

Your Profile of Power

The following questions are designed to get you thinking about the power bases you have at the moment.

The questions are divided between the five types of power bases which are available to managers - Authority/Position, Expert, Resource, Interpersonal, and Network power.

The questions will help you to identify if you have a particular power base. The more positive indicators you have, the greater your power.

Please complete this carefully, thinking about all those with whom you interact. Try not to undersell or to over-value yourself.

Authority/Position

1. Do you have the right to make decisions, other than trivial ones - especially decisions which involve expenditure?
2. Do others need your approval before they can take action?
3. Do your decisions affect important aspects of the organisation's work?
4. Do you appraise anyone else's work?
5. Does your manager typically support your decisions?
6. Do you work in a key part of the organisation?
7. Can you provide praise/reward/discipline/punishment to others?
8. Do you encounter any resistance to your right to make decisions/supervise others/give approval from staff, peers, seniors?

Yes' answers to any of 1-7 indicate that you possess this sort of power. You need to determine how much power you have against others in the organisation who also have this power to gauge when and where you are most powerful.

'Yes' to 8 suggests you could have problems getting others to accept this authority, which is something you should consider addressing in the last

part of this exercise.

Expert

1. Does it take a year or more to learn to do your job well?
2. Do you need a qualification to do your job?
3. Do you have the highest qualification in your field?
4. Are you the only person in the organisation who can do your job right now?
5. If you were to leave the organisation would they have difficulty replacing you?
6. Does your knowledge and skill relate to a major aspect of the organisation's work?
7. Do others consult you and follow your advice?
8. Do senior people show that they value/need your contribution?
9. Do colleagues turn to you as someone they believe to be particularly competent? Expert power does not have to mean academic qualifications. It could be, for example, experience in a role, knowledge of how something – a machine, a process, a customer or a system – works and so on.

A 'yes' to any of questions 1–6 indicates that you possess expert power.

If you have said 'no' to any of 7, 8 and 9 then this suggests a lack of perception of your expertise by others. Consider addressing this in the last part of this exercise. For expert power to be useful to you, it is critical that others recognise your contribution.

Resource

1. Can you give or withhold access to any of these:
 - Money?
 - Information?
 - Promotion?
 - 'Perks' – e.g. time off, flexible working?

- Training?
- Senior people?
- Computer or other operational or administrative facilities?
- Accommodation/space?
- Anything else?

2. Do others know this, perhaps because you have sometimes refused them?

3. Do others have an easy, alternative source of access to any of these things?

‘Yes’ to any of the items in 1 indicates that you have power based on resource control. The more resources you control the stronger this powerbase.

‘No’ to 2 suggests you may need to do more to make others aware that you have this power. Power is only helpful to us if others are aware we hold it. However, a ‘yes’ to 3 for any of the resources to which you hold access indicates a low level of power for that resource. You may not want to draw attention to this or find ways to disguise it from others.

Network

1. Are you on good terms with a number of people from the organisation across different sections/departments and levels?
2. Do you know who the most powerful people are?
3. Do you know powerful people in your organisation pretty well and are you in frequent contact with them?
4. Do you connect in any way away from work with some of the most powerful people in the organisation?
5. Do you socialise over coffee, drinks or meals with people from work?
6. Do peers and seniors confide in you?

7. Do people at more senior level drop in, email or call you on the phone for chats?

8. Do you work closely with anyone who is very senior to you in the hierarchy?

9. Do you have a powerful mentor/ally?

‘Yes’ to any of these indicates that your power is based upon your networks. This is a particularly important source of power and one which many people need to develop. People do things for people they know and like, so it’s important to network upwards since that is where the decision makers are to be found. However, never forget the power that you can gain by knowing people widely across the organisation – from top to bottom.

Interpersonal

1. Do others take your views seriously?

2. Do you usually speak up at meetings?

3. Can you hold the attention of a large group or audience?

4. Are you comfortable giving presentations?

5. Do others ask your views on important issues?

6. Do you converse with your boss and other senior people on equal terms?

7. Are you good at getting resource and information for your group and defending them if necessary?

8. Do you make your point confidently, without sounding aggressive or weak?

9. Do you enjoy building rapport with others and making new relationships?

‘Yes’ to any of these indicates that your power is based upon your interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills are not innate but learned. People like people who are personable – who converse easily and who are not afraid to make their point and do so without alienating others. Interpersonal

power is often the first power source by which others will judge you so it's important to develop good interpersonal skills.

Your Profile

Now look at your answers again. It's likely that you have some degree of power base in each of the key areas – so it's time to establish your power profile.

There are no right answers here. You need to consider how powerful in each area you consider yourself to be and then how powerful you are perceived to be by others who are in your sphere – your colleagues, your staff and your seniors. Use these two views (and your answers to each section) to establish your power rating. Think carefully, and give yourself a power rating in your current role of between 1 (low) and 10 (high) for each of the areas.

Put your results on the graph below.

10					
9					
8					
7					
6					
5					
4					
3					
2					
1					
	Authority	Expertise	Resource	Network	Inter-Personal

Quite probably, your graph looks high in some areas and low in others. Don't worry. This is normal and in the next exercise you'll have the opportunity to improve your lower scoring areas.