Influencer: The Power to Change Anything

Joseph Grenny

The Unarticulated Problem

VitalSmarts

Influencer

“I haven’t got the slightest idea how to change people...
...but I keep a long list of prospective candidates just in case I should ever figure it out.”

– David Sedaris

Influence This

All Nippon Airways calculated that if passengers would use the restroom before boarding their planes they could lighten their load by 240 pounds—reducing their carbon footprint. And their costs. They’ve asked you to create the influence strategy.

The Two Problems of Leadership

1. What should we do? (Strategy)
2. How do I get everyone to do it? (Influence)

Grenny’s Law of Leadership

There is no strategy so brilliant that people can’t render it worthless.
No Matter How Strong the Brand

No Matter How Perfect the Product

No Matter How Sound the Process

Influence This

It’s what you can’t see

Strategy → Results

Influence This

It's what you can’t see

- Strategy
  Results
  Culture & Behavior

We Lack Influence

- Leadership. 85% of corporate change efforts fail.
- Personal Change. 19 out of 20 diet attempts fail.
- Social Problems. 2 out of 3 criminals are rearrested within 3 years of release.
- Global Problems. AIDS infected 5 million more people in 2004.

Problem

The most important capacity you possess is the ability to influence behavior—that of yourself or others.
And yet few of us have any systematic way of even thinking about this fundamental challenge!

In Search of Influencers

- Scholars: Reviewed the work of the most cited academics.
- Articles: Examined over 17,000 articles and books.
- Influencers: Studied those who (1) had succeeded at remarkable influence challenges; and (2) had data to prove it.

Meet the Influencers

Don Berwick – Helped save 122,000 lives in U.S. Hospitals from medical mistakes by influencing the behavior of healthcare workers.

Wiwat Rojanapithayakorn – Saved over 5 million lives from AIDS by influencing behavior in Thailand.
Meet the Influencers

Mimi Silbert – Helped over 16,000 criminals, lifetime drugs addicts, and gang members change their behavior—and their lives.

Meet the Influencers

In Search of Influencers

- Scholars: Reviewed the work of the most cited academics.
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- Influencers: Studied those who (1) had succeeded at remarkable influence challenges; and (2) had data to prove it.
- Application: Participated in over 50 first-hand tests of the concepts.

Meet the Influencers

Dain Hancock – President, Lockheed Martin Aero

Influenced behavior change across a 13,000-person workforce within 9 months enabling Lockheed Martin to win the $200 billion Joint Strike Fighter program.

Meet the Influencers

Matt Van Vranken - CEO, Spectrum Healthcare

Improved patient safety by increasing handwashing compliance from 50% to over 90% in a 10,000-person health system in one month.

The Two Problems of Leadership

What should we do? (Strategy)
How do I get everyone to do it? (Influence)
Principle: Find Vital Behaviors

Identify Vital Behaviors

1. The best way to improve results is not to focus on results, but on the behaviors that produce them.
2. Even with complex and long-standing problems, just a few vital behaviors can lead to enormous change.

If you focus on results, you will never change. If you focus on change, you will get results. - John Dixon

Vital Behaviors

A vital behavior:
• Leads directly to better result.
• Breaks self-defeating patterns.
• Causes many other positive behaviors to follow naturally

Always Be Collecting Dots

What are the crucial moments in a hospitality experience?

Principle: Make Change Inevitable

Why Is Change Impossible?

The Chief of Staff in one hospital does “Grand Rounds” every day—visiting many patients with medical students. He almost never washes his hands. Why not?
Your Influence Problem

Cletus is not exactly your star employee. After repeated reminders, you just spotted him snacking and texting rather than greeting and serving.

Influence vs. Quick Fix

Influencers succeed where the rest of us fail because they “overdetermine” success. They marshal a critical mass of all Six Sources of Influence to make change inevitable.

Six Sources of Influence

Source 1: Personal Motivation

The Problem
Many vital behaviors are boring, frightening, disgusting, uncomfortable or even painful. Similarly, many wrong behaviors feel pretty good—for a while.

