

Influencer Training® Drives Rapid Adoption of Process Improvement Tool at Xerox

INDUSTRY: BUSINESS SERVICES

ABOUT XEROX

Xerox Corporation is a leading global enterprise for business process and document management that serves clients in more than 160 countries. The company provides leading-edge document technology, services, software, and genuine Xerox supplies for graphic communication and office printing environments of any size.

Frustrated, Joyce Geier and her team in Xerox's Corporate Lean Six Sigma Office had just developed an implementation plan they knew to be flawed. Yet how *were* they supposed to disseminate a new process improvement tool—called QwikSolver™—to a corporation of 50,000 employees?

Months later, reflecting on what was ultimately a successful deployment, Geier, a Master Black Belt and QwikSolver™ Program Manager, concludes: “QwikSolver™ is a good product, but we could have killed it by rolling it out wrong. The Influencer Model from Influencer Training is what gave this thing legs to run—and, by golly, it is running.”

THE CONTEXT

Nearly a decade after implementing Lean Six Sigma, Xerox Corporation not only achieved widespread adoption of the new framework, but also discovered some of its limitations. Culturally, employees regarded Lean Six Sigma as a program “for the privileged few” and aimed only at massive problems rather than day-to-day issues. Ms. Geier explains, “That’s not the kind of culture we wanted at Xerox, and so we said ‘we have to do something about it.’”

Based on extensive internal research, Geier and her Lean Six Sigma team developed QwikSolver™—a simple decision-making rubric that any team, division, or department could use and was free of cumbersome requirements. Geier’s team believed that if they could train and motivate Xerox employees to use QwikSolver™, the entire organization could benefit from the kind of results traditionally experienced by Lean Six Sigma.

Although convinced of QwikSolver’s™ merits, the team was challenged by the implementation. If only influencing the behavior of 50,000 people were as easy as making photocopies!

THE PROBLEM

Ms. Geier’s team knew from experience—and from the earlier research—that a traditional, management-directed approach would likely backfire. Yet, their best attempts at creating a deployment plan that didn’t rely strongly on management direction felt flat. “I couldn’t put my finger on it, but it just didn’t feel like our rollout plan would meet what our people told us they wanted—a process supported by employee pull, not management push.”

Ultimately, a colleague recommended the book *Influencer* to Ms. Geier, and her thinking about designing an influence strategy changed.



influencer

THE SOLUTION

Influencer Training™ teaches that changing widespread behavior requires targeting and altering six specific sources of influence. Understanding these sources permitted Ms. Geier's team to design a multifaceted implementation strategy that, in the language of Influencer, "over-determined success."

First, Ms. Geier's six-person QwikSolver™ team contacted the newly-minted Influencer Trainers within Xerox. "We told them we wanted Influencer Training the following week and that we would work on the implementation issue in class," Ms. Geier recounts.

Meanwhile, Xerox management, though eager to see QwikSolver™ put to use, remained ambivalent about an unconventional deployment strategy. After several crucial internal conversations, however, Ms. Geier and the team received the buy-in they needed to proceed. About managing the risk of trying a new approach, she explains, "We were going to try it the Influencer way because we needed to do something we believed could be successful."

As the QwikSolver™ team progressed from the Influencer Training to designing their own customized influence strategy, they gained confidence in the new approach. And it wasn't long before management saw results: QwikSolver™ spread rapidly throughout Xerox, and multiple departments clamored for additional training—amounting to at least 700 additional people trained in QwikSolver™ during the first few post-pilot weeks.

SOURCES OF INFLUENCE

Building their successful influence strategy required the QwikSolver™ team to examine Xerox through the lenses of individual, social,

and structural motivation and ability. Following the steps outlined in Influencer Training, the team designed, refined, and documented a six-pronged plan that, among other critical tactics, included the following.

Social Motivation: Harness Opinion Leaders. The team used the Influencer methodology to identify "opinion leaders" within Xerox—employees who are widely respected by their peers. First, the team consulted the opinion leaders to improve early versions of QwikSolver™; then, they rallied the opinion leaders around multiple small QwikSolver™ pilot programs. As opinion leaders advocated for QwikSolver™ and modeled its use, employees throughout Xerox became interested and started to request training and support.

Structural Ability: Support Storytelling. The Influencer methodology helped Ms. Geier's team tailor environmental cues to support the adoption and continued use of QwikSolver™. At regular intervals, they fed QwikSolver™ success stories from opinion leaders and other employees back to the organization through internal portals, newsletters, and web pages. Further, an active internal microblogging group emerged to discuss QwikSolver™ lessons learned—and these stories were again reflected to the organization and became regular topics at meetings and training events.

THE RESULTS

"They love the results," says Ms. Geier, regarding the management's ultimate response to the Influencer deployment strategy. And the reason they love the results is because they fall nothing short of impressive.

Regular internal surveys point both to the quality of QwikSolver™ and to the effectiveness of the influence strategy in changing employee behavior across the entire organization:

- 93 percent of the people trained in QwikSolver™ used the decision-making rubric at least one more time in the weeks after their first application and more than half used it at least five times.
- 50 percent of the pilot participants used QwikSolver™ five times and some as many as eleven times.

"When combined with an excellent product like QwikSolver™, the Influencer Model is incredibly powerful." Ms. Geier continues, "I fear that had we rolled out this product via a traditional approach, QwikSolver™ would have failed. We could not have done it without Influencer Training."

Looking forward at Xerox after the success of QwikSolver™, Ms. Geier contemplates a new initiative "which is very big and will probably face the same types of challenges tenfold over." She concludes, "Once we have a solution, the Influencer Model from Influencer Training will be the key to actually making these new changes stick and take place. I'm a convert."

RESULTS AT A GLANCE:

- 93% of those trained in QwikSolver™ used the process at least once after training. More than half used it at least five times
- 50% of the pilot participants used QwikSolver™ five times and some as many as eleven times after training

About Influencer Training®—Influencer Training is a two-day leadership course that teaches proven strategies to drive rapid and sustainable behavior change for teams and organizations. By learning how to discover and counteract the complex web of forces underlying resistant organizational problems, you'll be able to make change inevitable.

This training infuses classroom time with original video clips of modern-day change agents who have solved some of the world's most complex business and societal problems. The Influencer course delivers an award-winning, proven model for changing behavior by applying Six Sources of Influence™ to solve your most persistent problems.

About VitalSmarts—An innovator in corporate training and leadership development, VitalSmarts combines three decades of original research with 50 years of the best social science to help leaders and organizations change human behavior and achieve new levels of performance. We've identified four high-leverage skill sets that, when used in combination, create healthy corporate cultures. These skills are taught in our award-winning training programs and *New York Times* bestselling books of the same titles: *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Accountability*, *Influencer*, and *Change Anything*. VitalSmarts has trained more than one million people worldwide. www.vitalsmarts.com