



Influence Without Authority: Leadership Lessons for Statistical Programmers

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Why Influence Matters for Programmers

Influence Moves Ideas Forward

Without influence, good ideas can die in a meeting room or get lost in backlog tickets.

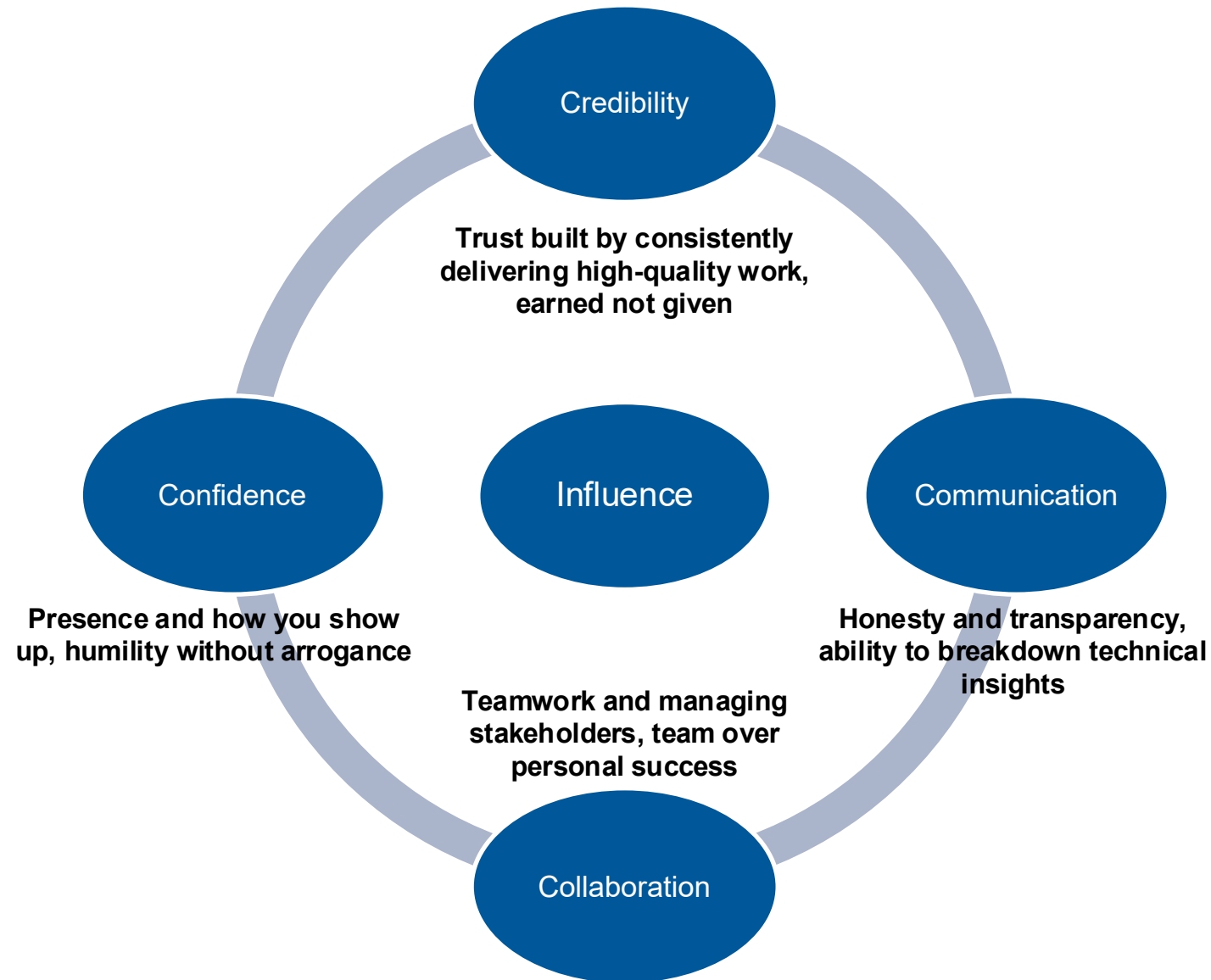
Influence Amplifies Your Impact

There's a limit to how much code you can write alone. If you can influence others to adopt better patterns, tools, or processes, your impact scales.

Influence Gives You a Voice in Decisions

High-impact ICs often act as “thought partners” to leadership without ever managing anyone.

