

The Finance Leader as an Organizational Influencer

Note-Taking Guide

Presented by IMA Leadership Academy



TODAY'S AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. What Is Influence?
3. Influencer Characteristics and Skills
4. Becoming an Organizational Influencer
5. Close

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After this session, you'll be able to:

- Define an influencer and describe the common skills/attributes.
- Explain how management accountants and finance leaders can make effective influencers.
- Identify challenges of becoming an influencer in the organization and strategies to overcome these challenges.
- Summarize strategies for maximizing your organizational influence.

REFLECTION

1. Who is someone in your organization that you would consider to be an influencer?
2. What makes them an influencer?



DEFINITION OF AN INFLUENCER

An influencer is a trustworthy and knowledgeable source on a particular topic with an above-average ability to shape the decisions and mind-sets of others.

- Can be found at any hierarchical level within an organization.
- Organizations with high morale have a significant number of employees who are influencers.

Source: See Bibliography [6,7]

Influencers in social media are people who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic.

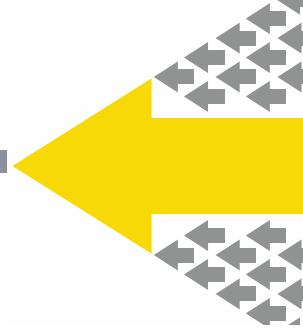
- Make regular posts about that topic on their preferred social media channels.
- Generate large followings of enthusiastic, engaged people who pay close attention to their views.

Source: See Bibliography [33]

HOW INFLUENCE HELPS

- Delegate tasks more effectively.
- Get support for your ideas.
- Motivate your team.
- Creative problem-solving.
- Opens new opportunities.
- Have your voice heard.

Source: See Bibliography [5]



THIS IS WHAT INFLUENCE LOOKS LIKE

EXAMPLE 1

You are part of a team of management accountants. The team is considering whether to implement new planning software. For most of your time on the team, you've been the go-to systems person although you are an accountant, not an IT person. You've developed a reputation for innately understanding systems, so your manager and your team members come to you when they have questions. They trust your take on anything systems-related. You've developed a reputation of expertise and trustworthiness, so your input on the new system has considerable sway over the decision. You're able to influence both your manager and your peers on the decision.

EXAMPLE 2

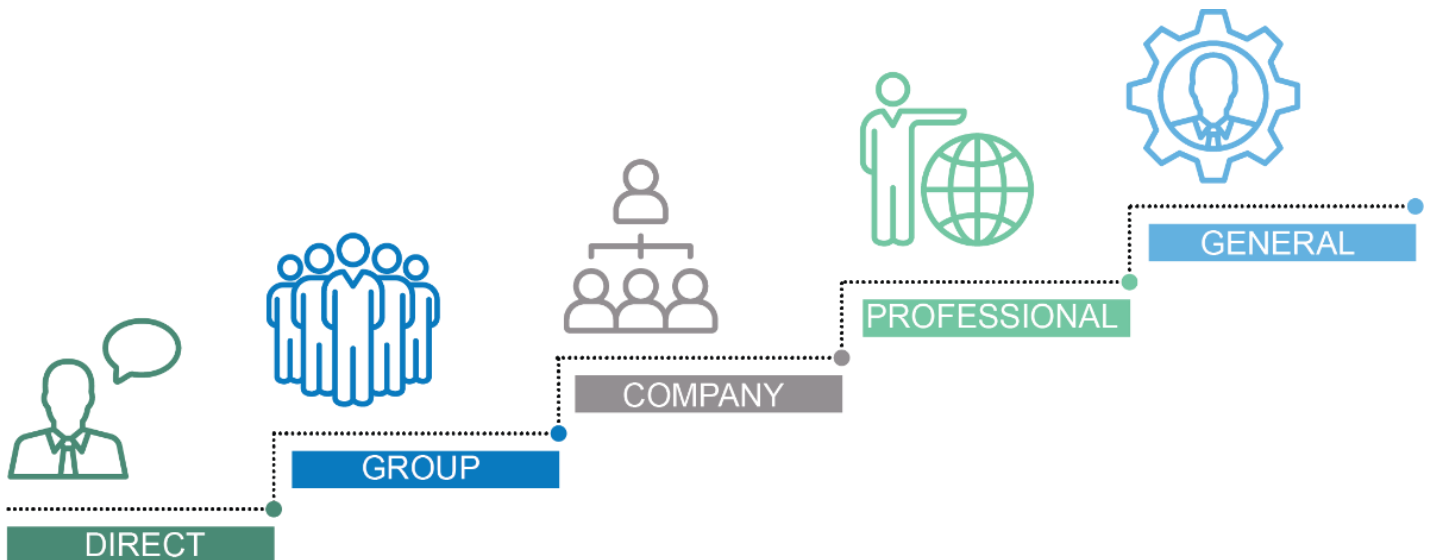
You're the finance person supporting a team of sales professionals. You work directly with the vice president of sales and her direct reports to help them make sound financial decisions. Over the course of your tenure, you've repeatedly helped the VP through some difficult situations and have helped her be successful in her role because of your expertise in revenue and margin analysis. She trusts you such that she often comes to you before any big sales contracts are finalized, and she regularly provides you with time at her staff meeting to discuss important financial matters. Virtually no big decisions are made without checking with you first.

