



## The Influentials: One American in Ten Tells the Other Nine How to Vote, Where to Eat, and What to Buy

By Edward Keller, Jonathan Berry

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One American in ten tells the other nine how to vote, where to eat, and what to buy. They are

#### The Influentials

Who are they? The most influential Americans -- the ones who tell their neighbors what to buy, which politicians to support, and where to vacation -- are not necessarily the people you'd expect. They're not America's most affluent 10 percent or best-educated 10 percent. They're not the "early adopters," always the first to try everything from Franco-Polynesian fusion cooking to digital cameras. They are, however, the 10 percent of Americans most engaged in their local communities...and they wield a huge amount of influence within those communities. They're the campaigners for open-space initiatives. They're church vestrymen and friends of the local public library. They're the Influentials...and whether or not they are familiar to you, they're very well known to the researchers at RoperASW. For decades, these researchers have been on a quest for marketing's holy grail: that elusive but supremely powerful channel known as *word of mouth*. What they've learned is that even more important than the "word" -- *what* is said -- is the "mouth" -- *who* says it. They've identified, studied, and analyzed influence in America since the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey (now Exxon) hired Elmo Roper himself to develop a model for identifying opinion leaders, and in *The Influentials*, they are finally ready to share their results. A few samples:

- Influentials have been the "early majority" -- leading indicators of what Americans will be buying -- for more than five decades, from choosing energy-efficient cars in the 1970s to owning computers in the 1980s to adopting 401(k)s and IRAs in the 1990s to using the Internet and cell phones today.
- Influentials have led the way in social development as well, from the revival of self-reliance (in managing their own health care, investments, and consumption) to mass skepticism about the marketing claims of everything from breakfast food to politicians.

Although America's Influentials have always been powerful, they've never been more important than now. Today, a fragmented market has made it possible for Influentials to opt out of mass-message advertising, which means that a different

route must be taken to capture their hearts and minds. *The Influentials* is a map for that route, a map that explains who these people are, how they exercise influence, and how they can be targeted. *The Influentials* features a series of rules and guidelines for marketing to Influentials; case studies of products that have prospered because of Influential marketing (and products that have failed because they lacked it); a history of the phenomenon...and why Influentials are more influential today than ever; and profiles of twelve real-life Influentials. Both an intellectual adventure and a hands-on marketing manual, *The Influentials* is an extraordinary gold mine of information and analysis that no business can afford to ignore.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

There's a group of people, Keller and Berry posit, who are responsible for driving trends, influencing mass opinion and, most importantly, selling a great many products. These are the Influentials, the early adopters who had a digital camera before everyone else and who were the first to fly again after September 11. Like Malcolm Gladwell (*The Tipping Point*), these authors are keen to point out a common phenomenon and spin it for the edification of marketing executives. Their assertion is that 10% of Americans determine how the rest consume and live by chatting about their likes and dislikes. Keller and Berry spend most of the book bolstering their theory with extensive findings from Roper polls (both authors work for Roper). Following this is a suggested plan of action for capturing Influentials' interest, with suggestions on how to target them, how to sell and even how to treat them in a customer service setting. Being an Influential today is similar to being a Vanderbilt in a bygone era: "[T]he company should invite them in and engage them in a conversation... and keep tabs on them in the weeks that follow." Because its points are so concrete and straightforward, the book should have little trouble finding adherents who want to woo such a powerful consumer base. Keller and Berry's theories are compelling and exceedingly well researched, and should be a boon to anyone looking to promote the next big thing.

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From Library Journal

Veterans of RoperASW, Keller and Berry based their first book on decades of research through the Roper Polls. Their findings suggest that one in ten people affects the way everyone else thinks via word of mouth. Presenting profiles of 12 such "Influentials" along with results of the polls, the authors argue that the most influential people in America are often everyday people, folks in one's own neighborhood who are active in civics, charities, and religious institutions. The premise is that marketers who understand these dynamics can focus their resources on these individuals in order to influence everyone else. Though the authors support their arguments with an impressive array of statistics, provided in minute detail to substantiate the premise, a much more lively discussion of a similar theme can be found in Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*. Clearly targeted toward practicing marketing professionals and business executives, this book is appropriate for libraries with specialized collections, such as those in business schools and advertising/PR agencies.

*Stephen Turner, Turner & Assocs., San Francisco*

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From [Booklist](#)

The word itself--*influentials*--has been floating around in the jargon of advertisers and marketers for some time now. Not until Keller and his cronies from the research firm RoperASW explore much more deeply the id and ego of this population segment does any clarity arrive. Based on the solid research of six decades of even more solid research, this compilation and analysis will prompt many nods of agreement, because somewhere, at some time or another, readers have either encountered or become an influential. Neither the wealthiest nor the most powerful, influentials are the one surefire vehicle for the spread of ideas, underscoring the importance of word of mouth. In each chapter, at least one "profile in influence" introduces us to a real-life mover and shaker, an individual who leads an activist, value- and family-filled life. Implications for marketers can be found in case studies, say, on the trend of entrepreneurialism, environmentally friendly products, and the like. From the mayor of Richmond, Indiana, to a Native American who participates in the Iditarod: expect a fact-filled yet intriguing read. Notes on methodologies appended. *Barbara Jacobs*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Eric Ray:**

This *The Influentials: One American in Ten Tells the Other Nine How to Vote, Where to Eat, and What to Buy* is great reserve for you because the content that is full of information for you who else always deal with world and get to make decision every minute. This specific book reveal it info accurately using great arrange word or we can declare no rambling sentences within it. So if you are read the item hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only gives you straight forward sentences but difficult core information with attractive delivering sentences. Having *The Influentials: One American in Ten Tells the Other Nine How to Vote, Where to Eat, and What to Buy* in your hand like obtaining the world in your arm, details in it is not ridiculous one particular. We can say that no guide that offer you world within ten or fifteen small right but this reserve already do that. So , this is good reading book. Hi Mr. and Mrs. active do you still doubt that will?

#### **Joanna Weekley:**

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#### **Anita Sizemore:**

As a university student exactly feel bored to reading. If their teacher questioned them to go to the library or to make summary for some book, they are complained. Just small students that has reading's heart and soul

or real their pastime. They just do what the educator want, like asked to go to the library. They go to presently there but nothing reading very seriously. Any students feel that examining is not important, boring and can't see colorful photographs on there. Yeah, it is to become complicated. Book is very important to suit your needs. As we know that on this time, many ways to get whatever we want. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore , this The Influentials: One American in Ten Tells the Other Nine How to Vote, Where to Eat, and What to Buy can make you experience more interested to read.

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