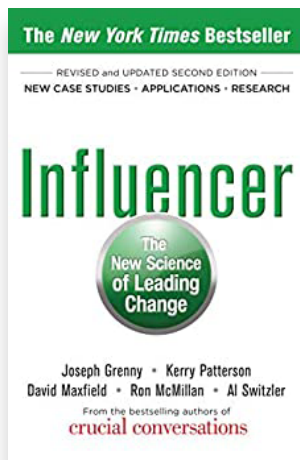


EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

convenenow.com/executive-summaries



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Joseph Grenny,
Kerry Patterson,
David Maxfield,
Ron McMillan,
and Al Switzler**

Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler are the leaders of VitalSmarts, and innovator in best practices training and services.

Influencer

THE SUMMARY

McGraw Hill Education 2013

PART ONE: THE NEW SCIENCE OF LEADING CHANGE

Chapter 1: Leadership is Influence

Learning how to motivate and enable others to change their actions may be the most important skill you'll ever acquire. It's curiously engaging and it sits at the center of what ails most of us. The lion's share of the problems that really bother us don't call for additional technology, theory, philosophy, or data; instead, the problems call for the ability to change what people do. When it comes to this particular skill, demand far exceeds supply.

Given the versatility and importance of knowing how to get other people to act differently, you'd think that at every backyard barbecue or office party, you could find someone who is an expert in influence. In fact, you'd think we'd be so consumed with the topic of influence that our children would collect influence trading cards, complete with pictures of world-class influencers. As a result of all this study and passion, we would speak a unique language, carry a full array of models, and master a specialized set of skills for both enabling and encouraging others to change their behavior.

Of course, none of this is true. At best, we chip away at the edges of influence but don't routinely study the topic, and we are not good at helping others to change. Most of us can't verbalize our personal theory of influence as we don't see ourselves as influencers, and we most certainly don't have a successful record.

Influencer

Influencers exist, and what they know and do is learnable. In fact, hundreds of thousands of people have read what we learned from them. They have applied the principles and skills to their own challenges and put the ideas to work on their own aspirations. They have made remarkable progress and so can you. It's time to roll up your sleeves and get started. Go get that list of prospective change candidates you've been keeping for so long, and let's see what it takes to help them change.

Chapter 2: Three Keys to Influence

Influencers don't randomly succeed at creating impressive and lasting changes in human behavior. The good news is that if they did rely on chance, we wouldn't have a clue how to replicate their efforts but they don't rely on chance. Instead, they count on three keys to success—keys that all influencers adhere to and that you can use to your own benefit.

1. *Focus and measure.*

Influencers are crystal clear about the result they are trying to achieve and are zealous about measuring it. They clearly articulate the goal they are trying to achieve. They know that fuzzy objectives are anathema to influence. Equally important, they know that clear, consistent, and meaningful measures ensure that they'll actually track their efforts and genuinely hold themselves accountable. This act alone sets them apart from the crowd. In fact, of the hundreds of influence attempts studied over the years, the vast majority of them fail at the outset by neglecting this first key. Unsuccessful agents of change make one of three early mistakes that undermine their influence.

A. *Fuzzy, uncompelling goals*

They begin with only a vague sense of what they'll achieve ("Empower our employees," "Help inner city kids," or "Build the team"). Clear goals aimed at a compelling target can have an enormous impact on behavior because they engage more than simply the brain. They also engage the heart. Research reveals that a clear, compelling, and challenging goal causes the blood to pump more rapidly, the brain to fire, and the muscles to engage.

So, influencers don't merely start their change efforts with their ultimate goal in mind. They take care to craft that goal into a clear and compelling goal statement. Such statements can provide focus and inspiration to families, communities, and even whole countries as individuals rally around a compelling cause.

B. *Infrequent or no measures*

Even when they have a somewhat clear result in mind ("Develop a culture of candid communication"), unsuccessful individuals rarely develop credible measures against which to match their intentions. We've all made this mistake. Perhaps we've set a goal of consuming X number of calories per day, and then we track our efforts by keeping a running guesstimate in our heads. Later when we log our exact food intake, we learn that our estimates were off by

Influencer

as much as half. Maybe we think the morale in our office is just fine because everyone seems happy enough and nobody has caused a scene or anything. Then one day we are surprised to see someone quit because he or she “hates the place.” Then another person takes a job across the street for less pay and worse benefits. “What’s that all about?” you wonder. You don’t know because you don’t measure.

