



The Star Factor

Discover What Your Top Performers Do Differently — And Inspire a New Level of Greatness in All

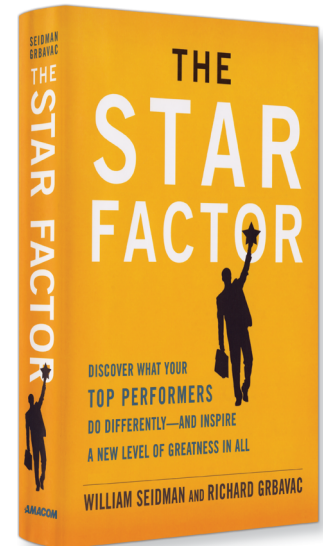
THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In every company, a select few produce more, sell more and deliver better results. These stellar performers consistently outshine their peers — and achieve more than most would believe possible. If only these people could be cloned! *The Star Factor* delivers the next best thing: a unique system for unlocking their wisdom, transforming that knowledge into actionable steps and helping other employees internalize these new attitudes and behaviors, bringing much-needed change to the whole organization.

The Star Factor and its proven Affirmative Leadership methodology helps executives, managers and trainers tease out the attitudes, behaviors and actions that form the core of their stars' performance. You'll discover how to turn their own words into a learning program that can be personalized for each employee, how to create global programs that feel like local change initiatives, and how to make the learning stick to create a leadership-rich environment.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to identify your star performers, using three simple questions.
- Techniques to train coaches to guide learners to convert that knowledge into applied, practical learning.
- Ways to reinforce learning with group discussions and other techniques.
- How to turn isolated employees from anywhere on the organizational chart into influential leaders.



by William Seidman
and Richard Grbavac

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE STAR FACTOR

by William Seidman and Richard Grbavac

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Follow Your Stars to a Bright Future

What would it mean to you and your organization if everyone became as good as your star performers? Everyone would be aligned in working toward something important, a compelling collective purpose. Everyone would believe that their teammates had the commitment and skills to achieve it. Organizations filled with this kind of energy are great places for their people and for the bottom line.

Affirmative Leadership is a scientific, proven methodology for creating leadership programs that are based on each company's own unique strengths and needs. Companies who follow the step-by-step process will develop extraordinary organic leadership throughout their organizations.

The Science Behind Affirmative Leadership

Affirmative Leadership succeeds where other programs fail because it is based on the synergy between new developments in neuroscience, technology and the new science of positive deviance (the study of people who dramatically outperform their peers).

In traditional approaches to leadership, executives and senior managers set the bar for performance. The science of positive deviance suggests a very different and more effective approach. It says that in any group of people, some consistently and systematically outperform others. These are the stars.

Stars' attitudes, thinking and behaviors are different. These people drive the success of your company out of all proportion to their numbers. They're not only great

at their jobs; they have a profound, compelling sense of purpose that is always aligned with a desire to improve the world for other people. And they get things done. They are your stars: the source of the knowledge, wisdom and passion the Affirmative Leadership program uses to transform your organization.

The Affirmative Leadership Methodology

Affirmative Leadership is developed and implemented in four phases that have been used in hundreds of companies with tens of thousands of people in all parts of the world with great success:

Phase 1 — Discover: First, a company efficiently and reliably identifies its stars and invites them to participate in a three-day workshop where their purpose and qualities are articulated.

Phase 2 — Prepare: The project team prepares the star wisdom for transfer to others by creating a learning program consistent with the neuroscience of learning.

Phase 3 — Launch: Coaches meet with their learning group of potential Affirmative Leaders and begin teaching them in a six-hour workshop.

Phase 4 — Guided practice: For four to six months after the workshop, learners complete weekly practice exercises that require practical application of Affirmative Leadership.

