

INFLUENCERS BOOK SUMMARY

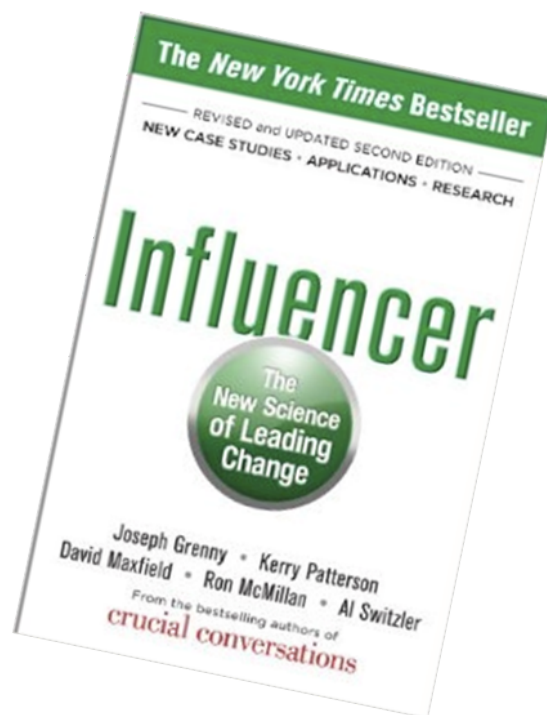
This has been one of my favourite books of the last 5 years. It is research based, clearly written, with lots of practical examples and stories. I find myself thinking and using the model all the time. Influence is an important topic. This book goes beyond persuasion and selling techniques and looks at behavioural change – others and ours.

Whether you're a CEO, a parent, or just someone who wants to make a difference, you probably wish you had more influence in your life.

The truth is we all want to be more influential. Hardly a day passes that we don't try to exert influence on others to change their behaviour. We also spend a lot of time trying to influence ourselves to make sacrifices in the short-term, in hopes of seeing payoffs down the road. We regularly try to convince ourselves to forego short-term pleasures in order to lose weight or save more money. We struggle to take charge of our tempers around our children. We strive to become a relevant voice in our friends' lives, and try to model good behaviours as best we can.

Consciously or not, we never stop trying to exert influence. It's just what we do.

Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that barely an hour goes by each day when we're not attempting to influence ourselves, or folks around us, most of us are pretty darn lousy at it. Even among the minority of us who would perhaps be considered "influential" by our peers, most of the time we're just "winging it." We may have acquired some of the basic tools to be moderately influential, but we're rarely conscious of what we're doing, and thus we tend to apply our skills inconsistently, and ineffectively. In short, there's lots of room for improvement.





On the market today are hundreds, if not thousands, of self-help books that claim to teach us how to “win friends and influence people.” Some of these offerings are better than others. But for the most part, these books are based on showing how to improve our verbal persuasion skills, or employ slick negotiation tactics.

Yes, having good communication skills is important. But according to the authors of a groundbreaking new book *Influencer: the Power to Change Anything*, you’ll never convince anyone to make a real, lasting change through mere words alone.

Many people when they encounter a difficult problem defer to an old prayer for guidance, which is what the authors call “the serenity trap” (p.4).

“We ask for the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things you can, and the wisdom to know the difference”.

We do not bring forth change by fixing specific problems or by verbal persuasion, as many have believed for their entire life. The authors believe therein lays the problem; we try a few comfortable strategies to fix our problem, and when they don’t work, we give up and try to control the aspects of our lives that we can. The premise of the *Influencer* is that all problems, from every facet of our lives, can be solved “because these problems don’t require solutions that defy the laws of nature; they require people to act differently” (p.4). When we learn methods and apply strategies daily, we expand our influence and bring forth change into every aspect of our lives.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler. They're founders of VitalSmarts, a leader in corporate training services that's taught more than two million people and worked with dozens of Fortune 500 companies. They're also the co-authors of the New York Times bestseller *Crucial Conversations*, and its hit follow-up *Crucial Confrontations*, which showed many thousands of people how to create dramatic, long-lasting change at work, at home, and in their communities by implementing proven influence strategies.

