

How to take your lobbying to the next level

Jim Dickinson

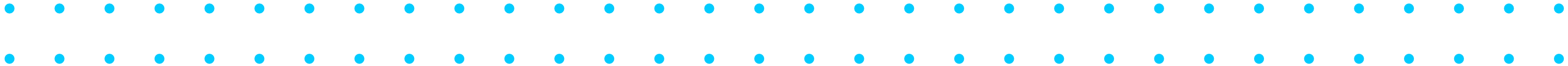
Southern SUs Feb 2026



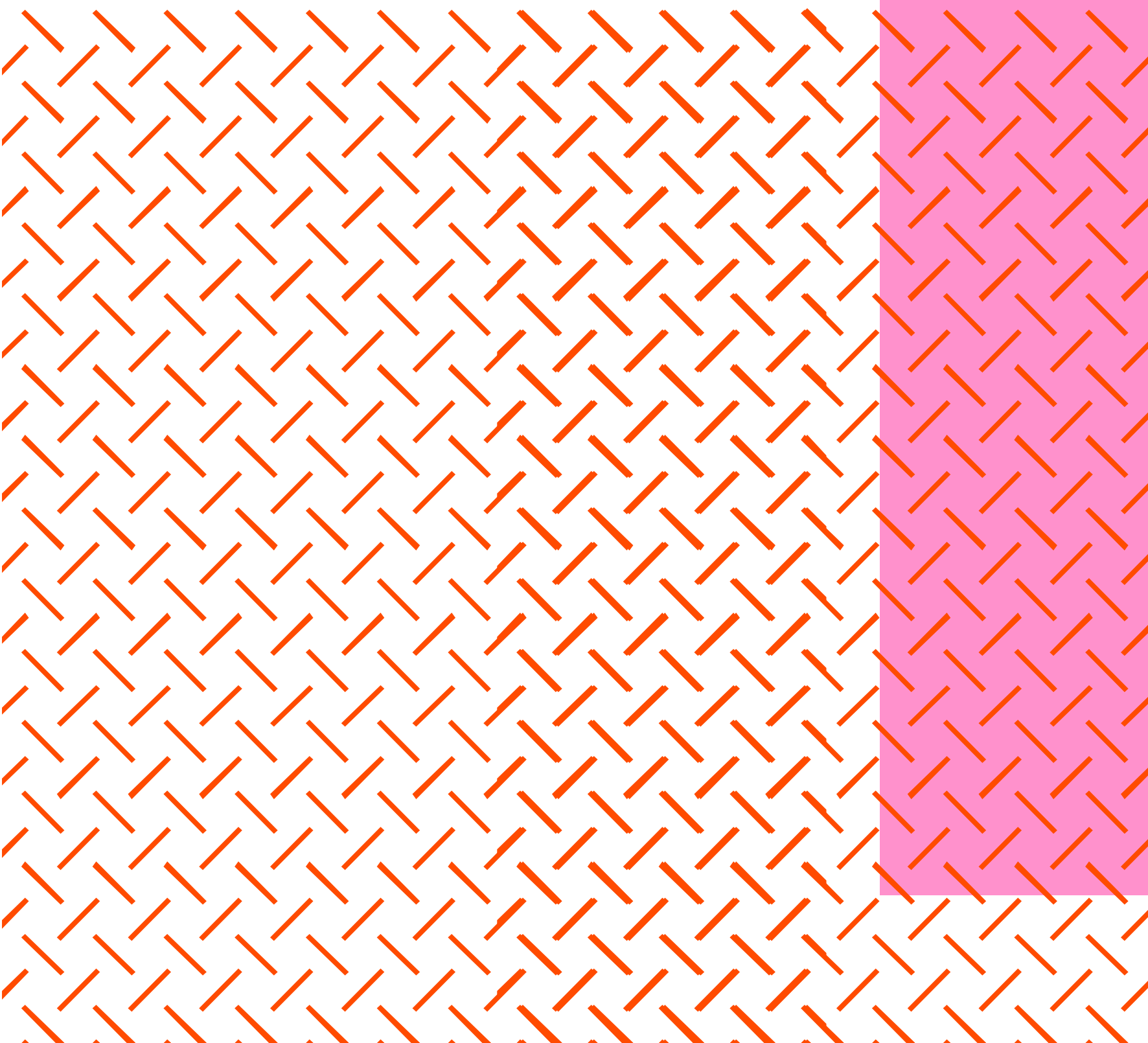
This is Bintu Foday



	You influencing others	Someone influencing you
It worked		
It didn't work		



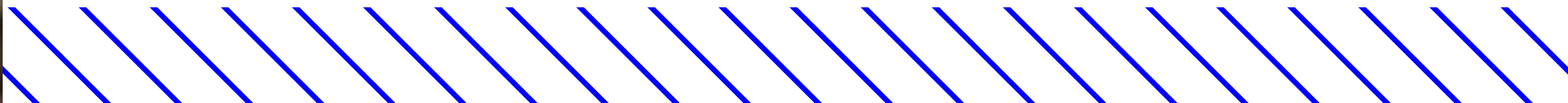
This is Samo Burja





Live and dead players

- The distinction between live and dead players matters if you are trying to predict the future of society.
- You can predict what will happen in a society if you understand its landscape of live players.
- That's because it's the live players who change things, while the dead players maintain and run things.
- Societies with few live players stagnate, while societies with many live players develop and adapt.



What is a live player?

A live player is a person or well-coordinated group of people that is able to do things they have not done before.

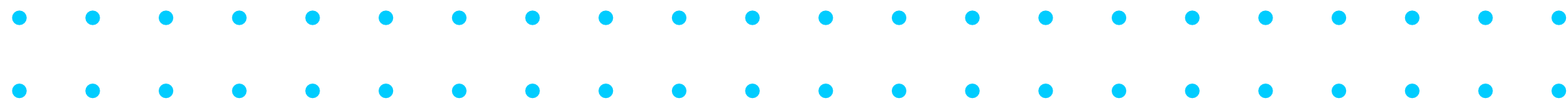
A dead player is a person or group of people that is working off a script, incapable of doing or choosing not to do new things.





There are dead people around

- Low role turnover in leadership, governance and government has a dead player expectation.
- That's because people become comfortable with what has worked for them in the past, and they become more (unsustainably) efficient.



There are dead people around

- Heavy role turnover in leadership, governance and government has a live player expectation.
- But such environments are deadly because most new role holders want to fit in and be seen to be doing a good job, both formally and informally through subconscious cues.





