



5 Ways to

Multiply Your Team's Natural Genius

And Unlock Their Full Contribution

FranklinCovey



Genius is everywhere — if you look for it.

Every person has things that they not only do exceptionally well but also love to do — their natural genius. And they want to contribute those abilities in ways that are seen and valued.



By leading like a Multiplier, you can unlock the natural genius of every member of your team. Research shows that Multipliers get more from the people they lead — much more. They get more intelligent action, more skillful problem solving, and more concentrated effort.

Try these FranklinCovey best practices for guiding your team members' work in ways that allow each of them to make full use of their natural genius.



1. Ask each direct report for ideas about how they can use more of their natural genius.

Once you and your direct reports have identified each person's natural genius, they'll likely have ideas for how to apply it to their work.



Some team members may struggle to see how they contribute unless you share what you notice about their genius.

After all, they're the experts. But if you have an explicit conversation about it, you'll raise their awareness further and help them take a more proactive role in their.

Before your next round of 1-on-1s, explain your intention. You could say:

Now that we've identified your natural genius, I'd like to explore ways to help you use and hone it.

Send questions to your direct reports to prime their thinking, such as:

- *How can your natural genius help the team?*
- *What are some ways you can use it more in your work?*
- *What are some ways you'd like to develop your genius but haven't had the opportunity to do so?*
- *What are some things you need from me in order to apply your genius more?*

In the meetings, listen to your direct reports' answers and ask follow-up questions. Share what you see, too. After all, you likely have greater visibility into the whole team's work than they do, and some may struggle to see how they contribute unless you share what you notice about their genius and its impact on the team.

Ideally, you'll leave each conversation with a few ideas for you both to try and refine. Make it clear that this is the start of an ongoing conversation, not a one-off.

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When people work with a Multiplier, they hold nothing back. They offer the very best of their thinking, creativity, and ideas.”

— Liz Wiseman



2. Reassign tasks and responsibilities across your team to better align with people's genius.

You have everyone trained in their tasks and meeting their goals. Why in the world would you mix up who does what?



If you align work with people's natural genius, you can access more of their energy and intelligence.

Simply put: If you adjust work across a team to better align with each person's natural genius, you can access way more energy and intelligence from all of them.

Start by mapping who does what across your team. Then talk with your direct reports to find a few positive adjustments.

Consider options that:

- Add someone's genius to an existing process. Don't expand a process just to make someone feel good. Do it to improve output—in a way that happens to excite them. For example, if Bella naturally excels at finding flaws, could you add her as a quality reviewer to the launch of a team or project?
- Better match responsibilities with interests. For example, if Angelo thrives on hunting down answers for colleagues, while Heidi finds colleague requests distracting, could Angelo be in charge of fielding internal requests?

- Allow people opportunities to learn and stretch. Maybe Jasmine can analyze data and prep monthly reports in her sleep. Could she take on a next-level task—and make room for another direct report to stretch themselves by learning how to do the work Jasmine is ready to leave behind? Bonus points if Jasmine is also interested in training her teammate.
- Rotate or share tasks that everyone (or no one) wants to do. You don't want to load up certain team members with thrilling work while depriving others—or give some people a disproportionate load of mundane work while others get interesting challenges. Aim for balance and fairness across your team.



What if you could get twice as much value from your team members — plus a 5 to 10 percent growth bonus because they were getting smarter and more capable while working for you?

3. Give each direct report more ownership in an existing work area.

While it may not be realistic to fundamentally change what work your team members do, you can at least give them space to adjust how they do the work they already have.



People tend to use their natural genius freely, even sometimes without realizing it.

Since people tend to use their natural genius freely, even sometimes without realizing it, you don't need to micromanage this process. Often it's a matter of asking them:

What part of your work are you ready to run with — with less direction from me?

Then make a plan with the person so that you can take a step back while they step forward to take what they already do well — and find ways to do it even better.