EXAMPLE 3

You're very involved in IMA® and other professional groups. You attend conferences and speak on topics that demonstrate your expertise. You engage in social media such as LinkedIn and Twitter with other professionals in your field to provide input on topics in your wheelhouse and learn more from others. You help others who can benefit from your expertise, and you readily share your experience on social media or at networking sessions. You mentor others and make and share network connections to benefit all parties. People come to you when they have problems in your area of expertise or when they simply want to know more. You've developed a reputation of knowledge and sharing what you know.

LEVELS OF INFLUENCE

- Direct
- Group
- Company
- Professional
- General



INFLUENCER CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS

- Authority and knowledge
- Authenticity and credibility
- Organizational intelligence
- Communicator
- Motivator
- Persuasive
- Desire to help
- Trustworthy
- Likability and engagement
- Passionate
- Forward-looking
- Doer
- Curious and daring
- Confident
- Creative
- Flexible
- Sense of good timing
- Networking
- Consistency and reliability
- Mind for marketing



Source: See Bibliography [1,3,4,5,6,8,11,18,28,34,36]



EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS

Barry Ritholtz is an American author, newspaper columnist, blogger, equities analyst, CIO of Ritholtz Wealth Management, and guest commentator on Bloomberg Television. He is the host of the Bloomberg podcast, *Masters in Business*, in which he interviews influential figures on markets, investing, and business. He currently has over 183K followers on Twitter, [@ritholtz](#).

Jim Marous is consistently rated as one of the top five most influential people in banking. Known for his understanding of the disruption in the banking industry, Marous is the copublisher of *The Financial Brand*, and owner and publisher of the *Digital Banking Report*. He has advised the White House on banking policy and is a contributor for *Forbes* and the *Breaking Banks* radio show. He currently has over 91K followers on Twitter, [@JimMarous](#).

Anders Liu-Lindberg describes himself as a finance professional with a mission to make the finance function contribute more to the value creation in companies. He is located in Denmark and is active on LinkedIn and Twitter, with just a couple of hundred followers on Twitter, [@LiuLindberg](#).

Winnie Sun is the managing director and founder of Sun Group Wealth Advisors. She serves on the CNBC Financial Advisor Council and is associated with quite a few other media outlets. She has over 335K followers on Twitter, [@winniesun](#).

Sebastien Meunier says that he strives to bridge the gap between business and technology, driving growth and efficiency in financial institutions by connecting them with the best innovations from the market. His passions include business transformation, cybersecurity, privacy, and innovation in finance. He currently has over 52K followers on Twitter, [@sbmeunier](#).

Cindy Hook is the CEO of Deloitte Australia and treasurer of Chief Executive Women. A champion of diversity and wellness, Hook is an active LinkedIn and Twitter user as well as blogger on Deloitte website. Hook began her career as an auditor with Deloitte in San Francisco, Calif., before moving to the Australian firm in 2009. She has over 3K followers on Twitter, [@cindy_hook](#).

Source: See Bibliography [27,29,32]



MORE EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS

Mark Weinberger is the former Global Chairman and CEO of EY. Useful for a global view, Weinberger is an avid Twitter user with recent tweets about megacities, the future of Shanghai, ethical investment, and tax reform. Weinberger has also published extensively on LinkedIn, with articles on how business can create value in the 21st Century. He currently has over 20K followers on Twitter, **@Mark_Weinberger**.

Bola Sokunbi is the founder and CEO of Clever Girl Finance, which was voted one of the top personal finance websites for women. She has over 5K followers on Twitter, **@CleverGirlCGF**.

Mike Walsh describes himself as a futurist, author, and a global nomad. He has been a keynote speaker at an IMA conference and currently has over 16K followers on Twitter, **@MikeWalsh**.

Richard Rubin covers tax policy for the *Wall Street Journal*. He currently has over 35K followers on Twitter, **@RichardRubinDC**.

