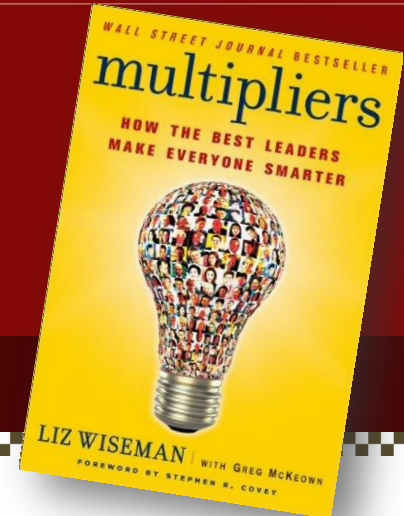


Multipliers

How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter

By Liz Wiseman with Greg McKeown

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The Author

For 17 years, Liz Wiseman worked for a 22 billion dollar software giant called Oracle Corp. As the vice president responsible for global talent development strategy, she worked alongside many intelligent executives that had been recruited from top companies and elite universities.

Wiseman was intrigued by the different effect these leaders had on people in their organizations. She wondered "How do some leaders create intelligence around them while others diminish it?" (p. 13, Ch.1)



Redhot, Relevant & Recommended

I recommend this book. Wiseman's extensive research across several continents provides an abundance of real-life examples, which serve to illustrate her point and interest the reader. Her writing is clear, straightforward and easy to understand. I particularly liked the flexibility offered to readers. Each chapter ends with a summary of key points in chart form. The reader can skim these for a quick overview of her findings or as a reminder of key points. For readers wanting more, there are thorough discussions and examples to support her findings. She purposely includes detailed descriptions of attitudes and actions of both positive and negative leaders. Readers are drawn into self-reflection. And, for those leaders prompted to change, this book serves as a guide with practical suggestions for becoming a Multiplier. Her appendices contain discussion questions and a link to online resources.

"At a time that many organizations face new demands, with insufficient resources . . . the ability to extract and multiply the intelligence that already exists in the organization is redhot relevant."

- Stephen R. Covey (p. 3, Forward)



"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."
(p. 31, Ch. 1)

Summary

There are leaders that manage to get the best out of people. In his or her presence, everyone seems to be more intelligent and capable. At meetings, ideas fly around the table and are debated. Tough problems get solved. People work hard and leave feeling exhausted and exhilarated. Recruitment is easy as people flock to work with these leaders.

There is another type of leader that seems to suck the oxygen out of the room. They do all the talking and hear only one or two people at the end of a meeting because they think no one has anything valuable to contribute. They ask questions they already know the answer to as a means to flaunt their intelligence or to belittle an employee that does not know the answer.

Wiseman calls these leaders Multipliers and Diminishers.

Wiseman's Promise

" 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." (p. 104, Ch.1)



+ x

Multiplier Math

x +

Our people
are
overworked.

We need more
resources.

Our best
people are
maxed out.

Diminishers use Addition

Their people are overworked but underutilized.

Like children at a buffet loading plates of food they don't eat, they load up on resources but don't utilize the capacity of their people

Most people
are
underutilized.

Capacity can be
multiplied without
extra investment.

80 people can
operate like 50
or 500.

Multipliers Use Multiplication

They leverage the capability of their people.

They operate more efficiently

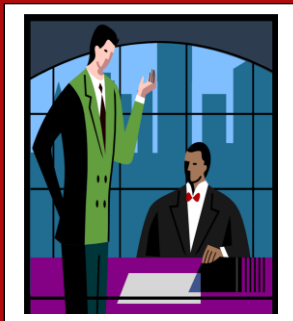
" Multipliers don't necessarily get more with less. They get more by using more - more of people's intelligence and capabilities." (p. 63, Ch. 1)



Surprise Findings

A Hard Edge

Multipliers are tough. They expect great things. They make people feel smart and capable. They are not "feel-good" managers. "These leaders are not about cupcakes and kisses". (p. 94, Ch. 1)



Great Sense of Humour

Multipliers are not comedians, but don't take themselves or situations too seriously. Many have a self-deprecating wit that puts others at ease.

Accidental Diminisher

Some leaders thought it was their job as the boss to be the smartest and manage their subordinates.

How Do Multipliers Do It?

The answer is in the mindset and disciplines of the Multiplier.

Mind of a Diminisher

- really intelligent people are rare and I'm one of them
- they'll never figure this out without me
- in meetings, I only listen to two people
- no one else really has anything to offer
- intelligence is static - it can't change
- people who don't get it now, never will
- I'll have to do the thinking for everyone
- the world is black and white

Mind of a Multiplier

- intelligence is continually developing
- people are smart, they'll figure it out
- talented people are capable of contributing at a higher level
- what can be done to develop and grow these abilities?
- my job is to get the right people together and get out of the way
- I trust them
- the world is Technicolor

Five Disciplines which Differentiate Multipliers from Diminishers:

1. Attract and optimize talent.
2. Create intensity that requires best thinking.
3. Extend challenges.
4. Debate decisions.
5. Instill ownership and accountability.



Unexpected Findings

1. Both Talent Magnets and Empire Builders attract top talent. What is different is what they do with the talent.

2. Talent Magnets don't run out of talent when they move their people onto better jobs because there is a line-up of talent waiting to join them.

What Can You Do to Become a Talent Magnet?

1. Become a genius watcher
2. Pull some weeds. Firing a destructive genius will allow your team to work at greater capacity.

1. Attract and Optimize Talent

The Multiplier operates as a Talent Magnet.

