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## **From the Editor**

April 2024

Welcome to the 46<sup>th</sup> issue of the *International Leadership Journal*, an online, peer-reviewed journal. This issue contains an article, practice piece, case study, and book review.

In the article, Lindner, Lindner, and Levitt clarify the direct impact of working from home, working from an office, or having a hybrid work arrangement on counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Their analysis of 391 working adults found no mean differences between OCBs and CWBs based on where they worked. Their results also showed that coworker and supervisor support predict CWBs and OCBs and that workplace loneliness was a significant predictor of CWBs.

To address the global epidemic of bad leadership, Kerns developed a practice-oriented leader profile that aligns five leader attributes with ten leader behaviors that are supported by a set of leader-influence practices to drive impacts and desired outcomes. The “wise warmly assertive caring teaching” (WWACT) leader profile is designed to increase leader effectiveness. Kerns shares the application value and implications, as well as challenges, of applying the profile in practice.

In Shah, Dixon, and Bear’s case study of a financial advisory and capital-raising firm located in five countries around the world, the firm needed to articulate a clear organizational culture to acknowledge the presence of diverse backgrounds. Using Edgar Schein’s model of the three levels of culture, the authors interviewed 12 employees to see how the firm’s culture and leadership adhered to Schein’s levels. Its distinct culture ensured that employees formed successful teams to minimize interpersonal conflicts.

Finally, Biasello reviewed Walter Issacson’s book *Elon Musk* (2023), a narrative biography provides an understanding of how a leader can change the world despite having negative qualities that some would consider fatal flaws. His review focuses on Musk’s leadership traits and behaviors. Trait theorists will find the former especially enlightening.

Please spread the word about *ILJ* to interested academics and practitioners and remember to visit <http://internationalleadershipjournal.com>. Also, feel free to propose a topic and be a guest editor of a special issue by contacting me at [jcsantora1@gmail.com](mailto:jcsantora1@gmail.com).

Joseph C. Santora, EdD  
Editor

## ARTICLE

### Should We Actually Be Going Back to the Office?\*

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**The WorkPlace Group**

**Chloe Lindner**  
**Fordham University**

**Kenneth Levitt**  
**Frostburg State University**

**The current study clarifies the direct impact of working from home, working from an office, or having a hybrid work arrangement on counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). An analysis of 391 working adults showed no mean differences between OCBs and CWBs based on where they worked. Multiple linear regressions indicate that coworker support and supervisor support predict CWBs and OCBs. Workplace loneliness was also a significant predictor of CWBs. Implications of these results are discussed.**

**Keywords: counterproductive work behaviors, coworker support, hybrid work, organizational citizenship behaviors, supervisor support, work from home, workplace loneliness**

All employers are concerned about counterproductive work behaviors and their negative impact on organizational productivity and performance. A recent CNBC article (Smith, 2022) indicated that 50% of businesses want or already require workers to return to the office full time, with others requiring hybrid work arrangements in which employees work part of the week from home and the remainder from the office. A survey of 20,000 people in 11 countries found that “85% of leaders say that the shift to hybrid work [and, by association, work-from-home arrangements] has made it challenging to have confidence that employees are being productive” (Microsoft, 2022, “1. End Productivity Paranoia” section, para. 2). Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Meta, announced that “an internal analysis of employee performance data suggests that engineers who work in person ‘get more done’” (Capot, 2023, para. 3). But does in-office work mitigate counterproductive work behaviors? In-office employees may be easier to manage

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and observe, but just like working at home, employees can always look busy without being productive.

Organizations debating where workers should work—from home, in a corporate office, or a hybrid of the two—is centered on employee productivity and performance. Three domains of work performance are task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs; Yao & Fan, 2015). Research has shown that working from home does not necessarily result in less productive workers in terms of task performance (Maurer, 2020). However, research has shown that employees working from home struggle to exhibit OCBs and report elevated levels of CWBs (Wax et al., 2022). However, workers can be lonely at work—despite where work is performed.

*Organizational citizenship behaviors* refer to doing things that benefit the organization, such as helping coworkers with their deliverables and volunteering to take on responsibilities. Organ (1988) described OCBs as behaviors that are “discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization” (4). *Counterproductive work behaviors* are “intentional employee behavior[s] that [are] harmful to the legitimate interests of an organization” (Dalal, 2005, 1241–1242). These dysfunctional behaviors violate the organizational norms and deviate from a company’s standard procedures and policies. They include behaviors such as working slowly or pretending to work, saying mean things to coworkers, taking long breaks, and complaining about insignificant work-related things. CWBs have two major dimensions based on the severity and target of the action. CWBs can include serious and dangerous deviant behaviors, such as sexual assault, as well as less serious actions, such as gossiping about a colleague. CWBs also can affect the organization’s or an individual’s well-being. When targeting an individual’s well-being, CWBs are sometimes referred to as interpersonal deviance. However, the two dimensions are highly correlated ( $r = .62$ ), reflecting that CWBs impact both the individual and the organization (Kelloway & Barling, 2010).

Researchers have tried to understand how to predict CWBs. Kelloway and Barling (2010) argued that CWBs act as a form of employee protest. Based on the model of protest, employees display deviant behaviors to respond to a violation of moral or ethical standards. These individuals use these counterproductive behaviors in an attempt to restore justice and fairness. The authors note that this view is consistent with the classic work by Hirschman (1970), who stated that when individuals experience dissatisfaction, they have two choices: leave the situation or express their displeasure. Thus, employees protest if they feel a lack of loyalty or a decreased quality in their organization. In the case of CWBs, this results in a lack of devotion to an organization's success, a want to have grievances heard, and a need to voice displeasure in the form of deviant behaviors (Kelloway & Barling, 2010).

The need for loyalty in an organization can also be understood under the context of identification. Researchers have argued that employees are more likely to pursue CWBs when they do not feel they identify with their organization. The social identity perspective states that

the identification of employees with their organization has been conceptualized as a specific type of social identity through which individuals integrate their personal self-definition with their membership of an organization. Thus, the organizational identity becomes a part of their self-concept. (Ciampa et al., 2019, 120)

Ciampa et al. (2019) argued that a sense of identity in an organization drives CWBs. Thus, when employees feel connected to their organization, they are less likely to go against it. When individuals view themselves as a part of an in-group, they internalize the group's goals, follow organizational norms and standards, and treat fellow group members more positively (Ciampa et al. 2019). Research on employee–organization identity infers that it moderates CWBs; where organizational identity is high, CWBs are low.

Research by Palmer et al. (2017) explored the role of overall perceived organizational support on CWBs. *Perceived organizational support (POS)* is defined as “an employee's perception that their organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being” (Palmer et al., 2017, 31). High POS increases employees' commitment and enhances positive organizational outcomes (Palmer et al., 2017). When an employee feels appreciated and

experiences high levels of organizational support, CWBs are diminished. Vatankah et al. (2017) also found this relationship when studying 198 Iranian flight attendants. They observed that elevated perceptions of organizational support reduced the frequency of CWBs.

Based on the research stated above, it can be argued that when individuals feel displeased, unsupported, or lonely at work, they are more likely to demonstrate CWBs and less likely to exhibit OCBs. However, it is unclear whether these behaviors are more present when employees work from home, in an office, or in a hybrid work setting. Does work location matter when it comes to CWBs and OCBs? Accordingly, the current study sought to (a) clarify the direct impact of work location on CWBs and (b) unpack the potential moderating impact of supervisor and coworker support on CWBs and OCBs. Consequently, based on the research results, I propose the following hypotheses:

***Hypothesis 1:*** CWBs are not greater for those working from home, in-office, or in a hybrid work arrangement.

***Hypothesis 2:*** OCBs are not greater for those working from home, in-office, or in a hybrid work arrangement.

***Hypothesis 3:*** Workplace loneliness, coworker support, and supervisor support predict the magnitude of CWBs and OCBs independently of where work is performed.

## Method

### Sample

Participants were recruited primarily from a database of U.S. job candidates from a talent acquisition and development consulting company, but also partially from an alumni network from a small liberal arts college in Southern California and social media posts. From the database of U.S. job candidates, 33,140 candidates were contacted via a personalized email with a link to the survey. These individuals were selected based on the following criteria: (a) residing in the United States, (b) having updated their candidate record within the past five years, and (c) having a valid email address. The job candidates in the database include individuals who work in

various industries, such as manufacturing, finance, health, pharmaceuticals, consumer products, IT, and engineering. These candidates range from no work experience to mid and late-career professionals. This database includes individuals in both trades as well as professional occupations.

Five hundred and sixty-one survey responses were received. Of these responses, 391 completed surveys were usable for analysis. Responses eliminated from the final sample included: individuals who didn't respond to any questions ( $n = 92$ ), individuals who were unemployed and had never previously been employed ( $n = 51$ ), individuals who did not provide consent for their data to be used ( $n = 15$ ), responses that came from the research group testing out the survey ( $n = 11$ ), and one response that, based on respondent location and pattern of answers, appeared to be a duplicate response ( $n = 1$ ). Of the 391 usable data points, all individuals were currently employed or had previously been employed. Of the participants, 74.68% worked in corporate offices, 16.62% worked had a hybrid work arrangement, 4.35% worked from home, and 4.35% did not specify. Participants reported working in a variety of industries, including education (18.93%), dining (11.25%), sales (9.21%), health care (9.21%), business (7.93%), and administration (6.39%). The average age of the participants was 32.41 years old ( $SD = 15.90$ ). The gender breakdown was 66.24% female, 30.18% male, and 1.02% non-binary/third gender; .51% preferred to self-describe, .26% preferred not to say, and 1.79% provided no response.

### **Procedure and Methods**

All data were collected via a web-based survey using Qualtrics, a software survey system. The following measures were used to capture conceptual variables in the current study.

**Workplace Loneliness.** Workplace loneliness was measured using Wright et al.'s (2006) 16-item scale. An example item is: "I often feel isolated when I am with my coworkers." Response options ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.93.