When an organization develops Affirmative Leadership in many roles and locations, the organization itself changes, becoming that idealized place to work which we call a "culture of greatness." When all critical roles in an organization are filled with Affirmative Leaders, people's shared purpose and trust in each other's mastery combine to create a superior culture and extraordinary



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performance. Organizations that are bursting with leaders achieve performance levels beyond what people currently can conceive of as possible. ●

Reach for Your Stars

Picture the people in your company who consistently shine at what they do and inspire others. They go by many names: top performers, stars, rainmakers, bright spots or thoroughbreds. Nothing gets between these people and achieving their mission, whatever the circumstances or situation. They are your stars and the source of the knowledge, wisdom and passion the Affirmative Leadership program uses to transform your organization.

Social Scientists and Stars

Social scientists now know that there are positive deviants — what we call “stars” — in every group, company and industry. They are the people who consistently and systematically outperform others. They have figured out how to succeed, even in situations or environments others find daunting, and outperform others facing the same issues.

Research shows that these people not only behave differently but actually think differently about their jobs than others do. They have a different mental model, a perspective that makes them more passionate about their work and better at it, too.

Many people believe stars are just innately more talented or skilled. Yet stars’ thoughts and behaviors, whatever their fields, tend to fall into certain very consistent patterns that can be identified and taught to others.

Organizational Change

When organizations need to change but believe they don’t have the expertise to do it successfully, they have three choices. They can hire experts, bring in consultants or use their own stars. A company’s own stars are immediately available, inexpensive, culturally aligned and incredibly knowledgeable. They are admired by everyone and know how to get things done. They are already your go-to people when change is needed. This is because stars are admired, reflect the best of the culture and enjoy a reputation for reliability.

Every company has some stars, and these people are always critical to improving performance. Even when a performance improvement initiative is to create something completely new, there may not be anyone who has experience with all aspects of it, but there are always stars in closely related areas.

Your stars are already Affirmative Leaders and, as such, disproportionately drive the success of your company. They hold most of its tribal wisdom and are consistently the most successful and more respected people in it. You can use their sense of purpose — and the esteem in which they are held — to inspire others to learn from them and create a leadership-rich culture. ●

Discover and Describe: The Detective

It is possible to get the stars to articulate what drives them, and then to explain their knowledge and wisdom so others can learn from them. The process, which we call Wisdom Discovery, requires some detective skills to dig beneath the surface and get to the unconscious competence.

The Wisdom Discovery process searches for the following four things from the stars:

1. A clear statement of their true purpose in their role (the higher Purpose).
2. A big-picture view of the steps or phases necessary to achieve their purpose (the Path to Mastery).
3. A deeper definition through principles of what greatness looks like in each of the steps (details of Mastery).
4. The activities that build the habits necessary to achieve greatness in the role (Learning Tasks).

These elements, organized and worded according to the latest neuroscience of learning, become the foundation for coaching others to become great in their role.

Compelling Purpose

The first part of the process is to have the group clearly articulate its purpose by creating a concise purpose statement. Tips for writing a great purpose statement include

- Use power words.
- Keep the finished statement to about 250 characters.
- Use the words the participants use.
- Tell the real story.

After the teams have finished their statements, they present them to the whole group. Eventually, the facilitator will collect the key ideas and re-sort them into a concise and powerful statement. This Purpose statement is the foundation for all that follows.

Path to Mastery — The Big Steps

The Path to Mastery is made up of phases, or Big Steps, that present a clear, sequential overall approach to building

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attitudes, skills and capabilities. These Big Steps allow those being coached to focus their attention on manageable chunks without being overwhelmed.

This list of Big Steps provides a clear, high-level view of the milestones on the way to achieving the larger goals.

Keys to effective Big Steps include

- Include six Big Steps at most.
- Use first person statement such as “I am...”
- Focus on the state of what we want to be at the end of the step.

Principles are the stars’ articulation of what is supposed to change and why. Before others can follow the Big Steps, they need to understand these Principles, using the language of the culture. Once people understand the Principles, they can clearly see their path to greatness, understand why they are on it and fully embrace the Big Steps. ●

Transform for Brilliance

Company transformations also require the ability to see and realize potential. In Affirmative Leadership programs, several different people must have the vision and skill to transform the raw data from the Wisdom Discovery session into learning programs that produce great leaders.

