

HOW to INCREASE YOUR INFLUENCE

- Focus on behavior.** Leaders who identify concrete and clear behaviors they hope people will enact are more effective influencers. For example, five million people were spared from AIDS in Thailand when one leader moved beyond vague awareness campaigns and focused on 100% condom use in the sex trade.
- Connect to values.** Use potent stories and direct experiences to make change a moral and human issue. New York restaurateur Danny Meyer helps employees connect to the value of “hospitality” rather than just “customer service” by repeatedly sharing powerful stories of meaningful guest experiences their colleagues create.
- Invest in skills.** Influencers invest more in building ability than simply motivating the masses. For example, healthcare CEO Matt Van Vranken influenced massive increases in hand hygiene habits in his nearly 20,000-employee hospital system by helping employees develop skills for speaking up when they saw a colleague violate hygiene standards.
- Leverage peer pressure.** Social influence is the most potent force for change. Research shows that if people believe bad behavior is normal they are far more likely to follow suit. A Ghanaian gold mine reduced vehicle accidents by engaging respected drivers in training other drivers in proper safety practices. Peers were far more effective at gaining compliance than either staff professionals or senior leaders had ever been.
- Change the environment.** Use tools, technology, information, and surroundings to make people conscious of the need to change and enabled to make better choices. For example, software entrepreneur Rich Sheridan cut employees’ time fixing errors from 40% of working time to no time at all by putting code writers in teams of two, sharing one computer.

Most leaders put a great deal of time into crafting strategy, selecting winning products, and engaging with analysts and shareholders, but according to our research, **only 6% of leaders are successful in influencing the behavior of the people who will have to execute on the big ideas—their employees.**

Our study of 2,308 people found that more than half of the time, leaders do little or nothing to reverse dysfunctional behaviors at work. In fact, pervasive behaviors have become so tolerated that 94% persist for a year or longer, and a third report the problem has persisted for more than 10 years.

The most common behaviors named were gossiping, shifting blame, and turfism—actions that serve personal interests at the expense of business results and end up sapping morale, lowering productivity, and decreasing quality.

When leaders rely on just one simple source of influence to drive change, such as incentives or verbal persuasion, they almost always fail. The most influential leaders realize there are six sources of influence that drive employee behavior. When strategies within these sources are marshaled, leaders are 10 times more successful in their efforts to influence rapid, profound, and sustainable change.

About VitalSmarts—An innovator in corporate training and leadership development, VitalSmarts combines three decades of original research with 50 years of the best social science to help leaders and organizations change human behavior and achieve new levels of performance. VitalSmarts has identified four high-leverage skill sets that, when used in combination, create healthy corporate cultures. These skills are taught in the Company’s award-winning training programs and *New York Times* bestselling books of the same titles: *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Accountability*, *Influencer*, and *Change Anything*. VitalSmarts has consulted with more than 300 of the Fortune 500 companies and trained more than one million people worldwide. www.vital-smarts.com

KEY RESULTS

Only **6%** of leaders can successfully influence their employees’ behavior

94% of dysfunctional behaviors persist for a year or longer in organizations

1/3 of these problems persist for more than 10 years

ABOUT THE RESEARCH. The study collected responses via an online survey of 2,308 individuals in April 2013. Margin of error is approximately 2%.

LEARN NEW SKILLS. To learn how Influencer Training® can help you become a more effective and influential leader, visit www.vital-smarts.com or call 1.800.449.5989.