

Praise for *The Multiplier Effect*

"Finally a real book for leaders to read, digest, and actually use. I cannot wait to use the specific exercises to promote the Multiplier Effect!"

**Molly Broderson, Elementary School Principal,
Hayes, Virginia**

"This provocative book is a must for school leaders. It provides clarity and insight into leadership and provides a framework to deliver strategy, improve working relationships, and boost individual leader's capacity and capability. It is packed with real-world techniques for engaging people at all levels. This is a timely contribution to the leadership debate when schools everywhere are facing the challenge of change."

Dame Pat Collarbone, Director, Creating Tomorrow

"The Multiplier concept is a powerful tool to develop and improve leaders both in business and across education, where we hear more about failure than we do about success. If educational leaders at every level read this book, we would hear more stories of successful educational outcomes. This book belongs on the reading list of anyone wanting to become the kind of leader that makes people and organizations better."

**Dean Gary Cornia, Marriott School of Management,
Brigham Young University**

"Educators are constantly looking for ways to do more with less. This book provides actionable steps that allow leaders to multiply the talents of their teachers while also fostering an exhilarating experience for staff and students alike."

**Kendra Hanzlik, Elementary School Teacher-Strategist,
Cedar Rapids, Indiana**

"Dripping in rich storytelling and anecdotes, this book explores why our society, schools, and companies desperately need to embrace the power of Multipliers in order to unleash talent, allow others agency, and fully utilize dormant intelligence. If you are looking to learn new leadership techniques, take advantage of your potential, and understand how to add value to your life and work, *The Multiplier Effect* is for you."

**Nikhil Goyal, Author of *One Size Does Not Fit All* and
*Forbes 30 under 30***

"Do not lead or attempt to lead without reading this! It will open your eyes and change you."

Matthew Henry, CIO, LeTourneau University

"An educator's role, by definition, is multiplying genius and developing future leaders. This book is an instructional manual for educational leaders who want to ignite the genius in their schools. The authors offer a thought-provoking yet simple framework full of stories and clear principles that can be put to use immediately in an educational setting."

**Prasad Kaipa, Executive Director Emeritus,
Center for Leadership, Innovation and Change,
Indian School of Business, and co-author of *Smart to Wise***

"In our hierarchical world of academic medicine, moving to the Multiplier model of leadership could be the game changer."

**Darrell Kirch, M.D., President and CEO,
Association of American Medical Colleges**

"*The Multiplier Effect* provides the secret sauce for what makes great teachers and leaders in education. Chock full of engaging stories, extensive research, and insightful 'experiments,' this is a must-read for anybody who cares about the future of society. Creating a Multiplier Effect in the education industry would be transformative."

**Michael Moe, Founder and CEO of GSV Asset Management,
Author of *Finding the Next Starbucks* and *America Revolution 2.0:
How Education Innovation is Going to Revitalize America and
Transform the U.S. Economy***

"The mindsets and practices of the Multiplier and the Accidental Diminisher translate readily to our education system. Educators are in the Multiplier business—whether you are a superintendent, principal, board member, teacher, parent, or student, you will find this book to be a compelling read and a toolkit for school and districtwide implementation. I hope this book starts many Multiplier experiments."

Julie Wilson, Founder, Institute for the Future of Learning

THE multiplier - EFFECT

TAPPING THE GENIUS INSIDE OUR SCHOOLS

LIZ WISEMAN | LOIS ALLEN | ELISE FOSTER

Foreword by **CLAYTON CHRISTENSEN**





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Foreword

Shortly after *The Innovator's Dilemma* was published in 1997, I spent some time with Andy Grove, the CEO of Intel. At the time, Cyrix and AMD were disrupting Intel with their low-cost microprocessors. As Grove quickly grasped the theories of disruptive innovation, he saw the threat materializing and understood what Intel would have to do to survive.

I was interested though that Grove didn't come out to the company and announce from on high a strategy for Intel. Instead he established an educational seminar during which Intel's top 2,000 managers—not a small undertaking—studied the disruption model. As a result, Intel launched its Celeron chip at the bottom of its market—a disruptive strategy that was counter-intuitive to the common logic of how to make money at Intel. It was also very successful in fending off the would-be disruptors. Reflecting back on that history, Grove later told me, “The disruption model didn't give us any answers. But it gave us a common language and a common way to frame the problem so that we could reach consensus around a counterintuitive course of action.”

People often wonder that if disruption is going to occur, then does leadership matter? Indeed, the answer is that when disruption is afoot, nothing could be more important for an organization than its leadership.

Currently disruption is coming to education in the form of online learning—and with it an historic opportunity to remake our schools from their factory-model roots into student-centric organizations that allow each child to realize her fullest human potential. As this disruption takes root and grows, leadership in shaping it in our schools will matter enormously.

In *The Multiplier Effect*, authors Liz Wiseman, Lois Allen and Elise Foster make a compelling case for a new, provocative approach to leadership in education. They ask the question, “Do the smartest leaders create the smartest organizations or do the seemingly smartest leaders

have a diminishing effect on the intelligence of others?" They offer a model of leadership that recognizes that the critical leadership skill is not personal knowledge but the ability to tap into the knowledge of others. They reject the notion that a heroic leader, a lone innovator, or a single brain at the head of a school can solve our most complex problems. They explain why it takes more than just a genius to lead a school.

