

10 QUESTIONS FOR BUILDING YOUR INFLUENCING STRATEGY

UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

If you want to engage your audience, you need know them well. As I mentioned in the [video](#), the curse of knowledge can blind you from understanding the point of view of the people you want to engage.

THE PREPARATION IS WORTH THE INVESTMENT

When you prepare, **you'll gain new insights that will help you craft a stronger influencing strategy**. You can increase your level and speed success—and prevent having to do cleanup after a message that missed the mark. As the old saying about preparation goes, measure twice, cut once.

BASIC PREMISE OF THIS APPROACH

Many people won't embrace your big idea, initially. While more time and information may help many of them engage, you will more easily engage people if you understand their world. Also, their resistance may be well-founded and understanding it may help you create a better execution plan.

Caution! Many busy leaders simply act as the proxy for their audience, assuming they know what other people are thinking and what they value. These leaders almost always miss critical information.

I strongly encourage you to talk and listen with these people so you can answer these questions in the worksheet from their point of view. It will not only give you a great education, it will help build trust that can help you tremendously in the future.

START WITH THE END IN MIND: WHAT IS POSSIBLE?

1. **Overarching Goal:** What is the big goal you want to accomplish? (Use one sentence or less. Forcing yourself to be brief helps you be more clear.)
2. **Who do you want to engage?:** Who are the critical people you need to influence to achieve this goal?*

*Note: There may be multiple groups of people you want to influence. Answer the following questions for each group separately as each might need a separate approach.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

3. **Desired State:** What would you like these people to think, feel and do about your idea so it can be successful?
4. **Current versus Desired State:** What are these people thinking/saying/doing regarding your idea, today?
5. **Point of View:** Which of their filters affect how they are thinking/feeling/doing about your idea today?
 - assumptions
 - beliefs and values
 - aspirations
 - fears
 - past experiences
6. What are their current objections to your idea?
 - What can you learn from their concerns that can make executing the idea even better?
 - How can you address their concerns so they'll become more engaged?

KNOW WHAT ENGAGES THEM

7. With this knowledge of your audience, what will light them up about your idea?
 - What are their aspirations? What are they enthusiastic about?
 - How can your idea make their pain/fear go away?

HOW WILL THE MESSENGER AFFECT THE MESSAGE?

8. How credible/trustworthy a resource are you to this audience? If you do not currently have credibility/trust with them, how will you build it?
- How can you craft your messages to these people, specifically?
 - What is the best method of communicating with them?

GATHER REINFORCEMENT?

9. Who are key influencers of these people that you might need to connect with who can help you understand them and deliver your message?

WHAT IS THE PATH FROM A TO B?

10. Considering all of this, what can you do to engage these people to your idea, to help them move from where they are today to where you'd like them to be?
- What are the conversations you must have with these people to move them forward? What is your message? How will they know you're listening?
 - What is the best way to engage with them—connect one-on-one, speak to a group, Q&A, social media, email, etc.?
 - When is the best sequence and timing of these?