

# Multipliers

## How the best leaders make everyone smarter

Notes on the book by Liz Wizeman

### Multipliers vs Diminishers

**Multipliers** : – These leaders are genius makers and bring out the intelligence in others. They build collective viral intelligence in organisations

**Diminishers** : These leaders are absorbed in their own intelligence, stifle others and deplete the organisation of crucial intelligence and capability.

How they lead:

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

Diminisher	
The Empire Builder	Hoards resources and underutilises talent
The Tyrant	Creates a tense environment that suppresses people’s thinking and capability
The Know-It-All	Gives directives that showcase how much they know
The Decision Maker	Makes centralised, abrupt decisions that confuse the organisations
The Micro Manager	Drives results through their personal involvement

Multiplier	
The Talent Manager	Attracts talented people and sues them at their highest point of contribution
The Liberator	Creates an intense environment that requires people’s best thinking and work
The Challenger	Defines an opportunity that causes people to stretch
The Debate Maker	Drives sound decisions through rigorous debate
The Investor	Gives other people the ownership for results and invests in their success

## The Five Disciplines of the Multipliers

1. The Talent Magnet – Attract and Optimise talent
2. The Liberator – Require people’s best thinking
3. The Challenger – Extend challenges
4. The Debate maker – Debate decisions
5. The Investor – Instil accountability

### The Results:

By extracting people’s full capability, Multipliers get twice the capability from people than do Diminishers.

## Chapter 2 – The Talent Magnet

**Empire Builders** – bring in great talent, but they underutilize it because they hoard resources and use them only for their own gain.

**Talent Magnets** – get access to the best talent because people flock to work for them knowing they will be fully utilized and developed to be ready for the next stage.

A cycle of attraction sees those with raw talent and the right mix of intelligence needed for the challenge (“A players”) attracted and under the leadership of the Talent Manager the genius of these players gets discovered and utilised to the fullest. They become smarter and more capable, they become “A players+”. They then get identified and recruited into bigger opportunities, they grow and develop under the care of the Talent Manager.

### The Four Practices of the Talent Magnet

#### 1. Look for talent everywhere

- *Appreciate all types of genius*
- *Ignore boundaries*

#### 2. Find people’s Native Genius (A Native Genius is something that people do, not only exceptionally well, but absolutely naturally. They do it easily (without extra effort) and freely (without condition))

##### 1. Look for what is native

- *What do they do better than anything else they do?*
- *What do they do better than the people around them?*
- *What do they do without effort?*
- *What do they do without being asked?*
- *What do they do readily without being paid?*

##### 2. Label it: ICNU - I see in you...

#### 3. Utilize people to the fullest

- *Connect people with opportunities*
- *Shine a spotlight*

#### 4. Remove the blockers

- *Get rid of prima donnas*
- *Get out of the way*

Empire Builder	
What they do	What they get
Hoards resources and underutilises talent	<p>A reputation as the person "A players" should avoid working with</p> <p>Underutilised people whose capability atrophies</p> <p>Disillusioned people who don't reach out to others</p> <p>A stagnation of talent where disillusioned people quit and stay</p>

Talent Manager	
What they do	What they get
Attracts talented people and sues them at their highest point of contribution	<p>A reputation as the person "A players" should work with</p> <p>Fully utilised people whose genius continues to expand</p> <p>Inspired people who attract others into the organisation</p> <p>A flow of talented people attracting others as they move up and out of the organisation</p>

### Becoming a Talent Magnet

1. Become a genius watcher
  - *Identify it*
  - *Test it*
  - *Work it*
2. Pull some weeds

#### Unexpected Findings

Both Talent magnets and Empire Builders attract 'A' talent. What differentiates them is what they do with the talent once it is in the door

Talent Magnets do not run out of talent by moving their people onto bigger, better opportunities, because there is a steady stream of talent wanting to get into the organisation

Resources:

<https://hbr.org/2011/01/the-six-habits-of-a-talent-mag.html>

HeroMaker

## Chapter 3 – The Liberator

**Tyrants** – create a tense environment that suppresses people's thinking and capability. As a result, people hold back, bring up safe ideas that the leader agrees with and work cautiously.