**Organizational Citizenship Behaviors.** OCBs were measured using Smith et al.'s (1983) 16-item scale. Participants were instructed to respond about their own



behaviors. An example item is: “Makes innovative suggestions to improve the department.” Response options ranged from “very uncharacteristic” (1) to “very characteristic” (5). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.79.

**Coworker and Supervisor Support.** Perceptions of coworker support were captured using O’Driscoll et al.’s (2004) four-item scale. An example item is: “How often, over the past three months, have you received sympathetic understanding and concern from colleagues?” Response options ranged from “never” (1) to “all the time” (6). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .92.

Perceptions of supervisor support were captured using Kottke and Sharafinski’s (1988) 16-item scale. An example item is: “My supervisor really cares about my well-being.” Response options ranged from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .96.

**Counterproductive Work Behaviors.** This variable was measured using the 10-item self-report checklist developed by Spector et al. (2006). The scale asks participants how often they participate in CWBs (e.g., complaining about insignificant things at work). Items are scored on a five-point scale from “never” (1) to “every day” (5). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .97.

## Results

All measured variables were deemed to be normally distributed. Descriptive statistics appear in Table 1, and Pearson correlations for variables examined to evaluate Hypothesis 3 are shown in Table 2.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Work Location+	301	2.76	0.52
2. Workplace Loneliness	301	46.03	17.42
3. Coworker Support	349	13.47	6.52
4. Supervisory Support	349	56.81	27.29
5. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors	301	62.18	8.83
6. Counterproductive Work Behaviors	349	13.59	3.85

*Note.* Work location was coded as follows: 1 = in-office; 2 = hybrid; 3 = home.

**Table 2: Pearson Correlations**

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Workplace Loneliness	—			
2. Coworker Support	-.384*	—		
3. Supervisory Support	-.183*	.653*	—	
4. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors	-.205*	.725*	.687*	—
5. Counterproductive Work Behaviors	.090	.500*	.507*	.533*

\* $p < 0.001$ 

To evaluate Hypothesis 1, which stated that CWBs do not differ for those working from home compared with those working in a corporate office or a hybrid work arrangement, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. No significant differences in CWBs were found for these three groups,  $F(2,298) = .897$ ,  $p = 0.409$ . Hypothesis 1 was supported.

To evaluate Hypothesis 2, which stated that OCBs do not differ for those working from home compared with those working in a corporate office or a hybrid work arrangement, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. No significant differences in OCBs were found for these three groups,  $F(2,298) = 1.409$ ,  $p = 0.246$ . Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3 was evaluated using multiple linear regression. This hypothesis stated that workplace loneliness, coworker support, and supervisor support predict the magnitude of CWBs and OCBs independently of where work is performed. Because the ANOVAs conducted to test Hypotheses 1 and 2 showed no mean differences in OCBs or CWBs based on where individuals worked, work location was not included as a moderator in the multiple linear regressions conducted. Workplace loneliness, coworker support, and supervisor support were regressed onto CWBs. Results showed that all three predictors were significant and explained 39% of the variance. The overall regression was statistically significant ( $F(3, 345) = 73.290$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with a  $R^2$  of 0.389. The fitted regression model is  $CWB = -.660 + (.375 * \text{coworker support}) + (0.57 * \text{supervisor support}) + (.098 * \text{workplace loneliness})$ . Coworker support significantly predicted CWBs,

$t(345) = 7.393, p < .01$ . Supervisor support predicted CWBs  $t(345) = 4.968, p < .01$ . Workplace loneliness also significantly predicted CWBs  $t(345) = 6.830, p < .01$ .

A second multiple linear regression was conducted to regress workplace loneliness, coworker support, and supervisor support onto OCBs. Results explained 61% of the variance with coworker and supervisor support as significant predictors. The overall regression was statistically significant ( $F(3, 345) = 178.325, p < .001$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .608. The fitted regression model is  $OCB = 26.659 + (1.225 * \text{coworker support}) + (0.211 * \text{supervisor support}) + (.051 * \text{workplace loneliness})$ . Coworker support significantly predicted OCBs,  $t(345) = 10.674, p < .01$ . Supervisor support also predicted OCBs,  $t(345) = 8.185, p < .01$ . However, workplace loneliness was not a significant predictor of OCBs,  $t(345) = 1.579, p = .115$ . Hypothesis 3 was supported.

## Discussion

This study suggests employers focus on the wrong question regarding productivity and work arrangements. It is not a question of working from home versus working in a corporate office or some combination of both. It is a question of job design and organizational culture. Mandating or redacting work-from-home policies to bring people into the office is unlikely to enhance employee productivity or performance. Employees can be counterproductive regardless, resistant to exhibit OCBs, and, as suggested by Kelloway and Barling (2010) and others, may protest an employer's unfavorable change in policy.

The current study adds to our existing body of knowledge by examining the magnitude of OCBs, CWBs, and workplace loneliness across three common work arrangements: working from home, working from a corporate office, or having a hybrid work arrangement. A *hybrid work arrangement* is defined as working part of the week from home and the rest in a corporate office. Results show that where work is performed is insignificant. The magnitude of OCBs, CWBs, and work loneliness did not meaningfully vary across these three work arrangements. This is a notable result as OCBs and CWBs comprise two of the three domains of work performance. Past studies regarding the third domain, task performance, observed

that employees' levels of task performance are not contingent on whether they work from home or a corporate office (Wax et al., 2022).

The compilation of current research and the findings of this study suggest that worker productivity and performance are not a matter of where they work. Individuals' work arrangements did not affect their level of OCBs or CWBs. However, their perceived degree of support from coworkers and supervisors and their level of workplace loneliness did. In fact, 61% of the variance across respondents regarding OCBs could be predicted by these variables. A closer look at the results showed that workplace loneliness was not a significant predictor and had a negligible effect on OCBs. A review of the correlation matrix in Table 2 shows a moderate and significant positive correlation of .653 between perceived supervisor and coworker support. The fact that each significantly predicts OCBs indicates that each accounts for unique variance. While workplace loneliness was not a significant predictor of CWBs in this study, potential moderators could be at play given its negative and statistically significant relationship of  $-.205$  with OCBs. This is an area for further exploration. Until then, what matters the most when it comes to boosting the magnitudes of employees' OCBs is their perceived levels of coworker and supervisor support.

Turning separately to CWBs, 39% of the variance in workers' levels of CWBs, regardless of work location, could be explained by their perceived degree of support from coworkers and supervisors and their level of workplace loneliness. In this case, all three of these variables were significant predictors. Workplace loneliness being a significant predictor of CWBs is noteworthy, particularly because its correlation with CWBs was not statistically significant (see Table 2). Potential moderators may be at play, and future research should explore this further. Similar to OCBs, findings suggest that lowering workers' CWBs is a matter of designing jobs and organizational cultures in which employees feel supported by coworkers and supervisors and experience lower levels of workplace loneliness.

This study has several limitations that are important to acknowledge. First, the study is based on self-reported survey responses and is subject to various biases, such as social desirability, that may influence response accuracy. For example,

employees may not want to accurately self-report their CWBs. Second, the sample may have issues of generalizability. Although our sample was diverse, it may not completely reflect the entire U.S. population of working adults. Future researchers are encouraged to study further the interactive effect of workplace environments on work-relevant outcomes using longitudinal, multi-methodological research designs with large, diverse samples of workers. Researchers should be encouraged to include objective measures of work performance domains to eliminate measurement bias.

The current study provides unique insights into how workplace loneliness and perceptions of coworker support and supervisor support deeply affect employees' OCBs and CWBs. Employee productivity and job performance are likely more contingent on designing jobs and work cultures that balance and optimize the interplay of task performance with variables that boost OCBs and minimize CWBs. Designing jobs and work cultures to strengthen employees' perceptions of support from coworkers and supervisors and lower their levels of workplace loneliness has a far greater effect on increasing OCBs and decreasing CWBs than decisions regarding working from-home, working from a corporate office, or some combination of both. Given this, future researchers should explore other predictors and moderators of OCBs and CWBs. While this study accounted for 61% of the variance in OCBs and 39% of the variance in CWBs, a significant amount of variance remains unexplained. Other factors are at play, and much can be learned through further inquiry.

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that influence workplace attitudes and performance, such as procedural justice, emotional intelligence, employee engagement, leadership, and personality. He also has extensive human resource consulting experience with The Gallup Organization and The WorkPlace Group. He can be reached at [kjlevitt@frostburg.edu](mailto:kjlevitt@frostburg.edu).



## PRACTICE

### Practicing Wise, Warmly Assertive, Caring Teaching: A Practice-Oriented Leader Profile\*

Charles D. Kerns  
Pepperdine University

**A global epidemic of bad leadership beckons practitioners, teachers, and applied researchers to address this problem. Equipping leaders with useful approaches to enhance their effectiveness can positively impact this distressing situation. After offering some key considerations and reviewing some relevant literature, a leader profile is provided to positively affect the bad leader problem. The effectiveness profile aligns five leader attributes with ten specific leader behaviors that are supported by a set of leader-influence practices to drive impacts and desired outcomes, increasing overall effectiveness. The application value and implications of the profile—in practice, teaching, and research—are discussed. Some challenges in applying the profile are offered.**

**Keywords:** behavioral impacts, desired outcomes, leader development, leader effectiveness profile, influencer role

Effective leaders make a difference in achieving organizational results (Pendleton & Furnham, 2016). Leader attributes, behaviors, and competencies are integral to leader effectiveness (Zaccaro et al., 2018). These elements, when effectively configured, can produce leader profiles that yield positive impacts and achieve desired results. This article offers a leader effectiveness profile that has been successfully applied in a variety of workplaces and leader development settings.

Five attributes have proven to be relevant in the successful development and execution of the profile: wisdom, warmth, assertiveness, caring, and teaching. These will be operationally defined and aligned with specific leader behaviors and a set of practices contained in a leader influencer action role that I developed and have been applying with colleagues over several decades (Kerns & Ko, 2014).

