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S U M M I T

MASTERING THE GENTLE ART OF BUY-IN

LED BY: SIMON DOWLING

YOUR MASTERCLASS WORKBOOK

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Mastering the gentle art of buy-in.

SIMONDOWLING

About Simon



Simon Dowling is a leading thinker on creating and leading collaborative teams and workplaces. As a speaker, facilitator and educator, he works closely with leaders and teams from some of Australia's most interesting organisations, equipping them with the inspiration and know-how to build strong, highly engaged teams.

Simon possesses a unique blend of creativity and pragmatism – something reflected in his past experience. He began his career as a commercial lawyer, and is also an experienced improviser, regularly performing with leading improvisation company Impro Melbourne. He was a regular cast member on Working Dog's hit TV show *Thank God You're Here*.

As the founder and Managing Director of training and development company 2engage, Simon has nearly two decades experience working with senior executive groups to build their communication and leadership effectiveness.

Simon's has enjoyed working with a number of high profile organisations like AFL, Bega Foods, Bendigo & Adelaide Bank, BUPA, Leidos, Microsoft, Mercedes Benz Finance, myob, SEEK, Telstra Health, Transurban and University of Melbourne. He is also a member of the Australian faculty of DukeCE – the executive education arm of the internationally acclaimed business school at Duke University.

Collaborative leadership is a topic so close to Simon's heart that he wrote a book about it. In *Work with Me: How to get people to buy into your ideas* (Wiley, 2016), Simon encourages everyone to become a champion of buy-in— a critical skill for 'small L' leadership... the essence of any collaborative workplace.

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Setting the scene

What's this all about, then?

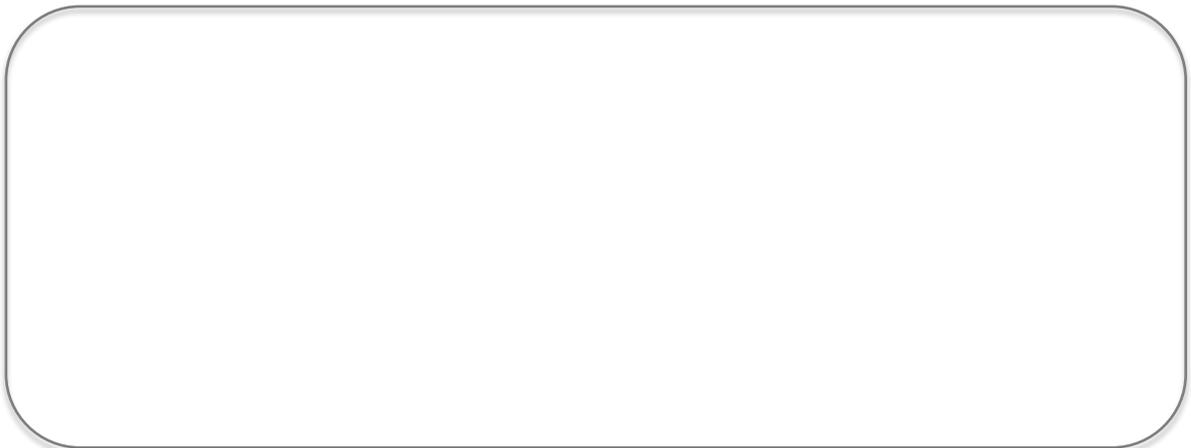
Buy-in matters.

Influencing skills sit at the core of our success (unless you're a hermit, perhaps). The ability to get things done through others is critical for anyone in a leadership or management role. But it's equally important if you have ideas or initiatives that need others' cooperation if they're ever to get off the ground.

