

Top 10 Influencing Tips

In my work I have seen a lot of influence success built on skill and luck and failures built on the lack of knowledge of how to influence others. Regardless of whether there you are attempting to influence a person, group, organisation or the masses there are some basic tips and techniques to keep in mind.

Here are my top ten influence tips:

1. **Know your target of influence.** It is near on impossible to influence someone if you don't know what they stand for. Research them, speak to those who know them or speak directly to them. You must know what their values, attitudes and beliefs are regarding your request before you start to try and move them in your direction.
2. **Make time to plan.** It is really easy to miss things you are not looking for. Make time to sit down and consider what the target of influence values/believes regarding this issue. Can you appeal to their motivation of right and wrong or simple desire? Where do you need to focus your attention, building a relationship, overcoming uncertainty or moving them into action? It is possible to influence almost everyone but you need to know if you have the time and resources available to do it.
3. **Show the implication for the target of influence not just the features of your request.** Ensure you are clear on the implication for the target of influence and show it to them. Once you have highlighted that your request will *“Create happier staff”* or *“Give them more free time”* then go about showing them the features and benefits of your request. Many people start with the features, listing all the technical aspects and wiz bang options, before moving to the benefits of taking up the request. But, if the target of influence zones out due to all the technical points they may never hear the implication; which is the most important aspect to them.
4. **It's not all about you.** Just because you are busy and email is easier for you to send, doesn't make it right. Think about the situation from the target of influence's perspective. If they are time poor receiving a 30page overview will doom your request to failure. Likewise trying to pitch an idea in an already full meeting agenda may not give you the opportunity you need to get engagement. Therefore, convey the request in most conducive format to gain acceptance – arrange a suitable time, sit down face to face or at least over the telephone and listen to what the target of influence has to say.
5. **Measure what you do.** You need to know what works. If you are modifying copy for an email blast, direct mail campaign or even modifying a website, know how successful you have been with previous attempts so you can test and measure the success of this approach. Alternatively split test; where you simultaneously test two versions to see which is more successful. Change one element at a time and measure its effectiveness. Knowing what doesn't work is just as valuable as knowing what does.

6. **Engage with knowledgeable others.** Working alone can promote a blinkered approach due to our own beliefs, biases and decision making strategies. Bounce your ideas off others (preferably those who know about the field of influence). You don't always have to have all the ideas and answers. Reach out to others. They will enjoy it and you may just start a fantastic collaborative, professional relationship with someone new.
7. **Don't lose focus.** It's really easy to get lost in the detail and the technical research. However if no-one can understand what you are talking about, all the research under the sun won't help. Keep it relevant, keep it simple and keep it on track.
8. **Don't forget the little people.** Relationship building, managing uncertainty and engagement is not just for the target of influence. Everyone in the team has to be on board so don't forget to influence them as well. Inform, listen and engage with your team so everyone is enthused about the project.
9. **Integration.** Don't rely on just one influence approach. Influence the influencers, have persuasive copy and supporting materials and deal with all the stakeholders not just the decision maker. Having multiple paths to your goal is important because each person, group and/or organisation may be influenced by different things. If you only have one option and it fails, what are you left with?
10. **No isn't failure it's feedback.** The only way to succeed as an influencer is to give things a go. Plan, execute and review what worked and what didn't. If you take every *No* as a failure your confidence will be shot in no time and you will give it away. *Take No* as feedback. Feedback on what depends on your request so don't be afraid to ask where you could have improved. If you continually run away from hearing *No* your efforts will never improve and overtime you run the risk of becoming irrelevant but not knowing why!

I have written these tips and techniques to help you become a better influencer. The ability to influence is something we all possess. For some it is intuitive and for the rest of us we look to the research in the field and the proven frameworks of how and when to apply the various techniques. Happy influencing.

About the Author

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As a Persuasion Specialist I have dedicated hundreds of hours to study the field of persuasion. I am regularly engaged by some of Australia's leading and most motivated individuals, groups and businesses to help them come up with ethically derived and scientifically proven strategies that work for them and their situation.

Having personally trained with Dr Robert Cialdini (the most cited Social Scientist of all time) I am only one of 25 Cialdini Method Certified Trainers (CMCT) in the world (and the only Australian / New Zealander) authorised to deliver Dr Cialdini's research, concepts and strategies.

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