Make your point clearly and briefly
- Influence people you do not manage, build a case and say no well

Programme map

LESSON	TITLE	YOUR TOOL
1	What makes people listen to you	The Impact Snapshot
2	Emotional intelligence: knowing yourself	The Emotion Log
3	Managing your reactions under pressure	The Pause Plan
4	Reading others with empathy	The Other Side Sheet
5	Presence in the room and online	The Meeting Presence Checklist
6	Speaking with clarity and brevity	The PREP Planner
7	Influencing without authority	The Stakeholder Needs Map
8	Building a case and handling objections	The Case and Objections Builder
9	Handling challenge and saying no well	The Pushback Planner
10	Your influence plan	The Influence Plan

LESSON 1

What makes people listen to you

A job title can get you into the room, but it does not decide whether people listen once you are there. Most of the time, people choose to listen based on what they have seen you do and how you make them feel. That means influence can be built, whatever your role.

Key ideas

- **Credibility:** people believe you know your subject and will do what you say. It is built through small promises kept and honest answers.
- **Connection:** people feel you have taken the time to understand them, so they give your ideas a fairer hearing.
- **Clarity:** people can follow you, because you know your point, say it early and use plain words.
- **Consistency:** people can predict how you will behave, on a bad day as well as a good one.
- Most of us are strong in two of the four and weaker in the others. Knowing which is where to start.

EXAMPLE

Maya is an analyst whose work is highly regarded, yet her ideas rarely get taken up in meetings. Her credibility is strong. When she asks two colleagues, they tell her that her updates are long and the point comes at the end. Clarity, not expertise, is her gap.

Reflect

Think of someone at work people always listen to. Which of the four do they do well?

Which of the four do I think is my strongest, and which is my weakest?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Complete the Impact Snapshot on the next page. Rate yourself on the four areas, then ask two people you work with how they see you, and look for the gaps.

TOOL 1

The Impact Snapshot

Rate yourself honestly on each area, based on the last month rather than your best day. Then ask two people who see you at work regularly for their view.

AREA	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	A QUESTION TO ASK OTHERS
Credibility	You deliver what you promise and admit what you do not know.	When I say I will do something, how confident are you it will happen?
Connection	You show interest in people and treat their concerns as real.	Do you feel I understand what matters to you?
Clarity	You make your point early, in plain words.	When I speak in meetings, is my point easy to follow?
Consistency	You are the same under pressure as when things are calm.	Do I come across differently when I am under pressure?

How I see myself

OVER THE LAST MONTH	NOT YET	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	CONSISTENTLY
Credibility	☐	☐	☐	☐
Connection	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clarity	☐	☐	☐	☐
Consistency	☐	☐	☐	☐

How others see me

AREA	WHAT THEY SAID	THE GAP I NOTICE
Credibility		
Connection		
Clarity		
Consistency		

Which one area, if I improved it, would make the biggest difference to my impact?

Emotional intelligence: knowing yourself

The idea of emotional intelligence was first set out by the psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer, and Daniel Goleman's popular book in the mid 1990s brought it to a wide working audience. It is often described in four areas: knowing yourself, managing yourself, reading others and managing relationships. This lesson is about the first.

Key ideas

- Feelings are information. Frustration may mean something you value has been crossed. Anxiety may mean something matters and you feel unprepared.
- Ignored feelings still shape what you say and how you say it. Noticing them gives you the choice back.
- Name feelings precisely. Disappointed, overlooked and impatient each need a different response.
- Your body often notices first: a tight jaw, heat in your face, an urge to interrupt.
- Self-awareness has two sides: what you feel inside, and how you come across to others.

EXAMPLE

Tom notices he is "stressed" most afternoons. When he names it more precisely, it is usually impatience, and it shows up in meetings that overrun. That points to a practical fix: agreeing clearer end times, not trying to feel less stressed in general.

Reflect

Which feeling do I find hardest to notice in myself at work?

How might others describe me when I am under pressure?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Use the Emotion Log on the next page. Each day, note one moment when you felt something strongly at work, name it precisely, and record the signal in your body and what you did next.

The Emotion Log

Spend two minutes at the end of each working day. Pick one moment, not the whole day. Use the word list to find a more precise name for what you felt.

INSTEAD OF	TRY SOMETHING MORE PRECISE
Annoyed	Frustrated, impatient, overlooked, let down, irritated
Stressed	Overloaded, rushed, anxious, unprepared, stretched
Worried	Uncertain, exposed, apprehensive, doubtful
Fine	Calm, content, flat, tired, relieved, quietly pleased

Your log

DAY	THE MOMENT	WHAT I FELT, PRECISELY	SIGNAL IN MY BODY	WHAT I DID NEXT
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				

At the end of the week

What patterns do I notice: particular people, times of day or kinds of meeting?