Before systematically presenting the leader profile, it is important to note the current worldwide epidemic of bad leadership. Bad leaders can be categorized in three ways. First, leaders can be deemed ineffective. These leaders do not achieve agreed-upon results. Second, bad leaders may be incompetent. These leaders

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find themselves in over their heads and unable to competently respond to the demands and requirements expected of them. Third, and most unsettlingly, leaders can be abusive. Abuse at the hands of leaders includes negative social behaviors such as excluding, blaming, invading privacy, and bullying (Einarsen & Fosse, 2022).

The profile discussed in this article is an outgrowth of my work to reposition how we think about the role of a leader. This work, along with the contributions of others, has been evolving and includes remedies to help turn around bad leadership (Hayes & Lusk, 2022; Kerns, 2021). When successfully executed, the offered profile contributes to this work, especially in the context of helping both emerging and seasoned executives to proactively and intentionally enhance their effectiveness and avoid derailment (Kaiser, 2022; Leslie, 2022).

### **Some Key Considerations**

The practice-oriented profile, which I call the “wise warmly assertive caring teaching” (WWACT) leader, reflects and draws upon five key dimensions relating to leadership:

- individual differences,
- motivation to lead,
- situational context,
- competencies, and
- results and desired outcomes.

I have been systematically reviewing and studying these five dimensions as important elements of leader effectiveness over the past several decades. My work in addressing leader effectiveness emerged from my own experiences as a key executive leading a large complex healthcare service organization; serving as a consultant, including as the director of organizational consulting in a major global

consulting firm; and subsequently pursuing my current career as a professor of applied behavioral science in a business school.

The WWACT leader profile represents an integration of selective leader attributes, behaviors, and practices associated with a holistic practice-oriented leadership system that focuses on enhancing leader effectiveness. The five dimensions are embedded in both the comprehensive system of leadership as well as in the WWACT leader profile. *Individual differences* are reflected in the attributes contained in the WWACT leader profile. For example, leadership attributes of wisdom, warmth, and assertiveness are prominent in the profile. When effectively operationalized and expressed through behavioral practices, these three attributes help leaders project themselves as being wise and warmly assertive. Both caring and teaching, which form part of the framework for the WWACT leader role, provide very real *motivation to lead*. Caring for others, as well as valuing learning, growth, and development, can provide foundational motivation to lead and are integral aspects of the WWACT leader. An effective leader needs to be able to read the situation to decide how to respond and what to say or do across a spectrum of circumstances. When and how a leader makes value-added contributions and/or imparts personalized knowledge will be informed by *situational context*. A leader's attributes and skills form how a leader responds to situations. Competent leaders will effectively use their unique set of attributes and skills, or *competencies*, to achieve agreed-upon *results and desired outcomes*. Leaders' awareness of their motivation to lead, the context of any given situation or challenge, their leadership competencies as well as their organization's

competencies, and the group's or individual's agreed-upon results and desired outcomes are integral to the WWACT leader's effectiveness.

Additionally relevant to understanding and executing the WWACT leader profile are leader development dynamics associated with attachment in adulthood and allostatic load relating to managing stressors and self-control (Fava et al., 2023; Kerns, 2013; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; Yarnell & Grunberg, 2017). *Adult attachment theory* indicates that adults are influenced by their relationships with caregivers, especially those experienced in their childhood (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Adult leaders can lead from positions of secure and/or insecure attachment. Leaders who display insecure attachment behaviors (i.e., being distant and detached or disengaged) often find it challenging to project warmth and caring in their leadership roles (Wu & Parker, 2017). *Allostatic load* relates to the cumulative effects of stress experiences/stressors in an individual's daily functioning (McEwen & Stellar, 1993). Stress is a psychobiological process that must be effectively managed and controlled for a leader to effectively execute the WWACT leader profile (Fava et al., 2023). A leader who experiences stressors that exceed their capacity to manage them moves into a state of allostatic overload wherein their effectiveness is likely impaired (Yarnell & Grunberg, 2017). Taken together, leaders who display insecure attachment behaviors, especially in the form of detachment, and/or experience allostatic overload are less likely to be effective in executing the WWACT leader profile.

The WWACT leader profile involves the dynamic interaction among and between several key leadership dimensions. Working in concert, these dimensions can

bring leader attributes, behaviors, and competencies together to produce positive behavioral impacts that yield desired outcomes. A leader's effectiveness is also enhanced through allostatic load management. Given this broader perspective, the practice-oriented leader effectiveness profile can be considered more specifically.

### **Practice-Oriented Leader Profile**

The current epidemic of bad leadership, coupled with my interest in leader effectiveness and development, motivated me to provide practitioners, teachers, and applied researchers with relevant frameworks and tools to advance the practice, teaching, and study of leadership. The WWACT leader profile is representative of these efforts and is illuminated across five interdependent areas—attributes, behaviors, influencer role practices, behavioral impacts; and integrated profile snapshot/desired outcomes (see Table 1). The profile reflects a review of relevant literature, applied research, and practice. The following observations have been gleaned from this work and offer support for the profile.

- The management of wisdom, especially relating to imparting personalized knowledge, provides leaders with the opportunity to make wise, value-added contributions (Bachmann et al., 2018; Kerns, 2020b).
- Wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leaders can positively energize people and situations when executed in just right amounts (Cameron, 2021; Pierce & Aguinis, 2013).
- Assertiveness needs to be situationally managed and delivered with a warm tone for optimal impact (Buzzotta et al., 1982).
- Authentic caring is associated with transcendent motivation and acts of well-doing, which virtuously benefit others (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Kerns, 2023; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014).
- Most effective organizational leaders can be impactful teachers (Betof, 2009; Finkelstein, 2019).
- Teaching for wisdom has significance and relevance to leader development and business education (Sternberg & Hage, 2019).

- While billions of dollars are allocated annually to leadership development, the prevalence and burdensome cost of bad leadership behavior continue worldwide (Kerns, 2021).
- The extant literature is increasingly exposing the realities of bad leadership while offering reasons and remedies (Hayes & Lusk, 2022; Kerns, 2021).
- The study of individual differences and personal attributes relating to leadership has evolved over many years, with the extant literature offering more sophisticated frameworks for describing the influence of leader attributes on leadership emergence, performance, and effectiveness (Zaccaro et al., 2013; Zaccaro et al., 2018).
- Self- and situational awareness are enhanced by effectively managing one's response modalities (Kerns, 2013; Richard, 1999).
- High-impact communicating is an essential competency for effective leadership (Kerns, 2016a).
- The study and practice of leader effectiveness can benefit from a multidisciplinary approach, which considers relevant work in the fields of neuroscience/brain science and related psychobiosocial studies (Pan et al., 2022; Yarnell & Grunberg, 2017; Zak & Winn, 2016).
- Adult development theory and adult attachment theory have relevance to and impact on leaders' interpersonal influence, especially as they relate to projecting engaged versus detached behaviors at work (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).
- Stressors and allostatic load play key roles in leader effectiveness, making it important for leaders to recognize allostatic overload in themselves and those around them (Yarnell & Grunberg, 2017).
- Leader profiles designed to enhance leader effectiveness should explicitly identify and measure desired outcomes and key results such as performance, well-being, and well-doing (Kerns, 2024).
- Leader profiles designed to achieve desired outcomes can benefit from using neurologically based coaching strategies that activate positive/renewal-related brain networks that serve as motivational tools for learning, growth, and development (Boyatzis et al., 2019).

- The bad leadership problem needs the attention of policymakers and boards of directors (Kerns, 2021).
- Evidence-based, practice-oriented profiles from applied research, practice, and conceptual frameworks can enhance leader effectiveness as well as turn around the incidence of bad leadership (Barends & Rousseau, 2018).
- When aligned across organizational levels and effectively executed, the WWACT leader profile may help create and sustain a wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching culture. When taken together, these elements may also help advance individual and collective learning, growth, and development.

**Table 1: WWACT Leader Profile**

Attribute	Behaviors	Influencer Role Practices	Behavioral Impacts	Integrated Profile Snapshot and Desired Outcomes
<b>Wisdom</b>	Making value-added contributions. Applying personalized knowledge to topics/situations.	Displaying self-/situational awareness, internal operating system (IOS) control cycle, and B.A.S.I.C. response modulation (Kerns, 2013). Offering relevant/accurate self-disclosures.  High-impact communicating (Kerns, 2016a).	Gain perspectives on topics/situations. Strengthen maturity index and manage stressors/allostatic load (Fava et al., 2023; Yarnell & Grunberg, 2017).	The WWACT leader makes value-added contributions using a warmly assertive approach while showing authentic caring and underscoring key takeaways as teaching moments to leverage for learning, growth, and development.  The overall strategic desired outcome is to optimize individual and collective performance, well-being, and well-doing across organizational levels and with key external stakeholders.
<b>Warmth</b>	Voicing understanding (cognitive empathy) while appropriately illuminating emotions (emotional empathy) (Massaro, 2020). Reassuring, supporting, and self-monitoring (Parks-Leduc et al., 2014).	High-impact communicating (Kerns, 2016a).	Advance openness, supportiveness, and cohesion to strengthen trust levels.	
<b>Assertiveness</b>	Displaying the “just-right amount” of assertiveness. Holding the line on what one believes is the right thing to do for key stakeholders. Aligning with core values.	Understanding and managing work preferences and learning styles (Kerns, 2019).  High-impact communicating (Kerns, 2016a).	Strengthen mutual respect, caring, and psychological safety when delivered with warmth (Grant, 2021).	
<b>Caring</b>	Acting authentically in virtuous ways that benefit others (Kerns, 2023).	Managing conflict/differences and negotiating (Kerns, 2016b).  High-impact communicating (Kerns, 2016a).	Advance trustworthiness, secure/healthy attachments, and modeling virtuous well-doing.	
<b>Teaching</b>	Identifying and communicating key takeaways and teaching moments to advance learning, growth, and development. Engaging in “both/and thinking” (Smith & Lewis, 2022).	Decisive problem-solving (Kerns, 2016c).  High-impact communicating (Kerns, 2016a).	Advance individual and collective learning/development while helping create and sustain a wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching culture (Kerns, 2020a).	

