

What's in it for you?

It is often argued that without Winston Churchill at the helm, Britain would have capitulated to the Germans during the Second World War. Winston, in his actions and famous speeches, galvanised the country and found the keys to influence us all. Backs against the wall, we will never surrender, victory and beyond. He knew exactly how to rouse the nation. And it worked.

Whether you're in sales, management or a supervisory position, you probably want to be a good communicator or be able to influence people. Some of you may want to be a master influencer or communicator. The purpose of this article is to begin your journey to becoming a natural, effective and master communicator.

Let's stop and think for a moment. Why is it that the last joke you told only got a laugh from a few people? Why is it that you work well with some people but others the chemistry is just not there? Why is it your selling style doesn't seem to get results from some people, even though you try really hard? Why is it that others can get through to people you can't?

George Bernard Shaw once said, *"In the right key one can say anything. In the wrong key, nothing: the only delicate part is the establishment of the key."* Shaw is precisely correct. Address someone in the right way, the right expression and manner, and you'll be accepted. The trick is to get the key to the people you meet.

This week I took delivery of a new piece of software designed to upload my web site onto the server that stores the data. As always, my first task was to master how the software worked. After some manual study and playing around, some forced reboots and mini crashes, I got it to work and it did the job I wanted it to do.

If you want to get your computer to do something, you have to understand its software first. To influence, persuade or communicate with another person you'll need to understand their influencing keys. This article will start your journey to being able to find the keys.

The key benefits

Once you've found people's keys – and they're not that difficult, the benefits are numerous. If you're in sales you'll be able to get your messages through to clients and become more effective. You'll be able to examine your prospecting. Whether this is by advertising, client bank nurturing or cold calling, you'll be able to tailor the messages so they mean more to clients. Proposals will have more substance and authenticity to your clients.

If you're in management, you'll be able to find the keys to your staff. That means you'll become more influential with them. Recruitment will become more accurate. You'll know the characteristics to rely upon, that will suit the role. And you won't need a complex psychometric instrument to do it.

Towards and Away From

Do you move *towards* an objective, or *away from* problems to be solved or prevented?

Questionnaire

- 1 Think of yourself exercising. Tick or circle the thoughts that are most like the ones that come to mind.
 - A Getting fit.
 - B Avoiding injury.
 - C Having a sense of personal achievement.
 - D Losing weight.
 - E Enjoying the environment.
 - F Taking your mind off the pressure of work.

- 2 When you think of changing your job, which of the following are you most likely to think about?
 - A The kind of work you would most like to do.
 - B The situations and people you don't like and want to avoid.
 - C The satisfaction you will get from doing what you want.
 - D The frustrations you experience currently.
 - E The things that your current job doesn't give you.
 - F The kind of work that satisfies your needs.

- 3 When you make a decision to go on holiday which of the following do you do?
 - A Think of the problems of organising a holiday.
 - B Begin to imagine yourself there on holiday.
 - C Think of what your holiday will be like.
 - D Remind yourself of all the benefits of taking a holiday.
 - E Think of some of the problems you have experienced on previous holidays.
 - F Think of everything you have to do first.

Check your Answers

	<i>Away from</i>	<i>Towards</i>
Question 1	B D F	A C E
Question 2	B D E	A C F
Question 3	A F E	B C D

The column with the most ticks indicates your likely preference.

More about towards and away from

Three years ago I injured my back. After a short rest period, my doctor recommended that I built up my back muscles to prevent the problem happening again. My job is sedentary with many hours sitting in a car travelling the length and breadth of the UK. So as not to endure the excruciating pain again I joined my local gym and was soon shown an exercise routine which would strengthen my back.

Talking to some members during the exercises it appears that people are motivated to exercise in one of two ways. Some are like me, they are fearful of the consequences of not exercising and some just enjoy the pleasure they get from exercising. It makes them feel good, especially when the endorphins are released into their bodies.

Has anyone heard or used the SPIN ® technique? A very clever, yet simple concept. The main idea behind SPIN ® is to consult with the client by asking lots and lots of questions. These questions allow the client to figure what might happen if the worst happen. Sales people know what these worst scenarios are and some more. I recall a life office in the 1980's who used to issue their salespeople with tiny replica coffins. I'll leave the rest to your imagination.

