

# THE INFLUENTIALS

One American in Ten Tells the  
Other Nine How to Vote, Where  
to Eat, and What to Buy.

ED KELLER and JON BERRY

**ED KELLER** is CEO of RoperASW, a global marketing research firm which has been researching influence since the 1940s. Mr. Keller is a nationally recognized expert in brand strategy, customer loyalty management, corporate reputation and communications effectiveness. He is also on the board of directors of the Advertising Research Foundation and a member of the Market Research Council.

**JON BERRY** is a vice president of RoperASW. He is the senior research director of *Roper Reports*, a company published research bulletin which has tracked consumer trends for more than 30 years. Mr. Berry previously worked as marketing editor of *BusinessWeek*, as an editor and columnist for *Brandweek* and as the San Francisco bureau manager for *Adweek*.

The Web site for this book is at [www.theinfluentials.com](http://www.theinfluentials.com).

**SUMMARIES.COM** is a concentrated business information service. Every week, subscribers are e-mailed a concise summary of a different business book. Each summary is about 8 pages long and contains the stripped-down essential ideas from the entire book in a time-saving format. By investing less than one hour per week in these summaries, subscribers gain a working knowledge of the top business titles. Subscriptions are available on a monthly or yearly basis. Further information is available at [www.summaries.com](http://www.summaries.com).

**MAIN IDEA**

When Americans make buying decisions today, they prefer to do so in conversations with people they respect rather than through one-way advertising communications. For most people, the first step in the buying process is to ask someone what they think, and then to test-drive those ideas and suggestions with others before making a purchase decision. The availability of e-mail, chat groups and bulletin boards on the Internet enhances this trend substantially. Therefore, to forecast what direction consumer preferences will move in the future, it isn't necessary to research the entire population. Instead, know and understand what the "influential people" are thinking and you'll have a pretty good leading indicator on what the population as a whole will say.

Put another way, when it comes to effective word-of-mouth marketing, who says it (the "mouth" element) is far more important than what is said (the "word"). Get the "Influentials" on side, and your marketing becomes far more effective. To reach the Influentials, you need to know as much as possible about how they think and so forth. To this end, a snapshot or profile of the Influentials' mind-set has been developed over the past 60 years by RoperASW, a marketing research firm. This research has identified:

- The defining characteristics of the Influentials.
- A database showing how Influentials think across a range of subjects.
- A 30-year trend backgrounder of how Influentials will act.
- An understanding of the key principles needed to get Influentials to absorb new ideas and disseminate them to others.

To be successful, therefore, get the Influentials on board first and the broader market will follow.

**1. The Defining Characteristics of the Influentials.. . . . . Page 2**

Influentials are not defined by their demographics because Influentials exist in all demographic groups. Rather, they are defined by their character traits and interests. More specifically, an Influential will have five common characteristics:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. An activist approach to life         | 4. A like for problem solving           |
| 2. A broad network of contacts          | 5. Self confidence to be a trend-setter |
| 3. An interest in giving helpful advice |   |

**2. The Influentials Mind-set. . . . . Page 3**

Influentials tend to have a very clearly defined set of personality traits. As a consequence, they act differently and distinctively. Influentials have five distinctive personality traits:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. A clear sense that something matters    | 4. A value system putting family first |
| 2. A belief in personal growth and change  | 5. Comfort with own idiosyncracies     |
| 3. Balance of interests – self & community |  |

**3. How the Influence Process Works. . . . . Page 4**

Influentials spread the word about their interests in a snowball effect – they tell someone, who then tells someone else, and this cycle is repeated over and over until loads of people are involved. There are seven key principles in the way Influentials spread the word:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. They use multiple sources of information | 5. They rely heavily on the printed word |
| 2. They value word-of-mouth most highly     | 6. They may also use other media         |
| 3. They are passionate about sharing ideas  | 7. They trust their instincts            |
| 4. They look for ongoing enhancements       |  |

**4. The Leadership Role of The Influentials. . . . . Page 5**

Influentials are at the forefront of the self-reliance movement which is sweeping society. Under this trend, individuals take it upon themselves to act rather than leaving it to the government to set things right. As thought leaders for this movement, Influentials tend to align with five general themes:

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. A unique kind of activism         | 4. High levels of self confidence         |
| 2. Outside-the-square style thinking | 5. Self-improvement and learning emphasis |
| 3. A return to traditional values    |   |

**5. The Influentials' Insights On What Tomorrow Holds.. . . . Pages 6 - 7**

What is the vision of the future as far as Influentials are concerned? In broad brush terms, most Influentials believe seven key themes will play out in their lives:

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. The Need to Leave a Legacy          | 5. Living Longer and Stronger   |
| 2. A Global Perspective and Connection | 6. The Absence of a Big Brother |
| 3. High Pace Coupled With High Peace   | 7. The Limits of Convenience    |
| 4. A PC-Centered World                 |                                 |

**6. Six Rules For Developing a Business Strategy for Influentials. . . . . Pages 7 - 8**

To connect with Influentials and enter into conversation with these opinion leaders, there are six rules you need to follow:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Be information rich              | 4. Keep it simple to deal with you        |
| 2. When critics arise, welcome them | 5. Understand when to make exceptions     |
| 3. Get involved in the community    | 6. Be your own brand – and tell the world |

# Summaries.Com

The Ultimate Business Library



We condense **300+ page** business books into **8-page** summaries.

By reading summaries, you'll get the **key ideas** in **30 mins**, so you can spend more time turning your ideas into **dollars**.

## Knowledge is Power — Invest in Your Future

For just **\$2 per week**, you will...

- Learn from the mistakes and success of the smartest people in business;
- Get fresh ideas, strategies & motivation that could be worth millions to you;
- Follow emerging trends, so you can catch the wave before your competitors do;
- Catch up on the classics you always wanted to read.

## 1,000 Top Business Book Summaries

Our catalog includes summaries on a range of topics for aspiring entrepreneurs, managers, and consultants.

BUSINESS PLANS

MANAGEMENT

PRESENTATIONS

SALES

LEADERSHIP

MOTIVATION

STRATEGY

AND MORE

