



Business Chemistry

Practical Magic for Crafting Powerful Work Relationships

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Ever wonder what it is that makes two people click or clash? Or why some groups excel while others fumble? Or how you, as a leader, can make or break team potential? Based on extensive research and analytics, plus years of proven success in the field, *Business Chemistry* provides a simple yet powerful way to identify meaningful differences between people's working styles.

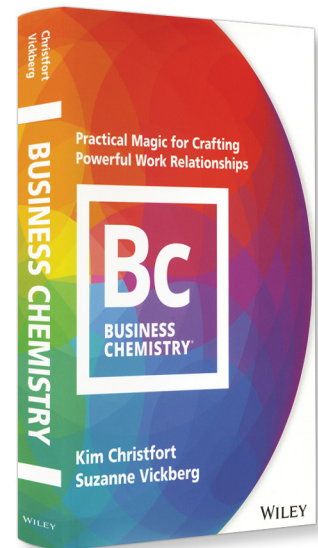
Who seeks possibilities and who seeks stability? Who values challenge and who values connection? Authors Kim Christfort and Suzanne Vickberg will help you grasp where others are coming from, appreciate the value they bring and determine what they need in order to excel. It offers practical ways to be more effective as an individual and as a leader.

Imagine you knew how to create a work environment where all types of people excel, even if they have conflicting perspectives, preferences and needs. Suppose you could activate the potential benefits of diversity in your organizations.

You don't have to leave it up to chance, and you shouldn't. Let *Business Chemistry* guide you in creating great chemistry.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The meaning of Business Chemistry and the strategies that support it.
- The four Business Chemistry types and how to help them thrive in the workplace.
- Tips for working with both similar and opposite types.
- To use Business Chemistry to develop both individuals and teams.



by Kim Christfort
and Suzanne Vickberg

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: BUSINESS CHEMISTRY

by Kim Christfort and Suzanne Vickberg

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The Power of Chemistry

Chemistry. A powerful word used to represent that magical *something* that can exist between people — and not just the romantically inclined.

In most cases its presence is obvious but mysterious. It is hard to know exactly what's behind it. It's just there. Of course, chemistry is also a branch of science that explores what matter is made of and how those ingredients interact, combine and change.

Chemistry is a huge factor in business. Once you start looking, its presence or absence is noticeable everywhere. With that colleague you seek out when you want to riff on a new idea versus the one you avoid because he's so difficult to work with. With the client who will work with no one but you, versus the one you can't seem to click with. With the teams that achieve outsized success, versus those that churn and churn and never make progress.

We often consider the great chemistry in these situations to be something we either have or don't. But what if, instead, we viewed it as a discipline, one that explores the elements behind human interactions and how they might be brought together to minimize explosions and maximize positive outcomes? What if we took a scientific view of the art of business relationships?

Decades of studies have shown that empathy is integral to effective human connection, and recent research further demonstrates links between empathy and leadership performance, as well as commercial success at the organizational level.

Working style is essentially your personality manifest in a business setting. It's a composite of how you

process information, make decisions, connect with people, and a multitude of other facets that reflect your unique perspective.

To cultivate empathy, you need to recognize differences for what they are — useful signals about an individual's perspective and the building blocks of powerful working relationships. But in order to fuel that magical chemistry of great business relationships, you need gem-grade empathy. That requires going beyond simply acknowledging differences and building understanding, to acting on that knowledge.

The mission of Business Chemistry is to provide a simple, practical way to identify meaningful differences between people's working styles; to grasp where others are coming from, appreciate the value they bring and determine what they need in order to excel; and finally, to offer ways to act upon that information in order to be more effective as individuals and as leaders.

Let's start by learning the four Business Chemistry types: Pioneers, Guardians, Drivers and Integrators. ●

Pioneers Value Possibilities and Spark Energy and Imagination

The essence of the Pioneer in one word is "possibilities." Pioneers love imagining what could be, and don't hesitate to reach beyond the status quo. Expressions like "What if...?", "Picture this...", "Yes, and..." and "Why not?" are music to a Pioneer's ears and often are lead-ins to lively brainstorming.

