

The Leadership Archetype Questionnaire (Abridged Version)

To assist you in understanding the process of what your own dominant leadership behaviors might be, this questionnaire provides 360°, or multi-rater, feedback about your leadership. The Leadership Archetype Questionnaire (LAQ), Abridged Version, comprises 8 items that assess 8 archetypes: the strategist, the change catalyst, the transactor, the builder, the innovator, the processor, the coach, and the communicator. The results you obtain on this questionnaire will provide you with information on what your own leadership archetype may be.

Note: Another recommendation is to get other members of your team to complete the questionnaire for themselves so that you can map out your team constellation to see how balanced your team is, or if there are areas that are lacking.

Instructions: This questionnaire contains items that assess different dimensions of your leadership and will be completed by you and others who know you (coworkers, friends, members of a group you belong to).

1. Make five copies of this questionnaire.
2. Self-assessment: Fill out the assessment about yourself.
3. For the 360° feedback, have each individual answer the same questions about you. It is insightful to see how other people perceive you; their perceptions also influence the way they deal and interact with you.

Study the following statements and mark the ones that you think are true for you. Select more than one if appropriate.

1. I have great strategic sense.
2. I take on the role of deal maker, always prepared to make propositions about new business deals.
3. I am highly experienced at turning around difficult situations.
4. I suggest entrepreneurial ways of developing the business.
5. I come up with a number of new product or process innovations.
6. I promote and monitor structures, systems, and tasks.
7. I am very interested in devising creative ways to develop people.
8. I take on the role of communicator in my organizations.

Scoring Interpretation

Each statement corresponds to one of the following leadership archetypes:

1. **The Strategist**—Leadership as a game of chess
2. **The Change Catalyst**—Leadership as a turnaround activity
3. **The Transactor**—Leadership as deal making
4. **The Builder**—Leadership as entrepreneurial activity
5. **The Innovator**—Leadership as creative idea generation
6. **The Processor**—Leadership as an exercise in efficiency
7. **The Coach**—Leadership as people development
8. **The Communicator**—Leadership as stage management

1. *The Strategist*

Strategists are good at dealing with developments in the organization's environment. They provide vision, strategic direction, and outside-the-box thinking to create new organizational forms and generate future growth. They can see the big picture, anticipate future developments, and respond quickly to change. Although strategists have a talent for aligning vision with strategy, they are not always good at taking the next step—aligning strategy with values and behavior. They prefer to ignore “soft” issues and avoid conflict, focusing instead on facts, figures, and abstract scenarios. To compensate for this deficiency, strategists often join forces with coaches. Strategists are often not good communicators. Their followers may not always fully understand what they are trying to do or what message they are trying to get across. Because they are preoccupied with the big picture, strategists may ignore some of the “micro” issues that warrant attention to keep organizational processes on track. In these instances, processors and communicators can be very helpful to them.

2. *The Change Catalyst*

Change catalysts function best in the integration of organizational cultures after a merger or acquisition or when spearheading reengineering or turnaround projects. They are also excellent at managing rapidly growing organizational units and recognizing opportunities for organizational transformation. Change catalysts are implementation driven and very good at selecting talent to get the task done. Unlike strategists, they have the talent to align vision, strategy, and behavior. They are both outcome and process oriented. The flip side is that change catalysts can quickly become bored in

stable situations and are not suited to participating in small, incremental change efforts. Many operate on a short-term timeline, and need to see immediate results. If no challenging assignment is available, these leaders may try to create one (sometimes for the wrong reasons). Although many change catalysts have a talent for people management, there will be times when their sense of urgency may override their sensitivity to people and make them poor communicators. Change catalysts also tend to have a starkly black-and-white view of what is right or wrong. Thus, they are not always politically sensitive enough to handle complex organizational problems. What they see as innocent actions can have disastrous consequences. Some of these problems can be avoided, however, if they team up with coaches.

3. The Transactor

Transactors like making acquisitions or other deals. Extremely dynamic and enthusiastic, they thrive on new challenges and negotiations. They like novelty, adventure, and exploration, and have high risk tolerance.

Proactive in welcoming change and instinctive networkers, transactors know how to lobby inside and outside the organization to get their point of view across. They are outcome oriented but not as effective at processes. Like change catalysts, transactors can become very restless if they do not have enough stimulation. As a result, they can be seduced by the excitement of mergers and takeovers. Once they get going, there is no holding them back, and they can take other people on a very risky journey. After they pull off a deal, however, transactors lose interest in taking the project to the next phase. Their impatience with structures, processes, and systems means that they are poor at organization building. Their sometimes mercurial temperaments can also create very stressful situations. Being good deal makers and negotiators, they are frequently hard to read—an asset in negotiation, which can confuse collaborators. They need others, such as strategists, processors, and coaches, to compensate for their limitations.

