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Our View on New Leadership:

# How to Grow Humility in Charismatic Leaders

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# Table of Contents

# Abstract

Emergent leaders, the ones that get noticed, promoted and pampered in their organizations, typically exhibit strong self-confidence, decisiveness, and visionary thinking – which are not bad things. These characteristics are related to charisma. Too much might be as unacceptable as too little, though. Charisma has a dark side; it is linked to narcissism, and narcissism comes with disastrous side effects.

Multiple studies have revealed that it is humility in leadership that ensures results, productivity and effectiveness of an organization. Humility is a personality trait that is not glamorous at all, and often overlooked. Yet, it seems what many companies are missing in their endeavors to face and cope with the exigencies the 4th industrial revolution is presenting. According to their conversation on leadership 4.0 at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting of the new champions, working with millennials, leaders say humility works better than bossing around (Vanham, 2019). Today, there are fewer possibilities for dysfunctional narcissistic leaders to mask or coat their misconduct. It is a huge opportunity for HR departments to make identifying humble leaders and developing humility in charismatic leaders a priority.

**Keywords:**
Humility, charisma, narcissistic leaders, effective leadership, leadership emergence, curvilinear effect, new leadership, leadership 4.0, future leadership.

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# The case for

# new leadership

Beginning in the 1970's boards of directors (i.e., majority stockholders) began demanding better financial returns. They began hiring anyone who would promise big financial returns. Parallel, financial performance-based compensation packages for CEOs took hold (Hambrick & Wowak, 2010): CEO pay ballooned from 10 times the company average prior to the 1970s to more than 100 times the company average today. Not surprisingly, the sorts of individuals motivated by personal gains – and not necessarily business success – began to volunteer themselves for these lucrative executive roles. Unfortunately, the kinds of people who are skilled at persuading boards that they are right for the job not only tend to be charismatic. They are also in the danger zone to be perceived as narcissists at some point of time once they are in the position of power. "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men", wrote Lord Acton, a 19th century British historian, to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887, to convey the opinion that, as a person's power increases, their moral sense diminishes. His maxim has been vividly illustrated in psychological studies, notably the 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment.

Bringing charismatic narcissists into leadership roles may come with a high price. They make a big show, give empty promises, won't accept responsibility for failure, and take all credit for success. Ultimately, this sort of behavior alienates the staff, destroys engagement, and ruins companies. The consequences of misbehavior on corporate reputation is significant, CEO misconduct can reverberate across the organization and has long-lasting effects (Larcker & Tayan, 2016). Self-promotion neither guarantees better results nor leadership effectiveness.

A recent study from Price Waterhouse Cooper (2018) has revealed that the tide may be turning in addressing misbehavior. Their research has brought to light that CEO misconduct is now the most frequently cited reason why a CEO is let go, more than poor financial performance: 39% of CEOs who were fired in 2018 left the company for reasons related to unethical behavior, results of a scandal or improper conduct.

In the drive for success today, organizations need to not only adapt to technological advancement and changing demographics but also develop the market, as well as creating strong company cultures that encourage employee engagement. The 4th industrial revolution is bringing unparalleled changes to the world and organizations across the globe. The current business environment is defined by the speed and significance of change, and the lack of just one right course of action. Leaders need to consciously choose their responses to their work environment.

Organizations are challenged by the structural and cultural constraints of their hierarchical command and control model. In today's fast-changing, knowledge-based economy, the static, process-driven, top-down conception of management in many business models is not the most effective anymore. It wastes the talent, creativity, and energy of powerful leaders or low-ranking employees alike and has encouraged short-term thinking, corporate greed, overconsumption, and the reckless exploitation of the planet's resources and ecosystems (Laloux, 2016).

The looming work paradigm is shifting

| from | to |
|---|---|
| Control | Trust |
| Static | Dynamic |
| Sell | Serve |
| The past shapes the future | Learn and adapt fast |
| Leaders create followers | Leaders create more leaders |
| Power | Empowerment |
| One direction | Multiple goals, diverse perspectives |
| Plan | Plan and improvise |
| Silos and separation | Convergence and integration |
| Survive | Thrive |
| Obligated | Inspired and committed |
| Competition | Co-creation |
| Charisma | Humility |

Table 1: *Shifting work paradigm*

The consequences of digitalization, the accompanying acceleration and increased complexity of work activity, make it inevitable to revisit the assumptions and practices that have defined leadership to date. Paradigms from the past shift (table 1), and so does the need for leadership behavior. For HR departments, the most pressing challenge remains to get the right caliber of people into management and leadership roles and to develop them accordingly. While charisma received – with good reasons – a lot of attention in the past, we need to emphasize the necessity to also consider humility as a critical element of organizational success.

