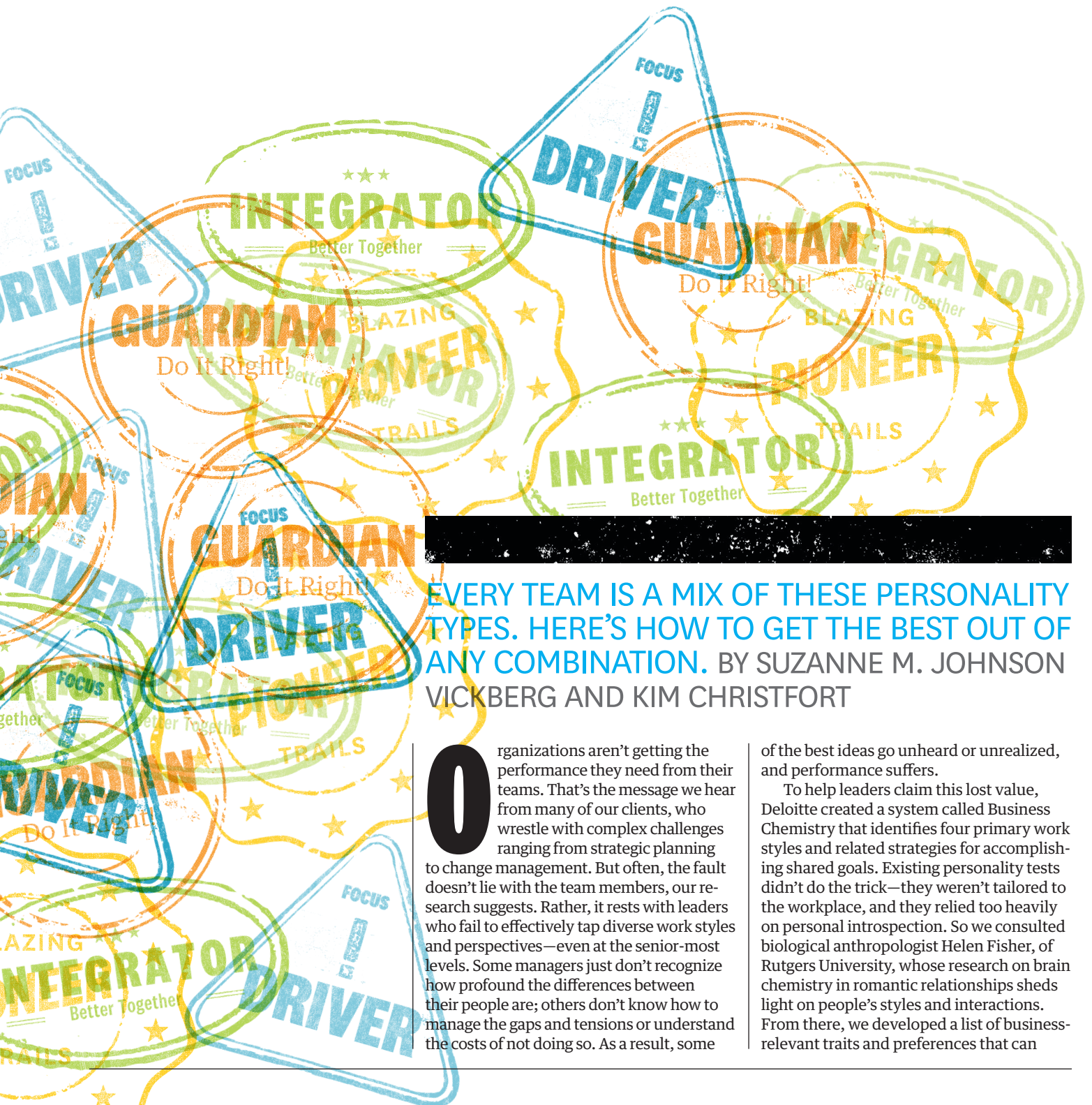


PIONEERS, DRIVERS, INTEGRATORS, & GUARDIANS



EVERY TEAM IS A MIX OF THESE PERSONALITY TYPES. HERE'S HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF ANY COMBINATION. BY SUZANNE M. JOHNSON VICKBERG AND KIM CHRISTFORT

Organizations aren't getting the performance they need from their teams. That's the message we hear from many of our clients, who wrestle with complex challenges ranging from strategic planning to change management. But often, the fault doesn't lie with the team members, our research suggests. Rather, it rests with leaders who fail to effectively tap diverse work styles and perspectives—even at the senior-most levels. Some managers just don't recognize how profound the differences between their people are; others don't know how to manage the gaps and tensions or understand the costs of not doing so. As a result, some

of the best ideas go unheard or unrealized, and performance suffers.

