


7 Ways to Boost Your Influence

A man with a beard, wearing a light blue suit jacket, is speaking into a microphone. He is gesturing with his right hand towards a group of people in the background. The background is slightly blurred, showing a group of people standing in a room. The overall image has a blue tint.

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Be More Influential



Your success depends on your ability to influence the behaviour of others.

Whether you're leading an organisation, contributing to a team or making the world a better place, you need to understand, guide and inspire other people.

Your influence is defined by your communication.

Follow the seven tips presented here to communicate better and have more influence on the world around you.



1

Build a Reflection Habit

Learning doesn't happen without reflection. Fighter pilots know this and debrief after every mission.

As a group, they reconstruct the events of the mission to confirm what happened. They determine what went well, what didn't and what they'll do better next time.

You don't have to debrief every conversation. You do, however, have to regularly reflect on your experiences and draw lessons from them.

Begin by scheduling time for reflection into your calendar. This could be at the end of every day, on a Friday afternoon, or first thing Monday morning. I recommend no less than 30 minutes every week.

Go on—do it now. Find your regular reflection time and book it as a recurring event in your calendar.

In this time, take a notebook, pen and your calendar to a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Look through the appointments you've had since your last reflection.

Answer these questions for the period:

1. What did you learn about yourself and others, and how you communicate?
2. What went well?
3. What's one thing you will do differently in the next period?



[Click here to watch the Debrief Book video](#)



2

Think Audience First

Your message's meaning is determined in the minds of your audience. No matter how well you know your topic, to communicate effectively you must consider how your message will be received.

Whenever you're going to speak to other people, whether it's a one-on-one conversation, a meeting or a presentation in an auditorium full of people, you must consider your audience first.

Audience First. Always

Put your purpose and message to one side and think about the people you'll be speaking with.

Considering your audience first makes you more confident when you meet them and helps you craft your message in a way that will connect with them.

Before you draft your email or create your PowerPoint slides, answer these questions:

1. Who is in my audience?
2. Why are they there? What is their purpose and how can I connect my goal to theirs?
3. What is the way they communicate? What do they already know and what level of detail do they expect?

Then apply what you've learned to the structure and content of your message.



[Click here to watch the video on the Power of Curiosity](#)



3

Use AMP to be Clear and Concise

Here's a simple framework to use before a conversation, meeting or presentation. Complete these three steps in order:

Audience

Think first about your audience. Who else will be there? What do they want to achieve and what is the way they communicate?

Message

Then define your message in a single, simple sentence. What is the one thing you want the audience to take away?

Points

Finally, what are the three points that will convey that message to this audience, in their language?

Before your next conversation or meeting, think AMP.

Spend 5-10 minutes, thinking through your audience, message and points. Take some notes in your notebook or even on a post-it, and refer to these during the meeting.

Afterwards, reflect on the experience. What difference did the preparation make? How did the effectiveness of your communication change?



[Click here to learn about the Dilution Effect](#)



4

Do a Consistency Audit

You're communicating all the time, whether you're speaking or not. In fact, communication is more than our words. We have four 'voices':

- What we say
- How we say it
- How we appear
- What we do

All these voices influence how others receive, interpret and remember what you say. If any of these clash, then it is what you do and how you appear and sound that will be trusted, not your words.

Look at a recent people-related decision you made, for example a direction to come into the office on certain days. Then think through the four voices, testing your consistency:

- What words did you use?
- How did you convey this message? What medium did you use? What was your tone?
- How did you and your message appear?
- Do your actions align or clash with your message? In the example, are you coming into the office on the set days?



[Click here to watch the video on What Speaks Loudest](#)



5 Start with an Open Question

When we go into a meeting with a clear purpose, we're tempted to leap to that purpose, regardless of the other people in the room.

To be more influential, get into the habit of starting every interaction with a few open questions. When you start with a question:

- Your message will be better understood. You've checked how everyone is feeling and what they already know about the topic, allowing you to adjust your communication.
- Others feel valued because you've showed interest in their perspective. They're more likely to trust, believe and act on what you say.
- You learn more about others, allowing you to better tailor your communication in the future.

In preparation for a meeting, think of a few questions about your topic and how everyone is feeling. Make these questions open, starting with 'what' or 'how'. Some examples:

- What would you like to get out of this meeting?
- What do you already know?
- What would you like to know more about?
- How could this meeting be more successful for you?
- How are you feeling about this topic?



[Click here to watch the video on Making Communication a Loop](#)



6 Spend Time on Relationships

Relationships oil the engine of communication. They enable clear, concise and compelling information to pass rapidly between people.

To be an influential communicator, spend time nurturing your relationships.

Social 'chit chat' is not wasted time. It is an investment in influence.

- Dedicate time in meetings to social talk and show interest in others.
- Remember personal details of the people you meet. Find a system, such as a written diary or a form of CRM tool.
- Schedule purely social interactions, simple catch-ups without an agenda.

Do these two things to improve your relationships:

1. Review your calendar. How much time do you spend catching up with people? Include at least one 1-hour catch up in each of the coming weeks.
2. Review your standing meeting agendas. Do you allow time for social catch-up? If not, add an opening item that builds relationships.



[Click here to watch the video on How Relationships Helped Air Traffic Controllers on 9/11](#)

7

Be Vulnerable

We want our leaders to be human beings, who have experienced successes and failures and are willing to entrust us with their stories.

We trust people who put their trust in us. To build a trusted connection with others, you must share your humanity with them. Be vulnerable.

How you show vulnerability depends on who you are connecting with. Things you can do include:

- Telling stories, particularly of times when you made a mistake and learned from it
- Acknowledging your emotions and those of others
- Being accountable for your actions—those that lead to positive outcomes and those that don't

- Not claiming infallibility and showing that you are willing to learn from others

Tell a story

In your next meeting, share a personal story that is relevant to the topic.

This story doesn't have to be life-changing or perfectly re-enacted. It should give the other attendees a new perspective on the topic and an insight into the person you are.



[Click here to watch the video on The Trust Equation](#)





CHRIS HUËT

Need help improving your influence? Give me a call.

I work with organisations and leaders to improve performance through better communication. Communication, in all its forms, has been key to my success:



Fighter pilot and commanding officer of Australia's top gun fighter school



Business leader who has won billions of dollars of contracts



Australian champion spoken word artist and award-winning poet

I draw on this experience to help you communicate with the precision of a fighter pilot and the passion of a poet.



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