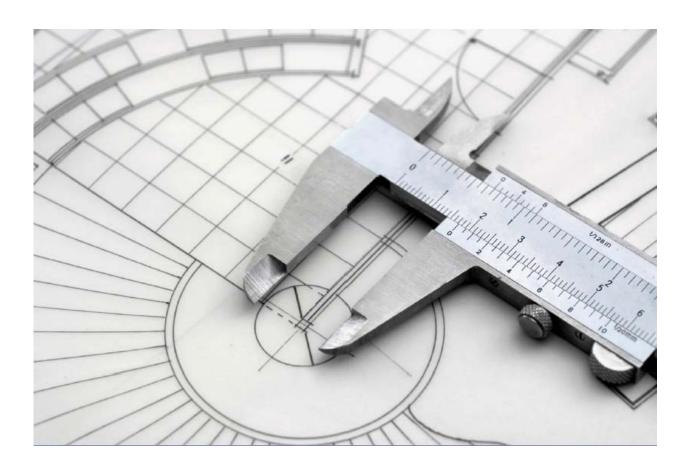


How to work with the "Crazy-makers"

- Enhance Your Leadership Skills -



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Abstract

Business owners implicitly entrust valuable resources to leaders with the primary expectation to produce results. Equally important is a leader's stewardship duty to help people flourish. Team members who cooperate and collaborate are enjoyable and easy to work with. The Crazy-makers present the biggest challenges and are time and energy consumptive. Crazy-makers are everywhere; they arrive from many places and seem to appear without notice. In many circumstances, current leaders are reformed Crazy-makers and oddly enough do not remember how their personal transformation to collaborative, results-oriented behaviors took place. This white paper provides perspective, insights, tools and skills for working with the Crazy-makers. Understanding this topic is much like being Alice in Lewis Carroll's classic tale, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1866). Preparing to work with Crazy-makers, a leader needs to **Peek** into the Rabbit Hole and adopt the proper mindset. Once Into the Rabbit Hole, on the way to the Mad-Hatters party, how to spot the Crazy-maker behavior is helpful. Just as important are the road maps provided by The Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Lencioni, 2002) and Tribal Leadership (Logan and King, 2002) to help navigate away from Wonderland into a trust-based collaborative culture. The Regaining Sanity section offers practical considerations for setting direction and clarifying work and relationship expectations. Finally, **Getting Out of the Rabbit Hole** presents Crazy-maker survival skills, which enhances leadership competency. Highly developed leadership competencies not only motivate teams to produce timely, cost-effective and quality results, they help facilitate change with grace and build a trust-based culture of collaboration. The cumulative effect of an intentional mindset, heightened awareness, pragmatic tools and skills is the transformation from Crazy-maker to trusted team member.



Up Your Relationship Skills Index: How to work with the "Crazy-makers"

Introduction

Leaders have a principle responsibility to be in service to teammates, colleagues, clients, and managers. Being a leader "is the ability to set direction; motivate and influence others to collaboratively produce results" (Bristol & Yeatts, 2011). Significantly reducing a leader's ability to influence and produce results is chaos, confusion and collusion often associated with Crazy-maker behavior. Collusion provides the seeds for chaos to grow. Clarifying direction, work expectations and relationship expectations are important to restore equilibrium. Team members and leaders have a high need for order, consistency, and producing results. Transforming Crazy-makers into collaborative members of a team can be time consumptive. With the right mindset, skills and tools, leaders can create a culture, which produces results and respects the team member's humanity.

To expedite clarity and eliminate Crazy-maker created chaos, a leader objectively needs to analyse and resolve confusion. Leaders need a framework to understand Crazy-maker behaviors and to evaluate personal attitudes. Attitudes and behaviors can become habits that filter the available options for gaining clarity and subtly restrict a leader's focus. Having a singular focus on business results reduces a leader's awareness of their responsibility for team member development and growth. The keys to working with challenging people require a leader to understand what mindsets to review, how to gain transparency, and how to influence team member collaboration. With an intentional mindset and an understanding of chaos, a leader can see what appears to be disruptive is instead multiple layers of interconnected and interrelated solvable patterns. In short, moving to a collaborative culture creates the environment to do what's important - identifying the appropriate results, processes, and people related activities needed to remain competitive in the marketplace. A culture of collaborative, trust-based relationships is the basis for lasting competitive advantage

Peeking into the rabbit hole: Preparing for the journey

Working with Crazy-makers is a leadership journey. A journey filled with challenges and opportunities. How we mentally prepare for the Crazy-maker expedition will shape the experience. One approach is consistently view others as a vehicle for personal success or as an impediment to results desired. Our unconscientious mind can be running self-protecting questions to help justify our position of authority and organizational importance (Exhibit 1).