Which feeling showed up most, and what might it be telling me?

Managing your reactions under pressure

A reaction is fast and automatic. A response is chosen. Both start with the same feeling. Influence depends on responding, especially under pressure, because that is when people are watching most closely.

Key ideas

- Most of us are triggered by the same few things. Once you know yours, they stop being surprises.
- A pause is the simplest tool: one slow breath out, putting your pen down, or saying let me think about that.
- A calm pause usually reads as confidence, not weakness.
- Under pressure we tell ourselves a story. Separate what you know from what you are guessing.
- When you get it wrong, go back and repair it simply. It often builds more trust than never slipping at all.

EXAMPLE

Leila is questioned sharply about her figures in a leadership meeting. Her story is "they think I am not up to this". She takes a breath, and asks what is behind the question. It turns out the director has been caught out by a different set of figures and wants to be sure. Her answer is calm and short.

Reflect

When did I last react in a way I later regretted? What was the trigger?

What story did I tell myself in that moment, and how sure was I that it was true?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Complete the Pause Plan on the next page for your two most common triggers, using what you noticed in your Emotion Log.

The Pause Plan

A plan made in a calm moment is far easier to use in a heated one. Choose a pause move that suits the setting.

SETTING	PAUSE MOVES THAT WORK
In the room	One slow breath out. Put your pen down. "Let me think about that for a moment."
Online	Take a note before you unmute. "Can I just check I have understood?"
In writing	Save it as a draft. Reread it an hour later, or after a conversation.

Your plan

MY TRIGGER	EARLY WARNING SIGN	USUAL REACTION	PAUSE MOVE	RESPONSE I WANT

The story check

What do I actually know here, as fact?

What else might explain what is happening?

What response would I be proud of tomorrow?

EXAMPLE

Dev's trigger is being interrupted. His early warning sign is leaning forward and talking faster. His pause move is to stop, breathe out, and say "I would like to finish this point, then I would really like to hear yours."

Reading others with empathy

Empathy is understanding how someone sees a situation and what they feel about it. It is not agreement. You can fully understand a colleague's frustration and still disagree with their conclusion, and your disagreement will land far better because of it.

Key ideas

- Listen for three things: the content of what is said, the feeling underneath it, and the need behind it.
- Notice tone, pace, energy and posture, and especially what changes. Online, notice who has not spoken.
- Signals are clues, not proof. Check with a simple, curious question before you act on them.
- Show that you understand by reflecting back briefly, in your own words.
- People who feel accurately understood relax, and become more willing to hear your view.

EXAMPLE

Grace's colleague says the new deadline is ridiculous. Grace resists defending it. She reflects back: "It sounds like the worry is having enough people, not the date itself." He agrees, and the conversation moves to what support would make the deadline workable.

Reflect

Whose view at work do I find hardest to understand?

When do I tend to assume what people mean instead of checking?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Complete the Other Side Sheet on the next page for one person you need to influence. Then have a conversation where you check at least one of your guesses.

The Other Side Sheet

Choose one person you need to influence or work better with. Be strict about separating what you know, because they have told you or you have seen it, from what you are guessing.

Person: _____ Situation: _____

	WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I AM GUESSING
What they want		
What they feel		
What they need		

Checking and reflecting

One curious question I will ask to check my biggest guess:

How I will reflect back what I hear, in one sentence:

LISTENING FOR	A QUESTION THAT HELPS
Content	What is the main thing you would want me to take from this?
Feeling	How are you feeling about it at the moment?
Need	What would make this work better for you?

After the conversation: what did I learn that I had not expected?

Presence in the room and online

Presence is how you show up, and how others experience you when you do. It is not about being loud or polished. It is calm, focus and warmth, and most of it can be practised.

Key ideas

- Presence starts before you arrive: know why you are there, your one key point and what you want to happen next.
- Steady body and voice: feet on the floor, hands visible and still, eye contact, a slightly slower pace, sentences that end on a statement.
- Attention is the real presence. Listen, build on what others say, notice who has not been heard.
- Online: camera at eye level, face the light, close other windows, and speak early in the call.
- Your writing is part of your presence. Point first, short, and never sent in the heat of the moment.

EXAMPLE

Hannah often joins calls a minute late and stays quiet until the end, when she makes her point in a rush. She starts logging on two minutes early and asks one question in the first ten minutes. By the time her item comes up, people are already listening to her.

Reflect

In which settings do I feel most present, and in which do I fade?

What might someone conclude about me from my last five emails?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Use the Meeting Presence Checklist on the next page for two meetings, one in person and, if you can, one online. Rate yourself after each.

The Meeting Presence Checklist

Use this before and during two meetings. It takes two minutes to prepare and one minute to review afterwards.