To help leaders claim this lost value, Deloitte created a system called Business Chemistry that identifies four primary work styles and related strategies for accomplishing shared goals. Existing personality tests didn't do the trick—they weren't tailored to the workplace, and they relied too heavily on personal introspection. So we consulted biological anthropologist Helen Fisher, of Rutgers University, whose research on brain chemistry in romantic relationships sheds light on people's styles and interactions. From there, we developed a list of business-relevant traits and preferences that can

be observed or inferred from behavior at work. A survey development company then helped us build an assessment, which we tested and refined with three independent samples of more than 1,000 professionals each. Finally, we collaborated with molecular biologist Lee Silver, of Princeton, to adapt the statistical models he uses for genetic population analysis to look for patterns in our business population data and to mathematically derive four work styles.

Since then, more than 190,000 people have completed our assessment, and we've conducted follow-up studies to determine how each work style responds to stress, the conditions under which the various styles thrive, and other factors that can inform how to manage the styles effectively. We've also engaged leaders and teams in more than 3,000 "labs"—interactive sessions lasting 90 minutes to three days—during which we've gathered more data and explored strategies and techniques for getting the most out of diverse styles.

In this article, we'll lay out the value that each style offers, address the challenges of bringing people with different styles together, and describe how to capitalize on the cognitive diversity in your organization.

UNDERSTANDING THE STYLES

Each of us is a composite of the four work styles, though most people's behavior and thinking are closely aligned with one or two. All the styles bring useful perspectives and distinctive approaches to generating ideas, making decisions, and solving problems. Generally speaking:

Pioneers value possibilities, and they spark energy and imagination on their teams. They believe risks are worth taking and that it's fine to go with your gut. Their focus is big-picture. They're drawn to bold new ideas and creative approaches.

Guardians value stability, and they bring order and rigor. They're pragmatic, and they hesitate to embrace risk. Data and facts are baseline requirements for them, and details matter. Guardians think it makes sense to learn from the past.

Drivers value challenge and generate momentum. Getting results and winning count most. Drivers tend to view issues as black-and-white and tackle problems head on, armed with logic and data.

Integrators value connection and draw teams together. Relationships and

THE FOUR STYLES GIVE LEADERS AND TEAMS A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR UNDERSTANDING HOW PEOPLE WORK.



responsibility to the group are paramount. Integrators tend to believe that most things are relative. They're diplomatic and focused on gaining consensus.

Teams that bring these styles together should, in theory, enjoy the many benefits of cognitive diversity, ranging from increased creativity and innovation to improved decision making. Yet time and again, diverse teams fail to thrive—sometimes stagnating, sometimes buckling under the weight of conflict. A first step for leaders hoping to turn that around is to identify the differing styles of their team members and understand what makes each individual tick.

In our work, we've clustered thousands of groups by style and asked them to list the things that energize and alienate them in the workplace. The lists vary greatly—what motivates one group can suck the life out of another (see the exhibit "The Profiles at a Glance"). Some of the differences have to do with how people interact. For instance, Integrators abhor anything that feels like conflict, but Drivers love to debate. This can create tension and misunderstanding. In one of our lab sessions, a CFO and her team were talking about their executive meetings. One participant, an Integrator, confessed that she dreaded bringing topics up because "it always leads to an unpleasant argument." The CFO, a Driver, reacted with surprise, saying, "But that's just how we discuss things!"

Differences in how individuals think and contribute can also create problems. For instance, if a Guardian walks through a detailed plan line by line, that may feel like a forced march to a Pioneer, who wants to skip ahead or whiteboard a completely different idea. Conversely, the Pioneer's riffing about ideas without any agenda or structure may seem like an impractical mess to the organized Guardian.

The four styles give leaders and their teams a common language for discussing similarities and differences in how people experience things and prefer to work. Groups come to appreciate why certain times feel so challenging (that is, which perspectives and approaches are at odds), and they also begin to recognize the potential power in their differences.

One leadership team, for example, was struggling to get everyone aligned with its strategy and was experiencing a great deal of interpersonal conflict in the process.

