

JOSE UGAR

GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Simplify, improve and amplify your
international leadership impact



FOREWORD BY MARIA FRANZONI

Businesses that operate across borders need clear, impactful cross-cultural communication to foster collaboration, avoid misunderstandings and gain a competitive edge in today's globalised world.

Global Influence is the business leader's guide to navigating culturally diverse teams and expanding into new markets while promoting personal growth. It equips you with practical strategies to forge authentic connections, propel your leadership prowess and amplify your global impact.

Read this book to:

- Claim your identity as a leader with a truly global outlook
- Overcome communication fear and express yourself confidently
- Develop the skills to bridge cultural divides and build meaningful connections across nations
- Embrace authentic global influence to foster trust, relatability and understanding
- Stand out in crowded markets and drive business results through positive influence that transcends borders



Jose Ucar is an international communication and influence expert with over a decade of experience working with businesses such as Procter & Gamble and SEAT-CUPRA. His actionable strategies for business leaders expose hidden barriers to effective communication, bridge cultural gaps, ignite positive influence and amplify global impact. Jose is a TEDx speaker and host, a professional speaker, a leadership and communication trainer, a

speaking coach, and founder of Jose Ucar Ltd. His writing has been featured on *Yahoo Finance* and *Yahoo News*, *Disrupt Magazine*, *LA Weekly* and *The Influencer Age*.

Find out more at www.joseucar.com

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Praise

‘Jose Ucar’s insightful book is for anyone navigating the complex world of international business. With a focus on authenticity and simplicity, it provides practical strategies to foster genuine connections, enhance communication and, ultimately, boost productivity and results.’

— **Cecilia Taieb**, Global Director of Communications, SEAT and CUPRA, www.cupraofficial.com

‘*Global Influence* encourages the reader to use different emotional and internally led frameworks, to navigate the global business world. The Global Influence Model explores our differences while focusing on solutions for business leaders to amplify their international impact. If you are serious about expanding your influence and adapting in situations to get the most from your audience, this is the book for you.’

— **Nicola Towse**, Senior Market, Strategy and Planning Manager, Procter & Gamble UK & Ireland, www.pg.co.uk

‘This insightful and thought-provoking book delves into the strategies and techniques that business leaders can employ to navigate the complexities of the global business landscape. With its clear and concise approach, readers will gain a deeper

understanding of international business dynamics and learn how to effectively solve complex challenges. Prepare to unlock your full potential and make a lasting impact on the global stage with this exceptional read.'

— **Jose Aristimuño**, former Obama official and CEO, VIP Media, www.vipmediasolutions.com

'If you want to have an impact at a global level, you must be able to simplify your message, be adaptable in the way you deliver it and have the ability to connect with audiences from diverse backgrounds. This book will show you how to do this and, when applied, will transform you into a leader with global influence.'

— **Simon Alexander Ong**, international keynote speaker and bestselling author of *Energize*, www.simonalexanderong.com

'Jose Ucar draws on his international experience as well as his skills in communicating for positive impact and influence to bring a unique and practical set of tools to international business leaders. An essential set of tools for today's world.'

— **Brigid Farrell**, intercultural communication specialist and director, AllTalk Training, www.alltalktraining.com

'A must-read book on mastering effective global communication from the charismatic storyteller that

is Jose Ucar. A book I'll be recommending to business leaders and entrepreneurs.'

— **Alex Chisnall**, founder of Podpreneur,
and host of the *Screw It, Just Do It* podcast,
<https://podpreneur.co.uk>

'*Global Influence* by Jose Ucar is an exploration of international communication and influence through a different lens. Jose's unique perspective and expertise, together with his stories and practical examples, provide valuable tools and resources to leaders and business owners operating in international environments. I highly recommend this book to gain a deeper understanding of how communication shapes your world and how positive influence can change the way you lead your people to achieve greater results. Don't miss the opportunity to expand your knowledge and perspective by delving into *Global Influence*.'

— **Elliot Kay**, award-winning entrepreneur
and expert speaker helping established
entrepreneurs become leaders and influencers
in their sector, <https://elliottkay.com>

'If anyone is looking for a dry, theoretical tome on communication – avoid this book! Because Jose's book is fully committed to real-life application of the *how* of becoming a global thinker, influencer and, ultimately, player – whatever your preferred game is. My biggest take-away is to be less vanilla (though it remains my favourite ice cream flavour) and work on

my CQ. This is a great read that speaks to the heart as well as to the mind.'

— **Reza Ram**, management consultant, EY,
Latin dancer and global mind, www.ey.com

'In today's global economy, we must bridge the gap of fear and cultural differences to communicate authentically. This book reveals how leaders can simplify, improve and amplify their international impact, fostering genuine human connections across nations. Embrace authenticity, sharpen communication skills, and lead with confidence to positively influence others and drive remarkable business results.'