# How do we distinguish between individual emergence and team effectiveness?

# And why is that important?

Luthans, Hodgetts, and Rosenkrantz (1988) studied 457 managers from different organizations over four years. The aim of Luthans' study was to see if the most successful managers – defined as speed of promotion – spent the same amount of time as the most effective managers – defined by the quantity and quality of their performance and the satisfaction of employees – on the same activities. Luthans found two groups of high performers: (1) Those who advanced rapidly and (2) those whose teams performed well. There was a 10% overlap in the groups, i.e. only 10% of managers were both, individually successful and effective as a team. The two groups also used their time very differently.  Those who advanced rapidly spent the largest amount of their time networking and promoting themselves but the least on human resources management. These people were high on (individual) **emergence**. Those whose teams performed well, spent the largest amount of time communicating and working with their teams and the least networking. These people were high on (team) **effectiveness**. Luthans' study showed that the most effective managers were not the most successful at advancing their careers and have a different set of activities and priorities than emerging managers. It also suggests that for managers, social and political skills have the largest influence on speed of promotion. Unfortunately, the common misconception that managers who advance quickly are also competent and promote team effectiveness has been surviving in organizations for far too long.

Jim Collins helps us understand how leadership behavior and organizational success are related. He conducted an organizational effectiveness study with 11 firms from Fortune 1,000 companies that had 15 years of below average performance in their industry followed by 15 years of above average performance. In order to thrust an organization into greatness, he says that leaders must "combine extreme personal humility with intense professional will" – a seemingly paradoxical combination of traits. Not only are they compellingly modest, but also more concerned with the welfare of their organization than their own celebrity status. They work tirelessly, spotlight their employees rather than themselves, and do what benefits the company even at their own expense. Collins states that they are incredibly driven, but their ambition is first and foremost for the cause of the organization and its purpose. Collins concludes that the key driver of change in organizational performance was a change in leadership. Leaders who have brought the 'Good to Great' transformation are not the ones who are charismatic or have big egos but are rather quiet, shy and deliberate (Collins, 2001).
Both studies call for a better understanding of the underlying personality traits of charisma and humility.

Charisma refers to attractive aspects of an individual's personality that sets him or her apart and makes them appear exceptional. Charismatic individuals are said to have a compelling attractiveness that can inspire devotion in others. Charisma, charm, and self-proclamations of competence are strong predictors of leadership emergence, i.e., being chosen to lead. Many charismatic leaders exhibit strong self-confidence, dramatic flair, willingness to test the limits, and expansive visionary thinking. They make strong initial impressions, especially in the hiring or in the rising to power process. Narcissists know how to radiate all these positive qualities of a leader but take them to an extreme, too.

Narcissism is built around the self-held beliefs of individuals in their own elite status. They feel entitled to the admiration and respect of people whom they interact with. Failure is not an option. Rather, they blame anyone they can instead of admitting their own wrongdoing. Narcissists strive to create and maintain their inflated, overly positive self-image, an undertaking that is often achieved at the expense of others.

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In a nutshell: Narcissists …
- won't accept responsibility for failure
- take more credit for success than is fair
- won't listen to feedback / can't learn from experience
- feel entitled to leadership positions
- ruin companies as CEOs.

Humble leaders on the other side give credit to others, build a winning team and avoid the spotlight. Leaders with humility act as a source of encouragement, support and guidance for their team enabling them to tap into their full potential. As the research shows, humility contributes to leading others from good to great.

What humble leaders do:
- Focus on team performance, not their individual performance
- Channel ambition back into the organization vs for personal gain
- Foster a culture of development by encouraging learning and personal growth
- Build a culture of openness, trust, and recognition.

Humility is freedom from pride or arrogance: the state of low self-preoccupation. Humility is an understanding that every human is equally valuable; a recognition that you are worth no more or less than anyone else. It has nothing to do with being meek, weak, or indecisive. It is not mere courtesy or an especially kind and friendly demeanor. Nor does it necessarily mean shunning publicity.

