
INFLUENCE: YOUR SECRET WEAPON FOR CAREER SUCCESS

*Step-by-step strategies for building your professional credibility so you can be
an influential voice at work, accomplish more with your projects, and set
yourself up for career success!*

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME!

Are you ready to embark on a journey of building your influence, so that you can make a difference at work?

For over 20 years, I've been helping my clients learn to exert influence with integrity, using actions that are above-board, positive, and—most importantly—successful. Now I'm ready to give back and am eager to help you achieve the same success.

In this self-study guide I'll be providing you with connection-making tips that you can take action on immediately and then progress through at a pace that's comfortable for you.

This course contains four modules, each of which is designed to be completed in one week. But, really, it's up to you. You can choose to do one module each week, or move through it more quickly. Here's the best part: You'll be planning for the whole year, so actions you take over these four weeks will set you up for twelve months of influence-building strategies.

Let's get started!

To your success,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer".

Jennifer

MODULE 1: CHANGE YOUR MIND-SET TO IMPROVE YOUR INFLUENCE

INTRODUCTION

I'm so excited to be working with you on this self-study course!

VIDEO



Click on this video link to hear my personal message to you. It's a message that will form the foundation for the rest of your training sessions.

[Video Greeting: Changing Your Influence Mindset](#)

VIDEO RECAP

- The number one trait you must have to create influence at work is **connectedness**.
- Connectedness is the ability to reach out to all types of people both within and outside of your organization in order to create positive, meaningful, and mutually beneficial relationships.
- Influence ability is like a three-legged stool: Your competence and trustworthiness are two legs of the stool, but without the third leg that stool will be wobbly. Increasing your connections with other people will strengthen your ability to influence.
- Improving your connectedness is just like improving your physical fitness: It requires a plan, and consistent choices enacted on a regular schedule.



YOUR INFLUENCE ACTION PLAN FOR THIS WEEK

1. Read my article, "[Networking Inside the Company Walls](#)," which was featured on Forbes.com. Are you guilty of the mindset I discuss in this article?
2. Select one of the five tips I outline in the article. Make a plan to put that relationship-building tip into play before beginning next week's lesson.

UP NEXT

In Module 2 we will focus on building relationships outside your company walls. Until then, know this: you can improve your influence!

MODULE 2: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND YOUR COMPANY WALLS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to week #2 in your quest to build your influence, one relationship at a time!

Last week, I talked about how important it is to have the right mindset for creating influence—it's a set of daily actions that will result in the development of your "influence muscles." I also sent you to this [Forbes.com article](#) I wrote for ideas on how to create stronger business relationships inside your company.

What action did you take to improve a business relationship?

WHY YOU MUST BUILD RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND YOUR COMPANY WALLS

This week, we're going to focus on building relationships outside your company walls. For some of you, this might be intimidating—but take heart—if you use my bonus tip in the action plan below, you'll have plenty of people to chat with in no time!

In my travels, I meet many people who are "in transition," which is a polite way to say they're out of a job. They ask me, "Jennifer, what should I do to start networking? I need a job." This breaks my heart, because the reality is *if you start your networking plan when you lose your job, it's too late.*

Do not be "that person" who has waited—get going now so that you will have a healthy network when you need it. Networking is a life-long endeavor—and it's a skill best developed every day, not just for "emergency purposes."

There's another benefit to developing your network **right now**—it ups your influence quotient. When you are known as someone who is "well-connected," you will be sought out for referrals and recommendations.



YOUR INFLUENCE ACTION PLAN FOR THIS WEEK

Step 1: Go through your contact list. Who do you know outside of your company that would benefit from knowing you better—and vice-versa? Ask yourself, "Who on this list do I need to foster a stronger professional relationship with?"

Step 2: Select twelve of the most high-leverage names. “High-leverage” means a person with whom you could forge a stronger bond and who, by doing so, would enable you to accomplish positive things for your organization. For example, is there a vendor or subject matter expert that you would like to get to know better? Perhaps he or she has an expertise that your company could tap into from time to time. If you are the person to make that happen—guess what? You have enhanced your influence!

