

Extraordinary Influencers

By Campbell Macpherson

Author of the 2018 Leadership and Business Book of the Year

The ability to influence others is one of the key secrets to success in business - and life.

Dale Carnegie's 1936 worldwide best seller *How to win friends and influence people* is proof that this has always been the case, and the messages contained within this timeless little book are even more relevant in today's world of flattening organisational structures, virtual teams, matrix management, hybrid working, outsourcing, partnerships, enhanced uncertainty and accelerating change.

If we are to deliver high quality outcomes that are sustainable, we simply cannot do it on our own. We need to reach out to people across our organisations, even beyond our organisations, and encourage and motivate them to allow us leverage their expertise. And this requires influence.

Even Steve Jobs, arguably the ultimate maverick, used to say: "*Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people.*"

Influence has also become an integral component of 21st Century leadership. The old-school, traditional 'command and control' style of leadership that was prevalent for decades has long become an anachronism. Simply telling people what to do doesn't work. It never did. We humans don't react well to orders. If we are to become committed to delivering our best, we need to know 'why' – both the 'right reason' (why this is good for the business) and the 'real reason' (why this is good for me). And we need to believe in both.

Leadership today is not about hierarchy. It is about influence. It is about influencing others to deliver. It is about helping others to want to change.

And the concept of leadership is not the exclusive remit of the C-Suite. Leaders can be found at all levels of an organisation – whether they have direct reports or not.

EQ vs the Delivery of Results

In my 25+ years of enabling business leaders to lead successful and sustainable change, I have come to realise that extraordinary leaders are extraordinary influencers and they possess two critical skills:

1. The ability to deliver sustainable results
2. The ability to influence, motivate and empower people (Emotional Intelligence)

In fact, #1 simply isn't possible without #2.

Emotional Intelligence is the critical skill that enables people to influence others so that they work with you to deliver the results you need – because they want to do it. When it comes to performance and leadership, EQ trumps IQ hands down.

And EQ is a skill that can be developed and honed.

The Chequerboard of Leadership

Poor leaders, poor influencers and poor performers deliver poor results - and tend to score low when it comes to emotional intelligence. Extraordinary leaders are extraordinary influencers, and they deliver high quality, sustainable outcomes enabled by their high EQ. And a continuum exists between the two extremes from woeful to extraordinary – which can be plotted on a simple matrix that I have called ‘The Chequerboard of Leadership’.

It is a chequerboard because someone’s position on the board is not set in stone. No matter which square you may occupy today, you do not have to be imprisoned in that cell forever; you can move - preferably upwards and to the right - as long as you are aware of your position on the board and possess the desire to change.

While colleagues trapped in The Disaster Zone may indeed be irredeemable in their current role, some of the occupants of the ‘Chaos Creators’ or ‘Lost Tribe’ squares will be capable of changing and developing - to become better contributors, better leaders, and have greater, longer-lasting impact on the business, the people around them and their own careers.

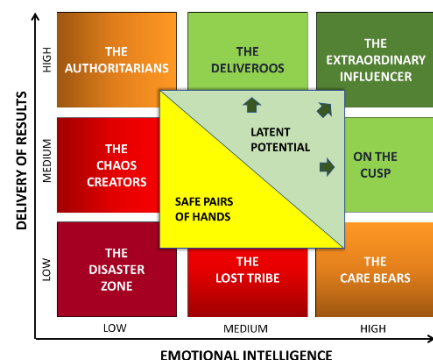
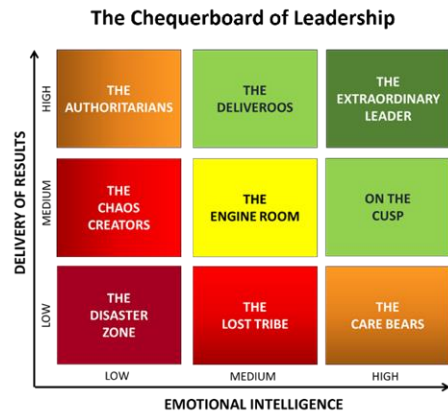
Those in the light green squares are the high potential performers of the organisation. Companies are quick to design talent development programmes for ‘The Deliveroos’ and those who are ‘On the Cusp’. But often, most of the occupants of the other squares are all but ignored.

Occupants of ‘The Engine Room’ (yellow square) can sometimes be taken for granted – and yet they are the backbone of many an organisation. The middle square is often the most populous square on the board – described by one CEO client, incorrectly, many years ago as his “permafrost middle-management layer”. But in hindsight, he was overlooking a trove of potential that he should have tried to ‘thaw’.

The middle square can roughly be divided into two:

1. ‘Safe Pairs of Hands’ – competent contributors who every business needs, whose impact and effectiveness can be enhanced.
2. ‘Latent Potential’ – hidden performers whose development will deliver substantial returns for the business.

Unlocking the potential of The Engine Room has the potential to transform any organisation.



