

The Decision Spying Blueprint

By

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The Decision Making Process

To keep things simple, I have divided decision makers to five different categories.

Now realize first and foremost, that pain, pleasure and circumstances ultimately have a huge impact on the decisions that people make in terms of these categories. I'm referring to helping people make big decisions, decisions that they really have to sit down and think about and ponder. So taking emergencies out of the equation or situations where people are almost forced into making a decision, we are going to refer to how people make decisions that will affect them drastically when they have the resources, time and the peace of mind to think them through.

The Thinker

Thinkers love to scrutinize, they love to jot down pros and cons and potential outcomes of every option before they actually make a decision. It is their ability to outwit outsmart outmaneuver and outthink their opposition that drives them to be so methodical in their decision-making process. Thinkers love to take a look at details and understand how and why things

work. When analyzing a problem, it is very easy for them to completely disassemble it and work piece by piece toward a logical solution. For them information and data are extremely important because these serve as the primary resources needed to make the right decisions. They rely mostly on rational thoughts and do whatever it takes to restrain their emotions, and they are open to new ideas and forward thinking concepts even if they differ from their personal beliefs. For the thinker, it is not necessarily whether or not the concept is right or wrong, but it is more about the information and the evaluation process. It is their curiosity and deep desire to understand the way things work that drives their thought processes.

It is important to realize that your presentation must always be structured in a way that thinkers can constantly analyze your message, because if they don't understand the mechanics behind what you are saying, you will lose them entirely.

And rather than listening to you, they will become caught up in trying to rearrange their thoughts. You can easily prevent this from happening by have all the data they need readily available. Things like studies, analysis, research and surveys are things that the thinker will thrive on.

When it comes to the data that you present the thinker, it must be hard, factual and quantitative if possible. Numerical data is especially intriguing to the thinker. Part of the thinker's desire for information will lead them to be extremely thorough and, in doing so, they will often try to gather the opinions of other people that may be involved in the decision-making process. Doing this may give the appearance that they want to enable other people to vote or have a say in the process, but in reality, they are doing it because they want to make sure they cover every single piece of ground in making the decision process.

Because thinkers not only rely on logic, but they want to rely on logic, they tend to put up walls of defense to guard their true emotions and feelings, passions and desires. This can make them extremely difficult to read. But that doesn't mean they can't be read or persuaded. The three biggest desires for the thinker are contribution, power and significance.

They are very competitive by nature, and thoroughly enjoy outwitting outmaneuvering and ultimately outsmarting other people. This is why they go to such great lengths when scrutinizing information. The good thing about thinkers is that even though they desire to win and they desire power, they are not afraid to change their view on something, if it makes logical

sense to do so. Many critical processes must first come into play before a thinker can come to a decision. It can be difficult to identify exactly what it is that is driving them to act. However, based on my research, it is hard data, factual arguments and a complete understanding of the process used to arrive at a decision that will ultimately will drive them to act the way you want them to.

Influencing the Thinker

Because thinkers are so guarded, they can be difficult to read. Their desire to have as much information in their hands as possible before making a decision can also act as an obstacle for getting them to comply. However, based on my research, if you follow the set of steps outlined here, you should be able to persuade and influence the thinker with no problem. You must first outline the entire process in your mind or on paper and know exactly how you're going to present your argument. Once you know that, you need to involve the thinker in the entire process and make him or her understand how you arrived at the conclusions that

you made and what data ultimately supports your conclusions.

If you don't do that, the thinker will spend too much time trying to figure it out, as opposed to just listening to what you have to say. And moving forward, your presentation must also have a strict order of events. You should envision your presentation almost like a movie that has to start from the beginning and never at the middle or the end. This will give the thinker a better understanding of the point that you're trying to make.

While every decision that we make is ultimately driven by in emotion, it is the desire to think logically that is driving the decision-making process of the thinker. Therefore, you have to appeal to the emotion within them by making your presentation logical.

A logical presentation has to be made chronologically; meaning it has to have a beginning and middle and an end. Using this type of a structure is extremely important, because if thinkers don't understand how you arrived at a certain point in the presentation, you are going to lose them. They're going to be thinking about it and questioning you. It is better to tell your story from beginning to end, even if it takes three times longer, so they can understand every single point

that you're trying to make and how you got to it. You also need to be able to explain how you arrived at certain points in your presentation, because the thinker will definitely challenge you if they don't understand. If you can't give them an answer that they're satisfied with, you are going to lose credibility.

You need to ensure that you have all of the relative data with you at the time you make your case. If you don't, the thinker will challenge you on it. Ultimately, you will have to procure it at some point, which will ultimately hold up the process.