They have little regard for rigid structure and an almost allergic aversion to details. That agenda the



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team put together so painstakingly? Don't expect the Pioneers to follow it. Their thinking can be non-linear and resists constraint. But give them a juicy, open-ended challenge and a whiteboard, and they'll be formidable idea generators.

Don't expect Pioneers to stick to any one task or activity for long. They tune out and are easily distracted.

Pioneers are very comfortable with risk and are likely confident that their inherent adaptability will carry them through, regardless of where they land. For a Pioneer, it's more important to expand upon what could be than to analyze why it can't be, because for Pioneers there is rarely such a thing as a dead end.

The Problems With Pioneers

All that energy and passion can be great, but it can come across as frenetic chaos. A Pioneer jumping from topic to topic, often without warning, can be perceived as scattered, erratic and unfocused.

Pioneers tend to be really comfortable taking risks — not because they've calculated probable outcomes and impacts and are consciously accepting those as costs of action, but simply because *it feels like a good idea*. This confidence in their own intuition as the basis for risk-taking can make Pioneers appear reckless.

Ultimately, even the best idea is only as good as its execution, and here's where Pioneers get the most criticism. Their strong dislike of rules, process and pragmatic realities sometimes makes them come across as impractical and unable to get things done.

The Promise of Pioneers

In spite of the fact that people report Pioneers are the most challenging type to work with, there is an almost universal appreciation for their value on a team.

Pioneers often provide the spark that ignites others' creativity. Their out-of-the-box thinking and "insanely creative ideas," as one executive aptly described it, catalyze innovation for teams and organizations. When a team is backed against a wall, Pioneers are the ones who see a window or suggest a ladder.

Pioneers' adaptability and flexibility are seen as a real asset in times of rapid change. Their boldness and ability to pivot make them effective on the front lines of disruption, rapidly formulating response options while the organization catches up in the trenches.

Not only willing but eager to step up into leadership roles, Pioneers are more common in the C-suite than any other type. They are often captivating individuals, social and networked. ●

Guardians Value Stability and Bring Order and Rigor

One word to represent what the Guardian values is "stability." A Guardian knows it's essential to forge a solid foundation before building anything skyward. And when it comes to how the Guardian does things, many aspects of their working style serve to establish and maintain such stability. They're methodical, careful, disciplined, meticulous and exacting.

Spontaneity? New environments? Ambiguity? A Guardian will likely say "no thanks," because spontaneity, newness and ambiguity all threaten stability. When they simply *must* embark on something new, Guardians seek to first understand as much as possible.

Guardians are most comfortable when the waters are calm and no big waves are rocking their boat. And they themselves often serve as anchors.

Guardians tend to be introverted and reserved, both socially and emotionally. You won't usually find a Guardian at the center of a large group of colleagues, and they don't need to be in charge. Instead, they often contribute in other, less out-front and obvious ways.

The Gripes About Guardians

Because of their reserved nature, others sometimes complain that Guardians are tough to get to know. Guardians are also viewed as sticklers for the rules. They tend to think rules are there for a reason, and it's certainly not to break them.

People also complain that Guardians are stuck in the status quo like tractors in a field of mud. As the pace of change quickens everywhere, some see Guardians as unable to free themselves and adapt, and wonder if they, perhaps, like being stuck in the mud.

The Gifts of Guardians

People value the Guardian's commitment to follow-through. They know they can count on a Guardian to do what they say they're going to do and to be accountable. People describe Guardians as dependable, responsible, persistent and loyal.

People also appreciate Guardians for keeping them out of trouble. Because they're less likely to embrace risk, Guardians will often insist that proper due diligence be conducted when other types might skip it. There's also something to be said for the Guardian's organizational skills and their attention to detail. Someone has to be paying attention to these things!

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Let's say you're really good at coming up with outlandish ideas — no one is more creative than you! But if your success depends on making those ideas a reality, a Guardian can help. Guardians are known for their realism and practicality, which can be a great balance for creativity.

Drivers Value Challenge and Generate Momentum

Ask people the best thing about Drivers, and a clear theme emerges: They get stuff done. Even when it's difficult. Especially when it's difficult. Because if you had to capture the spirit of Drivers in a word, it would be “challenge.”

Drivers love a challenge, and they love to challenge. They are focused and competitive. To get the results they want, Drivers will calculate the shortest possible path and stay on course despite whatever, or whoever, gets in their way. This directness infuses everything they do, from the way they make decisions to the way they interact with others. They like to get to the point.