The authors' latest book, *Influencer*, taps into the skills of hundreds of successful change agents from corporate America — and from organizations around the world — and combines them with decades of top-caliber social science research. Their lofty goal was to develop a coherent, concise and portable model for changing behaviours; a model that virtually anyone could easily learn, and apply.

Influencer is divided into two parts. The first part sets the stage, and explains why changing people's actions must always start by focusing on people's behaviours. The second part of the book goes on to identify, and then teach us how to effectively manipulate, the six timeless sources of influence that most affect people's behaviours, namely: Values, Skills, Support, Teamwork, Incentives, and the Environment. Best of all, the authors show us how to locate these six sources of influence using interesting, real life examples, and then explain step-by-step how to apply them to solve the most intractable problems.

PART I: THE POWER TO CHANGE ANYTHING



There are many global examples in order to determine factors of influence. They also researched the work of Dr. Albert Bandura, who studied how powerfully behaviour is shaped from the observation of others, not by using rewards or punishments. Studying a person's critical moments from their lives or being self-aware is not necessary in order to invoke change. The influencers came to the conclusion that if you understand the science behind behaviours, you can change remarkably resistant behaviours. "All of this is important to know because if you want to change the world, you eventually have to change how people behave. And if you want to change how they behave, you have to first change how they think"(p.20). This means that we as people, can learn how to influence others, it is not because of a character flaw or lack of motivation. We need to see because of a character flaw or lack of motivation. We need to see ourselves as influencers, and study the masters in order to learn.

To be clear, Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, and Switzler didn't discover a magic bullet. Rather, they uncovered a common set of tools that have been proven effective in different combinations, under different circumstances.

The authors also came to understand that the world's greatest influencers start by focusing on behaviours. They don't seek to apply an influence strategy until they have clearly defined the underlying behaviour they are targeting.

This is different than zeroing-in on outcomes. Effective influencers understand they must focus on the behaviours that enable, or impair, the desired outcome.

"All too often," say the authors, "failed attempts at influencing others are the direct result of a 'means/ends' confusion, where the desired outcome may be obvious, but the means for achieving it remains unclear." To make their point, the authors cite the example of Ethna Reid, a highly-regarded educator who studied the key essential behaviours that separate effective from non-effective teachers. For five years, Dr. Reid and her team studied and coded the behaviours of high and low performing teachers. In the end they found two critical behaviours that separated the two groups. Specifically, they found that high performing teachers typically distinguish themselves by rewarding their students' positive performance more frequently. They also discovered that high performing teachers are better at quickly shifting gears between (1) teaching new concepts, and (2) assessing whether their students are grasping those concepts, in order to make immediate, on-the-spot adjustments to their teaching approach, if needed.

Influencer Model



STEP 1: CLARIFY MEASURABLE RESULTS

Begin with the end in mind. The most important part of leading change is understanding what you are leading towards, when it will happen, and being able to track progress towards it. Use both quantitative and qualitative metrics.

Don't waste time on how to create change until you've clarified what you want, why you want it, and when you want it. An effective result is:

1. Specific and measurable. It is quantitative not qualitative.

2. What you really want. It's the outcome that matters.

3. Time bound. It comes with a completion date.

Defining success in an easy way to measure it. Begin with the end in mind. The most important part of leading change is understanding what you are leading towards, when it will happen, and being able to track progress towards it. Use both quantitative and qualitative metrics.

As a hypothetical, assume you are leading a culture shift within your nonprofit organization to promote innovation and instill passion to better engage donors. Quantitative measurements include: Increases in number of donors, amount per donor, recurring donations, rate of recurring donations. Qualitative results include stories of inspiration, new programs funded, stronger teams, etc.



THE 3 MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE:

1. FUZZY AND UNCOMPELLING GOALS

They start with a vague sense of what they want people to achieve or do. "Empower our employees", "Be a high performing Operational center" "Improving customer service".

What we want to design is clear goals, aimed at a compelling target. Something that engages more than just the brain but also the emotions.