Surprises like this often take place in corporate settings because leaders see satisfaction, engagement, and other human metrics as not only difficult to measure but as “soft.” This means they don’t believe the measures matter in the grand scheme of things, and they don’t trust the measures. Leaders don’t take “soft measures” more often than, say, every two years. This schedule is typically kept against a backdrop of measuring quality every 10 minutes and discussing cash flow measures every two hours. A measure won’t drive behavior if it doesn’t maintain attention, and it certainly won’t maintain attention if it’s rarely assessed—especially if other measures are taken, discussed, and fretted over a hundred times more frequently.

Of course, frequently gathering data consumes enormous resources. Leaders often complain that it takes as much effort to measure an influence campaign as it does to deploy the campaign itself. Within this complaint lies the real problem. Leaders assume measurement is completely separate from influence. It isn’t. Measurement is an integral part of the change effort, and done correctly, it informs and drives behavior.

C. Bad measures

Finally, even when they do take measures, folks who fail often drive the wrong behavior by measuring the wrong variable. Good measures don’t merely inform us. They also drive the right behavior. Sometimes it may take a while to figure out exactly which measures you should be taking, but it’s worth studying in detail. The measure of a measure is its actual influence. If there’s a chance that the very process of measuring results might drive the wrong behavior, then be sure to faithfully measure the actions you need to produce those results as well.

Start every change project with a clear and compelling statement of the goal you’re trying to achieve. Measure your progress. Don’t leave it to intuition or hunches. Measure your measures by the behavior they influence. Finally, measure the right thing, and measure it frequently.

2. Find vital behaviors.

Influencers focus on high-leverage behaviors that drive results. More specifically, they focus on the two or three vital actions that produce the greatest amount of change. In the next chapters we’ll dig into how influencers go about searching for and finding vital behaviors as well as the methods they use to influence each. The good news is that the key of finding no more than a handful of high-leverage behaviors works with almost any problem. Change vital behaviors, and soon you’ll achieve the results you’ve wanted all along.

Influencer

3. Engage all six sources of influence.

Finally, influencers break from the pack by overdetermining change. Where most of us apply a favorite influence tool or two to our important challenges, influencers identify all of the varied forces that are shaping the behavior they want to change and then get them working for rather than against them. According to our research, by getting six different sources of influence to work in their favor, influencers increase their odds of success tenfold.

Source 1. Personal Motivation.

The source people most frequently include in their influence attempts is personal motivation. As you watch others not doing the right thing while repeatedly doing the wrong thing, ask: Do they enjoy it? In most cases—particularly with deep-rooted habits—this source of influence is an important factor in propelling and sustaining behavior.

Source 2. Personal Ability.

Of course, motivation isn't everything. When trying to understand why others don't do what they should do, ask: Can they do it? Just because individuals enjoy something doesn't mean they'll succeed. They have to have the skills, talent, and understanding required to enact each vital behavior or they'll fail.

Source 3. Social Motivation.

Next, you need to examine the social side of influence by asking: Do others encourage them to enact the wrong behavior?

Source 4. Social Ability.

Others not only provide a source of motivation but they can also enable vital behaviors. To examine this important source of influence, ask: Do others enable them?

Source 5. Structural, Motivation.

Most burgeoning change agents think about both individual and social factors but they leave out the role "things" play in encouraging and enabling vital behaviors. To check for this ask: Do rewards and sanctions encourage them?

Source 6. Structural Ability.

Finally, "things" can either enable or disable performance. To examine this source, ask: Does their environment enable them?

So, there are the three keys to influence. Whether you're eradicating disease, improving customer service, or engaging struggling students, these three principles provide the foundation of all effective influence strategies. They aren't tricks or gimmicks. They aren't fads or the latest "things." They aren't quick fixes. But together they make up a learnable path to success. They are the science of leading change.

Influencer

Chapter 3: Find Vital Behaviors

As you do your best to increase your influence, if you've been following the path of effective influencers, you've already used the first key. You created clear, compelling, and measurable goals. You know exactly what you want, by when, and how to measure it. So you're off to a good start.

Next you have to figure out what behaviors people need to change in order to achieve these results. Influencers are universally firm on this point. They don't create methods for changing behavior until they've carefully identified the exact behaviors they want to change.