Drivers are not the warmest and fuzziest of the types. They don't mince words and they don't sugarcoat. Expecting small talk? Drivers see it as a waste of time. No clear agenda? Come back when you have one. Vague ambitions? Intuitive conclusions? Emotional interpretations? Good luck with that.

Drivers are logical, technical and quantitative. They want data and structure. Try to engage them without these things, and they have no qualms voicing their displeasure.

There are two subtypes of Drivers: Commanders and Scientists. Commanders are the take-charge, more extroverted type. Scientists are the cerebral, more introverted type.

The Difficulties with Drivers

Drivers are impatient and don't particularly value social niceties. Add to that their single-minded focus and direct speaking style, and it's not surprising that Drivers often come across as blunt and abrasive.

Drivers are quite focused, but this can look like “tunnel vision” to those who view the world from a broader vantage point.

Drivers tend to want to be leaders and strive for advancement and achievement. They think second place is for losers. Drivers like to know how they measure up and how they can move on up.

The Deftness of Drivers

Drivers possess a unique combination of originality and pragmatism, which helps them to translate vague visions into actionable strategies. They'll make sure discussions are grounded in facts, without getting bogged down in too many details. And while their straight-shooter style might occasionally offend, it also gets the truth out quickly. Sometimes you need someone who can call out the elephants in the room — and volunteer to subdue them.

Drivers are particularly good at making tough choices. More than anything, Drivers are great at getting results. This is perhaps why they are the second most prevalent type in the C-suite (after Pioneers). As leaders they channel the energies of the rest of the team into productive progress toward goals. ●

Integrators Value Connection and Draw Teams Together

Connection — that's what it's all about for Integrators, and connector is the role they often play on a team. Sometimes an Integrator is focused on creating connections between people and other times on connections between ideas. Either way, Integrators like working on teams more than toiling away in solitude. They're trusting and they forge deep relationships — beyond networking or teamwork — getting up close and personal to form real friendships with colleagues.

Integrators are great listeners and observers, too. They pay close attention to what's being said and can often sense even unspoken emotions and reactions. And then they take others' feelings into account. They consider it a worthy goal to reach consensus, getting everyone on the same page without leaving anyone out.

There are two subtypes of Integrators: Teamers and Dreamers. Teamers are more extroverted, and Dreamers more introverted. Teamers are outgoing, perhaps best defined by their relationships with others. They place a high value on traditions and loyalty in relationships — if you've got their back, they'll have yours.

Dreamers are typically defined more by what's happening in their head and their heart, which makes them a bit more elusive than the Teamer. Dreamers are reserved, particularly around new people, listening and observing more than talking. During that quiet time, Dreamers are processing what's happening in the moment and what it means, reviewing how things have happened in the

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past (particularly what's gone wrong), considering what might happen in the future, and tracking how others in the room are feeling and reacting.

The Issues with Integrators

One of the most common criticisms of Integrators is that their diplomatic style makes it difficult to know where they stand — “Do you love my idea or hate it? I can't tell.”

While Integrators are busy considering everyone else's feelings, they don't always get the same courtesy. Instead, they're accused of being overemotional and oversensitive. People complain they often have to worry about hurting an Integrator's feelings and that it's exhausting to have emotions in the mix at work.

One of the reasons for the Integrator's indirect style is their aversion to conflict, and some people see this as a real problem. People sometimes also see Integrators as being overly inclusive and taking too long to make decisions because they're trying to make sure everyone is on board.

The (Social) Intelligence of Integrators

If two people are standing on opposite banks of a river and need to accomplish something together, a bridge might be a good idea. Integrators often serve as that bridge. Their ability to see both sides of an issue, combined with their diplomatic skill, makes Integrators well suited to the roles of mediator, facilitator and peacemaker.

The Integrator's specialty is asking people for their input, opinions, thoughts, suggestions and reactions. The bottom line is, people feel understood when someone really listens, and they start to trust the listener.