For a better understanding it is necessary to draw a line between humility and servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011): While Servant Leadership initially seems to be similar to the understanding of humility and also has a positive effect on the commitment of employees and a negative effect on burnout and fluctuation (e.g. Sousa & Van Dierendonck, 2017), there is an important conceptual difference: Humility is a fundamental attitude; it is the opposite of arrogance. Arrogant people per se assume that they are entitled to respect, status and recognition. Humble people, on the other hand, understand that they must earn respect, status and recognition – every day. Servant Leadership, on the other hand, is about concrete behavior, servant leaders ask their employees what they need to be more efficient (Yıldız, Yıldız, & Force, 2016).

Servant leadership is displayed by leaders who combine their motivation to lead with a need to serve. This is demonstrated through empowerment and the development of direct reports; by expressing humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship; and by providing direction. Humility is an acknowledgment by the servant leader that s/he is neither omniscient nor omnipotent, and that employees may have more knowledge and experience. For leaders being dependent on knowledge workers, this is especially important as it is highly probable that employees do know more in their area of expertise or specialization than others in the organization. By acknowledging fallibility and the limitations of one's own knowledge, the servant leader helps facilitate a learning environment in which employees can learn and develop through their own experimentation and by learning from others. Leaders can amplify the effect of their actions if they stand back and empower followers to take more ownership (Sousa & Dierendonck, 2017).

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Taylor explores the question "If humility is so important, why are leaders so arrogant?" and describes the rationale of the tendency of leaders to dominate and control others as their innate will to win. And their ambition to win at all costs stems from the assumption that if they do not win, then they must lose. It also acknowledges the fact that the vast majority of world-changing leaders have been humble people who focused on the work itself, rather than on themselves. In our understanding, humility and ambition don't need to be at odds. Humility in the service of ambition is the most effective and sustainable mindset for leaders who aspire to do big things in a world filled with huge unknowns. Years ago, a group of human resources professionals at IBM embraced a term to capture this mindset. The most effective leaders, they argued, exuded a sense of "humbition," which they defined as "one part humility and one part ambition" (Taylor, 2018).

All of us need to get along, and we also need to get ahead. The team can only grow stronger and achieve its objectives when both motives are managed and balanced. An effective leader is someone who others are willing to follow. From the perspective of the team, these four characteristics are what others are looking for in leaders (Gregory, 2019):

### What employees look for in their bosses: Defining effective leadership

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Integrity | People need to know that the person in charge won't take advantage of their position. Trust in one's superior predicts the entire range of desirable organizational outcomes: productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. | *Can we trust them?* |
| 2 | Judgment | The success or failure of organizations depends on decision-making. Most business failures are the result of bad decisions that are compounded by an unwillingness to evaluate the decisions and change direction. | *Do they make savvy decisions and learn from their mistakes?* |
| 3 | Competence | Good leaders are perceived as knowing what they are talking about, as being competent in the team's business. Subordinates see leaders who lack business acumen as empty suits. | *Do they have the technical and business knowledge required to help the team succeed?* |
| 4 | Vision | Good leaders explain to their team the significance of their mission and how it fits into the larger scheme of things. By adopting a vision, people can transcend their selfish interests and develop impersonal ends for their actions. | *Can they explain the organization's mission, how the team's work fits into it, and what needs to be done to achieve it?* |

Table 2: *Effective Leadership*

Nearly two-thirds of the people currently in leadership positions will fail: They will be fired, demoted, or kicked upstairs. The most common reason for their failure will be their inability to build or maintain a team. Substantial research shows that humility predicts effective leadership (Sherman, 2018a). The crux is that emergent charismatic, often narcissistic leaders get noticed whereas humble leaders get overlooked. Let's dig deeper.

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# Spoiler Alert: Evidence-based framework assessing charisma & humility

Personality assessments (here specifically: Hogan Development Survey [HDS]) show, that charismatic leaders have a typical profile. It can be described by the following personality characteristics (figure 1). The higher the score of the personality scales, the more likely the leader is described as charismatic. For people with other profiles it is significantly less common to be described as such.