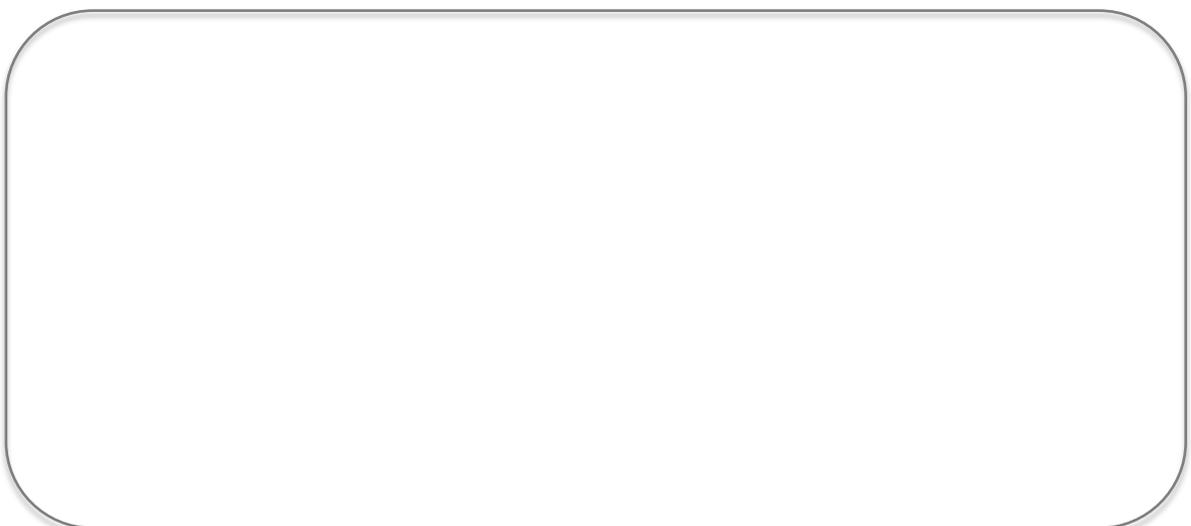
When we talk about buy-in and influence, we're talking about your ability to affect the thinking, feelings, decisions and – ultimately – the actions of others. With influence comes the ability to effect change.

In short, we are all engaged in “non-sales selling” (a term used by author Daniel Pink) much of the time: persuading, convincing, negotiating and influencing.

What are some of the group's examples of influence?



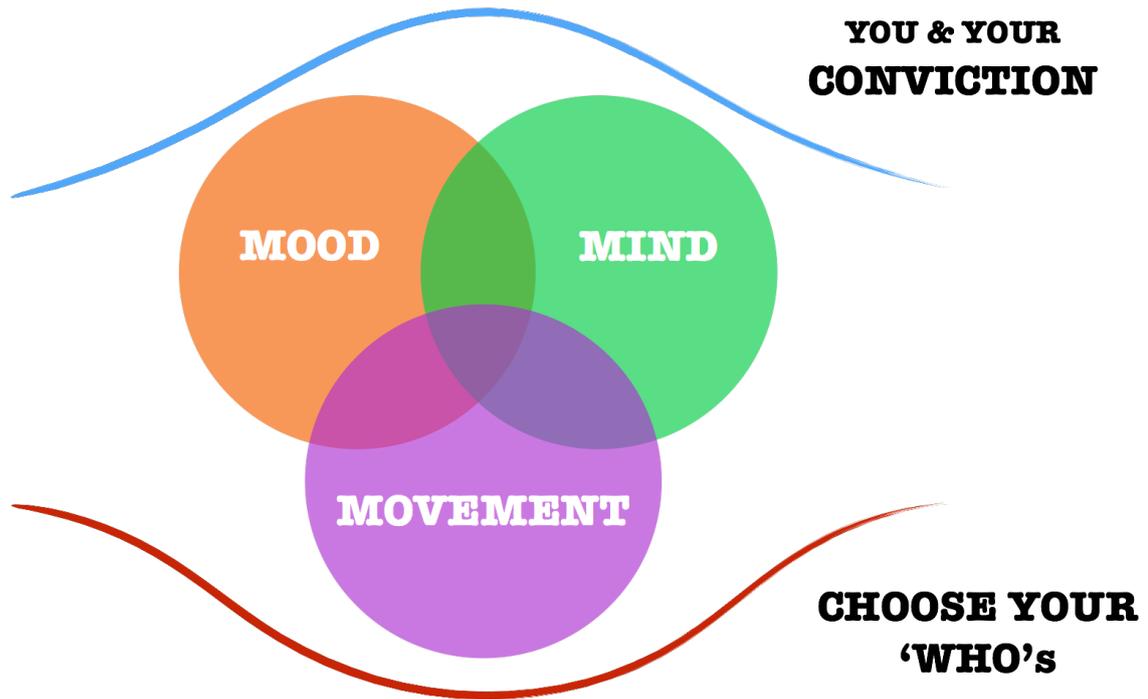
What are the key challenges faced by the group in being effective influencers?



3 Dimensions of Buy-In

Building buy-in is all about your ability to build cooperation and generate buy-in to your ideas and contributions – all in a way that strengthens your relationship and reputation for the future.

We will explore a model of buy-in that focuses on 3 Dimensions of influence:



First things first!

Before you worry about the 3Ms, there are a couple of things you need to do make sure you are truly ready to be an effective influencer.

