

The Secret to Managing Everything by Lex Sisney

Excerpted from [*Organizational Physics – The Science of Growing a Business*](#).

If you were to ask 1,000 people “What makes a good manager?” you’d get just as many different answers: “A good manager is participative and democratic.” “No, a good manager is firm and decisive.” “Actually, it’s a person who listens really well but isn’t afraid to make tough decisions.” “It’s someone who can manage the details and make the trains run on time.” “A good manager is a visionary, can spot opportunities, and get others to act on them.” “A good manager produces results.” You get the idea.

If you were to read the most cited management literature, you’d see that there are myriad definitions and some confusion about what constitutes good management (participative, autocratic, etc.) and how varying approaches have evolved over time. In many ways, the differences in interpretation make sense. Many of them have to do with context—the time, setting, and surrounding conditions that impact what it means to manage and do it well. There’s also the obvious fact that human beings are complex individuals attempting to manage complex situations. Naturally, each of us must attempt to deal with our complicated selves, others, and situations with limited resources and awareness.

But what if you could work with a universal theory of management that lays a foundation for all the rest? A theory that defines certain underlying principles of all human endeavors and interactions and could really explain what it means to manage anything? Like a talented engineer works at the underlying causes of an engine’s performance, such a theory would help you work at the underlying causes of organizational behavior and manage its performance too.

In this part, you will learn how you can work with a singular, meta-level management theory that is simple, effective, and all-encompassing in its scope. This framework governs and explains the behavior of all organizations—from individuals and families to corporations. In fact, all aspects of organizational management can be understood through this lens, including the tasks being performed, the styles of the people involved, the behavior of subgroups, and even how the organization relates to its environment.

Think about that for a moment. This one theory explains all the rest. It’s universal. It applies equally to a team in Bangalore and one in New York. It applies to your marriage and it applies to your management style. In the following chapters, I will explain how it works and show you how to use it simply and effectively. With a little practice, you’ll find that your skills as a manager of anything will improve and lead to much better outcomes for you across the board.

Once you know the principles, you can look at any aspect of an organization—from the actions of the individuals involved to the performance of an entire company in the marketplace—and understand how it got to be that way. You will also be able to anticipate its future behavior and work with the underlying causes to change that behavior. This meta-model is powerful, pervasive, and universal.

The secret to understanding management is this: Complex adaptive systems (such as people and organizations) must (1) shape and respond to changes in the environment and (2) do so with a focus

on the whole, as well as the parts and sub-parts of the system. If they are unable to do so, they will cease to get new energy from the environment and they will perish.

Intuitively, this makes sense. For example, imagine a family of four. If the family is to survive and flourish, it must shape the environment by getting resources such as money, food, and shelter. It must also respond to the environment, including to changes that are societal, economic, ecological, and so on. At the same time, it must pay attention to all the parts that make up the family system—things like cooking, cleaning, commuting, paying the bills, and taking the kids to school. It must take into account the different and often conflicting needs of the individual family members. It must also give focus to holistic dynamics so that the family acts like a single, unified whole—for example, making sure that there’s a sense of family identity as well as plenty of love, warmth, laughter, and nurturing for all of its members.

If the family isn’t able to shape or respond to the environment, or if it loses focus on the parts or the whole, it will quickly run into trouble. If the pattern continues, then the family will disintegrate. Just imagine a family that doesn’t have income, or is unable to perform its daily routine, or can’t respond to economic changes, or whose members are always fighting with each other. Obviously, it’s not a family you’d want to be a part of. It is not resilient or adaptive to change. Being part of the family costs all of its members more energy than they get in return. Such a family is on the verge of failure.

The same is true for every organization. It must be constantly shaping and responding to change while focused on the parts and the whole. I am, therefore, going to classify observable behavior, at its most basic level, as either *shaping* or *responding* to change while focusing on the *whole* organization or on its *parts* and sub-parts. I call this the *Adaptive Systems Model* of organizational behavior.

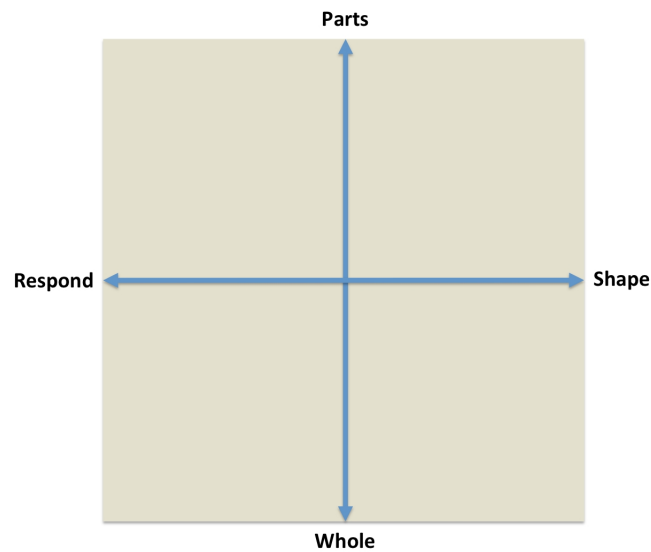


Figure 1. The Adaptive Systems Model provides a universal framework for understanding individual and collective behavior.

The dimensions of behavior within the Adaptive Systems Model exist on a relative and time-dependent scale. For example, if there’s a high drive to shape the environment, then at the same time, there will be a lower drive to respond to change. If there’s a high drive to focus on the parts, there will be a lower drive to focus on the whole. You can see this in your own life. Notice that, when the daily pressures and actions of your life consume you, you’re not simultaneously focused on

the big picture. That’s why you periodically “get away from it all,” go on vacation, or take time out to get a new perspective. Notice too that if you’re busy building a new business, you don’t have the time and energy to respond to all the little vicissitudes of life, family, friends, and so on. As the proverbial farmer would say, “There’s a season to sow and a season to reap and they don’t happen at the same time.”

All behavior can be viewed and understood through this basic model. Note that I’m not talking about “good” or “bad” behavior, nor about why something is behaving the way it is—only that it is behaving along these relative dimensions.

Now that you have an overview of the basic dimensions of behavior, you can use this framework to reveal some amazing insights into the people and situations you’re attempting to manage and do it more effectively.

The Four Forces of Organizational Physics

Using the Adaptive Systems Model as a guide, we can see that the behavior of any complex adaptive system—an individual, a team, or a company—can be broken down into four basic types or forces. I call these the Producing, Stabilizing, Innovating, and Unifying forces.¹ These forces coexist along a continuum that we can map on two axes, representing the drive to shape or respond to the environment and the drive to focus on the parts or the whole organization.

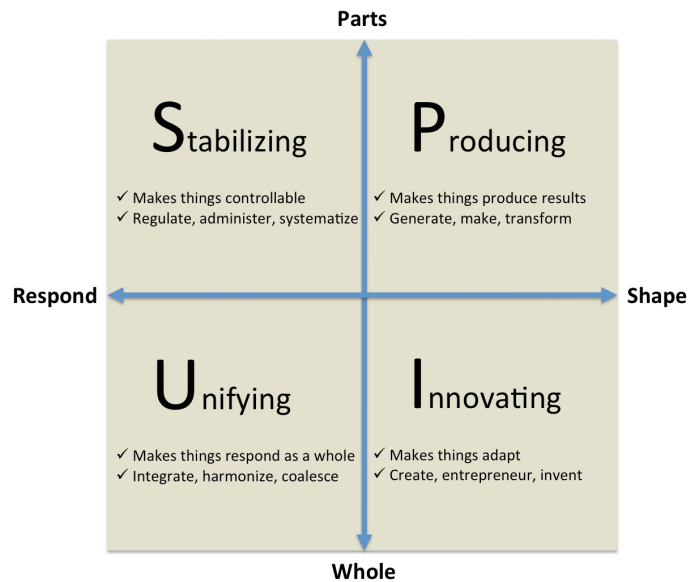


Figure 2. The four forces of Organizational Physics.

¹ I originally learned the concept of four managerial codes from Dr. Ichak Adizes of the Adizes Institute, who uses the terms “Producing,” “Administering,” “Entrepreneurial,” and “Integrating.” While the central concept behind each code is the same, the Organizational Physics model introduces a more universally applicable terminology and performs a meta-level contextualization by coding each function based on its shaping or responding to the environment and focusing on the parts or the whole. Organizational Physics also differs significantly by integrating concepts from physics, evolution, and complex adaptive systems theory. For more on the Adizes approach to styles, see *Management/Mismanagement Styles* (Santa Barbara: Adizes Institute Publishing, 2004).

The Producing force demonstrates a drive to shape the environment and is focused on individual components or aspects of the system. The Producing force is what makes things produce results. Synonyms are “generate,” “make,” and “transform.” Within a business, this is the drive to generate tangible results such as making the sale, completing the code, and getting the work done.

The Stabilizing force demonstrates a need to respond to changes in the environment and is focused on individual components of the system. The Stabilizing force is what makes things controllable. Synonyms are “regulate,” “administer,” and “systematize.” Within a business, this force shows up as the ability to systematize the work being performed, including a drive to create greater efficiencies, improve quality, or reduce liabilities.

The Innovating force demonstrates a drive to shape the environment and is focused on the whole system. The Innovating force is what makes things adapt. Synonyms are “create,” “entrepreneur,” and “invent.” Within a business, this is the ability to sense and act on new opportunities, to be disruptive of the status quo, and to anticipate and adapt successfully to change. You’ll notice this strongly in entrepreneurial endeavors, new product development, R&D, and strategy.

The Unifying force demonstrates a need to respond to changes in the environment and is focused on the entire system. The Unifying force is what makes things respond as a whole. Synonyms are “integrate,” “harmonize,” and “coalesce.” Within a business, this force shows up as the need to create teamwork, interpersonal connections, and a sound group culture.

With a little practice, you can begin to see the Producing, Stabilizing, Innovating, and Unifying forces just about everywhere you look. That is, the four forces are scale-independent. You can spot them from the macro to the micro, including within tasks, functions, individual behavioral styles, and your entire organization. Let’s take a look and see how the four forces behave in a similar fashion at all levels of an organization.

