

Hi. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank you for tuning in. Please give us the benefit of your comments below and click on our social media icons, too. That helps us with our search engine optimization.

So, this week I want to talk about a terrific book and how to multiply your efforts. The book is called ***Multipliers*** by Liz Wiseman. It was recommended to me by my peer group and it really is an eye-opening book. I could do a 30 minute blog. I don't think you want me to, but I could do a really long blog about this book. It's really, really excellent.

So, after a great deal of study, Liz Wiseman sort of divided business executives into two groups – multipliers and diminishers. And this book is all about contrasting why multipliers are able to get so much more out of their people and diminishers get so much less out of their people. In fact, she makes the case that multipliers get twice as much out of their people as diminishers. We'll talk about some of the reasons for that in a minute.

So, our clients are smart. For 29 years, we've been working with really super smart people, most are college educated. Almost all are college educated. Some have advanced degrees. That's fine. I'm not talking about academic smart. I'm talking about common sense smart, practical smart, just the kind of people, entrepreneurs that can just figure a way to overcome problems consistently and just manage to get it done irrespective of the challenge. It really is quite amazing. I mean I think they have a kind of genius. There's lots of different kinds of genius, but entrepreneurial genius has got to be among them and I think many, many, many of our clients have this genius capacity.

But, Liz Wiseman points out there's a problem with genius and that is that it's always being the smartest person in the room, in a way, diminishes the gifts and the talents of other people in the room. So, focusing, and our clients tend to be sort of top down decision makers and, as I say, they're very smart and capable, but sometimes being the smartest person in the room is not good for you or your family business.

Now, it is possible to not only be the smartest person in the room, but to amplify the intelligence of other people in the room. And so, she lays out five disciplines of multipliers that might be able to help you get more out of your people. And let's face it, if you've got 100 employees and you can get a little bit more out of them, that's going to make your business run better, that's going to make your life simpler. It's going to make everybody happier, et cetera, et cetera. There's just no downside to encouraging and multiplying the talents and intelligence of your people.

So, the first thing is attract and optimize talent. Multipliers are talent magnets. They know that they're good, maybe even great, but they know they're better working on a team with other great people. So they actively go out and recruit and search for talent all the time. They don't sit back and look at HR as a necessary evil. They know that one of the key roles of a leader in a small or a large business is to be able to attract terrific talent to the team.

The second thing is they bring intensity to their companies. They demand a lot of themselves and they demand a lot of their people. So, these multipliers are not always the kumbaya, touchy-feely types. They're very much demanding and intense and driven people. So, it doesn't mean that you have to change your entire personality and be a lot more touchy-feely and a lot less driven. Multipliers are driven people. They do, however, give their people what's called psychological safety. They do give them responsibility. They challenge them. And if somebody does make a mistake, they don't come down on them like a ton of bricks. People are going to make mistakes. I make mistakes, you make mistakes, everybody makes mistakes. So, there's an element of psychological safety that multipliers bring to their organizations and that allows people to feel better, more relaxed, and make better decisions.

The third thing is they challenge their people. They give them responsibility and give them tough goals. They challenge them. They stretch them. And that's a characteristic of multipliers. Now, so many of the especially smaller businesses that I've encountered over the years, it's like the leader has to make all the decisions. You know, what kind of carpet goes on the floor, what kind of paint goes on the walls, what kind of jobs to go after, what kind of customer service we're going to have. It's just like they value control over success even. And I've seen lots and lots. My wife uses the term control freak. And that's kind of what I think these people are. So instead of letting their people flower and make their own decisions and contribute to the overall success of the team, they reserve all decision making for themselves and they, unwittingly, become diminishers and not multipliers.

The fourth thing that multipliers do is they encourage rigorous debate in their organization. So, they don't make these top down unilateral decisions, they bring up decisions, especially big ones, for their management team and maybe even for more people than that and try to make sort of bottom up decisions. They have rigorous debate and you don't have to agree with me. Here at our shop, it's rather shocking when everybody agrees with me. We have debate on things. And sometimes I'm off base and just all wet and other people have much better ideas or they take an idea that maybe I started off with and then they build it into something much bigger and better than I would have on my own. So, they allow for rigorous debate and they allow for other people to make decisions and contribute to the quality of the decisions.

And then the fifth thing is they assign ownership of projects to people and they hold them strictly accountable. And so, again, they're not soft, touchy-feely leaders. They hold people rigorously accountable in the long run and that's a terrific thing.

So, the main distinction that I think Liz Wiseman makes between multipliers and diminishers is that why multipliers, just as much as diminishers might be genius, they focus more on becoming genius makers, not just individual geniuses. And you can take your pick, right? It makes perfect sense if you're a genius maker, you're going to be more successful in the long run and so are the people that you work with.

This is Wayne Rivers at the Family Business Institute. Thank you.