- **Conviction Up!**
- **Choose your Who's**

"The most influential person who will talk to you all day, is you. So, you should be very careful what you say to you."

Zig Ziglar

1.Conviction Up!

“Without conviction that you can make change happen, you will not act, even if you see the vision. Your feelings will hold you back.”

John Kotter, author of Heart of Change

Courier...



or Catalyst?



Have a **BIG SO WHAT**

Catalysts care about the outcome – not just their proposal. Stepping into Catalyst state requires you to develop a strong level of conviction about your purpose – your **BIG SO WHAT**.

2. Choose your Who's

“Make decisions slowly by consensus, thoroughly considering all options; implement decisions rapidly.”

The Toyota Way, Principle #13 (Nemawashi)

Stakeholder management

Get your Who's in Order

“Nemawashi” 根回し

A stakeholder is anyone who is interested in or impacted by a proposal or an issue. When we talk about “Choose your Who's”, we're effectively talking about good stakeholder management.

A big part of effective influence is ensuring that...

- The right person is talking...
- To the right people
- At the right time
- In the right way
- For the right purposes



Nemawashi is a great principle in Japanese culture.

On Wikipedia, *nemawashi* is defined as “an informal process of quietly laying the foundation for some proposed change or project, by talking to the people concerned, gathering support and feedback, and so forth.”

2. Choose your Who's (continued)

1. Map the social landscape

Using your Social Mapping sheet, start with the end in mind, and work backwards:

- Decision maker: Who makes the decisions?
- Influencers: Who will or can influence the decision or the decision-maker (positively or negatively)?
- Implementers: Who is needed for implementation?
- Wildcards: Who else will need to be kept informed or be interested?
- Allies: who can help you to navigate the social landscape?

Remember, it's important not to draw an organisational chart.

2. Map their disposition to your idea

Against each of the stakeholders, make a note of whether the stakeholder is:

- ✓ In favour
- ✗ Against your idea
- ? Don't know / undecided

3. Map the stakeholder's relationship to one another

Draw lines between each of the stakeholders to designate:

- A relationship of influence (heavy or light – using arrows to mark the direction in which influence flows)
- Broken relationships (a severed line)

4. Step back and plan it out

Now looking at your map, step back and plan out a sequence of stakeholder engagement.

- Who do you speak to first?
- For what purpose?
- How will you approach the conversations?

And so on....

Social mapping

STAKEHOLDER MAP: *Start with the end in mind and work backwards*

Decision maker(s)

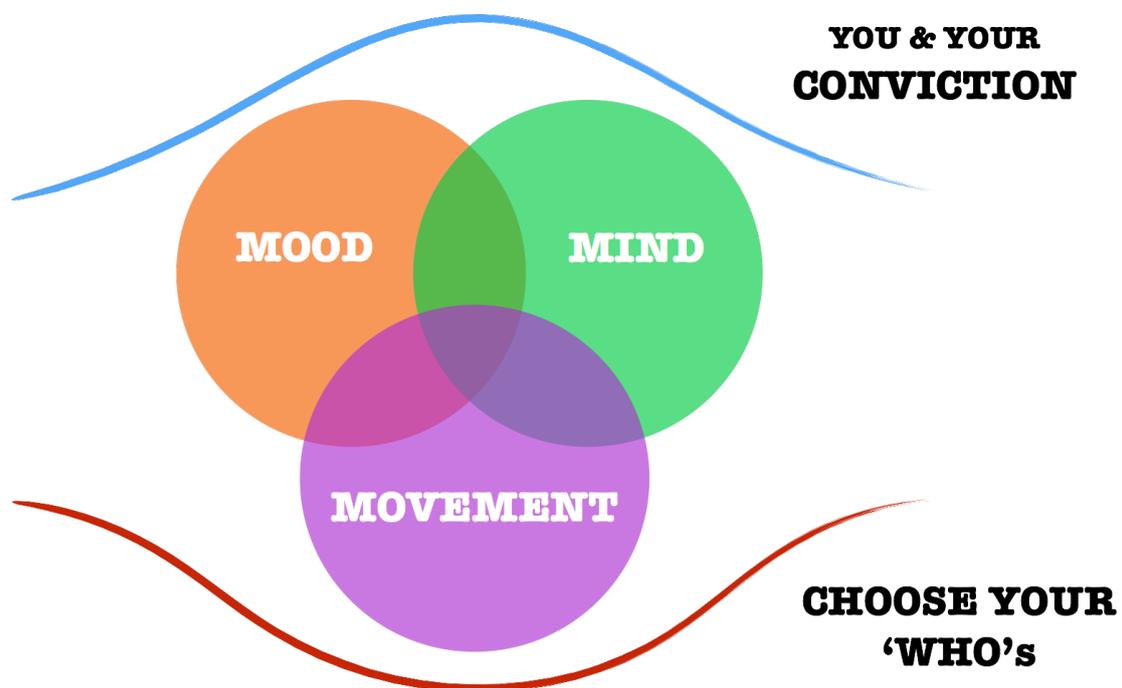
Influencers (positive or negative)

Implementers

Wildcards

MIND

How I THINK shapes my decisions and actions



"Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything."