Geni Whitehouse works for a company applying financial concepts to the winery industry and also is a noted keynote speaker. She has over 4.5K followers on Twitter, **@evenanerd**.

Rick Telberg is the president and CEO of CPA Trendlines Research, an online platform for tax, accounting, and finance research and analysis. He also provides services in management consulting, marketing consulting, public speaking, business consulting, public relations, and more. He currently has over 26K followers on Twitter, **@CPA_Trendlines**.

Source: See Bibliography [27,29,32]

INTROVERTS AS INFLUENCERS

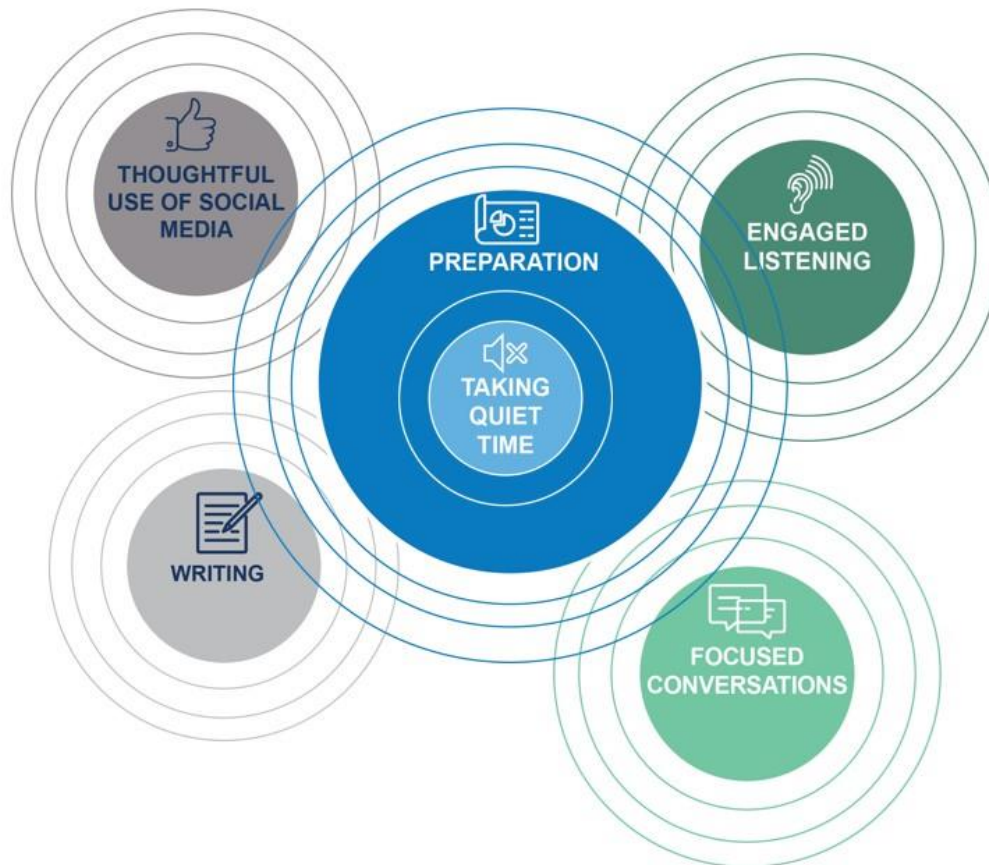
Six strengths of introverts:

1. Taking quiet time
2. Preparation
3. Engaged listening
4. Focused conversations
5. Writing
6. Thoughtful use of social media



Source: See Bibliography [17]

THE QUIET INFLUENCE PROCESS



Source: See Bibliography [17]

INITIATING CONVERSATIONS

Questions to use at internal events

- What project have you been working on?
- What is most interesting about your current work?
- What is a change going on right now in your area? How is it going?
- What have you learned from working in your area?
- What brought you to this company?

Question to use at external events

- What brought you to this meeting?
- What do you know about the speaker (or the subject)?
- What interests you about this session?
- What is the best new idea you have heard so far?

Source: See Bibliography [17]

INFLUENCING IN VIRTUAL MEETINGS

- Become familiar with the technology.
- Be sensitive to time zone differences.
- Plan questions for group input.
- Take advantage of video.
- Utilize chats and polls.
- Tag team with a “producer.”



Source: See Bibliography [17]



HOW EXPERTS GAIN INFLUENCE

Trailblazing

Finding new opportunities to use expertise.

Toolmaking

Developing and deploying tools that embody and spread expertise.

