Influencing Without Authority

As you build your persuasive message:

Consider Your Audience
- Be prepared to adapt your pitch according to what you hear as you build your coalition.
- Have the right level of detail for the right audience.

Be explicit
- Tell them precisely what you want.
- Don’t assume others understand how the idea links to organizational strategy.

Stress Benefits Over Features
- Focus on the WHY, not the WHAT.
- Relate to marketplace trends, customer needs, or external best or next practices.

Be Concise
- Make sure you are leading with key messages.
- Avoid wordy slides, long emails, and rambling explanations.
- Use graphs and pictures wherever possible to illustrate your key messages.

Structure Your Message to Have Impact
- Catch their attention; connect to what they care about.
- Before stating what you want, explain the problem.
- Tell them what you are suggesting. Keep it simple and logical.
- Explain the benefits of what you are proposing.
- Proactively communicate the possible downsides and what you think can be done to mitigate them.
  - If you don’t do this, they are more likely to pick your idea apart.
- Call them to action. Be explicit and don’t assume that people will magically know what you expect of them.

Persist
- Be prepared to pitch the same idea on multiple occasions to different people using a variety of means, settings, and approaches.
- Include continuous improvements to your pitch based on what you hear each time.