

API Model

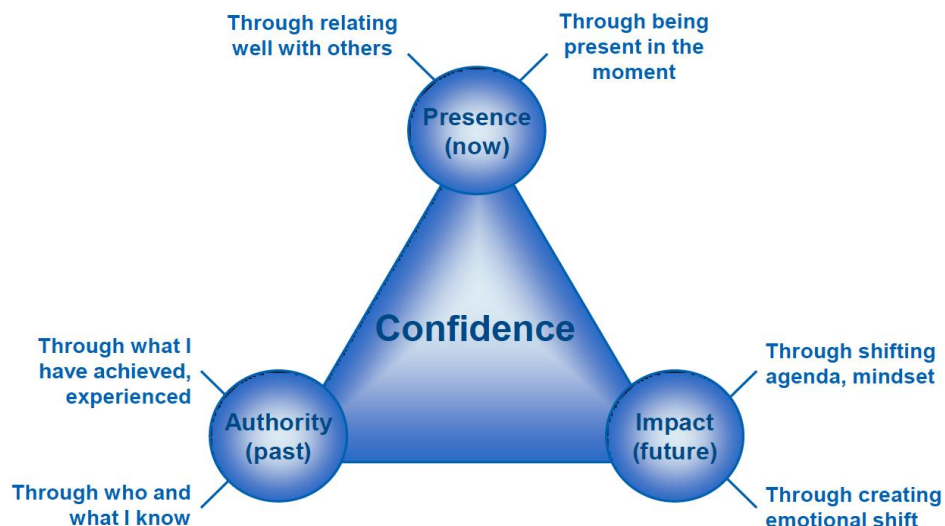
Peter Hawkins

When you're leading, or just trying to make something happen, if you're not backed by the automatic power of influence that often comes from having a large budget or an important title, you are left depending on your sheer ability to convince others to follow. How can you improve your chances of success?

Getting to know the three concepts of the API method is a good start. The API Method, developed by Peter Hawkins, helps professionals build trust and influence through the development of three core leadership qualities:

Authority, Presence, and Impact.

Personal power and influence can be divided into three main aspects:



Authority Presence and Impact relate to the confidence you have in yourself and what you can bring to bear in any situation.

AUTHORITY (Past)

What and who you know; your experience and achievements

Authority is an essential attribute of a leader particularly when interacting with stakeholders. It is derived from what you have done in the past. Tapping into one's strengths, depth of knowledge, qualifications, experiences and achievements. It builds a sense of self-esteem which others will perceive as authority. An individual's authority can be perceived by others within 5 minutes of meeting/ interacting.

However, it doesn't, by itself, create lasting relationship or affect change.



Overuse can lead to negative effects, with people wondering why you are trying so hard to promote yourself.

Authority is seen physically when people are grounded breathing slowly and standing tall and straight.

PRESENCE (Present)

Relating well to others; Being fully attentive and reading the moment

Presence is the ability to read the moment and build strong relationships with all stakeholders involved in any process or context. It is the ability to build rapport quickly with a wide range of people. Every sustainable change process is full of obstacles, resistance, and unexpected moments. Presence is the key capability one needs to come up with strong, effective interventions on the spot.

People with high levels of presence command attention and respect in varying situations and a large number of people find them easy to relate to. To have high quality presence individuals need to have the skill sets to act in the moment and connect with those they are relating to in the first 10 minutes of the interaction.

Presence is physically manifest when people are openminded and 'embracing' those around them and in a way that connects with each individual.

What physical and energetic presence do I want to create and how do I match or lead the other person. You may want to inspire, enthuse, excite or demonstrate empathy. Presence requires self – awareness to behave authentically and with recognition of preferences and patterns of behaviour you have noticed in different people.

IMPACT (Future)

Transforming agendas and mindsets; creating an emotional shift in others

Impact is the measure of the difference between what is said and suggested, and what is actually accepted and followed by other people. Many people have deep knowledge or a burning passion for an issue, but too few have (or work consciously to develop) the trust of others—the very element that transforms them into leaders or advisors who can really make things happen. It is the emotional shift you enable in others.

It is seen as you making a difference. It is a shift in the direction of a discussion or conversation brought about by a change in the other persons thinking as a result of your intervention. Impact is the ability to shift the emotional climate of a relationship by skilfully introducing different emotional energy, such as humour, feedback or the naming of a collectively felt and unexpressed feeling. Impact includes persuasion, challenge, reframing, assertiveness and clarity of expression. An impact is about moving forward it is outcome thinking it is future focused.

Our impact is perceived in the first 20 minutes. Impact is physically manifest by stepping or sitting forward to create energy, momentum and action.



How do you use the API method?

You can begin by using it as a means for self-evaluation. For each quality ask yourself:

1. How would I rate myself for this quality on a scale from 0 to 10?

Authority
Presence
Impact

2. What am I actually doing to demonstrate this quality?

Authority
Presence
Impact

3. Is this quality something I should work on, or am I content with it?

Authority
Presence
Impact

Now gain feedback from at least 3 colleagues on how they would rate the different aspects out of 10 and why.

1.	Authority
	Presence
	Impact

2.	Authority
	Presence
	Impact

3.	Authority
	Presence
	Impact



After receiving that feedback and understanding we often rely on two aspects of the model to the detriment of one, whereas the power and true impact comes from an appropriate use of all three. This is about asking the questions:

- How did that feel?

- Do you know what you want to be different?

- What impact you want to provoke?

- What do you want to create?

- How do I want others to perceive me?

By completing this mini self-assessment and receiving feedback you will gain more clarity about your strengths and learning areas when it comes to being a leader.

Taking the time prior to any important meeting, project or event to reflect on the above can be so powerful:

- How will I show up?
- What is my intention?
- What behaviour do I want to exhibit?