The point is that SPIN ® relies on *away from* influence keys.

We said at the beginning of this article that we wanted to take you on a journey to becoming a natural, effective and master communicator. This could make you more wealthy and successful, admired by all your peers and adored by your family. Or it could ensure you never ever have a financial worry ever again.

Two benefits at the end of the paragraph. The first one – admired by your peers is *towards* and the second, no financial worries, is *away from*. Towards a great future as opposed to away from destitution.

Are you chiefly *towards* or *away from*?

People who are predominantly *toward*. We must get one thing clear here. We're not trying to put people in boxes. We're saying that for the most part, there are people who naturally steer in a forward direction. Now going backwards can be dangerous. We're talking about going for your goals and striving to achieve something far out there in the distance. Working towards a direction even if that might be to have the lawn mowed and looking spectacular, ideal for playing football with the children.

Goal getters. Those clichéd, sharp talking sales managers from the 1980's. All suit and motivational talk. Promises of wonderful cruises and spectacular beach holidays for the winners. These messages mean something to a *towards* person.

An equal proportion of the population is predominantly *away from*. Problem solvers. Life Office Help desk people will love to solve your problems and get *away from* the harmful issue. Mortgage surveyors, I reckon, are very *away from*. Always looking to highlight the problems with the property. Before the society can advance on 22 Acacia Avenue, it'll need complete re-wiring and a damp proof course incorporated. All problems.

Away from people are motivated by getting away from events, situations etc. The lawn probably needed mowing because an easy life is sought.

How do we decide our client's key? Give them the questionnaire, I hear you mumble. I'll tell you in a minute after we've discussed what the use is.

What's the use? A lot. I remember talking to a client and selling training consultancy services. He was hunting for quality supervisory training. I asked him: "*Why is having this training important to you?*" He was worried about the PIA as he had just appointed a supervisor and wanted them trained and certified. He wasn't concerned about the grandeur of the training or how powerful the material really was.

He wanted certification to show the PIA man.

A quick exercise for you – turn to your neighbour or someone very close by and ask them same question about why they are attending here today. If *toward* listen out for language such as what they'll gain, achieve, get, have etc. What they want i.e. goals. *Towards* will have pointing body language and their head nodding. *Away* will mention situations to be avoided, gotten rid of or problems. Body language of shaking heads, exclusion gestures might be seen.

Beware of the first answer leaning *towards*. We live in a positive thinking society where we are trained in avoiding problems, preferring to call them challenges instead. This is especially true in sales. It reminds me of the story of the gentlemen in the hotel. Every day he'd call to collect his keys and stroll to his room. One day he did exactly that but returned hastily to the front desk. Young lady, he inquired, I have a problem. "No, no, no, we don't have problems here" She replied having recently undergone positive thinking training. "We have challenges". The gentlemen, who had heard enough of this modern talk continued, "I don't know whether you call them problems or challenges, but there is a woman in my room"

Ask them why it's important. Follow up the first question with probes such as, In what way? What makes that vital to you? What's in it for you?

What's the use in sales and marketing? Insurance is very much an *away from* product. How many of you sell insurance by building up an element of fear in case a loved one is lost? How many of you build the picture of your client, too ill to work, receiving brown envelopes through the post demanding this final payment and that final payment? In this context, most clients buy to avoid problems for themselves or their family. Failed sales may well have been to *towards* people, who were neither moved or motivated by the sales pitch. Have you ever considered how to sell a whole of life to a *towards* person?

Investments, on the other hand, naturally steer themselves *towards*. I recall training an estate agency financial services sales force back in the early 1990's. They were excellent at selling the various products that attach themselves to mortgages such as life assurance, critical illness and redundancy insurances. These were very *away from*, and their clients reacted well to this approach, fearing the worst themselves. Try and train them to sell PEPs and other investments, and their first reaction was to go into *away from* mode to sell these products. The financial consequences of investing your money badly?

It didn't work.