This happens in stages. First, the facilitator and project manager convert the raw learning experiences from the Wisdom Discovery session into engaging learning tasks. Next the project manager works with management to prepare the measurement systems and tools that will track success. Finally, the facilitator transforms managers into great coaches by showing them how to teach others to embrace the star wisdom as their own.

Converting Raw Experiences into Effective Learning Tasks

Neuroscience has shown that the most effective way to learn and retain what you’ve learned is a result of short, frequent bursts of mental and physical repetitions of a key attitude, concept or behavior. Six to eight repetitions of the same idea, over a short period of time, create new neural circuits and new habits.

To create an effective Learning Task, the facilitator must 1) create Learning Tasks that will help develop the attitudes and behaviors described in the Principles, and 2) design six to eight mental and physical activities that teach or reinforce the desired attitude, concept or behavior for each Learning Task.

Training Coaches

People learn faster and expert content sticks better when they work together in a structured Learning Group led by a trained coach. The coach’s job is to guide the group to interact with the starts’ content and each other in ways that are consistent with the newest neuroscience of learning. Coaches drive alignment with the Purpose, application of the Principle, adaptation of the Learning Tasks, discussions about the application of the learning experiences and intense reflection about the learning.

Before anyone can develop into a great content coach, they must first understand and embrace the higher purpose of coaching others to greatness. The Leading Group Learning session gets the coaches to begin to embrace Fair Process as a basic value and a way of dealing with all people in their lives. When combined with the knowledge of how people think and learn, the results are predictable and positive. ●

Motivate the Rest to Be Like the Best

We know now that one of the best ways to motivate people to accept change is to present that change in ways that increase listeners’ dignity and honor. This mindset, focused on respect for the listeners rather than top-down authority, is known as Fair Process. Fair Process gathers input and makes decision-making visible. The leadership team would make sure everyone knew their suggestions would be compared with those of other groups and considered seriously. Fair process stresses participation and lots of communication.

Motivation 3.0

The first component of Motivation 3.0 is a sense of Purpose — the social good which gives work meaning. Purpose is what makes some people love to get up in the morning and meet the challenges of the day, converting a job into a vocation. The second component of Motivation 3.0 is Mastery. Many people resist striving for a greater Purpose because they don’t believe they are good enough and can’t see a path to achieving Mastery. People will work hard to achieve Mastery only when they have a compelling Purpose and believe they can achieve it. The third component of Motivation 3.0 is Autonomy. People like to have control over their work and their environment; they resent interference from others. Being in control is a powerful motivator.

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In sum, providing people with a great vision of a higher Purpose and showing them the path to become Masterful are key ingredients to creating an autonomous and responsible workforce.

The Neuroscience of Learning

The value of Fair Process and the new sciences of motivation significantly increase when combined with the latest neuroscience research on learning. It shows that positive imagery and written or verbal affirmations cause the release of the neurochemicals that increase openness to new ideas and learning speed.

Related studies have shown that putting positive images and affirmations in writing transfers neural resources from the portions of the brain associated with fear and resistance to the portions of the brain associated with a sense of control and empowerment.

The concepts and language of the stars' Purpose, Path to Master and Principles are the foundation for Motivation 3.0 and for using the neuroscience of leaning — all three become the basis for the positive images and affirmations and the intense motivation for all learners to become as good as the stars.

In the Launch Workshop, the facilitator and coaches will guide the Learning Groups to Read/Discuss/Praise/Anchor and thereby reflect on all the elements of the stars' wisdom. This amounts to

- **Read:** Focus on respected expert content that is positive and affirmative in nature.
- **Discuss:** Discuss that content with a group of peers in an open, accepting environment.
- **Praise:** Visualize themselves in those positive terms.
- **Anchor:** Write down their visions of greatness to make the vision real for them.