George Bernard Shaw

VALUE: what's in it for me?

“The only way I can get you to do anything is by giving you what you want.”

Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends & Influence People

Why would I?

Value is the first of 3 ways to appeal to the Mind.

Essentially, Value focuses on whether the benefits of your idea or proposal outweigh its costs and risks (as I perceive them).



Inside-Out Value

To design value, you need to start with an intimate understanding of your stakeholders' needs and drivers – as well as showing them that understanding. Then also understand their fears and concerns.

This starts with some good preparation. But the magic really happens in a good old fashioned conversation.

Yes vs No



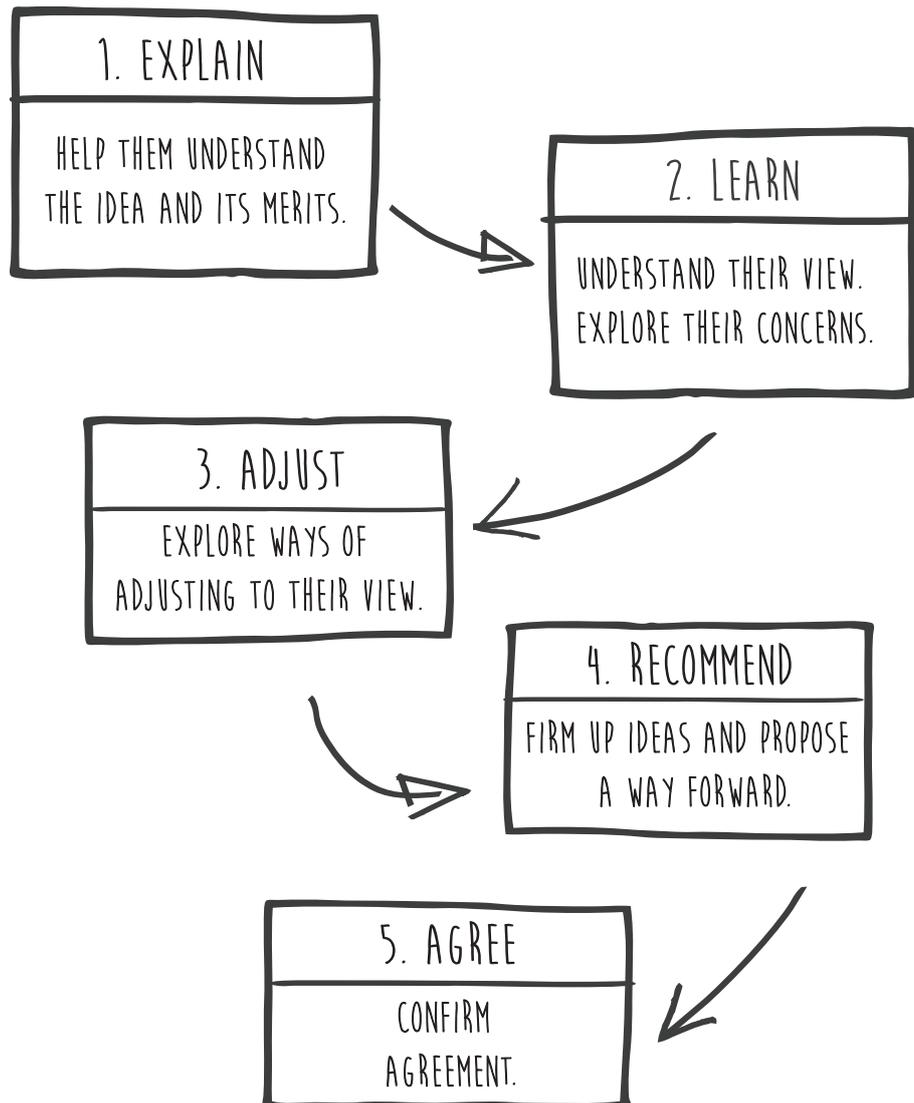
Consider their needs and drivers through both a **Yes** lens and a **No** lens.