At the macro level, the four forces dictate the behavior of how a business performs in the marketplace. A high-tech startup requires a very high Innovating force to disrupt the market and a Producing force to build the product. Compare this to a senior citizens’ home. This needs a very high Stabilizing force to make sure that processes and regimes are followed and a high Unifying force to help the residents feel like they’re part of a community.

As you dive deeper into how an organization functions, you’ll see the same four forces at work. R&D requires a high Innovating force. Sales needs a high Producing force to win accounts. Accounting needs a high Stabilizing force to limit liabilities and focus on every dollar and penny. A high Unifying force is needed to keep the staff working together as one team.

Because a company is really just a collection of the people involved, you’ll also begin to spot the same four forces within the styles of individuals doing the work. Ideally, the CEO needs to make sure the business is Producing results, Innovating for market demands, and Unifying the team around a consistent vision and values. A good account manager will express a high Unifying force in order to connect well with clients. A good accountant will have a high Stabilizing force that makes it easy to keep the books in order. A good entrepreneur will have a high Innovating force to spot opportunities, as well as a high Producing force to take action.

Even work tasks themselves can be understood through the four forces. For example, the product development process needs good throughput (Producing force), attention to detail

(Stabilizing force), and strong teamwork (Unifying force). The strategy process needs high creativity (Innovating force). The controller process needs attention to detail (Stabilizing force).

The four forces are always at work within an organization. However, not all forces are present in equal amounts. Rather, the four forces exist in *co-op-ctition*. They must cooperate because, without all four, the organization would quickly cease to exist. They must also compete for available energy and, when one force is consuming most of the available energy, this naturally leaves less for the others. This play of forces is what drives observable behavior and shows up in patterns that we'll explore in the coming pages.

From Forces to Styles

Each of us expresses a certain style—understood in its broadest sense as a mode of operating in the world—that reflects our own unique combination of the Producing, Stabilizing, Innovating, and Unifying forces. All four forces are present in each of us in some form, but usually one or two of them come to us most naturally. In addition, when one force is relatively strong, one or more of the other forces will be relatively weak.

While we may modify our general style depending on circumstances, stepping out of our natural strengths costs us more energy than operating within them. For example, imagine a highly innovative entrepreneur who is forced to do bookkeeping for a week. Sure, she may be able to do it, but she's also going to feel extreme tedium, effort, and a loss of energy as a result. It's because of this energy cost that most of us express fairly consistent characteristics that reflect our usual way of managing. Effective management, therefore, requires understanding your own style and its relative strengths and weakness, as well as that of the people with whom you work and interact.

The chart below shows how each basic management style compares to the others. It compares the pace (slow to fast) of how a style tends to act, think, and speak; the timeframe (short view to long view) of how a style tends to perceive a situation, trend, or idea; the orientation (process-oriented to results-oriented) of how a style tends to relate to people and situations; and the approach (structured to unstructured) of how a style tends to operate in daily tasks.

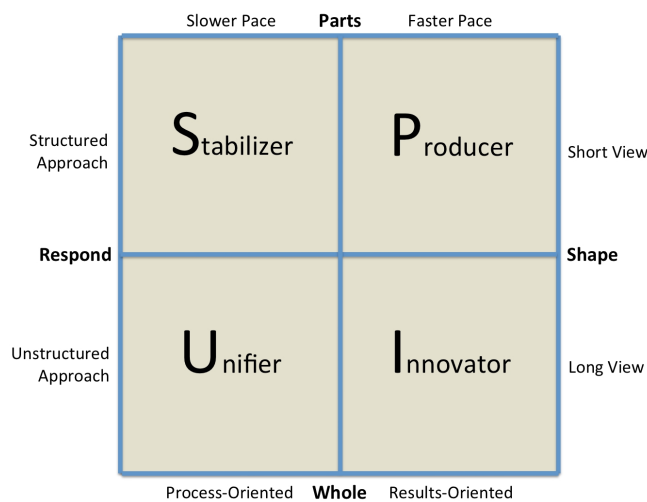


Figure 3. The four styles.

The Producer

The Producer (P) has a high drive to shape the environment and is focused on the parts that make up the system. Thus, this style moves at a fast pace, takes a short-term view, is results-oriented, and follows a structured approach. The Producer is focused on what to do now and working hard to get it done quickly. To get an immediate sense of the Producer's qualities, think of a fast-charging, focused, determined, high-energy person who thrives on working long and hard. That's a Producer.

The Stabilizer

The Stabilizer (S) has a high drive to respond to the environment and is focused on the parts that make up the system. Therefore, this style moves at a slower pace, takes a short-term view, is process-oriented, and follows a structured approach. The Stabilizer is focused on how to do things and working methodically to get them done the right way. To get an immediate sense of the Stabilizer's qualities, think of a very structured, process-oriented person who likes to analyze the data before making a decision. This person is highly organized, has outstanding attention to details, and takes their time in their words and actions. That's a Stabilizer.

The Innovator

The Innovator (I) has a high drive to shape the environment and is focused on the whole system. Consequently, this style moves at a fast pace and is results-oriented like the Producing Force, but takes a long view and operates in an unstructured way. The Innovator is focused on driving change while finding new and better ways of doing things. The lens they use to view the world is, "Why not?" as in: "Why not do it this way?" or "Why not try putting these two things together?" To get an intuitive sense of the Innovator's qualities, think of a dynamic, creative, big-picture person who has myriad new ideas and is usually excited by the latest one—until a new one strikes again. That's an Innovator.

The Unifier

The Unifier (U) has a high drive to respond to the environment and is focused on the whole system. Therefore, a Unifier moves at a more measured pace and is process-oriented like the Stabilizer, but takes an unstructured, freewheeling approach and a long view of change like the Innovator. The Unifier is primarily focused on who is involved and the interpersonal dynamics of the group. To get an immediate sense of the Unifier's qualities, think of a very likeable, gregarious, warm, people person who is in tune with others. That's a Unifier.

A Note About Language: When a person or organizational function has, or requires, a strong Producing Force, it is referred to as a "Producer" or "P." A strong Stabilizing Force is referred to as a "Stabilizer" or "S." A strong Innovating Force, an "Innovator" or "I." A strong Unifying Force, a "Unifier" or "U." As a mnemonic aid, think "PS I love U" and you'll remember the four forces: PSIU. In addition, strong and weak forces are distinguished by capital and lowercase letters, respectively. For example, a strong Producer is written: PsIU. A strong Innovator is written: psIU. A person or role that has or requires a strong Producer and Stabilizer is written: PSIU. And so on. This nomenclature is in recognition that every system needs all four forces and that not all four forces exist in balance.

Friends vs. Foes | Gains vs. Drains

One way to intuitively grasp the basic characteristics of each style is to recognize who it tends to view as friends (those they admire, respect, and value) versus foes (those they devalue, discount, or disrespect) as well as what tends to cost it energy (emotional drains like stress, anxiety, frustration, etc.) versus give it more energy (emotional gains like satisfaction, happiness, and confidence).

	Lens	Energy Drains	Energy Gains	Foes	Friends
Producer	What	Not enough time	Momentum/ results	Not working hard/fast	Working hard/fast
Stabilizer	How	Not enough control	Order/ accuracy	Not doing it right	Follow the process
Innovator	Why not?	Too many ideas	Enthusiasm/ buy-in	Not getting it	Support their ideas
Unifier	Who	Too many conflicts	Harmony/ intimacy	Not working as a team	Add to the group

Figure 4. The friends, foes, gains, and drains for each style.

The Producer views the world as *what* to do. The energy drains for a Producer are the feeling of not having enough time to accomplish all of the work. And guess what? Producers always have too much work to do. In addition, it is their own internal clock that determines when work should be accomplished. The energy gains happen when Producers have a feeling of momentum and achieving results in their tasks and goals. Producers tend to like others who work as hard and as fast as they do and dislike people who don't.

The Stabilizer views the world as *how* to do things. The energy drains for Stabilizers occur when they don't feel they have control over a situation. They experience energy gains like confidence and happiness when things are orderly and accurate. Not surprisingly, Stabilizers like others who are accurate and thorough and dislike those who are not.

Innovators view the world as possibility. They ask, "why not?" The energy drains for an Innovator are having too many ideas to pursue. This may seem counter-intuitive because Innovators love ideas. When they generate too many ideas, however, they can't find their way out of a paper bag. The gains for an Innovator occur when one of their ideas takes hold and really works. Innovators like people who give them support. This could be as simple as excitement and encouragement for their latest idea or support from investors and employees who buy into their vision. Innovators dislike people who don't support their ideas.

The Unifier views the world from the perspective of who is involved. Because Unifiers value harmony in the system, they experience energy drains when there is too much conflict and gains when everyone is on the same page and working well together. The friends are those who add to the team chemistry and interpersonal dynamics. The foes are those who create conflict and destroy harmony in the system.

Meshing of Styles

Most mature, healthy adults aren't extreme versions of a singular style. Instead, they exhibit a range of styles depending on their current life conditions and level of development. In my experience, people generally seem to start out with one or two primary styles, can develop a third over time, and are usually weakest in one style throughout their lives. For example, if you were born with a high drive and high creativity, your style is PsIu. If you've learned to develop your stabilizing qualities over time through the demands of your school or work, you might show up as a PSIu. However, you've always been an introvert and enjoy alone time, so the U is the weakest of your styles. No amount of personal or professional development is going to change that relative balance.

Because all four forces compete for a finite amount of energy, if you are born a P and have matured into a U, that will mean that one of the other styles has backed off in predominance over time. For instance, I have a successful friend who was a PsIu (a typical entrepreneur style) for much of his career. He built and sold several companies. He's mellowed and matured over time. Today, he shows up more like a psIU. He's friendly, gregarious, creative, and loves to mentor others. That is, as his U qualities developed over time, his P qualities lessened. It would take tremendous energy and effort for him to reengage his former P qualities to do another start-up.