Having other people involved in the process that can help the thinker think things through will also be of great benefit to you as well. As a measure of making sure they've covered all bases, thinkers will often want to cross-reference all of the data with other people whose opinions they respect.

Anytime you are having a conversation with someone and trying to persuade him or her, you should always be listening more than you're speaking. But with the thinker, it is especially important to not only listen, but also to include them in the entire process.

Thinkers want to understand your logic and want to understand how you arrive at your opinions and decisions. Oftentimes they will ask you questions

during your presentation to understand these factors. They also want understand your decision-making process.

So any time you make a presentation to them, you should always identify the problem and explain and evaluate the possible options. Explain why you think the option that you chose is the best. Evaluate the benefits that are associated with that option, as well as the risks associated with it.

Be prepared to answer a barrage of questions that the thinker might have regarding how you arrived at your conclusions on everything you've just explained. At times, it may seem like they're interrogating you. But the key is to remember to not get frustrated and not take it personally, because it's not a personal attack on you.

It is really just the thinker trying to understand your methodology. One of the best ways to get thinkers to accept a concept or an opinion is to have them arrive at the same opinion of it as you do at the same time. If you involve them in the process, you'll not only engage them, you'll also get them invested in the decision-making process, which is going to further strengthen their buy in.

If there are risks associated with your proposal to them, be open about these risks and ask them what they think the best way to reduce those risks would be. This will give you more credibility than you could ever imagine what the thinker.

If I had my way, I would gain compliance from someone every single time I sat down with him or her. Remember, this program is about more than just gaining compliance from someone just one time. Being able to persuade someone to do something once is great. But if you can build a relationship and influence him or her continuously, ultimately, this person will be contributing to your life on a much larger scale.

Realize that with a thinker if you really want to gain compliance for the long haul, you have to sacrifice getting them to comply the first time around. It's really best to not pressure them at all to make a decision that day. Give them time to do what they love to do, which is thinking. They will respect you for your ability to understand the way they like to make decisions. Additionally, your chances of gaining compliance from them on larger scales will increase if you give them time to scrutinize the information and then come back with them.

For this reason, I often have two meetings with the thinker. Or if I find myself in a situation where I'm realizing that the person that I'm trying to influence is a thinker, I will make it my business to ensure that no pressure is put on him or her for that day and I will schedule another meeting at another time. The first time you meet with them it's best to explain your process and the way you do things and show them some of the successes that you've had. Then it's important to clearly understand what else the thinker might be looking for. Information is going to be important to them in making their decision. You do this by asking questions and involving the thinker in your process. Gain their input in the process. Then the second time you meet with them, outline any changes that were made to your process since the first time you met with them. Then I will line up those changes with supporting logic.

When it comes to thinkers, you can never provide enough information. Sometimes, you may even think that you've exhausted every single option and provided all the data that was humanly possible and the thinker will then ask you a question about a topic that you never even thought to bring up. If this happens, you don't want to appear as though you didn't do your homework, but you don't want to be dishonest either.

The best thing to do at this point is to thank the person for bringing up that topic, as it was something that never ever crossed your mind. Then begin diving into the subject in exploring the different options if you think you can.

If the information that they are requesting is something that you can't provide, then point them in the direction that they need to go in order to obtain that information for themselves. Remember all the thinker wants is information. If you can at least point them to the source of that information, you still will appear as credible.

Once you've given thinkers all the information that they requested, you must now allow them the opportunity to scrutinize it and arrive at their own conclusions and decisions. Thinkers are more motivated by having control, so having them take complete ownership over the decision-making process is extremely important. The time that they need to make a final decision could take longer than you expected, but in the end, this is the process that you must follow in order to effectively influence the thinker. Thinkers also tend to remember bad experiences. So you have to make sure that you don't create one for them by providing recommendations that could have a negative effect on them.

Perhaps the most challenging part of influencing the thinker is that you really have to go the distance. When providing them with exhaustive amounts of information, the best way to go about this is to systematically present everything to them sequentially. Even if the thinker finds parts of your presentation that are flawed, ambiguous or inconsistent, they will still respect the fact that you have a plan and you're following it. But because they will look for flaws in your presentation it's very important that you set up two meetings with the thinker. In the first meeting, you involve them in the decision-making process, so you can assess the areas where you'll need to do some additional work and address issues that you didn't think would have come up. Once you know all of this, make sure that you're able to address it and resolve it if necessary during the second meeting.

The Skeptic

As the name suggests, the skeptics are naturally suspicious people and very rarely will they take information seriously that is not congruent to their own paradigm of the world. In order for them to truly believe information, it must come from sources that in

their mind have credibility. Otherwise, they will not accept what you tell them. In fact, they will challenge it and write it off as nonsense even if it is accurate and correct.