Step 3: Now, here’s the part you must do in order for this to work: For each of the next twelve months, make a “To-Do” item on your task list/calendar, and set up a lunch date with these twelve people. Spread these appointments out over the next year. Or, schedule two each month in order to speed up your connection time. Etiquette dictates that you should offer to pick up the tab for lunch, if at all possible.

Bonus tip: When you meet with these key contacts, as you wrap up lunch tell them, “I really enjoyed connecting with you. We talked about <mention key work-related topic that was discussed> today. That’s a really important topic to me. Who else can you suggest that I meet with to help me better understand <key topic>?”

This is an important step for two reasons:

1. It shows that you share an interest in a work-related topic that’s important to your contact. And that helps build a stronger relationship.
2. It provides you with another person to connect with, thereby continuing your ability to grow your connections. This can provide a never-ending stream of possible connections.

So, are you ready? Go get to work on reviewing your contact list!

UP NEXT

In Module 3 I’ll show you how to build your influence in as little as five minutes per week by using a simple connection-making tip that I’ve used for years.

You can do this!

MODULE 3: CREATING CONTINUAL CONNECTIONS

REVIEW

How did you do with your homework so far? Have you scheduled those twelve To-Do's for connecting with external contacts into your calendar yet? If not, STOP. Go back to Module 2 and take care of that first.

HOW TO CREATE CONTINUAL CONNECTIONS IN UNDER FIVE MINUTES

This week's lesson is about creating continual connections—connections with both your internal and external contacts, made in less than five minutes, and all from the comfort of your own office. Do this at least once a week and you'll have reached out 52 times in a year. That's a total of less than 5 hours of effort, spread throughout one year that will help you to be seen as an expert in your field and as someone who thinks of others.

Here's how you do it:

When you read an interesting e-newsletter or online article, before you close the document, ask yourself, "Who do I know who would be interested in this information?" Forward the newsletter or article to that person via email with a simple introductory note such as, "I saw this and thought you would appreciate it because _____."

Key point: be sure to fill in the blank with something very specific to that person's interests and needs. It shows you are thinking specifically of them and how they will benefit from you sharing your expertise.

This is not the time for the "more is better" approach. It will not be nearly as powerful if you send this to your entire contact list saying, "Hey, look at this great article!" Remember, you build influence *one relationship at a time*. If there are two or three people who would enjoy the article, send them individual emails, even if the contents of the emails are similar.

Bonus tip: increase the connection you have with this person by asking if they'd like to connect for lunch.



YOUR INFLUENCE ACTION PLAN FOR THIS WEEK

1. Review your outgoing emails for the last seven days. Have you been naturally connecting with people by sharing information without even realizing it? If so, give yourself a pat on the back.
2. Think of the twelve people you selected from Module 2—what helpful information do you have to share with them in advance of your lunch meeting?
3. Decide on a specific way to remind yourself to do this until you get into the habit of automatically sharing information. Possible ways to do this:
 - a. Get a brightly colored index card and write on it, “Share information,” or “Reach out.” Place this where you will notice it and take action.
 - b. Schedule a task reminder for once a week so that it will pop up and remind you, “Who have you connected with today?”
 - c. If you are the competitive type, set a goal or make a bet with yourself: how many connections do you want to make this week? Just be sure not to sacrifice quality for quantity. It’s better to reach out and share information sincerely with three people than to blast three hundred people.

UP NEXT

In Module 4 I’ll share some tips on how to make the most of professional meetings outside your company so that you don’t feel like you’re “schmoozing.”

MODULE 4: CONNECTING THROUGH PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

REVIEW

Last week's homework was to seek out articles and other resources and forward them to your contacts with a personalized note that mentioned why you thought they would benefit from reading them. Were you able to find at least one piece of industry-related information to help a colleague?

CONNECTING THROUGH PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

This week, we're talking about maximizing your involvement in professional organizations. Are you involved with a group that meets monthly outside your company? Maybe it's a service organization like the Rotary Club, or your industry's professional trade organization. Whatever the reason, each time you go outside the place you normally work, you have an excellent opportunity to build your influence with other business professionals.