	IN THE ROOM	ONLINE
Before	Write your one key point and what you want to happen next. Arrive five minutes early.	Same, plus: check camera height, light and sound. Close other windows and notifications.
Start	Feet on the floor, hands still. Greet people by name.	Camera on, face the light. Say something in the first ten minutes.
During	Full attention. Build on others' points. Notice who has not spoken.	Look at the camera for your key point. Watch faces, not yourself.
After	Send a short, clear follow-up with the point first.	Same. Reread before sending.

Rate yourself after each meeting

TICK FOR MEETING 1, CROSS FOR MEETING 2	NOT YET	PARTLY	MOSTLY	FULLY
I arrived prepared and calm	☐	☐	☐	☐
My voice and posture were steady	☐	☐	☐	☐
I gave full attention	☐	☐	☐	☐
I made my key point clearly	☐	☐	☐	☐
My follow-up was short and clear	☐	☐	☐	☐

What one thing will I do differently in my next important meeting?

Speaking with clarity and brevity

Making your point clearly, and then stopping, is one of the most valuable skills you can build. It respects people's time, and it makes your ideas far easier to agree with.

Key ideas

- Know your point before you speak. If you cannot say it in one sentence, you are not ready yet.
- Put the point first. Give your answer or recommendation, then the reasons.
- Lean on a simple structure: point, reason, example, point. It is often called PREP.
- Use fewer, plainer words. If a sentence needs a breath in the middle, it is probably two sentences.
- Stop when you have finished. A short silence gives your point room to land.

EXAMPLE

Asked how the supplier review is going, Ollie used to start with the history. Now he says: "We should switch supplier in March. The current one has missed four deliveries this quarter. Last month that delayed two customer orders. So I would like your agreement to start the switch."

Reflect

When do I tend to go on too long, and what is usually going on for me then?

Which words or phrases do I lean on that I could cut?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Use the PREP Planner on the next page for one real message you need to give soon: an update, a request or an idea. Then deliver it, and stop when you have finished.

The PREP Planner

Plan on paper first. Read it aloud once. If any part takes more than two sentences, cut it.

The message and who it is for: _____

STEP	WHAT I WILL SAY
Point: my headline in one sentence	
Reason: why	
Example: one concrete example	
Point: repeat, with the action I want	

The cut list

INSTEAD OF	TRY
Going forward	From now on
Leverage, utilise	Use
Just to say, I think maybe, sort of	Cut them and say the point
A long run-up to the point	Start with the point

After you have delivered it

HOW DID IT GO?	NOT YET	PARTLY	MOSTLY	FULLY
I said my point first	☐	☐	☐	☐
I kept it short	☐	☐	☐	☐
I stopped and let people respond	☐	☐	☐	☐

Influencing without authority

Much of the influence we need is with people we do not manage: colleagues in other teams, senior leaders, clients and partners. It starts with understanding what they need, not with what you want.

Key ideas

- Start with them. The most persuasive argument usually helps someone with something they already care about.
- Ask four questions: what are they trying to achieve, what pressure are they under, what worries them, and how do they like to receive information?
- Allan Cohen and David Bradford, in *Influence Without Authority*, describe influence as an exchange. Think about what you can offer, not only what you need.
- Build relationships before you need them.
- Keep it open. Ask yourself how you would feel if the other person could hear your whole plan.

EXAMPLE

Ravi needs time from the IT team to fix a reporting problem. He first asks their lead what they are under pressure on. It is a backlog of access requests. Ravi's team can clear some of those themselves, so he offers that alongside his request.

Reflect

Whose support do I need most in the next three months, and how well do I know what matters to them?

What could I offer people that I have been taking for granted?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Complete the Stakeholder Needs Map on the next page for three people whose support you need. Where you are guessing, plan a conversation to find out.

TOOL 7

The Stakeholder Needs Map

Choose three people whose support you need for something real. Mark anything you are guessing with a question mark, and find out before you rely on it.

PERSON	TRYING TO ACHIEVE	PRESSURES AND WORRIES	HOW THEY LIKE INFORMATION	WHAT I CAN OFFER

Things people often value

WHAT YOU CAN OFFER	WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE
Practical help	Taking a task off their list, lending a skill, sharing a template.
Information	Early notice of a change, context from your part of the organisation.
Recognition	Crediting their team's work in front of people who matter to them.
Being consulted	Asking their view early, before a plan is fixed.
Support for their priorities	Backing something they care about when it comes up.

Which of these three relationships needs attention before I ask for anything?

Building a case and handling objections

Once you understand what matters to people, you can build a case that speaks to it, and treat objections as part of the conversation rather than a contest to win.

Key ideas

- Frame it around their priorities: start with what they care about, then show how your idea helps.
- Choose evidence that suits the audience: numbers, an example, or who else supports it. Two or three strong points beat ten weak ones.
- Make yes easy: a small first step, a clear request, and an honest view of the cost of doing nothing.
- Welcome the objection. Listen fully and ask a question before you defend.
- Acknowledge what is fair, respond honestly, then check. If you cannot answer, say so and come back.