The practices of the Talent Magnet are:

1. Look for Talent Everywhere
 - All types of genius
 - Ignore boundaries
2. Find People's Native Genius
 - Look for what is native
 - Label it
3. Utilize People to Their Fullest
 - Connect people with opportunities
 - Shine a spotlight
4. Remove the blockers
 - Get rid of prima donnas
 - Get out of the way

Diminishers operate as Empire Builders.

They think everyone has to report to them or they won't get anything done. They acquire human resources and don't use their talents. They organize people in charts that make it clear who the boss is. They hog the spotlight and take credit.

(Ch. 2)



Unexpected Findings

1. The path of least resistance is often the path of tyranny.
2. Liberators give people the freedom to think but hold them accountable for doing their best work.
3. Multipliers are not tense, but they are intense.

What Can You Do to Become a Liberator?

1. Use poker chips to limit the amount of talking you do. Each chip represents 30 or 90 seconds.
2. Label your opinions as soft and hard. The soft ones can be changed, but the hard ones are final.
3. Make your mistakes known.

2. Create Intensity that Requires Best Thinking

The Multiplier operates as a Liberator.

The practices of the Liberator are:

1. Create Space
 - Release others by restraining yourself
 - Shift the ratio of listening to talking
 - Operate consistently
 - Level the playing field
2. Demand Best Work
 - Defend the standard
 - Distinguish best work from outcomes
3. Generate Rapid Learning Cycles
 - Admit and share mistakes
 - Insist on learning from mistakes

Diminishers operate as Tyrants.

They make a tense environment. People share only safe ideas that they think the leader wants to hear. They talk most of the time.

(Ch. 3)



Unexpected Findings

1. Even if a leader has a plan for the future, there are advantages to seeding the opportunities.

2. Challengers can ask the big questions and the small steps needed.

3. Asking people to take on difficult tasks in the right way, it creates more comfort than asking for something easier.

What Can You Do to Become a Challenger?

1. Ask a leading question.

2. Take a bus trip. (Get out in the field and see the problems first-hand.)

3. Take a huge baby step. (Involve everyone in a small step.)

3. Extend Challenges

The Multiplier operates as a Challenger.

The practices of the Challenger are:

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 to reality
- Lay out a path
- Co-create the plan
- Orchestrate an early win

Diminishers operate as a Know-It-Alls. They always try to show how smart they are. If they don't know something, they stall until they can learn it. They ask questions they already know the answer to just to "catch" people.

(Ch. 4)



Unexpected Findings

1. A leader can have strong opinions and facilitate debate. Data is the key.
2. Debate Makers are also comfortable making the decision in the end.
3. Rigorous debate doesn't break a team; it makes them stronger.

What Can You Do to Become a Debate Maker?

1. Ask the hard question.
2. Ask for the data.
3. Ask each person.

4. Debate Decisions

The Multiplier operates as a Debate Maker.

The practices of the Debate Maker are:

1. Frame the Issue
 - Define the question
 - Form the team
 - Assemble the data
 - Frame the decision
2. Spark the Debate
 - Create safety for best thinking
 - Demand rigor
3. Drive a Sound Decision
 - Clarify the decision-making process
 - Make the decision
 - Communicate the decision and rationale

Diminishers operate as Decision Makers.

They assume there are only a few people worth listening to. They dominate discussions with their own ideas. They are debaters, not debate makers. They force decisions. Most people are left in the dark and then begin to question the soundness of the decision.

(Ch. 5)



Unexpected Findings

1. Multipliers do get involved with details, but leave leadership with others.
2. Multipliers are rated 42% higher in results than Diminishers.

What Can You Do to Become an Investor?

1. Let them know who is boss (it is them, not you).
2. Let nature take its course.
3. Ask what they would like to do to fix problems.
4. Hand the pen back so they continue to lead. Maintain your role as back-up.

5. Instill Ownership and Accountability

The Multiplier operates as an Investor.

The practices of the Investor are:

1. Define Ownership
 - Name the lead
 - Give ownership for the end goal
 - Stretch the role
2. Invest Resources
 - Teach and coach
 - Provide backup
3. Hold People Accountable
 - Give it back
 - Expect complete work
 - Respect natural consequences
 - Make the scoreboard visible

Diminishers operate as Micromanagers.

They jump in and take over, essentially telling people they are not smart enough to handle the problem. They "save" people from natural consequences, which eliminates an opportunity to learn.

(Ch. 6)

How Can You Become a Multiplier ?



1. Work the Extremes:

Assess your leadership practices and focus on developing the two extremes 1) bring up your lowest low and 2) take your highest high to the next level.

2. Start with the Assumptions of a Multiplier:

- If I can find someone's genius, I can put them to work.
- People's best thinking must be given, not taken.
- People get smarter by being challenged.
- With enough minds, we can figure it out
- People are smart and will figure things out.

3. Take a 30-Day Multiplier Challenge:

Pick one practice within one discipline and work at it for thirty days.

4. Build layer by layer and stay with it for one year. Repeat.

(p. 73, Ch. 7)





Wiseman began each chapter with an appropriate quote. This was my favourite:

"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. "

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Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever encountered a leader that acts like a Diminisher?
2. Are there times you act like a Diminisher ? Are you an Accidental Diminisher?
3. Which practice would you work on in your 30-Day Challenge?

References

Wiseman, L. & McKeown, G. (2010). *Multipliers: How leaders make everyone smarter*. Toronto, ON: HarperCollins Publishers.

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