Why is this important? Because knowing more people in your industry—people who truly, really understand what you do and how you make a difference—will mean having more people who can vouch for you and connect you to other influential people, thereby allowing you to amplify your influence.

Here's how to make the most of your monthly association/organization meetings:

Make it a goal to meet two new people each month. When you attend the monthly meeting, sit at a different table than the one you usually frequent. "No way!" you say, "I'm too shy." Or, you have a favorite group of colleagues that you like to hang out with and this is the only time you see them. Here is my response to those situations:

Feeling shy? Try one of my two favorite conversation starters:

- "What drew you to this organization?"
- "What is it about this industry that you find interesting?"

Don't want to "ditch" your current friends? Before the meeting starts, talk with your friends and make a pact—for this meeting, you're going to agree to sit at different tables (or talk with at least two different people) for the majority of the meeting. Then, reconvene with your friend towards the end of the meeting and compare notes. Who did you meet that was interesting? Did you meet anybody your friend(s) might like to know? If so, strike while the iron is hot: introduce them before the meeting ends.

Bonus tip: If you're already well-known in your professional association, then adopt a mindset of "host" when you attend. Circulate through the room, looking for people who are alone. Introduce yourself to them and chat for a few minutes. Listen for this person's area of expertise, or for a professional "need" he or she has. Make it a goal to introduce that person to at least one other person in the room. You can say, "Sally, I'd like you to meet Joe. Joe was telling me he's looking to go for his PMP designation and I know you just completed yours. I thought maybe you'd have a few words of advice for him."



YOUR INFLUENCE ACTION PLAN FOR THIS WEEK

1. Review all professional organizations that you belong to. Are you attending them on a consistent basis? If not, pare back and commit to attending the ones that you find most beneficial.
2. Feeling strapped for time? You're not alone! Many busy professionals would like to attend more industry meetings, but it can be hard to find the time. Check LinkedIn to see if your trade group has a corresponding LinkedIn Group associated with it. That way, you can plug in even when leaving the office is a challenge.
3. Set a monthly goal—what one thing will you do each month to stay connected to your industry's thought leaders?

CONCLUSION: PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Over the last four weeks you have worked your way through this self-study course. If you have taken all the steps outlined in the course, look at what you have achieved to build your influence muscle:

- You have selected one relationship-building idea from the “Networking Inside Your Company’s Walls” article and taken action upon it.
- You have identified the names of twelve colleagues outside your organization with whom you want to build a strong relationship. You have begun the process of scheduling one lunch per month (or two per month to accelerate the process) to meet with those individuals.
- You are passing along helpful articles to colleagues who would benefit from the information. If you are doing this each week, within the next eleven months you will have helped fifty-two colleagues add to their professional knowledge—and you’ll be seen as a person who “thinks beyond themselves” to help others.
- At each monthly association/professional organization meeting you attend, you are actively finding ways to connect with new people, setting a goal of meeting two new people each month. If you continue this process monthly, you’ll have made twenty-two new professional contacts in the next year.

I wish you much success as you test your new influence-building muscles. Remember, it’s a daily choice to remain connected to those whom you can help.

STAY CONNECTED

Speaking of staying connected, would you like to stay connected to me? Here are a few ideas:

- [Subscribe](#) to my quarterly e-newsletter “The People Equation” where you’ll receive tips on how to influence with integrity, lead with character and win with positive office politics.
- [Subscribe](#) to get new People Equation blog posts delivered to your email inbox— tips for being workplace savvy — hot off the press!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Career strategist Jennifer V. Miller is a former HR manager and corporate trainer who helps mid-career professionals chart the course for their next big leap. A self-described “professional opportunity cultivator”, Jennifer provides one-to-one and small group professional development coaching via her company [SkillSource](#). Jennifer is the co-author of [The Character-Based Leader](#) and her work has appeared in Forbes, SmartBrief on Leadership, Executive Travel Magazine and The Huffington Post. She offers up tips for leading yourself and others at [The People Equation](#) and tweets at @JenniferVMiller.