Skeptics are always questioning the status quo, and are ready to fight tooth and nail against anything that is not congruent to their belief system. They are not afraid to speak their minds and get something off their chests if they feel that it needs to be said. They're also very confident about their opinions and will often make decisions that can be extremely risky, based solely on their instinct. They're usually very persistent people, and will keep trying until they achieve the goals they set out to achieve. They very rarely give up on a goal and don't tie themselves up with what is going on now. Instead, they are constantly envisioning possibilities of the future.

Skeptics like to think they know it all and, more importantly, they like to keep that appearance. In other words, they don't really like asking for help. When they find themselves in situations where they do need help, they will usually only rely on certain people for it. Further, that select group of people that they will ask for help from has to be on the same level as them in their minds. If they are not, they will view them as

being un-credible and they will not accept anything that they have to say.

This is why it's extremely important to gain credibility as fast as possible with the skeptic. You could be handing the skeptic a winning lottery ticket, but if you are not credible, he or she won't accept it. Skeptics are often extremists in the way they feel about people. They either trust you immensely, if you can get into their circle, or they will completely shut you out if they decided that you can't get into their circle.

One of the initial ways that skeptics begin to trust people is through similarity. If the skeptic believes that someone is similar to them in some way, he or she will assume that their perspectives on things are the same. The challenge in influencing a skeptic is that they make it very difficult to engage emotionally because they can very easily detach themselves.

Skeptics are not fans of authority and oftentimes will resist it just for the sake of being controversial. In fact, even in professional business meetings they can be very disruptive and outspoken and even rebellious to a certain degree. I've even seen skeptics get up and walk away while someone that is in the middle of a presentation that they don't agree with. They also don't have a problem showing you that their attention

is occupied by something else. They will often take phone calls or text others while you're in the middle of a conversation with them.

Skeptics are truly confident people with strong personalities who are not afraid to let you know what they think of you. They are not afraid of being wrong or losing an argument.

People often falsely assume that skeptics do not make decisions quickly, but nothing could be further from the truth. They actually make decisions extremely quickly and oftentimes will do it right on the spot if their intuition is telling them to do something. They will often throw caution to the wind and not need any sort of proof whatsoever. This is important to remember that this only happens when their gut feeling or intuition is pointing them in a certain direction. When it's not they will rely on quantitative information and data, much like thinkers.

Thinkers take all the data and use it to come to a conclusion, where the skeptics usually have a conclusion in their mind already and they will use the information to support the conclusion. If there are parts of the information that do not support their conclusion, they will write it off as incorrect.

Dealing with a skeptic does take a very special skill set, because they are very assertive and extremely demanding. They expect people to answer their requests instantly and can appear as aggressive and combative when they speak. Skeptics are not afraid to work and will oftentimes do so around-the-clock. When they're passionate about something, they can easily become almost obsessed with it.

The skeptic's strong desire is for self-absorption. They like to call their own shots and take credit for making decisions that are correct. They are not afraid of risk, in fact, most of the time they are seeking it. Skeptics don't like being wrong and will very rarely take accountability. When things go wrong, they are quick to blame others and when things go right, they are quick to take credit. They don't like being told what to do, and they don't like when people remind them they need to do certain things. It's important to never make skeptics feel like you're rushing them because if you do, they will most likely take even longer to reach a decision simply because they don't want to feel like they are being controlled. Second to self-absorption and rebellion is the desire to be competitive. They like to be the best at whatever they do.

To summarize, the skeptics like to call their own shots and do not like to be controlled or directed. They will

let you know exactly how they feel and speak their mind. They are only afraid of being wrong and will oftentimes make risky decisions based solely on gut instinct. They will do whatever it takes to achieve a goal and don't care whose toes they have to step on in the process. They are not easily distracted and have a great ability to remain focused on the task at hand. They have little to no regard for the way things should be, and are more concerned at the way things could be.

Skeptics are very independent people, which can make them hard to get along with in team atmospheres. But their ability to think outside the box and be great visionaries often leads them to great things.

Influencing The Skeptic

You may think that influencing skeptics would be extremely difficult, because they don't value any sort of opinions or information that are not congruent to their outlook on life. But the good thing about influencing the skeptic is that there is little left to the imagination

and not very much guesswork involved. You don't have to spend time trying to figure out what the skeptic is thinking about, because they're going to tell you straight to your face. The key to influencing skeptics is to get them to place extreme value on the source of the data that is being used to influence them. Once they can place a value on that data, they will make their decision very quickly and not procrastinate. That's why it's extremely important to establish credibility as soon as possible. If the skeptic has no idea about you or what you've done, try to seek an endorsement from someone that they already view as credible. This will make things a lot easier for you.