— **Neil Cameron**, founder and director,
Cameron Investment Group and
SportWorks, <https://sportworksltd.co.uk>

'An insightful blend of psychology, communication, and cultural awareness, *Global Influence* is a unique guide for leaders trying to navigate the complexities of our interconnected world. The book challenges fear-based norms and promotes authenticity, providing leaders with the essential tools to enhance their international impact. It breaks new ground in leadership communication, offering a strategic roadmap for building authentic, effective relationships across nations. In an era when AI is a threat to authenticity in business and life, *Global Influence* is a must-read for leaders striving to stand out in the global marketplace.'

— **Cinzia De Santis**, chair and founder, Healing
Venezuela, www.healingvenezuela.org

‘The ability to communicate and lead with impact is what separates the so-so leaders from the big hitters. This book not only builds you from the foundations – understanding what global influence is – it supports you to develop your own global influence and, not only that, but to exercise it too. This is where the true magic happens. Jose is perfectly placed to lead you on this journey. I’m excited for you to amplify your influence globally!’

— **Liz Hamlet**, internationally known author, strategist, coach and speaker; founder, Spark Succeed and The Antisocial Social Club, www.sparkssucceed.co.uk

‘In *Global Influence*, business leaders will have the opportunity to explore the essential elements of authentic communication, cultural fluency and transformative leadership. By honing these skills, they will be empowered to achieve unprecedented levels of international success, making a positive impact on a global scale. I highly recommend this book.’

— **Ricardo Schmidt Diaz**, General Manager of Travel Retail APAC, L’Oréal, www.loreal.com

‘If you are looking to unlock your *Global Influence*, this book is for you. Learn to bridge cultures, connect minds and inspire success.’

— **Sabrina Stocker**, entrepreneur and investor, www.twocommapr.com

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FOREWORD BY MARIA FRANZONI

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This book is dedicated to my unforgettable and always present grandparents; my supportive, patient and ever-loving papa y mama; my beloved wife; my brother, German; my friend and mentor, Alan Pearce; and all the people who have positively impacted my life.

I also want to dedicate this book to all the international leaders out there who want to improve their ability to influence and create positive change in their expanding businesses and organisations.

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Foreword

What makes a leader influential on a global scale? What does it mean to communicate effectively across borders, cultures, languages and accents, and how do you master this complex art? If you are asking yourself these questions, then this book is for you.

As a mentor to speakers and professionals across the globe, I have worked with influential figures including Neil Armstrong, Anita Roddick and Nassim Nicholas Taleb, and have held senior positions in prominent bureaus such as CSA Celebrity Speakers and London Speaker Bureau, as well as running my own international speakers bureau. I have helped many professionals transform their speaking careers, and Jose Ucar is one of them.

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When I met Jose, he immediately resonated with me: his is not just a success story, but a story that demonstrates resilience, adaptability and a deep understanding of global communication – which he shares with us in this book. Jose and I met virtually, but even at this remove I was immediately struck by his big personality, his humour and great passion for bridging communication gaps in international business environments. His sincerity in wanting to help others left a real impression on me. Our collaboration marked the beginning of a transformative journey for Jose – a journey that has culminated in this thought-provoking and insightful book.

Global Influence is a practical handbook for leaders as well as a mirror that reflects the reality of global communication in the business world. Jose explains, with great clarity, the key obstacles that leaders face in trying to communicate effectively across international borders. He identifies fear as a primary factor, but also our desire to fit in, which can compromise our authenticity and make our communication less effective.

As you go deeper into the book, you'll discover effective strategies and helpful concepts to deal with these challenges. Jose outlines how to be authentic in our interactions, how to harness the power of simplicity in communication and how to navigate the nuances of cultural difference. Beyond that, he provides a roadmap for becoming a more effective leader who

can inspire, motivate and positively influence others across nations.

Jose's wide-ranging experience of working with global businesses is the basis of the wisdom and practical knowledge he shares in this book. Through his engaging storytelling and pragmatic advice, Jose offers a fresh perspective on the complex area of international business communication.

This book is an invaluable resource, whether you're an established leader or an ambitious professional. You too can master the art of global influence – let Jose show you how.

Maria Franzoni

Former International Speaker Bureau owner
Founder of Speaking Business Academy

Introduction

Businesses keep growing and the world seems to be getting smaller, thanks to technological advancements in communication. Yet the fundamental ability of humans to communicate to connect and impact each other hasn't evolved much. The channels and content may have changed, but we still don't manage to get our message across as effectively as we could, which has a variety of repercussions in life and in business. But why is this?

