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It's obvious when we aren't working in the right job or the right role. We are drained, overwhelmed, underwhelmed, and we burn out quickly. Whenever we are working in our "sweet spot," the role we enjoy and thrive in, we can get lost in our work, spending hours where it doesn't even feel like work. So, how do we get our team members in the right roles? Have discussions with your team this month about HOW they want to do their work, and reduce guilt and shame if a task seems outside their realm of knowledge, mission, or expertise.

Kristin

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TAP INTO YOUR TEAM'S 6 TYPES OF WORKING GENIUS

"Every job is a 6-letter job," or so says Patrick Lencioni as the premise of his latest assessment: [The 6 Types of Working Genius](#).

Birthered in the middle of the pandemic, Patrick was frustrated in his role as CEO and wanted to figure out why. After all, doesn't everyone deserve a job that brings them joy and fulfillment? Yet there were things he absolutely loved to do, things he did well and could sustain over time, and things that drained the energy out of him. And thus the Six Types of Working Genius was born.

I was fortunate enough to listen to an early presentation he made to the Chief Executive Network and I was hooked, hook, line, and sinker to this simple, powerful, and memorable model. So much so that I hoovered everything I could on the model, shared the model with a few clients (thank you – and you know that I experimented on you!), and just finished one of the first Working Genius Certification workshops!

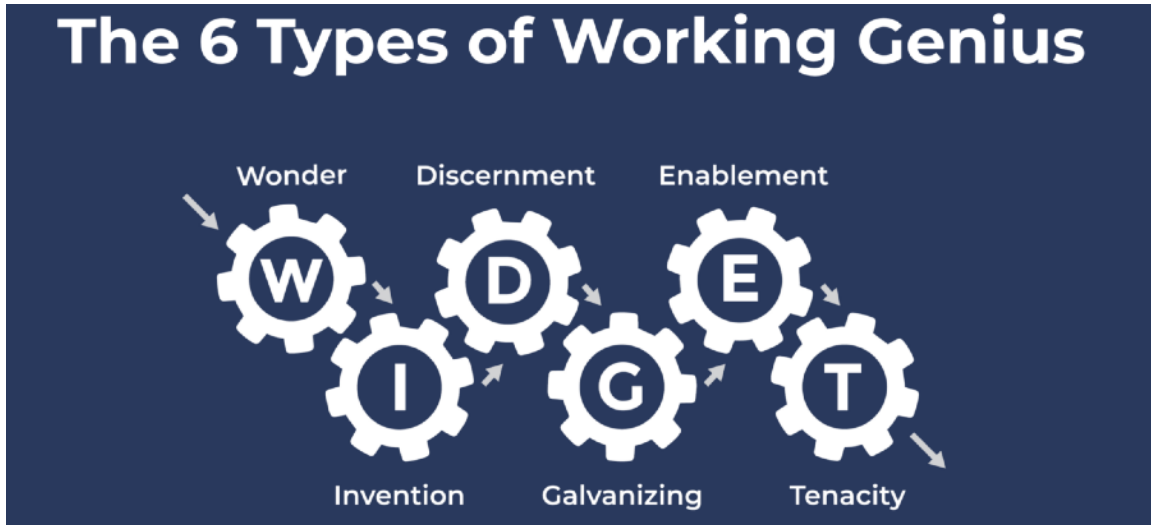
The 6 Types of Working Genius Defined

So what's the Working Genius? Some might think it is another personality profile like MBTI or DiSC, and there is a small dose of personality in this assessment. But more importantly, it is a productivity tool to help your team be more productive and fulfilled in their work. It's super fast to take the assessment and easy to remember (aka easy to use in a team setting). I can share this simple model in less than three minutes and you'll instantaneously "get it":

So let's start with the basics: Every job has six elements or "geniuses" that create great results:

1. Wonder – The natural gift of pondering the possibility of greater potential and opportunity in a given situation.

2. Invention – The natural gift of creating original and novel ideas and solutions.
3. Discernment- The natural gift of intuitively and instinctively evaluating ideas and situations.
4. Galvanizing – The natural gift of rallying, inspiring, and organizing others to take action.
5. Enablement – The natural gift of providing encouragement and assistance for an idea or project.
6. Tenacity – The natural gift of pushing projects or tasks to completion to achieve results.



Notice: “WIDGET” is a clever acrostic that is easy to remember! Photo: The Table Group

You can see how all jobs start with someone wondering why and then brainstorming solutions. Wonder and Invention are the two geniuses in the ideation phase. But it doesn't stop there as not all ideas are great ideas! Inventive ideas need to be evaluated and refined until there is a crystal clear vision to rally around.

Discernment and Galvanizing are the two geniuses in the activation phase. Once the idea has taken shape, then the geniuses of Enablement and Tenacity help and support those to bring it home in the implementation phase.