Live and dead

LIVE PLAYERS

A live player is a person or well-coordinated group of people that is able to do things they (or their role) have not done before. They experiment, iterate, learn fast and incorporate efficacy evidence into their work. They forecast and revise. They defy expectations.

DEAD PLAYERS

A dead player is a person or group of people that is working off a script, incapable of or not interested in doing new things. They seek out best practice and positive feedback about their work or role. They plan actions but not the impact of them. They meet or exceed expectations.



What live are like

- There are two attributes that are necessary for a player to be considered live: tight coordination and a living tradition of knowledge.
- A live player group is tightly coordinated in order to be flexible and responsive enough to do things they have not done before.
- This allows them to make moves outside of the formal structure of the group, go off script, and modify themselves.
- The generation of new tactics, strategies, coordination mechanisms and so on entails the production of new, useful knowledge.
- So a live player must have a living tradition of knowledge.
- For the tradition of knowledge to be living, it must have at least one theorist, among other things, able to keep an eye on why something is or isn't working.
- The bravery required to be live is reciprocated by support from others in a live group.
- Live groups are speculated about rather than understood.
- They also both attract and recruit talent.



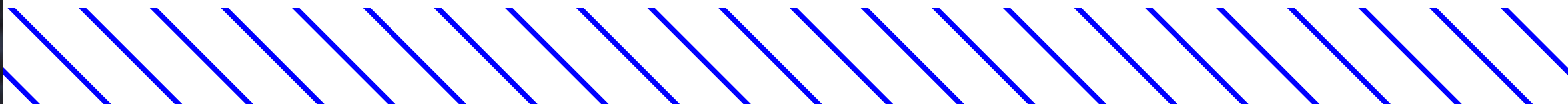


How do players die?