This can sound like an enormous task. On any given day, how many behaviors does one enact? Thousands? Fortunately, when it comes to creating change, you don't have to identify thousands of behaviors or even a hundred or a dozen. Typically one or two vital behaviors, well executed, will yield a big difference. This is true because with almost any result you're trying to achieve, there are moments of disproportionate influence. These are times when someone's choices either lead toward great results or set up a cascade of negative behaviors that create and perpetuate problems. These crucial moments are often easily spotted. Even the most pervasive problems will yield to changes if you spot these crucial moments and then identify the specific, high-leverage actions that will lead to the results you want. These actions make up what we call the vital behaviors in any change project. Find these vital few behaviors, and you've found the second key to influence.

Knowing that you need to find high-leverage behaviors and focus your efforts on them raises these questions: How do you find them? What if they aren't obvious? If you're not careful, you could easily focus all of your attention on the wrong behavior and achieve no results. Successful influencers escape such debacles. They avoid spending time and effort on the wrong behaviors by drawing from the following four vital behavior search strategies:

- *Notice the obvious.* Recognize behaviors that are obvious (or at least obvious to experts) but underused.
- *Look for crucial moments.* Find times when behavior puts success at risk.
- *Learn from positive deviants.* Distinguish behaviors that set apart positive deviants—those who live in the same world but somehow produce much better results.
- *Spot culture busters.* Find behaviors that reverse stubborn cultural norms and taboos.

Master influencers know that it takes only a few behaviors to create big changes in the results they care about. To do so, they look vigilantly for one or two actions that create a cascade of change. They move through this phase by using a combination of four search techniques. They look for obvious but often underutilized actions. They then seek confirmation of what seems obvious to them by examining the advice of experts. When tailoring their own change program and trying to see what

Influencer

will work for them (given their unique circumstance), they look not at the 98 percent of the time they're successful but the 2 percent of the time when they fail. They then use these crucial moments to inform the actions that need to follow. Often successful influencers surface these high-leverage actions by studying individuals within their organization or circumstances who face similar problems and yet have found a way to succeed. Finally, they watch for behaviors that might be needed to break free of a culture that sustains past problems.

PART TWO: ENGAGE SIX SOURCES

Let's be honest. How many of us haven't yearned for a quick fix for our own problems? We dream about a powerful phrase for holding people accountable, a magical marriage solution, or maybe a two-hour course that will change our work culture from a short- to a long-term orientation.

The simplicity of this hope is alluring, but a quick fix rarely works. If the behavior you're trying to change is supported by only one source of influence, changing that one might be sufficient to improve results. However, when you're facing longstanding, highly resistant habits, you're typically up against many—if not all six—sources of influence. So think about it: if six sources are driving a bad habit and you address only one, what do you predict will happen? If you answer, "Nothing," you're right. The problem is not a mystery. It's math. Five sources are usually stronger than one. As you learn to think in terms of the six sources of influence, you'll learn to solve your math problems.

Chapter 4: Help Them Love What They Hate

We'll start our exploration of the six sources of influence by examining tactics that address the first source, personal motivation. This important source of influence answers the question: Is the vital behavior intrinsically pleasurable or painful?

We'll start here because the first problem influencers often face is that good behaviors feel bad while bad behaviors feel good. The vast majority of the intractable influence problems we face or the stretch goals that we routinely miss are made more daunting because bad things are fun and good things aren't. Actually, people do learn ways to take pleasure from almost any activity, even if the activity isn't inherently satisfying. Psychiatrist M. Scott Peck makes this point rather bluntly. "Just because a desire or behavior is natural, does not mean it is...unchangeable.... It is also natural...to never brush our teeth. Yet we teach ourselves to do the unnatural. Another characteristic of human nature—perhaps the one that makes us more human—is our capacity to do the unnatural, to transcend and hence transform our own nature."

We're extending this argument even further. Humans don't merely find ways to act unnaturally. They find ways to enjoy activities that aren't inherently enjoyable. Finishing tasks on time can feel like either a bureaucratic bore or a demonstration of integrity. Changing a baby's diaper can feel like either a gruesome chore or a precious moment. The question is how can you help vital behaviors feel like the latter rather than the former? Influencers use four tactics to help people love what they hate.

Influencer

Allow for Choice. The best way to help individuals align their behavior with their deepest motives is to stop trying to control their thoughts and behaviors. You must replace judgment with empathy, and lectures with questions. If you do so, you gain influence. The instant you stop trying to impose your agenda on others, you eliminate the fight for control. You end unnecessary battles over whose view of the world is correct.

There is an influence method called motivational interviewing. Through a skillful use of open and non-directive questions, the counselor helps others reach their own conclusions about the values that are most important to them and the changes that might be required for them to live according to their values. When you ask thought-provoking questions and then listen while others talk, they discover on their own what they must do. Then, propelled by their own aspirations and beliefs, they make the necessary changes.

