

Organizational Change Management Approach of the Year Awarded to VitalSmarts

Bestselling authors receive the Beckhard Memorial Prize by MIT Sloan Management Review

July 28, 2009 — Provo, UT — New research by the authors of the *New York Times* bestselling book and corporate training program of the same title, [Influencer: The Power to Change Anything](#), has received the Richard Beckhard Memorial Prize from *MIT Sloan Management Review* for the most outstanding article on planned change and organizational development of the year.

The article titled "[How to Have Influence](#)," was originally published in the Fall 2008 edition of *MIT Sloan Management Review* and features research from VitalSmarts, a corporate training company, that shows leaders who combine four to six unique sources of influence are ten times more successful at producing profound and sustainable change.

The research combined three studies and involved focus groups and surveys with more than 2000 executives, managers and individuals.

- The first study looked at entrenched organizational problems including politics, rigid bureaucracy, and low morale.
- The second study looked at the success and failure of leader-led initiatives such as mergers and acquisitions, product launches and reorganizations.
- The third study looked at challenging personal habits such as smoking, overeating and debt management.

The results were identical in each study: ***most people don't know how to influence themselves or others to change behavior because they rely on a single solution instead of combining multiple sources of influence.***

The study also showed that successful change was not predicted by a leader's or individual's desire to change or by how critical the change was to the organization's or individual's health. For example, the problems that drove General Motors into bankruptcy have been known for thirty years—but no one seemed capable of influencing change. According to the study, success comes to those who overwhelm problems by aiming four or more of the six possible sources of influence at the same behavior.

"Rather than relying on one or only a few activities ... the research supports using multiple sources to ensure success," said Erik Brynjolfsson, chair of the *MIT Sloan Management Review* and member of the Beckhard prize committee. The award honors former MIT Sloan School of Management faculty and well-known author Richard Beckhard.

"Dick Beckhard was an advocate of such a multifaceted approach to change, and he would have endorsed the very practical, doable actions laid out in this article for the leader and change agent," said Brynjolfsson.

[Joseph Grenny](#), coauthor of [Influencer](#) and leading researcher of the study, says the reason quick fixes don't work is because behavior problems are not fed by a single cause; rather, they are fed by a conspiracy of causes.

"Our research clearly shows the main variable in success or failure is not which source of influence leaders choose," says Grenny. "By far, the more important factor is *how many*."

Grenny's research outlines the six sources that influence human behavior. ***If people learn how to leverage these sources, they are ten times more likely to succeed than those who rely on a single solution.***

The Six Sources of Influence:

1. **Personal Motivation** – overcome individual reluctance and resistance
2. **Personal Ability** – teach and master the necessary skills for success

3. **Social Motivation** – enlist help from leaders or other opinion-leaders
4. **Social Ability** – leverage teamwork
5. **Structural Motivation** – reward early successes
6. **Structural Ability** – create a supportive physical environment

Grenny's article outlines how leaders can effectively leverage each source of influence to affect changes to their entrenched behaviors using case studies of large organizations such as Spectrum Health, AT&T, Lockheed Martin, Sprint, and OG&E Energy.

About [VitalSmarts](#)

An innovator in corporate training and organizational performance, VitalSmarts is home to award-winning training products that enrich relationships and improve end results. The company also has three *New York Times* bestsellers, [Crucial Conversations](#), [Crucial Confrontations](#) and [Influencer](#). VitalSmarts has been listed twice on the *Inc.* 500 list of fastest-growing companies and has taught more than 2 million people worldwide. www.vitalsmarts.com

About the Richard Beckhard Memorial Prize: The Richard Beckhard Memorial Prize honors Professor Richard Beckhard—former MIT Sloan School of Management faculty and well-known author of *Organizational Development* and *Organizational Transitions*—and is given annually to the authors of an outstanding article on the subject of planned change and organizational development.

<http://sloanreview.mit.edu/the-magazine/articles/2009/summer/50499/the-richard-beckhard-memorial-prize/>

About the Research: The report is based on three studies. The first study surveyed 25 C-level leaders, the second surveyed 900 managers and supervisors, and the third study surveyed more than 1,000 individuals. The full research report is available at

<http://www.vitalsmarts.com/userfiles/10xinfluence/index.html>.

Note to Editor: Author and researcher [Joseph Grenny](#) can share with your readers/viewers tips on how to secure change by combining multiple sources of influence.

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