



E-BOOK

THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP

*How to Increase Your Impact in
the Changing World of Work*

*K*ATIE SCULLIN LONG
Training & Coaching

Table of Contents

03 Why Influence Matters Now

The Influence You Create

05 The Business of Leadership Is Influence

06 Influence Creates Buy-In

The Impact You Shape

08 What Your Influence Brings Out in Others

09 Influence Becomes Culture

The Influence You Navigate

11 Every Leader Is a Gatekeeper of Influence

12 A Framework for Weighing Influence

13 Read the Room. Then Influence Accordingly.

14 Turn Debate Into Commitment

Influence at Scale

15 Leadership Alignment Extends Your Impact

16 Lead Within the Organizational System

17 When Leadership and Environment Are Out of Sync

18 Turn Diagnosis Into Action

19 Put Your Influence to Work

20 Sources

Why Influence Matters Now

Technology is changing how we work, from how we communicate and process information to how we make decisions and deliver results. It is also changing what organizations expect from their leaders.

Leaders are under greater pressure to adapt and create measurable value quickly. In fact, recent [Deloitte research](#) found that seven in ten business leaders say their primary competitive strategy for the next three years is to be fast and nimble as business, customer, and market needs change.

Technology can certainly help organizations meet those demands, but it is not enough. To move quickly and effectively, organizations need to become greater than the sum of their parts. That requires leaders who can set direction, connect efforts, and help teams achieve more together than they could on their own.

At the center of that work is a critical skill: influence.

Leaders use influence to shape decisions, inspire commitment, and move people toward action. They also need to be aware of what is shaping their own perspective.

As expectations rise, a leader's influence is increasingly measured by the impact they create.



This eBook explores how leaders can expand their influence, sharpen their awareness of what shapes their leadership, and translate both into greater impact.

What You'll Learn

- Expand your impact across people, priorities, and the work.
- Bring in perspectives and resources that strengthen decisions.
- Build alignment that turns decisions into adoption and action.
- Recognize the conditions that amplify or constrain your influence.
- Focus your leadership where it can make the greatest difference.



THE INFLUENCE YOU CREATE

The Business of Leadership Is Influence

Early in our careers, our value is often closely connected to what we can personally produce.

We learn the industry, develop the skills, and accumulate wins. We become known for delivering results.

As leadership responsibility grows, the equation changes.

Leaders are still expected to understand the business and make sound decisions. However, their impact increasingly comes from what they can enable.



- » Can you rally people around a goal?
- » Can you create clarity when the path forward is uncertain?
- » Can you turn a goal into a plan and move it to execution?

The reach of leadership extends well beyond what any one person can accomplish independently. A leader's knowledge, expertise, and authority become most valuable when they create movement throughout the organization.

Leadership is measured by the impact you create, not the knowledge you hold.

That is the business of leadership: using your influence to turn possibility into progress.

Influence Creates Buy-In

People are busy, and most prefer some consistency in how they work. Change can be disruptive, even when the reason for it is clear.

Leaders still have to set the direction and get people to move with them. Influence is what helps turn that direction into buy-in.

Change also asks people to work differently than they did before. That takes focus, commitment, and confidence in where the organization is headed.

Leaders build that confidence by helping people understand the purpose, giving them room to raise concerns, and making the path forward clear.

How to Build Buy-in:

- 1 Make the purpose clear.** Explain why the change matters and what you are trying to accomplish.
- 2 Ask direct questions.** Surface concerns, risks, and what people need in order to move forward.
- 3 Be candid about trade-offs.** Acknowledge the strongest concerns instead of glossing over them.
- 4 Keep the message clear.** Use plain language so people understand what it means for them.
- 5 Ask for commitment.** Move the group toward a clear decision and next step.

Influence in an Unlikely Setting

Jury duty gave me a memorable example of what it takes to build buy-in with a reluctant audience.

The judge and attorneys started by giving us context: why we were there, what mattered, and what to expect. They acknowledged competing perspectives and made the experience feel personal and human.

Then they got more specific, asking direct questions that surfaced the information they needed to make sound decisions.

Influence helps turn a new direction into something people understand, support, and are willing to carry forward.



