

# 5 steps to becoming an influencer in the 'digital attention span economy'

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The study of influence has become a passion of mine. An influencer is generally thought of as a person who has the power to alter the actions, thoughts, behaviors or opinions of others.

Current day influencers are Steve Jobs and Oprah Winfrey. Just the mention of their names says it all. Other top influencers include Elon Musk, Sheryl Sandberg and Jay Z -- each globally renowned in their own niches.

You don't, however, have to have that level of global fame and recognition to be considered an influencer or to experience the heightened level of success that so often comes along with the title.

A similar impact can be had on a more localized level with highly satisfactory results.

It is important to note that unlike the title of expert, Influencer isn't a title you can award yourself. It is bestowed by others -- people whose opinions, actions and lives have been positively changed because of your message or solutions. It's a title that's earned.

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In order to earn the status of Influencer and the rewards which accompany that title, your message must be heard by many. This has become more difficult in the crowded digital world we live in.

In addition to being inundated by the deluge of information that is poured out daily by internet users, this same deluge and the many digital devices

which are available have created which is known as a “ Digital Attention Span Economy.”

Microsoft, as well as others, has been studying the impact of our current technologies on the brain and on attention. It appears that “ the structure of the brain changes in response to changes in behavior, environment and neural processing.” The intensive use of new technologies has, in fact, impacted attention skills and how we use those.

It may be a question of which came first -- has a shorter attention span led to shorter bits of information, or have these smaller bits of information led to a shorter digital attention span?

This is true across all mediums, even more established ones like television.

“ When presenting on-camera, shorter messages tend to work best. One of the most powerful but overlooked tools for concise on-camera communication is the teleprompter. Teleprompters keep you on point and on message” says Aaron Ralph Thomas, author of Teleprompter Bible. Thomas goes on to say “ As a corporate video producer I have seen many below average speakers use a teleprompter and look great. And conversely I have seen great off-camera speakers not use a teleprompter and look unfocused, unconfident, and uncomfortable.”

Once upon a time, people were mystified as to how to convey any relevant information using 140 characters in Twitter. Now we have seconds-long Vine and Instagram videos, and 15 minute Kindle Books with their own Best Seller category in Amazon.

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Precisely-timed 18-minute Ted Talks may seem quite long when compared to the shorter and shorter radio and TV interviews currently done, sometimes as short as five minutes.

The result of the current digital attention p economy means that in order to get your message out and become an Influencer, you need to use different strategies when trying to capture an audience's attention.

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The following five strategies will help you do that.

## **1. Enable others to call you an expert.**

While it's easy to bestow the title of expert on yourself, having others believe it of you is another story.

An important and simple way to be seen as an expert is to provide solutions to problems in your area of expertise.

As others start to seek your help, your ability to provide these solutions will be enthusiastically shared by many without any efforts on your part.

## **2. Provide quick solution messages.**

A shorter attention p has led to reluctance to dig through large amounts of information for a solution to a specific problem. It's far too easy to click to another website or pick up another short book if it looks like something will take too long or be too complex.

Learn to provide a solution upfront, simply and in a short manner and your messages will become the sought-after answers to questions.

### **3. Deliver short message in multiple modalities.**

As a result of the many technological advances in the information world, people have been able to select preferred ways of receiving information based on their natural-born and developed learning styles.

Turn one into many to accommodate these diverse styles.

In other words, the message in a video can easily be turned into a blog post, podcast, articles, Kindle eBook and even interviews -- to be seen, heard and read. Also, make sure your message is able to be received on the many devices that are currently available.

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### **4. Make it easy for media to choose you.**

Just as people want to find solutions and information pertinent to them, the media very much wants to provide those solutions and information to their audiences.

Therefore, don't make the mistake of focusing your media pitches on why you are an expert. Instead, focus on how interviewing you will be a benefit to the audience of the radio program, podcast or to bloggers who might cover you. Create 5-minute interview topics and suggested questions that allow you to truly help their audience. Make it easy to have you as a guest.

## **5. Use social media and PR.**

Social media and PR are ideal for amplifying and recycling your media coverage. Don't make the mistake of letting the benefit of media coverage end when the show is over. Use social media and press releases to get the most mileage out of those five-minute interviews.

As time goes on and you continue to follow these suggestions, you will become known as an influencer. Then you will experience the success and will reap the financial rewards that accompany that title.

Just remember, short and simple will lead to becoming an influencer in a “Digital Attention Span Economy.”