This consumed a lot of the leader's time and energy, since members kept coming to him with complaints about others. Through discussions with the team, we uncovered some norms that were disagreeable to each style: Guardians felt that they'd been rushed through due diligence processes; Pioneers felt that innovation was being squashed by rigid interpretations of compliance guidelines; Drivers were frustrated by the team's unwillingness to commit to a decision; and Integrators were bothered by dismissive behaviors, such as eye-rolling.

Our discussions highlighted team strengths, such as an openness to sharing perspectives and voicing concerns and a commitment to generating innovative ideas and supporting the business. The team brainstormed strategies for accommodating individuals' differing styles and taking advantage of the value that each brought. A month after we met with them, members indicated they had been actively hypothesizing about one another's styles and were developing a better understanding of the team. Even more important, they reported a greater sense of shared purpose, an environment that better enabled them to contribute at their highest levels, and an improved ability to accomplish goals.

MANAGING THE STYLES

Once you've identified the work styles of your team members and have begun to consider how the differences are beneficial or problematic, you must actively manage them so that you're not left with all frustration and no upside. You can do so in three ways.

Pull your opposites closer. Often, the biggest pain points are in one-on-one relationships when opposite styles collide. Each of the styles is different from the others, but they're not different in equal measure. For example, Guardians are generally more reserved than Drivers—but both types are very focused, which can help them find common ground. Guardians and Pioneers, however, are true opposites, as are Integrators and Drivers.

As you'd expect, the interpersonal problems that tend to arise when opposite styles come together can put a damper on collaboration. Indeed, 40% of the people we surveyed on the topic said that their opposites were the most challenging to work with, and 50% said that they were the least

enjoyable to work with. Each type cited different reasons for the difficulties.

For example, one Driver explained why she doesn't enjoy working with Integrators:

"I find it exhausting to do all the small talk to make everyone feel good about working together. I just want to get things done, give honest and direct feedback, and move forward. Having to worry about sensitive feelings slows me down."

An Integrator who found Drivers challenging to work with said:

"I need to process things to get the contextual background for the big picture. Drivers often speak in code or thought fragments that we need to translate."

We were told by a Guardian:

"I'm always thinking about how I'm going to implement something...and while the Pioneers have great ideas, they typically can't be bothered with discussing how to execute them. But, if the outcome doesn't match their vision, they're frustrated!"

And a Pioneer admitted:

"I have a very difficult time adjusting to a Guardian's style. I am decisive and like to generate ideas without judgment. Guardians can come across as judgmental, and they don't allow creativity to flow."

Despite the havoc such differences can wreak on team performance, opposite styles can balance each other out. Still, that takes time and effort. We worked with one Guardian-Pioneer pair who struggled in the beginning but, by openly discussing their differences, eventually forged a stronger partnership. The Pioneer was quite comfortable speaking in front of groups and doing so on the fly. The Guardian dreaded public speaking even with thorough preparation, which she rarely saw as enough. When getting ready to present something together, the Pioneer often felt impatient, and the Guardian felt alarmed at what she saw as inadequate planning. As their relationship progressed, they began to trust and adjust to each other. The Pioneer learned that her partner's meticulousness often got them out of a tight spot and that doing a bit more preparation herself helped her to be better in the moment. The Guardian learned that her partner's more spontaneous approach was engaging and enabled them to be more flexible and responsive to their audience's needs. She found that when they were working together, she could relax a bit and take more risks herself.

IN BRIEF

THE PROBLEM

When teams fall short of their potential, it's often because leaders don't know how to manage the differences in how people approach their work.

THE RISK

The four work styles described here—Pioneers, Guardians, Drivers, and Integrators—all have something important to offer. But they can cause conflict among team members.

THE SOLUTION

To foster productive friction, leaders should pull opposite types closer, seek input from people with nondominant styles, and pay attention to sensitive introverts, who risk being drowned out but have essential contributions to make.

By pulling your opposites closer—having them collaborate on small projects and then take on bigger ones if it's working out—you can create complementary partnerships on your teams. It's also important to pull your own opposites closer to you, to balance your tendencies as a leader. This is really about generating productive friction. Think Lennon and McCartney, Serena and Venus, the Steves (Jobs and Wozniak). Differences are what make such collaborations powerful.

Elevate the “tokens” on your team.

If you've got a team of 10 people, seven of whom are Guardians, what leadership approach should you favor? Adopting one that works well for Guardians—seeking the greatest good for the greatest number—might seem like the practical thing to do. But in our experience, it's often more effective to focus on styles that are represented by just a few team members, since it's those minority perspectives you need to court to reap the benefits of diversity.