As an example the authors use, Martin Burt started Fundacion Paraguay's 30 years ago. The aim was to provide Paraguays poor with easy access to credit as a means of helping them climb out of poverty. Burt was troubled, too few were getting out of poverty through this method. No longer would they focus on number of loans they processed (a somewhat unconvincing goal), they changed it to be "Beginning April 2011, "Our goal is to help 5000 poor families to earn \$5 per day per person or more before the end of the year."

The effects of this clear goal was immediate and set of a whole chain of events. It influenced the way people saw their jobs. It influenced how the loan officers needed to work with their clients. Burt announced on December 31, 2011 that over 6000 families had achieved this goal.

2. INFREQUENT OR NO MEASURES

Unsuccessful change strategies or programs rarely develop credible measures against which to match their intentions

You have to pick a measure that represents the goal or idea. We need to go beyond anecdotal evidence that things are better. A measure won't drive behaviour 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 it takes effort and energy to collect and present data, leaders often complain it takes too much effort to do. Here is an issue, leaders don't see that measurement is an integral part of the change effort and done correctly, it informs and drives behaviour.

Let's say a restaurant measured revenue daily, but customer experience yearly. Revenue would drive the leaders attention and customer experience would get a ritualized yearly review. If you want to influence behaviour, it must be measured frequently.

Leaders assume that measurements are separate from influence. It isn't. Measurement is an integral part of the change effort, and done correctly, it informs and drives behaviour.

3. BAD MEASURES

Even when they do take measure, many who fail often drive the wrong behaviour by measuring the wrong variable.

In Communist Russia the Soviets didn't have ways to measure profit, or customer satisfaction. What they could and did measure was output. They measured output by weight. So a nail factory switched from making the nails that people needed to huge and heavy railway spikes. When the leaders learnt this they switched to number of units. So the nail factory switched to tiny, almost useless nails.

STEP 2. FIND VITAL BEHAVIOURS

Patterson et al. (2008) maintained that before a person can influence change, they must first decide what they are trying to change. The first step of identifying the key behaviours to develop influence strategies is a critical component in successful change. The authors asserted that beginning with the end goal in mind, and being able to track progress is essential, and they suggest both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. It is extremely important to ensure that there is no confusion between outcomes and behaviours when planning for change. What you want to achieve is the end goal, it is necessary to learn what actually needs to be done in order to influence change. The authors also warned of advice from the experts. If you can't immediately figure out what to do, then the advice is too abstract, and may lead to an unclear course of action. The second step in creating a focused plan for change is the search for vital behaviours. Once vital behaviours are identified, a plan to change these behaviours is developed, and problems seem to disappear. In all of the examples provided by Patterson et al. (2008), there was an intense search for the best practices available for their particular domain. Not only were the top performers studied, others that were not quite as good were also observed, in order to identify key behaviours that set the groups apart. The results of the observations were studied, and the researchers then took their findings and taught them to a small experimental group, and noted the changes.

If the researchers were correct, then both the vital behaviours and the desired outcomes were positively affected. After the study of vital behaviours has been completed, in order to personalize the plan of action, a source of positive deviance must be out. It is important to find an example of people, places, or times where the problem studied simply does not exist. After careful observations, the unique behaviours that differ can be identified and used in the plan of influence. Finally it is time to test your ideas. Implement your plan and observe the results are what you intended. It is important that you notice if the desired results are happening, not just if the behaviour has increased or decreased. Develop a series of short, quick, low risk experiments in order to prove success through data. Acting on a hunch or advice without evidence will result in certain failure.



Begin with the end in mind. The most important part of leading change is understanding what you are leading towards, when it will happen, and being able to track progress towards it. Use both quantitative and qualitative metrics.

Don't waste time on how to create change until you've clarified what you want, why you want it, and when you want it. An effective result is:

We must understand that there are a few moments of disproportionate influence on people's performance and behaviour.