Core Pillars of Influence Without Authority



Prove Your Ethos Through Quality

Let your work speak for itself. Consistent, high-quality work builds credibility.

Trust Should Be Bilateral

Executives should also have faith in their employees. A PwC report finds that 61% of workers believes that their bosses' lack of trust negatively affects their productivity.

Presentation Matters

Everything from your fashion style to your eye contact impacts your projection of confidence.

Speak Authoritatively Without Arrogance

Confidence means an openness to other perspectives. Perceive opposing ideas as suggestions rather than attacks on your work.

Embrace Confident Humility

Create a learning culture, acknowledge flaws, challenge existing norms, identify a conflicting opinion, and critically interrogate to see whether that opinion stands correct against your own.

Communication Is a Bridge

It connects the gap between technical sophistication and translatable, non-tech-savvy insights.

Transparency and Ethics

Do not overinflate numbers and ideas. Be transparent to ensure you get the resources (time, capital, team, etc) that you need.

Statistical Programming $\neq$ Lone Wolf Effort

With a median team size of 14 members, programming requires everyone to be on the same page.

Collaboration Can Take Many Forms

It can range from helping with technical troubleshoots to offering emotional support. The ultimate idea is to prioritize the team over personal success.

Never Neglect the Stakeholders

Poor stakeholder management is a key factor in 50% of failed projects. Avoid this mistake by setting realistic expectations and active communication with stakeholders.

Personal Anecdote – Finding Your Influence Early Career

Context: Data scientist at a Series A FinTech startup reporting directly to the CEO, tasked with building a Sales Forecasting R Shiny dashboard to shape the vision and growth strategy of the business.

Credibility: 6 months into my first job, never held a leadership role, worked with R Shiny for a few months, but had a hustler mentality.

Communication: Presented the dashboard to my CEO who bought into the growth strategy. He decided I should present the dashboard in front of the BoD the following week.

Collaboration: Worked with the executives and sales team to understand the size of the market, the average deal size, growth projections, and new logos per year.

Confidence: Presented the scenarios and followed the data to show the biggest driver of sales. Convinced the BoD of our ideal customers and developed our product-market fit.

Takeaway(s):

1. Even early in your career while developing your voice, you still should have confidence in your work.
2. Credibility is not just built through experience or years on the job, it is how you show up every day at work.
3. Collaboration does not need to be with a large team. Sometimes it can be how you show up for yourself.

Team Stories – Radical Transparency for a Study Resubmission

Context: Original submission study failed, the AD quit and blamed the Sr. Manager, and the Ex. Director put our consultant to form a team to resubmit the study.

Credibility: Top programmer, managed 3 people, great at ADaM, not just SDTM

Communication: Transparent with Ex. D about the complexity of the study, needed the top programmers and another 6 months

Collaboration: Rather than create distance from the statisticians, the new submission team worked closer, team of top 10 programmers from 3 groups

Confidence: Convinced Ex. D that the senior manager from the failed submission deserved a second chance, trusted a team that never worked together

Takeaway(s):

1. Instead of covering up mistakes, starting projects with radical transparency allows for proper scoping.
2. Asking for help is a sign of maturity and allows for the formation of the best team.
3. Empowering your team will encourage members to perform at their best.

Team Stories – From an Oncology Head to Principal Consultant

Context: Transitioning from being an Oncology TA Head at a large pharma company to being a principal programming consultant without a true leadership role.

Credibility: Top programming consultant, takes pride and ownership of their work, consistently goes above and beyond.

Communication: Immediately notified lead statistician of the SAP misalignment, missing variables, and incorrect endpoints.

Collaboration: Understands statisticians as key team member, not managers, QC with TFL shells ensures compliance with SAP

Confidence: Raising issues is not a sign of undermining authority or stepping out of line.

Takeaway(s):

1. Consultants (FSPs) can take on influential roles while still being individual contributors.
2. Being an influential leader means expanding out of your predefined roles. No job is beneath you.
3. Collaboration even when it is hard and requires additional work will save time in the long-term.

Practice Takeaways

Use Your Unique Strength to Your Advantage

No one knows your work (the data, the analysis, the code) better than you.

Practice Building One of Your 4Cs (Credibility, Communication, Collaboration, Confidence)

Have your voice be heard the next time you are in a meeting.

It Is Never Too Late to Build Your Influence

Every individual has a someone they can to influence.

Call to Action



You Don't Need Authority to Lead

What is one way you'll lead differently starting tomorrow?

Questions?

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