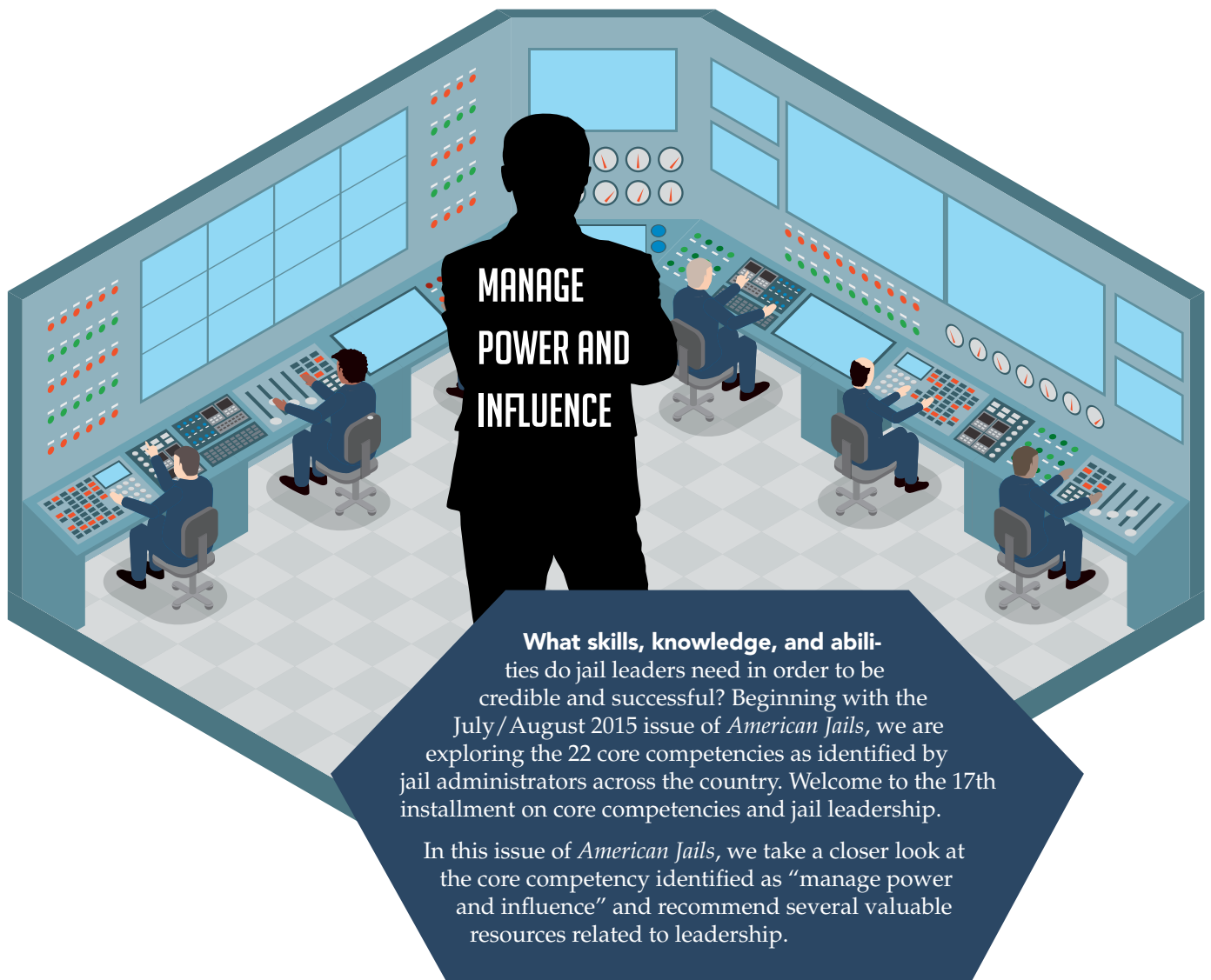


Core Competencies **AND** Jail Leadership

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What skills, knowledge, and abilities do jail leaders need in order to be credible and successful? Beginning with the July/August 2015 issue of *American Jails*, we are exploring the 22 core competencies as identified by jail administrators across the country. Welcome to the 17th installment on core competencies and jail leadership.