Let's go back, for a second, to the moment of our birth. A time at which, by nature, we are all genuine. Our origin is undisputed, We are authentic. Then, along the way, life experiences, culture and people begin to sculpt the person we will become, a social individual conditioned to follow rules and standards, to meet

expectations and to fit in, causing us to adopt an external authenticity that is almost imposed upon us.

This is where it gets interesting. From this place of adopted authenticity, we go and ‘communicate’ with one another – and what happens? We pretend to be someone else. We don’t display our true self, our true feelings and thoughts, leaving things unsaid, making assumptions, fearing being disliked, avoiding uncomfortable situations, stereotyping... And yes, we are still communicating, because we are conveying information, but with what purpose?

If we dig deep, we’ll discover that most of our communication problems are rooted in different shades of *fear*, that unpleasant emotion that we experience when we perceive a threat or danger. We fear what people will say and what people will think. We fear mistakes and failure. We want to be liked and accepted. We don’t want to disappoint people or let them down. We don’t want to upset others. We lack the confidence and resourcefulness to express ourselves... The list goes on. (This is the common tune I hear at each of my sessions.)

Communication is about the impact you make on the other person, and vice versa. But how can we have an impact when the premise that we operate from is one of fear? We are all different. We perceive reality from different perspectives; we possess different values, education and upbringing, which creates a

huge gap that needs bridging. And at this point, we haven't yet added the international element – things get even more complex when you throw in cultural differences, languages and accents to the mix, creating a real international playground.

Into this playground, more leaders are being introduced every day. A big part of their success will depend on the quality of their communication, which in turn will dictate the quality of their relationships and, most importantly, their ability to motivate and positively influence people to drive business results. But how well equipped are these leaders to navigate the waters of human interactions, let alone the stormy international seas? How well equipped are *you*? The likely answer is that *there is room for improvement*. Would you agree?

As a leader, you must lead effectively, provide constructive feedback, challenge undesired behaviours, deal with conflict effectively, present your business and ideas in a compelling way, motivate, influence, coach, mentor and empower your people...

And it doesn't stop there. Let's add some more wood to this fire. The markets are getting more crowded and competition is fierce, so communicating, influencing and leading effectively is not enough. You need to be authentic to foster trust, relatability and understanding; your teams need to be more creative, resilient and flexible in the face of continuous change; a more

daring mindset is needed to try new initiatives while embracing failure in the process, to eventually shine through and become the international business that is everything but vanilla. More than ever, you need to *stand out*.

If you've got this far, you might be thinking, 'Thank you, Jose, for painting this lovely picture and for all the encouragement.' I know it's grim – but it's also the reality. Can it be changed? Of course it can – that's why I decided to write this book on how you, as a leader, can simplify, improve and amplify your international impact through the power of positive influence.

This book is for leaders of international businesses and organisations who want to increase their ability to effectively lead individuals and teams who work across nations in order to improve productivity, morale, motivation, wellbeing, customer service, business relationships and more, to drive business results. If you are one of these leaders, continue reading.

What makes me the right person to write about this? I know what it's like to start from scratch (more than once), to move to a new country, to adapt to a new culture, to learn a new language, to develop and use my communication skills to move up the business ladder, to sell, to market products and services worldwide, to manage and lead teams and to run my own business. I speak to, train and coach people from a variety of countries and cultures on how to become impactful

communicators. I've been working with global businesses and organisations as well as those who want to grow and expand internationally, for over ten years. I especially love working with organisations who need to engage with non-native English speakers, whether customers or teams, and don't possess the skills nor the awareness of how to effectively communicate across those boundaries.

I've been trusted by many top global companies, including SEAT and CUPRA (Volkswagen Group), Procter & Gamble and international organisations like the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Some of my articles have been featured on Yahoo Finance, Yahoo News, Mentors, Thrive Global, Disrupt Magazine, LA Weekly and The Influencer Age. I'm also a TEDx speaker and host, leadership and communication trainer, speaking coach, international business and marketing specialist, and founder of Jose Ucar Ltd. During the Covid-19 pandemic, I launched the World-Class Communicator online course to support people with their mindset and communication skills, and the community grew exponentially, reaching over forty thousand online students.

And I almost forgot, I also happen to be fluent in two of the most spoken languages in business worldwide, English and Spanish, which gives me a unique perspective when communicating internationally.

So that's me. But you might well be wondering, what does all this mean for you?

