

The Influence Codes

CHAPTER 05: Health

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PART 01

Introduction



The source of our insights:

18+ months of exploration.

5 projects investigating Influence.

3 specialist organisations.

45 global experts.

28,000 consumer conversations.

THE
growth
DISTILLERY

Ogilvy

KANTAR

A background image showing three people (two men and one woman) sitting on the floor in a gym, laughing and talking. They are wearing athletic wear. A water bottle is visible on the floor to the right.

A quick recap of the Influence Codes. The main ingredients of Influence.

What is Influence?

Influence is the intentional (and sometimes unintentional) effort to affect the attitudes and behaviour of an individual or group, through the provision of stimuli or conditioning.

There are 4 key components to Influence:

Information: Holds power when it is scarce or valuable, guiding decisions with unique insights or outcomes.

Authority: Vested in trusted individuals or institutions, derives its influence from being perceived as reliable sources of information and guidance.

Community: Reflects the shared behaviours and attitudes of those within our physical or ideological spaces.

Affinity: Shaped by those we admire or aspire to be like, it influences through personal connection and aspiration.

| Why *Influence* matters.



↓ 51%

Decline in number of brands with meaningful differentiation versus 10 years ago*.

↓ 50%

Of comms are less effective than a 30 second video of a cow eating grass**

↓ 50%

Decline in base sales over a 4 year period from ineffective and inefficient marketing***

This is a crisis for the marketing and communications industry.

For those seeking growth, understanding how to build and wield Influence is now more critical than ever before.

The *New Era* of Influence in Health.

Our extensive study into Influence has revealed that Affinity is the most powerful factor driving decisions across all categories tested. For brands seeking growth, offering relatable, selfless advice is key to capturing attention and prompting action.

Health is a complex and evolving consideration that demands daily decision-making. Historically, we relied on health experts for guidance, but today, we have access to a wide range of sources.

As people navigate the sea of information available, Affinity helps determine which voices to trust. In today's world, consumers seek Influence proactively, flipping the traditional 'top down' model where Authority and Information dictated Influence.

Now Affinity is the most potent Influence factor, as people prioritise sources that personally resonate with them.

| *Cultural Drivers* of Change.

The shifts that have created the change in how Influence works.

Whilst the four components of Influence (Affinity, Information, Authority and Community) are enduring, their relative power and ability to influence are defined by the current cultural context.

We have identified four key cultural shifts that have impacted the relative importance of each factor.



Cultural Drivers of Change.

The modern context for Influence, how it works, why it's changing and with this, the implications and imperatives for marketing have been defined by these macro shifts.

01

Information overload

We live in an era of information overload.

With so much information available from different sources, it is now harder to determine useful information and which source is appropriate to listen to.

02

Code-less culture

We now live in a 'codeless culture' where conventions are constantly changing.

This has made it more difficult to recognise and understand how to respond to the world around us.

03

Default distrust

Australia used to be defined by deep institutional faith. We believed that institutions had our best interests at heart and would advocate for us.

This faith has since eroded, leading us to look towards other sources of Influence.

04

Too much choice

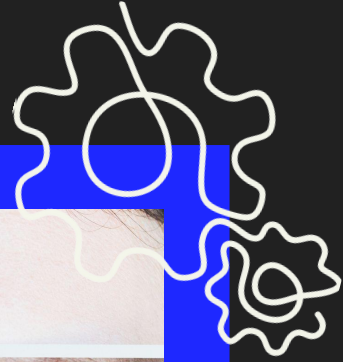
The growing number of choices available to us is increasing exponentially.


While more choice was once beneficial, it has instead led to greater pressure and anxiety in making the right decisions.

PART

02

How the Health Context has Changed





From a prescribed
perspective, to
*personal
preference.*

Our relationship with Health has now shifted.

Aussies are much more proactive in the management of their health, due to a lack of trust in institutions and more information available.

However, they need more guidance as the majority are still not satisfied with their health.

75%

of Australians are
actively seeking to
improve their health.

The tension this presents:

Whilst we overwhelmingly believe our health is our own responsibility, only 18% are satisfied with emotional and physical wellbeing today.

This means we are looking for guidance and tools to help us take control.