As you learn to identify the forces, you'll notice some common patterns emerging among different career types. Here are some examples:

Entrepreneur. Good entrepreneurs have an ability to see the future and act to make it happen (PsIu). They have a very developed innovator capability that allows them to see and anticipate how trends will converge in the future. They're not just visionary, however; they also have the willingness and drive to take action on that vision and produce results to make it happen. Because of this, as the company grows, a great challenge for most entrepreneurs is when and how to shift out of working *in* the business to working *on* the business.

CEO. If an entrepreneur is going to evolve into a CEO, then they'll need to develop either their S (PSIu) and be a shrewd and calculated operator or develop their U (PSIU) and be a visionary who can rally a larger company and market to their cause. There's a popular notion among management circles today about the difference between a "wartime" and a "peacetime" CEO. The basic difference is that, in a time of crisis, contraction, or "war," a company needs a CEO who can analyze the situation, make a bold decision, and be ruthless in execution (PSIu). In times of expansion and growth, or "peace," however, the company needs a CEO who can build bridges, form alliances, and find new growth opportunities, all while executing on the quarterly goals (PSIU).

Implementer. An implementer (PSiu) is someone who can work really hard and be highly organized. You'll find them thriving in tasks that require effectiveness and efficiency in high-pressure situations. If this person wants to evolve their career, they can develop their U (PSIU) and become an Operator or a person who can drive results, manage the details, and coalesce a team—very valuable skills for a chief operating officer.

Sales person. A good sales person has a high drive to produce results and thrives on winning (PsIU). However, you'll meet many different styles of sales people. There's the PsIU who is a great sales manager because they walk the talk and coalesce the entire sales team. There's the PSIu who is outstanding at working hard, producing accurate contracts, and creating and following a scalable sales process. Compare this to a good client relationship

manager who should demonstrate pSiU in that they can follow a process, keep the client on track, and have great interpersonal relationships at the same time.

Engineer. Engineers come in many different types. If your organization uses traditional waterfall engineering, then you'll want an engineer who can work hard and follow the documentation and standards (PSiu). However, if you use an agile methodology, then you'll want an engineer who works hard and is a great team member (PsiU) or is highly creative (PsIu) while following a sound agile process that provides the S for the team to follow. A good code for a scrum master would be (PSiU). In this case, they work hard and gain the respect of the team (P), create and follow a sound process (S), and keep everyone on the same page (U).

The Cause of Different Styles

So what is the cause of different styles? Why does one person act differently than another in any given situation? Obviously there are many factors that influence why a person behaves a certain way. There's genetics, environmental factors, personal history, family history, education, culture, and more. But there's one fundamental element that plays a key role in conjunction with all these factors: energy.

Here's why. As I discussed in Part 1, every system (person, organization, etc.) operates with a finite amount of energy. We conserve our available energy to maintain ourselves, make decisions, and get work done. In order to survive and flourish, we must get new energy from the environment—just as you must get oxygen from the air while reading this or a business must get new revenues from its clients in the marketplace. This quest for new energy compels us to shape and respond to the environment and to do so while focusing on the whole, as well as the parts and sub-parts. If not, our system will cease to get new energy from the environment and it will perish.

In an attempt to make the most efficient use of our available energy, we develop habits. Our habits are unconscious patterns that govern how we interact with the world. When we're dealing with a lot of change, for example, it generally costs us more energy to manage. When we can make our actions into habits, we have more energy available to attempt to be in integration with the outside world. That's why professional athletes practice for hours on end—so that the perfect swing becomes second nature. They don't have to think about it. It costs less energy.

Our style, therefore, is formed over time and becomes a habit because it is how we learned to cost-effectively shape and respond to the world while managing all of the parts and sub-parts that make up the totality of our systems. That's why Producers tend to get more energy by working hard and feel stymied when obstacles are in their path. That's why Stabilizers tend to get more energy by creating order out of chaos and feel overwhelmed when there's not enough control. That's why Innovators prefer to drive change—it gives them energy—and why they feel drained when others don't enthusiastically support their latest ideas. And it's why Unifiers like to maintain harmony and low conflict—it costs them less energy than disharmony and high conflict.

Identifying the four forces not only allows you to quickly discern what's really happening; it also helps you gain self-awareness and better accept yourself, others, and the situations around you. At the same time, it improves your ability to orchestrate win-win situations by giving whatever you're managing what it really needs. And this will make your life a lot easier, more satisfying, and even more fun.

How to Manage It All

With different forces all around, deep inside your organization and far outside in the market and your life, how can you possibly manage it all? Managing organizations and people can often seem chaotic, challenging, and frustrating. Crises and disorder can strike at any moment. Especially in fast-growing companies, management actually feels like operating in permanent white water. You just do your best to keep your head above water and not sink. Still, the four forces show us that there is order in apparent chaos—and when you have a sense of the underlying forces involved within a person, team, task, or situation, you gain a profound awareness and can respond more astutely.

As I mentioned earlier, the term “management” means different things to different people. Depending on who you ask, management sometimes means controlling, administering, leading, inspiring, overseeing, and so on. Plus there are the many different styles of management—autocratic, democratic, participative, data-driven, instinct-driven, visionary, practical, disciplinarian, laissez-faire, etc. The answer to “What is management?” usually depends on context, including time, culture, situation, and experience. But what is management, really?

The simple answer is: *Management is the application of force.*

By “force” I, of course, don’t mean coercion, compulsion, or pressure but rather the application of the Producing, Stabilizing, Innovating, and Unifying forces. In short, to manage it all, you need to understand and use the appropriate force for a given situation. This is determined by many factors, encompassing both strategy and execution, which we’ll investigate further in the following pages. However, there’s one general rule of thumb for better management: Identify the force behind what you want to manage.

If you understand the makeup of forces behind what you want to manage, then you can work at the underlying causes of behavior. Spotting the forces isn’t hard at all. With a little practice, you can begin to quickly break down any behavior into its component forces and become a much better manager as a result.

This principle of management is the same whether you’re managing a little league team or a Fortune 500 firm. For example, imagine that you’re a little league baseball coach. It’s the first day of practice. The kids show up and they’re eager to play. How do you get the best out of the team and create a positive experience for everyone involved, including yourself? According to this model, the first thing you do is identify the forces behind what you want to manage. Here’s how it works.

Begin with you. What type of baseball coach are you? Are you a strong Producer who leads by example and exhorts the team to play harder? Are you a strong Stabilizer who excels at planning a well-run practice schedule by the numbers? Are you a strong Innovator who finds creative ways to manage the game, train the players, and create breakthroughs? Or are you a strong Unifier who excels at creating a strong team spirit and all-for-one-one-for-all mentality?

Of course you have all of these dimensions to your personality but, if you look closely, you’ll see you’re exceptional at certain things and, when you’re engaged with them, you experience greater energy, joy, and satisfaction. Other tasks cost you more energy than you experience in return. Perhaps you love to speak in front of the team and share the innovative strategy to win each game but the act of putting together a daily practice schedule is not your strong suit. In this case, it indicates that you’re a stronger Innovator and weaker Stabilizer and so you’ll want an assistant coach who can complement you where you’re weaker and s/he is stronger.

As you and the assistant coaches execute your season, you'll need to make sure that there's the right balance of forces working within the team throughout. The ultimate goal of the team is to get more runs than the opposition and win enough games to win the pennant (Producing force). In order to do that, you'll need to ensure that the players understand the rules of the game and each knows the basics of their stance, swing, position, and situational awareness (Stabilizing force). You'll also want to engage in activities that build team unity and ensure that the boys are playing well together (Unifying force). As the team progresses in the basics, you'll need to add new training techniques, more advanced and creative playmaking, and new strategies based on the increasing skills and awareness of the team (Innovating force). All four complementary forces are necessary to win the pennant.

When you break things down into forces, it becomes faster and easier to see what the team really needs and give it to them. Let's say that the team is winning games. This could mean that the Producing force is really high and the team is performing at a high level. But it could also mean that the competition is lousy and your team has gotten lucky. Which is it? Perhaps you notice that the team is getting cocky and there's fighting among the players. Over time, this could negatively impact the team's ability to win. In this case, you'll want to increase the Unifying force by finding ways to create a team-first mentality. Or let's say that the team isn't winning games, the practice schedule is a mess, there's no organization or discipline, and things are rapidly falling apart. In this case, you'll want to reassert the Stabilizing force to bring some order and discipline to the situation. Once that's in place, you can look for quick victories to rebuild the Producing force by focusing on hits, outs, solid playmaking, and wins. If it's a long season and the players are losing their enthusiasm, you'll need to amp up the Innovating force to keep things interesting and cutting-edge for the players.

Throughout the season, you'll want to assess the forces behind the individual players and coaches too. What are they dealing with and where do they need training and support? For example, little Bobby has high energy, can't sit still, and swings wildly at each pitch. You recognize that you'll have to give him some extra attention to focus on the task at hand (Producing) and to develop a strong stance and technique (Stabilizing). If he can develop those forces, he'll be a good player and so you resolve to coach him in those areas. On the other hand, little Fernando has got a natural swing. He is focused and loves to win (Producer), is a natural leader, and makes everybody on the team a better player (Unifier). In order to coach Fernando, you know that you've got to build a trusting bond with him first because Unifiers tend to need that deep interpersonal connection in order to thrive. If you can establish that with him, Fernando can help you build a strong sense of team and enjoy a great season.

Depending on which forces are balanced or imbalanced, you will need to adjust your coaching style and the focus of each practice. If you amp up the wrong force or apply forces in the wrong sequence, you'll have a big mess on your hands just as if you allow the necessary and needed force to diminish. For example, if the team is winning games and playing well, the Producing force is doing just fine. But what force should you give the team next? It depends. You won't want to amp up the Producing force so high that the team burns out. Nor will you want to amp up the Stabilizing force so high that things get too rigid and no one is having fun. Nor can you go crazy on the Innovating force by constantly throwing new information and strategies at the team without their first having integrated past lessons. They'll just feel confused and their faith in you as a manager will falter. You also can't allow the Unifying force to get so extreme that politicking, infighting, and backstabbing take over. The team needs to be unified to such an extent that it helps them be resilient but not so inwardly focused that they lose sight of winning the game.

There's a time and a place for everything and understanding what force to apply as well as how much, when, and in what sequence, comes from knowledge and experience. In other parts, I discuss

how to execute on any given strategy by understanding where the organization is in its lifecycle and then giving the organization the forces it needs to progress to the next stage.

