

Are You Leaving Your Influence to Chance?

Influence can sometimes appear to be an ‘in-the-moment’ phenomenon. Certainly the actual results of your influence seem to hinge on specific conversations at specific times. But unless you’re happy to let your opportunities to influence be dictated by chance, there is planning you do in order to influence the right people.

Who are the right people?

It depends very much on your role, your organisation culture and your objectives.

Ask yourself, ‘Whose partner or ally do I need to become?’ Make a list of people that ideally should be including you in their thinking, plans, meetings and strategy.

It might be your boss. It could be certain key customers or suppliers. What about senior members of other departments that have an interface with yours? Or the head of the team where you think your next promotion might lie?

Here’s a system you might use to keep your focus on building relationships. The stronger the relationship, the greater the potential for influence.

For each person on your list:

1. Rate them according to the strength of the existing relationship.
2. Identify the next step forward you want to make in that relationship. It might simply be to introduce yourself, it might be to arrange a short meeting with the person, it might be about reviewing their current plans. You could take him or her to lunch, or meet for coffee. It all depends on how well you are ‘on side’ with that person right now. Create a **Well-formed Outcome** in relation to each person.

3. Make a plan to contact everyone on the list. Schedule it into your calendar and note the purpose of each meeting.
4. After each meeting reflect on what you have learned and achieved. Each person has their own style of thinking and communicating. The more you can accommodate those varying styles, the more influential you will become.
5. Review the list regularly to track progress and identify relationships that need a boost.

I know, this isn’t rocket science. You probably already know most of what I’m saying. The important thing here isn’t what you KNOW. It’s what you DO with what you know.

Lots of people, including me, are very familiar with the concepts and theories of NLP and of influencing others but don’t always remember to apply that knowledge to everyday work and life.

Using systems and structures that focus attention can be very helpful for you and me. It’s all too easy to set goals and objectives and then forget about them in the rush-and-tumble of the average day at work.

The key is not to leave it to chance. Not to simply hope to remember the right things at the right time. The key is to plan.

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