- How can I get ahead?
- How can I look good?
- How can I get even?
- · How can I look impressive?
- · How can I get someone else to do this for me?
- How can I get the boss to like me?
- How can I look better than anyone around me?

Exhibit 1 – Self-Protecting Questions (Arbinger 2010)

Mindful leaders prepare for the excursion with balanced awareness between two big responsibilities and obligations. Responsible leaders are always mindful and attentive of the results needed and their influence on others. Simply summarized, world-class leaders know the WHAT, actions and activities, that produce needed results and the HOW, a way of being, that inspires and motivate others. Tightly bundled with WHAT and HOW responsibilities are leadership obligations to facilitate change and build a trust-based culture. World-class leaders make an intentional decision to serve others and society, by making a positive difference for a higher, greater good. Exceptional leaders add to society instead of depleting it. This world-class level of performance requires elevated levels of awareness and compassion for the humanity of others. While preparing for the journey, there are simple questions to ponder (Exhibit 2) that can create opportunities rather than the spiralling downward rabbit-hole vortex of Crazy-maker self-interest.

- How am I a problem for others?
- · How can I help?
- How can I help things go right?

Exhibit 2 – Collaborative Questions (Arbinger 2010)

Leaders must be mindful and aware when entering into the rabbit hole because "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there" (L. Carroll, 1866).

Into the Rabbit Hole: Spotting the Crazy-makers

Entering into the Crazy-makers rabbit hole, a leader may experience a cast of characters similar to the Mad-Hatters tea party. Knowing where to look and what identifiers to spot will help a leader remain resourceful. Unlike the tea party participant's outlandish clothing, Crazy-maker behaviors, what they say and do, become their costumes. Over time, cumulative Crazy-maker behaviors can result in organizational dysfunction. To produce results and create a trust-based culture, a leader's ability to influence team members and stakeholders, even the Crazy-makers among them, is essential. Knowing who the Crazy-makers are, where to find them and what they do, is a first step to move toward raising your relationship skills.



Who are the Crazy-Makers?

Crazy-makers are people who create team turmoil and organizational churn. As Crazy-makers interact with team members and other stakeholders they create seductive distractions from useful and collaborative work. These distractions slow progress and redirect focus on unproductive activities such as complaining and gossiping. Crazy-makers appear in all organizational levels, executive, mid-management, and knowledge-worker. Additionally, years of education, functional expertise, industry longevity, organization tenure, sex, age, or nationality fail to provide a unique way to identify Crazy-makers. According to the Arbinger Institute (2010) suggests a simple unifying way to identify collaborative relationships. Placing relationships in one of four large categories (Exhibit 3), manager, reports, peers and customer, will be helpful when developing skills to get out of the rabbit hole.



Exhibit 3 – Identifying Crazy-makers (Arbinger 2012)

What do they do?

In Tribal Leadership, (Logan & King, 2011) address Me-centric behaviors (Exhibit 4) which create alienation, disengagement, disharmony. As Crazy-maker dissatisfaction grows, they begin to collude by enrolling others into a web of gossip and complaints. The recurring observable communications and behaviors (Exhibit 4) create friction and distract from team and organizational performance.

- Blaming others and making excuses
- Diminishing the contributions of others
- · Spreading innuendo and rumor
- Exaggerating the importance of their contribution
- Demanding respect because of positional power or service longevity
- Being impatient or frequently short-tempered
- · Talking down to others. Acting entitled to special treatment or privileges
- · Justifying their poor treatment of others
- Being overly critical of others
- · Complaining about the lack of opportunity

Exhibit 4 – Crazy Maker Behaviors



Patrick Lencioni's 2002 book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, suggests a focus on results, embracing accountability, achieving commitment, mastering conflict and building trust are indispensable for a high-functioning collaborative team. Crazy-makers actively recruit allies to their point-of-view. The ensuing confusion will erode trust and increase personal and organizational conflict. Paying attention to symptoms that are Crazy-maker induced (Exhibit 5) leaders can identify organizational indictors and take appropriate action to restore productivity and collaboration. Mindful awareness to subtle beginnings of these behavioral indicators can minimize consequences. Just like bad news, bad behavior does not improve with age.

