Peter Drucker, widely considered the father of modern management, once claimed that too many managers are preoccupied with their efforts rather than with their results. They focus downward, and think a lot about what their organization and their boss should do for them, not the other way around (2006). The following guidelines will help you recognize what must occur in order to influence your senior management when you have a good idea.

- When you present ideas, realize that it is your responsibility to sell, not your audience's responsibility to buy.
- Focus on contributing to the larger good, not just the achievement of your objectives, or for the good of only your organization.
- Invest time on issues that will make a difference.
- Present a realistic cost-benefit analysis of your plan.
- Challenge issues that involve ethics or integrity.
- Recognize that your leaders are human and may make mistakes or say the wrong thing. Focus on helping your managers, as opposed to judging them.
- Support the decisions of your team in word and deed.
- Think about how to make a positive difference; don't just try to be “right.”
- Focus on the future and let go of the past.

How would you rate your past focus on these nine ways to influence up? Do all of them have the same level of importance based on the positions you are in? Think about a situation that you will need to influence someone in the near future. What will you do to achieve these suggestions? These guidelines should be useful in helping you convert your good ideas into meaningful actions.