In this issue of *American Jails*, we take a closer look at the core competency identified as “manage power and influence” and recommend several valuable resources related to leadership.

Mastering Power and Influence to Advance Your Jail's Workplace

Description: Understand the organization's history and political climate; use the political process (internal/external and official/unofficial) to accomplish goals; understand the impact of your use of power on the organization and the community.

Rationale: While a certain degree of power accompanies the position of jail leader, the ability to use it effectively and in a responsible manner is a personal attribute. It is especially important that jail leaders understand both the limits and the widespread impact of their power and influence on internal operations and external stakeholders.

Knowledge of:

- The nature of power and influence and the legacy of how misuse of power has affected an organization.
- The agendas of those with external power and influence (e.g., policy-makers, politicians, com-

munity leaders, unions, and others who impact jail management and operations).

- How you use your personal power in your job.

Skills to:

- Identify your formal/informal sources of power.
- Recognize how power can be used to support the jail's vision/mission.
- Use power with external stakeholders and the community.
- Recognize what mistakes were made regarding the use of power in the past and avoid repeating them.
- Understand why the use of unilateral position-based power is often resented and counterproductive.
- Network; keep abreast of the current political climate (without becoming consumed by it).
- Use effective interpersonal communications, especially nonevaluative listening.
- Mentor peers and subordinates in their use of power.

- Understand and influence various agendas of other power brokers who impact the jail.

Abilities to:

- Be comfortable with using power and influence.
- Weigh alternatives for using power.
- Learn from past mistakes.
- Avoid over-reliance on unilateral power.
- Be perceptive and accessible.
- Listen and communicate in a non-confrontational manner.
- Respect power without being intimidated by it.
- Be confident and persuasive.

The jail leader's knowledge, understanding, and ability to legitimately and effectively use power and influence are important to the jail's success, as well as to reaching and sustaining the facility's mission, vision, and values. This article discusses the 16th core competency—"Manage Power and Influence." It focuses on clarifying the definitions and types of power and influence

22 Core Competencies for Jail Leaders

- Anticipate, analyze, and resolve organizational challenges and conflicts.
- Assure organizational accountability.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with external stakeholders.
- Build and maintain teamwork; mentor and coach others.
- Communicate effectively, internally and externally.
- Comprehend, obtain, and manage fiscal resources.
- Develop and maintain a positive organizational culture that promotes respect for diverse staff.
- Develop and sustain organizational vision/mission.
- Engage in strategic planning.
- Enhance self-awareness; maintain proactive professional commitment.
- Establish organizational authority, roles, and responsibilities.
- Leverage the role of the jail in the criminal justice system.
- Make sound decisions.
- Manage change.
- Manage labor relations.
- **Manage power and influence.**
- Manage time.
- Obtain and manage human resources.
- Oversee inmate and facility management.
- Oversee physical plant management.
- Reduce jail-related liability risks.
- Understand and manage emerging technology.

and provides a tool that can give you insight into how you use power (both positively and negatively). It also opens the discussion about the nexus between leadership and workplace bullying. Finally, let's not forget that you are managing four generations in your workplace—and effectively using this core competency is especially relevant for the success of today's jail.

For many, the word “power” has a negative connotation; for others, “power” is exhilarating and sought-after. Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying: “Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.” Most of us have witnessed the misuse of power in our workplace and vowed never to submit our peers and colleagues to such abuse again. We also see people who have no formal rank influence decisions, despite the fact that they are not in powerful positions or in the organization's chart of formal leaders. An early important lesson for most leaders is that having “rank” does not mean that people pay attention to your message or follow what you say. And we know that the newest generations in the workplace value competence, not rank.

For the purpose of this article, power is defined as *“having control, authority and/or ability to accomplish a task individually, or by directing others to act.”* Influence is defined as *“the capacity, either formally or informally, to change an individual's or groups' actions, behaviors or opinions.”* The distinction drawn here is that “power” is generally granted by an external force; the ability to “influence” is earned. Even though an internet search can identify more definitions, we feel these working definitions clarify the difference.

