Fire Them Up!
7 Simple Secrets to: Inspire Colleagues, Customers, and Clients, Sell Yourself, Your Vision, and Your Values, Communicate with Charisma and Confidence
by Carmine Gallo

As a leader you know where you want your company to go in the future but you also know that you can't get it there single-handedly. Ultimately, your success and the success of your business will rely on your ability to motivate, inspire, and excite those around you. In other words, you must be able to positively influence people and get them fired up about your vision.

In his latest book, Fire Them Up!, author Carmine Gallo presents the seven secrets to influence that you can use to motivate yourself and those around you. With these simple secrets Gallo, a communications coach for companies such as Intel, Nokia, Hyundai, and IBM, teaches leaders how to become inspiring communicators who foster enthusiasm and results.

With simple secret #1 – Ignite Your Enthusiasm – Gallo explains how leaders must energize their own vision and then relate that vision to motivate others. By infusing your communications with excitement, enthusiasm and energy you can influence those around you to buy into your goals.

Simple secret #2 – Navigate the Way – shows you how to present your goals in a way that further increases enthusiasm and ignites passion. Once others have adopted your vision you need to help them see the path necessary to achieving it.

Sell the Benefit – simple secret #3 – focuses on putting the listener first. The quickest way to influence others and help them “see” your vision is to connect your message to them personally and show them how they can benefit from hopping aboard.

With simple secret #4 – Paint a Picture – Gallo stresses the importance of visualization. If your audience can picture the key points of your message they are more likely to feel an emotional connection and become inspired by your ideas.

By teaching you to bring your audience in with simple secret #5 – Invite Participation – Gallo helps you improve your listening skills and boost your communication skills in order to inspire and ignite the passions in those around you.

Using simple secret #6 – Reinforce an Optimistic Outlook – Gallo shows leaders how to inspire hope in others and fire them up to meet your goals.

And finally, with simple secret #7 – Encourage Their Potential – leaders learn how to emotionally connect with people and use praise to inspire them.
If you want to influence those around you, garner an excited following, and reach levels of success you previously thought impossible, read on to learn more about how these seven simple secrets can bring your dreams to life.

**Simple Secret #1: Ignite Your Enthusiasm (How to light a fire in your heart before sparking one in theirs.)**

According to Gallo, successful leaders are fired up about what they do and have an extraordinary ability to generate excitement in others. In order to ignite your own enthusiasm you must first determine what exactly it is about your product, service, company, or cause that really excites you or stokes your passion.

Is it your product's ability to improve the lives of your customers and employees? Is it how your specific job responsibilities feel — does your job give you a sense of calling? Is it the smile on your customer's face after the service is done? Think about the one thing related your job, company, or responsibilities that makes you want to get up in the morning and go about your day — that's usually your inspiration.

Once you pinpoint the inspiration for your enthusiasm you need to infuse it into every message you deliver to everyone around you. By taking the feelings of excitement that are generated by your passion and connecting them to your message you will be able to generate excitement in others. And, according to Gallo, once one person is fired up, it rubs off on the next person and the next, until everyone on the team shares the excitement and they all perform better together.

Start igniting enthusiasm at your company by including the three E's (energy, enthusiasm, and excitement) in every conversation, memo, presentation, email, or communication.

For example, if your passion as a salesperson comes from the knowledge that the product you sell really changes people's lives, relay that information to the product fulfillment department or production line staff. Relate stories of satisfied customers, show them thank you notes you have received, help them understand the impact the product and their involvement in it has had on the customers.

By being energetic (having a great attitude and always being ready to jump in and work), enthusiastic (showing real belief in the cause and mirroring your actions to that belief), and excited (being happy to have a part in the plan and looking forward to making it happen) about the difference the product has made and portraying that passion even in everyday conversations around the water cooler, you will inspire others to see their "job" as more rewarding than just a means to a paycheck.

**Simple Secret #2: Navigate the Way (How to deliver a specific, consistent, and memorable vision.)**

Simple secret number two is about creating an emotional connection with an
audience by articulating a vision so bright, so magnificent, the rest of us cannot help but come along for the ride. In order to create this connection, Gallo suggests that you craft a motivating message that embraces your inspiration, fires up the people around you, and helps propel your company to a better future.