For now, it's enough to keep this in mind: The art and science of management is recognizing the forces at work within a system and adjusting them along the way. Ineffective management is just the opposite. It occurs when the wrong force, the wrong amount of force, the wrong sequence, or the wrong timing are applied. When this happens repeatedly and systemically, an organization will fail. And notice that there are many more ways for things to go wrong than right! (Yes, entropy is always at work).

By the way, the terms “right” and “wrong” are not value judgments but physics statements. If you step hard on an upturned rake in the grass, the handle will hit you in the face. It's not right or wrong to step on a rake but the result is predictable. If you keep stepping on the rake, you'll keep getting hit in the face. Effective managers will work with—not against—the laws of physics. This means, first of all, understanding the forces and patterns in front of you. Then you can look at any aspect of your organization—from the actions of individuals to the company's performance in the marketplace—and understand how it got to be that way, anticipate its future behavior, and steer that very behavior towards greater integration and success. This is the art and science of great management.

4. The Producer Style

The Producer has a high drive to shape the environment and is focused on the parts. Thus, it moves at fast pace, takes a short-term view, is results-oriented, and follows a structured approach. The Producer is focused on what to do now and working hard to get it done rapidly. To get an immediate sense of the Producer’s qualities, think of a fast-charging, focused, determined, high-energy person who thrives on working long and hard. That’s a Producer. If you put this person in a rowboat and say “Row!” what will they do? Well, they’ll just start rowing straight ahead—and fast! They don’t need to ask questions, plan a route, understand where they should go, or even how long they’ll be gone. They just row and keep rowing until you say “Stop!”

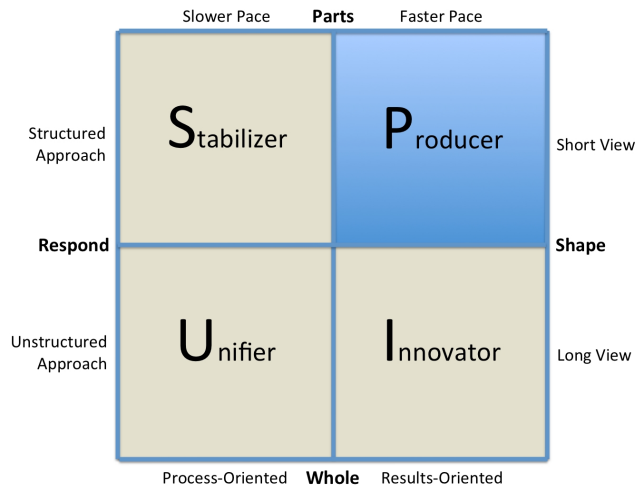


Figure 5. The Producer style.

The Producer has a tremendous capacity to work hard to accomplish a goal and takes great pride in winning. That could be winning the new account, completing the project, achieving an objective, or beating the competition. A Producer is decisive and makes decisions based on what can be accomplished now, without waiting for all the information to be in hand. Instead, they figure it out as they go. Our best Producer qualities are our ability to act, lead the charge, overcome obstacles, urge a team to action, and be effective, assertive, and victorious. A Producer is a lot like the engine of a car. The bigger the engine, the faster the organization can go.

The Big P

When the Producer trait is exceedingly strong, we call it a Big P. A Big P is like a hammer. It sees every problem as a nail and the solution is to hit it. Hit it with hard work, more work, and faster work. The Big P comes into work very early and leaves work very late. If they have an office, it’s likely very messy with lots of projects and tasks to complete (and usually awards and trophies on display). The Big P doesn’t like to have meetings unless they’re short, to the point, and focused on the most pressing task at hand. Their biggest frustration is that things aren’t getting done fast enough according to their own internal clock. Their common complaint is that others aren’t working as hard as they do. Their answer to most problems is to work harder, longer, and faster. Because of this, they tend to overestimate the amount of work that can be accomplished by a team. Therefore, when getting schedule estimates from a Big P, recognize that they are going to significantly underestimate

the actual time it will take to complete a team project. If they say one month, it will be more like three to four months.

The Big P can't stomach falsity and they're often brutally honest in their communication. If you went into their office, the first thing you'd hear about is how hard they've been working and how much they still have to complete. When this person supervises others, there's a lot of anxious waiting by the staff because the Big P is not very effective at delegating. Often, they delegate at the very end of a project when they just can't do the work themselves and a deadline is approaching fast. The staff then leaps into action to try to solve another last-minute crisis.

The reason that the Big P always has so much work to do is because they value themselves and others based on how much they do. Delegating tasks or planning ahead to avoid a crisis actually decreases the Big P's sense of self-worth. The Big P thrives on averting crises. And the bigger the crisis, the better. In fact, sometimes the only way you can get their attention is to present a new crisis for them to fix.

Big P Under Stress

When the Big P is under extreme stress, they tend to become erratic in their actions. They will tend to make a lot of mistakes because they can't see the big picture, understand the details, or communicate and unify the rest of the organization. It's the classic "Fire, ready, aim!" When angry, the Big P tends to lash out verbally, tell others what to do, and become domineering or aggressive.

Big P and Other Styles

Big Ps get along really well with other Producers because they value hard work and move at the same fast pace. They don't mind Stabilizers as long as the Stabilizers don't create "unnecessary" barriers to getting work done. But if they do, watch out. Producers respect an Innovator's ability to see into the future but dislike Innovators who cause too much chaos or changes in strategy because that requires Producers to refocus and change their work. That's hard for a Big P to do. Producers will often judge Unifiers as sycophants who don't do any real work, chitchat all day, and play the political winds—unless, of course, a Unifier can help the Producer alleviate obstacles that are in the way of getting tasks completed. In that case, they'll form an uneasy alliance.

Managing a Big P

If you're managing a Big P, you never have to worry about them working hard enough or finding the inner motivation to complete a challenging task. Instead, you need to be mindful that they don't run too far in the wrong direction. While another style might require the symbolic whip to trigger them into action, the Big P will need a set of reins to slow them down. A Big P needs a high level of autonomy in their tasks and the best way you can support them is to help eliminate obstacles that prevent the work from getting done. Also be mindful that, because the Big P is outstanding at completing the tasks at hand, they may have blind spots around how the work is impacting others, how the big picture has changed, and the intricate details involved. If you praise them for being productive and celebrate and honor their victories, you'll have a loyal employee.

If Your Boss is a Big P

If your boss is a Big P, you will need to demonstrate your value based on measurable achievements and how long and hard you work. That is, if you're working long and hard and producing tangible

results such as sales wins, products launched, hours billed, or capital raised, then you'll be in good standing with your boss. If you need a request fulfilled, you better phrase it quickly and to the point and be able to show how it is necessary for completing short-term tasks and goals. The Big P values actions more than words and has little patience for politics, bureaucracy, or anyone and anything they view as standing in the way of what they want to achieve.

The Big P thinks and speaks literally. They are plain-spoken. A "yes" means just that and a "no" does too. Therefore, a Big P takes you at your word as well. If you say you'll do something, even in an off-hand way, they'll remember it and hold you to it. If you follow through, you'll be accepted and rewarded. If you fail, you'll lose favor with the Big P, regardless of the surrounding circumstances. The Big P loves to reward and promote for performance and to fire for a lack of performance. It's black and white. So when it's time to discuss your performance review, be prepared to validate your wins and state how you will mitigate your losses going forward. If you keep failing to hit your stated goals, you're at risk of getting fired, regardless of the circumstances.

In the 1992 movie *Glengarry Glenn Ross*, Alec Baldwin plays an extreme Big P. His character, Blake, is sent in by the faceless owners of a real estate office to motivate the salespeople. Blake shows up with a pair of brass balls, cusses out the sales team, and announces a contest where only the top two salespeople will get the more promising leads and everyone else will get fired. That's a Big P. Perform or else—and do it quickly.

Summary of the Producer Style

Producer qualities allow us to work hard, achieve our goals, and be decisive and effective in our actions. They provide the engine for accomplishment. When taken to an extreme, they turn into Big P—a giant hammer that only sees what's in front of it, gets overwhelmed by taking on too much, and seeks to alleviate its frustration by pushing things to go faster.

The Producer	
Enjoys	Completing tasks
Personal work space	Cluttered/busy
Normal communication style	Energetic/fast/to the point
Primary work focus	Implementing the game plan/producing output
Typical complaint	People aren't working hard enough
Decision making behavior	Quick/figures it out along the way
Addresses problems by	Working harder/getting others to work harder
Likes to be praised for	Being productive/working hard
Excels at	Taking action
Most satisfied when	Scores a victory

Figure 6. Traits of the Producer Style.

5. The Stabilizer Style

The Stabilizer has a high drive to respond to the environment and is focused on the parts. Therefore, this style moves at a slower pace, takes a short-term view, is process-oriented, and follows a structured approach. The Stabilizer is focused on *how* to do things and working methodically to get them done the right way. To get an immediate sense of the Stabilizer’s qualities, think of a very structured, process-oriented person who likes to analyze the data before making a decision. This person is highly organized, has outstanding attention to detail, and takes their time in their words and actions. That’s a Stabilizer. If you put this person in a rowboat and say “Row!” what will they do? Well, first they’ll analyze the rowing mechanism and plan the most efficient stroke. Then they’ll want to understand where they are rowing, for how long, what the best route is, when the water and food breaks will occur, and the prevailing winds and currents. Once everything is planned in detail, with two contingency plans in place, then they’ll start to row!

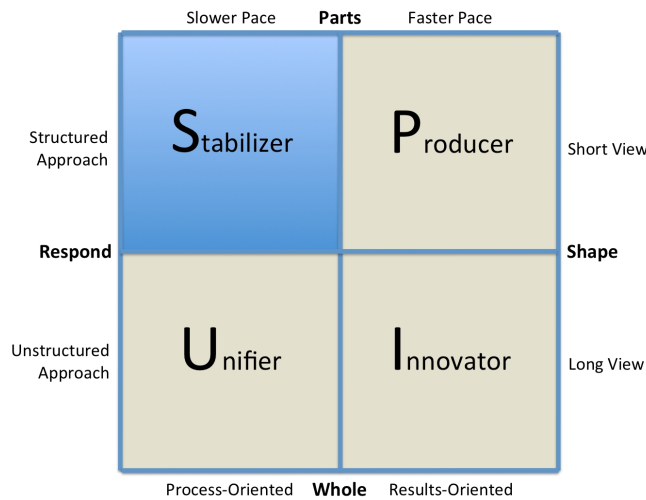


Figure 7. The Stabilizer style.