- Disputes and disaffection within the group
- Increase in staff turnover
- Increase in complaints and grievances
- Increased reports of stress
- Difficulty in attracting new staff
- Poor performance
- · Customer dissatisfaction or complaints

Exhibit 5 – Organizational Symptoms

Navigating the Crazy-maker World: Frameworks for action

Leaders disentangle Crazy-maker created turmoil and chaos by knowing frameworks for understanding the behaviors of organizations, teams and individuals. Within each framework, select interpersonal skills and tools can help a leader remain resourceful and focus on what is important.

Organization Behavior

The success of a team depends on its people, the strength of its people determines the culture, and effective leadership creates a flourishing culture. Each progressive organizational stage (Exhibit 6) displays distinctive behaviors. Logan and King (2011) recommend simple actions leaders can take to move individuals from the lower performance levels of alienation, disengagement and Me-centric behaviors, to become teams that are more productive. Typically, stage-two, disengagement, and stage-three, Me-centric behviors are characteristic in many organizations. Crazy-makers entrenched in stage-two firmly believe "my life sucks" and avoid accountability, are cynical and sarcastic; believing all their problems caused by others. Stage-three Crazy-makers continually need to win others over to their point-of-view, form cliques, make others feel like objects and fail to manage time. Me-centric Crazy-makers let everyone know "I'm great... and you're not"... in other words, "aren't you lucky I'm here to solve all these problems." Research by Logan and King (2011) illustrate a leader's principle tools are clearly stated purpose and values to achieve stability and superior performance.





Exhibit 6 – Organizational and Team Stages (Logan & King, 2002)

Team Behaviors

Lencioni (2002) reveals the five dysfunctions, which go to the very heart of why teams often struggle. Crazy-maker behavior emerges when teams have low levels of trust and do not know how to manage conflict. A way to understand the Lencioni model is to convert the five dysfunctions into positive behavioral statements of a cohesive team (Exhibit 7).

- 1. They trust one another
- 2. They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas
- 3. They commit to decisions and plans of action
- 4. They hold one another accountable for results
- They focus on achieving collective results

Exhibit 7 - Desired Team Behaviors

Teams succeed because they are human. By acknowledging the limitations by being vulnerable, team members overcome me-centric tendencies that make trust, conflict, commitment, accountability and a focus on results so elusive. This simple model (Exhibit 8) can help leaders build cohesive and effective teams where trust-based relationships are the foundation for results.



Exhibit 8 - Team Functions (Lencioni, 2002)



Behavioral Communication Styles

A leaders ability to influence, inspire, and motivate directly correlates to communication skill proficiency. Leaders establish and sustain trust-based relationships by how they communicate. It is important to recognize that communication styles exist along a continuum. The two major communication style continuums are task-people focus and aggressive-reflective problem solving approach (Exhibit 9). Paying attention to behavioral clues of naturally occurring communication style variances can help to differentiate style tendencies and distinguishing behaviors to help a leader recognize styles in others. Differences in communication styles can create naturally occurring conflict and under stress, most people have the tendency to overdo their preferred style. Ironically, others can perceive the overuse of a strength as a weakness. A communication style that has a task focus rather than a people focus may be seen as too demanding and uncaring about people. In another instance when making a decision, others may see a reflective communication style as taking too long before taking action. These behavioral differences can cause tension and feed the notion that the Crazy-makers are in action. Knowing the tendencies of others, a leader can match natural inclinations and establish rapport and trust. An effective team-building program encourages individuals to understand and appreciate diversity. Team members learn about differences in motivators, communication, and thinking and problem-solving styles. A leader's ability to identify and calibrate to the preferred communication style of another coupled with the flexibility to adapt to the other persons style is the most effective way to establish trust (Bonnstetter & Suiter, 2013). Understanding the similarities and differences between style preferences can help team effectiveness by preventing or defusing conflict. "If you honor team mate individuality, their differences, they will feel like a winning team" (Alessandra & O'Connor, 1996).