Create Direct Experiences. People often make poor choices because they prefer the short-term benefits of their bad behavior over the long-term benefits of doing the right thing. If it's chocolate today versus the unknown likelihood of a stroke 40 years from now, then pass the cake.

The most powerful way to help people recognize, feel, and believe in the long-term implications of their choices is to get out of their way and let them experience them firsthand. To no one's surprise, influencers help people go out into the cold, hard world and experience the consequences of their choices.

Getting people to create their own direct experience is a powerful way to help them connect to genuine human consequences and ultimately find moral significance in vital behaviors. Fieldtrips can do that. When you go out into the world on a fieldtrip, so to speak, you can see firsthand what's happening. Rather than simply hearing impassioned speeches or clever words (that can be easily discounted), you see for yourself what's actually happening. You can feel the pain associated with the consequences you observe and that is a powerful tool in creating personal motivation.

Tell Meaningful Stories. Although it clearly takes more than story to drive change, when used in combination with other influence methods, storytelling can be a powerful tool in anyone's influence repertoire. Time and again we watched influencers awaken people to the profound choices they were making by telling poignant, believable, and compelling stories that put a human face on people's actions. Independent of the industry whether healthcare, IT, financial services, manufacturing, or telecommunications—leaders who helped build a sense of mission in their organizations were always storytellers.

Make It A Game. It turns out that one of the keys to personal motivation lies in a force just barely outside the activity itself. It lies in the mastery of increasingly challenging goals. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a researcher at Claremont Graduate School, has devoted his career to what he has come to call "flow," or the feeling of enjoyment that comes from losing yourself in an engrossing activity. Dr. Csikszentmihalyi has discovered that almost any activity can be made engaging if it

Influencer

involves reasonably challenging goals and clear, frequent feedback. These are the elements that turn a chore into something that feels more like a game. We all like games.

We often don't act in our long-term best interest because the short-term actions we currently enjoy are far more motivating than the remote and distant likelihood of suffering in the future. With persistent influence challenges, bad actions are generally real, fun, and now, whereas negative consequences are often fuzzy, maybe not so bad after all, and most certainly a long time off. To turn this around, influencers learn to help others love what they currently hate by allowing them choices, creating direct experiences, telling meaningful stories, and turning the tedious into a game.

Chapter 5: Help Them Do What They Can't

Many of the profound and persistent problems we face stem more from a lack of skill (which in turn stems from a lack of deliberate practice) than from a genetic curse, a lack of courage, or a character flaw. Self-discipline, long viewed as a character trait, and elite performance, similarly linked to genetic gifts, stem from the ability to engage in guided practice of clearly defined skills. Learn how to practice the right actions, and you can master everything from withstanding the temptations of chocolate to holding an awkward discussion with your boss.

Not all practice is good practice. That's why many of the tasks we perform at work and at home suffer from "arrested development." With simple tasks such as typing, driving, or playing golf and tennis, we reach our highest level of proficiency after about 50 hours of practice; then our performance skills become automated. We're able to execute them smoothly and with minimal effort but further development stops. We assume we've reached our highest performance level, and we don't think to learn new and better methods.

With some tasks, we stop short of our highest level of proficiency on purpose. The calculus we perform in our heads suggests that the added effort it'll take to find and learn something new will probably yield a diminishing marginal return, so we stop learning. For instance, we learn how to make use of a word processor or Web server by mastering the most common moves, but we never learn many of the additional features that would dramatically improve our ability.

When this same pattern of arresting our development is applied over an entire career, it yields fairly unsatisfactory results. For example, most professionals progress until they reach an "acceptable" level, and then they plateau. So what does create improvement? Deliberate practice.

Deliberate practice requires complete attention. Deliberate practice doesn't allow for daydreaming, functioning on autopilot, or only partially putting one's mind into the routine. It requires steely-eyed concentration as students watch exactly what they're doing, what is working, what isn't, and why.

As part of this focus on specific levels of achievement, top performers set their goals to improve behaviors or processes rather than outcomes. In basketball, players who routinely hit 70 percent or

Influencer

more of their free throws tend to practice differently from those who hit 55 percent or fewer. How? Better shooters set technique-oriented goals such as, “Keep the elbow in,” or, “Follow through.” Players who shoot 55 percent and under tend to think more about results-oriented goals such as, “This time I’m going to make 10 in a row.”