The Stabilizer has a tremendous ability to find better, more efficient ways of doing things. They excel at organizing, planning, controlling, and systematizing things. They create order out of chaos and usually have outstanding retention of pertinent details. The Stabilizer tends to value control over freewheeling innovation, unless that innovation can be analytically justified. They have little patience for errors, sloppiness, or anyone or anything violating a defined process or procedure without good cause. A Stabilizer is methodical and makes decisions based on analyzing the data and finding more efficient solutions. Naturally, it takes time to gather and analyze data and to understand the intricate details involved in a decision. Consequently, the Stabilizer moves at a deliberate pace in their thoughts, words, and actions.

The Big S

When the Stabilizer trait is overly high, we call it a Big S. A Big S is like a bureaucrat who seeks to control for change by establishing and following processes. They value efficiency over effectiveness, even to the extreme. The Big S comes into work on time and leaves on time. If they have an office, it’s likely very clean and orderly with files neatly arranged and spreadsheets and objective data readily

on hand. The Big S schedules regular meetings and always has an agenda prepared in advance. Their biggest frustration is that others aren't following the process. Their common complaint is that others don't pay close enough attention to important details.

The answer to most problems for a Big S is to analyze the data and document a plan. Because of this, they tend to falsely believe that proper planning can account for any contingency. Therefore, when getting schedule estimates from a Big S, recognize that the schedule will look excellent on paper. It will be very specific, down to each nut and bolt, but also totally incorrect because change is a constant. Consequently, there will likely be several creative ways to accomplish the same objective but much more quickly.

If you walk into their office, the first thing you might hear is how there's a need for more process and control. When this person supervises others, there are usually a lot of other Stabilizers on the team because the Big S values adherence to standards and protocols as a top priority. They delegate frequently and monitor the work being performed using project plans and milestone reviews. Unlike the Big P, a Big S can't manage a crisis well. There's too much noise and confusion for them to quickly and accurately get a read on the situation.

Big S Under Stress

The Big S must always plan due to a fear of lack of control. For them, a lack of control leads to bad things happening. Asking the Big S to move more quickly, be creative, or take a huge risk is asking them to face their biggest fear. When the Big S is under extreme stress, they tend to withdraw inwardly and focus on unimportant but controllable details. For example, in the classic movie *The Caine Mutiny*, Humphrey Bogart plays an extreme characterization of a Big S in the role of Captain Queeg. When under stress from a life-or-death naval crisis at sea, Captain Queeg could only resort to enforcing rules about the consumption of strawberries and his crew was forced to mutiny to survive.

Big S and Other Styles

The Big S gets along really well with other Stabilizers because they value process, control, and planning. They don't mind Producers as long as the Producer is not violating any procedures. But if they do, watch out. They distrust fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants Innovators because Innovators have three new ideas per week, all of which cause more work and headaches for the Big S. They find Unifiers to require way more interpersonal connection and emotional support than they're willing to give, so they prefer to avoid them entirely. If avoidance isn't an option, they'll smile tightly and find an excuse to get back to their private office where they don't have to engage in intimate conversation.

Managing a Big S

If you're managing a Big S, you rarely have to worry about them making errors and omissions. Instead, you need to be alert that they don't fall into paralysis by analysis. A Big S needs lots of structure in their tasks and the best way you can support them is to give them the relevant data to analyze and then allow them time to process it. Be mindful also that, because the Stabilizer is outstanding at understanding the details, they may have blind spots around how the work is impacting others, how the big picture has changed and thus impacts the work being performed, and the real effort involved in executing the plan. If you praise them for being accurate and thorough, you'll have a grateful employee.

If Your Boss is a Big S

If your boss is a Big S, don't expect a warm open door policy but do expect a highly controlled and efficient work environment. If you have a need or a request to make, expect to hear "no" a lot since it's hard for a Big S to say "yes." This is because they tend to need a lot of information and time to analyze an issue before committing to a course of action. Therefore, a "no" from a Big S is more like a "not yet, I need more information." Even if you get a "no" from a Big S, you can usually return with more information and revisit the decision later. Once you get a "yes" from a Big S, you can take it to the bank. It's very unlikely that they'll change their mind.

The best way to get a Big S to take action is to point out how something is violating an existing policy. If you can do that, mountains will move. If not, the next best course of action is to point out how the new decision will improve efficiency for the organization. Don't try to appeal using your personal needs or by pursuing an innovative risk. For example, if you need a raise, don't say, "My husband lost his job and we can't afford to pay the bills." That's a personal appeal and it will fail. Instead say, "According to HR Policy 254, Level 1 employees shall be rewarded per annum by 5 percent." And then make a case that, based upon your job duties, you actually should be reclassified as a Level 2 and thus earn a higher salary.

Summary of the Stabilizer Style

Stabilizer qualities allow us to be accurate, secure, and efficient. They permit a factual, deliberate, and methodical approach to planning and decision making and create a sense of order out of chaos. They promote high quality and follow-through. They also help us to be cautious, thoughtful, and prudent when faced with the unknown. When taken to an extreme, a Big S becomes a liability, however, by always valuing efficiency, even at the cost of effectiveness, and risking paralysis by analysis.

The Stabilizer	
Enjoys	Analyzing problems and tasks
Personal work space	Practical/organized
Normal communication style	Factual/deliberate/methodical
Primary work focus	Planning/organizing/systematizing
Typical complaint	People not following the process
Decision making behavior	Methodical/decides once everything is understood
Addresses problems by	Implementing new systems/revising policies and procedures
Likes to be praised for	Finding efficiencies/creating order/high quality
Excels at	Analysis
Most satisfied when	Achieving high quality

Figure 8. Traits of the Stabilizer Style.

6. The Innovator Style

The Innovator has a high drive to shape the environment and is focused on the whole. Consequently, this style moves at a fast pace and is results-oriented like the Producer, but takes a long view and operates in an unstructured way. The Innovator is focused on driving change while finding new and better ways of doing things. To get an intuitive sense of the Innovator’s qualities, think of a dynamic, creative, big-picture person who has a plethora of new ideas and is usually excited by the latest one, until a new one strikes again. If you put this person in a rowboat and say “Row!” what will they do? Well, they’ll start to come up with new ideas! “Why don’t we put a sail on this baby? How about a glass bottom? Come to think of it, a 250hp motor would do just the trick; I bet we can find one at the marina. Be right back.”

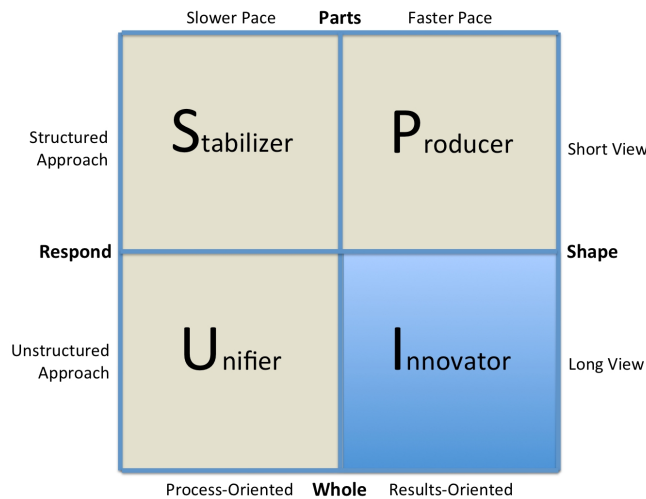


Figure 9. The Innovator style.

The Innovator has a tremendous ability to peer into the future and anticipate how seemingly disparate trends will (or can be made to) merge together. They are highly conceptual and easily get excited about new ideas and opportunities. Because an Innovator can sense change occurring faster than other styles, they spend a lot of time trying to get others to see the same thing they do. They usually attempt to do that by explaining the idea and sharing their enthusiasm, and by trying to get others to understand and be enthusiastic too. Our best Innovator qualities are our ability to anticipate change, to be imaginative, charismatic, and inventive. Without the Innovator force, we would have no ability to adapt to changes in our environment and we would quickly become irrelevant or extinct.

The Big I

When the Innovator trait is exceedingly strong, we call it a Big I. A Big I is like a mad genius. It’s always cooking up one crazy-sounding idea after the next. The Big I comes into work whenever they want and leaves work whenever they want. If they have an office, it’s likely a testament to their own unique individuality and creativity. The Big I doesn’t like to have meetings unless it’s to discuss a new idea and as long as they get to do most of the talking. Their biggest frustration is that things are stymied in production and implementation or that they get bogged down in managing release schedules and milestone dates, rather than working on the next new thing. Their common complaint

is that others “don’t get it.” Their answer to most problems is to come up with a new idea.

The Big I is not usually comfortable giving schedule estimates because they recognize they just don’t have any interest in (or clue about) how long something will actually take. Those are details for others to figure out. They are happy, however, to give predictions on when market trends will converge. At the same time, because they see the future (not necessarily the accurate future) so clearly, they tend to overestimate when something will actually occur. Therefore, if they think the market demand will tap out in two years, in reality it will probably just be getting started then. If and when demand finally does arrive, the Big I is already bored with it—“OMG, that’s so last decade!”—and has moved on to yet uncharted territory.

The Big I gets bored with the status quo really easily. Their past creations are never good enough because something new keeps being invented. If there’s nothing new to build or think about, they prefer to destroy what’s already been built. “Hey, let’s tear this old thing down and rebuild something new.” When you walk into their office, the first thing you’ll hear about is their latest idea and why it’s important and revolutionary. When this person supervises others, there’s a lot of chaos among the staff, projects, and schedules. They’ll usually have a right-hand person who suffers while trying to keep up with the extreme amount of innovation and who has learned to distinguish a passing notion from a true need for implementation.