Exhibit 9 – Communication Style Behaviors (Bonnstetter & Suiter, 2013)



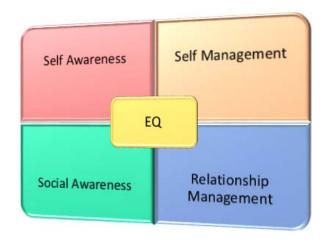
Regaining Sanity: Focus on what's important

The quintessential leader question is how to slow down or even stop the rising tension when Crazy-makers seem to appear from every direction. To regain sanity, an appropriate leadership mindset uses emotional intelligence to establish the overall tone for organizational culture and personal performance. "The biggest benefits of having the right mindset is to help leaders be more creative, operate in a more relaxed way, and be open to trying novel approaches" (Brooks, 2014). Emotional intelligence and communication styles flexibility allow leaders to gain a new perspective, so they can align intentions, thoughts, and actions. A collaborative, results-oriented leadership style creates success at multiple levels, with individual people, teams, organizations, and the larger community. Mutually contributing to a larger service-oriented goal is what shifts peoples' viewpoints from trying to gain more control to becoming helpful to others. This shift towards helpfulness requires a leader to pay more attention to the subtle clues that ambiguity, tension, conflict present. This trio are the elements that allow the Crazy-makers to thrive.

Heightened Awareness

The two primary considerations to develop increased awareness and staying resourceful are avoiding personal blind spots and using emotional intelligence skills. As Stephen M.R. Covey states (2006), "We judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their behavior." Decision-making and problem-solving skills diminish when a leader views others through this Me-centric filter. When the Crazy-makers are hosting the Mad-Hatters tea party, emotional intelligence (D. Goldman, 1996) provides another framework for building and sustaining trust-based relationships (Exhibit 10). Mersino (2007) states compelling reasons for leaders to enhance their emotional quotient (EQ) in order to avoid poor decision-making, reduced collaboration, and low awareness of others. Significantly, Dr. Friedman (Frieland & Frieland, 2013) describes how the amygdala (Exhibit 11) hijacks our capacity for creative and logical solutions while flooding our body with cortisol and adrenaline. As a leader, recognizing and identifying our emotions and an awareness of the emotions of others is an essential interpersonal competence. Combining heightened awareness with actions, tools and skills to produce results, the WHAT, and build trust-based relationships, the HOW. A leader can eliminate ambiguity and foster passionate fact-based discussions with increased awareness of WHAT essential actions to initiate and a HOW mindset that respects the humanity of others. Taking these actions provides an opportunity for Crazy-makers to play-nice-in-the-sandbox with others.





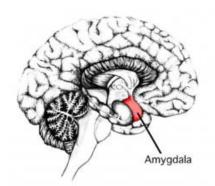


Exhibit 10 - Emotional Quotient (EQ) (Goleman, 1996)

Exhibit 11 - Amygdala

The WHAT: Producing results

Leaders facilitate the actions and activities of the WHAT by setting direction and clarifying work expectations. These actions typically produce a tangible document to help team members and stakeholders understand the outcomes of their collective effort, and the work sequence needed. Direction setting activities create a focus on results when documented in a charter or plan. Leaders clarify work expectations by identifying and prioritizing key results; then creating schedules, processes and performance metrics so others understand how they can contribute. These work products directly support the top two layers of Lencioni's pyramid model, results and accountability.

The HOW: Building trust-based relationships

Trust-based relationships, the HOW, is built by combining an EQ mindset and behavior management documents aiding issue escalation and linking values. "Genuine success does not come from proclaiming core values, but from consistently putting them into daily action" (Blanchard & O'Connor, 2003). Using a value definition process, leaders engage team member participation. Identifying values begins with dialogue around the important expected behaviors. Then a list of value synonyms, which clarify behavior, then paraphrase what that value is and is not. This simple four-column table (Exhibit 12) provides daily guidance for intentions, dialog, and actions. Clearly stated relationship expectations and communication style flexibility lay the foundation for Leniconi's trust and managing conflict layers.

| Value Integrity | Synonym Honesty Truthfulness Authenticity Veracity | Walking my talk | What it IS NOT Being deceitful Untruthful by omission masking true thoughts or feelings |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| | VeracityForthright | Aligning intentions, words, behaviors | Avoiding an uncomfortable truth |

Exhibit 12 – Values Template (Bristol & Yeatts, 2010)



The book *Tribal Leadership* (Logan & King. 2011) reveals a simple format (Exhibit 13) to integrate direction, work expectations and relationship expectations on a single page. This template facilitates a team's best thinking when brainstorming the WHAT while keeping in mind the HOW. This format reminds leaders to measure results by the effect on client and end-users and in addition to the typical project productivity measures of timeliness and budget compliance.