The key to crafting this motivating vision is to keep it simple. For a vision to have impact it must be simple and profound. To help you achieve this combination Gallo suggests that you adopt a "one-liner": a concise statement that tells people what you do.

A powerful one-liner can quickly let people know what you want, where you want to go, and how you plan to get there. For example, Google's one-liner is "We deliver the world's information in one click." From that statement you can derive that Google wants to deliver vast amounts of needed information, they want to deliver it world-wide, and they want to make the delivery so simple for the users that everyone everywhere thinks "Google" when they need information fast. To the employees, investors, and customers of Google this one-liner helps them envision a service that meets the informational needs of the world. It paints a picture of a company that is out to help the world get exactly what they need, when they need it, one user at a time.

Obviously your one-liner needs to have a clear yet concrete message, but it also needs to sound powerful enough to grab people's attention and get them excited about the vision. To accomplish this Gallo suggests that you use imagery and vivid, descriptive words that "paint a picture" of where you want to be or what you want to accomplish. For example, don't just state: "We want to help people travel easily." Instead, say: "We want to be with you as you travel the world. You take the pictures and we'll take care of the travel details."

**Simple Secret #3: Sell the Benefit (Put Your Listeners First)**

According to Gallo, people are inspired when they know how your product or service will improve their lives. This concept works not only with customers and investors, but with employees as well. Once a person understands what they will get out of your vision, and how their own lives will improve, they will be more likely to stay inspired and remain committed to your goals. Employees will be more likely to go the extra mile and truly take pride in what they do if they understand how their job impacts their lives and the lives of the customer.

For example, a field electrician at an energy company is more likely to put the customer first and take the extra step with every job if he associates what he does with lighting the family dinner table, illuminating the room for that last bedtime book read, and keeping a family warm and secure, as opposed to thinking he just hooks up wires for eight hours to earn a day's pay. Help your employees make this connection by holding daily pep talks, monthly meetings, or by putting out quarterly newsletters that relate customer satisfaction stories, applaud employee efforts, and highlight extraordinary actions so others can see that the company appreciates and recognizes a job well done with more than just a steady paycheck.
To sell the benefit of your vision, service, product, or company in order to ignite enthusiasm, Gallo suggests that you ask yourself one simple question: What "feeling" do you want to leave them with? If you can get your customer, employee, investor, supplier, or partner to identify personally with your message and feel as though the offering or goal will improve their life you will definitely succeed at drawing them into your vision. For example, a financial planner may not grab a customer's attention for long with promises of quadrupled investments in 25 years, but they will sell the package if they can paint a vivid picture of how that money will improve their lives, and the lives of their children and grandchildren. "You will have X amount of dollars in the bank in X years" is not as compelling of a statement as "Imagine spending your retirement traveling the world secure in your finances, while having the freedom to see your grandchildren anytime you want and provide them with the things that will make them happy and comfortable." Don't focus on just what the product or service can do in theory, instead focus on what using it can personally do for your listener and how it can tangibly improve their life.

**Simple Secret #4: Paint a Picture (Tell Powerful, Memorable, Actionable Stories)**

Messages relay facts, but stories make connections. As Gallo states: "Inspiring individuals sell themselves, their vision, and their values by turning their message into a story that piques your interest, keeps you entertained, makes it easy to remember key points, and, above all, leads you to take some sort of action." If you can tell powerful, memorable, and actionable stories you are more likely to influence and inspire your audience.

According to conventional wisdom a solid presentation has three parts: the introduction (where you tell your audience what you are going to tell them), the body (where you tell your audience what you came to tell them), and the conclusion (where you wrap up by telling your audience what you just told them). In this scenario you would highlight your key points in the introduction, describe them in detail in the body, and summarize them in the conclusion.

However, Gallo believes that this tried and true technique lacks inspiration and leads to audience boredom. To begin mesmerizing your audience, Gallo suggests that you paint a picture with your presentation by including an introduction, a narrative, an argument, a refutation, and a finale.

The introduction section of your presentation is used to set the stage for your message. Here you grab the audience's attention by making an emotional connection with them through personal stories or observations. For example, if your new software is meant to streamline processes and save time, don't just begin by pointing out this benefit, paint its picture. "During development of this product we had a chance to test out its benefits. Gary, a key person in our accounts receivable department, was pressed for time between meeting testing and development deadlines and planning for the birth of his son. Thursday morning, as he was inputting information into the system, he was convinced his tasks couldn't be accomplished by Friday at noon, the time his wife was expected
to deliver their baby. Long story short, with the new features of this software Gary did finish his task and spent Friday afternoon sharing the miracle of birth with his wife and cuddling his new son.”

