

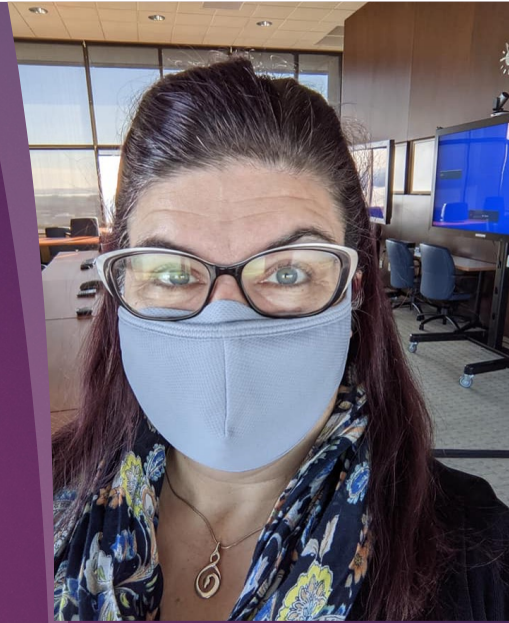


IGNITE: Maximizing your impact on a project without direct authority

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Who am I, and why should you listen?

- ▶ Jo Carter, Administration, Innovation & Planning (AIP) Lead at UW-Madison
- ▶ Project Manager since 2012 (Epic, WPS, CUNA, UW System Administration)
- ▶ Data wonk, UW System Covid Ops center
- ▶ PhD in Communication, with a dissertation on leadership in non-traditional situations
- ▶ You might as well listen – you're already here!



The problem:

- ▶ You have things you need/want to get done, but
 - ▶ You don't have the power to do them
 - ▶ You can't do them alone
 - ▶ You need buy-in from other people
 - ▶ You need leadership to make certain decisions
- ▶ So you need to influence the situation.



Structure of this presentation

1. What is influence?
2. Who has influence?
3. Increasing personal influence
4. Increasing environmental influence
5. Takeaways & recommended reading

What is influence?

- ▶ There are a lot of definitions out there, but for the purposes of this presentation,
 - ▶ Influence = intended impact
 - ▶ Not a one-time thing – we're talking about becoming a person who has the capacity to influence a range of situations



How does change happen?

The ADKAR Change Management Model

- ▶ **Awareness** of the need for change
- ▶ **Desire** to support the change
- ▶ **Knowledge** of how to change
- ▶ **Ability** to execute change competently
- ▶ **Reinforcement** to make the change stick

This is the foundation on which all influence happens, so it's good to be aware of it. (Google for more info.)



Influence = Intended Impact

- ▶ Not accidental
 - ▶ anyone can “influence” a glass into breaking, but that’s generally not a good thing
 - ▶ Impact is always more relevant than intention
- ▶ In order to have intent, think about what impacts you want to have
 - ▶ Specific: “I want to convince this person to make this decision this way”
 - ▶ Systemic: “I want to help build a culture of trust and safety in my department”
 - ▶ Systemic: “I want to help people feel good about themselves”
- ▶ It’s easier to have Personal influence if you already have Environmental influence. *Influence nurtures influence.*

How does influence show up?

- ▶ Giving a team a half-time pep talk, turning their frustration into energy and resolve
- ▶ Knowing who to call in a given situation, and having them make time to hear you out
- ▶ Being regularly called for information or advice
- ▶ Making standards, definitions, or metrics that others use
- ▶ Being able to get your issues into the larger discussion

Who has Influence? EVERYONE.



- ▶ It's easy to feel like we're not big enough or important enough to influence the world around us, or that the problems we face are too big – but that's self-defeating logic
- ▶ Don't rule yourself out as an agent of change – you already influence the world around you. Really.
- ▶ Remember – *that's the start of every great hero's story*

Example: Dancing Guy



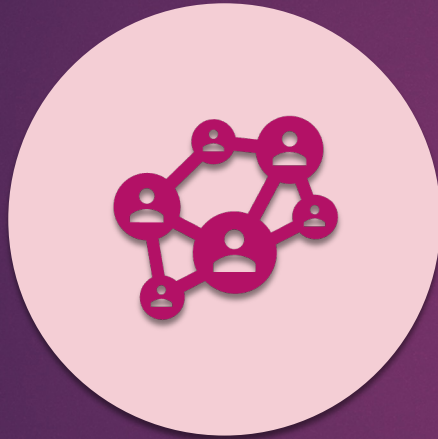
Example: Dancing Guy



Things to note:

- ▶ There's no planning or coordination here – just visibility, example, invitation, and safety to act.
- ▶ When new people join, they are welcomed as peers. No gatekeeping.
- ▶ The first two had to go it alone for a long time, without seeming awkward. They were just doing their thing, enjoying themselves.

