

RESILIENCE SERIES

Leadership Resilience Guide

How to be at your best when facing adversity
by effectively leveraging strengths

Overused Strengths

When under threat or in a crisis, leaders react and take action. During these times of adversity, leaders tend to lean heavily on what they are good at (Staw, Sandelands, Dutton, 1981). This is natural and can at times be effective. In many cases, however, it can also result in an overuse or overreliance on these personal strengths. This can lead to counterproductive behaviors or a lack of leader versatility (Austin, 2015).

Counterproductive Behaviors

Counterproductive behaviors can emerge when leaders intensify their prominent work styles and overuse their strengths (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011; Kahneman, 2011). This may reflect a knee-jerk reaction. It may also reflect overconfidence (“What has worked well in the past will continue to work in the future”).



Take the case of the sales leader who experiences anxiety and stress due to their team missing sales goals. This leader fears they might lose their job. They may not take time to investigate the underlying reason they missed their sales goals, or they may not know how to solve the identified problem. They subconsciously intensify their naturally higher dominance and extraversion, which results in more aggressiveness and pressure placed on their team to raise their level of performance. Already stressed due to an uncertain work environment, the team falls apart under the added pressure from the sales leader, missing their goals by an even wider margin.

Lack of Versatility

A lack of versatility is another byproduct of overreliance on strengths in reaction to a crisis (Kahneman & Lovallo, 1993). This often results from limited leader mindsets (“There is only one way to do things”). Reactions to anxiety and stress cause leaders to more firmly focus on the behaviors they do well. As a result, these leaders stop exercising other behaviors that may be equally valuable.

As our sales leader from above began to overly rely on their dominance and extraversion, they lessened their ability to take careful heed of the situation. Without a thorough exploration of

possible solutions when making decisions and proposing ideas, the sales leader developed a lack of interpersonal awareness. They failed to realize how the team members were feeling as expectations were pushed beyond what they could handle. This can be perceived as uncalculated risk-taking, as well as proposing impractical solutions without being mindful of the impact on individuals.

How to use this guide

Behavioral Emphasis

The Leadership Resilience Guide is intended to provide leaders with content to support self-reflection and taking action to effectively leverage their behavioral strengths during times of crisis. The guide is organized according to the PI Strategy Framework and the target behaviors most effective for driving success forward in those types of strategic initiatives. The areas of behavioral emphasis include:

- ❑ **Exploring Leaders:** Visionary, innovative, and risk-oriented.
- ❑ **Producing Leaders:** Driving, competitive, and demanding.
- ❑ **Stabilizing Leaders:** Well-organized, coordinated, and efficient.
- ❑ **Cultivating Leaders:** Supportive, transparent, and empathetic.

Guide Sections

This guide includes insights and actions empowering you to be at your best as a leader related to:

- ❑ **Normal Behavioral Styles:** Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations.
- ❑ **Crisis Behavioral Styles:** Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on your strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress.
- ❑ **Tips to Increase Resilience:** Simple, practical actions to apply in your daily work to avoid overuse of strengths.
- ❑ **Self-Reflection Questions:** Topics for self-coaching to evaluate how well you are recognizing overuse of strengths and applying tips to adapt your work style.

What is your behavioral emphasis?

The PI Design software and your PI consultant are resources you can turn to for insights into how your Behavioral Assessment Pattern aligns to the PI Strategy Framework. The following general guidelines can also be used for self-awareness into which areas of behavioral emphasis may be most relevant to you.

Disclaimer: Keep in mind that the PI Design software and your PI consultant will be the most accurate resources to support your understanding. The information described on this page is not meant to represent hard and fast rules, but rather simple guidelines that will be true in most yet not all cases.

Behavioral Emphasis and the Four Factors

The determination of an individual's behavioral emphasis across the four quadrants of the PI Strategy Framework is driven by mapping between the quadrants and the Four Factors of the Behavioral Assessment. For each quadrant, there are mappings for two primary Factors that are most relevant for behaviors required to effectively execute that area of strategy.

- ❑ **Exploring:** Higher Dominance (Factor A) & Extraversion (Factor B)
- ❑ **Producing:** Higher Formality (Factor D) & Dominance (Factor A)
- ❑ **Stabilizing:** Higher Patience (Factor C) & Formality (Factor D)
- ❑ **Cultivating:** Higher Extraversion (Factor B) & Patience (Factor C)

Behavioral Emphasis and Reference Profiles

Based on the mapping of the Four Factors, there are common themes between an individual's behavioral emphasis and their Reference Profile.

- ❑ **Exploring:** Common profiles include Persuader, Captain, Maverick, and Venturer.
- ❑ **Producing:** Common profiles include Controller, Analyzer, Strategist, and Scholar.
- ❑ **Stabilizing:** Common profiles include Operator, Craftsman, Guardian, and Specialist.
- ❑ **Cultivating:** Common profiles include Collaborator and Promoter.

Special Case Reference Profiles

There are some Reference Profiles where the behavioral emphasis is more adaptable, and the direction of behavioral emphasis depends on the configuration of their Behavioral Assessment Pattern. These are adaptable profiles, in that they express behaviors that are somewhat paradoxical. This makes them well-suited to work in a variety of areas, which is especially helpful if the nature of the work is highly variable. These Reference Profiles include:

- ❑ Adapter
- ❑ Altruist
- ❑ Individualist



Exploring Leaders

Normal Behavioral Styles

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- Socially confident and assertive
- Prefer risk-taking and novelty
- Act quickly and urgently
- Avoid structure and process

Crisis Behavioral Styles

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on your strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- Get louder and more disruptive
- Take uncalculated risks
- Act impulsively
- Generate impractical ideas
- Tendency to get bored and distracted
- “Steal oxygen” out of the room

Tips to Increase Resilience

- Limit your need to talk during meetings. Let others go first.
- Discuss ideas in private with others before making them public.
- Stay tuned to your levels of boredom and focus.
- Try not to offer suggestions unless you have thought them through.
- Don't just offer solutions; offer details and an execution plan.
- Strike a better balance between intensity and thoroughness.