Power 101

Resulting primarily from the work of John R. P. French, Jr. and Bertram Raven (1959), five categories of power were identified, with a sixth added later. As each of these



“THE DAYS WHEN A BOSS SAYS ‘JUMP’ AND EVERYONE RESPONDS ‘HOW HIGH?’ ARE GONE FOREVER.”

—JOHN P. KOTTER

bases are described, think about how you use power. The power bases are:

- **Legitimate**—The leader has been granted the right to make decisions and expects others to comply with his or her directives. This leader controls the human and fiscal resources to achieve objectives and maintain order in the organization.
- **Reward**—The leader is able to compensate employees who perform and/or comply with his or her directives, by giving praise, raises, public acknowledgments, promotions, or premium work assignments.
- **Expert**—Based on the leader's perceived knowledge and experience, subordinates defer to the leader to define the best way to proceed. This leader is considered by those in the organization to have superior knowledge, education, job experience, and/or training.
- **Referent**—The leader's ability to be liked and respected by others results in him or her leading the work group or organization. If the leader is considered charismatic,

his or her personality gains him or her followers.

- **Coercive**—The leader can punish those who do not comply—or threaten to do so—by instilling a fear of negative consequences or by withholding pay increases, transfers, promotions, or terminating employment.
- **Informational**—The leader's ability to control information that others need in order to perform their responsibilities results in subordinates following him or her.

These power bases were categorized as either “positional” or “personal” power. Positional power bases are legitimate, reward, coercive, and informational. Personal power bases are expertise and referent. Thinking about the power bases in these terms gives us insight into leading a multi-generational workplace. Younger generations will not choose to stay in an organization that relies primarily on positional power.

To be successful, a leader must leverage and balance all power bases. Just as importantly, when you as a leader make mistakes in your use of power, you need to admit those mistakes and grow from the experience.

Evaluating How You Use Power

How do you use power? Often we react, not even thinking about how our own behavior can influence the workplace. A mini self-assessment, “How Do You Use Power and Influence: A Self-Assessment,” is provided on page 34, so that in the privacy of your office you can ask yourself a few important questions. Your answers will tell you if you need to reconsider how you use your power. What you do with the results of this assessment is your decision. You may want to consider gathering the input of those with whom you work to validate your own thinking (anonymously, of course!). If you determine that you have areas that require attention, it is your responsibility to devise a way to move

forward and to develop the ability to honestly judge if your personal improvement plan is working.

Influence 101

In order to be an influencer in your environment—whether at home, work, or in social settings—you must first have some level of credible visibility. Influencers generally rely on the personal power bases (expertise and referent) to make their points of view known and to convince others to join them. After all, who will follow a person who is inaccurate in their statements or whom others avoid? No matter what your rank is within an organization, you can influence decisions.

We are confronted each day by staff who complain about the organization—the leaders, the workplace, and basically everything. Even when challenged, these employees are unable to provide meaningful suggestions of change. These complainers are not influencers. They can become influencers (i.e., negative influencers) if not confronted. While it can be difficult for leaders to convince these individuals to focus on how to fix the problems, simply ignoring them allows other employees to consider these complainers as emerging influencers (providing the complainers with referent power). This is why communication within the organization is essential: to reaffirm the leadership's message and the organization's mission, vision, and values.

Leaders need to recognize who the influencers are in their organization. We all know of those without rank or title who have the ability to convince leaders (or their peers) to change direction or those who can impact the internal agency culture.

Here are some tips on becoming an influencer or improving your current abilities. As you review these suggestions, consider how you can influence your organization.

- **Develop clarity.** Be clear in your own mind about what you want to influence or change. Are you

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—BARRY POSNER

working to convince decision-makers to raise salaries, improve the workplace, or gain more staff training? If you can't articulate your objectives to yourself, you will certainly not influence others.

- **Gather information.** To leverage the expertise power base, you need to become an expert. Spend time determining what data will guide your influencing, then gather the information. Be prepared to present the data precisely so that your audience can quickly draw conclusions. Be honest in your collection of information and cite your sources.
- **Know the history of the issue.** Examine what worked in the past or what was tried and consequently failed. Learn why there were successes and why there were failures.