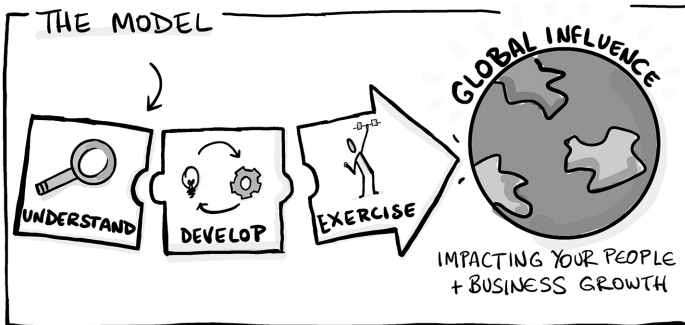
In this book, I will provide you with easy to grasp and apply concepts and frameworks that will enable you to thrive as a global business leader. I've divided this book into three parts. In the first, **Understanding Global Influence**, I cover topics such as the global playground, how to simplify your communication across nations, the core areas of global influence and its magnetic effect. In the second part, **Developing Your Global Influence**, I speak about authenticity and how to be less vanilla and essentially more you; the alienation game; how to increase your internationality (the heart of human connections across nations); the energy intensity in human interactions; the channels of global influence, and more. Finally, the third part, **Exercising Your Global Influence**, focuses on the importance of preparation, developing a fear-embracing mindset, the international behavioural styles analogy and how applying your global influence will impact your leadership, your people and your business growth and expansion. At the end of each chapter, you will also find some additional questions and actions to help you reflect on how you can apply the learnings from this book to your current situations and challenges.

I have based my work on the fact that it can take years to understand a culture and learn a language, but it can take only seconds to start building an authentic human connection. Thus, simplicity is key to improving and amplifying your global influence.

My wish for you is that, at the end of this book, you will be able to positively influence the people you lead by communicating effectively, with confidence and authenticity, in any scenario, whether internationally, virtually or even across your desk. You will be able to convey information with authority one-to-one and to an audience; will enhance your listening and questioning abilities to coach people using the shift framework; will deliver motivational and developmental feedback and engage in healthy conflict as and when required; and will never stop pursuing your goals while enabling others to achieve theirs.

Exercising global influence is not easy, and it won't happen overnight, but it is more than possible. It is also an extremely rewarding process once you commit yourself to being the best you can be daily. There is no secret, only a lot of focused work. Simply put, if this Venezuelan alien currently living in the UK can do it, so can you.

Let me show you how.



PART ONE

UNDERSTANDING GLOBAL INFLUENCE

As a business leader, understanding the concept of global influence is crucial to unleashing your full potential. Global influence goes beyond the ability to positively impact the individuals you work with; it involves creating a profound effect that extends across borders and cultures. By harnessing this power, you can initiate positive change not only within your organisation but also on a global scale.

In today's interconnected world, businesses operate in an increasingly borderless environment. The decisions you make and the actions you take can reverberate far beyond your immediate surroundings.

GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Understanding and exercising global influence is pivotal for business leaders seeking to create a lasting impact. By empowering individuals within your organisation and cultivating future leaders, you can spark a chain reaction that spreads wealth, opportunities and positive change worldwide.

ONE

It's All About Impact

In all our actions lies the power to influence others, and it is crucial that we embrace intentional positive impact. From the outset, I encourage you to challenge your thinking, as this book aims to magnify the effect you, as a business leader, can have on your people and, ultimately, your organisation's bottom line. By striving for positive outcomes, you can create a compound effect that ripples through every level of the business, fostering a culture of growth and success.

People

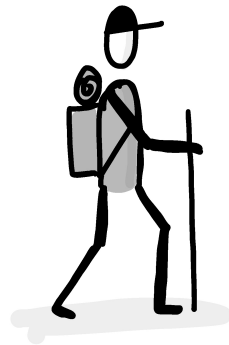
The foundation of your impact as a leader with global influence will always be people. You will create inner impact that will help them to become more authentic,

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increase their confidence and motivation, to name just a few benefits. From here, they will then go and interact with other members of the team and the organisation, clients, suppliers and wider stakeholders. Successful interactions can only happen through proactive and effective communication that encompasses an understanding of oneself and others. This is what will foster not good, but great relationships from which even greater business results will be achieved – higher productivity, better team morale and motivation, more sales, increased customer satisfaction, increased mental health and wellbeing... You will likely be able to think of even more benefits yourself.

The human explorer

A leader with global influence is a human explorer. Remember this: every human interaction is unique. To understand the link between being a human explorer and developing global influence, first we need to define global influence.



Global influence, as presented in this book, refers to the capacity to enable positive behavioural shifts in people. These positive shifts are attained by:

- Being authentic.

- Forging profound and enduring connections with individuals, irrespective of their cultural background, accent or country of origin.
- Adopting a holistic approach of conveying information effectively, providing coaching and challenging unhelpful behaviours, adapted to the unique needs and style of each individual.

To achieve the above, you need to regularly explore yourself to understand your weaknesses and strengths, your fears, confidence levels and any barriers or limitations that could be stopping you from being comfortable in your own skin, regardless of the external circumstances.