The reason that the Big I always pursues so many different ideas and opportunities is that they’re afraid of standing still and being trapped. Standing still means risking boredom and there’s not much more terrifying than that. So to ask a Big I to focus on one thing and complete it is like asking a crack addict to put down the crack pipe. It’s very, very hard and not much fun at all.

Big I Under Stress

When the Big I is under extreme stress, they tend to think themselves into a corner. Because they see so many options, it’s hard to choose one. Thus, they’ll want the flow of options and counter options to stop so that they can pick a path and get out of the mess they’ve created. The Big I tends to seek escape when under duress. So if things are going poorly in the office, you can expect to find them thinking of a new idea, dreaming of a vacation or a fun new purchase, diving into entertainment, or generally trying to avoid reality. When angry, the Big I can get very volatile and hypercritical of others.

Big I and Other Styles

The Big I appreciates Producers because they act really quickly to implement their vision. However, sometimes it can be frustrating to have to explain to the Producers why the Big I is changing the strategy again. “Can’t they see it? It’s so obvious!” Besides, to a Big I, Producers are kind of boring and uncreative. They absolutely dislike Stabilizers who are finicky, slow, and say “no” a lot. They distrust other Innovators and view them as arrogant competition. They enjoy Unifiers because they are easy to be around, always have a supportive and encouraging word for their latest idea, and can be useful allies in galvanizing support for their vision.

Managing a Big I

If you’re managing a Big I, you have an outstanding idea generator and a terrible implementer. If you have a good relationship, they’ll want to bounce new ideas off you frequently because they need to talk things through and weigh different possibilities. Often they can be scattered and inconsistent so

you'll need to make sure that the work is actually getting done and that the details are being managed well. Because the Big I is capable of generating so many new ideas, they are often unaware of how the changes they propose are hard for everyone else to keep up with. They overlook the intricate details involved in implementation and conveniently forget all of the half-completed projects they've left in their wake. If you praise the Big I for having great ideas and get excited about them, you'll have a loyal employee.

If Your Boss is a Big I

If your boss is a Big I, you will need to demonstrate your value by helping them complete the pieces of the puzzle they see in their mind. Whatever you do, though, don't add to or change the vision for them. That would be like taking their paintbrush and drawing on their half-completed canvas. It's very risky and the Big I may never forgive you for it. Instead, ask questions, gently point out gaps in the planning, and always try to be enthusiastic about their ideas. Because a Big I changes their mind so frequently, you'll need to be able to discern between a passing notion and real action item. "Oh that, we're not doing that any more; I changed my mind this morning. Didn't I tell you? Here's what we're doing now . . ." is something you'll hear frequently.

The Big I thinks and speaks conceptually in big patterns and generalities. They see things others just can't. They promote people who they believe can help them achieve their vision. They fire people who no longer fit the vision or who seem to be creating obstacles to achieving it. If they are away on a long airline flight, you can expect them to show up at the office with a list of fifty new ideas and improvements.

In general, the Big I has a hard time saying "no" to interesting new ideas or appealing opportunities. If you present a proposal to a Big I, however, you might get a "yes" or a "no" depending on how your idea fits or competes with their own vision of how things should or could be. If they say "no", it's usually because your proposal doesn't align with their own version of the current vision. But unlike a Big S, you can't go back and try again. That's it. It's over, unless the Big I can begin to see how your proposal fits into their vision. A "yes," on the other hand, doesn't really mean "yes." It is more like "sure, sounds pretty good, let's explore it more." For example, if you were to ask a Big I, "Mr. Jones, what do you think about this new prototype?" and Mr. Jones responds, "Hey, I like it! Very cool! We could also make it do this..." That's not a legitimate go-ahead signal. When Mr. Jones comes back in two weeks and you show him the progress on the prototype, he'll probably say something like, "What? Why are you working on this? I didn't approve of this. It's time you focus on the XYZ project. We're already three months behind schedule!" So, a "no" is a final "no" from a Big I but a "yes" is more of a "maybe."

In the 1985 hit movie *Back to the Future*, Christopher Lloyd plays Doc, a madcap inventor and a pretty good depiction of a really Big I. He always seems to have three new ideas running through his head; he has a garage full of half-completed inventions; he's enthusiastic; he loves to think big; and the viewer is never quite sure if he's for real or insane because he's so far out there on the edge.

Summary of the Innovator Style

Innovator qualities are what allow us to sense and adapt to change and to find creative solutions and new opportunities. Innovators are creative and dynamic. They have an innate ability to see things others can't yet see. When taken to an extreme, the Innovator turns into a Big I and can become overzealous in pursuing too many different strategies, all half-baked and constantly changing.

The Innovator	
Enjoys	Spotting new opportunities
Personal work space	Unique/creative
Normal communication style	Charismatic/expressive/excitable
Primary work focus	Moving the next latest thing forward/spotting trends
Typical complaint	People aren't getting it
Decision making behavior	Bold/decides once the opportunity is sensed
Addresses problems by	Looking for new approaches or ideas
Likes to be praised for	Finding creative solutions that work/getting others excited
Excels at	Conceptualizing
Most satisfied when	Thinking outside the box

Figure 10. Traits of the Innovator Style.

7 . The Unifier Style

The Unifier has a high drive to respond to the environment and is focused on the whole. Therefore, a Unifier moves at a more measured pace and is process-oriented like the Stabilizer, but takes an unstructured, freewheeling approach and a long view of change like the Innovator. The Unifier is primarily focused on who is involved and the interpersonal dynamics of the group. To get an immediate sense of the Unifier’s qualities, think of a very likeable, gregarious, warm people person. If you put this person in a rowboat and say “Row!” what will they do? Well, they’ll want to know where everyone else is! You can’t expect them to row all by themselves. They’ll need a team of people, ideally their friends, to climb in the boat and all row together.

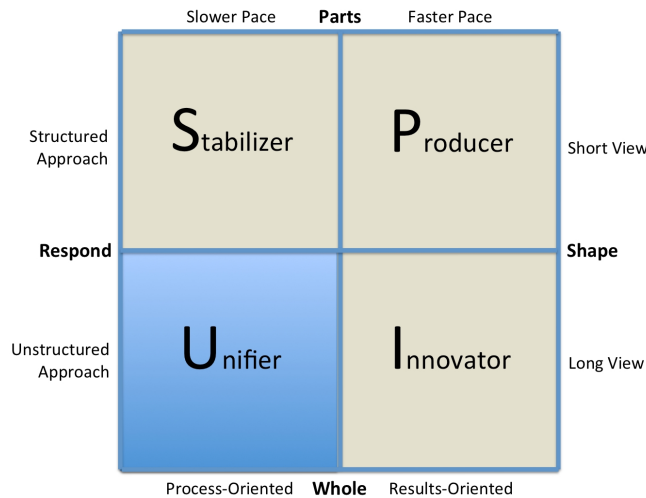


Figure 11. The Unifier style.

Unifiers are excellent communicators and team builders and are especially good at listening and empathizing. They tend to make everybody else feel uplifted, listened to, and respected and thus improve teamwork and loyalty in the workplace. They always have time for a chat and are genuinely concerned with how you are doing and how they can help you. They are excellent at smoothing things over and intuiting how someone else is really feeling. For example, if a Producer and a Unifier went on a sales call together, the Producer could only interpret what the client was actually *saying* while the Unifier could tell how the client was really *feeling* beneath the words. Our best Unifier qualities are our ability to create rapport, understand and motivate others, build cohesive teams, and create sound organizational cultures based on caring, empathy, and loyalty. Without the Unifier force, we would have no ability to respond to change efficiently because the organization couldn’t act as a whole.

The Big U

When the Unifier trait is extreme, we call it a Big U. A Big U is like a politician who always seeks to curry favors and plays the political winds to their own advantage. On the one hand, they value and leverage personal relationships; on the other, their words can’t be taken at face value because their loyalty will shift with the prevailing winds. The Big U comes to work when expected and leaves when expected. If they have an office, it’s likely very warm and inviting and personable. The Big U likes to

have meetings because it gives them a chance to see and connect with others and gauge which way they really stand on an issue. During the meeting, they prefer to sit and listen while others do the talking. Their biggest frustration is when others won't engage with them in a dialogue, shut them out, or keep up a stoic guard. Their common complaint is that others aren't working well together and thinking of the team.

The answer to most problems for a Big U is to gather input from others and process feelings (their own as well as others'). This takes time and that's why a Big U tends to move at a slower pace than a Producer or Innovator. Therefore, when getting schedule estimates from a Big U, recognize that before committing to any schedule, the Big U will insist on getting input and buy-in from those who will be impacted. The result will be a very safe, prudent schedule that will account for the needs of all the different constituents. Thus, there are likely several ways to improve the speed or direction of the plan if you're willing to step on some proverbial toes.

If you went into their office, the first thing a Big U would do is warmly invite you in, offer you some tea or coffee, and give you all the time in the world to be heard. When this person supervises others, there are usually a lot of other Unifiers on the team because the Big U values camaraderie and teamwork. They delegate frequently but don't tend to follow up too vigilantly because that can create conflict, something the Big U prefers to avoid.

Sometimes a Big I can appear as a big people person or a Big U. However, the Big I is really motivated to connect and influence people to move forward their own vision. When the time for selling the vision is through, a Big I will want to retire and be alone. For a Big U, however, being with people is a joy unto itself.

In the classic movie *The Godfather*, Michael Corleone's older brother Fredo (whom Michael ultimately has killed in *The Godfather Part II*) plays the part of a Big U. Fredo is always seeking approval, wants to be liked, is trapped within his own feelings, and prefers to avoid conflict. It's hard for Fredo to take a stand so competing factions within the Mafia easily influence him. Ultimately, he betrays his family and justifies it because life has never been fair to him. That's a pretty good depiction of an extreme Big U. Nice enough, always wanting to get along, and yet underneath capable of being spineless, wishy-washy, and seeking power by currying favors.