**Liberators** – create an intense environment that requires people's best thinking and work. As a result people offer their best and boldest thinking to give their best effort.

Liberators create an environment where good things happen:

- *Ideas are generated with ease*
- *People learn rapidly and adapt to new environments*

- People work collaboratively
- Complex problems get solved
- Difficult tasks get accomplished

### The Three practices of the Liberator

1. Create space
  - Release others by restraining yourself
  - Shift the ratio of listening to talking: become a ferocious listener! Let others share what they know.
  - Operate consistently. Consistency creates predictability. When leaders are consistent, it lets others know when they can jump in allows them to contribute.
  - Level the playing field
2. Demand best work
  - Defend the standard
  - Distinguish best work from outcome
3. Generate rapid learning cycles
  - Admit and share mistakes
  - Insist on learning from mistakes. Learning cannot happen without mistakes

Diminishers dominate the space, create anxiety and judge others

Tyrants		Liberators	
What they do	What they get	What they do	What they get
Creates a tense environment that suppresses people's thinking and capability	People who hold back but appear to be engaged not eh surface  Safe Ideas the leader already agrees with  People who work cautiously, avoid taking risks, and find excuses for any mistakes they make	Creates an intense environment that requires people's best thinking and work	People who offer their best thinking and really engage their full brainpower  The best and boldest ideas  People who give their full effort and will go out on a limb and learn quickly from any mistakes

### Becoming a liberator (it takes long-term commitment)

1. Play your chips, learn restraint in meetings, limit your input to when it most matters
2. Label your opinions:
  - Soft opinions offer a perspective and ideas for someone else to consider
  - Hard opinions are a clear and potentially emphatic point of view
3. Make your mistakes known, acknowledging your mistakes give others permission to experience failure and go on to learn and recover with dignity and increased capability.
  - Get personal

- *Go public*

### **Unexpected findings**

The path of least resistance is often the path of tyranny. Because many organisations are skewed, a leader can be above average in an organisation and still operate as a Tyrant

Liberators maintain a duality of giving people permission to think while also creating an obligation for them to do their best work

Multipliers are intense. Leaders who can discern and create the difference between tense and intense climate can access significantly more brainpower from their organisations.

## **Chapter 4 – The Challenger**

*The number one difference between a Nobel prize winner and others is not IQ or work ethic, but that they ask bigger questions.  
-Peter Drucker*

**Know it all** – give directives that showcase how much they know. As a result they limit what their organisation can achieve to what they themselves know how to do. The organisation uses its energy what the boss thinks. They are the 'expert' in everything.

**Challengers** – define opportunities that challenge people to go beyond what they know how to do. As a result they get an organisation that understands the challenge and has the focus and energy to take it on.

*Multipliers understand that people grow through challenge. They understand that intelligence grows by being stretched and tested. So even if the leader has a clear vision of the direction, he or she doesn't just give it to people. Multipliers don't just give answers. They provide just enough information to prove thinking and to help people discover and see the opportunity for themselves. They begin a process of discover.*

*-Liz Wiseman, Multipliers, p107*

### **The three practices of the Challenger**

1. Seed the opportunity
  - *Show the need*
  - *Challenge the assumptions*
  - *Reframe problems*
  - *Create a starting point*
2. Lay down a challenge
  - *Extend a concrete challenge*
  - *Ask the hard questions*
  - *Let others fill in the blanks*
3. Generate belief in what is possible

- *Helicopter down*
- *Lay out a path*
- *Co-create a plan*
- *Orchestrate an early win*

Know - it - alls	
What they do	What they get
Gives directives that showcase how much they know	<p>Distracted efforts as people vie for the attention of the boss</p> <p>Idle cycles in the organisation as people wait to be told what to do or to see if the boss will change direction again</p> <p>An organisation that doesn't want to get ahead of the boss</p>

Challengers	
What they do	What they get
Defines an opportunity that causes people to stretch	<p>Collective intent toward the same overarching opportunity</p> <p>Rapid cycles and accelerated problem solving without the initiation of the formal leader</p> <p>People's discretionary effort and intellectual energy to take on the toughest organisational challenges</p>

### Becoming a challenger

- Become Seriously Curious. Ask: Why? Ask: I wonder if we could...?
- Ask leading questions - go extreme
- Take a bus trip - go somewhere together to learn together.
- Take a massive baby step - let everyone see that something great is possible

### Unexpected findings

Even when leaders have a clear view of the future there are advantages to simply seeding the opportunities

Challenges have full range of motion, they can see and articulate the big thinking and ask the big questions, but they can also connect that to the specific steps needed to create movement

If you ask people to take on the impossible in the right way, it can actually create more safety than if you ask for something easier.