Next, you need to explore everything about the person or people you will be interacting with and how you feel about them and the situation. If I think about my most successful relationships, they've always involved a level of excitement and desire to engage and connect. Unfortunately, we often feel the opposite – we tend to get nervous and uncomfortable when we don't know exactly what's going to happen.

When you follow your excitement and curiosity about the human(s) in front of you, you will gain additional knowledge about how to best interact with them. Don't worry, I will provide you with frameworks and techniques that will increase your confidence and ability to adapt to any international scenario.

Finally, after gathering information about yourself and others, it's time to communicate in a way that creates impact. Remember this is happening within a business and leadership context, where you are articulating a message using all of your body to get the receiver to consider their situation differently, reflect on it and, ideally, make a change for the better.

The learner and stretcher

A leader with global influence is also a learner and a stretcher. The learner part may make sense straight away. It's important that you search for new knowledge all the time because this is what will back you up when exploring and



delivering your impact. Read books, browse the internet and social media with purpose, look for coaches and mentors, surround yourself with people who will impact and boost your journey and ask them for help when you're stuck. Do these things intentionally and you will grow exponentially. Be hungry for knowledge and the application of it.

You can explore and be inquisitive, you can be a learner who applies the knowledge, but what will set you apart, what will make you *great* in terms of your

global influence will be your stretching talent. Stretching refers to the act of challenging oneself and others to expand their capabilities, perspectives and boundaries.



It involves pushing beyond one's comfort zone, embracing discomfort, and taking risks to catalyse personal and global growth. Stretching talent encompasses the ability to inspire and encourage others to do the same, fostering a culture of continuous learning, innovation and positive change. In essence, stretching is about going beyond the ordinary and ordinary thinking to create a significant and transformative impact.

The global playground

When communicating with someone, you need to remember that your reality might be different to theirs.

I once started a virtual training session with the huge assumption that the people with their cameras turned off were not as interested and lacked confidence to show up. When delivering a session about communicating with impact and confidence to students from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe, I neglected to consider the possibility that some students could be having issues with a poor internet connection meaning

they couldn't have the camera on. The amazing Sophie Daud from the Leaders Network kindly interrupted to highlight this. It hadn't crossed my mind. Yes, the international communicator and author of this book on global influence. Feel free to mock me a little bit.

The forex (foreign exchange) market serves as a pertinent analogy to describe the dynamics of the global playground because it is fluid, ever-changing and driven by emotions. While emotions play a significant role in both contexts, it is essential to recognise that the forex market is not solely driven by them. It is a complex marketplace influenced by many factors, including economic indicators, geopolitical events and market sentiment, as well as emotions.

The analogy applies to this dynamic global environment in the sense that each interaction is distinct, just as currency pairs behave uniquely in the forex market. When individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives converge, it is crucial to approach these interactions with presence, curiosity and a commitment to having a positive impact on the people or groups involved. Such an approach can set a constructive tone for various scenarios, including my virtual training session with the international group, by fostering understanding, empathy, collaboration and the exchange of valuable insights.

Looking at it from a different angle, I like to see people as equals in terms of their potential to achieve

things in life, but do they see themselves under the same light? Communication is beautiful and it's an infinite game – it never stops, and the results are never definite. My concern had been that the cameras weren't off to excuse people from being fully present and dealing with their current fears and limitations.

We create our reality and tend to impose it onto others, mostly unconsciously. Now imagine how interesting things can get when different realities interact within an environment of people determined to achieve a worthwhile outcome. There lies the root of most of our communications challenges or learning opportunities, depending on how you choose to look at it. Our realities are being shaped from the moment we are born, from which point we are influenced by our cultures, language, music, education at home and school, and our experiences in life, both good and bad. What this does is build layers that separate us from our essence.

Can you guess what's coming next? Well, your mission as a Global Influence Leader is to remove these layers to communicate with the actual person behind them. A good analogy is of opening a door to enter that person's home. To do this, you need to find the key that will open the lock. But how can you find the key if you haven't left your own home yet? Linking it to the virtual session, I was too much in my own head from the start and didn't empathise with the audience as I could have done. In a way, I'm glad it happened,

as now I won't repeat this mistake – and you are reading about it and hopefully learning from it.

Unlocking doors

The global playground is the environment in which we all operate. This is where we demonstrate our behaviours and show our reactions to what's happening at a certain moment in time. This is where all our realities collide. These are virtual realities, because they are all subjective – no one carries the ultimate truth. This is all happening at a superficial level. What you see here is a result of what's within the person. Remember the layers that cover our essence, who we really are? These are inspired by the work of Robert Dilts. Our persona in the global playground is the top, superficial layer.