7_{in}10

of Australians go
online for information
to consciously care
for their health.



Always looking for
the *next thing*.

There is an expectation for
continuous innovation.

Whether it be from new medical practices, fitness trends or personalised health solutions, each iteration promises an improved opportunity for better health outcomes.

The tension this
presents:

While some methods are well-established, there's always a tension between trusted practices and the potential for better options. This curiosity drives people to seek out new approaches and remedies in the pursuit of improved health and wellbeing.

62%

of Australians say that
'prioritising my physical
and mental wellbeing' is
very/extremely important.

ONLY 6%

of Australians are
completely satisfied
with their physical
wellbeing.



A movement towards a *Multi-Faceted Health Journey.*

Constant advancements
made us more proactive.

But has also led to more health products
and services available which can be
overwhelming.

There is a desire for information, with 4
in 10 Australians agreeing they notice
advertising (increasing to over 50% for
certain subgroups).

The tension this
presents:

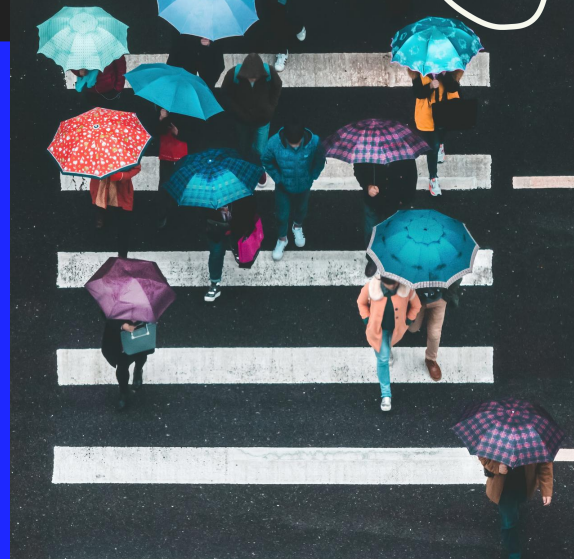
Although the health issues we face
may be one-dimensional (e.g. lack of
sleep), the role they play in our lives
is complex and multi-faceted.

Brands may offer solutions for health
issues, but if they don't align with
consumers' desired lifestyles, they
are easier to be overlooked.

PART

03

The Influencing Factors in Health



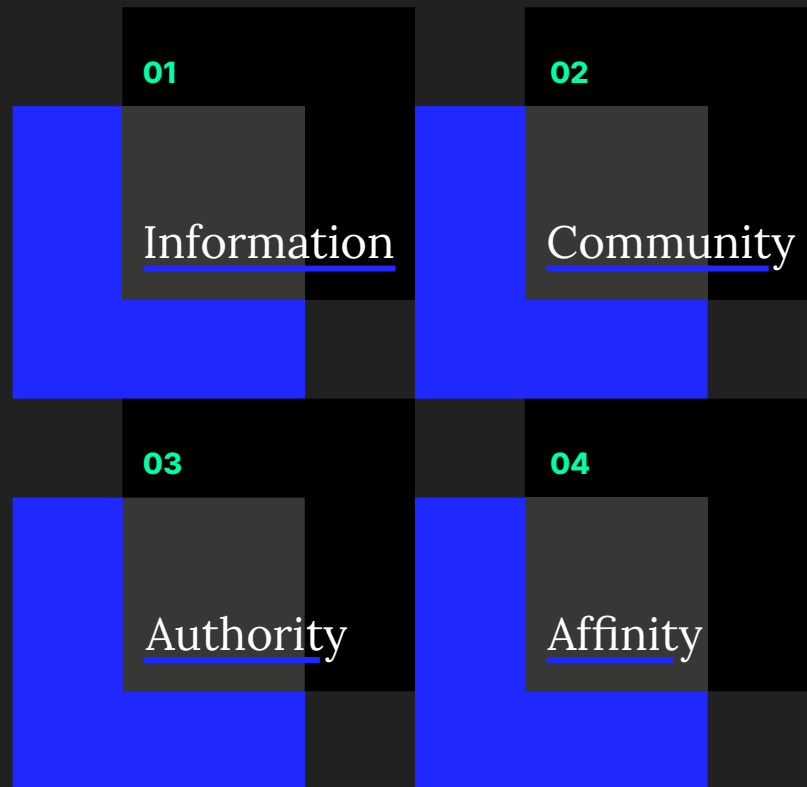
There are *four* fundamental ingredients of Influence.

There is a consistent, fundamental set of ingredients for Influence.

Historically, *Information* and *Authority* were the most potent sources of influence. However, there were also two other components.

Community represented what people saw as accepted practices, behaviours and schools of thought within the groups and communities they were part of. These communities were predominantly geographically defined.

Affinity represented the final ingredient. We would look to our friends and family and those we liked or wanted to be like, to look for the signals we needed to make decisions.



Affinity, paired with Information, is critical for Influence in Health.

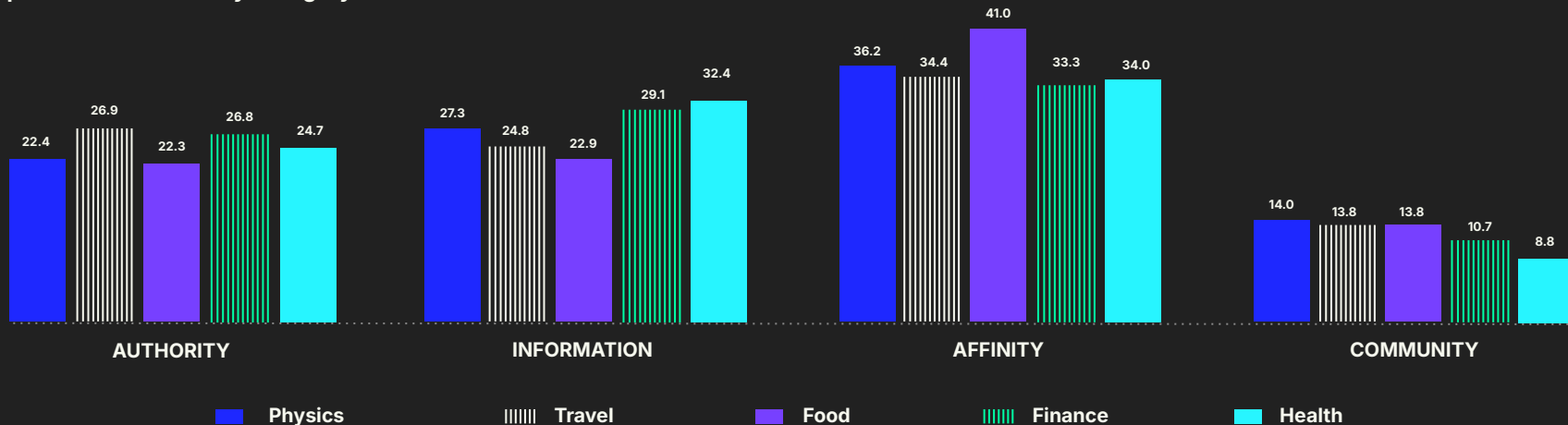
Across all categories tested, the most potent element of Influence is **Affinity**. For Health, this is no different.

Key to building Affinity in Health is the ability to listen to and understand people, alongside offering selfless advice.

Interestingly, Information is significantly higher as an Influence factor than for any other category tested.

This is due to the highly personal nature of health decisions. Whilst Affinity builds confidence by seeing other people's choices, Information validates that is appropriate for our circumstances.

Top Influence Factors by Category



Building Influence relies on understanding the *decisioning dynamics in Health.*



Health is complex, so people make health-related decisions and purchases in many different ways.

We have used the following framework with two key variables:

01 Investment

This includes cost, time and effort to obtain a result. At the low end of the spectrum, there are simpler decisions such as buying some multivitamins.

At the higher end, there are more involved decisions such as choosing a gym.

02 Criticality

Some decisions are made to 'optimise' Health, such as taking a fibre supplement.

Other decisions are made with the intention of 'surviving', such as using insulin or undergoing a medical procedure.

As a simple rule of thumb, the right approach can be one of four decision scenarios.

Across these scenarios, Affinity plays a central role in effectively influencing decisions.

Within each scenario, other Influence factors and specific tactics heighten the impact of Influence for consumers.

Regular
Choices

Optimising
Health

OPTIMISE/ DISCRETIONARY

LOW INVESTMENT

HIGH INVESTMENT

New
Considerations

Individual
Issues

SURVIVE/ MANDATORY

For Regular Choices,
*use simple, comparative
information to 'nudge'*
people in decisions they
are comfortable making.

These types of decisions are both lower risk and more familiar to consumers. As such, they are decisions consumers will be most confident making themselves.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, Information is the key driver to influence decisions. Detailing comparative information, i.e. why one product is better than another, and supporting this with accredited reviews is key to Influencing.

Regular Choices

e.g Multivitamins and other discretionary products

*Key Influence Factor:
Information*

Simple, comparative information supported by expert reviews and industry credentials.

LOW INVESTMENT

New Considerations

OPTIMISE/ DISCRETIONARY

Optimising Health

HIGH INVESTMENT

Individual Issues

SURVIVE/ MANDATORY

For New Considerations,
*new information that is
presented as a simple choice +
Affinity to amplify relevance
will create greatest impact.*

These types of decisions are more general,
i.e. relevant to the many, not me personally.

Because of this, Information is the key driver
of Influence to communicate message, with
Affinity being vital to demonstrate relevance
to the individual person.

The key here is simplicity of messaging.
New, rare and comparative information will
create greater cut through, whilst exhibiting
likeable qualities will create Affinity.

Regular Choices

LOW INVESTMENT

New Considerations

e.g. Public Health Campaigns

*Key Influence Factor:
Information & Affinity*

New, rare or comparative information
supported by likeable qualities as a
person, brand or body.

OPTIMISE/ DISCRETIONARY

Optimising Health

HIGH INVESTMENT

SURVIVE/ MANDATORY

For important Individual Issues, *amplify Affinity with the person, and demonstrate Authority through relevant experience.*

These types of decisions are high risk, focused on mandatory considerations, such as mental wellbeing, are both highly personal, and experienced acutely.

Affinity assumes central importance in influencing decisions, with Authority as key to establishing your right to do so.

Affinity with consumers is created from understanding their circumstances and being proximate. Authority, the secondary driver, is best built through demonstrating a deep level of experience in addressing similar issues.

Regular Choices

LOW INVESTMENT

New Considerations

Optimising Health

OPTIMISE/ DISCRETIONARY

HIGH INVESTMENT

Individual Issues

e.g. Mental Health

*Key Influence Factor:
Affinity & Authority*

Understanding circumstances, building proximity and demonstrating relevant previous experience.

SURVIVE/ MANDATORY

For Optimising Health, *amplify both Affinity and the Community* where people can engage with and achieve their health ambitions.

These high-risk but discretionary decisions such as fitness, are both highly personal, and highly sought after.

Again, Affinity assumes central importance in influencing decisions, but Community becomes a vital secondary driver.

Key tactics here include showing an understanding of the individual and their circumstances, and validating decisions in a social context, e.g. a community group.

Regular Choices

LOW INVESTMENT

New Considerations

OPTIMISE/ DISCRETIONARY

Optimising Health

e.g. Fitness

Key Influence Factor:
Affinity & Community

Understanding individuals and their circumstances, and social validation.

HIGH INVESTMENT

Individual Issues

SURVIVE/ MANDATORY

PART

04

'How To' Influence Guide for Health Brands



| *The Five Must Do's* for Influence in Health.

01

Be relatable
and demonstrate
character.



02

Cut through
with comparative
information.



03

Demonstrate
expertise to
build trust.



04

Target the
GOALdilocks
zone.



05

Don't sell a
solution, sell
the destination.



01

Be relatable,
and demonstrate
character.

Affinity is the most potent driver within the Health category, yet the communication as a whole is overly sterile.

Charm, wit and cultural connection can cut through like a scalpel.

WHAT TO DO

- Break health category conventions by showing up as more human and exhibiting warmth.
- Connect deeply using shared struggles and common experiences that resonate to many.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Don't blend in: don't use the same tricks just to make you feel 'safe' and be considered.
- Use your budget unwisely: allocate as much effort to perfecting tone of communication as you do to ad spend.

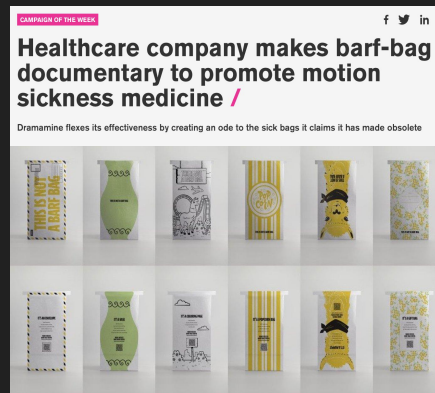
01

Be relatable,
and demonstrate
character.

Brand that gets this right:
Dramamine.

This campaign used humour to stand out in a serious category. By “retiring” barf-bags, it turned an unpleasant experience into a lighthearted joke, making the brand more relatable. The playful approach made the message memorable, shareable, and distinct from competitors' clinical tone.

Humour also helped de-stigmatise motion sickness, positioning this brand as an easy, everyday solution rather than a last resort.



CLICK HERE TO SEE THIS AD

Cut through with *comparative information.*



Affinity creates permission for a conversation, but **Information** validates it.

Guide decision-making by highlighting the differences between options.

WHAT TO DO

- Listen first, to understand your consumer and the information needed: if you want to be listened to.
- Get these right: fluency, relevance, accessibility and relatability for quality information.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Avoid overly complicated messaging: make it easy enough for a 13 year old to easily spot the benefit.
- Don't assume that consumers go to the trouble of researching to compare different options: spell out why what you offer is superior.

Cut through
with *comparative*
information.



Brand that gets this right:
Chemist Warehouse.

This campaign's success is largely rooted in Consumer Psychology.

By simply telling customers that it is the most affordable pharmacy, the brand creates a quick justification to no longer make comparisons (why pay more).



Consistency in messaging at the right touch points, on radio and in-store helps immortalise this comparison.

03

Demonstrate *expertise* to build trust.



Affinity is important but not enough, alone.

There is still a gap in people's satisfaction with their health, despite trying harder and they are looking for *guidance* (Authority).

WHAT TO DO

- Reinforce credibility using expert reviews
- Deliver scientific facts in the right tonality to still tap into humanity

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Don't use stereotypical imagery of pharmacists or nurses alone, you'll just be any other brand
- Avoid coming across too cold and too clinical

03

Demonstrate
expertise to
build trust.



THE PLAYBOOK FOR MARKETERS

Brand that gets this right:
La Roche Posay.

This ad cleverly gains trust by showcasing expertise through dermatologist-backed claims and real-user testimonials.

It emphasises scientifically tested formulas, transparent ingredient explanations, and proven skin benefits - equal parts Authority and Affinity.



Results help cement this brand's credibility as a reliable, expert-driven "skin life-changer".

CLICK HERE TO SEE THIS AD

04

Target the GOALdilocks zone.

Health choices are often aspirational and **deeply personal**, not social.

This is why Community isn't a strong factor for Influence in Health.

WHAT TO DO

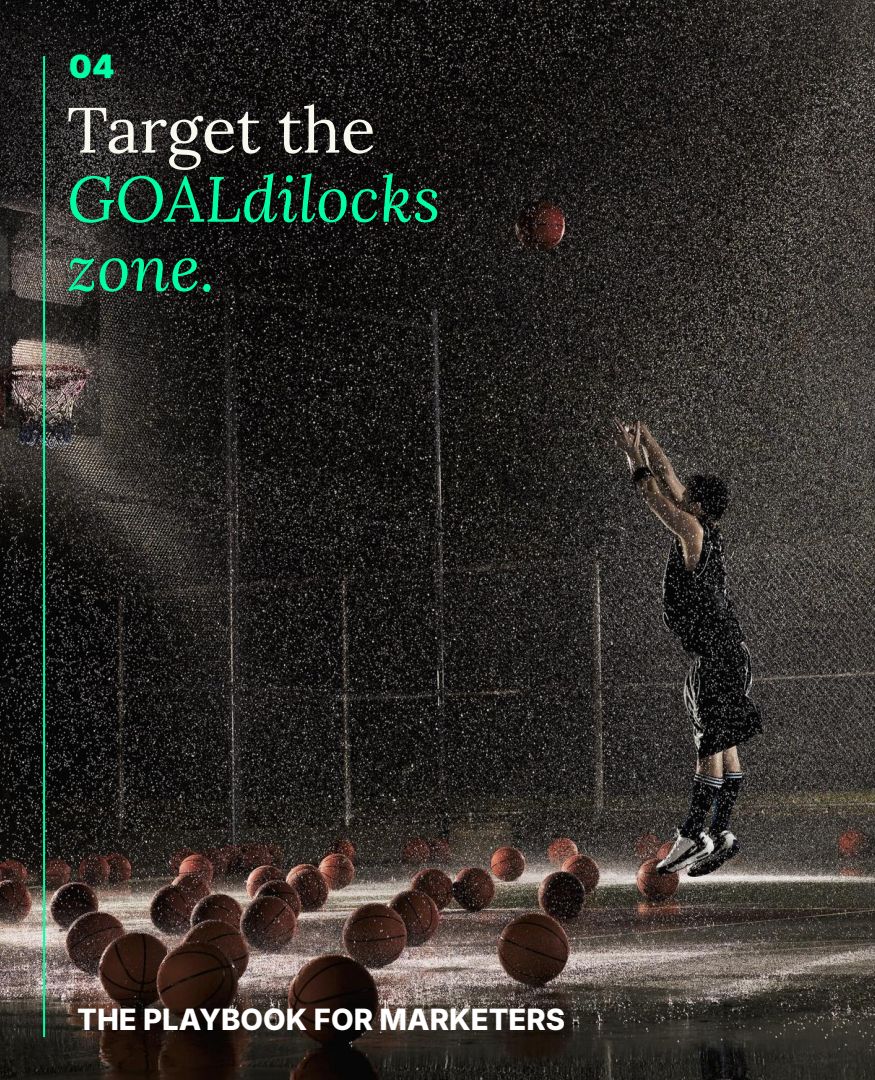
- Understand consumers' own health choices are driven by their desire to achieve a very personal outcome.
- Help them achieve such outcome, don't just tell them what to do.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Don't drink your own kool-aid: make sure that the information you're putting out there truly aids in achieving goals.
- Don't generalise your audience: ensure you understand their needs, how they differ, and how you can show up to build Affinity.

04

Target the GOALdilocks zone.



THE PLAYBOOK FOR MARKETERS

Brand that gets this right:
Blackmores.

This campaign showcases various tools that empower us to aspire for good health.

By offering tailored wellness products, digital resources and personalised solutions, it acknowledges that health is a personal journey rather than a social movement.



Self-motivation is smartly utilised here, making it a lot easier for individuals to take control of their wellbeing.

CLICK HERE TO SEE THIS AD

Don't sell a solution, *sell the destination.*



Brands that truly connect to consumers in the Health category are those that **sell the dream** of living your best wellness life.

WHAT TO DO

- Focus communication on the desired health state: as this will resonate more than the problem will.
- Find ways to do this with wit, charm and a chuckle: break through in a sterile comms landscape.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Don't over do it or else people feel like they're not being taken seriously. Back it up with substance.
- Don't bury the destination with information overload. Be very choiceful with what you say.

Don't sell a solution, *sell the destination.*



Brand that gets this right: **nib.**

This ad playfully invites its customers to use their full suite of benefits so they can access everyday advantages to make life more amazing.

It boldly engages and stands out especially in the health insurance category that can often be way too serious.



Visualisation of the end result i.e. the destination can be far more powerful than simply listing product features.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO SEE THIS AD

PART 05

Conclusion



In Conclusion:

The opportunity lies in bridging the gap between personal trust and professional authority to empower consumers in their health journeys.

72%

of people feel anxious about their health future.

67%

lack confidence in understanding medical information.

55%

distrust health institutions.

To connect, engage and influence, health brands must:

01

Be relatable and demonstrate character.

02

Cut through with comparative information.

03

Demonstrate expertise to build trust.

04

Target the GOALdilocks zone.

05

Don't sell a solution, sell the destination.

The background features several large, overlapping L-shaped geometric blocks in white and black. The central text is positioned to the right of the main cluster of these shapes.

Sharing
is caring...