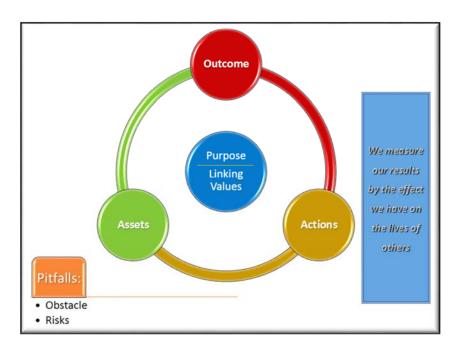


Exhibit 13 – QwikPlan (Logan & King, 2002)

Getting Out of the Rabbit Hole: Crazy-maker survival skills

Mindset matters. When working with challenging people, leaders need to take an objective inventory of their strengths and weaknesses. They can systematically convert weaknesses into strengths by paying attention to assumptions, way of being and subconscious self-justifying beliefs.

Mirror... Mirror on the Wall: Where to start

The book *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter* (Wiseman & McKeown, 2012) provides an objective framework to examine personal leadership assumptions and related actions (Exhibit 14). Multipliers intentionally bring out the best in others, while Diminishers display Me-centric thinking typical of a person operating at stage-three.

| | Diminisher | Multiplier |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Managing talent | Hoards resources, people are tools | Develops & attracts talent thru excitement |
| Approaching mistakes | Blames, suppresses best thinking | Creates environment for best thinking |
| Setting direction | Tells, directives that show their brilliance | Challenges people to stretch and grow |
| Making decisions | Decides abruptly with selected input | Drives decisions through passionate debate |
| Getting things done | Micro manages, personal involvement needed | Gives ownership for results & mentors |

Exhibit 14 – Assumptions (Wiseman & McKeown, 2012)



The Arbinger Institute books, *Leadership and Self-Deception* (2010) and *The Anatomy of Peace* (2015) provide another framework for leadership consideration. An outward facing mindset reflects a way of being where another person matters. The dreams, hopes, fears, and concerns of others matters just as much as leaders' personal dreams, hopes, fears, and concerns matter. With an inward facing mindset, people experience others more as an object and less human. Also, as an object, a person can be seen as an obstacle, blocking progress, a vehicle, a tool to provide an advantage, or an irrelevancy, just invisible. Prolonged inward facing thoughts can result in "Better Than, Must Be Seen As, Worse than, or I Deserve" attitudes and beliefs which create interpersonal barriers or boxes (Arbinger, 2009). These interpersonal boxes help Crazy-makers justify poor behaviors and cultivate debilitative emotions, which contribute to chaos and churn.

Action Steps

Social commentator and humourist Will Rogers once said, "Even on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." A practical action plan is the next step once a leader is clear on what interpersonal skills are wanted.

Follow a Process: Step one; conduct an objective assessment. Step two: work the extremes. After assessing your leadership practices, take your highest strength to the next level and concurrently improve your lowest low. Step three; adopt the leadership behaviors and practices identified in We-centric, outward facing and multiplier approaches. Step four; taking the 30-day challenge. Pick one practice in a discipline and work it for 30 days. By immersing yourself into a skill, a leader moves from unconsciously incompetent to consciously competent. This focused process starts by developing the attitudes demonstrated by outward facing leaders. When leaders practice these core attitudes daily, they form new beliefs and have enhanced interpersonal skills, (J. Dispenza, 2014). These heightened skill levels significantly help to convert challenging personalities into collaborative team members.

Develop Interpersonal Skills: The most successful leaders manage their emotional temperature, demonstrate communication style flexibility and invite a collaborative culture. Emotional quotient (EQ) improves when we develop personal and social competence skills (Exhibit 15). Communication and rapport are key to leadership success. Leaders create a way of working which enables diverse skills and interests to collaborate and bring out the very best in each team member. Leadership by example sets the behavioral standards for team and client interaction. To sustain rapport and trust-based relationships leaders need to understand individual communication styles, recognize the communication styles of others, and develop communication style flexibility. Authentic leaders establish exquisite rapport through communication style flexibility by aligning behaviors that fit and resonate with teammates (Bristol & Yeatts, 2011). We-centric leaders see others as people and suspend judgment; inviting the team to take collaborative action. A stage-four leader encourages the team to develop a solution by asking thought provoking questions and removing



any barriers, which hinder performance. Seeing others as people, leaders "are different" by the manner in which they listen, learn, and teach while helping things go right. A level-four leader allocates more time keeping others informed, finding and using the genius of others, and helping colleagues grow professionally while clarifying performance expectations.