Integrators have an uncanny knack for connecting ideas that others might not connect, and for recognizing context others might not see. Say your newly formed team needs to complete a complex project, but it's unclear who's in charge. An Integrator is likely to be the one to suggest that the solution might be found in how ants collaborate without a leader. ●

Pioneers in Hell: How to Stop Killing Their Potential

Let's discuss how to create an environment where each of the four Business Chemistry types can excel.

To meet the needs of Pioneers,

- Allow time for free-flowing discussion and idea generation.
- Brainstorm and whiteboard on the spot.

- Keep an open mind. Even if you can't say yes, try to avoid saying no.
- Provide options for where, when and how to work.
- Position them to do what they love, and explain how more mundane tasks enable them to do so.

If you are a Pioneer, here are a few suggestions regarding how you might flex to fit just a bit better into an environment where people might not seem to acknowledge the full extent of your creative genius:

Stick with it. While Pioneers are often thought of as visionaries, people sometimes complain that they struggle to stick with an idea long enough to make it a reality. If you're a Pioneer, try breaking your idea into smaller execution chunks, and celebrate the achievement of each one (Pioneers love a good party) before launching into the next “new” phase.

Make the new seem old. Your love of novelty isn't equally shared by everyone. Indeed, some people are quite suspicious of ideas that seem totally new or foreign. Instead, they're more comfortable with what's familiar. To reach these people, emphasize what's not new. This will likely feel counterintuitive to you, but it can get people comfortable with your idea more quickly.

Take a breather. A common complaint about Pioneers is that their high-energy, put-it-all-out-there, talk-to-think style can be overwhelming and can crowd out other voices. Pioneers often aren't even aware of their verbal steamrolling, so simply making a conscious effort to let others get a word in edgewise can help. ●

Guardians in Hell: How to Stop Killing Their Potential

To meet the needs of Guardians,

- Provide pre-work, data and information in advance of a discussion or decision.
- When a change is required, acknowledge the potential domino effect on the details Guardians care about, and explain why the change is needed.
- Provide clear expectations, including what success looks like.
- Offer workspaces that provide permission to be alone, control over the environment, sensory balance and psychological safety.
- Acknowledge the value of the Guardians' work, which often involves more invisible tasks that keep the trains running on time.

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- Pipe down and listen up so Guardians have a chance to process and don't need to fight to enter the discussion.
- Ask Guardians to help solve any potential problems they identify.

If you're a Guardian, you don't have to sit around waiting for someone to fix the situation for you — there is plenty you can do yourself:

Dip a toe in. Some people will assume that if you don't share your thoughts, you have no thoughts. They'll judge you as disengaged, not leadership material or even as being not too bright. If you're not yet ready to share an opinion, you can still contribute to the conversation by asking a question.

Be a positive force. Guardians are great at spotting mistakes, identifying the cracks that make an idea impractical, and foreseeing what might go wrong with a plan. This is a valuable role to play, but people won't always love you for it, because it feels like a downer. Try strategic optimism on for size. This practice involves envisioning the best possible outcome and then planning up a storm to make that happen. Both involve planning — the Guardian's specialty — but the tone is quite different and is likely to impact those around you differently.

Open up just a little. While everyone has a right to privacy, keeping to yourself can make others feel like you're not interested in them. Plus, it reinforces the stereotype that Guardians are boring. If people never have a chance to learn the interesting things about you, what other conclusions can they draw? ●

Drivers in Hell: How to Stop Killing Their Potential

To meet the needs of Drivers,

- Time-box socializing time, make it optional or explain why it's valuable.
- Explain what you and others want and why you want it. (Drivers may miss subtleties.)
- Provide ways for Drivers to measure their success.
- Offer practical workspaces where Drivers won't be disturbed more than necessary.
- Don't overreact to the Driver's brusque style.
- Be clear, concise and confident.

If you are a Driver, maybe you feel frustrated about some of the ways in which your work environment or

the people on your team seem to be interfering with your progress. Here are some things you can do about it:

Be nice. If you work with people who aren't Drivers (and who doesn't?), a little bit of nice can go a long way toward getting what you need from them. It's not that you should avoid telling the truth. Rather, spend a moment thinking about how what you're about to say might make someone else feel, and whether there's a way to say it that would make it easier for that person to receive.