- **Bold**: socially poised, arrogant, and entitled
- **Mischievous**: charming, manipulative, and impulsive
- **Colorful**: Smart, interesting, and self-dramatizing
- **Imaginative**: Creative, impractical, and eccentric



Figure 1: *Hogan Development Survey – Charisma Cluster*

In their paper "the double-edged sword of leader charisma: understanding the curvilinear relationship between charismatic personality and leader effectiveness" Jasmine Vergauwe, Bart Wille, Joeri Hofmans, Robert B. Kaiser, and Filip De Fruyt (2017) examined the question whether leaders can be too charismatic meaning that from a certain point more charisma may no longer be advantageous or may even become a hindrance as relates to their effectiveness. They argue that "more of a desirable trait is always better" is challenged by the "too-much-of-a-good-thing may become a weakness" framework. It is the latter which actually offers a functional form to predict effectiveness on the basis of charisma. According to Vergauwe et al. charismatic leaders' views of themselves are inconsistent with how other people see them. The researcher examined the relationship between charisma and overall effectiveness in a sample of 300+ business leaders. Self-ratings of overall effectiveness were inconsistent with coworker ratings: charisma scores significantly predicted self-rated effectiveness (r = .29), whereas the charisma scores were uncorrelated with coworker-rated effectiveness. The story did not end there (Sherman, 2018b).

It turns out that there was a significant curvilinear relationship between charisma scores and coworker-rated effectiveness. According to coworkers, some degrees of charisma – neither too little nor too much – predicted the highest levels of effectiveness (figure 2).
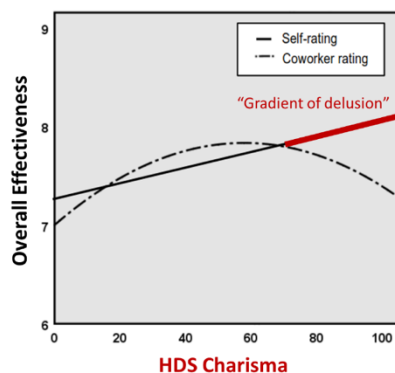


Vergauwe, Wille, Hofmans, Kaiser, and De Fruyt, (2017)

Figure 2: *Charisma and Leadership Effectiveness*

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Coworkers indicated that those managers with scores slightly above average in a large sample of working adults (i.e., at about the 60th percentile) of the HDS charisma cluster were the most effective leaders. After that, more charisma predicted decreasing effectiveness. At about the 70th percentile, coworkers start to see the dark side of charisma – where confidence becomes arrogance, risk-taking gets reckless, social presence looks melodramatic, and strong vision becomes ungrounded grandiosity. These highly charismatic leaders can't see the downside, and in fact see themselves as extraordinarily effective leaders. Study co-author Rob Kaiser refers to this divergence of opinion at the highest levels of charisma as "the gradient of delusion" (Sherman, 2018b).

There are three lessons to be learned:

**First**, if we define leadership as the ability to build and sustain an effective team, we need to consider how others rate leaders when evaluating leaders' effectiveness (table 2). Including the observer's view – or what we call reputation in the evaluation – goes beyond self-ratings. While we learn that "the more is better" is true in self-rating mode, "too-much-of-a good-thing can become a weakness" is true for the observer's view. The latter perspective needs to be considered when selecting and developing leaders. Two of the Hogan Assessment Suite (Hogan Personality Inventory [HPI], and Hogan Development Survey [HDS]) describe the leader's reputation even though only the leader him- or herself responds to the assessments. This is made possible on the basis of big and deep data analysis which consider the results from criterion validity studies when generating the reports.

**Second**, there is nothing like a good or bad personality profile. It is "situation-specific" and depends on additional factors, which degree of charisma leads to a peak in effectiveness rated by others. For example, the relationship between coworker ratings of effectiveness and charisma is moderated by the leader's ability to deal with stress. The higher the personality trait of adjustment, i.e. the leader's ability to deal with stress, the more charisma the leader may possess before "too-much-of-a-good-thing" turns into a weakness. In their panel discussion Hogan (2012), Kaiser (2012) as well as Kusch, Moser and Kassner (2012) have demonstrated that the relationship is dependent on function and industry. Because there is no good or bad personality profile per se, the success of a leader to build and sustain an effective team should be considered in the given position which calls for thorough requirement analyses yet again.

**Third**, leadership effectiveness is not binary: It is not either you have it, or you do not. It rather is a question of where a leader stands on a continuum and how s/he manages his or her approach. In that vein, potential and readiness should be differentiated. While potential is the position from where we start on the basis of our personality, readiness can be defined as the combination of our personality and growth along our biography, and therefore our ability to take care of responsibilities, even though those might not perfectly match with our personality profiles (Meroni, 2018). This is a great chance for coaching initiatives. Strategic self-awareness is the process which leaders apply to develop their behaviors on the basis of their personality and in the context of the given requirements.