The role of mini goals in maintaining motivation also deserves attention. With certain skills, people are deathly afraid that they won’t succeed. Once they do fail, they fear that bad things will happen to them. As you might imagine, when people predict that their actions will lead to catastrophic results these failure stories lead to self-defeating behavior. Individuals begin with the hypothesis that they will never succeed and that the failure will be costly, and then they look for every shred of proof that they are about to fail so they can bail out early before they suffer too much—which they do anyway.

To encourage people to attempt something they fear, you must provide rapid positive feedback that builds self-confidence. You achieve this by providing short-term, specific, easy, and low-stakes goals that specify the exact steps a person should take. Take complex tasks and make them simple; long tasks and make them short; vague tasks and make them specific; and high-stakes tasks and make them risk free.

As important as it is to use baby steps to ensure short-term success during the early phases of learning, if subjects experience only successes early on, then failures can quickly discourage them. To deal with this problem, people need to learn that effort, persistence, and resiliency are eventually rewarded with success. Consequently, the practice regime should gradually introduce tasks that require increased effort and persistence. As learners overcome more difficult tasks and recover from intermittent defeats, they see that setbacks aren’t permanent roadblocks but signals that they need to keep learning.

This capacity to tell ourselves the right story about problems and setbacks is particularly important when we’re already betting against ourselves. When faced with a setback, we need to learn to say, “Aha! I just discovered what doesn’t work,” and not, “Oh no! Once again I’m an utter failure.” We need to interpret setbacks as guides, not as brakes.

Changing behavior almost always involves learning new skills. World-class influencers spend far more time engaging people in deliberate practice than the rest of us. If you want to succeed at influence, then spend more time than you think you’ll need for people to practice the new behaviors. Make sure that practice involves realistic conditions, coaching, and feedback. Break the vital behaviors into smaller actions that allow you to judge how well they’re doing. Finally, help others practice how they’ll recover from setbacks, should they fail in their early attempts.

Lastly, be sure you help people develop not just the technical or interpersonal skills they need to succeed but also the intrapersonal skills. Engage them in practice in addressing emotions that might

Influencer

undermine their attempts to change. Help them learn to skillfully move from the go to the know parts of their brains so they can overcome impulses that might keep them from success.

Remember the good news here. Overcoming habits or developing complex athletic, intellectual, and interpersonal skills are not merely functions of motivation, personality traits, or even character. They all tie back to ability. Develop greater proficiency at deliberate practice as well as the ability to manage your emotions, and you significantly increase your chances for turning vital behaviors into vital habits.

Chapter 6: Provide Encouragement

No source of influence is more powerful and accessible than the persuasive power of the people who make up our social networks. None. The ridicule and praise, acceptance and rejection, approval and disapproval of our fellow beings can do more to assist or destroy our change efforts than almost any other source. A raised eyebrow, curled lip, derisive look, or small shake of the head can wield more influence than the sum total of all the world's thundering speeches.

Smart influencers appreciate the amazing power humans hold over one another, and instead of denying it, lamenting it, or attacking it, they embrace and enlist it. They use the power of social influence to support change by ensuring that the right people provide encouragement, coaching, and even accountability during crucial moments.

Why do human beings place such a high premium on the approval of others—often strangers? Certainly that's what you ask if you were a social scientist. Savvy students of influence ask how this amazing social force might work either for or against them as they do their best to lead change. Once they understand how social forces are working for and against them, they then use this power for their own purposes.

Savvy people know how to tap into this source of influence in hundreds of different ways, and they do so by following one rather simple principle. They ensure that people feel praised, emotionally supported, and otherwise encouraged by those around them every time they enact vital behaviors. Similarly, they take steps to ensure that people feel discouraged or even socially sanctioned when they choose unhealthy behaviors.

People who are respected and connected can exert an enormous amount of influence over any change effort. Under stressful and ambiguous circumstances, a mere glance from someone who is considered to be a respected official can be enough to propel people to act in ways that are hard to imagine. Fortunately, this "power of one" (often viewed as negative) can also be used to encourage pro-social behavior. When a vital behavior is difficult or unpopular or possibly even questionable, you must lead the way. You must not just talk the talk, you have to walk it as well. However, people

Influencer

aren't likely to trust your words until you demonstrate your willingness to sacrifice old values for new ones. You'll need to create visible and believable evidence by sacrificing time, money, ego, and other priorities before people will take similar risks themselves.

While it's true that you must lead the way, you will also need the support of those who have more immediate contact with those you're trying to influence. It often takes the support of formal leaders and opinion leaders to make it safe for people to embrace an innovation. Learn how to identify and partner with these important people. Ignore opinion leaders at your own peril.