Investments are predominantly *towards*. You invest for an income that will allow you to afford all those nice things in life. Or to secure a financial future where you'll want for nothing. Or to be able to buy a car for your children when they reach age 21 or that fantastic holiday on retirement. Their clients had become so *away from* during the interviews, that turning them around to think *towards*, proved very challenging.

I recall an estate agent friend of mine, who I'd taught the *towards* and *away from* idea to. Asking the question, what do you want in your new home, revealed the clients influence key immediately. We want an extra bedroom so the children stop fighting or we want this location so we can relax in the evening and enjoy the tranquillity of the garden. One *away from* and the other *towards*. Armed with this information, my friend knew exactly how to sell the house.

Match and mismatch

Do you match or mismatch? Do you look for the sameness in everything, or do you look for the odd one out?

Questionnaire

- 4 You are buying something. It may help to think of something that you are in the process of buying currently – a car, a house, a book, an item of clothing. Which of the following do you do? (you can tick more than one letter)
- A Look for aspects of this purchase that are the same as similar purchases you have made before.
 - B Think the purchase through to discover in what ways it doesn't meet your needs.
 - C Compare the purchase with a mental or actual list of characteristics that you want to have.
 - D Search for something that is different to what you have had before.
 - E Seek to find out how this product matches up to similar products.
 - F Want something that is unique, there is no other like it.
- 5 In conversation, which of the following applies to you?
- A You like a good argument.
 - B You look for the common agenda.
 - C You push for agreement.
 - D You test out someone else's views to find out where they are wrong.
 - E You find yourself using the expression 'Yes, but ...'
 - F You find that you are usually in the company of people who share your ideas.

Check your Answers

	<i>Match</i>	<i>Mismatch</i>
Question 4	A D E	B D F
Question 5	B C F	A D E

The column with the most ticks indicates your likely preference.

More about matching and mismatching

A good pal of mine told me a story once about his early days in training. He recalls telling his audience that his training was going to be different, radical and rather exciting. He looks back now and cringes. What about those in the audience who were *matchers*? You would have got them on your side, if you'd mentioned how similar your training was to successful courses they've attended in the past.

I was at a meeting the other day in the heart of London. Myself and some other freelance training professionals were discussing the roll-out of a large training initiative we were all going to deliver the following week. It was going far too well. We needed a *mismatcher*, someone who would disagree or challenge our status quo thinking. We needed the archetypal pain in the neck to stir things up. We needed a *mismatcher*.

Remember New Coke? Apparently when they tested the taste of New Coke, the results were conclusive. New Coke tasted better than the old Coke. Research shows about 30% of people are interested in different things and look for exception all the time – our *mismatchers*. With soft drinks the mismatch motivation is disastrous – as New Coke proved. People wanted what they knew, loved and trusted. Classic Coke was reintroduced shortly after.

By the way. Does anyone disagree with those figures? If so you probably have a *mismatch* key.

How can you find out what your client prefers? Apart from the questionnaire, you can explore with them something which has a relationship. One IFA I trained realised very quickly that you have to ask a question or two early on to find out the *match/mismatch* key. He made a brilliant suggestion. During his fact finding he was going to ask the question – what is the relationship between your work this year and your work last year?

I asked him to try it and phone me with the result. The result? Well he told me it felt strange to ask at first but the reaction from his clients was very precise. They either harped on about it being the same or immediately spoke about how things have changed. *Match* and *mismatch* in action.

I asked my friend to suggest how he might tackle the remainder of the consultation once he'd figured whether the client was largely a *matcher* or *mismatcher*?

A lifetime of *matching* won't go away quickly. This person has constantly looked for similarities in things and pigeon holed much of their experiences. They will seek the reassurance that things are similar or as they've always been. They won't be too keen on change or new radical ideas that have been untested.

My IFA friend continued. *Matching* clients want to know that the products I advise have been tried and tested and will buy those services that are similar to what they've bought successfully before. If it ain't broke don't fix it, can be their motto. As their IFA, I seek reassurance that I'm acting in a manner that they've experienced before, and been comfortable with. I can rest assured that if I give them the right services, they'll stay with me for the rest of their life. These people will visit the same restaurant, if they enjoyed their meal.