Skeptics are suspicious by nature, and tend to distrust most things that they come across unless, of course, they've decided that the source of the information is credible or similar to them.

Name brands, proven track records, and known leaders in any area are things that skeptics view as credible.

If you don't fit any of these criteria just yet, you must leverage the credibility of someone else that the skeptic trusts. Realize though that this tactic only gets you in the door. Once you are there, you still must earn the credibility needed to influence the skeptic. They will often do this by challenging you and asking you a

lot of questions, so you should be prepared to answer them. This is nothing more than a test that skeptics perform to see whether or not they should believe anything that you have to say.

What's interesting, though, is that when they are questioning you, they're looking for reasons to not trust you. If they can't find them then you will begin to appear credible to them. With the skeptic, you start out with nothing. Through your ability to answer their questions and provide them with what they need to take you seriously, you begin to gain credibility. Skeptics trust no one without a proven track record.

The good news is that once you do establish credibility with a skeptic, everything else is much easier. Skeptics only let certain people into their inner circle, but once they are there, everything is different. They will then listen and trust most of what you have to say and make decisions very quickly.

You have to be able to stand up for yourself. But realize first that you can't change the skeptic's paradigm or outlook on life. It is part of their human nature to not trust or except things at face value. That is why they challenge and question everything that they come across. They don't do this maliciously; they are just difficult people by nature. It's not your place to change

that and you shouldn't want to. Instead, accept it for what it is and influence accordingly.

Make no mistake; you are going to encounter very challenging situations with skeptics. But part of being a master of influence is realizing the type of person that you're dealing with and adjusting your presentation accordingly. It's easy to get frustrated upset or mad and want to walk away, but that's not what influence is about. Influence is about gaining compliance from anyone. Just as each person is different, every approach will be different. Realize that adjusting your presentation is just part of the game.

You must always appear as an expert in whatever it is that you are influencing someone to do. To become an expert, you must have the desire to want to learn. Once you do learn and once you gain a level of expertise that you desire, remember that you know more about the topic at hand than the skeptic that you're trying to persuade. Remain confident and trust in your ability even when the skeptic challenges it.

Aside from being naturally suspicious, skeptics also tend to be very rebellious people. You should know before going into a meeting with the skeptic that all of the events that take place should go according to when they want them to take place. This makes them feel as

though they are in control, which will lower their defense mechanisms slightly.

Another challenge with skeptics is the fact that they can often go off track and skip from one subject to the next, making it difficult to follow their train of thought. This can be frustrating, and it could cause you to want to feel as though it's not even worth your time dealing with this type of a person. But again, if you want to become a master of influence, you need to understand that each person brings with him or herself a different set of challenges and there is always a way to overcome them. When a skeptic starts jumping from one subject to the next, simply have the person slow down and start over again. You could say something like. "I'm not sure if I understood what you're saying, let's go back to what you initially said about...."

It's especially important to not reciprocate with a combative nature. When dealing with the skeptic, the best thing that you can do is control your emotions and your ego. When you become confrontational with skeptics, it only makes them more aggressive, because they tend to defend their egos. When they are in a state of defense, skeptics become difficult to influence.

When they feel like they are in control, they become relaxed, making them more susceptible to influence.

By the same token, a skeptic will not respect you if you back down easily. They feel that if someone is correct about something, they should defend their opinion. So when you don't defend your opinion, it makes you appear as not credible. That's why it's extremely important to defend your point, but do so in a way that is non-combative. Never fight fire with fire or act aggressively. Instead, just be confident when responding to the intense questioning. When you can stay in your ground and respond with factual information, your credibility continues to increase in the eyes of the skeptic.

As stated earlier, establishing credibility ASAP is essential towards influencing the skeptic. What's interesting is that even if you have a proven track record or a publicly respected reputation for your expertise, earning the skeptic's trust can still be challenging. If you assume that the skeptic will take what you have to say at face value simply because of your accomplishments, you are making a false assumption.

Always be sure to point out where you are getting the information that supports your case to the skeptic, as

that holds more weight with them than the actual information itself. Data that was obtained from a credible source will open up a skeptic's mind to influence more than just about anything else.

While influencing skeptics can feel like a daunting task with no sign of achievement because of their strong personalities and aggressive approaches to getting their point across, it doesn't mean that they cannot be persuaded and led to a decision just like anyone else.

Realize this fact- every time skeptics question or challenge something, it's because they are trying to figure out how or why they might change their frame of thought. You will eventually succeed in influencing them, you just need to be patient, answer every single question and let them take ownership over the decision.

