



# Influencer

The New Science of Leading Change

Most chronic problems that resist our best attempts at creating lasting solutions do so *because we lack influence*. More specifically, we lack the ability to motivate and enable ourselves and others to change behavior.

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. We now 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 New Science of Leading Change

## One Problem, One Solution

*Most chronic problems—from a corporation's decent, but not stellar, safety record to a delayed product release to acceptable, but not best-in-class, production methods—no matter how different they may appear, are actually the same problem. That's right; most problems that resist our best attempts at creative solutions and then persist for years 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 and within your own organization.

Odds are 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 you can motivate and enable your workforce to change with one set of influence strategies.

### Scope

Our VitalSmarts research team has 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. We wanted to find and apply the best practices for solving 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.”
- Reducing medical errors to all-time lows.

In looking for methods 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 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 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 develop a single model of human influence. And we did. But one of the most gratifying discoveries of our search was learning that every one of these successful scholars and practitioners had arrived at the same set of principles to influence change that we had been applying in corporate settings over the years.

## Impact

As we learned more about solving problems that had historically seemed impossible to resolve, we made an encouraging discovery. We learned that when leaders understand what drives human behavior, not only can they solve intractable, resistant problems and hit new records—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 not one or two, but a combination of strategies increases your likelihood of success dramatically. For instance, a study conducted by VitalSmarts and The Concours Group of nine hundred executives involved in more than three hundred 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 the ability to increase your chance for success tenfold, it's no surprise that the handful of world-class influencers we studied were able to:

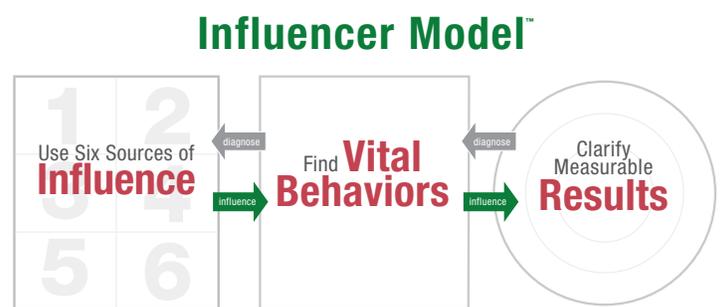
- Reduce the number of new AIDS infections in one country by 90 percent *in less than two years*.
- Help more than 14,000 hardened criminals and drug addicts change their lives forever—with a more than 90 percent success rate.
- Save tens of thousands of lives by reducing avoidable medical mistakes.
- Dramatically reduce violence against women nationwide.
- Eradicate a dreaded disease from eleven 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 Influencer Training Program. 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, corporations fall short when leaders implement programs that only measure how many forms are correctly filled out or how many people attend a course and not the impact on the outcomes they really value. Non-profit organizations make similar mistakes when they 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.

### 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 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 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 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 worked on their own influence strategy for tackling their pressing organizational challenges.

**Materials.** Each participant receives:

- **Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change**—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 Sources of Influence™ 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.
- **A Course Completion Certificate**

**Training Delivery.** The training is delivered by VitalSmarts facilitators or certified trainers within their own organizations. The training design supports trainers of varying skills 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.
- **VitalSmarts Instructional Platform (VIP)**—Slides and video content are delivered through this exclusive training platform, seamlessly integrating all course content. Within the VIP, facilitators can customize the presentation by suppressing and editing slides and selecting optional videos. The VIP also provides facilitation features such as the training timer, on-demand model reference, and content for training breaks.
- **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. The VIP integrates with two of the most popular PRS systems.
- **Award-Winning Video**—The influence strategies 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.

## VitalSmarts®

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**About VitalSmarts**—An innovator in corporate training and leadership development, VitalSmarts combines three decades of original research with fifty years of the best social science to help leaders and organizations change human behavior and achieve new levels of performance. We've identified four high-leverage skill sets that, when used in combination, create healthy corporate cultures. These skills are taught in our award-winning training programs and *New York Times* bestselling books of the same titles: *Crucial Conversations*®, *Crucial Accountability*™, *Influencer*, and *Change Anything*™. VitalSmarts has worked with three hundred of the Fortune 500 and trained more than one million people worldwide. [www.vitalsmarts.com](http://www.vitalsmarts.com)