



Inspiring Leaders 2013/14

Case Study: Reviewing Cialdini's 6 laws of influence and their relevance in the delivery of Estates focussed projects

Introduction:

This case study examines the theoretical models that can be used when influencing people with specific regards to Estates related projects.

The models examined are Cialdini's Six Laws of Influence and the Cohen-Bradford Influence Model. I have used a recent estates project to provide a new skills lab to apply these rules and comment as to whether the laws apply in practice.

Areas of leadership for consideration:

- Managing Expectations
- Managing Sponsors/Senior members of staff
- Influencing Senior People – will concentrate on this.

From an Estates bias – Stakeholder management – briefing – delivery

Focus on managing expectations – “gold standard” vs available resources

Standard theoretical model to apply & test case study:

- Cialdini's six laws of influence
 1. The law of scarcity
 2. The law of reciprocity
 3. The law of authority
 4. The law of liking
 5. The law of social proof
 6. The law of commitment and consistency
- Cohen-Bradford Influence Model (Focuses on reciprocity – Cialdini's Second law above)
 1. Assume all are potential allies
 2. Clarify goals and priorities
 3. **Diagnose the other person's world**

4. Identify both parties relevant currencies
5. Dealing with relationships
6. Influence through give and take

Other areas for consideration:

- Negotiation skills
- List of do's to manage expectations (Forbes.com PR):
 - Key assumptions
 - Define limits on influence
 - Be honest from the start
 - Under promise – over deliver
 - Anticipate the clients need
 - Constant communications
 - Reporting

Did a real life example actually meet the Model's conditions?

Case Study 1: Provision of new specialist lab facility

Reviewing Cialdini's 6 laws of influence:

- **Scarcity** – space and time. Additional teaching requires more space, project to be ready for the start of the academic year.
- **Reciprocity** – provision of this facility is likely to encourage client to look favourably on future requests for space to be handed back if needed for other uses.
- **Authority** – as estates experts, the client looks to us for advice on where the facility can be located and its suitability in terms of size and compatibility for conversion for their use.
- **Liking** – advocates similarities in both parties. Has some validation in that both client and service provider have employer in common. *(Especially relevant when employing external PMs. I have noted clients will give less input to external parties than internal.)*
- **Social Proof** – Collective behaviour deemed to be correct. Don't really see this in building projects as clients do not see this as usual business so tend to be steered by the experts – see authority above.
- **Commitment & Consistency** – When plans have been agreed, clients will commit and be consistent. Disagree. University sector is common to review agreed plans, and change during the process if further thoughts bring better solutions to light. Also there is a need to bring the whole team together – other opinions in the client team can be negative to the proposal.

Reviewing the Cohen-Bradford Influence Model:

Taking the Cialdini's second law of influence above, is reciprocity important in my work? (Or what do I get out of this request?)

Are negative factors the key here? (e.g. If I don't do something for you, then I will be seen not to do my job therefore poor performer.)

Motivation seems to be a much more important factor here. *I do my job to provide a service for someone else, and don't expect anything other than payment and job satisfaction for this work.*

Taking the case study above, reciprocity is required in order to progress. I am looking to influence people to undertake decision making on a process that is often in addition to their day job. What do they get out of it - the new facility.

The model is not necessary if all parties are cooperating. If there is resistance, then the model comes into its own.

- **Assume all are potential allies** – in this example a third party was involved. They were to lose some space in order for the new facility to be provided, therefore not seen as a supporter of the process. All other parties were on board.
- **Clarify goals and priorities** – Within the academic group, the new facility was to have a multifunctional purpose. Therefore there a number of conflicting requirements to be addressed. Knowing what you want can be as challenging as delivering it!
- **Diagnose the other person's world** – the need for the facility was in this case very black and white so easy to address. It was subsequent secondary benefits that were more difficult to agree.
- **Identify both parties' relevant currencies** – what is valued by both parties. In this case student experience is the key. I want to provide modern, excellent facilities that will maximise the student experience; the client wants to provide a facility for staff to enable the same.
- **Dealing with relationships** – Past experiences, personal likes/dislikes. Aware of limitations. Will depend on personality traits so different approach with different people needed.
- **Influence through give and take** – Offer timetable for delivery. Means the other party risks delivery if not inputting to the decision making process in a timely manner. More negative approach.

Conclusion:

- When influencing anyone, the model need not be considered unless resistance to the request is encountered.
- The Cialdini laws of influence are relevant to the work in Estates, albeit with the above caveats.
- Reciprocity is part of day to day life and not often actively considered. If resistance to a request is encountered, then the question ought to be rhetorically asked "What do they get out of this request?"
- Understanding of influencing theory is key when leading a project.
- Most important is to understand where the other person is coming from.

Questions?