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When leaders have an integrated understanding of the WWACT profile as a systematic and dynamic effectiveness-enhancing process, they are better able to manage and optimize their profile as a resource. In doing so, they are also more likely to effectively influence desired outcomes.

### **Operationalizing—Aligning Attributes and Behavior**

The five attributes of the WWACT leader are operationalized by aligning each with applicable behaviors and associated behavioral definitions.

*Wisdom* is defined as making value-added contributions. More specifically, these value-added contributions are typically drawn from a leader's personalized knowledge as it relates to a specific topic and/or situation that is under consideration. For example, based on personalized knowledge, a chief operating officer may advise the director of the supply chain to deliver feedback to a key customer regarding a recurring on-time delivery performance problem using a specific proven communication approach supported by targeted quantitative and qualitative data.

*Warmth* is operationalized when leaders use cognitive empathy to understand what another person is saying, and emotional empathy by identifying and, as appropriate, illuminating emotions (Stellar & Duong, 2023). The illumination of emotions can be communicated verbally or nonverbally. Neuroscience studies indicate that empathy starts with sharing emotion, followed by imitation of another individual's feelings, and perhaps motivates other behaviors relating to expressing supportive behaviors (Singer, 2009). Decety (2010) noted that neuroscience research reveals that brain networks provide humans with the capacity to empathize. Warmth is further operationalized when leaders offer reassuring and supportive messages. Leaders' effective self-monitoring behaviors help them adjust their behavioral responses to match what is needed in the moment (Parks-Leduc et al., 2014).

*Assertiveness* is realized when leaders do not yield on important points, especially when the situation involves aligning with and upholding core values. Acting authentically in virtuous ways that benefit others aligns with *caring* and can

demonstrate that leaders are motivated beyond self-interest (Dutton et al., 2014; Kerns, 2023).

*Teaching* is behaviorally operationalized when leaders identify and communicate key takeaways from encounters with others around important topics. These behavioral episodes become teaching moments for advanced learning, growth, and development. Leaders who use “both/and thinking” when facing situations that present conflicting perspectives or polarities rather than employing “either/or thinking” report enhanced decision-making capabilities (Smith & Lewis, 2022).

### **Competently Influencing Behavior**

Behaviors that help operationalize each of the five attributes of a WWACT leader are supported and enhanced when leaders competently execute practices contained in an influencer action role (Kerns & Ko, 2014). For example, when leaders practice self- and situational awareness while also effectively engaging in self-control, their wisdom or value-added contributions are more impactful. When leaders make relevant and accurate self-disclosures, they can boost the effectiveness of wisdom-oriented behaviors. When delivered effectively, leader self-disclosing statements are conduits for sharing personalized knowledge.

High-impact communicating is especially valuable for communicating warmth (Kerns, 2016a). High-impact communicating is a competency that can boost the effectiveness of all of the leader behaviors that are aligned with the five attributes. Assertiveness is buoyed by understanding and managing one’s own and others’ work preferences and learning styles (Kerns, 2019).

Caring is enhanced through effective conflict management and negotiating skills. Conflicts and differences are inevitable in interpersonal relationships, and leaders who want to project that they care can benefit by practicing situational conflict management strategies, such as accommodating others’ needs or wants when situationally appropriate. Strategic accommodation can help build goodwill and can especially help highly assertive leaders enhance their effectiveness (Kerns, 2016b). Decisive problem-solving helps strengthen behaviors that are aligned with teaching by having leaders recognize and competently manage decision-making

as it relates to time, the amount of quality information needed, and achieving the agreed-upon desired outcomes (Kerns, 2016c).

### **Behavioral Impacts**

Behavioral impacts are targeted for each of the attributes and associated behaviors and influencer role practices. Taken together, these aligned profile components are intended to produce the following five behavioral impacts:

- Helping others gain value-added perspectives, strengthen their maturity indices, and manage their stressors effectively to avoid allostatic overload. (The *maturity index* relates to the number of times a leader responds professionally, as opposed to personally, to challenging situations. Leaders' maturity indices rise as they display self-awareness, situational awareness, and self-control.)
- Advancing openness, supportiveness, and cohesion to strengthen trust levels.
- Strengthening mutual respect, caring, and psychological safety when assertive leader behavior is delivered with warmth. Warmly assertive leader communication also encourages recipients to move outside their comfort zones, which challenges them to learn, grow, and develop (Grant, 2021; Woolley & Fishbach, 2022).
- Advancing trustworthiness and secure/healthy attachments and modeling virtuous well-doing (Kerns, 2023; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).
- Advancing individual and collective learning and development while helping create and sustain a wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching culture.

### **Integrated Profile Snapshot and Desired Outcomes**

An integrated snapshot of the profile, optimally executed, along with the overall strategic desired outcome(s), as shown in Table 1, can be used as a valuable motivation tool to help leaders act and develop the habits of mind to successfully practice as a WWACT leader (Boyatzis et al., 2019). With an understanding of the five key components in the WWACT leader profile, and the interplay among them, a discussion of the application value of the profile relating to practice, teaching, and research follows.

## **Application Value and Implications**

Work relating to the development and execution of the WWACT leader profile has application value and implications for practitioners, teachers, and researchers. All three groups contribute to the growth and development of both emerging and seasoned leaders. Particularly, practitioners can benefit from having practical frameworks and tools to help them better manage their own efforts in striving to enhance their effectiveness as leaders. A discussion of the application value and implications of the proffered framework follows.

### **Practice Domain**

The profile can serve as a practical guidepost for constructive conversations, growth, and development. While the components are broken down for clarity and discussion purposes, the five-component profile is an integrated and interdependent whole. Various behavioral skill areas provide opportunities for leaders to increase their effectiveness in executing this framework. A managerial leader, independently or in consultation with trusted others, can consider the following 10 behavioral skill areas, each of which is integral to executing the WWACT leader profile and can present opportunities for improvement:

- making value-added contributions,
- applying personalized knowledge,
- voicing understanding,
- appropriately illuminating emotions,
- reassuring and supporting,
- being assertive,
- managing core values,
- acting intentionally to benefit others,
- recognizing and communicating key teaching moments, and
- considering differing perspectives for broader understanding.

The above checklist of behavioral skill areas represents a springboard for conversations with managerial leaders about their skills in executing the profile and in areas for improvement within the context of the overall framework. Discussing

these action areas can lead to more sophisticated forms of assessment, including 360-degree surveying and situational judgment testing (Campion & Ployhart, 2013).

Sundry rating scales are available when using surveys to assess leaders on the various behavioral skills. I have found the “just right rating scales” to be effective in determining how frequently a leader demonstrates the behavior at work (Pierce & Aguinis, 2013). Managerial leaders may also address the behavioral skills noted in this checklist with reports when coaching them to enhance their skills in executing the WWACT leader profile.

Multilevel alignment and engagement of leaders’ understanding and effective execution of the WWACT leader profile is important. Four relevant organizational levels can be addressed. First, the WWACT profile can be applied at the *intrapersonal* level. When addressing this level, leaders take a reflective look at themselves to determine which components in the profile represent strengths and/or developmental opportunities. For example, leaders who see themselves as more assertive and less inclined to project warmth may find it challenging to effectively execute the profile. In practice, a frequent refrain from these leaders is, “I’m not a touchy-feely-type person,” meaning that they do not frequently express their emotions; instead, they most often come across as very logical and rational. These leaders may not be seen as sufficiently approachable and may experience challenges in building trust.

Second, leaders interact on an *interpersonal* basis with other individuals. It is especially effective in these interactions to apply the basic communication model as it relates to understanding what is in the other person’s filter regarding a specific topic or situation. In these cases, it is valuable for the leader to demonstrate both cognitive and emotional empathy so that the leader can better understand what the person is thinking and feeling about the topic/situation. Applying the basic communication model in this way has proven to be effective in working with leaders at both the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels (Kerns, 2016a). I have found this approach to be especially useful when working with highly assertive, low-warmth leaders to help them improve their approachability and trust-building skills.

Third, there are many opportunities for leaders to apply the WWACT leader profile at the *group or team* level. Meetings provide opportunities for leaders to practice the behaviors and skills needed to put wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching attributes into effect. Over the last few years, I have had leaders who are responsible for managing meetings pay attention to their effectiveness in executing the profile. Special attention has been given to assessing value-added contributions and how they impact key projects and outcomes. For example, leaders managing innovation project teams have explored how to record and track value-added contributions to index their impact on desired outcomes such as increasing annual revenues of new products and increasing on-time delivery of all products.

Lastly, at the *organizational* level, with multilevel alignments and leadership commitment, the WWACT leader profile can be executed individually and collectively to create and sustain a culture characterized by wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leaders. This culture fosters individual and organizational learning and growth and development across organizational levels and with external stakeholders. In my experience, demonstration projects using an incremental-change-implementation approach work best when endeavoring to apply the profile to positively impact organizational culture and desired outcomes.

In addition to the basic communication model, a framework to enhance self- and situational awareness while tracking and managing B.A.S.I.C. response modalities (depicted in Figure 1) has proven useful in helping leaders execute the WWACT profile (Kerns, 2013). Leaders learn to identify and index both their positive and negative behaviors, feelings, sensations, images, and thoughts relating to situations and topics that can either increase their allostatic load or enhance their well-being. Leaders learn to identify the one or two stressors or triggers that cause negative reactions and work to replace them with positive responses. For example, certain situations trigger negative self-talk, which, in turn, creates tension and causes negative feelings such as anxiety and anger. In consultation with a trusted advisor experienced in applying this framework or by taking a self-management approach, leaders can develop a profile that constructively addresses stressors and triggers. This improves their ability to effectively execute the WWACT leader

profile. After learning to develop a constructive, positively oriented B.A.S.I.C. profile in Phase 2, leaders are often able to move more effectively through Phases 3 to 6 and effectively modulate their responses to stressors and triggers that might otherwise derail them from performing as wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leaders. Taken together, this six-phase approach serves as an internal operating system (IOS) and control cycle to help leaders gain perspective, maintain their composure, and manage their allostatic load.

