

RESEARCH BRIEF:

# Moving Beyond Personality to Leadership Performance



**Potentia**<sup>®</sup>

# The Four Leadership Patterns

## Our Research Indicates At Least 93% of Leaders Have Significant Upside Potential.

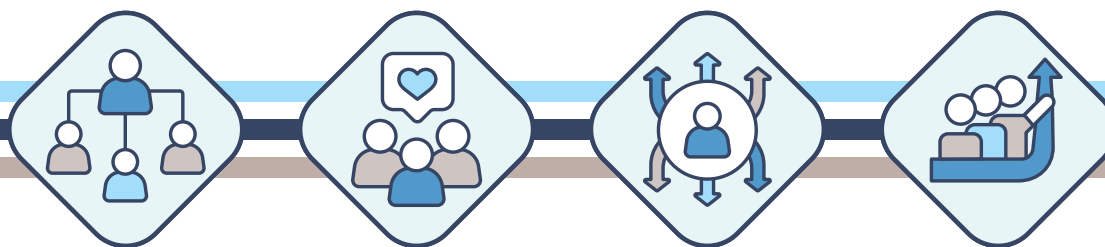
The purpose of most leadership improvement efforts is to increase effectiveness. Many of those efforts start with the personality of the leaders. While important, personality is a poor predictor of leadership outcomes. Our recent research sought to find patterns beyond personality that better predict performance. It did that - and also revealed targeted development areas for each of 4 leadership patterns.



Using our Pro-daptive® Leadership model we demonstrate how leaders need to respond to two broad types of conditions to sustain organizational success and satisfaction. The first type, *Favorable* conditions and situations, tend to be characterized by situations with positive results, outcomes, and relationships. The second type, *Unfavorable* situations, tend to be characterized by situations with negative results, failure, poor morale, dissatisfaction, and low levels of commitment. Leaders need to be highly effective and adaptable to respond to these changing situations. This yields four possible patterns of leadership effectiveness:

1. Effective in Favorable conditions or situations, but not in Unfavorable ones.
2. Effective in Unfavorable conditions or situations, but not in Favorable ones.
3. Effective in both Favorable and Unfavorable conditions or situations.
4. Ineffective in both Favorable and Unfavorable conditions or situations.

We recently analyzed the data from several hundred leaders who had completed our *Pro-daptive® Leadership Inventory*. They responded to 20 scenarios characterized by different types of favorable and unfavorable situations. By looking at higher versus lower performance responses for each of these areas we were able to identify four common leadership patterns.



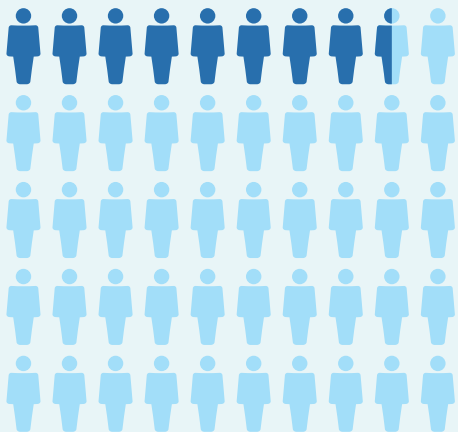
# Crisis Navigators



The first type of leader is what we will call **"Crisis Navigators"**. They tend to perform better in unfavorable situations than favorable ones. They lead in a manner that primarily relies on directive and controlling behaviors. They tend to be good at telling, showing, and instructing. *Their approach often yields success, but at the expense of satisfaction, enjoyment, and/or commitment.* They tend to over-control and micromanage when situations are more favorable. As you can see, from Chart #1, about 17% of leaders fall into this group.

Chart #1

## 17.1% Crisis Navigators



Much of our consulting, coaching and development is with such Crisis Navigators. Organizations engage us to “rescue” these leaders because of the need to smooth their edges. As one CEO who called us in to work with a pusher told us, “He delivers amazing results, but his staff fear him. I think he is a good person and cares for his employees. But he acts like a tyrant, and I don’t think his employees see his kind heart. I don’t believe he has any idea how they really feel about him. But I do. He is losing good employees because they feel bullied, micromanaged, or that all he cares about are results.”

Another finding from our real world research is that many of the leaders in this study are respected by their staff, even liked by them. Yet, these leaders still have significant upside potential. As one recovering Crisis Navigator said, “I had hired all these good people to work for me to help with our rapid expansion. They told me they liked working for our company, but I was micromanaging them. Thankfully, they let me know it. They absolutely flourished once I learned how to effectively let go and use more supportive behaviors with higher performers. Unfortunately, I lost a few good people before I made the change.”