Big U Under Stress

During a crisis, the Big U can fail to be decisive. There are too many conflicting viewpoints and hardened positions for a Big U to have the time to navigate. When under extreme duress, the Big U acts as if they're imploding under the weight of their own emotions. It's hard for them to see the big picture, do the work, make decisions, or even get out of bed. They'll need lots of time and companionship to process their emotions, restore their energy, and get reinvigorated.

Big U and Other Styles

The Big U gets along really well with all the other styles, especially those in power—all other styles, that is, except for other Big U's with political power! In this case, they can become highly suspicious and seek to either guardedly curry favor or quietly usurp the other Big U entirely. The Big U prefers to create a harmonious, low-conflict environment. But if they ever feel betrayed, they will rarely forgive the offender.

Managing a Big U

If you're managing a Big U, you will need to give them a lot of one-on-one attention and show that you care about them personally. Be aware that, because a Big U can be outstanding at helping a group work in harmony, they won't work as hard as a Producer, with as much attention to detail as a Stabilizer, or with as much creativity as an Innovator. If you share about your personal life, ask about their own, take them out to coffee or lunch, and give them praise and support, you'll have a loyal employee.

The best way to get a Big U to take action is to allow them to help you. Big U's love to help people who are important to them because they want those people to be happy and feel good about their relationship with the Big U! If you have a loyal Big U working for you, they can move mountains simply by opening doors and working their personal relationships.

If Your Boss is a Big U

If your boss is a Big U, expect to have a fun-loving, gregarious, lax work environment when things are good and a politically rife environment when things are not. Either way, who you know and who you're connected with are more important than what you accomplish. The Big U makes decisions based on personal likes and dislikes and on the prevailing political winds. When making a request, you can expect to hear "yes" and "no" a lot, but you can't take either one to the bank. This is because Unifiers tend to change their mind based on what others are thinking and feeling and who's in power at a given time. Therefore, a "no" from a Big U is more like a "maybe . . . could be . . . we'll have to see how it all plays out." And so is a "yes."

Summary of the Unifier Style

Unifier qualities are what allow us to be excellent connectors, communicators, and bonding agents for a group. They love to be with people, keep conflict low, and have a harmonious environment. When taken to an extreme, the Unifier morphs into a Big U and becomes a political animal, saying one thing and doing another to ensure their survival and advancement.

The Unifier	
Enjoys	Listening and empathizing with others
Personal work space	Warm/welcoming
Normal communication style	Appreciative/connecting/affirming
Primary work focus	Building consensus/meeting people's needs/teamwork
Typical complaint	People aren't being team players
Decision making behavior	Astute/decides once everyone's viewpoint is known
Addresses problems by	Communicating/bringing people together
Likes to be praised for	Understanding others/Uplifting the team/emotional intelligence
Excels at	Empathizing/unifying a group
Most satisfied when	Developing strong relationships

Figure 12. Traits of the Unifier Style.

8. The Key to High-Performing Teams

Growing up, I had a good friend whose dad was very successful. They lived in a gorgeous home on Lake Minnetonka where I was lucky to spend a lot of time, hanging out and enjoying their largesse. Among the things I vividly recall about their home was a refrigerator magnet that read, “Behind every successful man is a wise woman.” I remember that magnet because it made my fourteen-year-old self wonder, “Hmmm, is Mrs. B trying to tell the world that she’s equally responsible for all this magnificence?” and “Is it really true that all successful men have a supportive woman behind them?” or “Maybe it’s her way of putting her husband in his place . . .” I didn’t have the answers then but looking back, I can see that this message (dated and cliché as it is) is worth pondering and has implications for marriages and businesses alike.

Marriage or partnership is an exemplary opportunity to match and leverage complementary PSIU forces. No one can be predominantly change-driving, change-responding, focused on the parts, and focused on the whole all at the same time. For much of human history, sexual and gender differentiation resulted in men playing the part of PsIu while women played the part of pSiU. That is, men were responsible for bread-winning (P) and strategy or career advancement (I) while women were responsible for organizing domestic life (S) and taking care of children and family (U). In short, the left side of the PSIU chart shows the classic “feminine” functions and the right side the “masculine” ones.

In the United States in the 1970s, when baby boomers shifted to a dual-income family model and women entered the professional workforce *en masse*, women joined men on the Producer and Innovator (or traditionally “masculine”) side of the chart. The result? Couples started outsourcing their Stabilizer functions to housekeepers, bookkeepers, and organizers and their Unifier functions to babysitters and marriage counselors—all to keep the family together!

Today, as many of us have outgrown long-standing assumptions about gender and marriage, we can see that the point is not about gender roles. Rather, it’s that all four forces must be present for a family—however you define it—to thrive. Specifically, what all successful and harmonious unions have in common is that both partners naturally complement each other (or find alternative ways of bringing all four forces into the relationship). For example, a partner who is a balanced PsIu will tend to harmonize well with someone who is a balanced pSiU. If one partner is naturally externally focused on career innovation and the other is internally focused on domestic harmony and organization, the partnership can really work. If one partner is naturally better able to focus on short-run needs and structures, while the other is better at seeing the long run and creating harmony, that can also really work. Any number of themes and combinations are possible. What matters is that the partners bring in all complementary forces and (as long as they share love, trust, and respect) they can have a thriving partnership.

Compare that to a relationship where both partners are entirely focused on their careers and personal ambitions, while displaying strong Producer and Innovator traits (PsIu). If this occurs, there won’t be enough force organizing and bonding together the family, which will suffer and tend to disintegrate. On the other hand, consider a union where both partners are stable and prudent but prefer to hang out with their friends than develop their careers (pSiU). In this case, the couple will probably have a great social life and terrible cash flow. It takes a complementary team to have a chance at a happy relationship—and both partners must give and take to create a balance.

If you shift the lens to organizational dynamics, you'll notice that a highly successful and visible business leader usually has a highly capable and less visible complementary partner. For example, Apple's late CEO Steve Jobs was recognized for his inventiveness, charisma, and uncanny ability to predict the future of technology and anticipate (even produce) consumers' desires. Jobs was also famous for his blistering attention to product detail. In one oft-repeated anecdote, we hear that Jobs ordered the original iPod dismantled the night before the press launch when he noticed that the headphone jack did not make a satisfying click when inserted. These are classic traits of the Innovator. Jobs was also infamous for his impatience and high work ethic. These are classic Producer characteristics. As a management style, therefore, Jobs coded as PsIu.

Tim Cook was Apple's COO (now CEO) who, according to most reports, was a perfect complement to Jobs. Cook works at a relentless pace (Producer), is a spreadsheet junkie with ruthless attention to detail on the supply chain (Stabilizer), and is also down to earth, soft-spoken, and good at maintaining relationships (Unifier). As a management style, therefore, Cook is a PSiU. Cook's production drive met Jobs' own. They both demonstrated extreme attention to detail, but in different domains. While Jobs was a powerful Innovator, Cook is more of a Stabilizer and Unifier who makes things efficient and smoothes the way with others. Together, they made a powerful complementary team.

According to a 2011 profile by the *New York Times*, "Their complementary skills have helped Apple pull off the most remarkable turnaround in American business, and made it the world's most valuable technology company."² The *Times* also recognized that a huge void would need to be filled when Jobs passed on: "When Mr. Cook is on his own, he will have to compensate for the absence of Mr. Jobs—and his inventiveness, charisma and uncanny ability to predict the future of technology and anticipate the wishes of consumers" (all Innovator qualities).

So while Steve Jobs was celebrated as the world's greatest CEO, behind the scenes he had a complementary partner and executive team. The necessity of the complementary team gets short shrift in the media, however, which celebrates the cult of the individual. Just browse through any bookstore and you'll see the mugs of Donald Trump, Bill Belichick, Jack Welch, Richard Branson, or the latest guru celebrated with very little mention of their complementary partners who supported their success.

Even business schools promote this cult of the individual leader. Read a popular business book about leadership and it will say something like this: A good leader produces results (P), brings efficiency and systems (S), is able to innovate for changing market demands (I), is a good people person (U), and focuses on the vision and values (U). This is nonsense. It's a myth. Just because it gets spun as fact in the media doesn't make it true. The bottom line is that if you want to be successful (and happy), you simply can't go it alone. It takes a complementary team to be successful.

Getting from PSIU to Really Good Management

You now know that there are four fundamental forces (PSIU) that shape individual and organizational behavior. You also know that these forces compete for available system energy and that if even one of the forces is absent, the organization will perish. I've also mentioned that, if you want your organization to do something new—such as change direction or accelerate performance—

² Miguel Helft, "The Understudy Takes the Stage at Apple." *New York Times* (January, 24, 2011). Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/24/technology/24cook.html>.

you must engage the appropriate force. But how does all this translate into practical steps? And how can you use it to be a better manager of people and situations?

1. Know the Forces at Play

Knowing the forces at play within an individual or an organization delivers fast insight into what otherwise appears as complex or random behavior. For example, if you set up a team with all Producers, then that team is going to demonstrate some predictable behavior and outcomes. It's going to move very quickly, produce a large volume of work, and blow past its milestones in record time. However, the work is going to have errors (it will be an inch deep and a mile wide), it will totally miss out on the implications and the coordination with other departments, and it will lack creative problem solving. A team of all Unifiers would have very different but equally predictable outcomes.

There's another important benefit to knowing the forces at play: It allows you to see and accept things for what they are, with less judgment. You should not underestimate the power of this. On the one hand, judgment is the capacity to assess situations or circumstances astutely and to draw sound conclusions. Obviously, good judgment is a critical skill for a manager. On the other hand, it's hard to be a good manager when you're holding personal judgment against someone or something. That type of judgment causes us to close down, stop seeing what's really there, and miss out on finding creative solutions. It also causes the other person (the person being judged) to feel resentful, unrecognized, and discounted. Like everyone else, I've experienced both sides of judgment, as both the judge and the judged. I can unequivocally say that interpersonal judgment demonstrates a lack of personal responsibility and results in a waste of energy and a loss of opportunity.