The Follower

Followers use other people's decision-making processes as reference points to make their own decisions. They typically will do something because it has been proven to work in the past by someone else. They don't like venturing into uncharted territory or do

things that have never been done before. They don't like to explore options that have not been proven to work, and they are certainly not innovative or creative people. Followers are great listeners and are very diplomatic when they interact with other people. They are open to other people's opinions and perspectives on things and tend to have a high level of emotional intelligence. The challenge with the followers is that they can sometimes be hard to identify, because they can easily be misidentified as thinkers and enthusiasts or skeptics.

Followers tend to avoid new solutions that have not been proven to work in the past. Their decision-making process is predicated on what's worked before; they don't like to explore new options. They gravitate towards trusted brands, and products, and solutions and ideas that have been socially validated. Perhaps the biggest issue for followers is when they become faced with a problem that has never existed before. In a case like that, there's no reference point does nothing for them to compare. Oftentimes when this happens, they suffer from something called an analysis paralysis where they are scrutinizing and studying the problem in trying to determine the best course of action, but never actually doing anything.

Willingness to delegate tasks to others is one of their strong people skills. Followers usually are able to gain loyalty from others, because of their ability to connect. Another great attribute about followers is that they are open to other people's advice, even when it is different from their own opinions. When the follower asks for your input on a certain topic, it is because he or she truly values what you have to say.

They are also extremely empathetic and good at seeing the world through other people's paradigms. Similar to skeptics and leaders, followers like to ask a lot of questions. When they receive the answers to those questions, they could challenge them like enthusiasts, and they sometimes think out the box and look for innovative ideas.

As you might expect, most followers won't admit that they are actually followers. Instead, they want people to think that they are forward thinking even when their decision-making process proves otherwise. To avoid any indication that they are followers, they will often talk about their plans for the future to make themselves appear like they are visionaries. However, rest assured any plans that they have for the future would be based off of a similar idea that was successful for someone else.

Followers love bargains. To them getting a great deal is everything. And oftentimes, they will trade the risks involved with something new and unexplored for a decrease in price. Sometimes they will jump on an opportunity simply because the prices so low that they don't want to miss out. They enjoy haggling and oftentimes actually find the process to be a source of entertainment. What's interesting about followers is that they can be spontaneous and take action on the spot, but only if they know that doing so has been proven to work before.

Influencing the Follower

Identifying the follower can be challenging, but once you do the process of influence is actually pretty easy. In fact, in many cases, you'll gain compliance from them right on the spot providing you do everything the right way.

Here's what that entails.

First, you can use process of elimination, because research has shown that people who do identify themselves as followers usually do not make use of elimination. In the rare occasion where you come

across a person who is willing to identify himself or herself as a follower, you can begin asking questions about how they make decisions. They will typically classify themselves as followers because they don't act until they understand every single risk that's involved. But, in reality, those are the characteristics of the thinker.

Proof is extremely important to the follower. You see, even though they are tough to identify, when it comes to follower, the influence process is pretty straightforward and simple. In fact, of all the types of decision makers that you will have to influence, the followers will probably be the easiest, assuming you know what to do and what not to do. The first step is to never take them out of their comfort zone. Anything that they are not familiar with, or that is new to them, will raise high defense mechanisms within them. The only way that a follower will make a change is if he or she is absolutely sure that a large number of people have succeeded by making that same change.

Therefore, it's important that you have things like testimonials and references from credible trusted sources when dealing with a follower.

If you do not have a strong track record for success or a proven reputation for being a credible person, it will do

no good to try to sell yourself, particularly as the follower will not even pay attention to you.

Followers relate to phrases like “the old way,” “what works similar to” and “what has worked in the past.” They like proven solutions. They don't like risk, and the idea of losing money, time, resources or anything else that they deem is valuable. That's the reason they very rarely make risky decisions on the spot. The key here is that you can never have too much proof when influencing a follower.

Now there will be times where you find yourself in situations where you don't have enough proof to influence the follower. When this is the case, you can switch your tactic from using proof to delivering the bargains. Followers love bargains and many times you can offset the risk or lack of proof by providing them with a great deal. So if you're in sales, and you're trying to convince a follower to make a purchase based on a product's track record but that's not working, then you can move on to lowering the price.

When you do this, the risk is automatically lowered in the mind of the follower. The follower will now almost feel like you are sharing the risk with him or her. Remember followers find bargaining and negotiating fun and playful. So don't be afraid to do it.