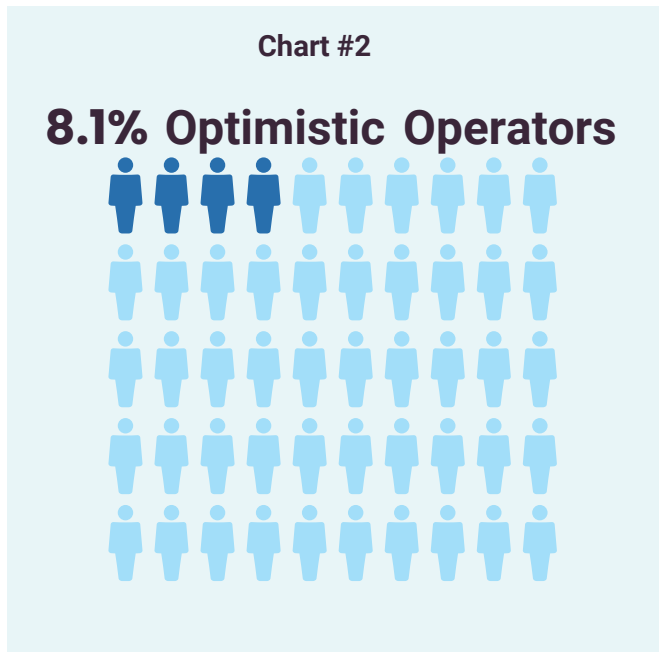
# Optimistic Operators



By contrast with the Navigators, a second type of leader is the **“Optimistic Operators”**. They tend to perform best in favorable conditions, situations where they lead in a manner that is primarily supportive and relating. They are cheerleaders or delegators. They tend to focus primarily on relationships, engagement, and morale but struggle with ensuring tasks are accomplished, especially in unfavorable situations. The *Optimistic Operators* are about 8% of the leaders in our study, as shown on Chart #2.

Cara is an example of an “Optimistic Operator”. She has strong success managing highly motivated and self-disciplined employees. They love to work for her. She simply teaches a concept and encourages others as they implement their newfound skills. Unfortunately, she under-performs when managing struggling employees who needed more clear direction, tight monitoring, ongoing accountability, and firm redirection when they get off track. As an Optimistic Operator, she struggled to provide the accountability and directive actions these struggling performers needed to improve.

Once she added directive approaches to her toolkit, the senior leaders in her company quickly recognized her as a go-to leader who could develop *both* higher and lower performers.





# Pro-daptives®



The “**Pro-daptives**®” are those leaders who perform well in both favorable and unfavorable situations. Unfortunately, at only 7%, these are the least common type of leader. Yet they are the only ones that diagnose, respond and adapt effectively across all types of situations and conditions.

Our experience has been that most of the leaders in this category use a leadership ‘model’ of some sort. Otherwise, they know that they will instinctively fall into the trap of being either a

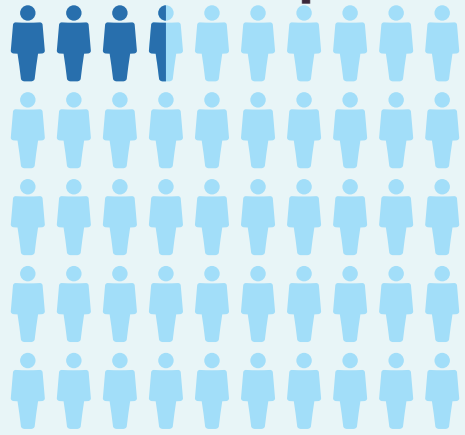
supportive or a directive leader regardless of what the situation requires to be effectively managed. Instead, they consciously use a resource such as our Pro-daptive® model tool to first diagnose the situation’s favorability and/or root-cause. Then, they effectively use the right type of an amount of *both* directive and supportive approaches. Lastly, they *adapt* their approach as needed to continuously deliver successful and satisfying results for all.

Benjamin was a typical “Crisis Navigator” who has now developed to be a *Pro-daptive*® Leader. He learned that the only way to sustain both strong success and satisfaction results is to add key supportive practices to complement his directive ones.

As the COO of his company, he has found the Pro-daptive® process so helpful that he has put more than 150 of his leadership team through this development program. As for the ROI, he has watched as his company has weathered the loss of employees during the “great resignation” much better than competitors due to the strong positive culture his leaders ensure.