The use of Read/Discuss/Praise/Anchor may seem to be a simple group discussion of an objective statement, but it's actually a sophisticated methodology for developing intense motivation for performance improvements. By the end of the Launch Workshop, the learners have a very strong conceptual framework for their Purpose and know how they are going to achieve their Purpose and what Mastery means.

Principles: Defining Greatness in the First Big Step

Imagine how motivated you would be if you had the opportunity to spend quality time with the top people in your field. This is the sensation that learners have as they work on the Principles. Principles are the accumulated

wisdom of the stars, the things that the stars know that others need to know to be great in their roles.

By focusing on the Principles, the Affirmative Leadership Launch Workshop drives greater depth of understanding, commitment and motivation. Also, Learning Groups establish stronger interpersonal bonds during the discussion of the Principles, because they're discussing what the stars meant and how the principle applies to real situations.

By the end of the Principles review, most of the learners experience a startling physiological change. They look more pensive, as though they have already developed significantly greater self-awareness, changing from passive participants to highly motivated learners. ●

Own Your Own Learning

Self-directed learning is directly related to leadership. Because self-directed learners are more proactive and effective at defining and executing their own leadership development programs than passive learners, they are better at becoming great leaders and at dealing with the constantly changing, increasingly complex world. Self-directed learners become great leaders more quickly than passive learners, and great leaders are always self-directed learners.

Passive learning is particularly poor for leadership development, yet, most leadership training programs use a passive learning process. Among the most important aspects of being a leader are being proactive, energetic and taking responsibility for your own and the organization's growth. Passive learning designs and media teach leaders to be passive, just the opposite of the attitudes and behaviors shown by great leaders!

Becoming Self-directed Learners and Leaders

In order to become self-directed, potential leaders must experience what psychologists call an "unfreeze" that challenges them to re-examine their learning habits, opening them to the possibility of thinking and acting differently. Applying Fair Process to the learning process is a particularly powerful way to unfreeze people from passive learning and motivate the development of the new habits of self-directed learning.

The neuroscience of learning and mass customization is used to transition these now unfrozen learners to be full self-directed learners. The bigger picture perspective on all of this science is that self-directed learners and great leaders are thoughtful, frequently reflecting on what they are doing and why they are doing it.

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Humans are at their best when they are deeply motivated to achieve something greater than themselves. When people have this motivation, they work incredibly hard to become great at what they do. Great leaders are motivated this way and inspire others to have similar feelings. The Launch Workshop is a powerful step toward something of great value for any organization: a culture where everyone is a self-directed learner and a great Affirmation Leader. ●

Learning to Lead

When people take control of their own learning and consciously practice emulating the stars, their goals, reactions and behaviors change. The leader that is inside each person emerges.

Working on Each Big Step

The group repeats the Do-Discuss-Anchor for each set of tasks in each Big Step. Each task builds on the previous task within a Big Step, reinforcing the earlier learning while becoming progressively more demanding and sophisticated as the sequence builds more leadership attitudes and skills.

Each incremental Learning Task and Big Step expands and reinforces the earlier learning, driving deeper internalization. The coaches play an important role in managing this developmental sequence. At the end of each big step, the coaches review their group's recorded learning and determine if the learner is ready to advance to the next step.

Keeping the Momentum Going

Neural conflict between established old habits and developing new ones becomes an outright barrier to progress after about six to eight weeks of the program. New habits are not yet established, and old ones are still there.

The Midpoint Checkpoint meeting is designed to address the neural barrier and has three objectives:

1. Boost commitment by the learners and the coaches to the program.
2. Quickly identify and adjust to any issues that emerge from the session.
3. Introduce the next level of self-directed learning, called "meta-learnings."

The first part of the Midpoint Checkpoint is a discussion of the Learning Group's progress to date. The Midpoint Checkpoint closes with a discussion about the meta-learnings and how they can make the difference between great and mediocre leadership. ●

Distribute Globally, Act Locally

Scaling has two elements: easy, inexpensive delivery to large numbers of people and significant impact. Most organizations are so intimidated by the costs of large-scale programs that they focus attention primarily on the cost aspects of a program and less on achieving the desired impact.