Vital behaviours exponentially improve your results. **If crucial moments tell you when it's time to act, vital behaviours tell you exactly what to do and how to do it.** Vital behaviours tend to stop self-defeating and escalating behaviours.

The good news is that these crucial moments are often easily spotted. A doctor enters a room and doesn't wash his hands. That is a crucial moment. A person carrying guinea worm feels an urge to thrust their infected arm into the local water source. Crucial moment.

Even the biggest most pervasive problem will yield to change if you spot these crucial moments and then identify the specific, high leverage actions that will lead to the results you want.

Find these few vital behaviours and you have found the second key to influence.

Take the example Dr Wiwat from Thailand. He tried and failed to stop the pandemic of AIDS in that country. AIDS had, up to 1988 been confined largely to the prison population IV drug users. In 1988 the King gave 30000 prisoners pardons. AIDS exploded into the wider community. In 1993 it was estimated that over 1 million people were infected.

At first Dr Wiwat and others thought that the solution was education. Educate the masses and the problem would be reduced. It didn't, it failed miserably. Dr Wiwat threw out the text book and looked at the data again. What he found was that overwhelmingly the transmission was between married men and prostitutes. He surmised that the crucial moment was when a sex worker chose or didn't choose to insist on using a condom. This one vital behaviour would disproportionately affect the spread of the disease. If he could influence the sex workers to use condoms, he could stop the spread of HIV in his country. Much to many people's surprise the plan worked. It is estimated that 5 million people who would have been infected were prevented from being so because of his strategy.

STEP 3. USE SIX SOURCES OF INFLUENCE

CHANGING THE WAY YOU CHANGE MINDS

After the vital behaviours have been identified, the next step is to convince the others involved that changing their minds is necessary. This can be difficult as people are often resistant to change, even in spite of evidence or data that correlates with the change. Again, the authors sought out the research of Dr. Albert Bandura, who studied people with snake phobias in order to learn how to change resistant behaviours. He started by confronting their fears and then enabled them to exercise control. Dr. Bandura found that the subjects needed more than words and less than actions. They needed vicarious experience- that is they needed to learn from others demonstrating the vital behaviour and learn from it. People will change their behaviour if they believe that it will be worth it, and that they believe that they can accomplish what is required. Storytelling is an influential tool that is both powerful and accessible. A story creates images and can provide details that can transport the listener into the content. Stories are seen as more credible than simple statements, are more focused around an actual event, and are easily understandable. Listeners often empathize with the character and changing behaviours. Patterson et al. (2008) noted the importance of telling the entire story, and clearly demonstrates the link between the current behaviours and negative results. Positive replacement behaviours need to be introduced next and send the message that change is worth it and that the listener can achieve the same goal.



MAKE CHANGE INEVITABLE

Most people have a strategy they use often in an attempt to influence aspects of their lives.

More often than not, it is too simplistic to be successful every time it is used. Patterson et al.(2009), found that successful influencers over plan their success- that is they utilize more strategies and at times even have more strategies in the plan than might be needed. Great influencers leave no loose end to chance. "We now know enough about the forces that affect human behaviour to place them into a coherent and workable model that can be used to organized out thinking, select a full set of influence strategies, combine them into a powerful, and eventually make change inevitable" (Patterson et al. 2009, p. 77).

The model starts with the basic assumption that every person asks themselves two questions when faced with change. The first one has to do with motivation- mainly -

"Do I want to do the work to change?"

The second one addresses ability -

"Am I able to make the necessary changes?"

These two questions form the two domains located at the top of the model. The authors further subdivide the domains into personal, social, and structural sources that were developed by research into psychology, social psychology, and organizational theory. These domains are located going down the side. With this model, master influencers are able to see the six sources of influence needed in order to over plan their chance for success.