Get a second opinion. If you're baffled by how people respond to you, it might be a good idea to ask someone for help. One CIO worked with an executive coach after receiving poor reviews from his team. The coach asked the CIO to re-enact a typical interaction on film. When he watched himself, the CIO was shocked. "I'm making such an angry face," he said, "I had no idea." The coach also pointed out that the specific words he used made him sound accusatory and judgmental. They practiced communicating the same message substituting different words.

Get a sidekick. Just look at the leadership ranks of many Fortune 500 companies to see examples of leaders of all types teaming with others who complement their skills. For Drivers this can be particularly powerful — not only because they can rely on that individual to round out their edges and fill in their gaps but also because that person is optimally placed to provide the second opinion.

Integrators in Hell: How to Stop Killing Their Potential

To meet the needs of Integrators,

- Support Integrators in their desire to help others, and reward them for doing so.
- Provide opportunities to work in teams.
- Help Integrators see the meaning in their work.
- Spend time connecting.
- Use technology to make virtual teams and meetings more personal.
- Enable them to socialize issues and gather info from stakeholders.
- Be nice and say thank you.

If you're an Integrator who works on a team or with a leader who understands and can provide what you need to thrive, then you are very lucky, indeed! If you're an Integrator who's not so lucky, there are things you can do yourself to make things a better fit:

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Accept trade-offs. While it's great to have everyone on board with a project or decision, getting there is both time-consuming and labor-intensive, and it's not necessary in every case. So take some time to determine whether a particular project or decision requires everyone's buy-in, or whether speed is more important, because it's difficult to attain both.

Make a decision already (and stick to it!). Research shows that second-guessing decisions — looking too hard for the very best option rather than a good-enough option — leads people to feel less committed to that decision and less satisfied with it. So, Integrators, go ahead and do what you do before making a decision (gather input, consider the people implications and so on), but once you've made a decision, popular or not, try to stick with it.

Toughen up. Integrators are the most likely type to sense others' emotions and to be concerned about how they make others feel. Remember that others aren't always as naturally attuned to people's feelings as you are. Try to put their behavior in context. Is it likely that they're purposely trying to offend you? Or is it more likely that their focus is simply elsewhere? ●

Creating Powerful Relationships with Colleagues, Customers and Everyone Else

Let's address how your type impacts the ways in which you should flex to best work with others.

Flex is a funny word, because it can mean seemingly contradictory things — to bend and stretch but also to tighten and contract. The concept here is that sometimes you need to tweak your style to adjust to other people's needs, while also being true to yourself.

When it comes to one-on-one relationships, how you go about flexing, and how challenging it's likely to be, depends on your type and that of the other person.

When You've Got Too Much in Common

You may think that when you're working with someone who's the same type as you, you're on easy street. But like-type pairs can quickly find themselves in trouble.

If you find yourself in a situation with someone of your same type, your goal is to flex but not to get closer to the other person's style. Instead, you want to get a little bit further away.

If you're a Pioneer working with another Pioneer, try to bring things back down to earth. After you've enjoyed some time brainstorming cool ideas, focus on developing actionable next steps so the path forward becomes clear.

If you're a Driver working with another Driver, while debating an issue, avoid tunnel vision by bringing up context or the human implications to get a broader view. Otherwise you may end up driving a bus together with no one else on board.

If you're an Integrator working with another Integrator, temper your shared desire to explore all alternatives, and settle on a direction. If there's an elephant in the room, address it, even if it's uncomfortable.

If you're a Guardian working with another Guardian, challenge yourself to ask whether the current way of doing things is really the best way to reach your goal. Avoid fixating on unknowns, and instead focus on what is necessary to move ahead.

When You Need to Flex Just a Little

What about the types with whom you share some traits despite your differences? Here are some tips for how to flex.

If you're a Pioneer working with a Driver, go ahead and bring your out-of-the-box ideas; Drivers like to explore, too. And feel free to spar a little; you're both likely to thrive on it. But don't lose sight of logic or practicality. Pie-in-the-sky isn't going to work here, and ill-considered risks will likely not be embraced.

If you're a Guardian working with an Integrator, the Integrator shares your distaste for confrontation, so make sure any issues that need to be discussed are surfaced and not ignored. Be patient with discussions that may seem tangential; an Integrator's way of thinking through an issue may be more roundabout than yours.

