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By **ROWENA MORAIS**

COMMUNICATING TO INFLUENCE

YOU're not just sharing ideas, you're working to create impact and gain movement

In the last few days, I've received feedback on an idea I've been advocating, which I'd like to open up to a wider audience. The idea I've been putting forward, for some time, is that you should work towards becoming an influencer. It is simple - work on how you present yourself and your ideas. Then, be clear about what you're focusing on and what your skillsets are so that such clarity comes across to your audience as well. If you can do that, you're setting yourself up in a distinct way which means that when you have a compelling message to share, your audience will be able to understand it in the manner you intend. To ensure a greater level of success, developing a body of work in advance speaks to you and your ability, focuses areas and credibility in more ways than one.

I can understand that this may be a puzzling proposition to deal with. Why should you put yourself out there? Why should you paint a picture of yourself and what will you do with all that interest that comes your way as a result of all this work you do? What is the big picture and what is the point?

This to me is clear as day. First, every single one of us needs to communicate with others in our work lives, whether it be with peers, colleagues, leaders, midlevel managers, suppliers, partners, supporters, prospects or clients. Even in the most isolated roles, some level of communication is required, albeit minimally. The point of communication is not simply a sharing of facts and figures. With a learning and development situation, you could argue that you are merely sharing information as you educate your audience. But in all other situations, you need to communicate because you're working towards achieving something.

In some cases, winning their mind over; in other cases, you're going so far as to see movement or action taken by

others. Ultimately, you're communicating but the wider purpose is to influence the other. You're not just looking to share your ideas. You want to get others to see things from your perspective, to understand where you're coming from and to regard it well. And then, to do something about it.

Second, the advances in IT, automation and the digitalisation of many aspects of our work and personal lives now means we live and work in a global environment and there is so much more available to us. We have the opportunity, which we can leverage at any time, to reach out to as wide an audience as we wish. Ponder on that for a minute to grasp what this means.

Take jobs. You could apply to any job around the world, if

you wanted to. You have the ability to create a digital CV or digital profile (such as LinkedIn) and reach out to various organisations at any point. You have the ability to access even more jobs than ever before because platforms now exist to provide this to you. Just from this perspective, you can see and believe that you really are able to compete in a global environment - if you want. The limit is what you make of it and how you view things because everything has opened up.

Take the conferencing industry, for example. In the past, you had to wait till an opportunity presented itself to you to get a speaking engagement, to speak to your target audience. Today, the tools you need (and technical tips

and how-to's associated with this) to get a platform, take a position, reach out to a targeted audience and then make an impact by presenting an idea - they are right here. At little to no cost at all. The only cost is that of your time and effort.

You no longer need to wait for a platform to open up to you. You create your own platform. You put as many messages out there as you'd like. With such unprecedented opportunity, what are you to do? How should you even start? Yes, these are challenges to face but like anything, you break the challenge down and deal with things one at a time because you're far more motivated by the possibilities that may bubble up than by what stands in your way. Do you agree?



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EDITOR AND PROGRAMME DIRECTOR at VerticalDistinct.com, a media and learning organisation, Rowena Morais is an entrepreneur, communication and content specialist, editor, LinkedIn profile writer and most recently, a TEDx speaker. She supports Human Resource and Technology professionals in their career development through articles, podcasts, interviews and a range of internationally accredited, in-demand technical and professional courses offered throughout Asia Pacific and the Middle East. **Tweeting at @rowenamoras**, she is a ghostwriter and can be found at rowenamoras.com. Rowena is running small capacity free LinkedIn Primer sessions from Jan - June this year, contact her to sign up. Rowena also runs monthly meetups for Thrive Kuala Lumpur, a networking and support group for career women. For more info, visit meetup.com/Thrive-Kuala-Lumpur