	Motivate	Enable
Self	Pain and Pleasure	Strengths and Weaknesses
Others	Praise and Pressure	Helps and Hindrances
Things	Carrots and Sticks	Bridges and Barriers

	Motivate	Ability
Personal	<p><i>Do they want to engage in the behavior?</i></p> <p>MAKE THE UNDESIRABLE, DESIRABLE</p>	<p><i>Do they have the right skills and strengths to do the right thing?</i></p> <p>HELPING THEM SURPASS THEIR LIMITS</p>
Social	<p><i>Are other people encouraging and/or discouraging behaviors?</i></p> <p>HARNESS PEER PRESSURE</p>	<p><i>Do others provide the help, information, and resources required at particular times?</i></p> <p>FIND STRENGTH IN NUMBERS</p>
Structural	<p><i>Are systems rewarding the right behavior and discouraging ineffective ones?</i></p> <p>DESIGN REWARDS AND DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY</p>	<p><i>Are these systems that keep people in place and on progress?</i></p> <p>CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT</p>

SOURCE 1: MAKE THE UNDESIRABLE DESIRABLE

People must want to engage in the necessary behaviour for change. Influencers must link the vital behaviours to deeply felt internal motives.

SOURCE 2: SURPASS YOUR LIMITS

People must believe that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out the change. Influencers need to teach the specifics of the behaviour change to be successful.

SOURCE 3: HARNESS PEER PRESSURE

There must be people that are encouraging positive behaviours and discouraging of the wrong behaviours. Influencers use this domain to motivate people into acting in the target behaviour.

SOURCE 4: FIND STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

People must provide others with help through information or resources in this domain. Influencers must encourage cooperation in order to be successful.

SOURCE 5: DESIGN REWARDS AND DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY

Here influencers must study the reward system of the organization to ensure that the rewards are encouraging and motivational to work toward the target behaviour.

SOURCE 6: CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT

Here influencers must ensure that there are enough cues in place to encourage the vital behaviour, and discourage the wrong ones.

1. MAKE THE UNDESIRABLE DESIRABLE

Is it actually possible to change how humans can experience behaviours?

According to the authors, the answer is yes. Sometimes there may be a need for some external rewards or punishments, but the key is to make the behaviour intrinsically satisfying to the individual. Patterson et al. (2008) share the two ways influencers two powerful ways to change reactions.

The first strategy involves creating new experiences by providing individuals with ample opportunities to actually try the behaviour. Trying a new behaviour enables people to stop predicting how it will feel, which historically, is often wrong. The authors suggest using modelling to create vicarious experiences. It is important for individuals to feel like it is almost a game, that is, use reasonably challenging goals and clear feedback in order to engage individuals. Take the focus off of the activity itself and attempt to reconnect the person's behaviour with the vital behaviour, in order for successful influence.

The second strategy involves creating new motives for the vital behaviour. Influencers must make the new behaviour relevant to an individual. When people make their behaviour morally significant, almost anything can be achieved. In daily life we are often not moral thinkers, so it is imperative that influencers get individuals to act on their morality instead of blurring the vision by acting on emotions.

Influencers should not try to argue or lecture with logic, when dealing with highly resistant people. Allowing individuals to discover their own course of action by letting the person talk about what is most important to them morally, and what changes they must make in their lives to accomplish this is important to an expert influencer.

2. SURPASS YOUR LIMITS

A person's resistance to change is because of a lack of skill. People underestimate the need to learn and practice the skill they desire. In fact, all people who achieve extraordinary accomplishments do so because they have practiced the right actions in a controlled environment. People simply cannot change through sheer willpower alone. According to psychologist Dr. Anders Ericson, improvement can be achieved through deliberate practice which include:

Demand full attention for brief intervals: Deliberate practice requires full attention, with no time for distractions. Concentrating seems sometimes like a difficult challenge, and most can only maintain a high level of concentration for an hour a day, usually in the morning. **Provide immediate feedback against a clear standard:** It is more important to receive clear and frequent feedback against a standard than the number of hours practiced. When combined with concentration, growth is accelerated.

Break mastery into mini goals: Sometimes a large goal seems too daunting, causing fear that they will never achieve success. This fear leads to costly failure. By providing short-term specific, manageable goal, self-confidence is built. **Prepare for setbacks; build in resilience:** If people achieve only successes early on in the change process, when a failure does occur, they can become quickly discouraged. Persistence and resiliency are key factors to success. It is suggested that the gradual introduction of tasks that need an increased effort help learners overcome defeat, and realize that setbacks are not permanent.