According to Gallo, the narrative is where "you must get into the heart of the matter, whether it involves something you want your listeners to do, something you wish to persuade them about, or something you want to tell them about." Here, the software development company would want to share other stories of how the software can make things simpler. Now's the time to point out how the features can free up man hours, reduce costs, increase a company's bottom line. Just be sure to share the benefits with real life examples and animated stories.

The argument section of your presentation is where you get into the "nuts and bolts" of your product. The "hows" and "whys" of its benefits and the charts, statistics, and facts belong here but you need to present them in a memorable way that avoids being dry and boring. For example, when Al Gore presented a line chart representing the climb of CO2 levels in the atmosphere in his argument about global warming he didn't just prop up a chart and point to the numbers. Instead, he engaged his audience and drove home his point by climbing on a mechanical lift and rising alongside the line in an attempt to show just how far the levels could go and how dangerous the consequences would be. The chart held the facts but the lift made the information memorable.

In the refutation section of your presentation you need to take time to bring up objections your audience may have and refute them. Real-life stories about how your product really performs, or real world examples of how your service has solved a problem belong here to help you make your point and paint a picture.

Finally, in order for your presentation to inspire your audience into action it needs a powerful finale. Instead of using this time to summarize your message, leave your audience with a reason to act and the inspiration to follow through. For example, the software company may end with "Your time is important. How do you want to use it?"

Simple Secret #5: Invite Participation (Solicit Input, Overcome Objections, and Develop a Winning Strategy)

The key to selling yourself, your vision, and your values is not to "announce" them but to get others to embrace them. By listening to your audience, asking for feedback, and taking action on what you hear, you can make your audience feel like equal participants in your vision and help them "see" the impact your vision will have on their lives.

The first step in inviting true participation (whether you are speaking to one employee or customer, or a whole room full of them) is to master the art of listening. When others are speaking, sharing ideas, or voicing complaints, avoid interrupting, eliminate distractions, and maintain eye contact. By fixing your gaze on the speakers eyes, leaning towards them to show interest, turning off your cell phone or putting papers to the side, and waiting until the speaker is done to reply
you will make your audience feel important, let them know you truly care about what they have to say, and show them that you are enthusiastic about their ideas.

The second step to inviting participation focuses on how you respond to what your audience has said. If you just nod, agree vaguely, and walk away, your audience will not keep sharing and feeling engaged for long. Instead, Gallo suggests that you restate the information you have just heard, be humble, acknowledge your audience’s pain, and use “five magic words” in your response.

Restating what you have heard is a great way to avoid misunderstanding and let your audience know you were really listening. However, you do not want to just repeat the information back, verbatim. This will just showcase your good memorization skills. Instead, summarize what you heard, stating the key points, and ask questions to make sure you have understood. For example, say an employee comes to you with a concern about the new automated employee benefits hot line, and they are worried about the time it takes to get the correct information due to a confusing automated menu. You could respond by saying: "What you are saying is that our new benefits hotline, which was put in place to make our employee's lives easier, is actually making it harder for you to find the answers you need in a timely manner. And, you feel this problem is due to a confusing automated menu. Is that correct?"

Once your employee agrees that you understand her concern, you can use Gallo's remaining suggestions to invite participation and reinforce your excitement over the new benefits hotline. For example, you could say: "I am really glad that you have brought this problem to me. The best critiques of any new system always come from those that are actually using it. (Be Humble.) I still believe in the benefits of this new system but I definitely want it to solve your problems, not create new ones. (Acknowledge their Pain.) I would like your opinion on how we can improve the current menu. (The Five magic Words..."I would like your opinion.")"

By really listening to your audience, inviting their participation, and acting on their suggestions and concerns you can inspire them to become more involved and fire up their enthusiasm to help you realize your vision.

Simple Secret #6: Reinforce an Optimistic Outlook (Become a Beacon of Hope)

According to Gallo, the link between optimism and inspiration is direct and immediate: Thinking optimistically will make you feel better about yourself. Speaking optimistically will give others the confidence to follow your vision.