EXAMPLE

Ellie wants her team to trial a new booking system. Her manager's first objection is cost. Ellie asks what worries him most, and learns it is actually the disruption of a busy month. She suggests a pilot with one team after the peak, and he agrees.

Reflect

When I meet an objection, do I tend to defend, give in, or get curious?

What idea have I been holding back because I expect a no?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Use the Case and Objections Builder on the next page for one idea you want someone to support. Plan a small first step and your responses to three likely objections.

TOOL 8

The Case and Objections Builder

Build your case around the person you need to persuade. Use your Stakeholder Needs Map to fill in the second row.

Who I need to persuade: _____

PART	MY CASE
My ask, in one sentence	
Why it matters to them	
My best evidence for this person	
A small first step	
The cost of doing nothing	

Likely objections

OBJECTION	WHAT MIGHT BE BEHIND IT	MY HONEST RESPONSE

IN THE CONVERSATION

Listen fully. Ask what the main concern is. Acknowledge what is fair. Respond honestly. Then check: does that address it, or is there something else?

Handling challenge and saying no well

Influence is tested most when things get difficult. This lesson brings together staying calm, understanding others and speaking clearly, so you can handle challenge and say no in a way that protects the work and the relationship.

Key ideas

- Stay curious under challenge. Most challenge comes from concern, a different view or missing information.
- With a hard question: pause, acknowledge it, answer the actual question, and keep it short.
- With a difficult audience: find out what you can in advance, name the mood, and speak to their concerns early.
- A good no is clear, kind and short. A clear no is respected more than a reluctant yes that is never delivered.
- Offer what you can do: an alternative, a later date, or a trade-off.

EXAMPLE

Sam is asked to lead a new project in her busiest month. She says: "Thank you for thinking of me. I cannot lead it well before the audit finishes. I could join the kick-off and take it over from the 20th, or if it needs to start now, which of my current projects should I hand on?"

Reflect

What have I said yes to recently that I should have questioned?

Which kind of challenge unsettles me most, and why?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Use the Pushback Planner on the next page for one request you need to decline, or one challenging conversation coming up.

The Pushback Planner

Choose the shape of your answer first, then plan the words. Say them aloud once before the conversation.

SHAPE	WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE
A clear no	Thank you for asking. I am not able to take this on, because my time is committed to the launch.
A trade-off	I can do this, if we move the report to next week. Which matters more?
An alternative	I cannot lead it, but I could review the plan before it goes out.
A later yes	Not this month. I could pick it up from the start of next month.

Your plan

MY NOTES	
The request or challenge	
What I am saying no to	
What I can offer instead	
My reason, in one sentence	
The words I will use	

If they push back, what is the one point I will calmly come back to?

Your influence plan

Influence is rarely won in a single meeting. It builds through many small moments: a promise kept, a calm response, a clear update, a colleague who felt listened to. A written plan keeps those moments deliberate when the week gets busy.

Key ideas

- Your reputation is what people say about you when you are not in the room. Choose three words you would like them to use.
- Check honestly whether your recent behaviour supports those words.
- Choose three relationships to invest in deliberately, with a first step for each.
- Keep using your strongest strand, and practise one habit from your weakest strand every week.
- Keep asking for feedback. Go back to the people who gave you feedback after lesson 1.

EXAMPLE

Leila's three words are calm, clear and fair. Her weakest strand is presence online, so her weekly habit is to speak in the first ten minutes of every video call. She books a review in three months and asks the same two colleagues from her Impact Snapshot.

Reflect

What has changed in how people respond to me since lesson 1?

Which tool from this course will I keep using, and when?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Complete the Influence Plan on the next page. Then put your review date in your diary now, three months from today.

The Influence Plan

Keep this plan somewhere you will see it. Look at it each week, and review it properly in three months.

My reputation

THREE WORDS I WANT PEOPLE TO USE	WHERE I ALREADY SHOW IT	WHAT I WILL DO MORE OF

My relationships

PERSON	WHY THEY MATTER	MY FIRST STEP	BY WHEN

My habit and review

MY COMMITMENT	
My weekly habit, from my weakest strand	
Who I will ask for feedback	
My review date	

What I am going to do

Two or three small changes that you actually make will do more than a long list you never start.

My three actions

WHAT I WILL DO	WHEN	WHO I WILL TELL

Coming back to this

Put a date in your diary about a month from now and answer these three questions.

What has changed since I did this workbook?

What did I not get to, and what got in the way?

What am I carrying forward?

KEEP GOING

Influence and Communication

Return to the video lessons and knowledge checks whenever you want a refresher, and use these tools each time an important conversation comes up.

£149 per person, per year, inc. VAT

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