But you want to access people's depths. You want to open the door to their home. At the next level, you tend to find that it's people's skills and knowledge that are driving behaviours and actions. Here lies what they know, and what they've learned and continue to learn. You want to become a better leader, so you learn about leadership. You want to become a better salsa dancer, so you go to Cali, Colombia (where my wife is from) and take some lessons. We learn new things to develop our competence, which

in turn changes our conduct. This works most of the time. This is usually the level we tend to operate from when we have conversations with our team members and work colleagues. 'What skills would you like to develop?' is a common question in appraisals and personal development plans. Learning a language sits here – like any other skill, it involves practice, repetition, exposure and gradual improvement over time.

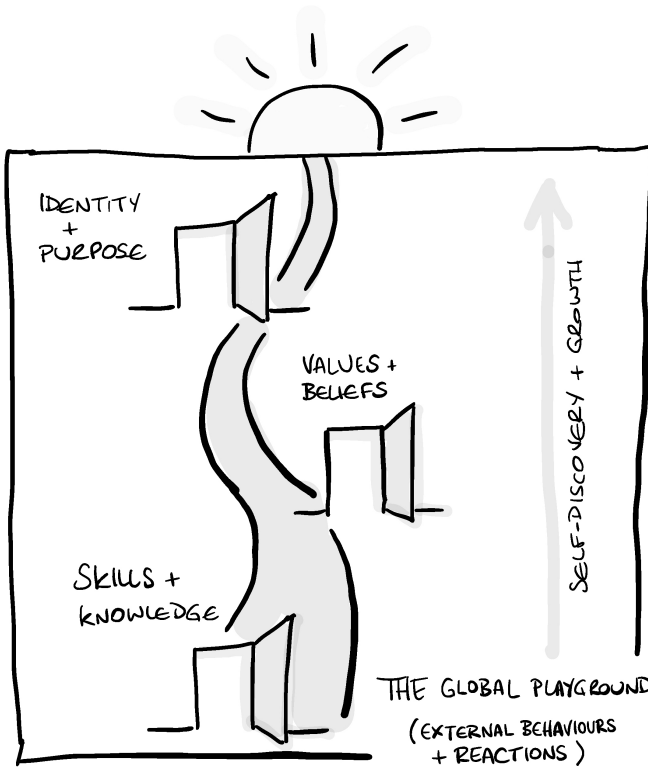
In the next layer down, is what we value and hold to be true. Here we find our culture, what we learned at home, in our country and from life and work experiences. This is the realm of self-empowerment and also self-limitation. Here is where we consciously or unconsciously decide what we can or can't do. What's acceptable and what isn't. Here we also find our moral compass, which guides us through all our human interactions telling us what's right and wrong.

Changes made here create a greater impact than those made at the skills and knowledge level. Why? Because as I like to say, it doesn't matter what or how much you know, but what you do with it. Despite possessing valuable knowledge, many individuals refrain from taking action due to various factors such as fear, limiting beliefs or lack of confidence. These barriers hinder their progress and potential for growth. By identifying and addressing these obstacles, you can help them unlock their true capabilities.

Finally, at the bottom level, you have your identity along with your big *why*, or reason for being. We don't tend to be conscious about who we are on a daily basis and how clarity (or lack thereof) on this impacts our results and how we come across. When writing this book, I'm channelling and presenting my knowledge through my global influence identity, and I'm very much connected to the reason behind this book.

Your team, clients and colleagues will generally present their situations at a superficial, external level. Your mission, or reason for existing, as a Global Influence Leader is to discover the internal elements that are causing them to act in the way they do and look to have a positive impact on their way of thinking, which in turn will transform their behaviour and results. Do they need new skills? Do they need to change some of their beliefs and values or perhaps to gain clarity on what they stand for and what drives them? The role of the global influence leader is to help others make changes at the different levels in order to impact their behaviours and results.

The international playground remains complex, but when it comes to human interactions within the scope of global influence, this multi-level framework provides areas of focus for you to unpick and drive change.



Simplify your communication across nations

Above, I shared with you the global playground layers, to help you pinpoint the key levels people operate from internationally. This is important because, without knowing what to look for or pay attention to, we would be quite lost when trying to communicate in a way that can positively influence a team member or colleague.

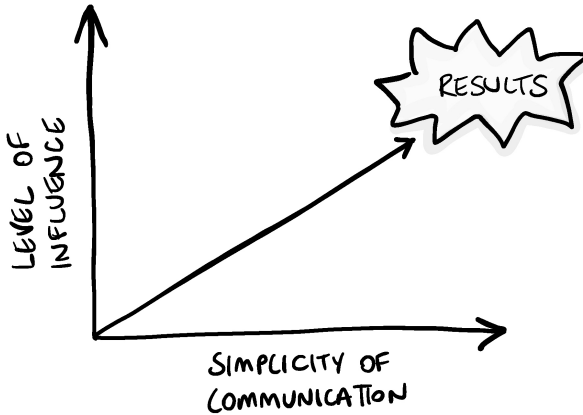
According to the communication theory developed by Richard Bandler, we are exposed to billions of bits of information throughout the day. This information is filtered by the playground layers, creating our unique subjective reality. The mind then deletes, distorts and generalises this information in order to process more effectively what's happening in our surroundings. From this recreated reality we go and communicate, hence my favourite phrase: communication starts within.

