

Two-Step Flow

Communications & Media

Media reach opinion leaders, and opinion leaders reach everyone else.

Influence often travels from media to socially connected individuals, and from them to their circles.

- Found in 1940s voting studies of Erie County.
- Interpersonal talk outweighed direct media exposure.
- Opinion leaders are topic-specific, not general.
- They are usually peers, not elites.
- Modern versions describe multi-step diffusion.

LOOK FOR IT

A health message spreads further through trusted local voices than through repeated broadcast.

The finding that broke the direct-effects model. Later network research complicates it: influence is many-step and reciprocal.