HOW DO PLAYERS DIE?

A player dies if their tight coordination is replaced by formal structures. If you're constrained by formal structures, it becomes harder to go off script, and this won't be adaptive enough.

Remember, however, that tight coordination can be achieved by just one exceptional person.



Types of power

BORROWED POWER

Borrowed power involves roles, duties, tasks, expectations, memberships and stakeholders. Borrowed power is like buying clothes: you're trying it on and want to look good when you do. It involves meeting expectations for yourself.

OWNED POWER

Owned power involves resources, skills, personal relationships, knowledge, new wisdom, systems and patterns. Owned power is like fashion design: you change the way other people dress to look good. It involves setting expectations for others.





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Jas is the lead spokesperson for the Students' Union and all Bath Spa students. She chairs the Students' Union Board of Trustees and works closely with the University's senior management team to champion you and your interests.



POPPY LAYCOCK

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Poppy leads on issues relating to the Bath Spa student community. This includes welfare, mental health and wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion, housing, and the Students' Union's relationship with the local Council and local residents. Poppy is a member of the Student Community Partnership and works closely with our Networks supporting them to make change and to ensure the Students' Union represents Bath Spa's diverse student body.



ELISE BOOTH

VICE PRESIDENT OPPORTUNITIES



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Elise's job is to help you make the most of the opportunities available to you outside of your course which enable you to have fun, make friends and develop your skills. Elise leads on activities including all clubs and societies, events, volunteering, trips abroad and employability. Elise works closely with Club and Society Committee Members ensuring the Students' Union is supporting them to be successful in their roles.



ARRAN FELTHAM

VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION



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Arran's role is to represent your academic interests. Arran is the student representative on many University committees which make decisions about the policies which affect your learning and teaching. Arran works closely with our Course Reps, Senior Academic Reps and Student Community Leaders to ensure students' voices are heard at a course, school, and University level and that your academic experience is the best it can be.



HARD TACTICS

- Requesting is probably the simplest influence approach.
- Requesting is when you use simple demands to get others to take action.
- Requesting means gaining the commitment of the people you are trying to persuade by making a direct statement of what you want and by asserting your position confidently and certainly.
- Requesting also includes the use of frequent checking and persistent reminders to get people to act.





HARD TACTICS

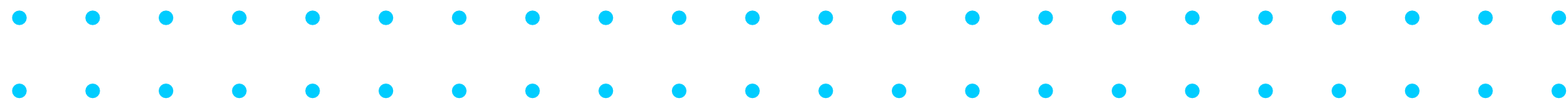
- Rational persuasion is a simple tactic.
- It combines the request of the pressure approach with logical arguments supporting the request.
- With the rational persuasion tactic, you use logical arguments and factual evidence to show that a request is feasible and relevant to reaching important objectives.
- It uses logic, rationale or evidence to explain or justify a position, and to show that your perspective is the most logical alternative.





HARD TACTICS

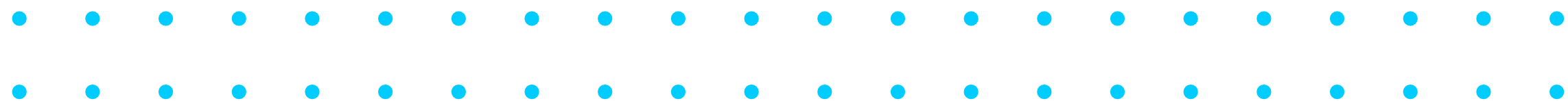
- Legitimating is slightly more complex than requesting in that you add a legitimation or rationalisation for the command and control approach.
- With legitimating you seek to establish the legitimacy of a request or to state that you have the authority to make it.
- Legitimating means using authority or credentials to explain and influence, for instance when you show that what you want is consistent with policy, procedure or culture.
- Those who refer to directives, laws, rules, supportive authorities or recognised experts are legitimating.





