

## Sales Coach Series

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### Influence buys from influence

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Following last month's exploration of authority and influence we now turn our attention to building successful business relationships with the 'right' people.

Firstly, we need to have integrity and personal influence. Integrity should be self-explanatory. Personal influence means being able to make commitments on behalf of others in the company and to deliver on these promises. Consider how some salespeople rally support from other departments and the confidence this inspires in their customers. A recent survey has indicated this as a major factor in successful selling. Influential people buy from influential people.

Such people are often highly motivated. We are all aware of motivational factors such as achievement, advancement and money but do we consider these in relation to our customers? Supporting the customer in achieving their personal goals can culminate in a strong business alliance.

Being of political and strategic value gives us a significant advantage. First, we become a resource not just a supplier, enabling the customer to share plans, ideas and views. Then we learn the customer's own personal drivers and ambitions. Knowing 'where they see themselves going' and being available as a resource in this process is a powerful relationship-builder and keeps the competition at bay.