My IFA friend continued further. *Mismatching* clients, on the other hand, like things to be different, exciting, adventurous. They're more inclined to enjoy the fruits of a more high risk fund as opposed to the FTSE 100 Tracker. They want to know that products and services are new.

Managers amongst the reading audience, should bear in mind that recruitment leans very heavily towards this influence key. What are you recruiting for? Is it a fairly mundane, repetitive job, which requires that the recruit follow a strict procedure? A *matching* person may well suit that role. Or is it a sales role which requires a pioneering, exception orientated, wind direction changing spirit? A *mismatcher* might suit better here.

Those in financial services may wonder which of the above is the 21st Century financial consultant?

Big chunk/small chunk

Are you a big chunk person or a small chunk individual? Before you seek me out to punch me on the nose, read on.

Questionnaire

- 6 Take a piece of paper and write down three or four sentences describing your home as if to someone who has never been there.

Check your answers

Now go through your sentences and count up how many descriptive words you used that were:

- abstract global descriptions, e.g. spacious. airy, dark, traditional. These are words that are non-specific.
 - Number of abstract words =
- detailed, precise descriptions, e.g. n x n metres, temperature. number of doors, windows etc., colour of the surroundings.
 - Number of precise words =

The more abstract words you have, leads you towards a *big chunk* individual. The more precise you are, the smaller *chunked* you are.

More about big chunk and small chunk

This influence key has enormous ramifications. If you grasp this one, practise eliciting it and master its applications, you'll surely achieve great things in your career. The benefits are huge and will mean a more relaxed life coupled with immense warmth looking down on your family.

Alternatively, if you get to grips with the individual nuances of this technique, and strategically move through each step towards success, you will have achieved much in such a small timescale. Meet people, carry out an imaginary checklist of ingredients to elicit their key and apply it in your conversation, ensuring that you slowly build and gauge their reaction at each application you try.

I vividly remember attending a team building course a few years ago. I was put into a team of four people and we were given a large bag of children's play dough, some washable paint, straws, twigs, a plastic mat and many other Blue Peter style items. There were about ten other similar sized teams in a very large hall.

Our job, for a few hours, was to build a model island on the floor and decide on the overall strategy for this new community.

Typically with these team games, it took about twenty minutes to begin to 'gel' with the other members. We slapped the play dough on the mat and began to mould our island, painting forests and creating ports for supplies, helicopter landing pads, defence areas with anti aircraft guns (we were all boys!) etc.

Two of the guys in the group lost interest in this creative side of constructing the island and began to talk about our role in the sea of islands in the big room. What were we going to do to be able to trade, what goods could we export, how would we be ruled, what is the island's purpose? Meanwhile myself and the other chap had great fun filling in the detail of our island, creating housing complexes, deep water reservoirs for fresh water, road systems etc.

We'd slipped into our natural roles of big and small picture people and got the job done.

The *big chunk* person likes to look at the big picture in order to get a clear impression before making a decision. A *small chunk* person will want all the details and scrutinise the figures with a fine toothcomb.

Research shows that *small chunk* people represent about 15% of the population whereas *big chunk* people represent over 60%.

Recently I was tendering for a piece of training consultancy work and I was meeting with the Compliance Director of a large institution. I arrived with my brief case stuffed with information, data, graphics and other essentials to illustrate my proposal. We chatted for a little while, not long mind you. You know when you meet people, you can tell if they're turning on or off to your conversation. Their eyes glaze over or look disinterested. It soon became apparent that this person was really *big chunked*.

Let me have your proposal on one sheet of paper with plenty of visuals, was her request. I obliged that evening. One piece of A4 can only show the brief detail, in fact it can't show detail, it can only illustrate an overview or the big picture.

Don't take for granted that people in high positions in companies are always *big chunked*. Dealing with another training proposal over the phone, I was asked to put together the synopsis of the training course and fax the detail to my contact. They wanted it all – objectives, content, structure, exercise information, testing processes etc.