Persuasive technology makes using Web meetings considerably easier and more effective. By using persuasive technology as part of the Web meeting, learners absorb the content more quickly and internalize it more completely with less effort and expertise from the facilitator. The combination of Web and persuasive technology increases the effectiveness of the learning while decreasing the cost.

Basic Scaling Infrastructure

When companies use direct managers as the coaches, the process tends to be the most cost effective. In Affirmative Leadership, these managers are taught to become coaches with skills that include co-facilitating the Launch Workshops and monitoring progress.

An entire Affirmative Leadership program can be done over the Web, reducing travel costs. The coaches and learners still get personal interaction with other learners, especially if there are video feeds.

The persuasive technology plays an important role in ensuring the impact and lowering the cost of training the trainers and ultimately in developing great Affirmative Leaders. They quickly learn to be great Affirmative Leader trainers and become models for their students.

Extraordinary Scaling

Once the coaches are fully motivated and trained to lead their Learning Groups, the costs of scaling decrease sharply without any decrease in its impact. As soon as the infrastructure is in place, all an organization really needs to do is conduct the Discovery Workshops and put the results into the coaching system. From that point on, the system takes over, and anything can be completely and quickly implemented.

Any new initiative or program can go from Discovery to globally scaled in less than two weeks, with minimal expense. The Affirmative Leadership infrastructure enables organizations to achieve the long-desired goal of scaling; extremely effective, fast and inexpensive Affirmative Leadership for anyone, anywhere, even if there are thousands of potential leaders. ●

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Experience a Real-World Executive Program

This section is a detailed real world example of how Comptech developed leaders and changed its culture. We chose Comptech because its experience is typical of what many companies experience when facing significant market changes that demand better leadership. The Comptech example shows how executives can and will be active participants in their own development if a program's content and the process are consistent with the participants' self-images as executives.

When tablet computing drastically cut into Comptech's dominance of the server, desktop and laptop computer market, its executives needed to do something fast. Comptech needed a leadership development program that would quickly grow a large group of new leaders who could lead the transformation to tablets.

Wisdom Discovery Workshop

The content of a leadership development program had to come from internal sources and reflect Comptech's unique situation to be acceptable to the participants. After the group agreed on their Purpose statement, it dove into creating their path to mastery (the Big Steps), the major capabilities a transformational leader needs to develop.

As the stars reviewed the Big Steps, a consensus emerged that they would be equally useful to any Comptech executive anywhere and should be used to develop every executive and potential executive in Comptech. The stars' enthusiasm for the best practices and willingness to be coaches were indicative of their strong engagement with and commitment to Affirmative Leadership.

Launch Workshop

During the Launch Workshop phase of the process, the participants were paired up to discuss greatness in leadership at Comptech, using the Purpose statement that had been drafted. With the coach's leadership, the entire Learning Group discussed greatness. The candidates appeared to be thrilled by the opportunity to discuss their ideas about greatness in Comptech leadership with peers and record their perspectives. They said this was the first time they'd been asked to explicitly think about the meaning of greatness in their roles, and they appreciated the insights they got from each other.

The Learning Group realized that being able to tell a compelling story would improve their abilities to articulate their Purpose. The group was asked to identify

two people outside of Comptech who are great at telling a compelling story and why. They liked the idea of using something outside of their business as an example but also thought they needed something related directly to Comptech — so they modified the assignment. By this time, coaches and group participants were completely engaged. The Comptech candidates were self-directed learners and were becoming Affirmative Leaders. ●

Unleash the Suppressed Energy of Frontline Managers

Organizations are increasingly aware of the importance of the Frontline Manager (FLM) as the glue that connects the work of an organization to its strategy. FLM leadership programs, developed and implemented using the Affirmative Leadership model, convert highly transactional managers into great transformational leaders without sacrificing operational excellence.