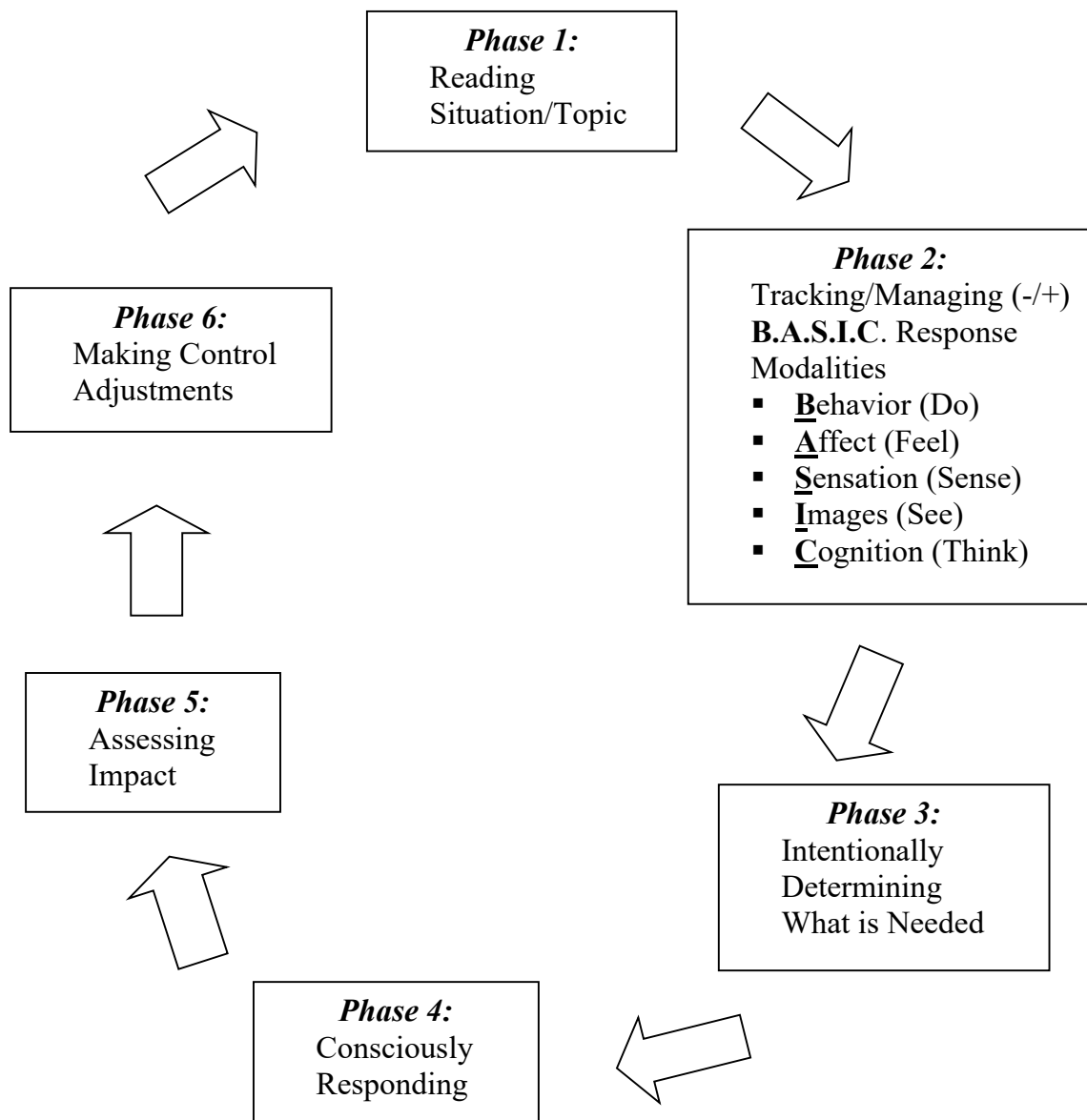


Figure 1. Self-situational awareness internal operating system (IOS) and control cycle  
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**Teaching Domain**

The teaching of leadership could benefit from having practical frameworks and tools to offer both emerging and experienced leaders looking to enhance their effectiveness. I have imported some of the applications used in organizational settings into various learning environments, including the MBA classroom, when teaching frameworks and tools associated with better understanding and managing the WWACT leader profile.

An especially helpful way to apply the profile has been to present the framework (see Table 1) to executives to orient them to the various profile components. Typically, in “chalk talk” format, the five components are reviewed individually, then discussed as an integrated, interdependent whole. It has proven valuable to emphasize how the attributes align with the behaviors and influencer role practices to drive behavioral impacts and desired outcomes. These chalk talks often stimulate leaders to self-reflect and consider who they are in relation to each of the five attributes. For example, the wisdom attribute helps initiate conversations regarding the relationship between personalized knowledge, self-disclosing, and being seen as a wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leader. Leaders learn how their knowledge can be offered thoughtfully so that others will listen and recognize the connections to practical and relevant takeaways surrounding topics and situations of mutual interest. Further, the importance of leaders assertively holding the line on specific topics that, for example, relate to the need to align with and uphold core values is often discussed.

Reviewing the WWACT profile offered in Table 1 is an effective way to offer a visual and concise overview of the profile to learners. This presentation and discussion helps learners understand how the five leadership dimensions are integrated into and influence the profile. Reviewing the framework gives learners an appreciation of the importance of aligning attributes with behaviors and influencer role practices to achieve specific behavioral impacts, which ultimately drive desired outcomes. In these discussions, I encourage learners to consider performance, well-being, and well-doing as foundational outcomes and recognize that not all results are created equal (Kerns, 2024). The notion that leaders need



to perform effectively while enhancing their own and others' well-being and well-doing is emphasized throughout these discussions.

Experiential exercises are especially useful in helping learners better understand and apply the five attributes comprising the WWACT profile. This process includes presenting learners with executive profiles that reflect challenges to effectively executing the behaviors of a wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leader. Learners are facilitated in recommending practices that these executives could engage in to be more effective in executing the profile. They are asked to work in small groups to identify target areas for improvement as well as practices and associated behavioral action plans to enhance performance in the specified areas. Each group also typically considers the expected influence their recommendations will have on improving the executives' impact as a wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leader. Finally, learners identify and discuss the value of managerial leaders competently executing the WWACT profile.

Another application of the five-component profile involves having learners select one of the five attributes and identify specific actions that they can take to successfully put the attribute into practice at work. This requires them to consider who they are in relation to the attribute and how they currently assess themselves against the behaviors and competencies that are needed to have the desired behavioral impact. For example, learners who select wisdom as their attribute often consider what personalized knowledge they have in relation to the current challenges and issues in their organization. This causes them to consider what value-added contributions they can make to become a wise contributor. Further, it finds them engaging in the influencer-role practices of self- and situational awareness regarding what they know and do not know in relation to the current topics that they are dealing with in their organizations. An outgrowth of this exercise is that learners will recognize the value of being able to offer relevant and accurate self-disclosures regarding the contributions they can make in specific situations. I have witnessed learners gain an appreciation for the notion of being curiously humble, meaning they know when to acknowledge what they don't know and when to weigh in as a warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leader. Another

takeaway from this particular exercise is that learners gain an appreciation for the idea that one does not need to have the leadership title to be an effective wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leader (Liu et al., 2022).

Another impactful way to bring the WWACT profile alive for learners is to have successful executives present the framework and indicate how they have used it. This activity is most often uplifting and is intensified when experienced executives offer relevant, credible self-disclosures about how they improved their abilities to act as wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leaders. This is especially effective when the leader has worked to display a more warmly assertive approach. It is even more impactful when an experienced and effective leader describes how they moved from not being a “touchy-feely” leader to one who recognizes the value in displaying cognitive and emotional empathy while offering relevant and accurate self-disclosures to enhance their approachability and perceived trustworthiness.

### **Research Domain**

While this article is focused on practicing managerial leaders to help them better understand and execute practices associated with effectively executing the WWACT leader profile, there are several areas that could be worthwhile targets for further research. It would be useful to have additional leader behaviors and competencies examined in relationship to the five attributes offered in the current profile. It may be wise to explore how linkage research models can be adapted and applied to assess the impact of the current practices on mutually agreed-upon outcomes/results (Kerns, 2002; Wiley, 2010). This work should be extended to include other behaviors and practices not offered in the current profile. The impact of WWACT leader practices on employee and customer results and other traditional and nontraditional business metrics is encouraged. It seems especially important to develop additional metrics to track and assess the impact of WWACT leader practices on nontraditional metrics when endeavoring to measure the impact of value-added contributions on key business outcomes. Field studies indicate that paying attention to nontraditional measures, such as value-added

comments made in meetings and during specialized projects, is important in determining their impacts on business outcomes.

Further, it seems important that research efforts represent an interdisciplinary perspective. There is a need to assess the impacts of wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leadership on other important domains outside of the work environment. This suggestion is in the context of the emerging work connecting mental health issues with stress and distress in work environments and how these conditions can spill over, for example, to affect significant others outside of work (Clifton & Harter, 2021; Fava et al., 2023; Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 2020). The research being done in neuroscience and brain science holds importance for assessing how leader behavior affects stress and allostatic load, which can then affect other spheres of influence outside the internal work environment (Kerns, 2015; Yarnell & Grunberg, 2017). The emerging work relating childhood adversity to resilience and allostatic load management in adulthood needs to be extended to investigate how these experiences affect subsequent leader development (Brinkhof et al., 2023; Tyrell et al., 2023). This work may likely add value to the evolving leader developmental lifespan research on the antecedents of leadership development across one's lifetime, which includes childhood and adolescent leadership-related experiences (Lui et al., 2022). It would be especially interesting to examine how the leadership journeys of the siblings of adults holding formal leadership positions/careers were affected, as well as how individuals from families without these experiences fared in terms of developing as leaders (Liu et al., 2020).