## Chapter 5 – The Debate Maker

*It is better to debate a decision without settling it than setting a decision without debating it*  
-Joseph Joubert

**Decision Makers** – decide efficiently with a small inner circle, but they leave the broader organisation in the dark to debate the soundness of the decision instead of executing it

**Debate Makers** – engage people in debating the issues up front, which leads to the sound decisions that people understand and can execute efficiently

### The three practices of the Debate Maker

#### 1. Frame the Issue

- Define the question
  - *Unearth and challenge the assumptions that entrench the organisation in old patterns and thinking;*
  - *Surface the fundamental tensions and tradeoffs to be considered in a decision;*
  - *Force people to examine the facts and confront reality'*
  - *Ensure multiple perspectives on an issue*
- Form the team
  - *Those with knowledge or insight needed to inform the issue*
  - *Key stakeholders for the decision*
  - *Those with responsibility for driving the outcome of the decision.*
- Assemble the data
  - *Give everyone concerned the right information*
  - *Give it in good time before the debate*
  - *Ensure people can make informed opinions*
- Frame the decision
  - *What Question needs to be addressed?*
  - *Why is the environment or situation creating the need for debate?*
  - *How will the decision making process happen? How long will it take?*
  - *Who will recommend? Who will decide?*

#### 2. Spark the debate

- *Create safety for best thinking*
- *Demand rigour*

A great debate is:

**Engaging:** The question is compelling and important to everyone in attendance

**Comprehensive:** The right information is shared to generate a holistic and collective understanding of the issues at hand.

**Fact based:** The debate is deeply rooted in fact, not opinion

**Educational:** People leave the debate more focused on what they learned than on who 'won' or 'lost'.

<b>Create safety for best thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share your view last after hearing other people's views</li> <li>• Encourage others to take an opposing view</li> <li>• Encourage all points of view</li> <li>• Focus on the facts</li> <li>• Depersonalise the issues and keep it unemotional</li> <li>• Look beyond the organisational hierarchy and job titles</li> </ul>
<b>Demand rigour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the hard questions</li> <li>• Challenge the underlying assumptions</li> <li>• Look for evidence in the data</li> <li>• Attack the issues, not the people</li> <li>• Ask "why" repeatedly until the root cause is unearthed</li> <li>• Equally debate both sides of the issue</li> </ul>

### 3. Drive a Sound Decision

- *Re-clarify the decision-making process*
  - *Are we making the decision right now or do we need more information?*
  - *If it is a team decision, how will we resolve any differing views?*
  - *Has anything that has surfaced in the debate altered the decision-making process?*
- *Make the decision*
- *Communicate the decision and rationale*

<b>Decision Makers</b>	
<b>What they do</b>	<b>What they get</b>
Engage a select inner circle in the decision-making process	<p>Underutilisation of the bulk of their resources, while a select few are overworked</p> <p>A lack of information from those closest to the action, resulting in poorer decisions</p> <p>Too many resources thrown at those who don't have the understanding they need to execute the decisions effectively</p>

<b>Debate Maker</b>	
<b>What they do</b>	<b>What they get</b>
Access a wide spectrum of thinking in a rigorous debate before making decisions	<p>High utilisation of the bulk of their resources</p> <p>Real information they need to make sound decisions</p> <p>Efficient execution with lower resource levels because they have built a deep understanding of the issues, which readies the organisation to execute</p>

### Becoming a Debate Maker

- Ask the Hard Question(s)
- Ask for the data
- Ask each person

### Unexpected findings

As a leader, you can have a very strong opinion but also facilitate debate that creates room for other people's view. The data is the key

Debate Makers are equally comfortable being the decision maker in the end. They are not only consensus-driven leaders.