You are in your own head every day and, let's be honest, it can get a little chaotic at times, to say the least. How can you be expected to communicate effectively with impact, to influence? This is why some individuals may appear to be poor communicators: not listening well, speaking rapidly, being indirect, staying silent, lacking empathy or showing an abundance of it, being overly straightforward or highly analytical and using unfamiliar words.

Many of the problems that arise in life are linked to communication, either with another person, a group of people or even with yourself. These issues can be influenced by your perception of specific situations, impacting how you navigate and address them.

The solution I'm going to present here is *simpler* than you might expect. Pun intended. Based on what we've covered so far, it's crucial to chart a clear path

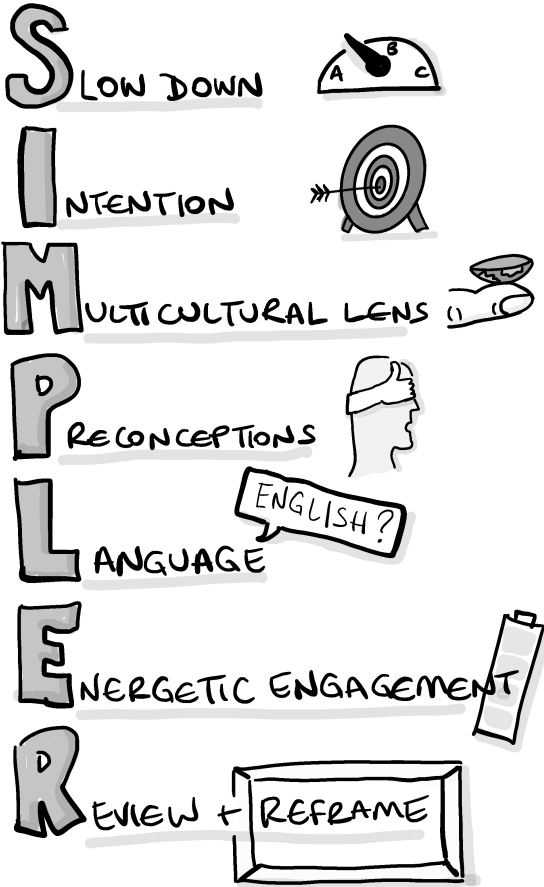
for direction and intention. As aspiring leaders with global influence, simplifying your international communication is essential, especially considering the complexities we often encounter in our minds, let alone when communicating across nations.



According to the International Labor Union, 70% of global ventures fail due to cultural differences (Thought Farmer, 2014). Aon Hewitt's 2011 study found that 33% of participants attributed deal failures to 'cultural integration issues'. Similarly, in a study by Marsh Mercer Kroll, 50% of respondents identified 'organisational cultural differences' as the key post-deal challenge (Carpenter and Wyman, 2008). These findings underline the significance of effective and simplified cross-cultural communication in increasing influence and achieving greater results.

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The SIMPLER acronym stands for:



Let's look at each step in more detail.

Slow down

This is one of the most important steps, hence it's the first. You need to slow down your thinking and take time to formulate what you want to say based on the person and situation in front of you. Especially in a business environment, aim to be:

- Accurate – convey information that is correct
- Brief – be efficient with your words
- Clear – make sure people understand

Intention

When you slow down, this will give you space. Use this to think about the impact you want to make or the result you would like to achieve after the communication has taken place. The I also stands for 'I' as in *you*. You are the person in charge of the process. If the outcome is not what you expected, you need to review and/or reframe (the final step in the SIMPLER method).

Multicultural lens

Start seeing your interactions through a broader lens, not expecting to know all the intricacies of every culture but being accepting and respectful of all the differences you perceive while also looking for

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similarities. Pay attention to what makes people tick, be curious and ask questions.

Be mindful of blind spots, which can still influence your perception, even with the best intentions (as my assumption about the switched off cameras showed). Acknowledging your own limitations and biases is a crucial step in developing a multicultural perspective. When you encounter unfamiliar customs or beliefs, approach them with humility and a willingness to learn.

Preconceptions

As explained earlier, our experiences in life have led us to form beliefs, values and opinions on events and people. My wife hates it when she meets people who bring up the drugs conversation or mention Pablo Escobar just because she is Colombian, or when people assume that I'm a good dancer because I was raised by the Caribbean Sea. In this latter case, it's true and I don't mind, but my point is that we are all unique, so focus on the person and be open to creating more informed conceptions.

