

# Influencing Others

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isiSOeMVJQk>



David Rock

## SCARF model

This is a summary / extract from a youtube video by David Rock.

He titles it 'influencing others', however there is the possibility for broader application in *leading people influencing others* and helping to *manage change*.

As a leader and manager, it is important that we maximise our capacity to influence other people. The 'integrate model' shows us that 'minimising danger and maximising reward' is an organising principle of the brain. We can be in either state at any time.

We know that which state you are in has a dramatic impact on your capacity to do good work. Being in the 'maximise reward' state is also known as engagement. Engaged employees are far more productive than disengaged ones. As leaders, we need to find the right levers to help move people into the 'maximise reward state'.

We often use rewards such as money or other external rewards to try to motivate people. It turns out that there are often far more powerful rewards and threats going on inside people's heads that are generating their behaviour. So to be a better leader and influencer of others, you need to know what makes people tick. Brain based research has given us a far more sophisticated understanding of what really drives behaviour. David has woven hundreds of studies into a model called SCARF which summarises this idea.

***Minimize Danger - Maximize Reward***

Status  
Certainty  
Autonomy  
Relatedness  
Fairness

These five elements are environmental factors that the brain is monitoring mostly below conscious awareness. They have a tremendous impact on our level of motivation.

**Status : your perception of where you are in relation to people around you.**

Brain science tells us when you experience a drop in status, your brain networks lights up just as if you were experiencing physical pain. And an increase in status it activates a reward circuitry.

Giving critical feedback to people can be seen as a threat to their status, at an unconscious level. One way to overcome this is to have people give their own feedback through questions about themselves. This helps their status to go up rather than feel threatened.

**Certainty : your perception of how well you can predict the future**

Brain science shows that ambiguity can trigger a ‘danger’ response. The brain is a certainty creating machine always trying to predict what happens.

When we provide clear expectations about what we expect from people it helps create more certainty. In times of change, letting people know when we might be able to communicate more information about the change can help reduce some uncertainty.

**Autonomy : a feeling of having choices, being able to make choices**

Brain science tells us that when we feel like we have no say, choice or control, our stress level rises. Giving some autonomy, choice or control dramatically reduces this. People need to know they have choices even when they feel that there aren’t any choices.

**Relatedness : feeling safe with people**

When we are surrounded by new people, our stress level typically rises. Just seeing some people we know can reduce the stress level dramatically. Bonding with people through a conversation or handshake triggers an oxytocin response. An implication for a leader is to determine if they need to help create these bonding opportunities for people – to feel more in the ‘friend’ rather than ‘foe’ state. Eg virtual teams or teams with people from different cultures may need help to connect and build bonds with others.

**Fairness : feeling of fair connections and exchanges with others**

A ‘fair exchange’ activates the brain’s ‘reward’ circuitry. An ‘unfair’ exchange activates a danger response. Leaders need to be conscious, open and obvious about treating people equally, more than may seem necessary at times.

## Examples where actions can trigger less than optimal performance

A new manager may not realise that they have triggered a 'danger' response in others by their actions or their in-action. For example:

- a manager thinks they know the job of their direct report very well and gives lots of feedback about what the other person should do differently. This can make the person feel there is a threat to their **status**.
- a manager may not be specific with communicating clear expectations and may therefore not give a person a sense of **certainty**.
- a manager may manage too closely (or micro manage) and not give a person a sense of **autonomy**.
- a manager may not connect with their staff on a 'human' level, concerned about feeling 'too close' to their direct reports (**relatedness**), and / or
- finally they may not fully appreciate the importance of a sense of **fairness** and keep things quite secretive.
- So managers may therefore accidentally create a 'threat' response in some of these elements and you end up with people who function at far less of their capacity than they could.



## Examples where actions can trigger possibilities for exceptional performance

Imagine a manager who does these things:

- Shows you what is great about yourself, thereby increasing your **status**.
- Who provides really clear expectations, increasing your **certainty**,
- Who lets you make decisions, increasing your **autonomy**,
- Who trusts you and there is a human bond between you (**relatedness**), and
- What if they treat you **fairly**, and you *know* they are fair.
- These things help generate the 'reward' state, literally making people smarter, more effective, more engaged and more productive in the workplace.