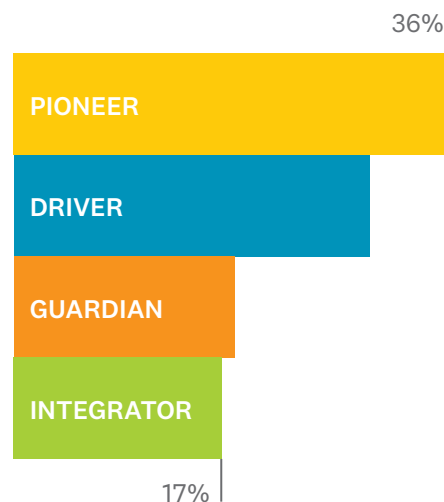
When a team's makeup is lopsided, cognitive bias can creep in, often leading to “cascades.” Imagine trying to change the direction of a big waterfall. Without a feat of engineering, it would be impossible. That's how a cascade works on a team: Once ideas, discussion, and decision making start flowing in a particular direction, momentum keeps them moving that way. Even if diverse views exist on the team, they probably won't change the flow once it's established, as people often hesitate to voice disagreement with an idea that gets early visible support.

Momentum builds for various reasons: *Reputational* cascades generally result from a fear of looking bad or of being punished for disagreeing, and *informational* cascades can occur when people assume that early speakers know something others don't. Either way, you end up with self-censoring and groupthink, which means the team doesn't benefit from its diverse perspectives.

Of the teams we work with, about half are relatively balanced, and the rest are dominated by one or two styles. We've also found that top leaders are most likely to be Pioneers, and then Drivers (see the exhibit “The Leadership Profile”). In many cases, the majority of executive team members share the leader's style, which can make the team particularly susceptible to cascades. Pioneers tend to be spontaneous and outgoing. They think quickly and speak

THE LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Most top leaders are Pioneers or Drivers, our survey of 661 C-suite executives suggests. Because these are the most vocal styles, executive teams should look out for “cascades” and evidence of groupthink.



energetically, sometimes before thinking much at all. Similarly, Drivers like to take charge in group settings, and with their competitive and direct style, they're inclined to jump right in and state their point of view rather than hang back to hear what others have to say. Especially if they're in the majority or supported by a leader with a similar style, there's a strong chance that Pioneers or Drivers will set the direction of a cascade with early comments.

We were asked by one leader to help uncover why her team, though highly productive, was repeatedly criticized by internal stakeholders for its lack of diplomacy. We analyzed the team's composition and saw that it was dominated by assertive and outspoken Drivers. When we asked whether this style might be ruffling feathers, those individuals pushed back, saying that they knew what needed to get done and didn't have time to worry about people's feelings.

The team also had a small group of Integrators—the style that typically shows the most relationship-building prowess. But those folks were marginalized, rarely spoke, and told us that they felt shut out and devalued. Although they were eager to share their thoughts and ideas with us in private, they were unwilling to stand up to the Drivers dominating the team. As a result, the group seemed to be losing out on the strengths of those who were best equipped to help them improve their relationships with stakeholders.

How can you elevate minority perspectives on your team to avoid cascading and marginalization—without turning others off? Here are some tactics that may help.

If you're trying to get Guardians to share their perspective, give them the time and the details they need to prepare for a discussion or a decision. Then allow them to contribute in ways that are comfortable for them (for instance, in writing) and that don't require them to fight for the floor—because chances are, they won't. Making advance reading and preparation an option rather than a requirement will lessen the burden for those uninterested in spending time this way, such as Pioneers.

To elicit Pioneers' ideas, allow room for discussions to get expansive. Provide white boards and encourage people to get up and grab the marker. Determining in advance how long you'll allow such discussions to go on will help those who prefer more

structure—particularly Guardians—to relax into the free-flowing exercise.

As for Integrators, dedicate some energy toward forming real relationships with them—and then ask for their thoughts. Also seek, and empower them to seek, the perspectives of other team members and stakeholders. Explore with them how the discussion or decision affects the greater good. Doing some of this work offline may prevent Drivers from getting antsy with what they may see as time-consuming niceties.

For Drivers, keep the pace of conversations brisk, and show clear connections between the discussion or decision at hand and progress toward the overall goal. Consider introducing an element of experimentation or competition—say, gamifying a training program—to keep them interested and engaged. Some styles, such as Integrators, may be less motivated by competition, so also look for ways to build or strengthen relationships—for instance, by providing opportunities for competing teams to socialize together.