Teamwork

Using personal interaction to take in others' expertise and convince people of the relevance of your own.

Translation

Personally helping decision makers understand complex content.

Source: See Bibliography [23]

INFLUENTIAL EXPERTS

Compliance champions

Toolmaking

Technical champions

Trailblazing + toolmaking

Business partners






Trailblazing + teamwork + translation

Engaged toolmakers

Trailblazing + toolmaking + teamwork + translation

Source: See Bibliography [23]

TOOLS TO MAXIMIZE INFLUENCE

LEVEL OF INFLUENCE	TOOLS TO MAXIMIZE INFLUENCE
 DIRECT	In-person meetings, email, Slack or Microsoft Teams channels
 GROUP	In-person meetings, email, Slack or Microsoft Teams channels, and internal tools that build community or provide for community input
 COMPANY	Email, Slack or Microsoft Teams channels, and internal tools that build community or provide for community input
 PROFESSIONAL	Networking meetings, conferences, professional networking tools, mentor programs, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat
 GENERAL	LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat

INFLUENCERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media allows you to do at least five important things:

1. Discover new ideas and trends.
2. Connect with existing and new audiences in deeper ways.
3. Bring attention and traffic to your work.
4. Build, craft, and enhance your brand.
5. Connect and develop relationships with other influencers.

Source: See Bibliography [30]

INFLUENCER SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS



- Career management, not just job hunting
- Connect with:
 - Those you know
 - Those you'd like to know
 - Those you should know
- Post your own content



- Use to
 - Know in real time about developments in your area
 - Be part of a global conversation
- Brevity is important
- Grammar and spelling count
- Have a clear biography



- Use to
 - Connect with influencers in your field
 - Share content
- Help shape what others think of you
- Algorithms mean not everyone will see your content



- Post great, relevant visuals to draw attention
- Explore relevant hashtags to learn and experiment



- Helpful to draw millennials and younger audience, if appropriate
- Offers businesses a lot of tools around ads

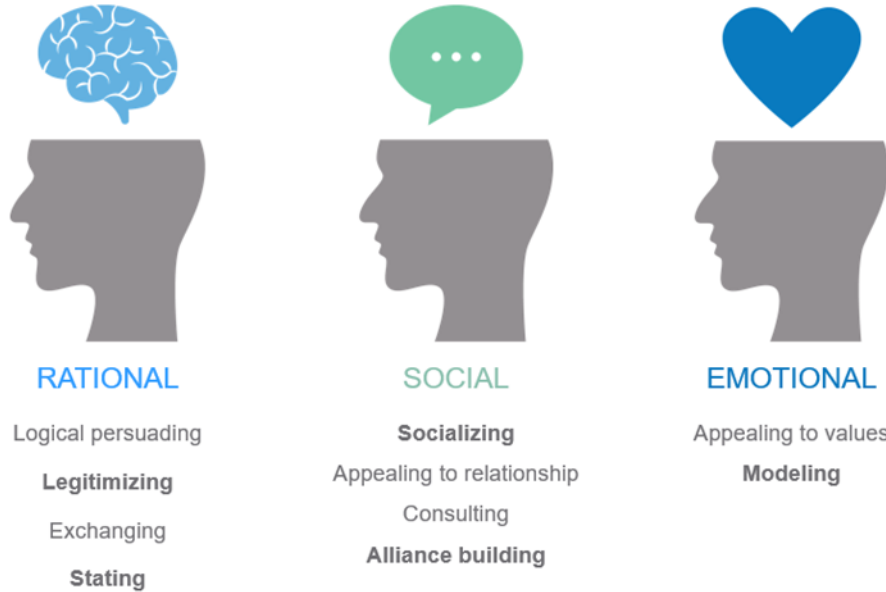
Source: See Bibliography [30]

TIPS FOR CREATING CONTENT

1. Write to answer the questions that you think people who need your services would ask.
2. Write regularly about what you know.
3. Link your writing to what's going on in the world.
4. Develop some good Twitter buddies and provide them with draft tweets about the content from their point of view.

Source: See Bibliography [17]

APPROACHES TO INFLUENCING



Source: See Bibliography [2]



PERSONAL SWOT ANALYSIS

	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	<p>Strengths: What characteristics and skills do I possess to become an organizational influencer?</p>	<p>Weaknesses: What characteristics and skills do I need to develop to become an organizational influencer?</p>
External	<p>Opportunities: What can help propel me to successfully become an organizational influencer?</p>	<p>Threats: What potential threats are there to my succeeding at becoming an organizational influencer?</p>

Use this analysis to plan your next steps toward being an organizational influencer.

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