



## People Make The Difference whitepaper

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### **Leading people who don't formally report to you**

As companies expand and become more complex, no matter what organisational structure is in place, people must work with each other across reporting lines.

It is the undeveloped leader who says, "Do it because I told you so." When it comes to leading people who don't formally report to you, your ability to influence is dependent on your credibility and character.

Modern – or super – leaders, need to understand how to create positive influence without being authoritative. Strong character is the starting point of influence and it often stems from a leader's awareness about self.

You don't have to have someone report to you in a HR line in order for you to have an impact upon their career and to help them be successful.

It is your character and behaviour as a leader that influences another person's respect and engagement with you; a great leader binds disparate people together in order to achieve common objectives.

In today's multi-national, connected, global economy, a common example is the local country leader with a team member answerable to a remote manager. During my time at Adobe, I was responsible as country manager for leading ten functions within the team – yet only two of those functions reported directly to me.

Tension can arise if the team member chooses not to listen to the local leader and plays his/her own leader off against the dynamic.

In the circumstance above, a local leader will require a separate relationship with the remote manager. This is where the skill to influence – not disrespect – the chain of command is vital. So how do you influence?

## **Find your style**

You can only inspire and influence if you are self-aware and know your leadership style. What do you do well and what are your shortcomings? Do you lead with charisma or caring? Becoming aware of how you lead allows you to better influence those around you.

## **Demonstrate integrity**

You've got to do what you say you're going to do to be a successful leader. Being honest and forthright shows respect for your team and yourself and builds influence.

## **Manage your brand**

Ensure your strengths are not being perceived negatively by asking for feedback, engaging in 360 assessments, and communicating proactively what you intend to accomplish with a particular action or question.

## **Care for your people**

Demonstrate you care for your team personally as well as professionally – direct report or not. Know their hobbies, their children's names, what's going on in their lives outside of the office. One leader walks his office handing out honeycomb each Friday. It's not so much the honeycomb, but his opportunity to walk, talk and interact with all his team personally.

## **Praise well, praise personally**

Don't just praise a job well done – deliver the praise in a way that is personally significant to the individually. Some may thrive on the company-wide announcement, others may shy from the spotlight and appreciate a quiet email.

## **Ask thought-provoking questions**

An impactful, intelligent probe can deliver a subtle message while giving you an insight into thoughts and behaviours. For instance, you may not be able to impose deadlines or restrictions on people who don't report to you. But you can ask:

- How should we be held accountable?
- What are the appropriate milestones?
- What should our top priorities be, given our timeline and budget?

Influential leaders use questions to get others to change or come around to their point of view.

## **Coach and advocate**

Show they don't need to be a direct report to benefit from your leadership. Be a resource, sounding board, and a safe place to talk. Advocate for them; help them get the promotion they've been hoping for. Leverage your influence on their behalf.

Have you experienced having to lead people who are not your direct reports? Or discovered other ways to influence? Please comment and let me know. To find out more, call People Make The Difference on 0412 333 415 or visit [peoplesmakethedifference.com.au](http://peoplesmakethedifference.com.au).