



Influencer

The Power to Change Anything

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VitalSmarts researchers spent the past thirty years developing a theory of change based on our work in more than fifty companies, the work of influencers and practitioners who have solved problems on a national and international scale, and the work of the finest scholars from the past fifty years.

The goal of our exploration was to crack the code of human influence. And we did. Now it's time to share what we've learned through a leadership development process that empowers others to create breakthroughs in their organizations—the award-winning Influencer Training™.



TRAINING PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

“Even if just a handful of employees implement these practices, an organization can experience enormous change.”

—Human Resource Executive®

Influencer: The Power to Change Anything

One Problem, One Solution

Most chronic problems—from a corporation’s mediocre safety record to a stalled product release to ingrained cultural challenges—no matter how different they may appear at first glance, are actually the same problem. That’s right; most problems that resist our best attempts at solutions and then persist for years on end do so because we lack influence. More specifically, we lack the ability to change human behavior.

We’ve collapsed the immense and slippery topic of influence into a single factor—human behavior. Why? Because human behavior affects most of what we really care about. Think about the profound and persistent problems you see in the world around you or a few of the chronic complaints you have in your organization.

Odds are, when you examine your list of concerns, you’ll discover the problems that plague your organization the most and persist for the longest do so because one or more human beings continue to behave in ways that perpetuate the problem.

The good news is that one set of influence strategies can enhance your ability to both motivate and enable your workforce to change.

Scope

VitalSmarts researchers spent the past thirty years developing a theory of change based on our own work in more than fifty companies—companies where we helped leaders create widespread and lasting

changes in corporate culture. We wanted to find and apply the best practices that explain how to solve challenges such as:

- Improving on-time, on-budget delivery of projects.
- Building accountability within teams.
- Gaining 100 percent compliance with safety or quality policies.
- Moving Six Sigma from “program of the month” to “the way we do things here.”
- Dramatically reducing medical errors.

In looking for theories of influence that could be applied to human behavior, we expanded our search to the world stage. We looked for scholars and practitioners who had solved problems on a national and an international scale by creating sustainable change—even in the face of doggedly persistent behaviors.

This search for world-class change agents took us through 17,000 books and articles where we reviewed the work of the finest scholars

of the past fifty years. It also took us from Bangladesh to Boston as we interviewed and studied world-class change agents and theorists who not only created change where others had failed, but who documented it through defensible research and replicated it through repeated trials.

The goal of our exploration was to crack the code of human influence. And we did. But one of the most confirming and gratifying discoveries of our search for influencers tackling global and social challenges was that every one of these successful scholars and practitioners had arrived at precisely the same set of principles to influence change that we had learned to apply in corporate settings over the years.

Impact

As we learned more about solving problems that had historically seemed impossible to resolve, we made an amazingly encouraging finding. At the corporate level, we learned that when leaders understand what drives human behavior, not only can they solve intractable and resistant problems, they can do so in a remarkably short amount of time.

For example, we discovered that significant and measurable changes in a handful of key behaviors took place at Lockheed Martin in a matter of months. These rapid changes led to substantial improvements in productivity, quality, cycle time and employee engagement. And all of this was done in a workforce with an average of more than twenty years tenure and a long history of failed change efforts.

We've also learned that applying a combination of strategies increases your likelihood of success dramatically. For instance, a study conducted by VitalSmarts and The Concours Group of 900 executives involved in more than 300 change projects showed that the benefit of applying an effective influence strategy is *not* incremental, it's exponential. Leaders and scholars are usually thrilled to learn that one approach or another improves the chance of success by 10, 20, or 30 percent. What we discovered is that those who use the full range of influence strategies we teach *are ten times more likely to succeed*.

With a clear theory of influence you can increase your chance for success tenfold; it's no surprise that the handful of world-class influencers we studied were able to:

- Reduce the number of new AIDS infections in one country by 90 percent *in less than two years*.
- Help more than 14,000 hardened criminals and drug addicts change their lives forever—with more than a 90 percent success rate.
- Save tens of thousands of lives by reducing avoidable medical mistakes.
- Dramatically reduce violence against women nationwide.
- Eradicate a dreaded disease from 11 countries.

After finding these remarkable change agents and verifying the Influence process we'd been developing, we knew it was time to share what we'd learned. We made a commitment to turn the strategies of effective influencers into a personal and leadership development process that would empower others to create breakthroughs in their organizations.

That commitment resulted in the training program *Influencer: The Power to Change Anything*. *Influencer Training* was named a 2009 Top Training Product of the Year by *Human Resource Executive*® magazine.