THE INFLUENCE YOU SHAPE

What Your Influence Brings Out in Others

You can often see a leader's influence in everyday moments.



- » **A team member brings you an idea.** Do you dismiss it quickly, ask a few questions, or help them think it through?
- » **Someone makes a mistake.** Do they leave the conversation focused on what they learned or worried about how you now see them?
- » **Different views surface.** Do you make room for varying opinions, shut the discussion down, or help the group move toward a decision?

These interactions shape how people contribute. They affect whether people speak up, take initiative, ask for help, challenge assumptions, and trust their own judgment.

They also shape how much capability you build in the people around you.

When people leave conversations with you clearer about what to do, more confident in their judgment, and more willing to take ownership, your influence is strengthening their ability to contribute.

Your impact is reflected in how people think, act, and contribute because of your leadership.

Influence Becomes Culture

Culture is built through patterns.

People pay attention to what leaders model, reinforce, and address. Those signals start to shape how the team operates and what people come to expect from the organization.

People look for cues about what matters here. Which priorities hold under pressure? What gets recognized? What gets addressed quickly? What is allowed to continue?

Those answers become part of the operating environment.

What leaders repeatedly do...



Notice

Signals what deserves attention.



Model

Sets expectations for how people work together.



Reinforce

Strengthens the behaviors and standards you want to see.



Challenge

Clarifies where expectations are not being met.



Allow

Signals what can continue without consequence.



Communicate

Clarifies priorities, decisions, and change.

As these patterns repeat, they influence how teams make decisions, solve problems, respond to pressure, and work together.

The effect compounds. What one leader reinforces can spread through a team. What a leadership team reinforces can shape an entire organization.

Consider your influence

- » Which behaviors are consistently reinforced on your team?
- » What gets attention when priorities compete?
- » What tends to go unaddressed?
- » Are the norms developing around you helping the organization perform at its best?

Culture is shaped by what leadership reinforces consistently.



THE INFLUENCE YOU NAVIGATE

Every Leader Is a Gatekeeper of Influence

Leaders are constantly being influenced, often without realizing it.

A trusted colleague, board member, new technology, or outside expert can shift how you see an issue. That influence can broaden your thinking, but it can also narrow your view.

The key is recognizing what is shaping your thinking and deciding how much weight to give it.

This matters because today's decisions can set off effects that shape the organization for months or years.

New sources of influence often bring both value and expectations. Funding may provide capital and expertise while increasing pressure around growth or profitability. A new board member or senior hire may bring experience while gaining a stronger voice in the organization's direction.

Before inviting in a new source of influence, consider:

- » What value could it bring?
- » What expectations come with it?
- » How might it shape the
- » organization over time?

Being a gatekeeper means staying open to different perspectives while remaining intentional about what shapes your leadership.

Invite input.

Keep ownership of the decision.



A Framework for Weighing Influence

When you're making an important decision, it helps to widen the lens. **Four shifts** in perspective can help.

Zoom Out

Look beyond those closest to the decision. Who else will be affected? Consider employees, customers, partners, or other parts of the organization.

Zoom Forward

What could this decision set in motion three months or a year from now? What may become easier or harder?

Zoom In

Consider the decision through the eyes of a few specific people, such as a top performer, new manager, or key contributor. Their perspective may reveal where more support or communication is needed.

Weigh New Influence

Investors, board members, senior hires, advisers, and partners can open doors but also bring expectations. Consider what you gain, what may change, and whether the trade-off is worthwhile.

A Framework for Weighing Influence



Read the Room. Then Influence Accordingly.

Good decisions call for different kinds of leadership as the conversation unfolds.

The team may need direction at one point and challenge at another. Sometimes the most useful contribution is to play devil's advocate or help the group see the issue differently.

Consider four ways to influence the conversation:



Move

Create direction and help the group advance.



Oppose

Challenge an assumption or test the strength of an idea.



Follow

Build support for a direction and help the group move toward commitment.



Reframe

Offer a different perspective that changes how the group sees the issue.

Source: Team Dynamics Profile, as presented by Ahmed El Aawar, International Coaching Federation.