Wisdom Discovery

Wisdom Discovery for FLM Affirmative Leadership programs has some particular challenges. First, it is often more difficult to identify FLM stars than senior managers or executives. There is greater resistance to giving those who are identified the time to participate, and FLMs tend to be less articulate about their roles than people higher on the organizational chain, thus requiring additional probing by the facilitator.

On the other hand, once a group of star FLMs breaks through to talking openly about how they really think and what they actually do to make difficult situations consistently successful, there is a release of energy that is quite astounding to them and to others, including their bosses.

An FLM who was good at his craft but not at leading a team or working with other departments couldn't model team leadership or interdepartmental cooperation and integration. At both DigiAd and LocalPower, the FLMs were very nervous about participating in a workshop in which they'd have to talk a lot. Few of the LocalPower FLMs were used to speaking in public. There was considerable concern about the possible demands of the Wisdom Discovery Workshop.

While the STLs at DigiAd had all come from sales and were more verbal, they also indicated that three days of intellectual discussion was a sharp departure from their norm. But when the facilitator asked, "Why do you love your work?" the floodgates opened and all resistance fell

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away. Talking about why they loved their work was both tangible and exciting.

Launch Workshop and Guided Practicum

While there was some concern about the willingness of the FLMs to openly discuss crucial management issues, the Launch Workshops generally went smoothly, even though they involved people from several remote locations. Overall, the launch and follow-through for Big Steps 1, 2 and 3 went as expected.

Perhaps the most important indicator of the effectiveness of the program was that most of the learning groups in both companies asked to continue meeting indefinitely. The groups had formed such a strong and useful bond, and valued the process so much, that they wanted to continue it, even though the Affirmative Leadership programs were officially over.

These examples of Affirmative Leadership programs for FLMs illustrate the importance of the FLM's role and the opportunity organizations have to add capabilities. ●

Drive Cultural Change With Individual Contributor Grassroots Leadership

Individual contributors (ICs) embody an organization's culture. ICs are generally not thought of as leaders because they do not sit high on the organizational chart. However, their in-depth experience with the real work of an organization gives them the insight and opportunity to identify and lead significant innovations.

DigiAd

DigiAd was a seller of yellow-page advertising space that was transitioning to offering integrated print and digital advertising solutions. The DigiAd executive team recognized that their sales and service people needed to adopt completely new attitudes and behaviors as well.

Identifying the stars for DigiAd's programs was relatively straightforward. The stars were highly respected sales and customer service representatives who had demonstrated a passion for the customer centricity program and at least some success either selling to or servicing the more complex digital solutions.

As the DigiAd exemplars worked on defining their Purpose statement, there were excellent discussions about the importance of passionate commitment to customer centricity, in-depth knowledge of the digital offerings and the skills of closing sales or resolving customers' issues.

There is a point in all IC programs when learners convert from being tactical, transitional ICs to becoming Affirmative Leaders. For most of the DigiAd salespeople, this transformational moment came during the fourth Big Step, "Relationship Building."

Results

The measurable results support the impact of IC Affirmative Leadership on the productivity and culture of the organization. The DigiAd Sales Representative certification program reported that 98 percent of the sales reps displayed the desired customer-centric attitudes and behaviors. This translated into a doubling of the sales of digital products. By the end of the Affirmative Leadership program, the DigiAd executives knew that 100 percent of their salespeople had the same attitudes and behaviors as their top performers. ●

Living in a Culture of Greatness

Leadership is ultimately about producing results, and these are just some of the many examples of how Affirmative Leadership changed organizations. Respect and Fair Process pervade everything in the program. Similarly, Purpose, Mastery and reflective learning are overtly and covertly everywhere. All three are explicitly used in the Wisdom Discovery, Leading Group Learning coach training, and Launch Workshops. In hundreds of small ways, Affirmative Leadership subtly creates a culture of greatness.

Affirmative Leadership programs immerse participants in a new way of learning and leading that gradually, seamlessly and very naturally becomes a new way of being. We say the Affirmative Leadership approach efficiently, and with surprisingly little effort from participants, creates a culture in which every person aspires to and achieves greatness. Everyone becomes as good as the very best. ●

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