How can you tell which person is which key? There are no specific questions to ask, you merely gauge the client's reaction. *Small chunk* people are keen to know the detail. The Terms of Business will reveal further clarification. Does your client ask more questions than normal at this point and through out the factfind interview? Are they interested in the forms and paperwork you incorporate into the interview. Do they talk in small features, going into explicit facts with their occupation, for example.

Big chunk people are more inclined to gloss over the formalities and detail, and are turned on by bigger and more strategic planning.

The fact that you're an IFA. To the small chunk person, this means that you're able to scrutinise the entire market of financial services providers having elicited all the necessary data about them to enable you to carefully and categorically select the most appropriate product that suits their needs and meets with their every expectation.

To the big chunk person, you're an IFA? So what, as long as you can aid them in achieving their global financial aims.

What's the use of this key? Plenty – you only have to think of the detail? A friend of mine carries out training in report writing and letter writing. She's always referring to this persuasion key when illustrating the format of a business report. Now, a lot of financial services salespeople write reports, particular IFAs who charge fees, but we all have to write Reason Why Letters.

Don't forget your executive summary, she'll remind her students, and don't put it at the back. Put it at the front and call it an executive synopsis if you want. The *big chunker* will study the

summary and maybe refer to one or two pieces of information. The *small chunker* will concentrate on the detail within the report and will probably skip over the summary altogether regarding it as too pithy.

This is especially important when you're not too sure as to the influence key of the readers or when more than one person will be reading the report.

Advertisements are great fun to apply these influence keys to. Thousands of pounds are spent on advertising for sales people in our industry, yet the attrition rate is still too high. Firstly decide whether your preferred person should be big or small chunk, and maybe some of the other influence keys, and design your advert to attract these people. Open the pink press and have a look at some adverts. See what type of person is going to be attracted to the ad.

Internal/external

Are you a Margaret Thatcher or a Stephen Fry? You're either internal or external. Do you know that you're right or do you seek our confirmation that you are? Do you congratulate yourself for a good job done, or seek out praise from others?

7 How do you know when you've done a good job? Tick the ones that are true for you.

- A Someone praises me.
- B I see people using the results of what I have produced.
- C I feel good inside.
- D I know I've met the standards I set myself.
- E I get results from the success.
- F I congratulate myself.

8 How do you know when you are enjoying yourself?

- A People around me are happy.
- B I feel happy with myself.
- C I have space and time for myself.
- D Other people are pleased with what is happening.
- E I appreciate the effect I am having on events around me.
- F I have a good feeling.

Check your Answers

	<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>
Question 7	C D F	A B E
Question 8	B C F	A D E

More about internal and external

Do you trust your instincts? I do now. You must remember that this influence key is the most context orientated. If you're new to a job, you probably want assurance that you're doing well. If you're experienced, you may not.

If you know that your gut reaction is the right one – you're probably *internal*.

I recall a trainer in the first training team I worked in. You'd catch him sneaking a peak at his happy sheets, you know, those evaluation forms filled in at the end of courses. The manager at the time, wasn't really into giving praise. Was it Gordon Gecko who made the comment, praise is for wimps? Upon subtle querying of his actions, he quite openly admitted that he needed to do this periodically to boost his confidence.

Internal people provide their own motivation from within themselves. They decide about the quality of their work themselves and have difficulty accepting other people's opinions and feedback.

I've always found it difficult to accept criticism, preferring to remind myself that feedback is the breakfast of champions. I'd try to keep a straight face when receiving criticism, but I didn't always agree with it. I know my gut reaction is right.

Now that can be construed as very arrogant. Maybe, but hey, I'm just internal. A true internal would say, take it or leave it.

There seems to be a trend towards STP feedback in our industry. Straight to the point. Maybe this has been engineered by internals who just want to get it finished. They won't agree with you anyway.

Have you ever managed someone who wouldn't take any advice or steer? A true *internal*.

Have you ever been managed by someone who didn't give you any steer, preferring to let you get on with it? A true *internal* which works only with other *internals*.

When the Commonwealth countries were negotiating whether to impose sanctions against South Africa during its long Apartheid period, the vote was 49 countries in favour of sanctions to one against. Who was the holdout? Margaret Thatcher who declared, I feel sorry for the other 49. A true *internal*.