Chart #3

## 7.2% PRO-daptives



# Potentials

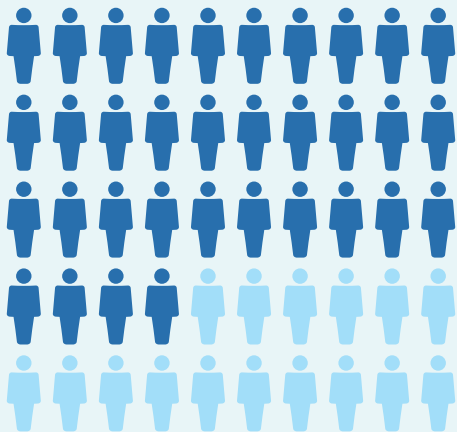


The **“Potentials”** are the last type of leadership pattern we identified. This group of leaders underperforms across all types of situations. Unfortunately, this is by far the largest group. As Chart #4 shows, this group of leaders represents 67% of the several hundred leaders in this study. These leaders are making the most common diagnosing, responding, and adapting mistakes on a regular basis. Quite simply, they are underperforming and need effective coaching, training, consulting, and/or self-development to achieve their potential for much greater success and satisfaction.



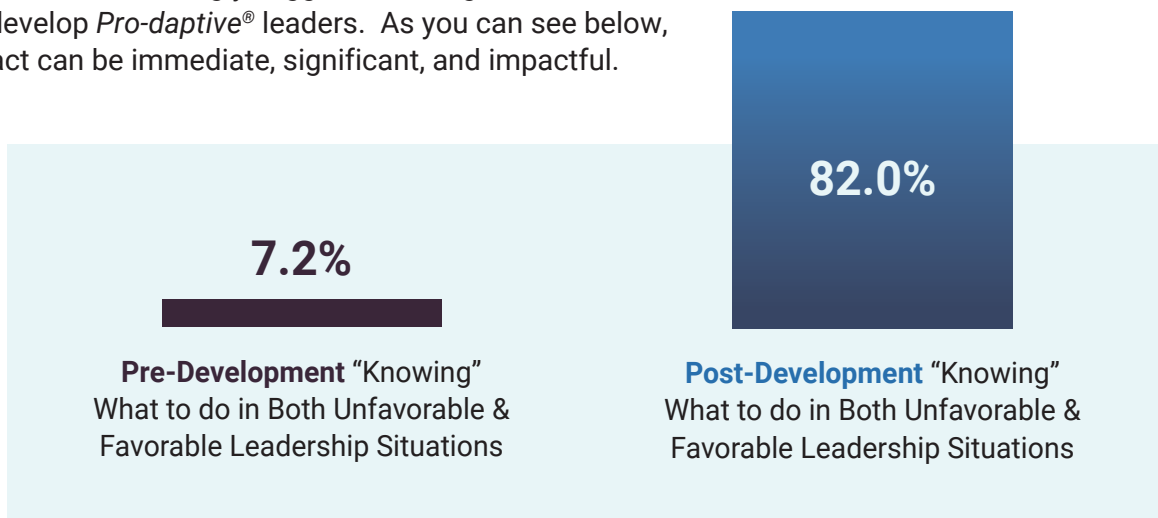
Chart #4

**67.6% Potentials**



# Our Pro-daptive® Research: Knowledge Improvement in Case Study Group

Finally, our findings are remarkably consistent regardless of organizational size, education level, or industry. These research results show why additional progress is needed to help leaders consistently achieve both greater success and satisfaction. **Where do your people fall?** Are they in the 93% of leaders that are a *Crisis Navigator*, *Optimistic Operator*, or *Potential*? If so, we strongly suggest reaching out to discover how to develop *Pro-daptive*® leaders. As you can see below, the impact can be immediate, significant, and impactful.



## About The Research

In their breakthrough new book, ***Conquering Unfavorable Leadership***, Michael O'Connor and David Spader identify the 5 common mistakes these 4 types (93%) of managers and leaders make.

This research led them to develop the Pro-daptive® Leadership model to both prevent and minimize those mistakes and to deliver unparalleled levels of *success* and *satisfaction*. The model is principles-based and a culmination of more than 40 years of practical, real-world and academic research. It has been applied and refined with thousands of leaders worldwide, across industries and in small to very large organizations.

Contact us Today: [info@potentia.solutions](mailto:info@potentia.solutions)