There is a growing body of literature evolving, defining humility first and foremost as the absence of charisma. It comes right on time since humility has positive effects not only on team effectiveness but also on individuals and organizations. Still, Dena Rhodes, Ryne Sherman, and Robert Hogan (in prep.) help us understand that it is not only about refraining from "doing too much of something" but what to proactively pursue. They summarized the literature and

empirically developed a 20 item 6-factor humility scale. It assesses egalitarianism, coachability, low overconfidence, admitting mistakes, spotlighting others, and low arrogance (see table 3). The authors report excellent psychometric properties, including criterion related validity. They even show that using existing personality assessments (Hogan Personality Inventory, Hogan Development Survey, and Motives Values and Preferences Inventory, 2010) can very well be used as proxies for the humility model.

### 6 Factors of Humility

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Spotlighting others: emphasizing others' achievements rather than one's own | „It's not my job to applaud others' achievements" (reverse scored) |
| 2 | Coachability: embracing feedback, being open-minded to learning from others at any level | „I appreciate other people's advice at work" |
| 3 | Admitting mistakes: acknowledging one's faults and limitations | „People lose respect when they admit their limitations" (reverse scored) |
| 4 | Egalitarism: having low perceptions of superiority towards others | „I am entitled to more respect than the average person" (reverse scored) |
| 5 | Low overconfidence: not being overconfident or boastful | „I do many things better than almost everyone I know" (reverse scored) |
| 6 | Low arrogance: having a low level of entitlement | „It annoys me when others ignore my accomplishments" (reverse scored) |

Table 3: 6 Factors of Humility

Eventually, there is no good or bad personality profile as such. Depending on the situation, the right amount of something will be context specific. Leaders with the ability to fine-tune their charisma and tune up their humility will be the ones considered as future leaders. In the following, we present a case study in which a charismatic manager develops her strategic self-awareness to incorporate humility into her mindset and behavioral portfolio.

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# How can you develop humility in charismatic leaders?

## A case in point:

Miranda P., Head of Human Resources, at a Berlin-based fintech company, has been with the firm for almost two years. Her excessive drive, imposing risk-taking, and dominant recklessness have helped the firm successfully leave the start-up phase and move to the next level in terms of their organizational development. She had managed two post-merger integrations in lightning-speed. On the flipside, Miranda ruffled the feathers of an influential venture capitalist who indicated that Miranda's behavior was irritating and not appropriate. The reason? Miranda had shown the broad spectrum of narcissistic dysfunctional behaviors. Miranda made bold moves without considering the risks and was not willing to discuss venture capitalist's feedback. The venture capitalist (vc) had lost trust in the sustainability of the relationship, as he put it. This was when her manager, the CEO, asked her to significantly tune up her humility as he suspected a behavioral pattern in that she handled the situation with the vc just like she does with her team. Miranda's team of five has been keeping more and more silent, and just executes the bare minimum. They feel overworked and undervalued. The team does not generate any new ideas and feels increasingly exhausted and pressured by high workloads and tight deadlines. An executive coach was hired for Miranda for her to come to grips with balancing her charisma by increasing her humility. Even though Miranda thought that humility was only for "weak people", and that there was nothing to gain from it, she agreed to meet with the coach to overtly and technically satisfy the CEO's request.

## Assessing personality:

To kick-start her coaching-process, Miranda agreed to have her leadership profile assessed with the empirically validated Hogan Assessments. The three-dimensional approach of measuring personality allows Miranda to better understand how she is perceived by others, how this has a significant effect on what is important for her and consequentially find meaning in the coaching process.

Here is what the three-dimensionality of the Hogan personality diagnostic captures (figure 3):
- **The bright side (HPI)** – This is your day-to-day reputation. Characteristics like drive and emotional resilience that enable one to work well with a variety of people are particularly important to leadership success.
- **The dark side (HDS)** – Reputation in times of stress, pressure, or uncertainty. These are characteristics that might be overused, particularly, when a leader is reacting in the moment, not self-managing, or being stressed. These characteristics are known to interfere with communication and relationship-building, gaining buy-in and clarity on direction, and the ability to balance conformity with being flexible and independent-minded.
- **The inside (MVPI)** – Although related to personality, values are different. They are more about one's intentions, preferences and motives. They are key to the fit between a leader and his/her organization's values. (Gregory, 2019)
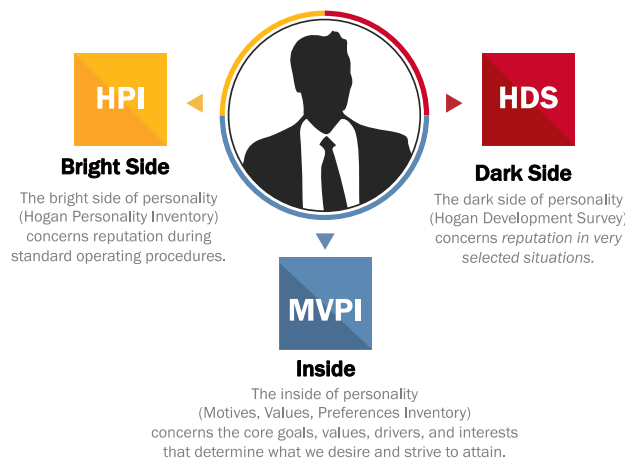
Figure 3: *The three dimensions of Hogan Assessments*