It's also extremely important to keep things simple when dealing with a follower. Remember, they don't like to admit that they are followers. Instead they would rather have you believe that they're innovative, so sometimes you might want to pacify them and feed that desire a little. Just remember not to make them stray too far from their comfort zone. If you begin to get too innovative with a follower the plan could backfire in your face. This usually happens when you make things more complicated than they need to be. All you really need to do is supply infinite proof that something is working. This is what makes influencing the follower easier than any other type of decision maker. All they need is proof, and if proof doesn't work, they need bargains. Both are the only two avenues that you will ever have to explore when dealing with a follower.

Linking new concepts to past results is also truly important when dealing with the follower. Followers like familiarity. So if you can show them how the features or benefits of whatever you're offering is similar to something that has worked for them in the past, you'll quickly begin to gain compliance from them. It's important that you make this connection as early as possible in your presentation when dealing with the follower, as it will enable you to open up the

door to gain compliance in the first place. Without first opening that door or showing them how your idea is similar to something that has worked in the past, they will become defensive or will not take your presentation seriously. Even with the most unique and innovative type of products, it's important to remember that followers assimilate information based on past experiences.

The last bit of information I want to give you when it comes to followers goes back to what I said earlier about them being hard to identify. Because they're hard to identify, if you confuse them with someone else, like an enthusiast, and you're trying to make your point by showcasing new and innovative ideas, you will destroy your whole presentation. Enthusiasts are driven by risk, whereas followers avoid it at all costs, so it's important to make sure that you are in fact dealing with a follower when you're making your presentation.

Followers don't necessarily like to change things, and they like to rectify things. They like the status quo and they like normalcy.

The Leader

Leaders are proactive, independent, meticulous, “strive for perfection” type of people. The main emotion that's actually driving all of their decisions is fear. They often worry and easily become anxious or nervous when they think about the unknown. Anytime change or something new enters their life, they automatically assume that it's going to affect them negatively rather than positively. If the fear becomes too overwhelming for them, it will actually paralyze them and prevent them from taking any sort of action. That fear can also make them extremely defensive and combative. This could cause them to focus too much on worst-case scenarios and negative outcomes. The fear can also drive them to achieve things that most people only dream of. It really all depends on how much fear is within them.

Leaders are not afraid to get their hands dirty and take massive action if they don't agree with the way certain things are being done. They are truly independent and often trust their ability to get things going without the help of other people. They prefer to do things their way whether they fail or succeed. In their minds, it is their ability, skill, education or favorable attributes that ultimately finds the right answers.

Leaders, as you would expect, are very different than followers. Leaders do not need any kind of path to be

prepared for them by someone else. Instead they rely on their own internal compass and gut instinct. Others often admire leaders, because of their ability to aggressively plow through tasks that others wouldn't even attempt to take on.

In terms of big decisions, leaders need to feel as though they are in control of the entire process. In a sense, they are possessed with power. They must first review any type of information so they can make a decision based on their own judgments rather than the input or device of others.

In fact, in many cases, they will not ask for advice from others, even if they trust and admire them. The only input that leaders really value is their own, because in their minds, this is the only truly credible source. This outlook is driven primarily by the emotion of fear that resides within them. If they think for a second that someone else's opinion conflicts with theirs, they will abruptly dismiss it, even if there is validity and truth to it.

Leaders tend to be very self-absorbed, and even if they share thoughts about a decision with others, they very rarely will take their advice into consideration. Meeting with leaders can be very unpredictable. If they think for

a second that you're trying to take advantage of them, they will become extremely confrontational.

At the same time, they could sit there in complete silence wrapped up in their own thoughts. They can also easily lose their patience, because they are frustrated with the fact that someone else can't see things their way. They also falsely assume that everyone sees things their way. When they learn that they don't, they can quickly become agitated.

In a sense, leaders are spoiled because they're used to getting their way. They have a huge desire for control, because control is equal to security in their mind. Leaders fear of loss of control more than anything. This factor can serve them both positively and negatively.

Leaders are very straightforward and clear people. In their minds, there is a clear set of rules that dictates what is right and what is wrong. The right way is their way, and the wrong way is anything that is not in alignment with their way. They are very black and white thinkers and leave little room for gray areas.

Leaders are not also open to change once they've made up their mind that they want something. Their ideas become written in stone and are truly hard to change. Part of the reason why their ideas are so hard to change is because they formulate these ideas on what

they perceive to be pure facts and logical data. They have no use for uncertainty and ambiguity or unclear information. This, however, does not mean that they will not make unintelligent or irrational decisions at times. But their decisions usually come in to play.

Leaders are driven perfectionists; they want everything done meticulously and with zero errors. This is often why they have the attitude of rolling up their sleeves and doing things themselves, as they really don't trust that anyone can do things as good as they can. Leaders have very strong personalities and, in their minds, they are the best at everything that they do whatever business they choose to be involved in. They feel that they can do better than anyone.