In other words, think about the needs that could drive them to say “yes” to your idea or proposal; but also consider the needs, fears and concerns that might cause them to say “no”.

The path to a logical ‘yes’

“Go wisely and slowly. Those who rush stumble and fall.”

William Shakespeare, ‘Romeo & Juliet’



The path to a logical ‘yes’

1. Explain

Open with a clear and compelling explanation – drawing on the Big So What. Be specific about what it is you want them to buy into and explain its overall value and proof.

Less is more – aim to shift to the next stage as quickly as possible.

2. Learn

Understand their needs, drivers, fears and concerns (focus on their WHY not their WHAT). Questions are key, and asking them with a willingness to learn about them (not to judge or catch them out!). Use questions and phrases such as:

- “Why?”
- “What’s important to you in this situation? What’s concerning you?”
- “Help me to understand...?”
- “Would I be right in assuming that one of your key priorities is...?”

3. Adjust

Jointly explore a range of ways for addressing their needs as well as your own – aiming to be flexible and creative. For example...

- “You mentioned this would cause confusion in the marketplace. How do you think we can avoid that? I’d love to hear your ideas.”
- “The last thing either of us would want is to have our team working on the wrong things in the wrong order. Did you have any ideas about how we could overcome that risk?”

4. Recommend

From the ideas generated, make a recommendation yourself, or ask them to make a recommendation (a more risky strategy).

Be sure to inject this stage with some forward energy, and begin to canvas questions about implementation (for example: “when would be the best time to start?” or “who else would need to be involved?”).

5. Agree

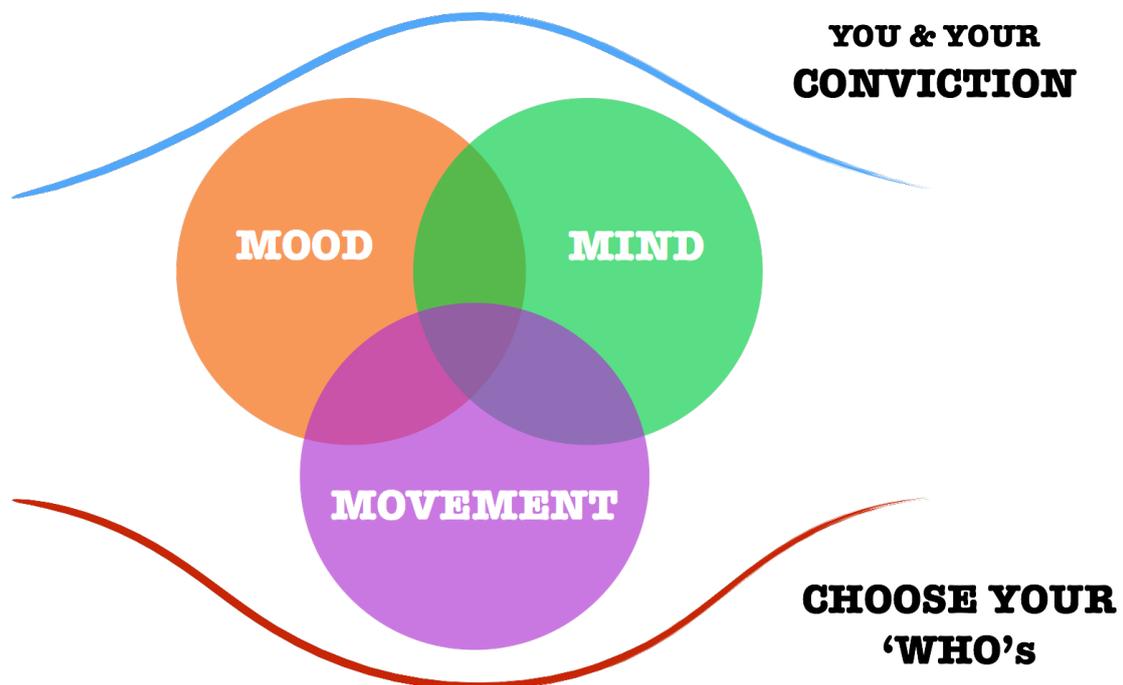
Now is the time to seek a “yes”. You can do this by asking one of the following types of questions:

- “Can I have your support on the basis of what we’ve discussed here today?”
- “Are you happy to proceed based on everything we’ve discussed here?”