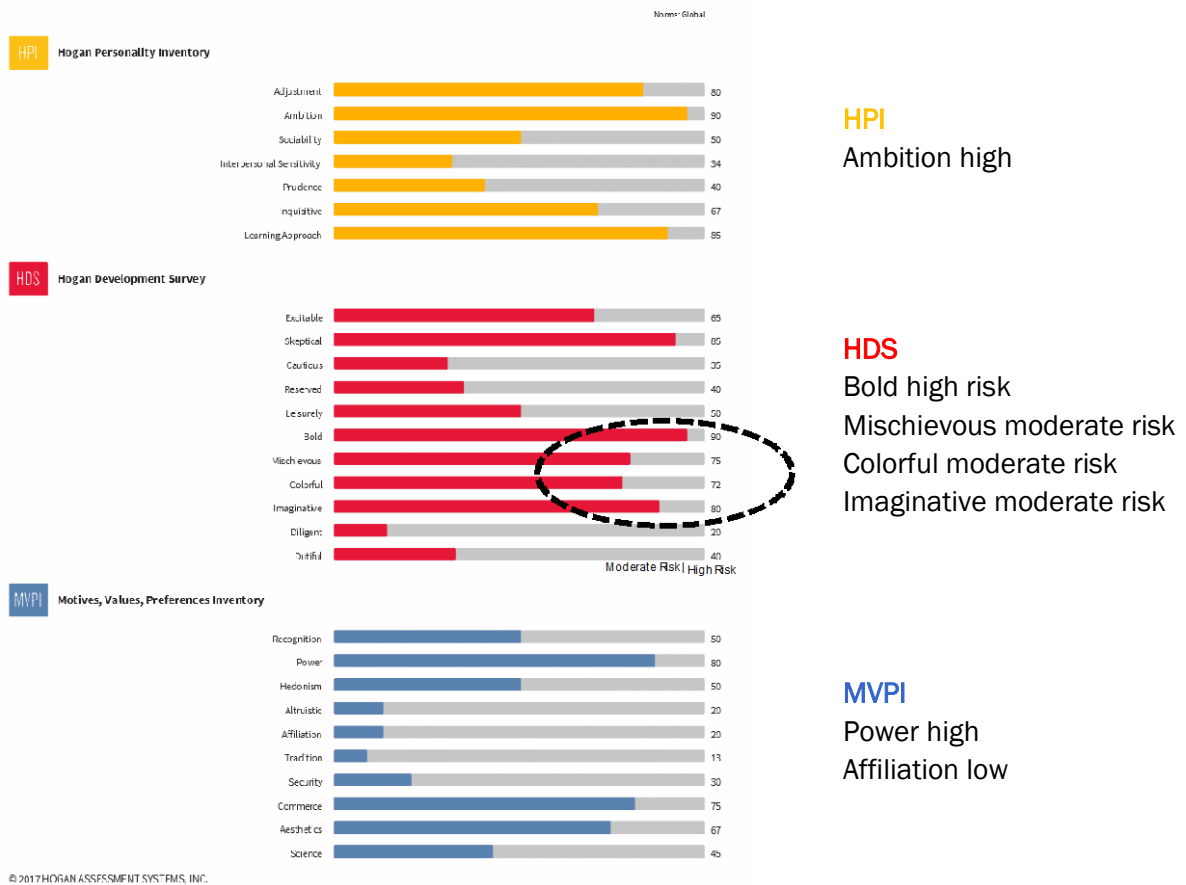These are some of Miranda's results relating to charisma and humility:



Figure 4: *Miranda's FLASH Report (part of Hogan Leadership Forecast Series)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Adjustment | | 80 |
| Ambition | | 90 |
| Sociability | | 50 |
| Leisurely | | 50 |
| Bold | | 90 |
| Mischievous | | 75 |
| Recognition | | 50 |
| Power | | 80 |
| Hedonism | | 50 |
| Altruistic | | 20 |
| Affiliation | | 20 |
| Tradition | | 13 |

Figure 5: *Recurring Theme "Leadership Initiative" in Miranda's Profile*

| Hogan Scale | People with low scores seem | People with high scores seem |
|---|---|---|
| **Ambition** | to be good team players<br>willing to let others lead<br>complacent | *energetic*<br>*competitive*<br>*restless and forceful* |
| **Bold** | unduly modest<br>self-doubting | *arrogant*<br>*entitled and self-promoting* |
| **Power** | not care about being successful<br>not want to make a difference | *want to be successful*<br>*want to make a difference* |
| **Affiliation** | *prefer to work alone*<br>*enjoy their own company* | need social interaction<br>want to be included |

Table 4: *Hogan descriptors of "Leadership Initiative" scales*

## Increasing Coachability:

The ABC-methodology for delivering feedback on Hogan assessment results enhances the coachability of candidates to discuss development topics. It generates strategic self-awareness around their autopilot behavior, blind spots, and behavioral implications in the context of their values. The coach establishes a thorough understanding of the client's key assets, potential derailment risks, and together they precisely identify the development needs and discuss tailored next steps.

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## A – Assessment results

Leading question: What is Miranda's reputation?

(Please note that in order to reduce complexity, only parts of her profile will be discussed.)

Miranda has a typical C-Level profile (figures 4 & 5, table 4). Miranda's profile indicates that others perceive her as confident, strong, able to see the opportunity vs. the risks, a great storyteller, and visionary. However, with high scores on the HDS charisma cluster, in stressful times, others may also perceive her as someone who dominates social situations, does not listen to others, takes unnecessary risks, promises too much, or takes all the credit and blames others if a plan or project fails.

## B – Behavioral consequences

Leading question: How do others react to Miranda and how does this run counter to what is important to her?

Overdosing her charisma, others may feel intimidated so that they play safe or hide resulting in a lack of connection and collaboration, and eventually in reduced productivity. When Miranda was asked to look after the consequences of her low level of humility, she thought the CEO wanted her to just be nicer and take greater care of relationships. With her low score on affiliation (MVPI), however, relationships do probably not matter so much to her. Therefore, there is no need to do something different from her point of view. She understands but doesn't care.

Coachability, which we define as the openness and active engagement in a coaching process is only achieved if not investing in the coaching assignment runs counter to her own interests. By illustrating how her charismatic demeanor damages her need to accomplish remarkable achievements (MVPI power scale), she was all ears. She needed to understand that by alienating the venture capitalist, thus damaging the work relationship, he might withdraw his funding commitment. The same holds true for the team. Intimidating the team typically triggers them to reduce their willingness to take responsibility, and hence diminishes Miranda's ability to leverage through them. Often, the most competent team members leave overly dominant bosses.

## C – Coaching conversation

Leading question: How can Miranda increase her impact?

With her low interest in relationships, she would not have bought into the coaching process had we made her discuss the behavioral consequences on relationships. Once Miranda started to realize the impact of her behavior on the sustainability of the business, she wanted to explore her reputation under stress (HDS scale bold). We also acknowledged some of the coping mechanisms she had put in place to manage her derailers. For her, it was an epiphany to put herself in the shoes of others and looking at the situation from their perspectives. She stated that the persona of the strong heroine was not serving her when others feel dominated, insecure and blamed. By taking on responsibility,

Miranda decided to

− **Stop** blaming others if things go wrong and ignoring feedback
− **Start** acknowledging and listening to others and managing attention to detail to ensure effective execution
− **Continue** being a role model for taking on challenges and creating resourceful ideas.

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If you want to tune up your humility or help others boost theirs, your focus and goals need to revolve around these behaviors and attitudes:

– Actively recognize others' achievements and give credit to them
– Continue to enhance your strategic self-awareness, and work to understand your limitations. Be willing to acknowledge your mistakes
– Ask for and listen to feedback; accept that your way is not the only way
– Ask the right questions (instead of having all the right answers). Be genuinely curious and keep learning
– Work to earn the respect of your colleagues; don't assume you are entitled to it. Be in service of others
– Monitor your self-promoting behaviors.