Depending on the person's experience level and the nature of their work, you might:

- **Give them ownership over a whole project or area of responsibility.** Try a "51% of the Vote" experiment. Tell your direct report: "I'll give you input if you need it, but you decide what to do along the way and own the outcome." This can work well for veteran top performers or team members with deep expertise.

- **Increase their autonomy over time.** If someone isn't quite ready to own a whole project, start by asking them to own a smaller, more manageable piece — with plenty of guidance from you. Then, as they build experience and momentum, they can take on more.

For example, if someone's genius is persuading others, and they're collaborating with you to prepare a client pitch, ask them to develop the pitch on their own and get your input before delivering it. Then, eventually, ask them to prepare and deliver the pitch on their own, soliciting feedback afterward about how it went.



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Multipliers make people feel smart and capable, but Multipliers aren't 'feel-good' managers. They look into people and find capability, and they want to access all of it.”

— Liz Wiseman

4. Add an engaging side project to the person's workload.

Many teams have nagging problems or big-picture questions that are important but never quite make it to the top of the team's to-do list.



Does someone have a natural genius particularly suited to taking on an issue that needs attention?

These could be inefficient data-entry procedures, haphazard systems for handing off work to another team, knowledge gaps about market trends or customer needs — or even an issue you don't know about because you're not as close to the work as your team members.

If you have a direct report with a natural genius particularly suited to taking on one of these issues, you could not only engage the person but also help the team make progress — a Win-Win. Check in with your team members about what you — and they — see as possible opportunities.

If you find a side project someone is itching to take on, be sure that they can still get their core work done without pulling crazy hours. They may be able to fit in the new work with no problem. But if not, help them deprioritize another task or ask them to limit the number of hours they devote to the side project in order to meet their primary obligations.



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Latent talent exists everywhere. Organizations are replete with underchallenged masses. Multipliers know how to find this dormant intelligence, challenge it, and put it to use at its fullest.”

— Liz Wiseman

5. Highlight and appreciate each direct report's natural genius when you talk to them about their work.

Pointing out someone's natural genius and its positive impact can help them feel seen—and understand and value what their contribution brings to the team.



Your observations can help someone realize where and when they should turn their genius up a notch.

Your observations and feedback can also help the person realize where and when they should apply their genius or even turn it up a notch.

For example, when giving an assignment, you could say:

This project really needs someone with your _____.

Be sure to specifically call out their natural genius, such as “your creative energy” or “your attention to detail” or “your diplomatic way with people who disagree.”

Once work is in progress or completed, reinforce the connection by pointing out how their genius has made an impact. For example:

Daniel, I really appreciate your eye for efficiency — especially in the way you've upgraded our team inventory reports. I notice that the new categories are helping people quickly see patterns and find what they need. You're saving us all valuable time.

Depending on the situation, it may be appropriate to give the person public recognition, for example, in a team meeting, so others can see and appreciate the person's genius:

Everyone, before we get started, I'd like to thank Daniel for how he's upgraded our inventory reports. His eye for efficiency is saving us all valuable time.

Leading like a Multiplier produces better results for your organization.

When people work with a Multiplier, they give all of their discretionary effort. They dig deep and access reserves of brainpower that only they know about.

Most people have had the experience of working with a Diminisher — a leader who has the effect of shutting down other people's intelligence. Leading like a Multiplier matters because Multipliers get more from people. Liz Wiseman's research shows that even high-performing people give Multipliers twice as much of their energy and ideas as they give Diminishers.

Leading like a Multiplier also matters to your organization and the world at large. What if we could apply twice as much human ingenuity to the perennial problems we face? Now, more than ever, we need leaders who can extract and use all available intelligence to solve our most complex and vital challenges.

FranklinCovey provides leadership development solutions that will help you turn all your managers into Multipliers. Our world-class learning solutions — delivered Live-Online, On Demand, or Live In-Person — are designed to build exceptional leadership skills at every level of your organization.

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