Since nothing is as powerful as an optimistic attitude in motivating yourself and the people around you, Gallo offers five steps to optimism that will help you boost your inspiration factor.

Step One: Build on Your Strengths. Everyone makes mistakes, has ideas that are
off the mark, and attempts new things that fail. Optimistic leaders see these "failures" as learning opportunities and focus on the good that came from trying them. Then, they build on what they learned from the setbacks and use this knowledge to reach their goals.

Step Two: Radiate Optimism. Optimism and confidence go hand in hand. Standing tall, shaking hands with gusto, and maintaining eye contact are all ways that you can outwardly express confidence. Act optimistic and others will "catch" your outlook.

Step Three: Speak Highly of Yourself, Especially When talking to Yourself. Optimism affects more than just your daily attitude. If you think you can do something, chances are you will. And, if you think you can't, you probably won't. When speaking to others about a new idea use phrases such as I will, I know, and I am sure that. These words tell your subconscious, and that of your listener, that you believe in your vision and are enthusiastic about its outcome.

Step Four: Surround Yourself with Builders, Not Detractors. Maintaining optimism can be difficult in tough times, but it is even more difficult when you are surrounded by pessimists and non-believers. In order to maintain your path to optimism seek out others who believe in you or your vision, strive to emulate the optimism you see in others, and reduce the time you spend in the presence of those who focus on the negatives.

Step Five: Create Magnificent Obsessions. Safe goals, mediocre dreams, and just above average visions will never challenge you to reach your full potential. Whatever your goal, think big. For example, as a plant manager you may know that your department can increase production by 5% in the next year. So 5% is not an inspiring goal. Dream big and aim for 10%. If you aim for a 5% increase you will only achieve a 5% increase. However, if you aim for 10 you may hit 10, but even if you fail you still may have hit 8 or 9%.

Simple Secret #7: Encourage Their Potential (Praise People, Invest in Them, and Unleash Their Potential)

The final step in firing people up and inspiring them to follow your vision lies in your ability to foster potential through effective praise. Everyone likes to hear that they are important. When employees feel valued they become more engaged in their job and their company's vision.

You can inspire others and sell them on your vision by praising them effectively and encouraging their potential through a process that Gallo refers to as "Filling Emotional Tanks." According to Gallo, emotional tanks are like gas tanks in cars, if a person is low on incentives, self-confidence and feelings of being valued they do not perform as well, do not care as much about their job, and do not have the energy or enthusiasm to meet challenges and achieve goals, just as cars low on fuel do not have the resources they need to move forward.
Fill your employees' emotional tanks by finding five reasons to praise them for every one thing you criticize, by sandwiching your criticisms in between praise, and by becoming emotionally invested in their personal lives. First, start by praising the people around you for their efforts and achievements often and with sincerity. Once people get used to being appreciated for their hard work and ideas they will be inspired to try harder and will take criticism in stride.

Second, deliver constructive criticism in a "criticism sandwich." For example, if you need to speak with an employee about his excessive tardiness you could say: "Bob, I like the dedication to completing this project you've been showing. Mary, your supervisor, tells me that you've been staying late most nights to wrap up loose ends. However, you need to work on showing up on time each morning. By doing so I really believe you will accomplish your goals much faster. Also, I wanted to let you know that the last report you turned in really hit the mark. Thanks for putting in the time and doing such a great job with that." In that example, Bob receives three lessons, two of which are based on praise and one that focuses on encouraging potential. Combined, the three statements can inspire Bob to top his previous accomplishments and overcome the challenge of tardiness.

Finally, you can inspire people by letting them know you really care. If you care about a person's family, values, visions, and goals, they are more likely to care about yours. By asking your line manager how his summer classes towards a new degree are going, or asking your HR supervisor how her plans for her daughter's graduation party are going, you show interest in the real person not just the current position they fill. This makes people feel wanted, valued, and important — all qualities that inspire them to reach their potential and meet challenges with excitement and enthusiasm.

Conclusion

Inspired, enthusiastic, energized people can meet any challenge and achieve any goal. As a leader, one of your main responsibilities is to encourage and instill that attitude and desire in the people around you. Start unleashing your passion with Gallo's 7 Simple Secrets to Fire Them Up and see yourself become the extraordinary, electrifying, influential leader you were meant to be.