All six Working Geniuses are required for getting work done successfully. And we all have TWO areas of Working Genius – your natural ability that brings you energy, joy, and fulfillment. Think of this as your “flow state.” You could do this kind of work forever. It's baked into your DNA.

Working Competency – you can do this type of work well (and may get lots of positive reinforcement about it), but you are not fulfilled with this kind of work. Over time, this drains your energy and productivity.

Working Frustration – you dislike doing this type of work and find it draining, even if you've learned to be capable of it.

As Patrick says, “We should be doing a good portion of our work where we can hold onto the energy for a long time. Working in our geniuses doesn't feel like work at all.”

The Working Genius and Teams

So what's this got to do with teams? Simple. When staffing projects, making assignments, offering help and support, tap into each of your team's working genius! By knowing what is needed for that phase of the team's task, you can minimize people's frustrations and be cognizant to NOT overburden those who are competent in a specific genius. (You know this happens....you keep giving a task “no one else can do” and then wonder why they are on the road to burnout!).

But what I love best about this tool is that it gives a language and a framework to

discuss how the team wants to do its work AND to reduce the guilt and shame that comes along with operating outside of your working genius.

As Patrick says, “Plenty of people do work that doesn’t correspond to their Working Geniuses. To a certain extent, this is inevitable. However, some people find themselves in roles that require them to spend a lot of time doing what they don’t naturally enjoy, and what they may not be particularly good at. This can limit success or lead to deep frustration.

Many people attribute their failures and struggles to having a bad attitude, not being smart enough, or making bad decisions. When people realize they have certain areas of Genius, and other areas of frustration, they can attribute their struggles to the lack of alignment between their geniuses and their role. This reduces their sense of guilt and shame, and allows them to move into work that provides a better chance of fulfillment and success...or put them in a role that better suits them.”

Additionally, this model helps reduce team frustration. For example, I was working with an executive who was frustrated with one of his direct reports thinking “He’s not creative enough.” By having his entire team take the assessment, he realized that this Enablement-Tenacity leader was plenty creative in supporting and helping others to complete the myriad tasks and in getting his own work done.

The executive was confusing ideation with creativity and expecting something that his employee was competent or even frustrated with. (The executive actually realized that he didn’t need a “new idea” guy – he had plenty of those on his team – but he DID need someone who could take that idea and bring it across the finish line!)

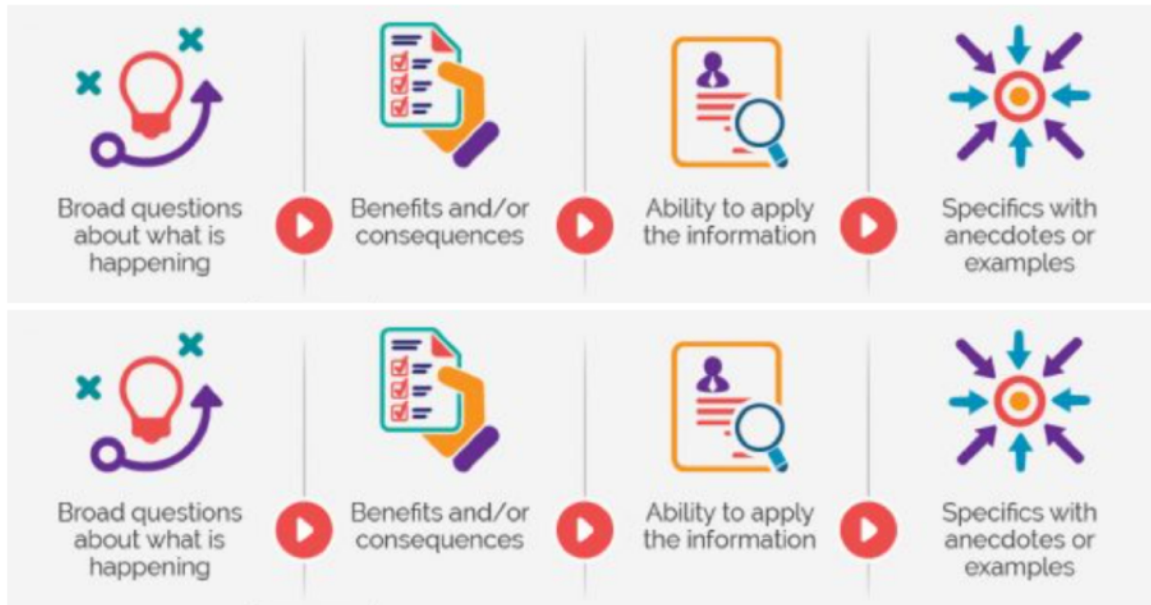
Finally, this model takes the turbulence out of meeting mayhem. You know the meeting where you are supposed to be talking strategy (which is a wonder/invention conversation) and a question about tactics disrupts the momentum? No guilt, no shame; it’s an implementation idea that is too soon for the discussion. Put it in the parking lot for the right time.

