**Graduate Transitions - Influencing Upwards: position your department to maximise success within your institution**

Which skill is most hard to find (from employers)?

The skill of being able to manage upwards.

Gary Argent - 30 years’ experience

Started work in Large IT company, graduate Recruitment Company. Trader association

4 years at City University in London - Head of Careers Team.

Part of his job was to influence in an ever-changing setting of restructures and reorganising of departments

**When influencing it is important to ask questions and listen.**

6 steps of process - Tools when you need to influence

Influencing upwards

What does it mean - way of getting more resource, getting people on your side, working more collaboratively to get people to support your agenda.

Why does it matter?

To get support for key decisions. VC and executive team - influence that team.

Why is it difficult?

Sometimes people don’t want to influenced - don’t understand. It’s not always easy to get access to the people who make the decision - barriers to being able to actually speak to them.

Why is it important to influence upwards?

Unique perspective to build upon a new outlook - important to share it.

If you are at the forefront, speaking with young people, you know what the market is thinking/doing. Most VCs probably aren’t speaking with them. Therefore you are able to influence on what you’ve learned throughout your encounters.

Initiative - you are competing with other departments/faculties and others for your resource.

Influence other departments - keeps you aligned - make sure your goals are inline.

TASK: Presenter asked group to draw a diagram of the university structure of departments to see how it fitted together.

Your department - up to senior department.

Other departments that might interact with the senior team. Do you work with the other departments? Direct relationships with other departments can help your influencing strategy.

TASK: Star next to influencers on your university structure diagram - who has centre of power and how do they relate to your team?

Hidden relationships - historical relationships

How might you influence the senior team indirectly? Another way to influence the team senior team?

**Three key groups to help you influence**

* Advocates - they are your strongest supporters.
* Allies - They are broadly supportive, but might have a slightly different agenda.
* Adversaries - cause biggest challenges. The block against your agenda. Who are they and why? University itself can be the biggest block - different agenda.

**Understand your stakeholders**

Who has an interest — students or other staff, employers? Stakeholders who have an interest in your department.

What is their view and how do they perceive what you department is doing? What does success mean for them?

**Influence people’s perspective of your department**

You need to get other departments to understand what your department actually does and how well you actually do it.

Directly ask them what they think of your department or covertly ask. Directly asking those people might not always get the truth, so listen to other conversations going on.

Attend on-campus events where Deans and VC are there and to listen to what they were saying, so you know what their agendas are.

Talking their language - telling your story, getting access, business case - put yourself in their shoes.

**Questions of style – what sort of person are you? What sort of person is your boss?**

Big picture or lots of detail?

Reader or listener

Stories and emotions or statics and facts

How often do you like to talk: daily, weekly, monthly?

Email, phone or face to face?

Are you an optimist or a pessimist?

Are you a morning or afternoon person?

**These define your communication style.**

Business Cases -

Keep in simple - stick to three points/areas.

Explain what your goal is:

* Explains what you do
* Demonstrate your USP
* Finish with an open-ended question

Prepare the ground - decision not just made on the presentation – it’s about the groundwork, think about your advocates - gather support from others around you. Get them to make the case prior to you giving your presentation.

Write it in their language - write how they would like it. Do they like data? If so, add statics in.

Get to know the VC’s Executive Assistant - good working relationship with them. Keep informed about events so you are prepared to listen to or talk about anything within your department.