A leader may move between several of these roles in the same meeting.

Strong leaders know when to shift their approach based on what will move the conversation forward.



Turn Debate Into Commitment

Good decisions require thoughtful debate, but discussion needs a destination.

Before deciding, make sure relevant perspectives are heard, especially dissenting ones. Different views should be welcomed. Silent disagreement helps no one.

Once the discussion is complete, the decision owner makes the call. The team's responsibility then shifts to supporting it and moving forward.

From Discussion to Action

- 1 Test the thinking.**
Examine assumptions, risks, and concerns.
- 2 Name the trade-offs.**
Be clear about what the decision gives up and enables.
- 3 Make the decision.**
Move once the team has enough information.
- 4 Clarify commitment.**
Confirm what the team will support and what happens next.
- 5 Carry it forward.**
Communicate the decision consistently beyond the room.

Inspired by Patrick Lencioni, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team.

Before moving on, ask:

- » Have we heard the strongest concerns?
- » Are the trade-offs clear?
- » Do we know enough to decide?
- » Does everyone know what comes next?

The real value of a good conversation is in what happens next.

INFLUENCE AT SCALE

Leadership Alignment Extends Your Impact

A leader's influence is strengthened by how well they work with the leaders around them.

That is why your **first team** matters. Leadership expert Patrick Lencioni uses this term for the group of peers you work with to set direction, solve issues, and keep the organization aligned.

When that group is aligned, leaders reinforce the same priorities and communicate a consistent message.

Employees notice. They gain clarity on what matters, where to focus, and how their work connects to the broader direction.

That consistency also builds trust. People are more confident when leaders are coordinated and committed to shared goals.

Strong leadership alignment helps everyone move in the same direction.



Lead Within the Organizational System

Leadership does not happen in a vacuum.

Every organization has patterns for how decisions are made, priorities are set, information moves, and work gets done. Those patterns shape how easily leaders can build support and move ideas forward.

Leaders who understand the system can work within it more effectively and see where their influence can have the greatest impact.

Your influence will carry further when you understand the system around you.



When Leadership and Environment Are Out of Sync

Sometimes the organization is asking for one outcome while creating conditions that make it harder to achieve.

You might be accountable for performance without the resources to deliver it, or expected to move quickly while key decisions stall. In other cases, you may be trying to drive change while other leaders send mixed signals.

Recognizing the disconnect is the first step.

Look at the conditions around you

- » Do I have the information and resources I need?
- » Are senior leaders aligned?
- » Are my peers working toward the same priorities?
- » Are managers equipped to execute?
- » Do our systems and processes support the goal?



These questions can help you see where your influence can make the biggest difference.

When the environment works against the outcome, start by identifying what is driving the disconnect.

Turn Diagnosis Into Action

Once you understand what is getting in the way, decide where your influence can make a difference.

Ask:

» What needs to change?

Identify the specific condition that is slowing progress.

» Who needs to be involved?

Bring the right people into the conversation.

» What can I influence directly?

Focus on the decisions and actions within your reach.

» What needs to be surfaced?

Raise issues that need support beyond your authority.

» What is the cost of leaving it unresolved?

Make the impact clear so the issue gets attention.

Strong leaders know when to act and when to bring others in.

Focus on what you can influence, and surface what is outside your control.



Put Your Influence to Work

You are already influencing those around you. Being intentional about it turns influence into impact.

The Leadership Influence Check

- 1 Impact**
Where could I be making a bigger difference?
- 2 People**
Who could contribute more with better support or direction?
- 3 Input**
Who or what is influencing my thinking most?
- 4 Decisions**
What perspective would strengthen an important decision?
- 5 Alignment**
Where would better alignment help the team move faster or with more confidence?
- 6 Environment**
What is getting in the way, and what can I do about it?

Choose one area. Try a different approach. Then act.

As work continues to change, leaders who understand influence are better able to help their organizations adapt and move forward.

Influence expands the reach of your leadership and what you can make possible.

Leadership is defined by the impact you create.

Sources

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ksl-coaching.com



[Linkedin.com/in/katie-scullin-long/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/katie-scullin-long/)



katie@ksl-coaching.com

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