Beyond these type-specific tactics, there are more-general ways to elevate minority perspectives on your team:

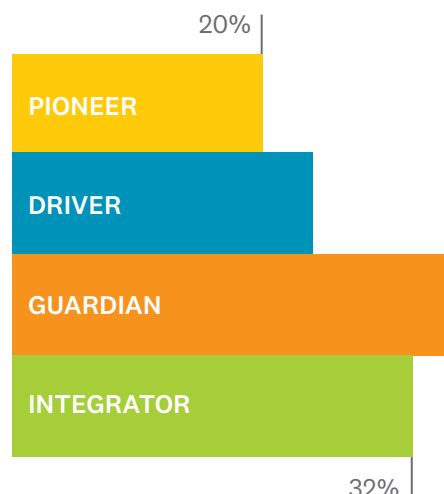
Encourage anyone in the minority to speak up early to give them a chance to influence the direction of the conversation before a cascade sets the course. Polish psychologist Solomon Asch's classic experiments on conformity demonstrated that when even one person goes against the majority, the likelihood that others will offer divergent perspectives increases greatly. Take advantage of this phenomenon to promote healthy dissent.

Also ask people to brainstorm on their own ahead of time and then share their ideas in round-robin fashion when the group convenes. Studies have shown that this approach is more effective than group brainstorming. Like giving minority styles the floor first, individual brainstorming can get more diverse ideas into the mix before a particular direction gains momentum. It also gives greater voice to those who prefer to process and generate ideas in a quiet atmosphere or at a more deliberate pace.

If a team is light on a particular style, try asking others to “think like” that style. Do this early in the conversation, before the majority viewpoint takes hold. Many of us are accustomed to saying, “Just playing devil’s advocate”; in this case, one might

STRESSED-OUT

In our study of more than 23,000 professionals, more Guardians and Integrators reported being stressed-out than anyone else. To benefit from their strengths on your team, look for ways to ease the pressure and help them feel psychologically safe.



say, “Just playing Guardian here...” or “If I were to view this issue through the lens of a Driver...” We’ve found that teams that have learned about the four styles are quite adept at putting themselves in the shoes of others when asked, and that doing so can enrich and round out a discussion that otherwise might be one-dimensional.

Pay close attention to your sensitive introverts. Although a cascading team may lose out on contributions from any style that’s in the minority, members who are highly introverted or sensitive are at greatest risk of being drowned out. We see the most evidence of introversion and sensitivity among Guardians but also find these traits in a subset of Integrators we’ll call Quiet Integrators. As with people who don’t share their team’s dominating style, sensitive introverts are rarely heard unless leaders deliberately reach out to them.

A Pioneer or Driver cascade can feel like Niagara Falls to Guardians, who tend to be reserved, to consider decisions carefully, and to avoid confrontation. Particularly if they’re in the minority, they may not speak up when others are clamoring to say their piece. Similarly, Quiet Integrators tend to be particularly nonconfrontational and focused on consensus—so if the team appears to be leaning in a certain direction, they’re unlikely to offer a divergent perspective. And because neither Guardians nor Quiet Integrators are inclined to embrace risk, they will probably see little reason to stick their necks out to challenge the prevailing wisdom.

Add to that the ways in which Guardians and Integrators are affected by stress. In a study of more than 20,000 professionals from inside and outside Deloitte, those styles were more likely than Pioneers and Drivers to report feeling stressed (see the exhibit “Stressed-Out”). And their stress levels were higher in response to every kind of situation we asked about—face-to-face interactions, conflicts, a sense of urgency, heavy workloads, and errors. In a second sample, this time of more than 17,000 professionals, Guardians and Integrators were also less likely to report that they work effectively under stress. These findings fit right in with author Susan Cain’s work on introverts and psychologist Elaine Aron’s work on highly sensitive people. Both suggest that today’s breakneck, open-space, highly collaborative work environment is particularly challenging for these groups.

Now consider all this in light of the fact that top leaders tend to be Pioneers or Drivers. People who are most introverted, most stressed, and least adaptable are often being led by those who are most extroverted, least stressed, and most adaptable. You can probably see how this could pose difficulties for everyone.

You might ask, Why bother catering to sensitive introverts? Shouldn't people be able to adapt and manage their stress? To speak up even when it's difficult? Maybe you simply don't want those who can't.