- **Take the temperature.** Timing is critical to success. Trying to get pay raises when the county is in the middle of a deficit budget is not a wise strategy. Assess how others in the organization feel about the issue you are attempting to influence. To gain traction, the articulated goals must be shared by others. As John C. Maxwell offers: “He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk.”
 - **Identify the options.** Find the middle ground to determine the principles with which people can agree. This builds the base for next steps.
 - **Adjust the communication.** Too often the message is lost in the communication. I recall when a union was displeased with its sheriff. The union paid for a banner plane to fly up and down the beach with a message stating the unfairness of the sheriff. Needless to say, most vacationers were not really interested, so the strategy was not a success. While a bombastic concept, the message was lost and the issue lost ground.
 - **Regroup and move on.** The influencing of issues never happens in a stagnant environment. Recognize the changing times and adjust the message. Learn from and acknowledge your mistakes in attempting to influence others.
- To be successfully influential in your jail is more than having the biggest drum or the loudest voice. These are temporal tools; they will fade when peers and colleagues learn there is no substance and no depth.

Misuse of Power and Influence: Workplace Bullying

In today's jail, the subject of workplace bullying must be included in the discussion of managing power. The misuse of power often results in bullying. The leader may be the bully or the leader may allow a work environment that permits others to be bullies. This behavior is at

the extreme spectrum of projecting power. Since 2003, 30 States have introduced legislation prohibiting bullying in the workplace (Namie, 2017).

Jail workplaces, which are classified as part of public services industries, are the *third most bully-prone* industry in the Nation behind healthcare and education (Namie, 2017). Forensic Psychiatrist Carole Lieberman hypothesizes that corrections is especially bully-prone due to the nature of work and the nature of people drawn to it (Wilkie, 2016).

The Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) defines bullying as: repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators. This *abusive conduct* is:

- Threatening, humiliating, or intimidating.
- Work interference (sabotage) that prevents work from getting done.

- Verbal abuse (Namie, 2017).

Research conducted by the WBI indicates that 37% of workers have been bullied, 13% are currently bullied, and 24% were previously bullied. Additionally,

- 19% of Americans are bullied; another 19% witness it.
- 61% of Americans are aware of abusive conduct in the workplace.
- 60 million Americans are affected by bullying.
- 70% of perpetrators are men; 60% of targets are women.
- Hispanics are reported to be the most frequently bullied race.
- 61% of bullies are bosses; the majority (63%) operate alone.
- 40% of targets of bullies are believed to suffer adverse health effects.
- 29% of targets of bullies remain silent about their experiences.

- 71% of employer's reactions to bullying are harmful to targets.
- 60% of coworker's reactions to bullying are harmful to targets.
- To stop it, 65% of targets leave their original jobs.
- 77% of Americans support enacting a new law to prevent/address bullying.
- 45% report worsening of work relationships, since 2016.

How do you overcome bullying, assure the internal workplace does not allow it, and lead the way? As workplace bullying is linked to workplace violence, doing nothing is not an option. Here are a few strategies:

- Define it and then communicate the prohibited behaviors throughout the organization. More than once. Talk about it.
- Establish zero tolerance for bullying as part of workplace policies—just as agencies have

addressed discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.

- Assure personnel actions, including transfers, demotions, and promotions, are truly transparent and objective as 60% of bullies are bosses or managers.
- Hold subordinates accountable for knowing the behaviors and addressing them.
- Link the initiatives of zero tolerance for bullying to the employee assistance program in order to have resources for the bully and the victims.
- Provide a means for staff who believe they are bullied to safely report without fear of retaliation.
- Assure you model the behavior.

There are many theories about why people bully others. Sometimes they were or are the victim; perhaps they are seeking a place for themselves through belittling others; they seek to project power; it is the only way they perceive themselves as a “success;” or they may have personal mental-health issues. Recent research by Khan, Moss, et. al (2016) reveals that managers may bully high-performing subordinate employees if the manager feels that these subordinates threaten their place in the organizational hierarchy by garnishing too much positive attention.

