

GROW YOUR POWER AND INFLUENCE

An Example of How to Apply the High Performance Strategy Mash-up

This document is a free download to provide an example of how to apply the 3 High Performance Strategies from a blog post I shared in January 2016. To read the blog post, [click here](#).

Goal: Build Your Power and Influence

Power = the ability to deliver important results and get things done, by yourself or through others.

Influence = the ability to engage people so they willingly make choices or take actions that were not originally obvious or attractive to them...without using coercion, commanding or manipulation.

Applying the 3 High Performance Strategies

1. From unclear to measurable.

The first step is to identify Key Performance Drivers that, when repeated effectively, will lead to the outcome you're aiming for.

One simple Key Performance Driver (KPD) that builds Power and Influence is the ASK/TELL RATIO (ATR). Super simple, super effective.

Before they've applied it, some leaders comment that the ATR seems too simplistic to actually grow Power and Influence. But this KPD is dynamite in the hands of a motivated leader.

The ASK/TELL RATIO measures how much time (or how many sentences) you're devoting to asking questions to understand what others think, feel, fear and want versus the time (or sentences) you're devoting to telling others what you think, feel, fear and want. Stephen Covey said it eloquently with his Habit #5 "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." But without a KPD to bring it to life, that brilliant but intangible leadership habit is just another platitude. *What is the ideal ASK/TELL RATIO?* *See Page 2 for guidelines.

2. From private to public.

KPDs work best when other people are watching. Set the ASK/TELL RATIO goal for your most important meetings (*guidelines page 2), then share your ATR goal with someone who will hold you accountable. Assess your progress frequently.

Does forcing yourself to ask more questions sound like a gimmick? Even if everyone knows you're just trying to achieve a KPD goal, it still works! I dare you to try to prove me wrong. Even if you try but fall short of the KPD goal, people will mysteriously be drawn toward you for your efforts. Stephen Covey was right.

3. From work to a game.

Turn achieving these goals into a game. For example, measure your ATR like a batting average or set a goal of consecutive times you achieved your ATR goal. Some executives post their goals and challenge their teams to play along. "Power and Influence" seem so elusive until you turn them into a game and watch them grow.

Act Now!

Right now, before you move on to your next activity, look at your calendar and identify your 3 most valuable meetings in the next week. Set an ASK/TELL RATIO goal for each one and share it with someone who will hold you accountable. It's even better if they'll be in the meeting to observe firsthand. Then, keep score of how you do versus your goal. Create a scorecard to track your results.

*Suggested ASK/TELL RATIO Goals

The optimal ASK/TELL RATIO varies with different factors like the goal of a meeting, who and how many people you're engaging with, and what is the topic.

Here are some simple guidelines to help you get started.

CAUTION: Under pressure, many leaders turn their ASK/TELL RATIO upside down and move toward ZERO ASK and 100% TELL. Instead of building Influence and Power, that behavior triggers others into resistance, resentment, and confusion toward your ideas. It might feel good to explain and exhort more but it kills your Power and Influence. That's why you need to set ATR goals in advance, so you'll pre-empt your unconscious, stress-induced behaviors.

5 Scenarios and Their ATR Goals:

1. **When facing resistance to a new idea:** *ATR goal = 3:1.* Most people's resistance to your idea is because they believe you don't understand, and they're probably more correct than you realize. Ask!

People don't engage with you because of what you know, which is what they'll hear if you do all of the talking.

They engage with you because they believe you finally understand them, which is what they'll experience when you ask questions that seek understanding.
2. **During important 1-on-1 performance development discussions:** *ATR goal = 2:1.* Until the other person knows you have their back, seek to understand. In this conversation, you may also have constructive feedback you need to deliver, but until the other person feels you grasp them and their world, they won't think your ideas apply to them. Lead with asking/listening and enjoy the new influence.
3. **During a debate among equals:** *ATR goal = 1:1.* During debates with people you trust, many driven leaders invert the ratio and move toward 1:3 or more. A 1:1 ATR would be a big improvement and is very effective among equals who trust each other. If the debate becomes at all contentious, the fastest way to re-engage is to quickly increase your ATR. It's a deceptively powerful move.
4. **When it's time to get into action:** *ATR goal = 1:3.* Once people feel understood, you've established trust, and you have a clear direction for where to go, you'll probably do more telling than asking. Notice that this ratio of more tell and less ask is where you might be most comfortable always. This ratio is most effective later in the process when you've already asked great questions to understand and engage people fully. At this point, they'll be much more open to your direction.
5. **Leading in a short-term crisis:** *ATR goal = 1:5 or more.* In short spurts of crisis, assuming you are the leader of the team or assuming you're in the best position to lead, it may be appropriate to become highly directive until the short-term crisis has passed. The challenge for most leaders is recognizing that the crisis has passed so they stop barking out directives and make room for people to step up and make their own decisions again.