We think you do. Cain's and Aron's research shows that people who are more introverted or sensitive have particular strengths that can benefit teams and organizations. For example, they tend to be conscientious and thorough—good at spotting errors and potential risks. They can focus intensely for long periods of time. They're good listeners and more likely to highlight others' great ideas than to seek the spotlight for themselves. They often tackle and excel at the detail-oriented work that others can't or simply don't want to do. So while reaching out to sensitive introverts may be labor-intensive, the effort should pay off.

To get the most out of your Guardians and your Quiet Integrators, consider asking how you can help them keep their stress levels manageable. This may involve identifying ways to slow the pace, reduce information overload, provide quieter or more private work environments, or run interference for them so that they can focus without a lot of distraction.

Next, to borrow a suggestion from Susan Cain's popular TED Talk about the power of introverts: "Stop the madness for group work! Just stop it!" Engage Guardians and Quiet Integrators by giving them some alone time for more-reflective tasks. Instead of defaulting to teamwork, ask whether some tasks are actually better done in solitude.

Sensitive introverts may not take charge, or compete, or even talk much at all, but don't mistake this for lack of interest. They're almost certainly observing and processing. If you want their perspective, ask them directly, but use a light touch—cold-calling Guardians and Quiet Integrators can backfire if they haven't had a chance to reflect first. If you do give them an opportunity to prepare and then make space for them to speak in a meeting, they'll probably

be happy to offer their thoughts. One leader we worked with was particularly skilled at this. Before meetings that included introverted team members, she would tell them what the discussion would focus on, often making specific requests to facilitate their involvement: "Will you say something about X topic or comment on section Y when we get to it in the meeting?"

Guardians and Quiet Integrators spend a lot of time and energy reviewing their own mistakes, so it's important to create an environment where good faith efforts are celebrated even when they fail. Since teams that feel psychologically safe have been shown to outperform those that do not, this can benefit team members of all styles.

ENCOURAGE ANYONE IN THE MINORITY TO SPEAK UP EARLY, BEFORE A "CASCADE" SETS THE COURSE.



PRACTICING WHAT WE PREACH

We've seen the power of this approach in working with executives and teams, and we've also experienced it personally, in our own opposing-styles partnership. One of us, Kim, is a Pioneer with a good bit of Driver mixed in. She values expansive thinking and rapid advancement, and she leads a large team dominated by other extroverted, free-wheeling Pioneers. Suzanne is a Guardian and a Quiet Integrator—a double dose of introverted sensitivity—making her a bit different from many of her teammates. She processes things deeply, insists on rigor, and can't be rushed. Working with Kim and the broader team sometimes feels to Suzanne like trying to thread a needle in the midst of a hurricane. To Kim, working with Suzanne sometimes feels like running in deep water.

Early on, things didn't always go smoothly for us, but with time we've realized how much stronger we are working together. Suzanne knows that Kim's always got the big picture in mind, and Kim trusts that Suzanne has considered every detail. And as the team's leader, Kim has created a protective enclave that allows Suzanne to take cover and do what she does best. Our partnership is better for it, and so is our team. ☺

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THE PROFILES AT A GLANCE

WHAT'S YOUR STYLE?

Check off the traits that generally apply (keeping in mind that you probably behave differently in different groups and situations). Tally up the relevant traits in each category for a rough gauge of which styles you draw on most often.

- ☐ Outgoing
- ☐ Focused on the big picture
- ☐ Spontaneous
- ☐ Drawn to risk
- ☐ Adaptable
- ☐ Imaginative

- ☐ Diplomatic
- ☐ Empathic
- ☐ Traditional
- ☐ Relationship-oriented
- ☐ Intrinsically motivated
- ☐ Nonconfrontational

- ☐ Quantitative
- ☐ Logical
- ☐ Focused
- ☐ Competitive
- ☐ Experimental
- ☐ Deeply curious

- ☐ Methodical
- ☐ Reserved
- ☐ Detail-oriented
- ☐ Practical
- ☐ Structured
- ☐ Loyal

HOW CAN YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF EACH STYLE ON YOUR TEAM?

Know what gets them excited—and what they find off-putting.

ENERGIZED BY:

Brainstorming
Spontaneity and trying new things
Enthusiasm

Collaboration
Communication
Trust and respect

Solving problems
Directness
Winning

Organization
Predictability and consistency
A detailed plan

ALIENATED BY:

Rules and structure
The word “no”
A focus on process

Politics
Conflict
Inflexibility

Indecision
Inefficiency
Lack of focus

Disorder
Time pressure
Ambiguity and uncertainty



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