OR when you’re having a daily huddle and a teammate wants to reinvent the wheel? (I can already hear the groans...). As Patrick says, “We all tend to make every meeting about our own Geniuses. This is well-intentioned but disorienting. Leaders and participants need to learn to regulate [and leverage] their genius” for the different types of meetings.

As one of the first batch of certified facilitators, I am honored to be able to offer the assessment and coaching around this model to help your teams be more productive. If you are interested or would like more information, I invite you to contact me at 480.399.8489 or [book a time](#) to chat.

24 QUESTIONS TO ASK IN ANY PANEL DISCUSSION

As you are preparing to moderate a panel discussion, you’ll want to develop a list of good questions to ask in a panel discussion. Typically, moderator-curated questions for the panel have a flow that moves from strategic to more tactical:



The Sequence of Questions

- **Strategic.** Start with broad or “high altitude” questions designed to define the topic and discuss what is happening in the field/topic/industry. (I’ll shorthand this to “topic”.) Be careful, as your first question sets the tone for the remainder of the panel!
- **Benefits.** Clarify/detail the benefits and/or consequences about why the audience should care about the topic.
- **Specifics.** Ask for more specifics and probe further where panelists will be more inclined to share anecdotes and concrete examples.
- **Application.** Ensure the audience walks away with substantial value, takeaways, as well as the ability and confidence to apply the information.

Examples of Questions to Ask in a Panel Discussion

Strategic:

1. How do you define [the topic]? What exactly do you mean when you say “[the name of the topic]”?
2. Why is [this topic] so important right now to this audience?
3. What is the biggest challenge facing us about [this topic] today?
4. What are the future trends of [the topic]?
5. What are the key success factors for those who are achieving success [in the topic]? How do you know you are making progress?
6. What is the biggest or most common misperception about [the topic]?

Benefits/Consequences:

7. What can you expect from [the topic]?
8. What’s the business case for pursuing [the topic]?
9. How does [the topic] impact an [individual, group of people, or specific set of stakeholders]?
10. Why would an [individual/group/stakeholders] need [the topic]?
11. How does this benefit the user/organization/community?
12. What are the long-term consequences if we ignore [this topic]?

Specifics:

13. What do you do to make sure you/your organization is successfully achieving [the topic]?
14. From your experience, what are some examples of [the topic] in practice?
15. Describe for us your typical day and how you deal with [the topic]?
16. What are the skills and talents required to achieve [the topic’s] desired results?

17. What are the potholes we need to avoid when implementing [the topic]?
18. What's the one thing you have learned in this process that you didn't know/couldn't find the answer to on the internet?

Application:

19. Where should [individuals, businesses, organizations] start with [the topic]?
20. Do you have a specific book, magazine, podcast, tool, or technique you recommend to the audience to continue their learning?
21. What advice or tips do you have for succeeding in [this topic]?
22. How do you counteract or respond to the "naysayers" who say [the topic] can't be done?
23. What do we [individual/group/industry] need to do to inspire more people to embrace [the topic]?
24. If there was only ONE thing you hope the people in the audience today do as a result of our conversation, what would it be?

As the panel moderator, you can fine-tune these example questions to suit the goal of the panel, the expertise of the panelists, and the expectations of the audience. And stay tuned for more examples for the more popular topical panels such as alumni panels, career panels, digital transformation panels, diversity & inclusion panels, fashion panels, female leadership panels, leadership panels, LGBTQ panels, nursing education panels, and women's panels.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: THE IDEAL TEAM PLAYER

Get the right people on the bus! I just got certified to deliver [Patrick Lencioni's The Six Types of Working Geniuses](#) and had to re-read his book, [The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate the Three Essential Virtues](#).

Why? Using Jim Collins' "bus" analogy, the Ideal Team Player provides a framework to get the right people on the bus. The Six Types of Working Geniuses get those right people on the right seats in the bus, and The Five Dysfunctions of a Team get those right people in the right seats to get the bus to go!

So I dusted off the Ideal Team Player (it was written in 2016) and the leadership fable is just as applicable today. A new CEO to an established construction company is facing explosive growth and a weak team to execute on it. How does he and his leadership team turn the company around? By discovering and focusing on three "virtues" - humble, hungry and people smart.

The second half of the book provides easy-to-use tools to "bake" these virtues into the hiring, assessing of current employees, developing employees who are lacking in one or more of the virtues and embedding the model into an organization's culture.

There is a self-assessment on pages 192-3 that was very eye-opening and worth taking because we can ALL be better team players!

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