Successful leaders like Grove seem in many situations to understand how to harness the power of the people around them innately. In Grove's case, through allowing his managers to learn and grow, together they were able to steer Intel forward and innovate successfully.

That's the promise of Multipliers. They can help make an entire organization smarter and more effective. Amplifying the intelligence of the educators in a school—to embolden them by placing them in teams with the autonomy to solve problems with new processes—is critical as our schools are tasked with solving challenges for which they were not built.

Too often leaders grow frustrated with the ideas for innovation that reach their desk. They shout back at people in their organization for more innovative ideas, but what they don't see is that the problem is not with the people generating the ideas, but with the processes and priorities that exist within every single organization that morph and shape every idea to fit the capabilities of the organization instead of the original problem they were intended to solve. As a result of these processes and priorities, what comes out of the innovation funnel is me-too idea after me-too idea.

What this means is that if school leaders are to preside over schools and districts that continually innovate, then they need to shape actively these processes and priorities so they can leverage and unleash—not stifle—the strengths of their fellow educators.

The Multiplier Effect reminds us that we need to do more than innovate our classrooms. Based on three years of research and a study of over 400 educational leaders, it shows us how we need to rethink the model of leadership that will sustain innovation and deliver a more powerful and productive learning system. We need managers who go beyond just planning and executing; we need leaders who have a plan for their staff to learn and discover.

Ultimately we are all educators and learners. It shouldn't be so surprising that those schools and districts that remember and prize that might also have dramatic student successes to show for it. You *can* reinvent your school and create a multiplying culture. Remembering why we entered the profession of education in the first place and multiplying the leadership around us is a great place to start.

Clayton M. Christensen

Introduction

I've always been a genius watcher, fascinated by the intelligence of others. When I began my career at Oracle Corporation, I landed in a rich stew of brilliant and interesting people. I was happy to rub shoulders with my new colleagues, hoping something would wear off on me; after all, I was voted class clown of my high school.

During my 17-year career at Oracle (where I got thrown into management at 24 years old and found myself running the corporate university), I worked closely with the senior executives, all of whom were brilliant. I saw how some leaders literally shut down brainpower in people around them, yet other leaders seemed to amplify the intelligence around them. I wondered why these smart leaders couldn't look beyond their own capacity to see and use the full capability on their teams. I could see there was more intelligence inside the organization than we were using. I suspected that there were smart, underutilized people across organizations everywhere.

I also had the honor of working with brilliant guest faculty, like CK Prahalad, the renowned strategy professor from the University of Michigan. While CK taught and consulted with Oracle, I became his student, soaking up everything I could learn from him. Years after I had been CK's client and student, I was visiting the Prahalad home. Gayatri, CK's wife, pulled me aside and whispered, "CK would never tell you this himself, so I will. CK told me that you might be the best student he has had. He thinks you are really smart." Inside I was laughing and wondering how this was possible, thinking, "Surely CK has had a thousand students who are a lot smarter than me." But then it hit me. I was smart *around* CK. When I worked with him, I felt brilliant. He made me think deeply. He made me question things and challenge assumptions. His intelligence provoked mine.

I left the Prahalad home that day thinking about what Gayatri had shared with me. I wondered why I was so smart around CK. Gayatri's

gift helped me better see what I had observed for years at Oracle—that some people make us smarter. I began to wonder, “Why are we smart and capable around some people but not around others?” It is the question that spawned 2 years of research and the book *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*.

The book struck a chord with managers across the business world, from the technology firms of Silicon Valley to financial institutions in the United Arab Emirates, and diverse industries in between, such as healthcare, consumer goods, the military, and education. As I have been teaching these ideas to leaders around the world, I’ve seen managers embrace the idea that they can get more capability from their people while also offering their employees an exhilarating work experience. As I’ve crisscrossed these diverse settings, I’ve noticed that the principles have their deepest resonance with organizations that face a confluence of conditions:

1. They are experiencing the challenges and opportunities resulting from growing demands.
2. They face resource shortages.
3. They understand that innovation is a critical strategy to meet growing demands.
4. They recognize, or merely suspect, that the old models of leadership are no longer sufficient.

Meanwhile, the *Multipliers* book website was receiving numerous comments and inquiries from schools across the United States (and beyond). It was clear that the book’s ideas resonated with as many educational leaders as business leaders. We wondered if perhaps the greatest use of these ideas would be in our education system. Surely even a casual observer of global affairs can see that freedom and prosperity hinge on economic abundance and that a vibrant economy is dependent on a strong, efficacious educational system. As a mother of four children in public schools, I know that the stakes are high both for us collectively as well as for each child. So when Arnis Burvikovs from Corwin asked if I would write a version of *Multipliers* for educational leaders, I put my business research priorities aside and assembled a team to send *Multipliers* “straight to the principal’s office.”