Rigorous debate does not break down the team; it builds them and makes the team stronger.

## Chapter 6 – The Investor

*If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea*  
-Antoine de St Exupery

**Micromanagers** – manage every detail in a way that creates dependence on the leader and their presence for the organisation to perform

**Investors** – give other people the investment and ownership they need to produce results independent of the leader

### The three practices of the Investor

1. Define ownership
  - Name the lead (give them 51% of the vote)
  - Give ownership for the end goal
  - Stretch the role
2. Invest resources
  - Teach and coach
  - Provide backup
3. Hold people accountable
  - Give back leadership & accountability
  - Expect complete work (ask for the "F-I-X", don't just identify the problem, find a solution)
  - Respect natural consequence
  - Make the scoreboard visible

The diminishes approach to execution:

- assume "people will never be able to figure it out without me"
- maintain ownership by giving piecemeal tasks not real responsibility
- jump in and out taking back assigned tasks the moment a problem arises.
- end up doing all the work themselves

Micromanagers	
What they do	What they get
Manage every detail of the work to ensure it is completed the way they would do it	<p>People who wait to be told what to do</p> <p>People who hold back because they expect to be interrupted and told what to do instead</p> <p>Free riders who wait for the boss to swoop in and save them</p> <p>People who try to "work" their bosses and make sophisticated excuses</p>

Investors	
What they do	What they get
Give other people the ownership for results and invest in their success	<p>People who take initiative and anticipate challenges</p> <p>People who are fully focused on achieving results</p> <p>People who can get ahead of the boss in solving problems</p> <p>People who respond to the natural forces around them</p>

### Becoming an Investor

- Let them know who is the boss: they are in charge and accountable, you stay engaged and supporting
- Let nature take its course: let them experience the natural consequences of their actions in order to learn and develop. Let them learn from their mistakes.
  - *let it happen*
  - *talk about it*
  - *focus on next time*
- Ask for the F-I-X
  - *What solution(s) do you see to this problem?*
  - *How would you propose we solve this?*
  - *What would you like to do to fix this?*
- Hand back the pen: Multipliers say:
  - *"I'm happy to help think this through, but I'm still looking to you to lead this going forward"*
  - *"You are still in the lead on this"*
  - *"I'm here to back you up. What do you need from me as you lead this?"*

### Unexpected findings

Multipliers do get involved in the operational details but they keep the ownership with other people

Multipliers are rated 45% higher at delivering world-class results than the Diminisher counterparts

## Chapter 7 – Becoming a Multiplier

Moving from being a Diminisher to a Multiplier may seem overwhelming so why not take the lazy way:

Use the right principles and tools to attain maximum results with just the right amount of effort

### Three Accelerators:

1. **Work the extremes** – assess your leadership practices and then focus your development on the two extremes

- i) Bring up your lowest low, and
- ii) Take your highest level to the next level

Multiplier	Talent Magnet	Liberator	Challenger	Debate Maker	Investor
Towering Strength					
Competency					
Vulnerability					
Diminisher	Empire Builder	Tyrant	Know-It-All		Decision Maker

2. **Start with the assumptions** – adopt the assumptions of a Multiplier and allow the behaviour and practices to naturally follow

Discipline	Diminisher Assumption	Multiplier Assumption
Talent Magnet	People need to report to me in order to get them to do anything	If I can find someone's genius, I can put them to work
Liberator	Pressure increases performance	People's best thinking must be given, not taken
Challenger	I need to have all the answers	People get smarter by being challenged
Debate Maker	There are only a few people worth listening to	With enough minds, we can figure it out
Investor	People will never be able to figure it out without me	People are smart and will figure it out

3. **Taking a 30 day multiplier challenge** – pick one practice within one discipline and work it for 30 days

4. **Sustaining Momentum:** sustaining momentum takes repetition, time and reinforcement

- Build it layer by layer
- Stay with it for a year
  - *How is what I know getting in the way of what I don't know?*
  - *What would cause other people to become smarter and more capable around me?*
  - *What could people figure out on their own if I just gave them more space?*
  - *How can I get the full brainpower of my team or organisation?*
  - *How can I multiply the intelligence of others?*
- Build a community