Self-Reflection Questions

- Do I speak more than my fair share during meetings?
- Have I considered the downside of my ideas?
- Did others follow my logic or reasoning, or did I lose them?
- Did I make any off-the-cuff actions (jokes, decisions, comments, etc.) that were inappropriate or interfered with other discussions?
- Did people get my ideas or did I lose them along the way?
- Did my solution just create more complexity for others?
- Am I paying enough attention to the details of a project or work stream?
- Does everyone get a chance to be heard, or do I overwhelm the conversation?



Producing Leaders

Normal Behavioral Styles

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- Results and goal-oriented
- Intense but with purpose
- Direct, candid, and to the point
- Focused on tasks and work completion
- Competitive and assertive

Crisis Behavioral Styles

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on your strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- Become overly controlling
- Lack interpersonal sensitivity
- Escape into work and away from people
- Push process and structure on others
- Being overly critical
- Micromanagement

Tips to Increase Resilience

- Pay attention to the people impact of your actions.
- Don't try to do everything yourself; find ways to build collaboration and teamwork.
- Be sure to seek out alternatives before jumping into action. You may need some fresh thinking to solve a problem.
- Balance your intensity so your expectations and work style don't burn others out.
- Watch your intense nature; others may find you intimidating and avoid being direct and honest with you.
- Consider whether your messaging could be more tactful and interpersonally sensitive.
- Conduct frequent check-ins on the mood/morale of colleagues and team members.
- Avoid spreading yourself too thin by being

Self-Reflection Questions

- Am I trying to control everything or getting into everyone's business?
- Did my message come across as too intense or intimidating?
- Are people avoiding me or not wanting to give me bad news, or do they shoot me straight?
- Am I disappearing into my work and becoming invisible when the stress gets high?
- Am I locked into execution mode when I should be seeking new alternatives?
- Am I overly critical of people without giving them a fair chance?
- Am I genuinely concerned about other people's feelings, mood, and morale or just going through the motions?

involved in every project and initiative.



Stabilizing Leaders

Normal Behavioral Styles

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- Steady and stable
- Friendly but reserved
- Selective about pursuits
- Process and procedure-oriented
- Analytical and cautious decision-making

Crisis Behavioral Styles

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on your strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- Overly analytical
- Perfectionism
- Rigidity
- Lack of urgency
- Too reactive (not proactive)
- Social withdrawal; do things without people involvement

Tips to Increase Resilience

- Consider the people impact of more structure, rules, and efficiencies.
- Don't go too deep on analysis right away; iterate and share your progress.
- Find ways to show others that you understand their urgency.
- Resist the tendency to make decisions without talking to people first.
- Seek out problems you can solve rather than waiting for them to come to you.
- Get more comfortable with risk-taking by starting small.
- Recognize the importance of innovation and creativity vs. routine and safety.
- Practice how you present information and sell ideas to others; focus on the impression you want to leave rather than the information you want to convey.

Self-Reflection Questions

- Am I spending too much time in the weeds on projects and tasks?
- Have I overcomplicated my analyses by going too deep too early?
- Did I present information that was matter-of-fact instead of memorable and audience-centric?
- Have I shared my thinking and gained insights from others before acting?
- Am I coming across as passionate and urgent about work that matters to others?
- Am I willing to take simple risks or take chances that feel uncomfortable to me?
- Do people find me rigid and unwilling to compromise on my way of doing things?



Cultivating Leaders

Normal Behavioral Styles

Day-to-day behavioral styles and preferences in normal situations

- Interpersonally sensitive
- Social and outgoing
- Collaborative and team-oriented
- Empathetic and caring
- Relationship building & maintaining

Crisis Behavioral Styles

Counterproductive behaviors or lack of versatility when leaning too much on your strengths in reaction to anxiety and stress

- Conflict avoidant
- Overly people pleasing
- Avoiding delivering negative feedback
- Difficulties saying “no”
- Unwilling to take control

Tips to Increase Resilience

- Resist the temptation to deliver negative feedback or bad news in an overly positive manner. It will lose its impact.
- Express your disagreement upfront instead of feeling frustrated later.
- Make sure to balance results and people concerns. There will be times where tough love is needed for performance.
- Don't overuse consensus seeking to the extreme that it hurts the quality of your decisions.
- Don't confuse performance management with relationship building. You will need to be tough and it will be uncomfortable.
- Collaboration has its place, but so does decisiveness. Not all decisions can be group ones.
- Sometimes being nice and positive isn't going to get the job done. Work on being more direct and candid.

Self-Reflection Questions

- Did I say yes or nod my head in agreement, when I really wanted to disagree?
- Am I feeling frustrated because others aren't buying my ideas?
- Did I miss opportunities to deliver solid feedback because it was comfortable?
- Am I too focused on people's feelings and morale, when stronger performance is needed?
- Am I being decisive or constantly seeking others' feedback?
- Do I make the right decisions or the popular ones?
- Have I put enough effort into objectives, execution, and deliverables?
- Do I need to pick up the pace when getting work done?

References

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Staw, B. M., Sandelands, L. E., & Dutton, J. E. (1981). Threat-rigidity effects in organizational behavior: A multilevel analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 26(4), 501–524.