Regardless of why people bully, it is the leader’s job to protect their workforce from bullies and to assure that this deviant subculture in an organization is derailed, and not permitted to exist or grow. Instead, the leader must cultivate an environment in which the prevailing behaviors are those of hard work and high performance, and are also consistent with the mission, vision, and values of the department.

Generational Relevance

Today’s jail leaders need to constantly check and verify the generational relevance in the workplace and in their decisions. Importantly, their supervisors need to understand the different generations—and can

effectively manage the newest generations of Millennials, “iGen,” and Generation Zs. Leadership theory is not stagnant, and how power and influence motivated—or de-motivated—workers 20 years ago isn’t the same today.

For Millennials, the use of power and influence must involve them; they want a stake in the outcome, and will leave your organization rather than sit on the sideline or be excluded. Mentor and coach these workers so that they can see their place and learn to refine their skills for success.

For iGen or Generation Z, born after 1994, know that they are not a newer version of Millennials (Twenge, 2017). This generation arrives in your jail workplace more mature than the previous cohorts, and they are ready for collaboration. They want mentors and want to learn. They expect challenges and inclusion. They want to work hard and expect their ideas to be heard.

The “just do it” approach that didn’t work for the question-asking

Millennials certainly won’t work for the iGen generation. These two generations put the challenge out there to Generation Xers and Baby Boomers that your actions must follow your words, especially for using power and attempting to influence them.

Conclusions

Power is not about “ordering” people to action. Influence is not trying to convince subordinates that you are right and they are not. Remember the Kouzes and Posner (2012) philosophy: In order to get power, you have to give your own power away. What does that entail? That you are showing a willingness to share in the decision-making process. This doesn’t mean that you dodge your responsibility to make decisions when needed; but rather work collaboratively to move the jail forward.

Allowing peers and subordinates to reach conclusions without you pushing your own agenda is powerful for them, and may provide an



Leader’s Library

Getting to Yes: Negotiating an Agreement Without Giving In
Roger Fisher, William L Ury, and Bruce Patton, B. (2012).
Random House.

“The Bases of Social Power, From Studies in Social Power”
John R. P. French, , Jr. and Bertram Raven
www.communicationcache.com/uploads/1/0/8/8/10887248/the_bases_of_social_power_-_chapter_20_-_1959.pdf

Power and Influence: Beyond Formal Authority
John P. Kotter (1985)
The Free Press

The Leadership Challenge, Fifth Edition
James Kouzes and Barry Posner
Jossey-Bass, 2012.

“Power and Leadership: An Influence Process”
Fred C. Lunenberg (2012)
International Journal of Management, Business and Administration,
15(1). <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7965/8afc91bc9b8a8966f3827e372e3656c7bfce.pdf>



How Do You Use Power and Influence: A Self-Assessment

Answer “yes” or “no” to these questions that reflect on the various power bases.

Legitimate

- Are you the one who must always make decisions?
- In your jail, is there a marked line separating those who make decisions from those who must carry the directives?
- Do you find yourself telling any subordinate “just do it because I said so” or words that have the same impact?

Reward

- Are you “bribing” members of your team to do their work—either by giving days off, “better” post assignments, or praise?
- Do all team members feel appreciated by you?
- Do you find yourself settling for work that you consider below standards?

Expert

- Are your subordinates confident in their ability to perform their job functions?
- Are team members reluctant to offer new information or data that differs from your point of view?
- Do you use your perceived expertise to undermine or chastise your team?

Referent

- Are communications strained among your team?
- Would you ask a team member to do something you would not do?
- Do your subordinates genuinely believe you care about them?

Coercive

- Is there conflict and blaming among your team?
- Is the initiation of formal or informal discipline for team members the way you manage your workload?
- Do your subordinates distance themselves from you?

Informational

- Are you bombarding your subordinates with information and over explaining?
- Does your team sometimes seem paralyzed to make decisions?
- Do you micromanage your subordinates?

These questions are to provide you with a quick look at how you use power and influence. If you honestly answered “yes” to any of these questions, perhaps it is time to consider how effective you are in leading your team and its contributions to the organization.

outcome you didn’t even consider—a better one. Our staff wants to be involved, but needs models of how that works and looks in a jail. You are the one to provide that vision. If not, who else? ■

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