Increasing Personal Influence



HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR INFLUENCE IN A
SPECIFIC SITUATION, WITH A SPECIFIC
GROUP; OR



HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR INFLUENCE WITH
PEOPLE YOU WORK WITH REGULARLY
(PROJECT TEAMS OR OTHER COLLEAGUES)

Personal influence

Role-Playing

Safety

Information

Listening



Role-playing

Look and act the part you intend to play

- Do you want to fit in or stand out?
- Are you establishment or an outsider?
- What are the power dynamics, both immediate and cultural?



Safety

- Be trustworthy and transparent, safe to come to with problems
- If you're not a safe person to talk to, people might not want to talk to you.
 - Your immediate reaction
 - What will you do with the info?
 - What might they lose by action?



Information

- Know your stuff – and know what's POSSIBLE to know.
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" or "I'll find out for you" when you don't have information.
- Know where to go for backup or more information.
- "That's a good question" is a useful stall – but don't use it TOO often.



Listening

- Listen to others, and be willing to be influenced
- Covey – “Seek first to understand, then to be understood”
- Those who feel unheard are generally resistant to influence, even on different topics

Personal influence recap

01

Role Playing: Look the part you intend to play

02

Safety: Be trustworthy and transparent, safe to come to with problems

03

Information: Know what you're talking about – have information (or trusted sources)

04

Listening: Listen to others, and be willing to be influenced

Increasing Environmental Influence



HAVE OPENLY SHARED
INTENTIONS WITH THOSE
AROUND YOU



SET UP RHYTHMS, REGULAR
CADENCES FOR INFO
OUTPUT



ENCOURAGE/GUIDE
OTHERS WHEN THEY TRY TO
INTERACT

Four Key Techniques

Break patterns

- Even small differences from “the usual” can open other possibilities

Network

- Meet people you like and help them out – with no expectation of return

Escalate

- Escalate to authority figures as needed

Pace & Lead

- Start where people are and match them

Four Key Techniques

Pace & Lead (part ii)

- Mirroring – classic customer service technique
- This creates an smoother energetic line, which is easier to direct
- Words, actions, environmental factors can all be part of changing the energetic feel

PLOT TWIST:

- ▶ You are your own first and primary audience. Influence yourself intentionally.
 - ▶ Remind yourself of who you are and who you want to be
 - ▶ Dress the part from time to time, set up reminders in your environment
 - ▶ Truly, honestly LIKE yourself and forgive your disappointments
 - ▶ It's easier to be influenced by someone you like and respect, someone who's safe to be around.
 - ▶ LISTEN to yourself, don't just charge ahead if it's not working
 - ▶ Set up rhythms and cadences that suit your intentions
 - ▶ Make it easier to do the things you intend to do; harder to do the habits you'd rather break

Takeaways

- ▶ You already have influence in the world – just learn how to manage it
- ▶ Know what your intentions are, both long term and short term
- ▶ Influence often takes time – be patient
- ▶ Be a safe and enjoyable colleague
- ▶ Experiment with “fitting in” vs. “breaking the pattern”
- ▶ It doesn't always work – that is just reality. Those are learning opportunities.



Further Reading

Bohns, Vanessa. (2021) *You Have More Influence Than You Think*.

Carnegie, Dale. (1936) *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

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McRaney, David. (2022) *How Minds Change: The New Science of Belief, Opinion, and Persuasion*.

Russell, Keri. (Netflix, 2023) *The Diplomat*.



Sudekis, Jason. (Apple+ TV, 2020-2023) *Ted Lasso*.