If you're a Driver working with a Guardian, you may need to access your reserve tank of patience. Like you, Guardians thrive on facts and data, but they're likely to need more of both than you are, and they'll probably take longer in considering them. Be prepared to continue reviewing the details even if you've already reached a conclusion yourself, and don't attempt to take shortcuts.

If you're an Integrator working with a Pioneer, you both value working closely with others. You may also enjoy thinking big together, but don't forget to address critical details, something neither of you is likely to do naturally.

You might need to pick up the pace, as Pioneers like to move quickly and they may feel impatient with your tendency to consider things more thoroughly. ●

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Putting Business Chemistry to Work on Your Teams

You now have a variety of options for flexing to individuals of different types. That will take you a long way, but what if you're dealing with multiple people at the same time? How do you go from focusing on the needs of one to addressing the needs of two, three or maybe even four types at once?

How to make a team effective usually involves asking a series of questions to help leaders take a step back and consider the issue in a different way.

1. What kind of environment do you have today?

Ask yourself, "Does our team's culture or way of working enable all types to thrive?" This is important because you can add all the diversity you want to a team, but if it's set up to work in a way that's more accommodating to some types than others, you're likely to get inconsistent performance.

Here are some questions you and your team members might ask yourselves:

- Do you typically dictate all aspects of a project? Or do you define what needs to happen and then set team members free to determine how they accomplish it? Pioneers, in particular, crave more freedom and autonomy, and your approach here is likely to impact them most.
- Are roles and expectations crystal clear? These answers may be particularly relevant for Guardians, who perform best when they have clarity.
- Are those expectations also set high? Drivers sometimes feel held back by what they see as the subpar performance of others.
- Is your door open? *Really* open? Integrators thrive when they can forge real connections with people.

2. What's your team's goal? Depending on what a team is trying to accomplish, certain types might add extra value. Need meticulous, high-quality work? A few extra Guardians might be a good idea. Looking for lots of big ideas? More Pioneers might be important. Need to navigate some tricky political waters? Maybe an Integrator-heavy team is what you'll want. Have a big goal to reach in a very tight time frame? You might benefit from including more Drivers.

Yet, it's important to recognize the complexity involved in reaching most any goal, which means it would rarely be ideal to have a team heavily dominated by just one type.

3. Who are your primary stakeholders, and what's their perspective? Sometimes it's easiest to work with

those who are just like you. In those cases you get each other, and things feel good because they go smoothly. For this reason, a like-type team or individual may be effective when working with an important stakeholder.

Other times what stakeholders most need is a perspective that's different from their own. Your team's client might be a big-picture thinker who needs help sorting through the details of an implementation plan. Or they might prefer to avoid conflict and want some support in making the right decision, even when it's unpopular with others. In these cases, a different-type team or individual may bring more value, but only if you can offer a different perspective in a way that's palatable to the stakeholder.

4. What's the current composition of your team?

There are many factors to simultaneously consider when choosing team members — like their knowledge, skills and experience; who's available when; what the budget is; the balance of gender and other types of diversity; and a multitude of other complicating factors. So even if you wanted to select your team based on their Business Chemistry types, in most cases it would be a real challenge to do so.

Instead, carefully assess your team's composition in the context of the issues just explored above, and then actively manage it by making adjustments to how your team works.

Whether your goal is to turn difficult relationships around; to manage your boss or your reports more effectively; to influence and connect with clients, customers and stakeholders; or to tap into the unique strengths of different people, Business Chemistry can get you there.

Like a hidden pattern revealed, once you've become aware of Business Chemistry, you'll see it everywhere.

And therein lies the magic. ●

MORE SV CONTENT ON MANAGEMENT

Summary: *Flex* by Jane Hyun, Audrey Lee. The authors present lessons on "flexing," which is the art of switching leadership styles to more effectively lead people who are different from you. *Flex* offers a proactive strategy for managers to navigate and leverage diversity effectively.

Webinar: *How to Lead Yourself, Your People and Your Organization for Extraordinary Results* by Jacqueline Carter. In this *Soundview Live* webinar, Jacqueline Carter offers a radical yet practical solution: To solve the leadership crisis, organizations need to put people at the center of their strategy. They need to develop managers and executives who lead with three core mental qualities: mindfulness, selflessness and compassion.