



Book Summary | The 6 Types of Working Genius | August 2023

Introduction

We are in the middle of a major transformation, and it's inspiring to look back at how we have evolved since the Step-Change era began. **Our Vision is bold as it entails transforming Barry-Wehmler into a \$5B organization that is known around the world for its culture of care, recognition and growth; outstanding people, service and relationships; market-leading innovation, disciplined and strategic acquisitions, and best-in-class financial performance.**

During the Step-Change era, we have grown revenue 56% (\$2.3B in FY16 to \$3.6B in FY23F) and EBITDA 118% (\$164M in FY16 to \$357M in FY23F). More importantly, we have achieved this growth while becoming a more vibrant organization...investing at record levels, establishing the strongest talent base in our history, remaining anchored in our Strategic Plan, and living our People & Performance in Harmony ethos on a daily basis. To borrow a phrase from BW Papersystems, everything we have done has made us more "Fit for the Future."

Retrospective on Prior Book Selections

These changes have occurred during a period of constant external disruption. Thriving in this uncertainty has required the qualities discussed in last year's book, *Great by Choice*. This included building the capabilities needed to achieve "10x leadership" (Fanatic Discipline, Empirical Creativity, Productive Paranoia, Level 5 Ambition), the discipline needed to define and succeed in our long-term vision (our "20 Mile March"), and the thoughtfulness to incorporate research and testing to ensure we are not making uncalibrated bets ("bullets before cannonballs").

That book selection continued a trend we established with our first three books, which focused on looking at how leading organizations have successfully established strategies that enabled short- and long-term success:

- *Strategy that Works* (FY19): Defined ideas about how to start taking our **developed strategies and connecting the organization to them** – and how many top performing companies have a **'way to play' that leverage their distinctive capabilities to drive results.**
- *Execution* (FY20): Emphasized **how three processes – strategy, people, and operations – all need to be focused on daily, led by the right people, and intensely followed up on to ensure that execution is occurring.** These three processes are not to be delegated with the hopes they work – but instead require leaning-in by the most senior leaders to reinforce the importance of them.
- *Winning Now, Winning Later* (FY21): Articulated how we as leaders must engage more deeply – not micromanaging – but with intellectual curiosity and rigor to **make sure we are winning both in the short-term – achieving our commitments – and planting seeds for the long-term – progressing towards our Step-Change Strategic Plan targets.**

Rationale for Selecting this Year's Book

We all should take **tremendous pride in the progress made on our Step-Change journey;** we also need to recognize that it's been extremely hard work. We are **building the muscles needed to enable organic growth** through market-driven innovations, and although it remains an all-encompassing transformation, I am excited about the progress made and the accomplishments anticipated in FY24 and FY25. **We are on the right path, and I am grateful for how you, and your teams, have embraced the hard work needed to transform BW.**

As we look towards FY24, we all need to be aligned around a clear focus: **unlocking the value of past investments while continuing to invest in our Strategic Plan.** We have invested significantly over the past few years, and it is **important**

that we let recently completed projects “breathe” so they can achieve their potential, while also keeping our foot on the gas to meet our growth targets.

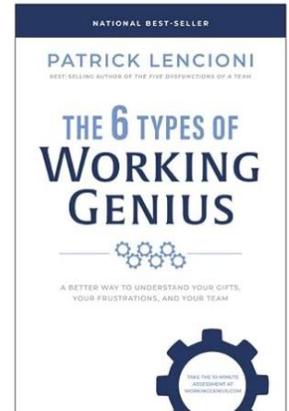
I believe a critical component in making this goal a reality is in the support we provide to our team members and leaders – equipping them with the tools to be successful in their roles and leave work fulfilled. **This is why I am so excited about the Leadership and Team Member Commitments that our People Team has launched**, a topic you’ve already heard a lot about, and one that you will continue to hear about in the future.



In addition to clearly setting the expectations for what it means to be a Barry-Wehmiller Leader or Team Member, **our leaders must also think critically about how they can set up their teams for success.** This requires a deep understanding of how you, as a leader, can best enhance our ability to be successful by maximizing each team member’s unique gifts and personality traits.