During subsequent coaching conversations, we discussed various options for how Miranda could approach different situations differently (micro level intervention). We also strategized about which situations to go into and which ones to avoid going forward so that she could maintain a healthy energy level (macro level intervention). We developed a contingency plan for her to be in control when her inner critic would dance up a storm or for her not to jump to conclusions too fast. Then she would, for instance, make her intentions transparent with the team and also strive to monitor and manage her behavior. In case of a misdemeanor, the team is more generous and willing to forgive her. Becoming more and more aware of the interplay of her emotions and thoughts in a given moment, i.e. her attitude, enabled her to make appropriate choices as relates to her actions and behavior.

Miranda came to understand that humility is not thinking less of herself but thinking of herself less. It is a paradoxical effect: By bringing less energy to an interaction and being less pushy, Miranda was able to increase the outcomes of her team. Again, "the more the better" is an illusion of our self-perception rather than what others really need from a leader. Sometimes all of us need a nudge to reconnect with our aspirations and higher purpose to tame the ego, thus creating an almost natural path for humility.

Unfortunately, most leadership development programs do not address how to develop humility yet. If they do, they either focus on the "one mindset" or what "to do" to display humility. We argue in favor of an approach which helps charismatic leaders understand how adapted behavior is not just an action item but serves their very own values. If this is the case, development plans have a greater likelihood of surviving difficult times and broadening behavioral repertoires.

Applying a 360° feedback at a later point in time helped her apply the same logic not only to charisma vs. humility but also to balance forceful and enabling behavior as well as a strategic vs. operational focus.

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# Does humility eat charisma for breakfast?

Many of the current global business challenges call for a more collaborative approach to solving them than in the past. Leaders are needed who are inclusive, encourage people's best thinking, energize creative talents, are willing to learn and able to build trust. It is because of this increasingly complex, rapidly changing, unpredictable, and ambiguous environment that the importance of humility has surfaced. No one person has all the right answers or can do it all. Trial and error, embracing failure, accepting criticism and learning from past mistakes often are important steps to organizational success. While humility has long been swept under the rug this is what future leaders need.

Luthans' research suggests that in order to solve corporate performance problems that we see today, companies must make sure to promote effective (team) managers. Politically charged promotion processes are unlikely to identify them. HR professionals need to review their hiring practices, promotion processes, and leadership development offerings to ensure the spotlight is not only on charismatic but also on humble leaders. The search for humility needs to be woven into all tools, communication and strides along the entire employee lifecycle for it to become visible. At best, it starts at the very top.

It might take a while until organizations have established processes to identify and adequately promote humble yet effective leaders. Until this is reality, what is true for charismatic leaders is also true for humble leaders: Strategic self-awareness is key. Some future senior position holders are hiding in organizations masked by their own humility. If they learn to intentionally tune up their charisma, they might reach positions of power in which their ability to support others thrive and fight for the greater good would allow them to leverage their full potential. HR, coaches and trainers can encourage those leaders to actually do so until charisma and humility are at eye level.

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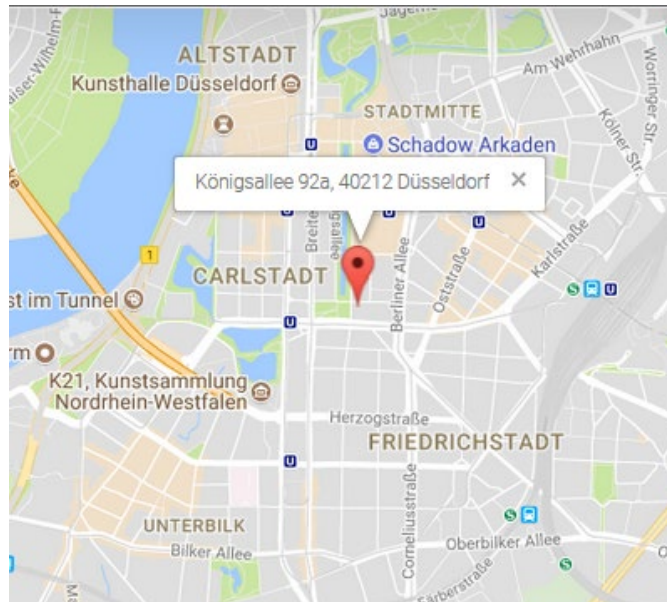Hogan Assessment Systems

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# Thank you!