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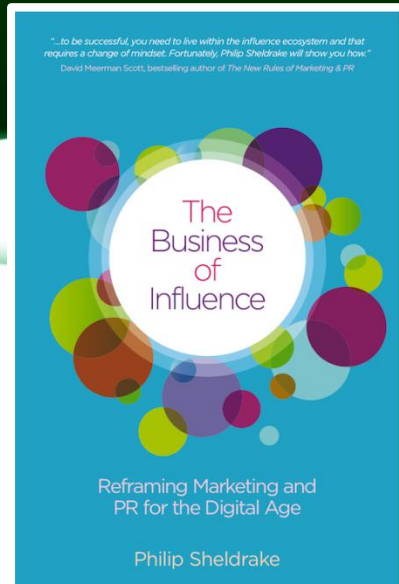
EUROPEAN SUMMIT
ON MEASUREMENT

13-15 June 2012, **Dublin**



Philip Sheldrake

Author, The Business of Influence

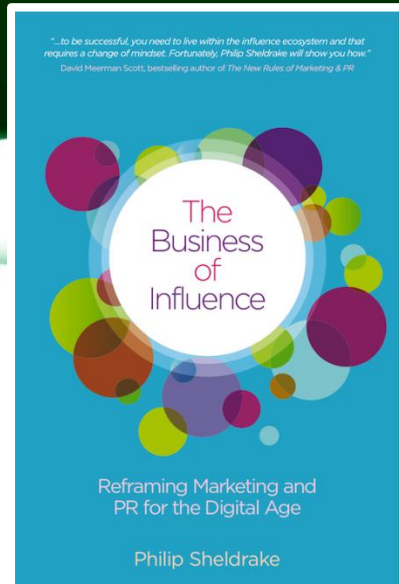


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Influence

The use and abuse of the word



Following "Influence – the bullshit, best practice and promise"

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A few questions ...

What do you think of Adidas?

How will you vote at the next election?

Why did you see that last film at the cinema?

Where would you really like to go on vacation?

Which company would you really like to work for?

Why did you select those items at the supermarket?



Why those answers? Maybe ... /1

Simple –

Because my other half / my mate / my Mum ...

Complex –

For a variety of reasons ...

some of which are immediately obvious to me,
some of which I can sketch out now I think about it,
and probably some other things too.

Why those answers? Maybe ... /2

Simple –

Because [celebrity name] recommended it ...

Complex –

Er, hmm, well, er, maybe, no, hmm, well perhaps, er ...
actually, I don't really know.

Lots of reasons I'm sure, just none I can pick out.

You've been influenced, right?

Yeah. Guess so.

You've been influenced when you think something you wouldn't otherwise have thought or do something you wouldn't otherwise have done.

Sure. I get it.

So life is one great mix of influences.

So, can I ask you? ...

Did this lady with an “influence score” of 67 influence you more than this one with a score of 66?

Did this gent with a score of 60 influence you twice as much as this chap with a score of 30?

Did your two mates, each scoring 27, influence you less than this 82 scoring “key influencer”?

Influence is not ...

... some quantity invented by a PR firm, analytics provider, or measurement and evaluation company that rolls up a number of indices and measures into some relatively arbitrary compound formula that makes any appreciation of the underlying approach, variables and mathematics completely opaque to the end-user thereby radically attenuating any little use it may have been but in such a way that it can be branded nicely and sold as “unique”.

The Business of Influence, Sheldrake, Wiley, 2011

Influence is complex ... /1

Complexity is the phenomena that emerge from a collection of interacting objects.

For example:

Molecules of air => phenomenon of weather

Vehicles => phenomenon of traffic

Population of Cairo => phenomenon of political uprising.


Influence is complex ... /2

The individual object rarely betrays anything about the phenomena.

You can't learn much about the termite mound by studying the individual termite.

Or learn about the traffic jam by studying the car.

Or learn much about the complex ways influence goes around comes around by studying “key influencers” alone.