Language

Since English is the most spoken language in business worldwide, I'm assuming that the people you communicate with will be either a native or a non-native

English speaker. If it's the latter, pay attention to their proficiency level and be mindful of the use of slang, common sayings and other colloquial expressions. As a rule of thumb (there's one!), keep it simple and gauge the person's level of understanding without appearing patronising. I left my first business meeting in the UK back in 2007 feeling quite overwhelmed because I'd only managed to understand a small portion of what was shared. Adapt your language and check their level of understanding. This also applies to native speakers from different countries, and those from the same country. In communication, less tends to be more, and simplicity can increase your influence when communicating internationally.

Energetic engagement

I just love this. People always say to me that they like my energy and engagement. I may have learned it from my grandad, who enjoyed talking to anyone and always managed to put a smile on their faces. We feel people's energy and it helps us connect with them. Even before we say a word, our energy and presence have strongly influenced how we are being perceived by others. Remember that communication starts within, so be mindful of the thoughts you carry and inject some excitement when meeting anyone. Always be appreciative, respectful, humble and humorous and you will notice a change in your relationships. Think about how you can leave that person better off after interacting with you.

Review and reframe

Following an interaction, take some time to think about how it went and whether you could have done anything differently. This proactive habit of looking at things in hindsight will support you in developing your global influence. In cases where the communication is not working for you, reframing will help you to find new perspectives and resources. When you reframe a situation, you change the meaning you've given to it, to something that serves you and the relationship better. Here is an example of a simple and quick reframe. When I lived in Spain, it used to annoy me when people asked me where I was from, because I found it intrusive. To reframe this annoyance, I simply asked myself the question, 'What else could this mean?' The answer that came to mind was, 'You speak differently, and they find you interesting.' Voila! A better perspective.

CASE STORY - 'JOSE, I CAN'T PUT MYSELF OUT THERE'

During a training session I was delivering to an international group of leaders, it became apparent that one of the participants was struggling to put herself out there. This led to a coaching session to explore the issue further.

Stephanie, a talented and accomplished professional of Polish origin and currently working for a global firm, conveyed that she was having difficulties

presenting her ideas openly in meetings and other business situations.

This was the external or superficial problem that she was presenting to me. There are different valid approaches to deal with this situation, but let's look at how I went about uncovering the various layers to support a highly capable businesswoman to shine in her corporate role.

Knowing from previous conversations we'd had that she was more than able to share her ideas, and that she had received plenty of training on communication and presentation skills, I decided to go straight for a deeper door sitting at the identity level and tried to unlock it.

ME: Steph, tell me. What do you believe about yourself?

STEPHANIE: Jose, I believe that I'm not good enough.

ME: When did you decide this?

STEPHANIE: I'm not sure. I think it comes from my childhood. My ideas were never heard by my father.

ME: Who are you in this situation with your father?

STEPHANIE: Well, I'm a little girl.

JOSE: Who are you at work?

STEPHANIE: I often feel like that little girl.

JOSE: Right now, who would you like to be instead?

STEPHANIE: I'd like to be a capable businesswoman who can achieve anything she sets her mind to.

JOSE: Isn't that who you already are?

STEPHANIE: Yes, that's who I am.

JOSE: Tell me, why are you here?

STEPHANIE: I want to drive change and support women within this organisation.

JOSE: With this clarity and understanding of who you are and why you are here, can you now put yourself out there?

STEPHANIE: Yes, nothing can hold my voice back. These women are counting on me.

In this case story, Stephanie was connecting with her childhood identity at work, which wasn't supporting the results she wanted to achieve. Gaining clarity about her identity and purpose created a positive shift in her state of mind and behaviour.



Help the people you lead to shift their behaviours by unlocking some of their doors.

Self-reflection

The time you spend on the Self-reflection and Action points sections of each chapter is entirely up to you. I usually recommend at least five minutes to consider the questions and set some intentions moving forward.

- How well are you embracing intentional positive impact in your leadership role?
- Are you truly exploring and understanding yourself, as well as the individuals you interact with?
- In what ways are you demonstrating a commitment to continuous learning and growth?
- How comfortable are you with stepping out of your comfort zone to stretch yourself and others?
- Are you effectively simplifying your cross-cultural communication to enhance your global influence?

Action points



- Invest in your global influence to increase your authenticity and success in business relationships.
- Position yourself as a leader who can make a meaningful impact across situations and cultures.
- Embrace the global playground by acknowledging the uniqueness of every human interaction.

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- Stay present and maintain curiosity in your international engagements.
- Recognise that it can be SIMPLER than you perceive.
- Be proactive in your thinking to regulate emotions and respond effectively in any situation.