The influence of the pleasure or pain of the behavior itself.
Your Influence Problem

He’s not personally motivated to because of...
1. Moral deficiency – he’s lazy or self-centered.
2. Moral slumber – in the moment he doesn’t feel a connection to human consequences.

What Do Influencers Do?

We spend most of our lives morally disengaged...we are unconscious of the moral and human implications of our choices.

Making the Undesirable Desirable

What Do Influencers Do?

Human beings are capable of profoundly transforming their experience of almost any behavior by anchoring it to deeply held values. Influencers help others make undesirable behaviors meaningful by connecting with human consequences.

Change the Way You Change Minds

High

Direct Experience

Low

Verbal Persuasion

There’s Always a Storyteller
Change the Way You Change Minds

High
- Direct Experience
- Vicarious Experience

Low
- Verbal Persuasion

Source 1 – Want More Influence?

When people behave badly, it’s more often from moral slumber than moral defect.

1. The Power of Experience: Design experiences that expose people to human consequences.
2. The Power of Stories: Tell potent stories that dramatize the human consequences of decisions.

Source 2: Personal Ability

Many Vital Behaviors are far more physically or emotionally challenging than we realize. So we grossly under-invest in building skills.

Delay of Gratification

What does it take to overcome powerful impulses? Is it primarily a matter of motivation?

Is Will a Skill?

The influence of skill.
What Do Influencers Do?

Influencers involve people in 5-10 times more “deliberate practice.” At least half of “training” time should be spent in hands-on practice of skills under realistic conditions.

Source 2 – Want More Influence?

Any attempt to motivate the unable creates depression rather than change. When things go wrong, become a teacher first, a motivator second.

What’s Going on Here?

Economist Felix Oberholzer-Gee offered people money to let him cut in line. The more money he offered, the more willing they were to let him cut. The more money he offered, the less willing they were to let him pay them.

The Minnesota Tax Experiment

Minnesota state government officials placed three different statements at the top of their tax forms in an attempt to increase tax compliance. Which worked best?

Influence vs. Quick Fix

Influencers succeed where the rest of us fail because they “overdetermine” success. They marshal a critical mass of all Six Sources of Influence to make change inevitable.
Option 1
“Tax fraud in any amount will result in prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.”

Option 2
“Thank you for joining the other 80% of Minnesotans who promptly and fairly pay their full taxes.”

Option 3
“Your tax contributions are used for the investments in education, community policing and fire protection that make our communities prosperous and safe.”

What would you predict? Why?
Robert Cialdini sent messages to California households reporting on their electrical usage.
• Last month you used 18% more than the 20 homes most like yours in your neighborhood.
• “Last month you used 8% less than the 20 homes most like yours in your neighborhood.”

What would you predict? Why?
Cialdini found he could stop energy misers from increasing their usage by doing one simple thing.
He put a smiley face next to the data reporting their low energy use.

Sources 3 and 4
The influence of other people – through modeling, praise, helping, and enabling.
Leveraging Social Influence

When a doctor would not comply with hand hygiene goals, one member of a contingent of respected physicians would invite him or her to lunch...

Sources 3 & 4 - Want More Influence?

Engage formal and opinion leaders in specific roles for modeling, coaching and influencing vital behaviors for others.

Source 5 - Incentives

Danny uses “Team Tips”

“Collecting” and “Connecting” dots is a team activity. Individual tips influence the opposite behavior.

Source 5: Structural Motivation

The influence of costs, incentives, and accountability.

Think Six Sources
What’s Going on Here?

Source 6: Structural Ability

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The influence of space, data, cues, tools, processes, and other environmental factors.

What’s Going on Here?

Source 6 – Want More Influence?

“First we shape our buildings, and then they shape us.”
– Winston Churchill

Use data, cues, tools, and surroundings to...

- Make bad behavior harder and conscious.
- Make good choices easier and obvious.

Influencers succeed where the rest of us fail because they “overdetermine” success. They marshal a critical mass of all Six Sources of Influence to make change inevitable.

Those who use four or more sources of influence to change personal habits are **four times** likelier to succeed.

Those who use four or more sources of influence to influence organizational change are **ten times** likelier to succeed.