Full Gesture
Communication™
in Unaugmented
Reality™ 😊

We are more influenced by the 150 nearest to us than by the other six or so billion combined.

If society is ready to embrace a trend, almost anyone can start one – and if it isn't, then almost no one can.

Dr. Duncan Watts



The conclusions of *The Tipping Point* are overly simplistic and probably just plain wrong.

The Business of Influence, Sheldrake, Wiley, 2011

So what about Klout et al? /1



“the standard for influence” / “measures your influence on your social networks”



~~“own your own influence”~~ / Now → “understand your online social capital”



“assemble the collective intelligence, identify its most influential people, and make them accessible for analysis and engagement” / “Kred measures personal Influence and Outreach in social media communities connected by interests”



Find influencers who impact your bottom-line

So what about Klout et al? /2

“For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong.”

H.L. Mencken

So what about Klout et al? /3

We have no scalable facility to ascertain or infer who or what caused someone to change their mind or behavior, without falling into some kind of last-click attribution trap, so how then can we pretend to score an individual's likelihood to exert that influence, and as if they did so with apparent Newtonian simplicity?

We've barely even attempted to correlate proxies for influence, assuming that universal correlates even exist.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media-network/media-network-blog/2012/feb/15/complexity-influence-challenge-opportunity>

So what about Klout et al? /4

Perhaps Klout et al attempt a measure at online popularity, or perhaps online authority, or more exactly **the likelihood to have one's online output shared / forwarded.**

But not one's influence.

So what about Klout et al? /5

The inappropriate use of the word *influence* is starting to be replaced with *social capital*.

I prefer that.

However, not every social share is accretive to social capital. Social capital is destroyed when stuff is shared in disagreement, disgust or mockery.

So any measure of social capital that treats negative social shares the same as positive social shares is flawed.

Influence and organizational objectives

Reputation management does not actually mean managing reputation, and brand management does not actually mean managing a brand.

They mean **actively attending to the business of influencing and being influenced** such that the resultant beliefs or opinions held about us and our products are **conducive to our achieving organizational objectives**.

Everyone's in the business of influence.

Engagement

When Chris Lake, Econsultancy's Director of Innovation, writes: 'It's all about engagement', _
and when Katie Delahaye Paine asserts in her presentation Are We Engaged Yet?: 'The definition of success has changed – The answer isn't how many you've reached, but how those you've reached have responded', _
they are emphasizing engagement as a measurable outcome of influence.

Influence is everything

The task at hand is influence (influencing and being influenced) with short- and long-term manifestations:

Shorter-term	Longer-term
Relevance	Reputation
Resonance	Trust
Accessibility	Significance
Engagement	Authenticity
Curiosity	Authority

Approaches to influence

Influencer-centric and influence-centric approaches.

High	Track the influence (the action) back to source	<p>Focused on business outcomes, as we should be! Best practice, intelligent and you could say scientific and professional marketing and PR.</p>	Influence-centric
Medium	It's quality not quantity. Not how many people you interact with, but who, how and in what context?		
Low	Number of followers, friends, subscribers, circulation	<p>Akin to "column inches" and "advertising value equivalent". Measurement because you can not because you should.</p>	Influencer-centric
Pitiful	Obfuscating compound measures of non-contextual trivial variables		

Table 5.1, p47, *The Business of Influence*, Sheldrake, Wiley, 2011

In conclusion /1

Focus only on the car and this moment's traffic jams, and you don't understand the city's traffic system. If you don't understand the traffic, you can't hope to invest your transport budget effectively.



Focus on flawed metrics of “key influencers”, on what's trending right now, and you don't understand the system of influence. If you have a poor grasp of the influence system, you can't hope to deploy your resources effectively.

In conclusion /2

Successful marketing and PR consultants of the 21st-century will avoid simplistic thinking and hyperbole. They will recognize complexity and navigate it appropriately.

As for the analysis firms, long may we have the for-profit motive to explore complexity science and network science, let's just not mis-sell its capabilities along the way.