Finally, sometimes change efforts call for changes in widely shared norms. You can do this in two ways. First, go public. You can't change norms without discussing them. Detractors will often suggest that it's inappropriate to hold such an open discourse, and they may even go so far as to suggest that the topic is not discussable. Ignore those who seek silence instead of healthy dialogue. Make it safe to talk about high-stakes and controversial topics—including concerns about any proposed changes.

Second, to create new norms, invite everyone to hold everyone else accountable. Lead the way by praising and critiquing the presence or absence of vital behaviors. Enlist formal leaders and opinion leaders in doing the same. Ultimately create a widely shared norm of 200 percent accountability where everyone is responsible not just to practice the new behaviors but to communicate clear expectations to everyone they touch.

Remember, social influence—the deeply felt desire to be accepted, respected, and connected to other human beings—really pulls at human heartstrings. It often sits at the top of the heap of all sources of influence. Consequently, whether you're a manager, parent, or coach, it doesn't matter. The problem you're facing doesn't matter. Learn how to tap into the power of social influence, and you can change just about anything.

Chapter 7: Provide Assistance

As the Beatles suggested, we're most likely to succeed when we have "a little help from our friends." These friends provide us with access to their brains, give us the strength of their hands, and even allow us to make use of their many other personal resources. In effect, they provide us with social capital. In fact, with little help from our friends, we can produce a force greater than the sum of our individual efforts. But we can do this only when we know how to make use of social capital—the profound enabling power of an essential network of relationships.

Sometimes it's not so obvious that your change strategy requires anyone other than yourself. For example, you might think that sticking with a diet is a matter of individual will. In the solitary moments when you're deciding between a deep-fried apple turnover and an apple, it's all up to you. But you'd be wrong to make the assumption that you're alone. While all vital behaviors are enacted by individuals and often done in private, an enabling group of individuals can make an enormous difference in influencing change.

Influencer

The poet John Donne was right when he said that no man is an island. When the people surrounding you are causing or contributing to the problems, playing the role of enabler rather than helper, you need to fight the urge to attack your detractors for their contribution to your pain. Instead, co-opt them. Turn a me problem into a we problem. Provide assistance in order to help people turn vital behaviors into productive habits.

Since you can't know everything, it's essential that you find people who can make up for your blindspots. A whole host of recent studies has revealed that today's most successful employees have networks of people they can go to for expertise, as well as networks of people they can trust with sensitive requests. Successful people not only refuse to see themselves as islands but they also carefully reduce their personal vulnerability by ensuring that they're valued members of hyper-connected networks.

Changing, complex, turbulent, and risky times require multiple heads to come up with creative solutions that no one person could ever invent. When problems call for creativity and multiple views, place people in teams. To make the best use of your existing human resources and dramatically lower your risks, turn your more experienced employees into coaches, trainers, instructors, and mentors.

In an interdependent, turbulent world, our biggest opponents may well be our inability to work in concert. Since rarely does any one of us have all that's required to succeed with the complex tasks we face every day, we desperately need to build social capital. We need to provide concrete assistance during crucial moments in order to help people change.

However, that's certainly not the message we've been fed for years. The movie and TV heroes of the last half century have fought the enemy within—the big bosses, the establishment, and “the man.” This constant celebration of the rugged individualist has had an enormous dampening effect on people's willingness to draw on others to enable change. Influencers know better than to turn their backs on social capital. They're quick to consider what help, authority, consent, or cooperation individuals may need when facing risky or daunting new behaviors. Then they develop an influence strategy that offers the social capital required to help make change inevitable.

Chapter 8: Change Their Economy

So far we've explored both personal and social influence. Now we step away from human factors and examine how to optimize the power of things such as rewards, perks, bonuses, salaries, and the occasional boot in the rear. Most leaders need no convincing to align rewards with vital behaviors. They fully believe that incentives change behavior. So our advice here may surprise you.

Your goal with structural motivation and using incentives should not be to overwhelm people to change. Rather, it should be primarily to remove disincentives—to “change the economy” as it were. As we'll see, most leaders run the risk of relying too much on incentives rather than too little. If bad

Influencer

behavior is deeply entrenched, odds are that the current economic system people live in is positively encouraging what you don't want. Changing the economy means simply to ensure that positive and negative incentives aren't undermining the influence message you're trying to send. The real work of change must be done by sources 1 (personal motivation) and 3 (social motivation).