Training

Influencer Training follows the model below. This model was named the 2009 Change Management Approach of the Year by *MIT Sloan Management Review*.

1. Identify Clear and Measurable, Time-Bound Results That Reflect What You Really Want

Too often, would-be influencers are either too vague about what they're trying to achieve, or they actually focus on the wrong outcome. For example, non-profit organizations often measure how many people they provide resources to rather than how many people they actually help out of poverty or return to the job market. Corporations make similar mistakes when leaders implement programs that only measure how many forms are correctly filled out or how many people attend a course, without following the impact on the outcomes they really value.

2. Identify Vital Behaviors

Savvy influencers search for just a handful of high-leverage behaviors—usually only two or three. They realize it is impossible to change five or ten behaviors at the same time, and that if you choose wisely, there are usually just a couple of behaviors that have a disproportionate effect on creating change. For instance, when it comes to finishing projects on time and on budget, everyone involved needs to be able to speak openly about what appear to be impossible deadlines. Speaking up would be considered a high-leverage behavior.

3. Diagnose the Six Sources of Influence Behind Existing Behaviors

Whenever people are acting in unhealthy ways, it's because the world is perfectly organized to create those bad behaviors. More importantly, there is rarely one single source of influence behind chronic poor performance. Consequently, the reason leaders fail to create change is because they set out in search of the *one* source of influence that will work for them. They may try training, or offering rewards, or shuffling the org. chart. When their chosen solution doesn't work, they give up. Any problem that is motivated

and enabled by multiple sources won't go away with a strategy that deals with only one.

4. Select and Implement Strategies Aimed at Each Source of Influence

Influencer Training not only exposes participants to six sources of influence that contribute to human behavior, it also provides a handful of strategies aimed at each source. With a clear understanding of strategies that affect each of the six sources, leaders are in a position to create a combined influence strategy that will literally make change inevitable.

Design

Influencer Training is a video-based, trainer-led, highly interactive, two-day course. By the end of this course, participants will not only have deeply explored methods for making change inevitable, but will also have created their own influence strategy for tackling their pressing organizational challenges.

Materials. Each participant receives:

- **Influencer: The Power to Change Anything**—The *New York Times* bestselling book behind the training.
- **The Influencer Participant Toolkit**—The participants' personal guide through the two-day training course and a take-home summary of what they've learned.
- **The Influencer Model Cards**—Visual maps of the influencer process and the Six-Source Model for tackling any problem.
- **The Influencer Audio Companion**—A six-CD audio recording that features each of the authors discussing, applying, and expanding on the concepts taught in the training.
- **The Influence Challenge Workbook**—A guide that walks participants through the steps to solve their most challenging influence problems.

Platform. The training is delivered via an exclusive platform developed by VitalSmarts. The platform serves trainers of varying skill levels.

- **Trainer Guide**—A comprehensive, step-by-step guide through the training. The easy-to-follow guide provides a thorough content overview and helpful cues and trainer tips to keep the training on track.
- **Trainer Assists**—The training platform offers a help button for trainers to use when preparing to train the course. The trainer assists available on each screen include notes from the trainer guide and, in several places throughout the training, video of a master trainer instructing complex principles.

- **Participant Response System (PRS)**—Participants are quizzed at key points throughout the training to test concept mastery. Each participant is provided with a remote control for answering questions anonymously. Answers are immediately displayed on screen and help trainers determine what concepts have been understood, where participants may be struggling, and what concepts may require additional instruction. The PRS is also used to facilitate an ongoing, friendly competition between participant teams. The competition keeps energy levels up and serves as an effective review throughout the training.
- **Award-Winning Video**—The influence strategies taught are illustrated throughout the training in award-winning video segments of many of the master influencers highlighted in the book. Participants are also provided with a serialized video case study that follows an imaginary, but very relevant, group of leaders as they struggle to learn and apply the Influencer strategies.

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About VitalSmarts— An innovator in corporate training and organizational performance, VitalSmarts is home to multiple training offerings, including Crucial Conversations, Crucial Confrontations, Influencer, and Change Anything Training. Each course improves key organizational outcomes by focusing on high-leverage skills and strategies. The Company also has four *New York Times* bestselling books: *Change Anything*, *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Confrontations*, and *Influencer*. VitalSmarts has been ranked by *Inc.* magazine as one of the fastest-growing companies in America for six consecutive years and has trained more than 650,000 people worldwide. www.vitalsmarts.com