*Where would you place yourself on the board?
Where would other people place you?
In which square would you place your manager?
Why?*

Five Elements of Emotional Intelligence



1. Self-awareness. *Recognising your own emotions and feelings, how you react under pressure and the effect you have on others.*

Underpinning Self-awareness:

- Self-confidence: sureness about your self-worth, strengths and capabilities.
- Humility: appreciation of your weaknesses, influences and biases. The ability to acknowledge that you may not be 100% right. Humility is strength.
- Observation: The ability to observe your emotions without judgement.
- Self-honesty: Understand the right reason and the real reason for why you want to achieve the outcome.
- Impact. Understand the effect you have on others.

2. Self-control. *Managing disruptive impulses, how you react and how long an emotion lasts.*

Underpinning Self-control:

- Controlling emotions. The realisation that it is you who generates your emotions, not the other party. The emotions you feel, their strength and what triggers them – are all within your control.
- Detachment. The ability to stay slightly detached, emotionally. To be objective and look at the bigger picture.
- Integrity. A desire to maintain standards of honesty and honour.
- Adaptability. Handling change with flexibility.

3. Empathy. *Understanding others - how they think, feel and what they are trying to achieve. The ability to genuinely put yourself in their shoes and appreciate their point of view.*

Underpinning Empathy:

- Respect for the other person – or at the very least, their position/viewpoint. A belief that they have the best intentions / come from a 'good' place.
- Understanding the implications of the change / achieving the outcome – for the business, the department, for you and for the other person.
- Understanding the right reason and the real reason for them wanting to achieve their desired outcome.
- Embracing and encouraging diversity of thought, background and experience. Avoiding echo chambers and encouraging 'constructive disagreements' and new ideas.

Social awareness. Reading a group's emotional currents and relationships.

4. Relationship Management. *Developing the relationships you need to deliver shared objectives.*

Underpinning Relationship Management:

- Listening to understand not just to reply.
- Ability to deliver clear, relevant messages that are understood.
- Scanning. The ability to gauge how an interaction is going in real time and pick-up on social cues.
- Collaboration, cooperation and compromise. Willingness to compromise to find shared objectives. 'Winning' is only ever short term.
- Managing conflicts and difficult situations with honesty and respect

5. Motivation. *Of self and of others. Building clear goals, taking initiative, commitment and a positive, proactive attitude.*

Underpinning Motivation:

- Ability to motivate yourself.
- Ability to motivate others.
- Driven to achieve. Desire to deliver the required outcomes.
- Willingness to initiate, manage and embrace change.
- Optimism, positive attitude and proactive approach.
- Clarity of what you are seeking to achieve – and why.

Our EQ Assessment Worksheets enable you to:

- a) rate the importance to your career of each sub-category above,
- b) score yourself out of 5 for each one, and
- c) seek similar feedback from colleagues.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

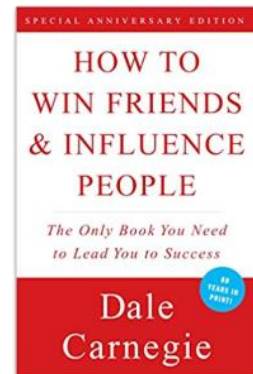
Words of wisdom from a 1936 bestseller ...

Part 1: Fundamental Techniques in Handling People

1. Principle 1: Don't criticize, condemn or complain
2. Principle 2: Give honest and sincere appreciation
3. Principle 3: Arouse in the other person an eager want

Part 2: Six Ways to Make People Like You

1. Principle 1: Become genuinely interested in other people
2. Principle 2: Smile
3. Principle 3: Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language
4. Principle 4: Be a good listener
5. Principle 5: Talk in terms of the other person's interests
6. Principle 6: Make the other person feel important—and do it sincerely



Part 3: How to Win People to Your Way of Thinking

1. Principle 1: The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it
2. Principle 2: Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say, "You're wrong."
3. Principle 3: If you are wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically
4. Principle 4: Begin in a friendly way
5. Principle 5: Get the other person saying, "yes, yes" immediately
6. Principle 6: Let the other person do a great deal of the talking
7. Principle 7: Let the other person feel that the idea is his or hers
8. Principle 8: Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view
9. Principle 9: Be sympathetic with the other person's ideas and desires
10. Principle 10: Appeal to the nobler motives
11. Principle 11: Dramatize your ideas
12. Principle 12: Throw down a challenge

Part 4: Be a Leader—How to Change People Without Giving Offense or Rousing Resentment

1. Principle 1: Begin with praise and honest appreciation
2. Principle 2: Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly
3. Principle 3: Talk about your own mistakes before criticizing the other person
4. Principle 4: Ask questions instead of giving direct orders
5. Principle 5: Let the other person save face
6. Principle 6: Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement. Be "heartily in your approbation and lavish in your praise."
7. Principle 7: Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to
8. Principle 8: Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct
9. Principle 9: Make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest