

WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER

multipliers

HOW THE BEST LEADERS
MAKE EVERYONE SMARTER



REVISED
AND
UPDATED

LIZ WISEMAN

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FOREWORD BY <https://e-bak.kalbm.com> STEPHEN R. COVEY

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How the Best Leaders
Make Everyone Smarter

Liz Wiseman



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Dedication

*To my children,
Megan, Amanda, Christian, and Joshua,
who have taught me to lead and shown me
why being a Multiplier matters.*

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THE
MULTIPLIERS
ASSESSMENT

Are You an Accidental Diminisher?

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Foreword

by Stephen R. Covey

I had the opportunity to work with a Multiplier when I was in my early twenties. It profoundly shaped the rest of my life. I had decided to take a break in my education to provide extended volunteer service. The invitation came to go to England. Just four and a half months after my arrival, the president of the organization came to me and said, “I have a new assignment for you. I want you to travel around the country and train local leaders.” I was shocked. Who was I to train leaders in their fifties and sixties? Some of these individuals had been leading twice as long as I had been alive. Sensing my doubt, he simply looked me in the eye and said, “I have great confidence in you. You can do this. I will give you the materials to help you prepare to teach these leaders.” It is hard to overstate the impact this leader had on me. By the time I returned home, I had begun to detect the work I wanted to devote my life to.

His particular ability—to get more out of people than they knew they had to give—fascinated me. I have reflected on this many times, wondering, *What did he do to get so much from me?* The answer to this question is contained in these pages.

Liz Wiseman has written a book that explores this idea more deeply than anything I have read elsewhere on this subject. And her timing couldn’t be better.

New Demands, Insufficient Resources

At a time when many organizations do not have the luxury of adding or transferring resources to tackle major challenges, they must find the capabilities within their current ranks. The ability to extract and multiply the intelligence that already exists in the organization is red-hot relevant. Across industries and organizations of all kinds, leaders now find themselves in what David Allen has summarized as “new demands, insufficient resources.”

For some forty years I have worked with organizations that were grappling with “new demands, insufficient resources.” I have become convinced that the biggest leadership challenge of our times is not insufficient resources per se, but rather our inability to access the most valuable resources at our disposal.

When I ask in my seminars, “How many of you would agree that the vast majority of the workforce possesses far more capability, creativity, talent, initiative, and resourcefulness than their present jobs allow or even require them to use?” the affirmative response is about 99 percent.

Then I ask a second question: “Who here feels the pressure to produce more from less?” Again, a sea of hands goes up.

When you put those two questions together, you can see the challenge. As stated in this book, indeed, people are often “overworked and underutilized.” Some corporations have made hiring the most intelligent individuals a core strategy on the basis that smarter people can solve problems more quickly than the competition. But that only works if the organizations can access that intelligence. Organizations that figure out how to better access this vastly underutilized resource won’t just be more enjoyable places to work; they will outperform their competitors, which, in this global environment, might well make the difference between companies that make it and those that don’t. And, as with so many business challenges, leadership is clearly a critical force for leveraging the full capability of the organization.

The New Idea

Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter represents nothing less than the leadership paradigm necessary for accessing the intelligence and potential of people in organizations everywhere. It unearths and explains why some leaders create genius all around them while other leaders drain intelligence and capability from an organization.

Peter Drucker spoke of what is at stake when he wrote:

The most important, and indeed the truly unique, contribution of management in the 20th century was the fifty-fold increase in the productivity of the manual worker in manufacturing.

The most important contribution management needs to make in the 21st century is similarly to increase the productivity of knowledge work and the knowledge worker.

*The most valuable assets of the 20th-century company were its production equipment. The most valuable asset of a 21st-century institution, whether business or non-business, will be its knowledge workers and their productivity.*¹

This book explains with great clarity the kinds of leaders who will answer the promise outlined by Drucker and those who will not.

As I read this book, a key insight was that Multipliers are hard-edged managers. There is nothing soft about these leaders. They expect great things from their people and drive them to achieve extraordinary results. Another insight that resonated with me was that people actually get smarter and more capable around Multipliers. That is, people don't just feel smarter; they actually become smarter. They can solve harder problems, adapt more quickly, and take more intelligent action.

People who understand these ideas will be well positioned to make the shift the authors describe from genius (where they may try to be the smartest person in the room) to genius maker (where they use their intelligence to access and multiply the genius in others). The power of such a shift is difficult to overstate. It is a night-and-day difference.

What I Love About This Book

I admire the work and insights in this book for several reasons.

First, the journalistic integrity and sheer tenacity required to analyze over 150 executives across the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa, and for giving us a book full of rich and vivid examples gathered from all over the world.

Second, it focuses the discussion on just those few things that really differentiate intelligence Multipliers and intelligence Diminishers. This isn't a general book on leadership, with all good qualities on one side and all bad qualities on the other. It is more precise than that, identifying and illustrating only the five most differentiated disciplines.

Third, its "range of motion." This book names a phenomenon the way Malcolm Gladwell seems to be able to, but also goes down several layers, to provide practical insight into exactly how to lead like a Multiplier.

Fourth, the way it seamlessly combines cutting-edge insights with timeless principles. Many books do one or the other. Few do both. This book will relate to your life today and it will connect to your conscience, too.

An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Multipliers is relevant for the entire world. Corporate executives will immediately see its relevance, but so will leaders in education, hospitals, foundations, nonprofit organizations, entrepreneurial start-ups, healthcare systems, middle-size businesses, and government at the local, state, and national level. I believe this book is relevant to everyone from first-time managers to world leaders.

And it comes to the world at a time when it is greatly needed, a time of "new demands, insufficient resources," when CFOs and HR directors are surprisingly in synch about the need for an approach that better leverages current resources. The principles in this book will always be true, but in this economic climate they will win in the marketplace of ideas. Their relevance will give them life and attention that is deserved. These are ideas that matter

now, and, as Victor Hugo once said, “There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.”

I have a vision of thousands of leaders discovering they have unintentionally diminished the people around them, and taking steps toward becoming a Multiplier. I have a vision of schools with diminishing cultures being reinvented around Multiplier principles, to the benefit of the whole community. I have a vision of world leaders learning how to better access the intelligence and capability of those they serve, to address some of the world’s toughest challenges.

And so I challenge you to recognize the opportunity that is in your hands. Don’t just read this book; pay the price to really become a Multiplier. Don’t let this become a mere buzzword in your organization. Use the principles to reinvent your organization toward a true Multiplying culture that gets more out of people than they knew they had to give. Choose to be a Multiplier to people around you, as that president was to me in England all those years ago. I have great confidence in the good that can come from such an approach to leadership in your team and in your entire organization. Just imagine what would happen to our world if every leader on the planet took one step from Diminisher to Multiplier.

It can be done.

Preface

This book began with a simple observation: *There is more intelligence inside our organizations than we are using.* It led to the idea that there was a type of leader, those I came to call Multipliers, who saw, used, and grew the intelligence of others, while other leaders, whom I labeled Diminishers, shut down the smarts of those around them.

When the book was released in 2010, this idea struck a chord with managers around the world, perhaps because it came on the heels of a global recession, at a time when a tectonic shift was occurring in management and the ground was moving under all our feet. What was once predictable and manageable had become volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. With the explosion of information, for example, doubling every nine months in science and technology,¹ there is simply too much for any one person to know. Consequently, the role of leader has shifted, too—moving away from a model where the manager knows, directs, and tells and toward one where the leader sees, provokes, asks, and unleashes the capabilities of others.

Ideas that were once considered subversive are the new normal. Diminisher bosses still exist, but, like old BlackBerry phones, it is only a matter of time before they become obsolete and people upgrade to newer models. As companies do the math, they realize that they simply can't afford leaders who waste talent, suppress vital innovation, and slow business growth. After all, why would a company pick results-driven leaders who diminish people when they could have leaders who both

deliver results and grow people around them? Increasingly, we are seeing diminishing leaders being asked to adapt . . . or leave.

Consider the fate of Jorgen, a general manager for a large, multinational pharmaceutical company.² Jorgen was a classic Diminisher who ran a country operation like a dictator and made life miserable for his direct reports. For years his behavior was tolerated because he delivered results, but then the company underwent a significant restructuring to better respond to changes in the marketplace. Instead of a single person calling the shots from the top, they organized around dynamic teams that could span organizational boundaries. Jorgen, accustomed to being the boss, struggled to adapt to this nonautocratic approach. Several months later, Jorgen was called to the corporate office in Europe and told that his style of leadership wasn't working. Jorgen responded with a compelling presentation that detailed his unit's performance. The executive team stopped him and said, "This is purely a style issue. You can no longer be a leader here." Jorgen was removed from his role as general manager and moved into a lower level staff role. His former direct reports celebrated when they heard the news, especially one who was just days away from quitting. But Jorgen wasn't pushed out by staff mutiny; he was a casualty of circumstance. The business environment pushed his company out of the Diminisher camp, and he was left behind. We are seeing more and more senior leaders left stunned in similar scenarios.

While some organizations seek innovation and agility, others are struggling to do more with less. Matthew Haas, assistant superintendent of the Albemarle County public school district in Virginia, said, "We are just running so lean. I can't imagine a world where you could work in silos and not collaborate. You used to be able to isolate yourself, but now efficiency requires collaboration. When you think about what is best for the organization and remove your ego, being a Multiplier is the only way to go."

While the direction may be clear, we clearly aren't there yet. Gallup's State of the Global Workplace study finds that across 142 countries, only 13 percent of people around the world are fully engaged at work.³ SHRM

reports that while 86 percent of Americans were happy with their jobs in 2009, that percentage has been in slow but steady decline ever since.⁴

This lack of engagement isn't just an emotional issue; it implies a waste in the fundamental resource that powers most companies today—intellectual capital. In 2011, after assessing hundreds of executives, we found that managers were utilizing just 66 percent of their people's capability on average. In other words, by our analysis, the managers are paying a dollar for their resources but extracting only 66 cents in capability—a 34 percent waste. When considering only their direct reports, that number increases to 72 percent. As we've tracked this indicator over the last five years, we've seen a slow, steady improvement, rising from 72 percent in 2011 to 76 percent in 2016.⁵ And while managers have become better at estimating their diminishing impact on others, most managers are still overestimating their Multiplier characteristics. They believe they are having an enabling, liberating effect on their team, but team members see things differently. We are improving; however, too many organizations are still overmanaged and underled.

In realizing a richer way of working, many critical questions still remain: How fast can we get there? What is the best path to impact? Who can make the shift and who can't? What do we do with those who can't? How do we move and reshape an entire culture? As many authors will confess, the most important insights on a subject tend to come long after the book is written. This new edition incorporates what my colleagues and I have learned as we grappled with these questions and continue to teach and study pioneering companies and their leaders.

Here are the three most essential insights that have shaped this new edition:

1. THE NEED IS UNIVERSAL. In studying leadership, one learns a lot about followership. I've learned that people across cultures, across professions, across industries come to work each day hoping to be well utilized—not by being given more and more work, but through the recognition that they are capable of contributing in significant ways and doing progressively more

challenging work. The need for Multiplier leadership spans industries and cultural boundaries; it's not just for innovation centers like Silicon Valley. It is as relevant in industries such as manufacturing, education, and healthcare and in cities like Shanghai, Seoul, and São Paulo. In cultures with high levels of hierarchy, we still find the presence of Multiplier leaders, but we find that the effects of Diminisher leaders are more pronounced—the 2× difference between Multipliers and Diminishers becomes a 3× differential (with the average Diminisher yielding roughly 30 percent of their employees' capability instead of the global average of 48 percent).

And, it's not just for Millennials. Certainly new and younger workers expect, if not demand, to be treated differently than those who came before them. But I'm not convinced Millennials actually need or want anything different than other corporate denizens. Contributors of all ages and stages want their ideas to matter, their voices to be heard, and workplaces where they can grow. Millennials have just been too impatient to wait and too empowered by technology not to speak out. What's good for the Millennials is good for the mainstream.

2. SOMETIMES THE GOOD GUYS ARE THE BAD GUYS. When I began this research, most Diminishers appeared to be tyrannical, narcissistic bullies. But I've come to see that the vast majority of the diminishing happening inside our workplaces is done with the best of intentions, by what I call the Accidental Diminisher—good people trying to be good managers. I've become less interested in knowing who is a Diminisher and much more interested in understanding what provokes the Diminisher tendencies that lurk inside each of us. Chapter 7, "The Accidental Diminisher," is new and offers a glimpse into how our best intentions can go awry and how, with self-awareness and simple workarounds, otherwise good managers can become great leaders. I've added this chapter because our greatest gains in the workplace will not come by reforming hardened Diminishers but by helping Accidental Diminishers become more intentional Multipliers and increasing the number of Multiplier moments in the workplace (perhaps

raising their utilization of employee talent from the current average of 76 percent to the target 100 percent).

3. THE BIGGEST BARRIERS ARE CONTEXTUAL AND CULTURAL. To build organizations where intelligence is richly utilized, we need both an offensive and a defensive plan. Most leaders who read the book aspire to lead like Multipliers and find “the better angels of their nature,” as Abraham Lincoln once said. However, their efforts are stymied because too much of their mental energy is spent dealing with the devils around them. For others, their diminishing colleagues leave them so enervated that their will to lead excellently is weakened as well. To understand how to counter the effects of shortsighted, absentminded Diminishers, I surveyed hundreds of professionals and interviewed dozens more. I learned that the reductive effect of a Diminisher is not inevitable. While you cannot change another person, you can change your response and smooth the sharp edges of your diminishing boss or colleague. Chapter 8, “Dealing with Diminishers,” offers strategies and tactics that help reverse the cycle of diminishing, or at least minimize its effects.

Unlocking individual potential is not just a matter of personal will and individual behavior change; it is a function of entire systems, and reshaping collective will is hard work. To help you navigate the complexities of large-scale change, my team at The Wiseman Group and I have studied organizations that are successfully making this shift. Chapter 9, “Becoming a Multiplier,” illuminates the paths that help entire organizations overcome inertia and move from insight to impact.

This new edition also contains some additional resources. There are new Multiplier examples from all around the world and appendix E is a set of experiments to help you develop Multiplier mindsets and practices. Also, the Frequently Asked Questions in appendix B have been expanded and now address the hardest-hitting questions that I’ve been asked by thousands of readers. These questions include: *What about leading in times of crisis? Does gender play a role? What about the iconic leaders like Steve Jobs with strong diminishing streaks? . . . and more.*

Our world is rapidly changing. To keep up and to create the type of workplaces where people thrive, we need diminishing leaders to be replaced by those who serve as true Multipliers, inspiring collective intelligence and capability on a mass scale. It's immense, both in promise and deed, so let's begin.

—*Liz Wiseman*
Menlo Park, California, 2017

ONE

The Multiplier Effect



It has been said that after meeting with the great British Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, you left feeling he was the smartest person in the world, but after meeting with his rival Benjamin Disraeli, you left thinking you were the smartest person.¹

—BONO

During the summer of 1994, Derek Jones joined the US Navy to escape his decaying hometown of Detroit, Michigan. Derek, a street-smart, confident eighteen-year-old, scored high on the navy's aptitude exam and was slotted to enter its advanced electronics computer program. Following nine weeks of boot camp in Illinois and eight months of intense training on missile firing systems, Derek earned advancement to petty officer third class and was selected for advanced training as an AEGIS computer network technician. He graduated first in his class and, in recognition, was able to choose the ship he would serve on; he picked the navy's newest *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyer. Within months, he had established himself among the 210 enlisted men as a superior performer and was recognized by his officers as one of the ship's smartest and hardest-working sailors. On the verge of earning a critical qualification, Derek felt on top of

his game—that is, until a new commanding officer (CO), Commander Fredricks, took the helm.²

Fredricks was a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, and his assignment as captain of this *Arleigh Burke* destroyer put him in an elite class of officers being groomed for cruiser command. Excepting a major mistake, he was on track to become an admiral. Fredricks had superior knowledge of ships' operations, which he flaunted to his sailors. He managed even the most minute details of the ship's operations, every situation, and every sailor.

In preparation for the ship's first missile exercise under Fredericks's command, Derek's team was to ensure that the ship's weapons systems were 100 percent available. A few days before the exercise, Derek and his peers realized that the ship was missing a critical part, so the sailors secured it through an informal network, then repaired the system and returned it to full operation. Several days later, Fredricks learned of the episode from the CO of a sister ship, who mentioned in passing that his sailors provided the part. Instead of being pleased that the young sailors showed initiative and resourcefulness, Commander Fredricks, evidently embarrassed that his ship required assistance, was livid. Derek instantly became a target of Fredricks's wrath and elevated scrutiny.

During a typical missile exercise, the CO and the ship's tactical action officer (TAO) survey the battle area, find the enemy, determine a firing solution, aim, shoot, and hit the target—all in rapid succession and while being engaged by the enemy. Hundreds of things happen at once that must be processed, prioritized, and decided then acted upon. Success requires intense concentration and keen mental aptitude. These operations can be particularly intimidating because the commanding officer may be standing inches from the AEGIS operator, watching every decision and taking constant notes.

Derek and his team now performed these operations under the wary eye of Fredricks, who publicly mocked their efforts when they failed to immediately determine firing solutions for assigned targets. In the end, Derek didn't just perform poorly in one training evolution, he failed nearly

every scenario. He had been stellar in the classroom and during team training, but as Fredricks loomed over his shoulder, managed every detail, and found every mistake, the tension mounted. Derek couldn't think properly and struggled to perform. As the scrutiny continued, Derek and his team became less and less capable. Within weeks, Derek and his chief petty officers were convinced they couldn't operate the ship's combat systems without the CO's intervention. The failure was so clear that Fredricks revoked Derek's qualification to operate the AEGIS console. After that, Derek's performance on the ship fell into a tailspin.

This downturn was interrupted only three months later, when the ship received a new CO. Commander Abbot was also a Naval Academy graduate and was as confident in his sailors as he was in his own abilities.³ Abbot had worked previously for a high-ranking defense official who assigned him projects stretching him to the limits of his ability. Having been briefed of Derek's troubles with the previous CO, Abbot quickly sought Derek out and informed him that they would be taking the ship to sea for another missile exercise before an extended deployment, saying, "Jones, you are my man in this exercise. Make sure we're ready to ace this test. I'm counting on you, and so are your shipmates." For a week, Derek's team flawlessly exercised the AEGIS systems in every scenario. As they prepared, the new CO provided a watchful eye and was calm and inquisitive. Derek no longer felt like he was being tested but rather, that he was learning and working with the CO on a challenge.

On the day of the exercise, the new CO standing behind him, Derek operated the AEGIS console and provided the correct solutions time after time without error, achieving the highest score any ship had seen in over a year. Commander Abbot announced on the ship's speaker system, "Petty Officer Jones and crew won the battle for us today."

Derek continued to advance on the ship. He was made petty officer second class in record time and became the ship's Sailor of the Quarter, a high honor. Abbot placed Derek in the top 5 percent of the crew and nominated him for the STA-21, or Seaman to Admiral program, where he would earn his college degree and a commission as a naval officer. Upon

completing officer training, Derek was promoted each time his record was reviewed. In less than nine years, he was selected to become an executive officer, training and cultivating other officers. Today, he serves in the US Navy as a lieutenant commander, and is destined for success as a commanding officer.

Derek's navy experience illustrates that a change in command can often cause a change in capability. He was stupefied with fear under one leader, but smart and capable under another. What did Fredricks say and do that so diminished Derek's intelligence and capability? And what did Abbot do that restored and expanded Derek's ability to reason and navigate complexity?

Some leaders make us better and smarter. They bring out our intelligence. This book is about these leaders, who access and revitalize the intelligence in the people around them. I call them Multipliers. This book will show you why they create genius around them and make everyone smarter and more capable.

Questioning Genius

There are bird watchers and there are whale watchers. I'm a genius watcher. I am fascinated by the intelligence of others. I notice it, study it, and have learned to identify a variety of types of intelligence. Oracle Corporation, the software giant worth \$174 billion, was a great place for genius watching. In the seventeen years I worked in senior management at Oracle, I was fortunate to work alongside many intelligent executives, all systematically recruited from the best companies and the elite universities as top performers. Because I worked as the vice president responsible for the company's global talent development strategy and ran the corporate university, I worked closely with these executives and had a front-row seat to study their leadership. From this vantage point, I began to observe how they used their intelligence in very different ways, and I became intrigued by the effect they had on the people in their organizations.

The Problem with Genius

Some leaders seemed to drain intelligence and capability out of the people around them. Their focus on their own intelligence and their resolve to be the smartest person in the room had a diminishing effect on everyone else. For them to look smart, other people had to end up looking dumb. We've all worked with these black holes. They create a vortex that sucks energy out of everyone and everything around them. When they walk into a room, the shared IQ drops and the length of the meeting doubles. In countless settings, these leaders were idea killers and energy destroyers. Other people's ideas suffocated and died in their presence and the flow of intelligence came to an abrupt halt around them. Around these leaders, intelligence flowed only one way: from them to others.

Other leaders used their intelligence as a tool rather than a weapon. They applied their intelligence to amplify the smarts and capability of people around them. People got smarter and better in their presence. Ideas grew, challenges were surmounted, hard problems were solved. When these leaders walked into a room, lightbulbs started switching on over people's heads. Ideas flew so fast that you had to replay the meeting in slow motion just to see what was going on. Meetings with them were idea mash-up sessions. These leaders seemed to make everyone around them better and more capable. These leaders weren't just intelligent themselves—they were intelligence Multipliers.

Perhaps these leaders understood that the person sitting at the apex of the intelligence hierarchy is the genius maker, not the genius.

Post-Oracle Therapy

The idea for this book emerged from my post-Oracle therapy. Leaving Oracle was like stepping off a high-speed bullet train and suddenly finding everything moving in slow motion. This sudden calm created space for me to ponder about the lingering question: How do some leaders create intelligence around them, while others diminish it?

As I began teaching and coaching executives, I saw the same dynamic playing out in other companies. Some leaders seemed to boost the

collective IQ while others sucked the mental life out of their employees. I found myself working with highly intelligent executives who were struggling with their own tendency to either overtly or subtly shut down the people around them. I also worked with many senior leaders struggling to make better use of their resources. Most of these leaders had developed their leadership skills during times of growth. However, in a more austere business climate, they found themselves unable to solve problems by simply throwing more resources at them. They needed to find ways to boost the productivity of the people they already had.

I recall one particularly pivotal conversation with a client named Dennis Moore, a senior executive with a genius-level IQ. As we discussed how leaders can have an infectious effect on the intelligence in their organization and spark viral intelligence, he responded, “These leaders are like amplifiers. They are intelligence amplifiers.”

Yes, certain leaders amplify intelligence. These leaders, whom we have come to call Multipliers, create collective, viral intelligence in organizations. Other leaders act as Diminishers and deplete the organization of crucial intelligence and capability. But what is it that Multipliers do? And what do Multipliers do differently than Diminishers?

Scouring business school journals and the Internet looking for answers to these questions, as well as for resources for clients, yielded only frustration. This void set the course for my research into this phenomenon. I was determined to find answers for leaders wanting to multiply the intelligence of their organizations.

The Research

The first major discovery was finding my research partner, Greg McKeown, who was studying at Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business. Greg has a curious and tenacious mind and a passion for leadership that gave him my same measure of determination to find the answers. We began our formal research by defining the question that would consume us for the next two years: What are the vital few differences between intelligence Diminishers and intelligence Multipliers, and what impact do they have on

organizations? Waking up for 730 days with the same question was like the movie *Groundhog Day*, in which Bill Murray wakes each day to the same time and song on his alarm clock, destined to repeat the events of the previous day. In the singular and prolonged pursuit of this question, we developed a deep understanding of the Multiplier effect.

We began our research by selecting a set of companies and industries in which individual and organizational intelligence provide a competitive advantage. Because these organizations rise or fall based on the strength of their intellectual assets, we assumed the Multiplier effect would be pronounced. We interviewed senior professionals inside these organizations, asking them to identify two leaders, one who fit the description of a Multiplier and one a Diminisher. We studied more than 150 of the resulting leaders through interviews and a quantitative assessment of their leadership practices. For many leaders, we then followed an intensive 360-degree interview process with both former and current members of their management teams.

As our research expanded, we studied additional leaders from other companies and industries, looking for common elements that spanned the business and nonprofit sectors as well as geographies. Our research journey took us across four continents and introduced us to an incredibly rich and diverse set of leaders. We came to know some of these leaders quite well, studying them and their organizations in depth.

Two of the leaders we studied provided a sharp contrast between these two leadership styles. They both worked for the same company and in the same role. One had the Midas touch of a Multiplier and the other had the chilling effect of a Diminisher.

A Tale of Two Managers

Vikram⁴ worked as an engineering manager under two different division managers at Intel. Each leader could be considered a genius. Both had a

profound impact on Vikram. The first leader was George Schmeer, a division manager for one of Intel's businesses.

Manager No. 1: The Genius Maker

George had a reputation for running successful businesses at Intel. Every business he ran was profitable and grew under his leadership. But what most distinguished George was the impact he had on the people around him.

Vikram said, "I was a rock star around George. He *made* me. Because of him I transitioned from an individual contributor to big-time manager. Around him, I felt like a smart SOB—everyone felt like that. He got 100 percent from me—it was exhilarating." George's team echoed the same sentiments: "We are not sure exactly what George did, but we knew we were smart and we were winning. Being on this team was the highlight of our careers."

George grew people's intelligence by engaging it. He wasn't the center of attention and didn't worry about how smart he looked. What George worried about was extracting the smarts and maximum effort from each member of his team. In a typical meeting, he spoke only about 10 percent of the time, mostly just to "crisp up" the problem statement. He would then back away and give his team space to figure out an answer. Often the ideas his team would generate were worth millions. George's team drove the business to achieve outstanding revenue growth and to deliver the profit bridge that allowed Intel to enter the microprocessor business.

Manager No. 2: The Genius

Several years later, Vikram moved out of George's group and went to work for a second division manager, who had been the architect of one of the early microprocessors. This second manager was a brilliant scientist who had now been promoted into management to run the plant that produced the chips. He was highly intelligent by every measure and left his mark on everyone and everything around him.

The problem was that this leader did all the thinking. Vikram said, “He was very, very smart. But people had a way of shutting down around him. He just killed our ideas. In a typical team meeting, he did about 30 percent of the talking and left little space for others. He gave a lot of feedback—most of it was about how bad our ideas were.”

This manager made all the decisions himself or with a single confidant. He would then announce those decisions to the organization. Vikram said, “You always knew he would have an answer for everything. He had really strong opinions and put his energy into selling his ideas to others and convincing them to execute on the details. No one else’s opinion mattered.”

This manager hired intelligent people, but they soon realized that they didn’t have permission to think for themselves. Eventually, they would quit or threaten to quit. Ultimately Intel hired a second-in-command to work alongside this manager to counter the intelligence drain on the organization. But even then, Vikram said, “My job was more like cranking than creating. He really only got from me about 50 percent of what I had to offer. And I would *never* work for him again!”

Diminisher or Multiplier?

The second leader was so absorbed in his own intelligence that he stifled others and diluted the organization’s crucial intelligence and capability. George brought out the intelligence in others and created collective, viral intelligence in his organization. One leader was a genius. The other was a genius maker.

It isn’t how much you know that matters. What matters is how much access you have to what other people know. It isn’t just how intelligent your team members are; it is how much of that intelligence you can draw out and put to use.

We’ve all experienced these two types of leaders. What type of leader are you right now? Are you a genius, or are you a genius maker?

The Multiplier Effect

Multipliers are genius makers. What we mean by that is that they make everyone around them smarter and more capable. Multipliers invoke each person's unique intelligence and create an atmosphere of genius—innovation, productive effort, and collective intelligence.

In studying Multipliers and Diminishers, we learned that at the most fundamental level, they get dramatically different results from their people, they hold a different logic and set of assumptions about people's intelligence, and they do a small number of things very differently. Let's first examine the impact of the Multiplier effect. Why do people get smarter and more capable around Multipliers? And how do they get twice as much from their resources as do the Diminishers?

Multipliers get more from their people because they are leaders who look beyond their own genius and focus their energy on extracting and extending the genius of others. And they don't get just a little more back; they get vastly more.

2× Multiplier Effect

The impact of a Multiplier can be seen in two ways: first, from the point of view of the people they work with, and second, from the point of view of the organizations they shape and create. Let's begin by examining how Multipliers influence the people who work around them.

Extracting Intelligence

Multipliers extract all of the capability from people. In our interviews, people told us that Multipliers got *a lot* more out of them than Diminishers. We asked each person to identify the percentage of their capability that a Diminisher received from them. The numbers typically ranged between 20 and 50 percent. When we asked them to identify the percentage of their capability that the Multiplier extracted, the numbers typically fell between 70 and 100 percent.⁵ When we compared the two sets of data, we were amazed to find that Multipliers got 1.97 times more. That represents an almost twofold increase—a 2× effect. After concluding our formal research, we continued to pose this question in workshops and with management

teams, asking people to reflect on their past Multiplier and Diminisher bosses. Across industries and in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, we continued to find that Multipliers get at least two times more from people.

What could you accomplish if you could get twice as much from your people?

The reason for the difference is that when people work with Multipliers, they hold nothing back. They offer the very best of their thinking, creativity, and ideas. They give more than their jobs require and volunteer their discretionary effort, energy, and resourcefulness. They actively search for more valuable ways to contribute. They hold themselves to the highest standards. They give 100 percent of their abilities to the work—and then some.

Extending Intelligence

Not only do Multipliers extract capability and intelligence from people, they do it in a way that extends and grows that intelligence. In interviews, people often said Multipliers accessed *more* than 100 percent of their capability. Initially, I pushed back when they would say, “Oh, they got 120 percent from me,” pointing out that getting more than 100 percent is mathematically impossible. But we continued to hear people claim Multipliers got more than 100 percent from them, and we began to ask: Why would people insist that intelligence Multipliers got more out of them than they actually had?

Our research confirmed that Multipliers not only access people’s current capability, they stretch it. They get more from people than they knew they had to give. People reported actually getting smarter around Multipliers.

The implication of our research is that intelligence itself can grow. This is an insight that is corroborated by other recent research into the extensible nature of intelligence. Consider a few recent studies:

- ▶ Carol Dweck of Stanford University has conducted groundbreaking research showing that children given a series of progressively

harder puzzles and praised for their *intelligence* stagnate for fear of reaching the limit of their intelligence. Children given the same series of puzzles but then praised for their *hard work* actually increased their ability to reason and to solve problems. When these children were recognized for their efforts to think, they created a belief, and then a reality, that intelligence grows.⁶

- ▶ Eric Turkheimer of the University of Virginia has found that bad environments suppress children's IQs. When poor children were adopted into upper-middle-class households, their IQs rose 12 to 18 points.⁷
- ▶ Richard Nisbett of the University of Michigan has reviewed studies that show: 1) students' IQ levels drop over summer vacation, and 2) IQ levels across society have steadily increased over time. The average IQ of people in 1917 would amount to a mere 73 on today's IQ test.⁸

After reading these studies, I recalculated the data from our research interviews at face value, using the literal percentage of capability that people claimed Multipliers received from them. When factoring this excess capability (the amount beyond 100 percent) into our calculations, we found that Multipliers actually get 2.1 times more than Diminishers. What if you got not only 2× more from your team—everything they had to give—but *also* a 5 to 10 percent growth bonus because they were getting smarter and more capable while working for you?

This 2× effect is a result of the deep leverage Multipliers get from their resources. When you extrapolate the 2× Multiplier effect to the organization, you begin to see the strategic relevance. Simply said, resource leverage creates competitive advantage.

Resource Leverage

Let's take the example of Tim Cook, currently CEO of Apple Inc. When Tim was COO and opened a budget review in one sales division, he reminded the management team that the strategic imperative was revenue

growth. Everyone expected this, but they were astounded when he asked for the growth *without* providing additional headcount. The sales executive at the meeting said he thought the revenue target was attainable but only *with* more headcount. He suggested they follow a proven linear model of incremental headcount growth, insisting that everyone knows that more revenue means you need more headcount. The two executives continued the conversation for months, never fully able to bridge their logic. The sales executive was speaking the language of addition (that is, higher growth by adding more resources). Tim was speaking the language of multiplication (that is, higher growth by better utilizing the resources that already exist).

The Logic of Addition

This is the dominant logic that has existed in corporate planning: that resources will be added when new requests are made. Senior executives ask for more output and the next layer of operational leaders request more headcount. The negotiations go back and forth until everyone settles on a scenario such as: 20 percent more output with 5 percent more resources. Neither the senior executive nor the operational leaders are satisfied.

Operational leaders entrenched in the logic of resource allocation and addition argue:

1. Our people are overworked.
2. Our best people are the most maxed out.
3. Therefore, accomplishing a bigger task requires the addition of more resources.

This is the logic of addition. It seems persuasive but, importantly, it ignores the opportunity to more deeply leverage existing resources. The logic of addition creates a scenario in which people become both overworked *and* underutilized. To argue for allocation without giving attention to resource leverage is an expensive corporate norm.

Business school professors and strategy gurus Gary Hamel and C. K. Prahalad have written, “The resource allocation task of top management has

received too much attention when compared to the task of resource leverage. . . . If top management devotes more effort to assessing the strategic feasibility of projects in its allocation role than it does to the task of multiplying resource effectiveness, its value-added will be modest indeed.”⁹

Picture children at a buffet line. They load up on food, but a lot of it is left on the plate uneaten. The food gets picked at and pushed around, but it is left to go to waste. Like these children, Diminishers are eager to load up on resources, and they might even get the job done, but many people are left unused, their capability wasted. Consider the costs of one high-flying product development executive at a technology firm.

THE HIGH-COST DIMINISHER Jasper Wallis¹⁰ talked a good game. He was smart and could articulate a compelling vision for his products and their transformational benefits for customers. Jasper was also politically savvy and knew how to play politics. The problem was that Jasper’s organization could not execute and realize the promise of his vision because employees were in a perpetual spin cycle, spinning around him.

Jasper was a strategist and an idea man. However, his brain worked faster and produced more ideas than his organization could execute. Every week or so, he would launch a new focus or a new initiative. His director of operations recalled, “He’d tell us on Monday, we needed to catch up with ‘competitor X,’ and we needed to get it done this week.” The organization would scurry, throw a Hail Mary pass, make progress for a few days, but eventually lose traction when they were given a new goal to chase the following week.

This leader was so heavily involved in the details that he became a bottleneck in the organization. He worked extremely hard, but his organization moved slowly. His need to micromanage limited what the rest of the organization could contribute. His need to put his personal stamp on everything wasted resources and meant his division of 1,000 was only operating at about 500 strong.

Jasper's modus operandi was to compete for resources with a larger division in the company that produced similar technology. Jasper's overriding goal was to outsize the other division. He hired people at a breakneck pace and built his own internal infrastructure and staff—all of which was redundant with existing infrastructure in the other division. He even convinced the company to build a dedicated office tower for his division.

Things eventually caught up with Jasper. It became clear that his products were hype and the company was losing market share. When the real return on investment (ROI) calculation was made, he was removed from the company and his division was folded into the other product group. The duplicate infrastructure he built was eventually removed, but only after many millions of dollars had been wasted and opportunities lost in the market.

Diminishers come at a high cost.

The Logic of Multiplication

We have examined the logic of addition and the resource inefficiencies that follow from it. Better leverage and utilization of resources at the organizational level require adopting a new corporate logic, based on multiplication. Instead of achieving linear growth by adding new resources, leaders rooted in the logic of multiplication believe that you can more efficiently extract the capability of your people and watch growth skyrocket by *multiplying* the power of the resources you have.

Here is the logic behind multiplication:

1. Most people in organizations are underutilized.
2. All capability can be leveraged with the right kind of leadership.
3. Therefore, intelligence and capability can be multiplied without requiring a bigger investment.

For example, when Apple Inc. needed to achieve rapid growth with flat resources in one division, they didn't expand their sales force. Instead, they

gathered the key players across the various job functions, took a week to study the problem, and collaboratively developed a solution. They changed the sales model to utilize competency centers and better leverage their best salespeople and deep industry experts in the sales cycle. They achieved year-over-year growth in the double digits with virtually flat resources.

Salesforce, a \$7 billion software firm that has pioneered software as a service, has been making the shift from the logic of addition to the logic of multiplication. They enjoyed a decade of outstanding growth using the old idea of “throwing resources at a problem.” They addressed new customers and new demands by hiring the best technical and business talent available and deploying them on the challenges. However, a strained market environment created a new imperative for the company’s leadership: get more productivity from their currently available resources. They could no longer operate on outdated notions of resource utilization. They started developing leaders who could multiply the intelligence and capability of the people around them and increase the brainpower of the organization to meet their growth demands.

Resource leverage is a far richer concept than merely “accomplishing more with less.” Multipliers don’t get more with less; they get more by using *more*. More of people’s intelligence and capability, enthusiasm and trust. As one CEO put it, “Eighty people can either operate with the productivity of fifty or they can operate as though they were five hundred.” And because these Multipliers achieve better resource efficiency, they enjoy a strengthened competitive position against companies entrenched in the logic of addition.

We want to strike at the root of the outdated addition logic. Let’s turn to the question of how Multipliers access intelligence and get so much from people. The answer is in the mindset and the five disciplines of the Multiplier.

The Mind of the Multiplier

As we studied Diminishers and Multipliers, we consistently found that they hold radically different assumptions about the intelligence of the people they work with. These assumptions appear to explain much of the difference in how Diminishers and Multipliers operate.

THE MIND OF THE DIMINISHER. The Diminisher’s view of intelligence is based on elitism and scarcity. Diminishers appear to believe that *really intelligent people are a rare breed* and that they are *of that rare breed*. From this assumption they conclude that they are so special, *other people will never figure things out without them*.

I recall a leader I worked with whom I can only describe as an “intellectual supremacist.” This senior executive ran a technology organization employing more than 4,000 highly educated knowledge workers, most of them graduates of top universities from around the world. I joined one of his management meetings, in which twenty members of his senior management team were troubleshooting an important go-to-market problem for one of their products.

As we walked out of the meeting, we were reflecting on the conversation and the decisions made. He stopped, turned to me, and calmly said, “In meetings, I typically only listen to a couple of people. No one else really has anything to offer.” I think he saw the alarm on my face because after his words came out, he added the awkward postscript, “Well, of course, you are one of these people.” I doubted it. Out of the top twenty managers representing a division of 4,000 people, he believed only a couple had anything to offer. As we walked down the hallway, we passed by rows and rows of cubicles and offices occupied by his staff. Seen through new eyes, this expanse now suddenly looked like a massive brainpower wasteland. I wanted to make a public announcement and tell them all that they could go home since their senior executive didn’t think they had much to offer.

In addition to seeing intelligence as a scarce commodity, our research showed that Diminishers regard intelligence as something basic about a person that can’t change much; they believe it is static, not able to change over time or circumstance. This attitude is consistent with what Dr. Carol

Dweck, noted psychologist and author, calls a “fixed mindset,” a belief that one’s intelligence and qualities are carved in stone.¹¹ Diminishers’ two-step logic appears to be that *people who don’t “get it” now, never will; therefore, I’ll need to keep doing the thinking for everyone.* In the Diminisher world, there is no vacation for the smart people!

You can probably predict how the executive described above actually operated on a day-to-day basis. You might ask yourself how *you* would operate if, deep down, you held these beliefs. You would probably tell people what to do, make all the important decisions, and jump in and take over when someone appeared to be failing. And in the end, you would almost always be right, because your assumptions would cause you to manage in a way that produced subordination and dependency.

THE MIND OF THE MULTIPLIER. Multipliers hold very different assumptions. If Diminishers see the world of intelligence in black-and-white, Multipliers see it in Technicolor. Multipliers have a rich view of the intelligence of the people around them. They don’t see a world where just a few people deserve to do the thinking. In addition, Multipliers see intelligence as continually developing. This observation is consistent with what Dweck calls a “growth mindset,” a belief that basic qualities like intelligence and ability can be cultivated through effort.¹² They assume that *people are smart and will figure it out.* To their eyes, their organization is full of talented people who are capable of contributing at much higher levels. They think like one manager we interviewed who takes stock of her team members by asking herself, “In what way is this person smart?” In answering this question, she finds colorful capabilities often hidden just below the surface. Instead of writing people off as not worth her time, she is able to ask, “What could be done to develop and grow these capabilities?” She then finds an assignment that both stretches the individual and furthers the interests of the organization.

Multipliers look at the complex opportunities and challenges swirling around them and think, *There are smart people everywhere who will figure this out and get even smarter in the process.* And they see that their job is to

bring the right people together in an environment that liberates everyone’s best thinking—and then to get out of their way and let them do it!

How would you operate if you held these assumptions? In the most trying times, you would trust your people; you would extend hard challenges to them and allow them space to fulfill their responsibilities. You would access their intelligence in a way that would actually make them smarter.

The chart below summarizes how these very different sets of assumptions have a powerful effect on the way Diminishers and Multipliers lead others:

How would you:	Diminisher “They will never figure this out without me.”	Multiplier “People are smart and will figure this out.”
Manage talent?	Use	Develop
Approach mistakes?	Blame	Explore
Set direction?	Tell	Challenge
Make decisions?	Decide	Consult
Get things done?	Control	Support

These core assumptions are essential to unearth and understand because, quite simply, behavior follows assumptions. If someone wants to lead like a Multiplier, he or she can’t simply mimic the practices of the Multiplier. An aspiring Multiplier must start by thinking like a Multiplier. In twenty years of watching and coaching executives, I have observed how leaders’ assumptions affect their management. When someone begins by examining and potentially upgrading their core assumptions, they will more easily adopt the five disciplines of the Multiplier with authenticity and impact.

The Five Disciplines of the Multiplier

So what are the practices that distinguish the Multiplier? In analyzing data on more than 150 leaders, we found a number of areas in which Multipliers and Diminishers do the same things. Both groups are customer driven. Both show strong business acumen and market insight. Both surround themselves

with smart people and consider themselves thought leaders. However, as we searched the data for the active ingredients unique to Multipliers, we found five disciplines in which Multipliers differentiate themselves from Diminishers.

1. ATTRACTING AND OPTIMIZING TALENT. Multipliers are *Talent Magnets*; they attract and deploy talent to its fullest, regardless of who owns the resource, and people flock to work with them because they know they will grow and be successful. In contrast, Diminishers operate as *Empire Builders*, insisting that they must own and control all resources to be more productive. They tend to divide resources into those they own and those they don't, and then allow these artificial separations to hamstring effective use of all resources and restrict growth. People may initially be attracted to work with a Diminisher, but it is often the place where people's careers die.

The Diminisher is an Empire Builder who acquires resources and then wastes them. The Multiplier is a Talent Magnet who utilizes and increases everyone's genius.

2. CREATING INTENSITY THAT REQUIRES BEST THINKING. Multipliers establish a unique and highly motivating work environment where everyone has permission to think and the space to do their best work. Multipliers operate as *Liberators*, which produces a climate that is both comfortable *and* intense. They are able to remove fear and create the safety that invites people to do their best thinking. At the same time, they are creating an intense environment that demands people's best efforts. In contrast, Diminishers operate as *Tyrants*, introducing judgment and a fear of judgment, which have a chilling effect on people's thinking and work. Diminishers try to demand everyone's best thinking, yet they don't get it.

The Diminisher is a Tyrant who creates a stressful environment. The Multiplier is a Liberator who creates a safe environment that fosters bold thinking.

3. EXTENDING CHALLENGES. Multipliers act as *Challengers*, continually challenging themselves and others to push beyond what they know. How do they do this? They seed opportunities, lay down challenges that stretch the organization, and, in doing so, generate belief that it can be done and enthusiasm about the process. In contrast, Diminishers operate as *Know-It-Alls*, personally giving directives to showcase their knowledge. While Diminishers set a direction, Multipliers ensure that a direction gets set.

The Diminisher is a Know-It-All who gives directives. The Multiplier is a Challenger who defines opportunities.

4. DEBATING DECISIONS. Multipliers operate as *Debate Makers*, driving sound decisions through rigorous debate. The decision-making process they foster contains all the information the organization needs to be ready to execute those decisions. Multipliers engage people in debating the issues up front, which leads to decisions that people understand and can execute efficiently. In contrast, Diminishers operate as *Decision Makers* who seem to make decisions efficiently within a small inner circle, but they leave the broader organization in the dark to debate the soundness of the leader's decisions, and with none of the satisfaction of helping to fine-tune and execute them.

Diminishers are Decision Makers who try to sell their decisions to others. Multipliers are Debate Makers who generate real buy-in.

5. INSTILLING OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY. Multipliers deliver and sustain superior results by inculcating high expectations across the organization. They serve as *Investors* who provide the necessary resources for success. In addition, they hold people accountable for their commitments. Over time, Multipliers' high expectations turn into an unrelenting presence, driving people to hold themselves and each other accountable, often to higher standards and without the direct intervention of the Multiplier. In contrast, Diminishers serve as *Micromanagers* who drive results by holding on to ownership, jumping into the details, and directly managing for results.

The Diminisher is a Micromanager who jumps in and out. The Multiplier is an Investor who gives others ownership and full accountability.

The following chart summarizes the five vital disciplines that differentiate Diminishers and Multipliers:

THE FIVE DISCIPLINES OF THE MULTIPLIER

	DIMINISHERS	MULTIPLIERS
SEE	<p>THE ASSUMPTION "People won't figure it out without me"</p>	<p>THE ASSUMPTION "People are smart and will figure it out"</p>
DO	<p>THE DISCIPLINES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Empire Builder Hoards resources and underutilizes talent 2. The Tyrant Creates a tense environment that suppresses people's thinking and capability 3. The Know-It-All Gives directives that showcase how much they know 4. The Decision Maker Makes centralized, abrupt decisions that confuse the organization 5. The Micromanager Drives results through their personal involvement 	<p>THE DISCIPLINES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Talent Magnet Attracts talented people and uses them at their highest point of contribution 2. The Liberator Creates an intense environment that requires people's best thinking and work 3. The Challenger Defines an opportunity that causes people to stretch 4. The Debate Maker Drives sound decisions through rigorous debate 5. The Investor Gives other people ownership for results and invests in their success
GET	<p>THE RESULT <50%</p>	<p>THE RESULT 2x</p>

Surprising Findings

As we studied Multipliers across the world, we found a remarkable amount of consistency and several patterns that confirmed our early observations. Here are four surprising and intriguing findings that we want to share.

They Have a Hard Edge

One of the most critical insights from our study of Multipliers is how hard-edged these managers are. They expect great things from their people and drive them to achieve extraordinary results. They are beyond results-driven; they are tough and exacting. Indeed, Multipliers make people feel smart and capable, but they don't do it by being "feel-good" managers. They look into people and find capability, and they want to access all of it and utilize people to their fullest. They see a lot, so they expect a lot.

During our research interviews, people oozed appreciation for the Multipliers they had worked with, but the gratitude was rooted in the deep satisfaction found in working with them, not in the pleasantries of a relationship. One person described working with Deb Lange, a senior vice president of taxation at a large firm: "Working with her was like an intense workout. It was exhausting but totally exhilarating." Another said of his manager: "He got things from me I didn't know I had to give. I would do almost anything to not disappoint him." An executive who reported to Derek Williams, executive vice president of Oracle's Asia Pacific region, put it this way: "When you left his office you felt so much taller."

The Multiplier approach to management isn't just an enlightened view of leadership. It is an approach that delivers higher performance because it gets vastly more out of people and returns to them a richly satisfying experience. As one early reader of this book noted, these leaders aren't about "cupcakes and kisses."

They Don't Play Small

People often assume that Multiplier leaders have to step to the side in order to shine a spotlight on others, or that they play small so that others can play

big. However, I found that these leaders not only utilize all of the intelligence and talent of the people around them, they use all of their own as well. One of my favorite Multiplier leaders is Magic Johnson. Even back in high school, when he was just Earvin Johnson Jr., he was a phenomenally talented basketball player. His high school coach told him, “Earvin, every time you get the ball, I want you to take the shot.” And so he did—and he scored a lot of points as they won every game. They would score 54 points, and Earvin would have made 52 of them. The coach loved it, and the players loved it, because what boy doesn’t want to be on an undefeated team? But then after one particular game, as the players were leaving the gym and heading out to their cars, Earvin noticed the faces of the parents who had come to watch their sons play basketball but instead ended up watching this superstar. He said, “I made a decision at this very young age that I would use my God-given talent to help everyone on the team be a better player.”¹³ And this decision eventually earned him the nickname Magic—for his ability to raise the level of excellence of every team he ever played on and of every person on those teams. It’s not that these Multipliers shrink so that others can be big. It’s that they play in a way that invites others to play big, too.

They Have a Great Sense of Humor

On a whim, we added “Great Sense of Humor” to our leadership survey. Our suspicion proved right. Not only is this trait prominent among Multipliers, it is one of the traits that is most negatively correlated with the mindset held by Diminishers. Multipliers aren’t necessarily comedians, but they don’t take themselves or situations too seriously. Perhaps because they don’t need to defend their own intelligence, Multipliers can laugh at themselves and see comedy in error and in life’s foibles, and their sense of humor has a liberating effect on others. Multiple workplace studies conclude that humor strengthens relationships, reduces stress, and increases empathy. Those who work in a fun environment have greater productivity, interpersonal effectiveness, and call in sick less often.¹⁴ Leaders who

operate with a sense of humor create an environment where people can contribute at their fullest.

Think of George Clooney when you think of the humor of the Multiplier—it’s a self-deprecating wit and an ability to put others at ease, allowing people to be themselves. As one journalist wrote of Clooney, “After fifteen minutes, he made me feel comfortable in my own house.”¹⁵ A Clooney costar said, “He has a way of daring you . . . which can be irresistible.” Multipliers use humor to create comfort and to spark the natural energy and intelligence of others.

The Accidental Diminisher

Perhaps one of our biggest surprises was realizing how few Diminishers understood the restrictive impact they were having on others. Most of them had grown up praised for their personal intelligence and had moved up the management ranks on account of personal—and often intellectual—merit. When they became “the boss,” they assumed it was their job to be the smartest and to manage a set of “subordinates.” Others had once had the mind and even the heart of the Multiplier, but they had been working among Diminishers for so long that they inherited many of their practices and absorbed their worldview. As one executive put it, “When I read your findings, I realized that I have been living in Diminisher land so long that I have gone native.” Many people have worked for Diminishers and, although they may have escaped unscathed, they carry some of the residual effects in their own leadership. The good news for the Accidental Diminisher is that there is a viable path to becoming a Multiplier. Chapter 7, “The Accidental Diminisher,” is for well-meaning, decent managers who are underutilizing their people, despite having the very best intentions.

The Promise of This Book

As we studied Multipliers and Diminishers, we heard case after case of smart individuals being underutilized by their leaders. We heard their

frustration as they told us how little some leaders got from them, despite how hard they were working and how they tried to give more. We learned that it is indeed possible to be both overworked and underutilized. Latent talent exists everywhere. Organizations are replete with underchallenged resources.

Multipliers are out there, and they know how to find this dormant intelligence, challenge it, and put it to use at its fullest. Great Multipliers exist in business, in education, in nonprofits, and in government. Consider just a few whom you will learn more about later.

1. K. R. Sridhar, successful green-tech entrepreneur and CEO, who recruits A+ talent, then gives them an environment with a lot of pressure but very little stress, and allows them to experiment and take risks until the right technology and solutions emerge.
2. Alyssa Gallagher, an assistant superintendent who led a charge to revolutionize learning across her school district by giving ownership to the teachers and letting them be the revolutionaries.
3. Lutz Ziob, general manager of Microsoft Learning, whose team says of him, “He creates an environment where good things happen. He recruits great people, allows them to make mistakes, and ferociously debates the important decisions. He demands our best, but then shares the success with the whole team.”
4. Sue Siegel, former biotech president turned venture capitalist, whose business partner described “a Sue effect. Everything around her gets better and companies grow under her guidance. I often wonder what people are like when they aren’t around Sue.”
5. Larry Gelwix, head coach of Highland Rugby, whose high school varsity team’s record is 392 wins and just nine losses in thirty-four years. He attributes this extraordinary record to a deliberate leadership philosophy that engages the intelligence of his players on and off the field.

Leaders like these provide an aspiration point for those who would be Multipliers.

The promise is simple: You can be a Multiplier. You can create genius around you and receive a higher contribution from your people. You can choose to think like a Multiplier and operate like one. This book will show you how. And it will show you why it matters.

This is a book for every manager trying to navigate the resource strain of tough economic times. It is a message for leaders who must accomplish more by getting more out of their people. As companies shed excess resources, the need for leaders who can multiply the intelligence and capability around them is more vital than ever. This book is also for the raging Multiplier who seeks to better understand what he or she does naturally, as well as for the aspiring Multiplier who wishes to get the full capability and intelligence from his or her people. And it is most certainly for the Diminishers, so they can better understand the negative effects of leadership centered on their own intelligence. It is for every manager seeking the promise of the Multiplier: to increase intelligence everywhere and with everyone.

As you read, you will find a few central messages:

1. Diminishers underutilize people and leave capability on the table.
2. Multipliers increase intelligence in people and in organizations.
People actually get smarter and more capable around them.
3. Multipliers leverage their resources. Corporations can get 2× more from their resources by turning their most intelligent resources into intelligence Multipliers.

Before turning our attention to the practices of the Multiplier, let's clarify what this book is not. It is not a prescription for a nice-guy, feel-good model of leadership. Rather, this book discusses a hard-edged approach to management that allows people to contribute more of their abilities. And although there will be much discussion of Multipliers and Diminishers, this book isn't about what they achieve themselves. It is about the impact that

these leaders have on others. It is about the impact and the promise of the Multiplier. And lastly, the ideas offered here are not intended to be terms for labeling your diminishing boss and your colleagues. Rather, I offer a framework for helping you to develop the practices of a Multiplier.

This book has been designed as an end-to-end learning experience, offering an opportunity to both understand and implement the Multiplier ideas. This introduction has provided a first glance into the Multiplier effect and an overview of what Multipliers do. Succeeding chapters will clarify the differences between Multipliers and Diminishers and will present the five disciplines of the Multiplier and how you can minimize your Accidental Diminisher tendencies. You'll also gain a set of strategies for dealing with the inevitable Diminishers around you. You will read stories of real Multipliers and Diminishers, but be aware that we've changed the Diminishers' names and the names of their companies, for rather obvious reasons. The book concludes with a road map for becoming a Multiplier leader and for building a Multiplier culture across an entire enterprise.

My Challenge to You

Although the Multiplier/Diminisher framework might appear binary, I wish to emphasize that there is a continuum between Multipliers and Diminishers, with just a small number of people at either polar extreme. Our research showed that most of us fall along this spectrum and have the ability to move toward the side of the Multiplier. With the right intent, the Multiplier approach to leadership can be developed. The good news is that 1) Multipliers are out there, 2) we have studied them to uncover their secrets, and 3) you can learn to become one. And not only can you become a Multiplier yourself, you can find and create other Multipliers. That will make you a Multiplier of Multipliers.

In this spirit, I challenge you to read this book on several levels. At the most fundamental level, it might illuminate what you undoubtedly have experienced—that some leaders create genius, while others destroy it. Or

you might go beyond this and reflect on the quintessential Multipliers and Diminishers who have been part of your career and life experience. But perhaps the best way to approach the book is to look beyond the idea that you or your colleagues are Multipliers, and instead spot yourself at times in the guise of Diminisher. The greatest power of these ideas might be in realizing that you have the mind of a Multiplier but have been living in a Diminisher world and have lost your way. Perhaps you are an Accidental Diminisher.

As I have journeyed into the world of Multipliers and Diminishers, I have often seen glimpses of myself—either in the present or from years past—and have found ways to better exemplify the Multiplier in my own work teaching and coaching leaders around the world. I’ve come to see that most of us have a Diminisher side, or at least a few vulnerabilities, mostly born of the best intentions. I certainly do. While we may not entirely rid ourselves of our diminishing tendencies, we can certainly work to string together as many Multiplier moments as possible.

Multipliers is a guide to those of you who wish to follow the path of the Multiplier and, like British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, leave those you meet thinking they, rather than you, are the smartest person in the world. It is a book for executives who want to seed their organization with more Multipliers and watch everyone and everything get better.

Let me now introduce you to the fascinating and diverse set of leaders we call the Multipliers. They come from all walks of life—from corporate boardrooms and our schools’ classrooms, from the executive suite to the fields of Africa. And the leaders we’ve selected represent diverse ideologies. I encourage you to learn from everyone, even those whose political views you do not share. None of these leaders is perfect, but as we look into some of their finest Multiplier moments, we can discover new possibilities. I hope you will find their stories, their practices, and their impact as inspiring as we did when we entered their worlds.

Chapter One Summary



Multipliers Versus Diminishers

MULTIPLIERS: These leaders are genius makers who bring out the intelligence in others. They build collective, viral intelligence in organizations.

DIMINISHERS: These leaders are absorbed in their own intelligence, stifle others, and deplete the organization of crucial intelligence and capability.

The Five Disciplines of the Multipliers

1. *The Talent Magnet:* Attracts and optimizes talent
2. *The Liberator:* Requires people's best thinking
3. *The Challenger:* Extends challenges
4. *The Debate Maker:* Debates decisions
5. *The Investor:* Instills accountability

The Accidental Diminisher

While true Diminishers are easier to spot, much of the diminishing that transpires in the workplace is a result of well-intended leaders whose honest attempts to lead or be helpful shut down ideas and cause others to hold back.

The Results

By extracting people's full capability, Multipliers get twice the capability from people as do Diminishers.

TWO

The Talent Magnet



I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow.

WOODROW WILSON

When you walk up to the porch of her house in Menlo Park, California, you can sense that Meg Whitman, CEO of eBay, has spent time on the East Coast. With its saltbox shape and white wood, the house looks like it should be in New England. Perhaps it reminds Meg of her time in Cambridge, Massachusetts, while at business school.

It was September 2007, early in the race for the 2008 presidential nomination. There were many interesting candidates vying for the ticket for both parties. That day was a chance for us locals to get a peek at one of the candidates, and for me, it was a chance to extend our research and gain insight into two interesting leaders.

As the guests gathered on her backyard lawn, Meg Whitman took the microphone and began to introduce Mitt Romney as a candidate for president of the United States. Her introduction was simple.

I was a young consultant at Bain & Company and had the good fortune to work for Mitt Romney early in my career. After we were hired, all the new consultants scrambled to get on Mitt's project teams. Why? The word spread that he was the best boss to work for because