Leaders also avoid risk and responsibility, because of fear of failure. Remember the fear is the driving force behind everything that the leader does.

Influencing the Leader

As you can expect, influencing the leader will be the most challenging of all decision makers. In reality, you can't even influence them. You can only influence them to influence themselves. The only two things that

you can use to do so are time and fear. You need time, because leaders work at their own pace and will not be rushed by anyone. And you need to reduce their fear as much as possible in order for them to take action. Here are the key steps to doing so.

Never try to force a leader into doing something. You could be giving a leader the best advice possible, but if they feel for a moment that you have a hidden agenda, they will become combative and defensive. They will relentlessly begin questioning you. When this happens it's best to gain your composure and stay patient.

Never become defensive or take things personally. You have to see leaders for what they are- people primarily driven by fear. This fear can sometimes transform into the complete terror of making a bad decision.

The key to dealing with a leader is to not let your emotions take hold of you. Remain calm and reassure them. If you can effectively silence their fears, you'll gain compliance from them. The challenge is that in their mind the fears don't exist. A leader will never want to admit to anyone else or to themselves that they are afraid of anything. So they will often put off making a fearful decision by asking for additional information, when in reality, they might not even look at the information that they asked for. If you sense that a leader is simply procrastinating when he or she is

asking you for additional information, it's important to provide the information anyway. Every time you respond to one of their requests, you actually reduce their fear slightly without actually calling them out on it.

During your presentation with a leader, be prepared for long intervals of silence as they often become very self-absorbed. In meetings the key to influencing a leader is having a presentation that is linear and very well structured. While they enjoy details, they only take them seriously if they feel they are being presented from someone who is an expert at what they do. When you present data, it must be combined with discipline, authority, strength, power and command. They admire and are open to approaches that are very straightforward and exude confidence.

In the end, the leader's decision to comply will come from within. Therefore, as I said earlier, you can't really influence them per se. You can influence them to influence themselves. The key to it is to always let them feel as though they are in control. Their decisions must come from their thoughts and opinions rather than yours. Think of it this way- when dealing with a leader, your job is not to sell. Instead, it's to give them

the opportunity to make a purchase. Your best course of action is to give them everything they need to make a decision and supply them with what they asked for. Then you can sit back while they influence themselves to take action. This allows the leader take ownership over the idea, which is what they want more than anything else.

Some years ago, I had a business partner who was a leader who was obsessed with control. I needed a certain amount of help from him, and I knew that if I got this help it would improve my financial situation drastically. The problem is that I also knew that he wouldn't be willing to give it to me, because in his mind, the financial gain that I would receive would be something that he feared. You see a leader always likes to feel like he or she is in a better position than those surrounding him or her. Therefore, the thought of him giving me something that would possibly make me more money than him was something that he wasn't comfortable with. Rather than asking him for what I needed, I asked him how he thought I could make more money with my business. In his mind, I was calling on him for his expertise and good judgment. He willingly complied, and gave me what I needed as a result. My income doubled that year.

Because leaders often take an extremely long time to make decisions, a good tactic is to give them a deadline that is controlled by an external factor rather than you. This is where you create urgency to circumstances beyond your control so that you are not perceived as the bad guy.

For example, when I was selling gym memberships, the object of the game was always to get the person to join on that day. Initially, we have something called the first. This is an incentive, which meant that you would save money if you joined on your first visit to the club. Oftentimes people would say, “Well, what if I come back tomorrow. You won't give me the discount?” This makes you appear as someone that doesn't want to do business with them. So I began to change my presentation and say that the sale ended on that day, or that there were only a limited amount of memberships left. This creates the same urgency and gives the same deadline; only it doesn't position me as the person who's in control of that deadline. Therefore, I can't make any adjustments to it. They must act that day if they want the best deal possible.

You must also know your bottom line when dealing with a leader, as they will often try to push the limits as far as they can get them. Never rush the leader, as you

will only make them defensive and resistant to being influenced.

The Enthusiast

Enthusiasts are always looking for something to get involved with. As the name suggests, they are enthusiastic about new ideas and are quick to embrace them. They seek to know more about how that idea can benefit them as well as others.

They're very interested in innovative ideas and can identify with the revolutionary thinking. They love to imagine possibilities, and are responsible and accountable. They care really only about the bottom line. Enthusiasts are interactive, can make decisions very easily and are not afraid of risk.

Enthusiasts as are never afraid to pull the trigger once the timing is right. In fact, if there's one thing that the enthusiast frowns upon more than anything else, it's procrastination and wasting time.