A true *internal* will blame others rather than themselves. I remember putting together a piece of flat pack furniture for my son's bedroom. Now I don't know about you, but they design these things terribly and the instructions are for Chinese speaking individuals only. It didn't go well, but it wasn't my fault – they can't manufacture flat pack furniture. Now if I'd only checked the instructions first...?

What about *externals*?

Externals need constant external reference and feedback to confirm their feelings of doing a good job. If they do not get feedback at work, they will not know how well they are doing. Their standards come from the outside and not from within.

Life company sales forces still use the Premiership Table technique putting all the sales people on a league table. They seem to want to display this in every semi-public place going and to constantly remind those successful ones how triumphant they are and how dazzling they are. There are some very good salespeople that don't need this *external* recognition, in fact shy away from it.

An estate agent commented the other day that he'd met a male client who was undoubtedly internal by his confident mannerisms. He asked – how do you know you've bought the right house. My wife liked it. A true *external*.

Don't confuse *external* influenced people with low self esteem. It is not the same. They just gauge success on outside sources rather than inside themselves. A friend of mine once said – do you think I'm too *external*. We both had a good laugh.

I used to be influenced by peer pressure until my friends talked me out of it.

I used to be indecisive but now I'm not so sure.

How can you gauge people that you meet? Ask a couple of questions that test to see how they've made a decision in the past. During a recruitment interview, ask them how do they know that they've made the right decision about the position? During a sales interview, find an opportunity to ask a similar *how do you know* question. For example, how do you know you've made the right decision about the house you're buying?

Let's talk about applications.

Do you remember the classic sales technique when faced with the ultimate objection – I want to think about it. We were trained to ask what is it that you want to think about. Someone even invented a system of writing all the issues on a piece of paper and systematically destroying them. A bit like carpet bombing the enemy – nothing survives.

To sell to people who are internal, you need to give them enough information and let them decide. I remember seeing an advert for sales staff, which gave useful information about the job in factual format, no benefits. At the end of the advert it stated simply, when you've decided, call us. I remember at the time, what an internal advert designed to attract *internals*.

Internals are more inclined to buy through the Internet which can give them the information they need to make an informed decision. *Externals* need outside influence. Have you bought items recently on the Internet? Have you noticed how they encourage customers to write their own comments about the product. I can just see the *externals* clicking on those links.

External clients need reassurance from the outside. One IFA emphasised his certificates of achievement which were proudly displayed on his office walls, ensuring that the client and himself shook hands right next to them. A warm reassurance for those seeking confirmation from the outside world.

I remember a colleague in financial services estate agency sales who would proudly display her thank you cards on the wall in her office. Designed for an *external* to get verification from the outside world but jolly useful to do the same for an *external* client.

In tests 9 out of 10 cats preferred Whiskers Supermeat. We're the number one car hire firm. We have the highest ratings for any show on TV today.

Working for the biggest insurance company in Europe was very comforting to staff and clients alike. I remember being awash with statistics about how big we were in asset size, number of clients etc. To an *external* that is just what they want to hear. An *internal* will not be interested at all.

I saw one of these sales aids the other day from another company. The biggest in the world at this and that. Great but find your client's key first. To an internal, this sort of thing can cheese him off.

Summary

This article has been one of those which can revolutionise the way you sell. Like all these *how to* articles, you have to take it away and use it.

We've given you four influence keys that everyone holds.

- Towards or away from
- Match or mismatch
- Big chunk and small chunk
- Internal or external

We've given you tools to elicit them from people that you meet and we've given you lots of ideas about tailoring your message to suit.

I'm on the belief that we can only learn one or two things at a time. Very internal of me I know? This was brought home to me by an IFA on one of my courses who half way through the afternoon, stood up, exhaled one long breath and fell to the floor. We all rushed over to see if he was OK. He got up and had been acting. I can't take any more new information he said.

The Americans call it TMI – too much information, but they would wouldn't they?

The key things to do are to pick one or two of the influence keys. Decide on a way of eliciting the key from your client and when you've decided, know how you can change your approach to suit them.

It's that simple.

Let me know how you do – I mean it – email me on keys@paularcher.com