It might be useful to first ask them for clearance. You might say something like, “Given where we’ve got to today, I’d be very keen to know whether I have your support. How are you feeling at this point? Do you need any time to consider?” If their answer to this is yes, then the next thing to do is lock down the time when you will reconvene. For example: “That’s absolutely fine. How about I revisit this with you in a week’s time?”

Mood

How I FEEL affects how I think, decide and act



"It's the vibe of the thing."

Denis Denuto, The Castle

How I feel about... YOU

“A reputation of a thousand years is forged in a single moment.”

Ernest Bramah

People buy people first

Instant relationship... just add perception!

The way someone sees and feels about you operates as a filter to everything you say and everything you do. It helps or hinders your ability to have a positive impact on people.

Our reputation and our relationships are a function of perception. How someone sees (and feels) about you shapes your relationship with that person – and the way people filter your ideas and proposals. People are subconsciously forming responses to questions like these about you all the time:

- Do you know what you're talking about?
- Can I trust you?
- Are you just in this for yourself, or do you have my interests at heart?
- Do you have your act together?
- Do I enjoy spending time with you?
- Do you get how the world works?



Is she old or young? Your perception is your truth.

A vision for yourself

“Character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion.”

Aristotle

If perceptions play such a key role in defining relationships, then it's critical to be purposeful about how you want others to perceive you. This is too important to leave to chance.

Perceptions and feelings that help influencers

Key corresponding behaviours: DOs and DON'Ts

Perception Audit

Use this worksheet to audit a specific stakeholder relationship – where influence matters to you.

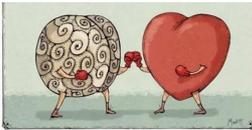
-
1. **Get specific.** Think of a specific stakeholder or colleague – where a relationship of influence is important to you
-
2. **Name your goal.** Write down 2-3 perceptions or feelings you would like that person to hold about you.
-
3. **Enabling actions.** Look back over the last couple of months: What are the things you have said or done that you genuinely believe would foster those perceptions or feelings in that person?
-
4. **Inhibiting actions.** Looking back over the last couple of months: What are things you have done or said (or omitted to) that you think may inhibit or undermine those perceptions or feelings in that person?
-
5. **Make a plan.** Based on the above reflection, what might you do differently in that relationship?
-

How I feel about your IDEA

“The heart of change is in the emotions.”

John Kotter, author of Heart of Change

Heart over Head; Elephant vs Rider



Emotion plays a big role in the way we make decisions.

*“Our emotional side is an **elephant** and our rational side is its **rider**. Perched atop the Elephant, the Rider holds the reins and seems to be the leader. But the Rider’s control is precarious because the Rider is so small relative to the Elephant. Anytime the six-ton Elephant and the Rider disagree about which direction to go, the Rider is going to lose. He’s completely overmatched.”*

Extract from *Switch*, by Chip & Dan Heath



Who's in control? Elephant or Rider?

Rouse the Elephant!

Our education and work tend to emphasise rational thinking. Enormous value is placed on our ability to piece together a logical argument – with a carefully balanced exposition of pros and cons.

Little wonder, then, that so much of our energy goes towards persuading the Rider to agree with us.

But the world of marketing worked out a while ago that this approach ignores the reality of decision making. The Elephant is the real consumer.

So here's the challenge: how can you 'rouse the Elephant'...?

Rousing the Elephant!