The emotion of excitement about a new idea is only the beginning of how the decision-making process takes place for the enthusiast. They do seek out facts and data to support their enthusiasm and desire to

want to get involved. But if they cannot find those facts, their enthusiasm will quickly diminish. You might not have to provide detailed information to enthusiasts, but they will need to see an in-depth plan on how the idea will be executed. Yes, they are enthusiastic people, but they only remain enthusiastic when they see that someone else has thought through every aspect of the idea. If they do not see that, they quickly lose their enthusiasm.

Part of the reason for this is because most enthusiasts have been burned in the past by making decisions too quickly without actually thinking them through. You cannot change the emotion that naturally resides within them, which is to become enthusiastic about a new idea. You can only prevent it from going away by providing them with what they need to remain secure in their decision to move forward.

They can become very discouraged if you don't have the answers that they are looking for. They admire those who have done their homework and are not afraid to be aggressively questioned on why their idea will work.

With an enthusiast, the bottom line is really all that matters. But that bottom line has to be supported by the proof that will keep them enthusiastic. They can

quickly begin to break down a large idea into smaller details and they are most excited about the details of the execution. They are not interested in long drawn-out processes. Rather they are more fixated on instant gratification and immediate results. They care more about the solution rather than the problem. They are open to change and willing to adapt if they feel a result can be gained faster.

Enthusiasts are also very interactive people. They enjoy talking with others and sharing ideas, brainstorming is also very enjoyable to them, as they like to share ideas with others and see how a concept can come to life. They're also known for jotting down ideas on the whiteboard or a piece of paper and leaving it to someone else to figure out how to assemble them. They can be very talkative and engaging people, but they can easily take over conversation and speak very fast and animated. They can also be very interruptive and have little tolerance for the boring and mundane.

Enthusiasts are not afraid to call in help from someone else if they feel they need it. Again, all they really care about is the results achieved. They will do whatever it takes to get that done.

Influencing the Enthusiast

When using the right approach, this can be one of the easiest decision makers to influence. Here is a closer look at what that right approach consists of.

First give the headlines. Enthusiasts typically have very short attention spans. They will not concern themselves with boring details. For example, if they were reading this book, they would probably go to the table of contents, find which chapters interested them or could be valuable to them and skip straight through to them. That's why when you begin your presentation within enthusiast; you have to start with the most critical information. If you don't, you could lose their attention very fast. Oftentimes, when you're influencing someone, you need to structure your presentation sequentially so that you can build value in your concept and then explain your concept. With the enthusiast, it's actually the complete opposite. You explain the concept first, and let everything else follow.

They can become bored very easily with a drawn-out presentation. It is better to have an interactive conversation with them. And if they interrupt you, don't take offense. They're just trying to make sense of what you're saying and get to the bottom line. Once

they understand the big picture, you should immediately begin to talk about execution and how that idea will actually come to life. What is really driving their enthusiast is a burning desire to interact with others. They love brainstorming, thinking outside the box and want to ultimately play with ideas.

Your presentation should be simple and straightforward as well as logical and systematic. If it's not, you will lose the enthusiast attention very fast. You should also be prepared to adapt and change your presentation according to whatever is going on to keep them engaged. In fact, the entire presentation should be structured around the enthusiast's needs. Keep a written checklist of all the points that you need to make so that you can stay on track while still fulfilling their immediate gratification needs.

Even though you may have to change your presentation, it's important to remember that you cannot get caught up in the enthusiast excitement and lose sight of the task at hand. The enthusiast might tell you that they are onboard 100%. Yet, just when you think your job is done, you may realize that they have changed their minds. It's one of their habits to agree to do something and then to fight off their impulses, because they have been burned in the past.

It's also important to talk about any risks associated with your ideas up front. In fact, if there is a part of your presentation that they are especially excited about, it's a good idea to actually undersell those things and make them appear less attractive than they actually are by discussing the risks associated with them at the same time. You also address your plan to minimize those risks. If you try to cover up any type of information, you can rest assured that they will learn it at a later time when you might not be around to address it with them by covering any risks or downsides up front and keeping the enthusiast grounded. You will appear as someone logical and credible. This factor will, in turn, strengthen their confidence in you.

Remember that risk is not something that they are afraid of. They actually seek it. So when you address the possibility of something going wrong up front, they are less likely to be scared away than other types of people.

When you finish your presentation, it is extremely important to follow up with the enthusiast afterwards. They can be very excited and appear to be proactive. When you leave, they could begin to rethink things and have a completely different perspective the next time you talk to them. For that reason, it's especially

important to keep a lot of communication open and consistently follow up with them with updates as to where you are in terms of the process.

Congratulations!

You now understand the 5 main types of decision makers and how to influence each of them.

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Talk soon,

Paul Mascetta

Founder of The Influential Mind