Stories of well-intended rewards that inadvertently backfire are legion. The primary cause of most of these debacles is that individuals attempt to influence behaviors by using rewards as their first motivational strategy. In a well-balanced change effort, rewards come third. Influencers first ensure that vital behaviors connect to intrinsic satisfaction. Next, they line up social support. They double check both of these areas before they finally choose rewards to motivate behavior. If you don't follow this careful order, you're likely to be disappointed.

So, the question is, how do you use incentives wisely? Take care to ensure that the rewards come soon, are gratifying, and are clearly tied to vital behaviors. When you do so, even small rewards can be used to help people overcome some of the most profound and persistent problems.

When it comes to offering extrinsic rewards, the rewards typically don't need to be very large if you've laid the groundwork with the previous sources of motivation. Nobody's suggesting that corporate executives should ask employees to come to work without any compensation or that children should never get paid for helping out around the house. However, when you do want to provide a supplemental reward to help shape behavior, as the much-maligned adage goes, it's often the thought, not the gift, that counts. That's because the thought behind an incentive often carries symbolic significance and taps into a variety of social forces that carry a lot of weight, much more so than the face value of the incentive itself. So, as you think of rewards, don't be afraid to let the thought behind the reward carry the burden for you.

Don't wait until people achieve phenomenal results. Instead, reward small improvements in behavior. As simple as this sounds, we're bad at it; especially at work. When polled, employees reveal that their number one complaint is that they aren't recognized for their notable performances. Apparently, people hand out praise as if it were being rationed, usually only for outstanding work. Perhaps people are stingy with their praise because they fear that rewarding incremental improvement in performance means rewarding mediocrity or worse. "So you're telling me that every time a poor performer finally does something everyone else is already doing, I'm supposed to hold some kind of celebration?"

Actually, no. If an employee's current performance level is unacceptable and you can't wait for him to come up to standard, then either terminate him or move him to a task that he can complete. On the other hand, if an individual is excelling in some areas while lagging in others, but overall his or her performance is up to meeting expectations, then set performance goals in the lagging areas. Don't be afraid to reward small improvements. This means that you shouldn't wait for big results but instead should reward improvement in vital behaviors along the way.

Influencer

Sometimes you don't have the luxury of positive performance because the person you'd like to reward never actually does the right thing. In fact, he or she does only the wrong thing—and often. In these cases, if you want to make use of extrinsic reinforcements, you're left with the prospect of punishing this person. Fortunately, since punishment is from the same family as positive reinforcement (half empty/half full) it should have a similar effect. Right? Maybe not.

Punishment far from guarantees the mirror effect of positive reinforcement. In virtually hundreds of experiments with laboratory animals and humans, punishment decreases the likelihood of a previously reinforced response, but only temporarily. Plus it can produce a whole host of other undesired effects. When you reward performance, you typically know that the reward will help propel behavior in the desired direction, but with punishment you don't know what you're going to get. You might gain compliance, but only over the short term. Then again the person in question may actually push back or purposely rebel. There's a good chance that this person is not going to appreciate you for what you've done, thereby putting your relationship at risk.

One way to make use of punishment without actually having to administer it is to “place a shot across the bow” of those you're trying to influence. That is, provide a clear warning to let them know exactly what negative things will happen to them should they continue down their current path but don't actually administer discipline yet. Then if they stay clear of the wrong behavior, they enjoy the benefit of the threat without having to actually suffer its consequences.

Administering rewards and punishments can be a tricky business. Consequently, when you look at the extrinsic motivators you're using to encourage or discourage behavior, take care to adhere to a few helpful principles. First, rely on personal and social motivators as your first line of attack. Let the value of the behavior itself, along with social motivators, carry the bulk of the motivational load.

When you do choose to tweak the economy, make sure the extrinsic motivators are immediately linked to vital behaviors. Take care to link rewards to the specific actions you want to see repeated. When choosing rewards, don't be afraid to draw on small heartfelt tokens of appreciation. Remember, when it comes to extrinsic rewards, less is often more. Do your best to reward behaviors and not merely outcomes. Sometimes outcomes hide inappropriate behaviors. Finally, if you end up having to administer punishment, first take a shot across the bow. Let people know what's coming before you impose the punishment.

Chapter 9: Change Their Space

Rarely does the average person conceive of changing the physical world as a way of changing human behavior. We see that others are misbehaving, and we look to change them, not their environment. Caught up in the human side of things, we miss the impact of subtle yet powerful sources such as the size of a room or the impact of a chair. Consequently, one of our most powerful sources of influence (our physical space) is often the least used because it's the least noticeable.