HARD TACTICS

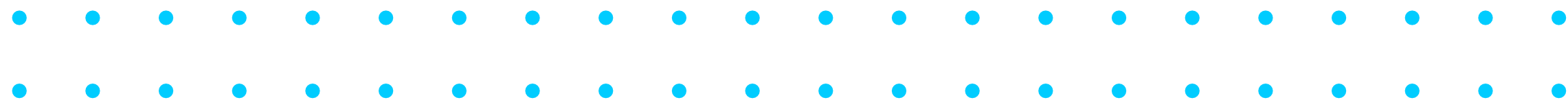
- Coalition is similar to legitimating, however its standing doesn't come from references to any form of authority.
- You use this approach to enlist other people's help and use their support as a way to get the people they lead to do something.
- The use of coalition tactics often indicates that you are getting others to help extend influence or reach goals you could not accomplish on your own.





SOFT TACTICS

- Socializing involves starting to take an interest in those you are trying to influence.
- Socializing uses praise and flattery before or during an attempt to get others to carry out a request or support a proposal.
- Socializing means establishing a basis for asking, behaving in a warm and cordial manner to influence others to act, being friendly, disclosing personal information or building a relationship.





SOFT TACTICS

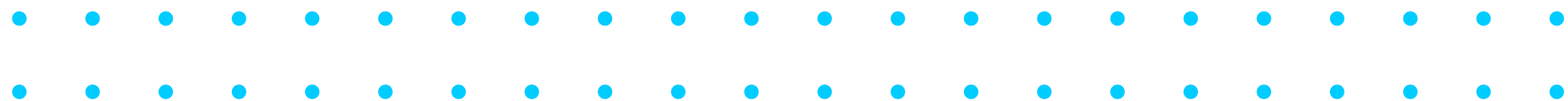
- Personal appeals are more focused on other people, as they assume some form of relationship and trust between you and those being influenced.
- With personal appeals you ask others to carry out a request or support a proposal out of friendship, or ask for a personal favour before saying what it is.
- Making a personal appeal means asking based on friendship, loyalty, trust or a past relationship.





SOFT TACTICS

- Exchanging is even more focused on others because it assumes that you understand what is valuable and important to the people being influenced.
- With exchanging, you give something of value to the people being influenced in return for getting something you want.
- Exchanging is based on the concept of reciprocity, which says people tend to return a favour.
- You offer others something they may want or offer to reciprocate at a later time if they will do as requested.





SOFT TACTICS

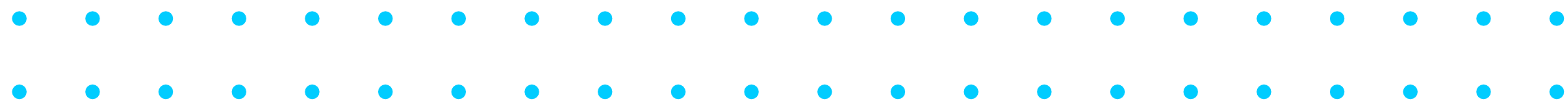
- Consultation is even more focused on others, because you pull them in and engage them in developing a course of action.
- With consultation, you ask others to suggest improvements or help plan a proposed activity or change that requires their support. Participative leadership is a form of consultation.
- Consultation means asking others to help you arrive at an acceptable solution, appealing to others' expertise, asking for input, probing for feedback, inviting others to participate or become involved in a process, incorporating others' ideas or acting on their suggestions to give them a sense of ownership.

