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Worth Reading: Why Should the Boss Listen to You? by James E. Lukaszewski

Posted by [Helio Fred Garcia](#)

February 3rd, 2008

Posted in: [Communication](#), [Leadership](#), [Worth Reading](#)

Why Should the Boss Listen to You?: The Seven Disciplines of the Trusted Strategic Advisor, by James E. Lukaszewski, Jossey-Bass.



How do you make a difference? How do you obtain and exercise influence inside your own organization? How can you become a trusted advisor, either in your own shop or to your clients?

Master counselor [James E. Lukaszewski](#) has written a remarkable guide to gaining the proverbial seat at the table, and then making good use of that seat. *Why Should the Boss Listen to You* is a thorough, candid, and highly usable guide to the personal attributes that are necessary to influence leaders and organizations. There is no silver bullet. Rather, having influence requires intentional investment of time and energy, and the ability to appreciate the perspectives of those you advise. Says Lukaszewski, "To begin having influence requires a personal strategy of accomplishment, commitment, and personal incremental progress that helps set you apart from the wannabes, the dreamers, and the self-servers."

Full-disclosure: Jim Lukaszewski is a good friend. We've taught together, done professional workshops together, and contributed writing to each other's projects. We share clients, and often refer business to each other. I blurb'd this book. But not just because we're friends. Rather, because this is an important book, and it can help internal and external advisors become even more effective.

The book is in two parts. The first covers the realities of advising top executives, and includes chapters on how leaders think and operate, what leaders expect, and how to achieve real impact within an organization. The second covers Lukaszewski's seven disciplines that collectively allow one to become a trusted advisor.

The first part, on realities of advising top executives, provides a wealth of insight into the pressures, obstacles, loneliness, and distraction CEOs and other leaders face every day. This includes their often being the last to know what's really going on within an organization. It also covers why leaders fail, why they succeed, and what they expect from their staff and advisors. This set of insights into leaders is a necessary first step in being able to advise with impact. Perhaps as important are Lukaszewski's observations on the self-marginalization that those within an organization often commit, usually because they see the world through their narrow staff functional area perspective.

The Seven Disciplines are straightforward, focused, and extraordinarily useful. I have taught some of Lukaszewski's principles in both corporate settings and in graduate school management and communication classes; clients and students report seeing immediate improvement in their ability to have their advice sought and taken. The seven disciplines are:

1. Be trustworthy
2. Become a verbal visionary
3. Develop a management perspective
4. Think strategically
5. Be a window to tomorrow: understand the power of patterns
6. Advise constructively
7. Show the boss how to take your advice

This isn't a book for everyone. But it is a book for anyone who wants to enhance his or her ability to give advice on things that matter to bosses. But then again, giving advice on things that matter to bosses isn't for everyone either.

Lukaszewski's book is peppered with questions to ask yourself to see if you have the willingness, intestinal fortitude, and aptitude to become a trusted advisor. This set is key:

- o "Why do I want to be heard by my boss?"
- o Why should the boss listen to me about anything? What's in it for him or her?
- o What is not working now? Why?
- o There are clearly some risks if I do punch through and get heard by the boss; am I ready for those?

- o Am I ready to be brutally honest with myself?
- o Can I train myself to focus on what really matters?
- o How willing am I to change myself to have more influence?"

If the answers to these questions haven't scared you away, then go out today and [buy this book](#). Read it with care, and use it as your guide to attaining greater and greater influence.

I will assign the book to my graduate communication strategy students starting this semester.

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Helio Fred Garcia is the president and founder of the crisis management firm [Logos Consulting Group](#), and is the executive director of the **LOGOS INSTITUTE for Crisis Management & Executive Leadership**. He is widely regarded as a leading expert in crisis management and crisis communication.

Fred is a coach, counselor, teacher, writer, and speaker. He advises and coaches leaders of some of the largest and best-known companies and organizations in the world. In addition to serving North American clients, Fred has had an active international practice, advising clients in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Australia.

