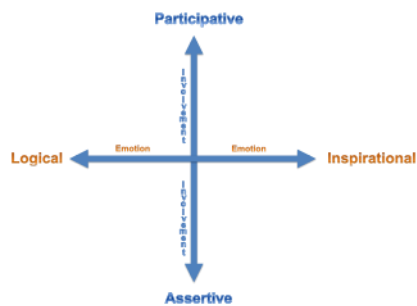


# YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 139

How to influence innovation...

## Influence Innovation Better...

*"If you are going to influence the future you have to master four ways of perceiving things: as they were; as they are; as they might become; as they ought to be." Dee Hock. Founder of the Visa organisation.*



*Influencing Matrix*

### How might you influence to innovate?

Recently I was bag packing in a supermarket with a group of young Scouts to raise funds for the Scout troop. When I first asked people if we could help pack their bags, I was often refused and I learned quickly that it was best to have the children ask them. It seems the sight and sound of a seven year old with a cherubic face melts the heart and influences most shoppers to accept.

Influence is as relevant to implementing innovations as it is to fundraising. This year I read [One From Many: VISA and the Rise of Chaordic Organization](#) by Dee Hock, the founder of the innovative Visa organisation, in which he describes its conception, the issues he had and how he overcame them. It struck me how well Hock influenced people when he had little or no authority.

In their book, [The Leader's Guide to Influence](#), Mike Brent and Fiona Dent provide a very useful model on two axes which I summarise here:

- On the axis of **EMOTION** you influence through **LOGIC** or **INSPIRATION**
- On the axis of **INVOLVEMENT** you influence through being **ASSERTIVE** or **PARTICIPATIVE**

I will describe four examples from Hock's story to illustrate this but first some background.

#### BACKGROUND

Visa emerged from the original BankAmericard credit card programme. Back in the Sixties, Bank

of America (B of A) licensed the product to many banks across America. Unfortunately, due to lack of experience, the licensees were losing hundreds of millions of US Dollars from fraud and credit losses and receiving bad publicity.

Hock, a manager at a licensee bank, suggested to B of A that the current licensing structure was hindering a solution. He became the chair of a steering group to resolve the issues and soon identified two important factors of influencing:

1. If you are going to influence the future you have to master four ways of perceiving things: *as they were; as they are; as they might become; but also as they ought to be*.
2. Leading on from "*as they ought to be*" he recognised that to influence at this scale you have to have a *vision*. His vision became "pay anytime, anywhere."

#### EXAMPLES

Can you identify the influencing styles Hock used in the following brief stories [e.g **ASSERTIVE / INSPIRATIONAL**; **LOGICAL / PARTICIPATIVE** etc.].

#### 1. Persuading B of A

Hock formed a small group to design an organisation "as it ought to be" to achieve his vision. They created the principles of a new organisation and honed and agreed them with the B of A licensees. They sent them to B of A for agreement. B of A accepted them but with conditions that violated all of the principles. Consequently, Hock asked the bank to agree a news release explaining why they had chosen not to accept the solution agreed by the other banks. In response, B of A's Vice Chairman asked Hock to a meeting at which Hock clearly laid out how the proposed organisation and principles would benefit B of A more. Following the meeting, the bank accepted the new organisation and all principles as long as Hock established it.

#### 2. Persuading potential licensees

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Hock and a small team did that. They provided each B of A licensee with a draft agreement to query and improve. After finalizing the agreement, they asked the licensees to agree it. Many signed up immediately but if any wavered, Hock called the senior person involved to persuade them. If it seemed they were about to refuse to sign, Hock would end the call and ask an influential supporter to call the person to explain why they had agreed. Hock's team signed up 3000 banks in 90 days to form the US organisation.

### 3. Persuading International licensees

A year later, international BankAmericard licensees asked Hock to set up an international organisation. After eighteen months of negotiations between them the licensees reached an impasse. On the first day of a final meeting they still could not agree and were about to abandon negotiations. At dinner that night, Hock presented each negotiating team member with cufflinks. He explained that these were a memento of the hard work they had done over the 18 months. The cufflinks would remind them either of their failure or success in establishing the new international organisation. The next day the team reached agreement on the organisation which eventually became Visa. Hock became President.

### 4. Persuading the Board

A few years after launch, Hock and his management team wanted to reduce the size of the Visa logo on the card. The Board members were concerned that this would lead to merchants refusing the card. The management team's response was to counterfeit the cards of trusted people, using the smaller logo, and test them. The tests were successful. At dinner with the Chairman before the next Board meeting, Hock paid with his counterfeit card and laid it in front of the Chairman, who eventually spotted the fake. Hock explained what his team had done. The Board accepted the proposal to reduce the size of logo the next day.

## SO

What you can glimpse from this summary is the character of a person, who as well as using a great deal of creative and logical thinking, was expert at influencing, flexing his style as appropriate.

My view on the styles he used is:

Story 1: Assertive / Logical

Story 2: Participative / Logical

Story 3: Participative / Inspirational

Story 4: Assertive / Inspirational

What did you think?

## ACTION

If you want a more in depth understanding of influencing in theory and practice, I suggest you buy both books mentioned here. If you are interested in new types of organisation, consider reading Hock. Meanwhile, think how you influence at work. Could you perhaps flex your style to improve it?

## TO CLOSE

I joined Visa six months after Dee Hock left the organisation and I was able to flourish in an open and entrepreneurial organisation based on his principles, after years in a rule bound, uncreative organisation. Sadly, it was not until I read his book that I realised just how much influence he had on my life. In fact he changed it.

There are people out there who are in organisations that perhaps do not inspire them and where they feel they have little influence. What I say to them is that you can influence, even if it is only yourself and your team. Perhaps you could change one person's life.

And that's the thought I would like to leave you with, except...

One young Scout I went to help during the bag packing clearly learned very quickly about the influence of young people. After a few minutes nobody had accepted our offers of help. She looked at me, "I was doing fine before," she pondered, "what time are you leaving?" Ouch.

Enjoy the festivities.

*John Brooker* / *Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.*

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