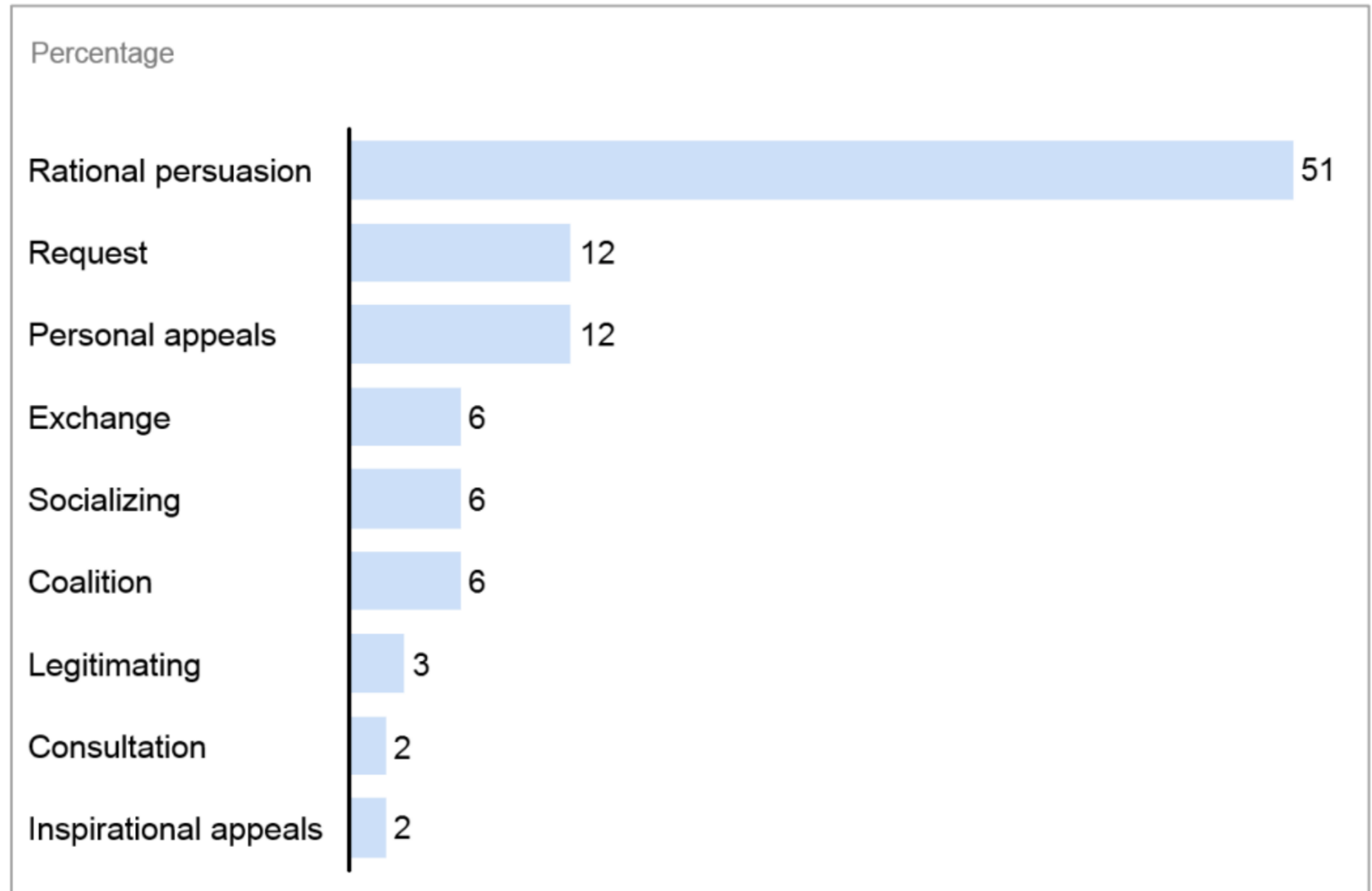




SOFT TACTICS

- Inspirational appeals are the core ingredient of inspirational leadership.
- They are by far the most personal in terms of understanding others' perspectives because they focus on what lies deep in other people's mindsets: their values and emotions.
- Influencers using this tactic appeal to people's values and ideals or seek to arouse their emotions to gain commitment for a request or proposal.