Closely related is a need for additional assessment instruments that measure the mental health, well-being, and developmental maturity of people in organizations. For example, the Psychological Index is gaining additional attention as an instrument to measure the impact of allostatic overload at work (Fava et al., 2023; Piolanti et al., 2016). Along with these assessments, frameworks and tools are emerging, such as the self- and situational IOS and control cycle, to enhance the effectiveness of leaders practicing the behaviors and competencies associated with the WWACT leader profile (Kerns, 2013, 2024).

Investigating the multilevel alignment and engagement of leaders' understanding and management of the WWACT leader profile across organizational structures would be useful. A better understanding of the dynamics within and among organizational levels as they relate to managing the profile would also be valuable. This work would support research efforts to further examine topics such as wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching attributes, and more broadly, leadership effectiveness across multiple organizational levels. Further examination of the impact of the current profile or related frameworks on external stakeholders, especially relating to customer experience and satisfaction, would also be valuable.

Finally, additional practice-oriented frameworks to help operationalize the WWACT leader profile would be useful. Practitioner-oriented scholars could develop more practitioner-friendly ways to present the WWACT leader profile and offer other tools for leaders to better understand and execute this profile. It is important that applied research integrate complex topics that draw upon many conceptual frameworks and empirical findings while considering multidisciplinary perspectives to offer holistic yet practical ways to effectively integrate these resources.

### **Some Challenges**

Applying the WWACT leader profile in workplace settings presents a variety of challenges. Managerial leaders are challenged to identify and apply practical frameworks and tools that integrate the key components found in the WWACT leader profile. These efforts need to be accompanied by a practical methodology to measure their effectiveness in executing the profile. Although the availability of sound, practice-oriented methods for successfully integrating the five key components found in the framework are sparse, I encourage emerging and seasoned organizational leaders to consider using the linkage research model (LRM) to assist in measuring effectiveness (Kerns 2002; Wiley, 2010). Using the LRM approach would likely help in linking leader behaviors, influencer role practices, and behavioral impacts with overall desired outcomes, such as performance, well-doing, and well-being (Kerns, 2024).

Closely associated with the challenge of effectiveness measurement is the need to operationally define the leader attributes that are used in these types of practice-

oriented leader effectiveness profiles. I challenge leaders to do this. In my experience, it is valuable to work with organizational executive committees to familiarize them with the LRM model while emphasizing that it is essential to define the practices that they and others will be executing, in observable behavioral terms, to drive both traditional and nontraditional business results. Behavioral definitions are beneficial in measuring nontraditional outcomes and the leader attributes associated with achieving these outcomes. For example, wisdom or being wise, as referenced in the WWACT leader profile, is operationally defined as making value-added contributions that resolve issues, challenges, and opportunities and/or make progress toward their resolution. During this process, it is important that leaders and their teams decide how they would like to customize their definitions to fit their operating environments. In this way, they can more fully commit to supporting and modeling the practices that they define. The key is for their definitions to be behaviorally specific. Engaging in this process requires outside advisors to put aside abstract conceptualizations in defining the behaviors. In the case of wisdom, for example, it has been considered and defined by philosophers, academics, and many others, representing a variety of fields and disciplines, making it challenging for organizational leaders to engage in this behavioral definition process. (Dong et al., 2023).

In practice, executing the WWACT leader profile can cut across all organizational levels. To achieve this outcome, I challenge practitioners, teachers, and applied researchers to think more broadly about the application of the WWACT leader profile across organizational levels and spheres of influence (Kerns, 2015). There is a need to investigate models, concepts, and practices from a multilevel perspective that recognizes that places of work involve individuals aligning with groups or teams, the overall organization, and external stakeholders. Managerial leaders are challenged to focus on executing the WWACT leader profile with individual employees, work groups or teams, the larger organization, and external stakeholders. In managing organizational culture, I have increasingly found executives who are interested in enhancing performance, well-being, and well-being as desired outcomes have also been interested in applying the WWACT

leader profile as an organizational culture building block (Kerns, 2020a). Interestingly, these leaders' profiles often align with the components found in the current profile, especially as it relates to the attributes of wisdom, assertiveness, and teaching (Kerns, 2024).

Further, practitioners, teachers, and applied researchers are challenged to consider key leadership dimensions such as individual differences and situational context when applying leader effectiveness profiles in workplace settings. Much conceptual and empirical work has been done in examining individual differences and situational context in relationship to leadership (Kerns, 2015; Zaccaro et al., 2018). Given the variability of leaders' personalities, lifespan-experiences, and work preference profiles, discernment is called for when asking leaders to invest in practicing the skills necessary to effectively execute the WWACT leader profile. For instance, leaders who are overly assertive, low on expressing warmth, and motivated predominately by self-interest will likely find executing the current profile challenging. Asking such an individual to consistently project these behaviors can cause them to experience allostatic overload due to the stressor of having to practice behaviors that are emotionally laborious for them (Grandey et al., 2020). Executing the current profile also takes place in changing situational contexts, calling on leaders to be flexible in executing the practices of a WWACT leader. For example, global leaders who demonstrate flexibility when executing the WWACT action role across diverse cultures will likely be more effective. It has been my experience from both field study and as a trusted advisor that behaviorally flexible organizational leaders are more likely to be effective in executing the behaviors associated with the profile. This field experience aligns with evidence provided by others in the extant literature (DeMuese & Harvey, 2021).

Another challenge is for top management, key executives, and boards of directors to address the bad leadership problem by supporting the development of practice-oriented profiles to reduce the number of ineffective, incompetent, and/or abusive leaders found across the globe (Kerns, 2021). Efforts need to focus on leadership development programs that help leaders on the organizational firing line more effectively execute leader profiles such as the one offered here. These efforts

may help turn the epidemic of bad managerial leadership around. These efforts also need to move beyond the individual leader and look at how organizations and their key stakeholders can demonstrate the behavioral practices that align with the WWACT leader profile. Further, it seems wise to challenge practitioners, teachers, and applied researchers across the globe to collaborate on an interdisciplinary basis to address the problem of bad leadership.

A final challenge is for leaders to develop an identity habit for managing the psychological, physiological, and social aspects of optimal performance, well-being, and well-doing. In striving to do this, I encourage them to focus on developing practical strategies to optimize their daily breathing (B), eating (E), moving (M), and sleeping (S) behaviors to shape, strengthen, and sustain a strong and effective B.E.M.S. identity (Kerns, 2024). These practical strategies include applying the previously noted B.A.S.I.C. response modalities profiling framework to their efforts while engaging with others they trust to offer social, emotional, and motivational support. In addition, I provide leaders with contemporary evidence-based resources for them to reference, which typically include publications such as *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones* (Clear, 2018), *Eat Move Sleep: How Small Choices Lead to Big Changes* (Rath, 2013), and *Good Habits, Bad Habits: The Science of Making Positive Changes That Stick* (Wood, 2019). Given the plethora of popular self-help resources in the marketplace, it is important that the suggested resources are conceptually sound, based on evidence gleaned from practice and/or research and practical to understand and implement while offering multidisciplinary perspectives. My work in helping leaders to develop a strong and effective B.E.M.S. identity is evolving and continuously being enhanced for the benefit of those they serve. I see the B.E.M.S. framework as an “admission ticket” for leaders to optimize their performance, well-being, and well-doing while also effectively managing their WWACT leader profile and their associated allostatic load. It is unlikely that restricted breathing (B), nutritionally imbalanced (E), out of shape (M), sleep-deprived (S) leaders will bring their best possible wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching self to work (Loveday et al., 2018).

Paying attention to the challenges of measuring effectiveness and defining leader attributes, organizational levels, and key leadership dimensions will enhance our understanding and execution of the WWACT leader profile. The profile will also be enhanced by leaders attending to the psychological, physiological, and social aspects of performance, well-being, and well-doing. As more attention becomes focused on the practice-oriented aspects of leader effectiveness profiles, additional challenges for practitioners, teachers, and applied researchers will arise. The current practice-oriented leader effectiveness profile offers a promising and stimulating area of study and will likely contribute to enhancing leader and organizational effectiveness across situational contexts while contributing to the efforts to reduce the incidence of ineffective, incompetent, and/or abusive leadership.

## **Summary**

Developing and applying frameworks and tools to support managerial leaders in understanding and managing practice-oriented leader profiles will be advantageous in advancing the practice and study of leadership effectiveness. With a systematic approach that builds upon practice-oriented leader profiles, additional resources can be developed and applied to help leaders better understand and manage the challenges associated with optimizing their effectiveness as leaders. As these efforts progress, there will be a need for assessment methodologies, additional practice-oriented leader profiles, and the identification of practices to help managerial leaders optimize their effectiveness in executing these profiles. This work and related efforts will likely advance our understanding, knowledge, and competence in applying practice-oriented leader effectiveness profiles in workplace settings. Having leaders align their attributes, behaviors, and practices to drive behavioral impacts and desired outcomes for optimal individual and collective performance, well-doing, and well-being seems laudable. Wise, warmly assertive, caring, and teaching leaders practicing across diverse situational settings seem equally appealing and praiseworthy.



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## CASE STUDY

### Simba Global Partners: A Leadership Case Study\*

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**Simba Global Partners (SGP)<sup>†</sup>, which focuses on financial advisory and capital-raising services, needed to articulate a clear organizational culture to acknowledge the presence of diverse backgrounds. Edgar Schein's model of the three levels of culture was used by SGP to evaluate and create a clear organizational culture. This case study investigated how SGP's culture and leadership adhered to the levels of Schein's model through interviews with 12 company employees. Its distinct culture ensured that employees formed successful teams to minimize interpersonal conflicts.**

**Keywords: case study, company employees, cross-cultural, culture, leadership, SGP**

Globalization has become a major part of our daily lives. Many companies employ people from different cultural backgrounds. Such diverse cultures require more understanding when interacting on business and organizational matters (Green, 2005) to avoid the negative effects of cultural diversity in the workplace (Martin, 2014). Thus, leaders and employees must understand the variety of cultures in a company.