I turned first to the educator and educational leader I admired most, Lois Allen. Lois is a former special education classroom teacher, who spent 16 years teaching the most challenging children to read and use that skill to gain knowledge. She was fascinated by the question: *How do children learn?* After encountering Roberta, a seemingly

magical principal, Lois's question changed: *How do great administrators lead?* Spurred by Roberta's belief that Lois had "principal written all over her," Lois became an assistant principal, an elementary and middle school principal, and a manager of special education. Lois is also my mother. I have grown up seeing her total devotion to educating children and her devotion to leadership. In the development of this book, Lois's role was to ground our work in the realities of educators and to lead the research.

We next tapped Elise Foster, a leadership coach who teaches Multiplier leadership and who brings an analytic approach to teaching and coaching (owing in part to her background as an engineer). Elise studied leadership at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, receiving her master's in education there, and she brings a hopeful, innovative view of the future of education. As a mother of a school-age child, she's passionate about education and wants to see our education system capitalize on children's natural intellectual curiosity and not simply reduce their inquiries to multiple-choice questions. Elise, who is smart, diligent, and witty, leads our efforts to help leaders learn to become Multipliers.

The three of us are united in the goal of building Multiplier leadership across our education system. We hope to see Multipliers in staff rooms, in classrooms, in the principal's office, and most certainly in the superintendent's office. We can't provide answers to education's most vexing problems, but we offer a model of leadership to address them. We offer you the data and stories that emerged from our research. We offer you questions to help you ponder the type of leadership needed to build strong schools and smart students. We suspect, as much of the current research suggests, that great teachers make the difference. But perhaps it takes more than leaders who hire great teachers; it also takes leaders who inspire and engage teachers' abilities to their fullest.

Unlocking individual potential is not just a matter of personal will. And it is not just a matter of individual leaders, even if those leaders are Multipliers. It is a function of entire systems. This is why we need educational institutions that are Multiplier environments.

Join Lois, Elise, and me on a journey as we investigate a fundamental question: *What becomes possible when our schools and universities are led by Multipliers?* Join the exploration and discover how to unleash brilliance all around you . . . with your administrative team, with your staff, with your students, across your entire school. Then, watch the Multiplier effect grow across your entire district.

Liz Wiseman
Menlo Park, California
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*To J. Bonner Richie, Dr. Margaret Naeser, Robert
Kegan, and all the other educators who have taught,
inspired, led, and shaped our lives.*

About the Authors



Liz Wiseman teaches leadership to executives around the world. She is the president of The Wiseman Group, a leadership research and development center headquartered in Silicon Valley, California. She is the author of the bestselling book *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*. She has conducted significant research in the field of leadership, collective intelligence, and talent management and writes for the *Harvard Business Review* and a variety of other leadership journals. She is the former vice president of Oracle University. Liz holds a master's in organizational behavior and a bachelor's in business management from Brigham Young University. She is a frequent guest lecturer at BYU, Harvard, the Naval Academy, the Naval Postgraduate School, Stanford, and Yale. She is the mother of four school-age children.



Lois Allen has 30 years of experience in public education. She is a former teacher, special education manager, assistant principal, principal (elementary and middle school), and lecturer at San Jose State University. She holds bachelor's with great distinction in speech pathology and audiology and a master's in special education, both from San Jose State University. She holds California credentials as a speech and language pathologist, a special education classroom teacher, and a school administrator as well as a Certificate of Clinical Competency from the American Speech and Hearing Association. In addition to her role as the mother of four children and grandmother of thirteen, she is an avid gardener and a community and church volunteer.



Elise Foster is a leadership coach who enables education and business executives to unlock their potential to become even more successful. She has conducted significant research in the field of leadership within education systems. As the Education Practice Lead for the Wiseman Group in Silicon Valley, Elise guides senior leaders on using their intelligence to make everyone around them smarter and more capable. She has taught and coached students at Indiana University (Kelley School of Business) and as a management fellow at Harvard University. She holds a bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering from Virginia Tech and a master's in education from Harvard University. She is the mother of one school-aged daughter, and she also enjoys finding the genius in local high school students through her work with the Lilly Foundation Scholarship and Youth Leadership Bartholomew County.

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This brings us the many Multipliers themselves we studied who inspired both our work and our personal leadership practice. You can check them out in Appendix C. Their professional contributions are compelling and motivating.

Next, there is a group of colleagues who stepped up and took one of the Multiplier Experiments, thus giving us further evidence of the Multiplier Effect. Kudos to Alahrie Aziz-Sims, Van Bowers, Alyssa Gallagher and the Los Altos School District staff, Shekhar Hardikar, Francois Laurent, Cherie Novak, Alice Parenti, Robert Thorn, Jim Vangerud, and Mario Waissbluth for finding time to take on another challenge in an already jam-packed challenging profession.

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Together we've enjoyed a rich learning experience studying these leaders and learning from each other as we've dissected, debated, and voiced these concepts. We hope you find a rich learning experience of your own as you and your colleagues explore, debate, and expand on the ideas in this book and unleash genius across your school.

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