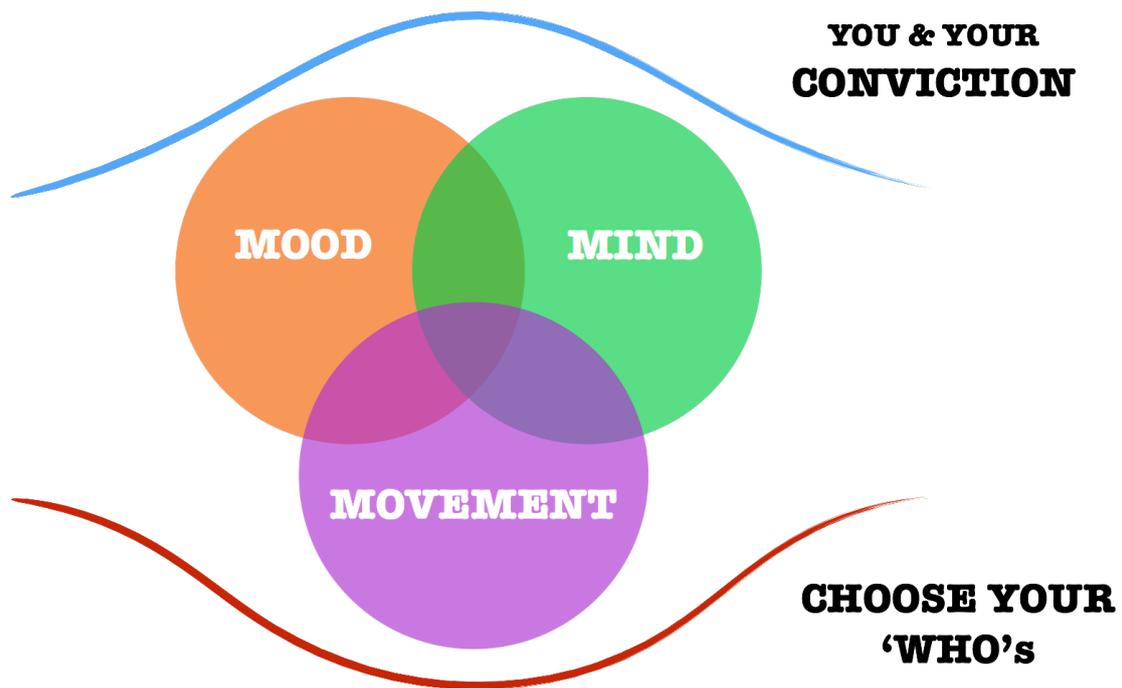
If only there was a single, simple technique that could guarantee you the ability to positively engage someone's emotions. There ain't!

Let's look at 6 key pieces of advice for sparking the right positive emotion about your ideas and proposals:

A 3x2 grid of six empty rounded rectangular boxes, each with a thin teal border and rounded corners. These boxes are intended for the user to write down six key pieces of advice for sparking positive emotion about their ideas and proposals.

MOVEMENT

The proof is in the action



*"Just Do It".
Nike*

START. JUST START.

“Sometimes thinking too much can destroy your momentum.”

Tom Watson

Motivation alone is not enough

What we've looked at so far is about helping others to make the intellectual and emotional choice to do something – through MOOD and MIND. This is about creating motivation.

It's one thing to agree to act. It's another to actually take the first step and create momentum.

Start small

The more energy and risk associated with something new, the more likely people are to put off starting. So make the first move small.



The Heath Brothers (Chip and Dan) talk about the idea of shrinking the change in their fabulous book, *Switch!* Think of the following examples:

- Free bonus stamps on a customer loyalty card
- 5 Minute Room Rescue
- Pilot or trial periods

What examples might help in your world?

START. JUST START. (continued)

“It’s a jump to the left; and then a step to the right. With your hands on your hips, you bring your knees in tight...”

Lyrics from ‘Timewarp’, The Rocky Horror Picture Show

Choreograph the dance moves

Anyone who grew up dancing the *Timewarp* – the song from the Rocky Horror Picture show – not only knows the moves, they can describe it to a tee. The famous lyrics provide the clearest choreographic instructions you can possibly hope for.

When it comes to buy-in, consider how you can provide your target audience with similarly crisp guidance as to what you need them to do. For example: It’s one thing to get a team of managers to agree to provide more feedback and coaching to their staff. It’s another thing to provide them with clear practical advice as to what that should actually look like. In the absence of that clarity, there’s a real risk that people will sit around, paralysed by analysis, waiting for the perfect opportunity to provide that feedback to their staff.

Consider how you can choreograph the dance moves with the same kind of clarity as the *Time Warp*.

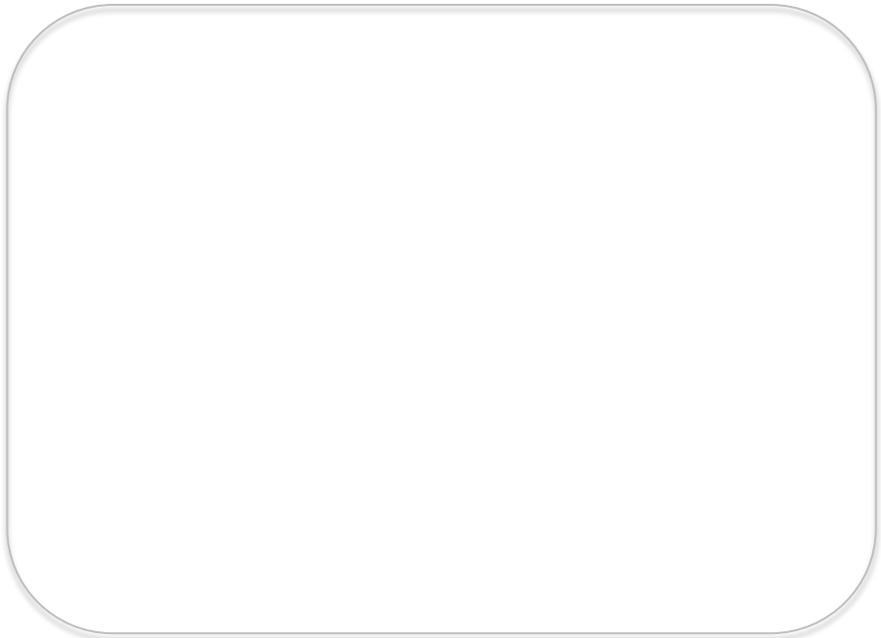
How might you ‘choreograph the dance moves’ in your own world?