Cross-culture literature has focused on a strong connection between culture and leadership styles (Javidan & House, 2002). The increase in global companies has made it imperative that leaders understand different cultures to avoid miscommunications with their colleagues and employees. Furthermore, international business and culture have sought to increase leaders' and employees' understanding of each other by encouraging them to learn about different religions, ethnic backgrounds, languages, political systems, and history. The purpose of this case study was to investigate how Simba Global Partners' (SGP) culture and leadership adhered to Schein's (1988) culture model. Employee interviews were the primary means of collecting data.

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<sup>†</sup>Authors' Note: This case study is based on a real company, but the names of the company and its leaders have been changed for privacy.



## Industry Lifecycle

Lang et al. (2022) reported that product development in the global investment banking and brokerage sector has slowed from 2017 to 2022, landing this industry in the maturity stage of its economic lifecycle. This raises significant challenges for companies like SGP. Industry lifecycle theory (ILC) captures the evolution of industry competitiveness as products or services mature over time (Vernon, 1979). Furthermore, ILC traces the role of innovation, market expansion, comparative advantage, and strategic responses of global rivals in international production, trade, and investment decisions (Griffin & Pustay, 2020).

Amir Bolboli and Reiche (2013) suggested there are many obstacles to overcome for firms in the maturity stage, which are often related to employee resistance to cultural change. However, they also noted that in mature industries, it is particularly pressing to address organizational culture to sustain excellence. *Corporate, or organizational, culture* is defined as the basic assumptions, values, and norms shared by an organization's members and transferred to new members. It determines stakeholder perceptions, interpretation patterns, thinking, decision-making, and behaviors. In mature industries, it is particularly pressing to address organizational culture to sustain excellence.

Throughout the stages of the ILC, it is important to treat all stakeholders equally and acknowledge them (Agrawal & Paulus, 2022). Internal stakeholders must be taken on the journey from start to finish, as it results in increased employee engagement. Burmann and Zeplin (2005) suggested that corporate culture and structure need to be aligned throughout the process. It is also noted that culture is often difficult to change; if it does at all, it changes slowly (Hofstede, 1992). Literature also suggests there is a link between organizational culture and organizational excellence (Al-Dhaafri et al., 2016; Sinha & Dhall, 2018). Leadership and organizational culture, therefore, are closely related during the entire lifecycle, and leadership styles need to evolve as the maturities of organizational excellence and organizational culture evolve (Lasrado & Kassem, 2021).

Friedman (2005) pointed out that not only does culture matter, but culture can change. Culture is a product of the educational level, geography, leadership, and

historical experience of employees within society. Friedman also points out that analyzing economic performance without reference to culture is ridiculous.

Other aspects of internationalization involve how to adapt products or services to account for foreign needs, preferences, cultures, languages, and climates (Yip, 1995). Matching culture to globalization is equally important. Therefore, companies conducting international business need to develop not just a favorable culture but specific cultural characteristics to support specific corporate strategies.

The global investment banking and brokerage industry is currently focused on complying with new regulations; therefore, product development has slowed down considerably. The industry's service offerings are still largely segmented into traditional investment banking services, including underwriting, advisory offerings, and trading services, contributing to the industry's maturity. One of the major challenges for SGP's leadership team is to provide growth opportunities to an industry on the verge of decline.

### **Simba Global Partners**

Simba Global Partners (SGP) was established in 2008 as a financial company focusing on financial advisory and capital raising across countries and global emerging markets. The company employs a diverse team of 50 employees who work from five different worldwide offices: London, United Kingdom; Nairobi, Kenya; Lagos, Nigeria; New York, New York, United States; and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. SGP has a global client base, but clients are mainly from sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions. SGP's client base includes governments, multilateral institutions, corporations, financial institutions, nongovernmental agencies, and foundations. As a global company, SGP needed to better understand how international business and culture intersect to achieve its corporate goals. SGP also offers its employees opportunities to work in different company offices to increase their exposure and awareness of cultural diversity.

**SGP Leaders**

Justin Cooper, Jacob Bryant, and Alex Hamilton are the leaders of Simba Global Partners. Individually and collectively, they have a vast knowledge of different cultural backgrounds through their education and previous work experiences in different countries. This knowledge and experience help them understand and lead SGP's diverse workforce.

**The Nairobi Office**

Founded in 2013, the Nairobi office is the largest of SGP's five worldwide offices, with 20 employees. Cooper, one of the co-founders, works out of the Nairobi office. Many factors were considered when deciding where the company should open an office. Cooper wanted a presence in Africa since most of the company's clients are based there and in the MENA region. The Nairobi office was closest to SGP's clients. In addition, Nairobi has the necessary resources available for the company to be successful. The workforce in Nairobi is highly educated and skilled and has the international mindset necessary to deal with its global client base. SGP hired people who had experience living in different countries or had worked for companies with an international client base to allow the company to provide exceptional services to the company's foreign client base.

**Simba Global Partners' Challenges**

Cooper, Bryant, and Hamilton, the leadership of Simba Global Partners, could not articulate the company culture. To help SGP better understand its company culture, the authors interviewed 12 employees to collect data on the existing company culture. The employees interviewed came from different SGP organizational levels. Each interviewee had experience working for a global company for more than five years, either in their previous workplace or with Simba Global Partners. Six individuals were from the London office, four individuals were from the Nairobi office, one was from the Lagos office, and one was from the New York office. The sample consisted of seven men and five women. The 12 interviewees represented six nationalities: Kenyan, British, German, Angolan, Burundian, and Israeli.

The company had one standard expectation of culture; however, each office's culture varied depending on its location. SGP's interviews sought information on (a) the communication process within the various offices and (b) its socialization processes among employees working in different offices. Employee interviews revealed the following about SGP's existing company culture.

- “Outsiders won’t notice the difference, as the same level of service is provided to clients across the board.”
- “The organizational structure includes the co-founders, managing directors, executive directors, associates, and junior members.”
- “There is a hierarchy culture, we have a CEO, managing directors, executive director, and so on; however, there is still an openness within the structure.”
- “I sit in the same working space as the rest of the employees.”
- “People are always working with their heads down.”
- “In London, people take lunch at their own desks, so having social interaction would help to understand people.”
- “The Nairobi office is more relaxed and works more as a team.”
- “In London, it is more work-driven, and there is silence among the people. It’s always about work, and people are not friendly or there is no familiarity in the office.”
- “We are a team of five people in New York, which makes us more collaborative.”
- “Training would be helpful theoretically but being open and learning from each other’s experiences would help better.”
- “Everyone is willing to share their knowledge and sharpen one another’s skills throughout the teams.”
- “There is a lot of intellectual curiosity, and people always want to learn.”
- “There is an expectation for people to work hard.”
- “It is important to be sensitive to other people.”
- “The values of the company are put in place by the two co-founders of the company.”
- “Simba Global Partners is an open culture.”

- “The Nairobi office has daily check-ins with each other, and in London, it is hard to do so.”
- “There is no codified cultural value in the firm.”
- “Employees can talk to management openly.”

What can we learn about SGP from the interviews with the employees?

### **Exploring the Company**

SGP is growing rapidly with a diverse workforce, which led its leaders to think about the organizational culture. The leaders knew the company had an organizational culture; however, they were not able to fully articulate it. The case study illustrates how SGP’s culture and leadership adhere to Schein’s (1988) model of organizational culture, based on the interviews conducted with the employees. The study also revealed how these employees worked together to form a successful team and allowed us to analyze what creates a successful company culture in a global organization.

SGP’s founders used the values and beliefs from their previous work experiences to establish the organizational culture. However, it was difficult for them to articulate the organizational culture and communicate it to the employees of SGP. Understanding the concept of the levels of organizational culture would help the founders articulate SGP’s culture.

### **Applying Schein’s Model of Culture: Simba Global Partners**

#### **Artifacts**

Schein (2010) defines *artifacts* as “all the phenomena that you would see, hear, and feel when you encounter a new group with an unfamiliar culture” (23). Artifacts can easily be seen in an organizational culture. SGP, a global company in the financial industry, has five offices worldwide with a standard layout in all the offices. Employees get their own desk spaces close to their colleagues from the same department unless an individual is in a different country. Furthermore, the senior management sits in the same working space as the rest of the employees rather than having their own offices. In addition to the company’s global presence, each

office has a diverse cultural workforce. Employees come from different backgrounds and countries, such as Kenya, Nigeria, France, Spain, Germany, England, and other European countries. Even though the company is remarkably diverse in all aspects, Interviewee 11 mentions that “outsiders won’t notice the difference, as the same level of service is provided to clients across the board”. Moreover, all the company employees are dressed in professional business attire, including blazers for the men, whether in the office or in client meetings. From an outsider’s perspective, the company has a clear, hierarchical organizational structure, and all the final decisions are made by the management team. The organizational structure includes the co-founders, managing directors, executive directors, associates, and junior members. According to a few interviewees, even though there is a clear hierarchy, the firm is open, and senior managers are easily accessible.

### **Espoused Values**

A company’s *espoused values* are beliefs about how things should be done in the organization. SGP’s company’s values were established by the co-founders of the company, who have the most experience in this financial field. The values the organization believes in are to focus on the quality of the work and its delivery; always work hard; and represent the firm in a professional way, even if it is during social events. However, after speaking to the employees, there does not seem to be a clear company culture. The associates and junior members of the company mentioned a lack of communication and direction from senior management, which does not show a clear company culture. Furthermore, to make the company culture recognizable, everyone in the company needs to have a common aim and an understanding of it. SGP’s employees mainly interact with their team members and do not get a chance to interact with the other departments, which makes it difficult for everyone to know one another or employees in different locations.

To overcome this, employees believe that having more social events would help them better understand and know the people with whom they work, which would also help avoid certain misunderstandings. As a company, however, they believe in working hard (see the espoused values above), and thus there is less focus on social events. This can be supported by statements from interviewees, such as

“people are always working with their heads down,” or “in London, people take lunch at their own desks, so having social interaction would help to understand people.” As a global company with a diverse workforce from different cultural backgrounds, the company believes that everyone in the company should be open-minded rather than having to be trained about the cultures to have the best output and success for the company.