Build emotional skill: It is easy to fall back into emotional and instinctual responses when trying to overcome challenges. To regain control "take the focus off your instinctive objective by carefully attending to distraction activities. Where possible, completely avoid the battle to delay gratification by making the difficult easy, the aversive pleasant, and the boring interesting" (Patterson et al. 2008, p. 135). When individuals develop competency through deliberate practice, there is an increased chance of acquiring the vital behaviours sought to change.

3. HARNESS PEER PRESSURE

The most powerful influence tool out there is the people who we respect. They can easily persuade any social network to either follow through with change or can grind change into a halt. In order to utilize this power, it is necessary to find the one respected person within the network who can model the new vital behaviour. It is also necessary to spend a large amount of time with the respected people in the network in order to build trust, and enable them to spread the message of change. Sometimes it is necessary to invite everyone in the network to come together and talk openly in order for change to be widely accepted. It is important to seek a healthy dialogue, and strive to create a safe venue for discussing controversial topics. In some cases, change efforts require the help of all members of the organization. "People must be plucked from their support structure and placed in a new network, one where virtually everyone in their new social circle supports and rewards the right behaviours while punishing the wrong ones" (Patterson et al. 2008, p. 164).

4. FIND STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

In the entertainment business, there are many examples of heroes who have defeated many enemies alone. In North America especially, the authors maintained that partially because of the entertainment industry, society has become unwilling to use cooperation in order to solve problems. Rarely does any one person have the ability to have success in every single problem they encounter. It is necessary to invest in building our own social capital in order to help us succeed in all complex situations. Expert influencers know the importance of building social capital. "They're quick to consider what help, authority, consent, or cooperation individuals may need when facing risky or daunting new behaviours. Then they develop an influence strategy that offers the social capital required to help make change inevitable" (Patterson et al. 2008, p. 192).

5. DESIGN REWARDS AND DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY

The first four sources of influence deal primarily with changing individual behaviour's in order to have success in the vital behaviour. Sometimes though, we need to utilize incentives to help create change. Patterson et al. (2008) noted that rewards must be linked to vital behaviours in order to be successful. They should be closely linked to specific actions you want repeated, and not just outcomes. In terms of rewards, it is also important to rely on personal and social motivators first. Small incentives that reward improvements, and that are heartfelt are the most appreciated. Before administering punishments of any kind, the authors advise leaders to provide a clear warning before handing out the punishment. People need to understand that negative things will happen if the negative behaviours continue. Punishments make an organization firmly understand their core values, and can be used to change behaviour if correctly administered.

6. CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT

The final strategy presented involves the changing of actual things within the building. People fail to realize the impact on change that changing a few things that at work, which means that this strategy is often overlooked. It is also far easier to change things rather than people. Another reason that we do not always adopt this sixth strategy, is that even if we realize the impact our environment is having on us, it is often difficult to know what to do about it. Once the element for change has been identified, the next step is to provide cues to remind people of the behaviours you hope to influence. The small cues draw attention to the important details, change how people think, which in turn, changes behaviour. Change also becomes easier and more manageable when changes to the physical environment can eradicate choice altogether. When structure is relied on, the vital behaviour an expert influencer strives to change becomes inevitable. The behaviour becomes more of a pattern, and failure does not become an option.

While it may seem that right now you may not be an influencer, according to the authors, after the development of the six sources of influence, anyone can become an expert. Study the strategies, watch the experts, and try to borrow their strategies until the sources of influence become automatic. To become an expert influencer, all six sources of influence must be addressed. Figure out what motivators and abilities are needed in order to change the vital behaviour, and use the sources of influence in the domains of environment, social network, and the individual to make change inevitable. Using only one of the six strategies could be enough to create the changes needed, but the more strategies an expert influencer utilizes, the higher the chance of success an influencer will have. Change becomes more rapid, and the chance for failure is lessened.