Influencer

If you can influence behavior by eliminating graffiti, shifting a wall, changing a reporting structure, putting in a new system, posting numbers, or otherwise working with things, the job of leader, parent, or change agent doesn't seem like such a daunting task. After all, these are inanimate objects. Things lie there quietly. Things never resist change, and they stay put once you change them.

Much of what we do, for better or for worse, is influenced by dozens of silent environmental forces that drive our decisions and actions in ways that we rarely notice. So, to make the best use of your last source of influence, take your laser like attention off people and take a closer look at their physical world. Step up to your persistent problem, identify vital behaviors, and then search for subtle features from the environment that are silently driving you and others to misbehave.

Once you've identified environmental elements that are subtly driving your or others' behavior, it's time to take steps to make the elements more obvious. That is, you should make the invisible visible. Provide actual cues in the space around you to remind people of the behaviors you're trying to influence. By providing small cues in the environment, you can draw attention to critical data points, and change how people think and eventually how they behave.

Information affects behavior. People make choices based on cognitive maps that explain which behavior leads to which outcomes. The problem is our own lack of awareness of where we're getting our data, as well as how the data are affecting our behavior. Despite the fact that we're often exposed to incomplete or inaccurate data, if information is fed to us frequently and routinely enough, we begin to act on it as if it were an accurate sample of the greater reality, even when it often isn't.

Influencers understand the importance of an accurate data stream and do their best to ensure that their strategies focus on vital behaviors by serving up visible, timely, and accurate information that supports their goals. Instead of falling victim to data, they manage data religiously. As difficult as it can be to notice the effects of data on our behavior, it's much more difficult to notice the effects of physical space. When social psychologist Leon Festinger and others first started examining the effects of space (and its two-dimensional cousin, distance) on relationships, they had no idea that they had stumbled on to one of the most profound social psychological phenomena of all time—propinquity.

Festinger discovered that the frequency and quality of human interaction is largely a function of physical distance. For example, bosses who interact the most frequently with their subordinates generally have the best relationships. Who interacts most often? Bosses who are located closest to their direct reports.

The opposite isn't necessarily true. That is, too much distance doesn't merely lead to inconvenience and loss of friendship. At the corporate level, when employees don't meet and chat (getting to know one another and jointly working on problems), bad things happen. Silos form and infighting reigns. Employees start labeling others with ugly terms such as "them" and "they" meaning the bad

Influencer

people “out there” whom they rarely see and who are surely the cause of most of the problems they experience. If you want to predict who doesn’t trust or get along with whom in a company, take out a tape measure.

Not everyone suffers from the negative effects of space and distance. Some people use it as a powerful influence lever. Savvy leaders rely on the use of physical space as a means of enhancing interaction. Instead of simply telling people to collaborate, they move employees next to one another or provide them a shared common area or eating facility. When it comes to corporate effectiveness, you can have propinquity work against you or make it your ally.

When it comes to developing an influence strategy, we just don’t think about things as our first line of influence. Given that things are far easier to change than people and that these things can then have a permanent impact on how people behave, it’s high time we pick up on the power of the space we inhabit to our influence repertoire. Who knows? Someday an everyday person may even be able to say the word propinquity in public without drawing snickers.

Chapter 10: Become an Influencer

As you look at your existing circumstance (including the current problem and the efforts you’re taking to resolve it), it’s important to realize that even though big influence challenges call for big solutions, you may already be most of the way there. Sometimes all it takes to create change is to add one more source of influence to your existing efforts. Perhaps several sources already support your vital behaviors and the threshold for change is just one source away. What a shame it would be to have traveled 99 miles of a 100-mile journey only to quit at the very edge of success.

Don’t be intimidated at the prospect of coming up with six new sources. You probably have several of them currently working in your favor. Then, as you do add new ones, consider it an experiment. You can’t and don’t want to use every possible source of influence, so pick the ones you think are best suited to your circumstances, are the most powerful, and are the easiest to implement, and go from there. Then, don’t expect that you can put together the perfect combination of influence methods the very first time. Instead, prepare for “trial and learn.” Put a method into play, observe the impact, learn from the effort, make changes, and repeat until perfected.

It’s time to get started. Identify what you really want and how you’re going to measure it. Discover the handful of high-leverage behaviors that will help you reach this objective. Then identify and get working in your favor not just one or two but all six sources of influence. As you apply each source, carefully study the results. Learn what is working and what isn’t, and then make changes. As you learn how to keep the right focus, adopt the right actions, and master the six sources, you will become an influencer.