Outcomes

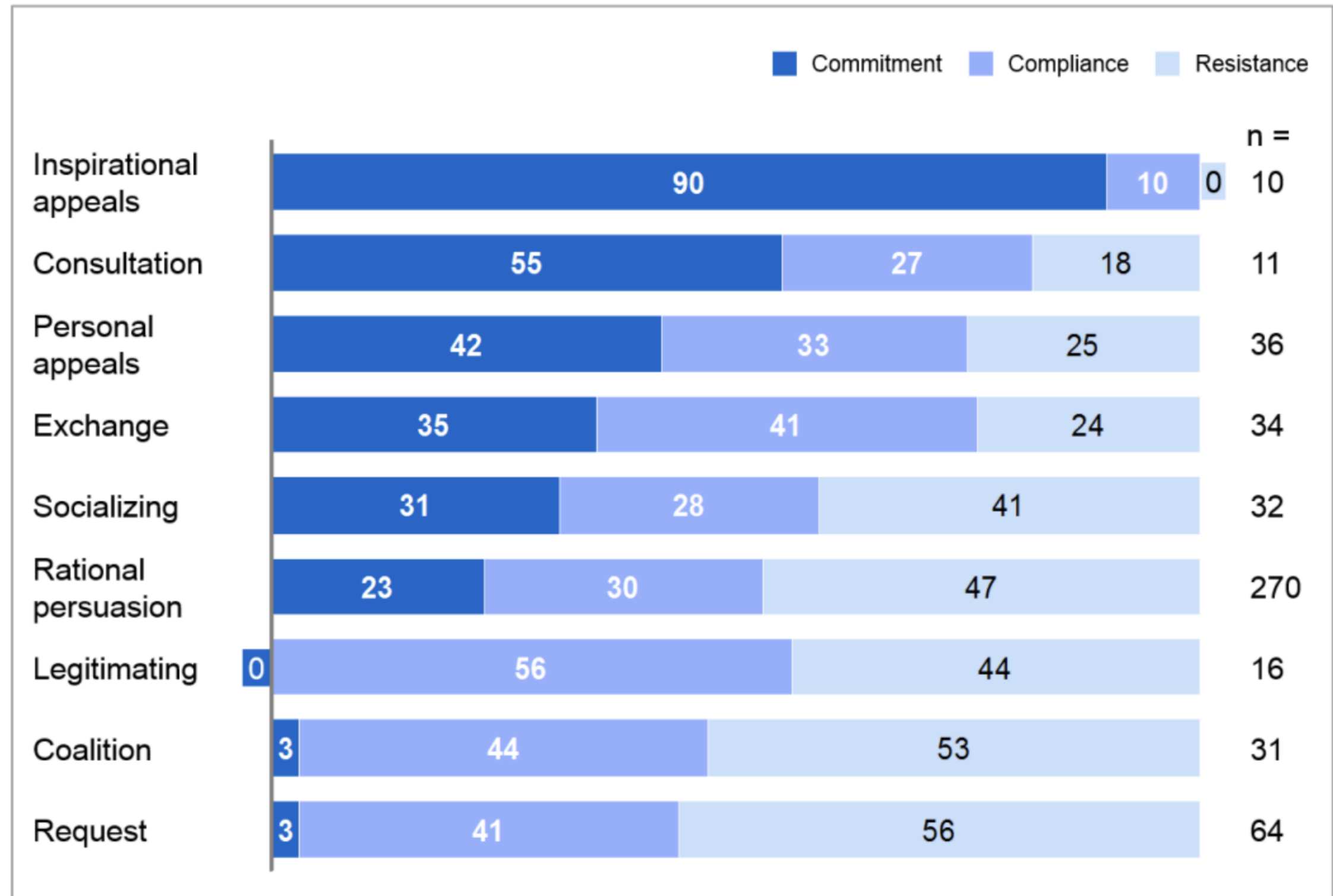
A tactic can generate resistance, compliance or commitment.

Resistance means you try to find ways to avoid doing it and determine whether you can get away without doing it.

Compliance means you did it begrudgingly and try to find ways to avoid having to do it again.

Commitment means you do it enthusiastically, and do it again (and in different ways) more often.





Be more Bintu!





Jim Dickinson
Southern SUs Feb 2026