START. JUST START. (continued)

Throw a 'starty party'

Getting started can feel intimidating. One way to neutralise that feeling is to throw what I like to call a 'Starty Party'. A starty party is an event where the emphasis is on taking action together and having fun while doing it – a little like a fun run. Running may not be something many people ordinarily think of as 'fun', but the idea of getting together with a group of people and all doing your run together clearly has a motivating effect on many runners, otherwise, it wouldn't be such a global phenomenon!

Other ideas for kick-starting momentum



SCAFFOLD THE CHANGE

“Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one’s thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world.”

Johann Wolfgang van Goethe

Scaffold the change

“Scaffolding” refers to the things we put in place that make it easy for someone to act in a particular way.

- Moving your alarm clock so you can't reach it from the bed
- Freezing your credit card in the middle of a large block of ice
- Changing a person's goals or key performance indicators, and how their bonus is measured
- Setting up reward systems
- Physically rearranging the office so that people from different areas of the business are now sitting in close proximity to one another

What sorts of scaffolding might help in your own world?

SUSTAIN

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher

Don't stop 'til you get enough

So, your stakeholder is moving in the right direction, making the right noises, busting the right dance moves. Don't fall into the trap of taking the foot off the influencing pedal and assuming everything is hunky dory.

Too often, change falters in the first 3 weeks. Some of the most common reasons are:

- Old habits get in the way
- I forget, become bored or get distracted by the next thing
- The change is too hard
- The change isn't meeting my expectations as I'd hoped

Any others you come across?



What can you do to ensure a sustained change?

Notes

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Notes

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Further reading

If you're interested in doing [some](#) more reading on the topic of influence, I'd recommend these books, in the following order...

- **“Work with Me: How to get people to buy into your ideas”** by Simon Dowling (Wiley, 2016). *How could I not put my own book in the list. I wrote this with the aim of providing the reader with a very practical guide that covers all of the key principles in this workshop plus more.*
- **“Getting to Yes”** by Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton (Penguin, 3rd edition 2011). *While this is a must-read book on negotiation, its focus on building value and relationships makes it extremely relevant for influencing in general. If you can master the advice of focusing on interests not positions (a central theme in this book), you will be a very effective influencer!*
- **“Switch: How to Change Things when Change is Hard”** by Chip and Dan Heath (Crown Business, 1st edition 2010). *Easy to read, entertaining and incredibly practical. Full of examples, if you like case studies.*
- **“Thinking, Fast and Slow”** by Daniel Kahneman (Penguin, 2011). *If there's a psychologist in you waiting to bust out, or if you're interested in better understanding how our brain works and why we make decisions that aren't entirely rational, then this is the book for you.*
- **“Influence: the Psychology of Persuasion”** by Robert Cialdini Ph.D. (HarperCollins, revised edition, 2009). *Another classic, but this one can divide readers because it's more about the psychology of persuasion and so the advice can seem a tad manipulative. But there's some very important research in here that will play a key role in understanding how influence works, and how you may be susceptible to influence yourself.*
- **“How to Win Friends and Influence People”** by Dale Carnegie (Pocket Books, 1998). *Okay, a real classic here. Like the club sandwich on a hotel room-service menu. But a great read for those who want to polish up on the way they approach the relationship dimension of our REV-uP model.*
- **“Influence with Authority”** by Allan Cohen and David Bradford (Wiley, 2nd ed. 2005). *A good examination of influence, with an emphasis on value-driven influence, but probably the hardest read of all the books on this list just because of the writers' more academic style. But, hey, you might love it!*
- **“Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive”** by Noah Goldstein, Steve Martin and Robert Cialdini, (Free Press, 2008). *A companion piece to the Cialdini book – a series of 50 specific observations born out of research into how people make decisions.*