| | Self | Other |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|
| | (Personal Competence) | (Social Competence) |
| Recognition | Self-awareness | Social Awareness Empathy Organizational awareness Service |
| Regulation | Self-management | Relationship Management Inspirational leadership Influence Developing others Change catalyst Conflict management Building bonds Teamwork and collaboration |

Exhibit 15 - Goleman's Framework of Emotional Competencies (Mersino, 2007)

We-centric leaders see others as people and suspend judgment; inviting the team to take collaborative action. A stage-four leader encourages the team to develop a solution by asking thought provoking questions and removing any barriers, which hinder performance. Seeing others as people, leaders "are different" by the manner in which they listen, learn, and teach while helping things go right. A level-four leader allocates more time keeping others informed, finding and using the genius of others, and helping colleagues grow professionally while clarifying performance expectations. Level-four leaders significantly improve project results and trust by seeing people as people as shown in Exhibit 16.

| Inward Facing – Resistant way of being | Outward Facing – Responsive way of being |
|--|---|
| I blame others and make excuses | I accept responsibility for my results |
| I self-justify my behavior | I recognize the humanity and intentions of others |
| I see people as objects | I see people as people |
| I deny being defensive | I know when I am wrong and apologize |
| I focus on being right | I focus on taking action and getting results |
| I shift responsibility when things go wrong | I respond to problems by creating solutions |
| I create problems to prove I'm right | I seek to be helpful to others |
| I resist the ideas of others | I respond to people as they are and take action |

Exhibit 16 - Leaders "Way of Being" (Arbinger 2012)



Determine the pace: Incrementally building skills layer-by-layer takes time. Collaborating with other leaders can hasten progress as mutual learning deepens resolve and team performance accelerates. A leader wanting to accelerate the transformational journey may consider finding a mentor or engaging a coach to compress the elapsed time. Regardless of the approach, as leaders develop a stage-four mindset, clarify values, and use team tools, they will become more We-centric. These refined interpersonal skills help transform conflict and chaos into a collaborative culture, which produces results for the organization.

Accelerating Change: Start with the Mindset Eliminate transactional flaws - Goldsmith Get out of the box - Arbinger Remove assumptions - Wiseman **Build Interpersonal Skills** Assess your emotional quotient - Mersino Create rapport - Losier Develop communication style flexibility - Alessandra Nourish trust based-relationships -Master Team Tools and Skills Create a values driven culture - Blanchard & O'Connor Invite accountability, integrity & collaboration - Arbinger Advance team performance levels - Logan & King Skill Refinement - Wiseman Improve your lowest Take your highest high to the next level

Figure 14 – Accelerating interpersonal skills transformation

Closing

Mindset matters. Working with the Crazy-makers can be an opportunity to help someone flourish as a productive team member or a never-ending series of challenges. Leaders need to conduct an objective self-inventory making certain they are not contributing to the uncertainty. If a leader has a low emotional quotient and treats a Crazy-maker as an obstacle or a tool, the churn and confusion will most likely intensify. With certainty, a Crazy-maker will find allies willing to join the Mad-Hatters tea party creating more distractions from desired results and team harmony. Leaders who intentionally raise their emotional intelligence quotient and practice communication style flexibility can begin to have cogent conversations. When these fundamental interpersonal skills integrate with a clearly stated purpose, a charter or plan, transparency about work expectations, a schedule or process, and relationship expectations and values, a collaborative transformation begins. As strengths and weaknesses are identified, prioritized and an action plan developed, a leader can grow the strengths and enhance the high priority weaknesses.

Lead by example. Be the leader who takes a hard look into the mirror and is transparent about your shortcomings then shares the action steps for skill development. Then use your enhanced emotional intelligence and communication skills to understand, create rapport and build trust-based relationships.



Building skills layer by layer creates personal synergy as leaders develop a world-class leader mindset, build core values, and use team tools to transform their competencies to accelerate organization performance. Stage-four leadership relationship competencies not only motivate teams to produce timely, cost-effective and quality results, these competencies help facilitate change with grace and build a trust-based culture of collaboration. The cumulative effect of an intentional mindset, heightened awareness, pragmatic tools and skills is the transformation from Crazy-maker to trusted team member. As a leader, you will leave the Mad Hatter's tea party and exit the rabbit hole; welcoming life in a collaborative culture which produces results.



Phil Bristol, Growth Curve Strategist Managing Principal,

Phil is internationally recognized as an expert in accelerating organizational performance. He has over 35 years of strategic planning, business process improvement, enterprise-wide project

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