It was with this mindset that I began reading *The 6 Types of Working Genius*, a recommendation I received from one of our senior Platform leaders. The book uses an easy-to-read, fictional storytelling approach to introduce the concept of Working Geniuses, a productivity framework that leaders can use to **“quickly understand [their & their team’s] unique talents...within the context of a new model for how any type of work gets done”** (pg. 2). This is a ‘way of working’ that complements prior personality tests, such as DISC, with a direct approach that helps teams feel more fulfilled and be more productive...**sounds perfectly aligned with our vision of People & Performance in Harmony!**

I will highlight that this is a very different type of book than the last few years, but it is a perfect fit for where we are in our journey, and directly connects with the feedback we heard from the 6,700+ team members who completed our Every Voice Matters survey. **This is the most actionable book we have read, and one that needs to be quickly put to work by all our leaders!**



Book Summary

The book defines 6 unique types of Working Geniuses (think of “geniuses” as a similar concept to strengths, **with the added element of highlighting what people enjoy doing, not just what they are good at doing**) and outlines how most people have **two Geniuses** (“activities that give joy, energy, and passion,” pg. 183), **two Competencies** (“activities that [are] neither completely miserable or completely joyful,” pg. 183), and **two Frustrations** (“work that drains joy and energy, pg. 184).



By understanding you and your teams' genius, you can help people be "more fulfilled and successful," avoid being in roles that force "them to live within their frustrations" (pgs. 1, 219), and increase our likelihood of success.

The Working Geniuses are¹:

- **Wonder:** Pondering the possibility of greater potential and opportunity in each situation.
- **Invention:** Creating original and novel ideas and solutions.
- **Discernment:** Intuitively and instinctively evaluating ideas and situations.
- **Galvanizing:** Rallying, inspiring and organizing others to take action.
- **Enablement:** Providing encouragement and assistance for an idea or project.
- **Tenacity:** Pushing projects or tasks to completion to achieve results.

Key Reflections

When I reflect on areas/projects that have been shining examples of success, **they are often driven by teams that were put together with the right mix of people, in the right roles, at the right times.** This means not trying to take someone whose strength is in brainstorming and idea generation (the geniuses of "Wonder" and "Invention") and putting them into an execution-focused role (the genius of "Tenacity"). **This also means being receptive to adjusting teams as needs evolve (e.g., ideation vs. execution).**

Alternatively, when I think about where we have not met our commitments, both to our people and to the organization, it is far too often because people are playing out of position. This could have been due to necessity – because we didn't have skillsets we needed – or due to not having the right understanding of how to best design our teams for success. With the great talent in the organization today, we should have far fewer times people need to play out of position!

When I took the Working Genius assessment (available here: www.workinggenius.com) I found my biggest "Geniuses" were in Discernment and Galvanizing and my "Frustrations" were in Wonder and Tenacity. That means I need to surround myself with people who bring new – sometimes a little crazy – ideas and strong executors who have the discipline to drive a project through the finish line. These are some of the reasons I'm so grateful for our team working on ERP implementation, because that's going to take more Tenacity than anything we've done in BW's history!

Looking Forward

As you should know by now, we are a very different company than we were just 5 years ago, with more intentional organic growth, a deeper commitment to innovation, a better ability to leverage our scale, and a more broad-based approach to living our culture. We are **well on our way towards transforming** into a **VIBRANT** organization that is more market-driven and innovation-focused. This transformation is showing **positive returns and we are bullish on driving success through future investments in our people and business.** Now is the time to raise our collective games but we will only make real gains when YOU – our team members – lean into your roles, provide improvement ideas, build new skills, and drive change.

With the journey ahead of us, we must constantly think about how we design our teams, bring in new talent, and organize teams to increase the likelihood of success and deliver a more meaningful and fulfilling professional experience for our team members. **I hope this book provides you with concepts that you can apply to this effort.**

We cannot lose sight into why we are doing this – **to Build a Better World and be an example companies use to see that People and Performance can live in Harmony. I am grateful for you sharing the gifts of your talent and time. It is a privilege to lead Barry-Wehmiller and partner with you on this amazing opportunity ahead of us.**

¹ Definitions provided on the book's website: <https://www.workinggenius.com/>



Questions for Reflection:

As you read this year's book, please reflect on the questions below and think about how this productivity framework can benefit you and your teams:

- What are your "Geniuses" and "Frustrations" – and how do these impact where you succeed and struggle?
- What are the "Geniuses" and "Frustrations" of your teams – and how do these impact where your team succeeds and struggles?
- When looking through the Working Genius lens, are there projects that you think were successful because we had people focused on their Working Genius areas?
- When looking through the Working Genius lens, are there projects that you think were un-successful because we did not have people focused on their Working Genius areas?