Growing up, my younger brother Carter and I fought constantly. I was the "responsible" older brother intent on working hard and "making it big" in the world (PsiU). He was the young, carefree spirit who loved to hang out with his friends (psiU). I'm ashamed to say that I would frequently nag, condemn, and ridicule him to get his act together, "be a man," and make something of himself. The truth is that my vision of him was severely clouded by my own judgment and he responded to me as you probably would: "F--- off. You're not in charge of me!" Later in college, after a few years of living apart, I took a road trip to visit him in Bozeman, Montana, to go hiking and camping in the mountains. In this new environment, and probably because I was out of my own comfort zone, I was able to let go of my "judgment vision" and see my brother in a whole new light. In fact, I was utterly in awe at what I saw. Here was a young man who was extremely capable, knowledgeable, thoughtful, and powerful. Who was this person? Where did he come from? The fact is that he was there all the time. It was my own judgment that had prevented me from seeing him fully. What a sad loss of time, brotherhood, and missed opportunity!

On the other hand, I've also been the judged when my boss couldn't truly hear, see, or listen to me without his own judgment vision clouding the interaction. For example, the man who taught me the most about organizational development is Dr. Ichak Adizes. He's a brilliant thinker, highly regarded and wise. Many rightfully refer to him as the Peter Drucker of his era. I was originally introduced to his work as an entrepreneur and we struck up a collaboration and a friendship. Later, because I was so enamored with his methods, I joined his organization as an associate. However, soon after he became my boss (and not just a friend and mentor), something really interesting happened.

He no longer seemed to see, hear, or understand me as clearly as he did before! On the receiving end, it felt like now there was a thick interference field operating between what I spoke and what he heard, between who I was and what he saw. Because I had the experience of collaborating with him

deeply before he became my boss, the discrepancy was really profound. Now that I was “inside” the organization, it seemed that I was subjected to the same type of judgment vision I had projected onto my brother. As an employee, my own judgment vision towards him was equally activated. Now, there was no longer an individual and friend, but a “boss” and my own projections of whatever that entailed. All in all, we were two talented, capable people who couldn’t see past their own judgments.

To be clear, I don’t think my example of judgment vision between employee and boss is unique. In fact, I think it’s the norm. For example, the COO for a famous personal development guru recently approached me seeking help around their growth strategy: “Lex, basically the guru doesn’t listen to anyone inside the company. He really only listens to external experts. We’re stuck on this issue and we need an external expert that he’ll listen to.” We all judge others and ourselves incorrectly. Sometimes consciously, usually not. It’s good to be reminded that, while judgment of ourselves and others may sometimes feel right and good, it’s really a loss of energy, productivity, and human potential. There is a better way.

Instead of letting your interpersonal judgments run wild, learn to judge the force, not the person. By “judging” or identifying the force, you are able to respond to the underlying energy patterns at work, without becoming caught up in personal criticism. You’ll give yourself and others the freedom to be fully seen, heard, and reach full potential; you’ll have more productivity and less drama in relationships; and your entire organization will have a greater chance to flourish.

Judging a force is pretty straightforward. Rather than labeling it as good or bad, right or wrong, you simply observe it in action. Is this individual or situation change-driving or change-responding? Are they dealing with the parts or with the whole? Is it a Producing, Stabilizing, Innovating, or Unifying force or some combination? And what force is most needed at this time? By identifying the force, you are better able to discern behavior without getting caught up in the drama. For example, if I had understood the force within my brother, “Oh, that’s the Unifier force. It likes to connect with people and build relationships,” then I’m sure our interactions wouldn’t have been so needlessly draining for both of us. Similarly with my old boss, if I had learned to judge the force rather than the person, I would have been much more effective: “Ahhh, that’s the Innovator/Stabilizer combo. I shouldn’t offer up new ideas in this situation. Instead, I should ask some thoughtful questions to help him reveal his own vision further. And when I do see an opportunity to pursue, I should come prepared with lots of data to support it.”

When we don’t reduce others to the sum of our judgments, not only do we see more clearly but we also allow them to respond to us in a more positive way. We can then enjoy much healthier, more creative, and less energy-draining relationships.

2. Give the Force What It Needs

Each of the four styles has a particular focus and need. Producers are focused on what to do and need autonomy to do their work. Stabilizers are focused on how to do it and need time and data to perform analysis. Innovators are focused on finding new solutions and need excitement for their ideas. Unifiers are focused on the people involved and require time to process relationships and emotions.

Good management requires versatility. You don’t manage different people or situations the same way. An effective manager is a flexible one who understands the different focus of each style and gives each one what it needs. Of course, to be truly flexible (and not just wishy-washy), you need to have a strong internal vision and values. You also need to know yourself. Are you a Producer, Stabilizer, Innovator, Unifier, or some combination? And what are your biases? Whatever your style,

it impacts how you see the world and interact with others. Good managers recognize their own style and have the ability to adjust it for short periods based on those with whom they are interacting—all without compromising their own authentic vision and values.

Why is it important to meet the needs of each force? Assuming that you're dealing with a mature individual, as you give a force what it needs, the energy of that force "moves through" and can make space for the emergence of other forces. But if a force doesn't have its needs met, the energy stagnates and causes entropy to rise. Put another way, once someone has had their immediate needs met, they are in a much better state to be able to see and appreciate all the other forces and perspectives involved.

Imagine that you're sitting in your office and different styles of people are coming to you for advice. In the following examples, we are going to assume that you are a psiu—that is, you have an equal balance of all four forces. Of course, in real life, no one has a perfect balance so you will have to adjust your temporary style based on your predominant style. Here's how you might successfully interact with each style by giving each force what it needs.

Polly Producer storms into your office. She has high energy. She's talking fast and moving quickly. She's focused on what to do and is frustrated at the continued delays. Your task is to give the force what it needs. So what do you do? You speed up your pace. You take a structured approach. You focus on the most immediate short-term objectives. You help remove any obstacles that are preventing the work from getting done.

Once Polly Producer has had a chance to vent her frustration, she's once again able to focus on completing the task at hand. In addition, because you've met the immediate needs of her strong Producing force, Polly is now able to see things in a new light too. She can have a greater appreciation for all the details (Stabilizing), as well as an improved awareness of other people's perceptions (Unifying) and the big picture of the overall strategy (Innovating). You can now give Polly plenty of autonomy to complete the task. And because she's a Producer, you don't have to worry about the work getting done. You only have to check that it's the right work and she hasn't gone too far in one direction.

Sam Stabilizer knocks on your door. Sam speaks and moves at a more deliberate, thoughtful pace. He's focused on how to complete a task or project. He's in your office because the recent corporate objectives don't make perfect sense. So what do you do? You slow down your pace. You carve out time to really explain things. You give Sam all the information and raw data involved in the decision. You focus on the short-term practical issues. You help him focus on how to do things more efficiently. You give him plenty of time to analyze the data.

After Sam Stabilizer's needs are met, he can amp up his creativity (Innovator) and production power (Producer) and better connect with others (Unifier). But if Sam was never given the data or the time to analyze it, he would simply be stuck in his Stabilizing force. There's no sense in berating Sam to work harder, to be more creative, or to be a better team player until you've also given him time to analyze and make sense of the data. By doing this, you're able to leverage Sam's talents and will likely uncover aspects of the problem or situation that would remain hidden if he, or someone like him, hadn't analyzed it.

Isabel Innovator makes a grand appearance. She speaks and moves in broad, fast strokes. She's been thinking about the new project and has some ideas. "Why not do it this way?" she asks. So what do you do? You amp up your own pace and get excited! You give her the space to go really big

picture and take an unstructured, creative approach. Together you explore the broader implications, and uncover where new innovations lie.

Once Isabel Innovator has had a chance to get excited with someone about her new idea, she may notice that the romance of it starts fading—followed by an increased awareness of the real effort (Producing), details (Stabilizing), and teamwork (Unifying) involved in bringing it to life. The result will be a better, more well-rounded decision. Isabel can now get out of her own way too. She can still be highly creative but won't be nearly as disruptive by always throwing new ideas into the mix just because they're new and she wants to be heard.

Ulysses Unifier enters your office and wants to chat. He's focused on who is doing the work on the new project and is noticing that team morale isn't as high as it could be. Ulysses moves, speaks, and thinks more deliberately and is usually "happy" and gregarious (unless he's upset and will then need time to process his feelings). In this case, Ulysses seems really upset. So what do you do? You slow down your pace and try to see the world as Ulysses sees it. You give him space to share his feelings and get his perspective on the needs of the rest of the team. You empathize with him.

After Ulysses Unifier has had a chance to process his feelings, he's much more capable of doing the work (Producing), following the process (Stabilizing), and supporting the new strategy (Innovating). If he doesn't get his Unifier needs met, he's going to be unproductive. Not only that: His gifts as a Unifier, including the ability to uplift others, empathize, intuit, and bring harmony to the team will be lost. By giving the force what it needs, the energy moves through and Ulysses can be at his best once again.

It's obviously hard work to give a force what it needs. It takes time, energy, skill, and awareness to do it successfully. But if you don't give a force what it needs, what happens? Our old enemy entropy starts to rear its ugly head. When the needs of a force aren't met, rather than dissipating, entropy increases and becomes detrimental to the individual and to the team.

Polly becomes frustrated to the breaking point. Sam withdraws into quiet resentment. Isabel gets dejected at the lack of interest around her and spins out even more crazy ideas (or stops sharing altogether). Ulysses gets so caught up in the melodrama that he becomes moody, grouchy, and petulant. So yes, while managing others well is hard and time-consuming work, not managing well has an even greater cost. Doing it right is always worth your time.

So far we've discussed that the elements to building and managing powerhouse teams lie in understanding the forces at work within a situation, team, or individual; forming complements of forces; and giving the system or force what it needs to be successful. Are these the only requirements for building powerhouse teams? Certainly not. Because the four forces are so pervasive, however, understanding them is a cornerstone to good management and team building.

There are other key elements to building powerhouse teams that are equally important. These include creating organizational alignment with the vision and values, designing the right organizational structure, having a sound process for decision-making and implementation, and hiring the right style of person for each organizational role. By understanding the essence of the PSIU forces, it gives you a powerful tool to align all aspects of the organization, including your own role, with greater clarity and power.

Visit us at <http://www.OrganizationalPhysics.com> to find all the resources you need to transform yourself, team, company, and growth. To your success!