### **Basic Assumptions/Underlying Beliefs**

*Basic assumptions, or underlying beliefs,* are beliefs by employees of an organization on how they should work with one another and what behaviors will lead to workplace success or failure. SGP has its own assumptions and behaviors that depend on the location. For example, the way the Nairobi employees behave is different from the way the London employees behave. According to one interviewee, “the Nairobi office is more relaxed and works more as a team.” Another interviewee stated that “in London, it is more work-driven, and there is silence among the people. It’s always about work, and people are not friendly or there is no familiarity in the office.” In the New York office, people are more collaborative, as it is a small office. Overall, as a company, they believe that having more inclusivity among the employees would help with the productivity and success of the company. They believe that this would help team members understand one another better, which would avoid misunderstandings. One interviewee noted that “training would be helpful theoretically but being open and learning from each other’s experiences would help better.” Furthermore, people are always working hard and willing to learn by being curious, which helps the company with the quality of service they provide. Employees are willing to share their knowledge and sharpen one another’s skills throughout the teams. The company holds a weekly Monday global call on which every team from each location mentions their goals for the week and allows other teams to know what is going on in the firm. Lastly, teams go through quarterly feedback sessions where there is transparency on the employees’ strengths or weaknesses, which helps them succeed in future projects.

**Table 1: Artifacts, Espoused Values, and Basic Assumptions of SGP Employees**

<p><b>Artifacts</b></p> <p>Schein (2010) defines artifacts as “all the phenomena that you would see, hear, and feel when you encounter a new group with an unfamiliar culture” (23). These are easily seen in the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Outsiders won’t notice the difference, as the same level of service is provided to clients across the board.”</li> <li>• “The organizational structure includes the co-founders, managing directors, executive directors, associates, and junior members.”</li> <li>• “There is a hierarchy culture, we have a CEO, managing directors, executive director and so on; however, there is still an openness within the structure.”</li> <li>• “I sit in the same working space as the rest of the employees.”</li> <li>• “Simba Global Partners is an open culture.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Espoused Values</b></p> <p>Schein (2010) notes that “all group learning ultimately reflects someone’s original beliefs and values, his or her sense of what ought to be, as distinct from what is” (25). Beliefs and values are those that are stated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “People are always working with their heads down.”</li> <li>• “In London, people take lunch at their own desks, so having social interaction would help to understand people.”</li> <li>• “There is a lot of intellectual curiosity, and people always want to learn.”</li> <li>• “There is an expectation for people to work hard.”</li> <li>• “It is important to be sensitive to other people.”</li> <li>• “The values of the company are put in place by the two co-founders of the company.”</li> <li>• “Employees can talk to management openly.”</li> </ul>



<p><b>Basic Assumptions</b></p> <p>Carrier (2019) noted that “underlying beliefs held by employees of an organization include assumptions about how they should work with each other. They also include beliefs about what behaviors will really lead to workplace success or failure” (1). These beliefs are not always overtly stated but are understood by individuals in the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We are a team of five people in New York, which makes us more collaborative.”</li> <li>• “Training would be helpful theoretically but being open and learning from each other’s experiences would help better.”</li> <li>• “In London, it is more work-driven, and there is silence among the people. It’s always about work, and people are not friendly or there is no familiarity in the office.”</li> <li>• “The Nairobi office is more relaxed and works more as a team.”</li> <li>• “Everyone is willing to share their knowledge and sharpen one another’s skills throughout the teams.”</li> <li>• “The Nairobi office has daily check-ins with each other, and in London, it is hard to do so.”</li> <li>• “There is no codified cultural value in the firm.”</li> </ul>
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**Conclusion**

What actions could the partners of SGP take to improve/strengthen the culture so that the employees of each office understand the overall culture? The partners of SGP could initiate more social or team-building events throughout each of their offices to help the employees learn more about their coworkers’ cultural backgrounds, which would lead to more open communication and fewer conflicts. SGP leaders could hold global conference calls with all the employees from across the five offices. This would help each employee know members and projects being worked on by members of the different offices. This would also help the employees understand everyone’s different cultural backgrounds. For SGP to strengthen their company culture, it could also use a common welcome package across the five

offices for new employees joining the company, as this would help articulate the overall company culture rather than the culture within that specific office.

For companies in the maturity stage of the industry lifecycle, intercultural competence is an important lever to help companies regenerate growth and innovation. SGP's leaders are still working on articulating the overall company culture.

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## BOOK REVIEW

***Elon Musk (2023)\****

**By Walter Isaacson**

**Published by Simon & Schuster**

**Cost: \$35.00; Pages: 670**

**Reviewed by Anthony Biasello, Bridgewater College**

Studying the lives of billionaire entrepreneurs may certainly provide leadership lessons for those who seek them, and Elon Musk's life is no exception. Walter Isaacson's *Elon Musk* is a narrative biography that affords readers an understanding of how a leader can change the world despite having negative qualities that some would consider fatal flaws.

Isaacson, a history professor at Tulane University, has served as a senior leader in multiple news media organizations and authored bestselling biographies of other business leaders, including Steve Jobs. Musk allowed Isaacson to shadow him for two years to document the work. In the book's Acknowledgements, Isaacson states that Musk did not read the book before it was published or otherwise exercise control of it in any way.

The book starts with a prologue and is further divided into 95 short, chronological chapters. For the most part, they are separated to avoid confusion about simultaneous events. Isaacson weaves a wide range of characters together in a real-life drama. Musk's grandparents, parents, and early years are described in Chapters 1–9. His adult personal and professional life experiences are recounted in the remaining parts, starting with his first company, Zip2, which he co-founded at age 24. Isaacson ends the book with an account of the experimental April 2023 launch of SpaceX's Starship vehicle, which was conducted just before Musk's 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday. In addition to particularizing Zip2 and SpaceX, the author details the

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leadership traits and behaviors Musk exhibited during the founding, acquisition, and growth of many other businesses, including Tesla and X (formerly Twitter).

## **Leadership Traits**

Trait theorists will find that Isaacson's depiction of his subject's drive, honesty, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and business knowledge all reinforce their notions of effective leadership. They may also be surprised by Musk's emotional instability.

To begin, trait theorists will discover that Isaacson's picture of Musk's incredible drive supports their concepts of good leadership. He thoroughly chronicles Musk's exceptional need for achievement. The book vividly records the fact that Musk is driven by enormous motivational forces that overshadow the energy behind his less accomplished contemporaries. Chapter 10 provides an early example of Musk's remarkable drive. At Zip2, he drove himself unremittingly and demanded others do the same. Isaacson sprinkles the book with stories of how Musk repeated this at every subsequent company he led.

Another leadership trait that Isaacson describes is Musk's (often brutal) honesty. In Chapter 25, titled "Taking the Wheel," the open disdain Musk had for Tesla co-founder Martin Eberhard is illustrated by records of his tweets declaring that Eberhard was the worst human he had ever worked with and that he wished he had never encountered him. The episode exemplifies a theme reiterated throughout the book. Musk's sense of integrity appears to be incited by self-indulgent goals, and his ethics are seemingly limited to a constricted principle of mutuality. Paradoxically, this accentuates his leadership, as evidenced by Tesla's success.

Musk's self-confidence and definiteness in leading his businesses are portrayed as well. Chapter 52 shows how his confident vision of getting to Mars has inspired decisions at SpaceX. In this case, the Starlink division's unwavering goal of creating a low-orbit satellite megaconstellation is exhibited as a practical financial enabler for Musk's even larger dream. Starlink's ability to bring the Internet to those who might not otherwise have access illustrates a form of heroism born of risk-taking that Musk demonstrates via his rare poise.

Isaacson paints a picture of how Musk's superior cognitive ability and business knowledge have been honed through his obsession with strategy-based video games. In Chapter 69, Isaacson cites *Civilization*, *Warcraft: Orcs and Humans*, and *Polytopia* as the games Musk mastered that sharpened his business-related tactical skills and strategic thinking. In particular, *Polytopia* is depicted as the game that Musk believes is the most instructive for developing business leadership skills.

Trait theorists will probably see Musk's regularly demonstrated emotional instability as contrary to their concepts of effective management. Isaacson repeatedly depicts this destructive characteristic throughout the book. He provides a marker for readers by referring to his subject's entry into "demon mode." Chapter 86, "Blue Checks," provides an example of Musk's authoritarian volatility during the weeks following his takeover of Twitter. During that time, the object of Musk's unstable wrath was Yoel Roth, the head of content moderation. After moving on from demon mode following a heated dispute with Roth regarding banning tweets that called for advertising boycotts, Musk went back to having civil interactions with him. Shortly thereafter, in the wake of another despotic outburst from Musk involving the company's relationship with Apple, Roth resigned. He, Martin Eberhard, and many others had great difficulty in coping with Musk's impulsiveness.

## **Leadership Behaviors**

In addition to describing Musk's leadership traits, Isaacson illustrates his leadership behaviors. While Musk is portrayed as having an extremely high degree of job-centered management ability, the author also tells of Musk's utter lack of concern for people beyond the two previously mentioned examples. Eberhard and Roth were not the only employees over whom Musk ran roughshod.

Isaacson points out that Musk has inspired people to meet deadlines and accomplish things others thought were unattainable. He has pushed workers to make seemingly impossible accomplishments possible. But Musk has problems dealing with others who do not see things as he does. He is cantankerous, impatient, and often unreasonably harsh with others. Musk does not feel that life's conventional rules apply to him. This, however, has enabled him to lead people in

changing the course of history in industries ranging from automobiles to space exploration to information technology.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, Isaacson provides a thorough and, as shown in the Sources and Notes appendices, well-investigated tome. Leadership scholars, students, and practitioners will find Isaacson's *Elon Musk* to be very useful. He provides readers with ample indication of Musk's complex character and contentious leadership style. As one of the most successful entrepreneurs of our time, the actual lessons from Elon Musk must be learned by observing what he has achieved.

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