4. The Builder

Builders enjoy starting and building their own organizations or setting up “skunkworks” and other entrepreneurial ventures inside a large organization. They have a powerful need for independence and to be in control. They also have the talent to make their dreams come true: They possess an enormous amount of energy, drive, dynamism, and enterprise. Builders are creative, decisive, focused, single-minded, and persevering, and have a great capacity to deal with setbacks. They also have a high, but calculated, propensity to take

risks, and they are quick to adapt when they see opportunities. They know how to get other people to produce results. Builders have to be at the center of things, however. They tend to have little regard for authority and great difficulties with delegation. Although a builder's leadership can be inspirational, poor communication and a culture of domination and control can contribute to dysfunctional decision making. Builders need others, such as processors and coaches, to be their sparring partners.

5. The Innovator

Extremely curious, innovators want to learn more about anything and everything that grabs their attention. Their passion for learning new things and their insatiable search for knowledge can be a source of inspiration to others. Innovators are the most reluctant of all the leadership archetypes to do things in a particular way simply because that is how things have always been done. Because of this innovative mind-set, they can bring fresh, new approaches to their organizations. More politically astute innovators can be good at managing innovative projects, if not hampered by routine. Starting in childhood, innovators tend to be introverts, stimulated by thoughts and ideas rather than people and things. Adept at logic and reason, they typically lack the usual social graces and may not always express their feelings appropriately. They are poor social sensors, unskilled at decoding body language, sensing others' feelings, or recognizing hidden agendas, thus making a rather "nerdy" impression. Moreover, innovators' driven way of working means that they have trouble conforming to organizational norms and may be treated as outsiders. In going their own way, they may lose sight of the financial realities and limitations, thus endangering the viability of the organization.

6. The Processor

Processors like to create order out of disorder and are adept at helping organizations make an effective transition from an entrepreneurial to a more professionally managed stage. Talented at setting boundaries and at creating the structures and systems necessary to support the organization's objectives, they have a systemic, practical outlook and dislike unstructured situations. They are good at time management, very conscientious, reliable, and efficient, able to keep a cool head in stressful situations. As team players, they have a very positive attitude toward authority and are committed corporate citizens. Because they tend to be adaptable and collaborative, processors complement most other leadership styles and thus play an important role in any executive role constellation. Sometimes, however, a processor's need for order, systems,

and rules can shade into stubbornness and inflexibility, so these leaders can be slow to respond to new opportunities or even hinder them. They tend to lack imagination, flexibility, and spontaneity. Their inflexibility can create people-management problems. Not only will it be helpful for processors to be paired up with coaches, but strategists or innovators can also help to bring in an element of out-of-the-box thinking.

7. The Coach

Coaches are very good at instituting culture change projects to address organizational alienation and loss of trust. They are exceptional people developers who possess empathy, are extremely good listeners, and have high emotional intelligence. With their positive, constructive outlook on life, they inspire confidence and trust. Great communicators and motivators, coaches are excellent at handling difficult interpersonal and group situations and at giving constructive feedback. They create high-performance teams and high-performance cultures. They are great believers in participatory management and know how to delegate. The downside is that their sensitivity to others' feelings can make them overly careful when giving feedback: They may find it hard to be tough when needed, and they may shy away from dealing with difficult underperformance and personal issues. In crisis situations, some coaches may be slow to act or may procrastinate about important issues, a danger when speed is a competitive advantage. Given the organizational context, teaming coaches with executives who possess other archetypes can be highly effective.

8. The Communicator

With their ability to express a vision strongly and powerfully, communicators can inspire people at all levels. They are good at projecting optimism in times of adversity or crisis and are strongly influential with the various constituencies in the organization. Possessing impressive theatrical skills and great presence, communicators are very effective in building alliances and enlisting the support of other people. However, a communicator's preference for looking at the big picture, rather than dealing with details, means that these leaders need others, such as strategists and processors, to make their dreams become reality. Communicators can also appear to operate on the surface: When it's time to deliver, very little happens, and everything they have been saying can seem like empty rhetoric. Expert in looking out for number one, they are not averse to obtaining excessive perks and other benefits for themselves. They sometimes latch on to others for support and even take credit for other people's achievements, a self-serving style that can contribute to

organizational disintegration. In their drive to acquire the symbols of power, they will tolerate warfare between internal fiefdoms in the organization. As in the case of coaches, when balanced with other archetypes, communicators can play an essential role in many role constellations.

When interpreting the Leadership Archetype Questionnaire results, keep this in mind:

- The results are based on your own (and your observers') perceptions at a single point in time. Though the responses certainly reflect long-standing behavioral characteristics, situational factors can have considerable influence.
- Most of us—and most effective leaders—can be slotted into more than one archetype. Archetype identifications change as our life changes. Assessing where and what we are is not a static, one-off, operation.
- Furthermore, it is a rare leader who can fulfill all the roles seamlessly. Successful organizations are characterized by a distributive, collective, complementary form of leadership.
- Finally, people are much more complex than the scores shown on the LAQ (or any other instrument). What the LAQ attempts to do is capture some of that complexity and illuminate basic elements of your behavior. The results are jumping-off points for self-examination and discussion.

For more information on the development and validation of the Leadership Archetype Questionnaire, please refer to Kets de Vries et al. (2010). Development and application of the Leadership Archetype Questionnaire. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(15), 2846–2861.