

Cracking the Leadership Code



Using the Task Quotient Assessment

By Dr. Kevin Gazzara - Senior Partner at Magna Leadership Solutions

Crack the Leadership Code – Using the Task Quotient Assessment

This is a transcript of the 30-minute webinar I delivered in the Crack the Leadership Code webinar series hosted by Dr. Michelle Pizer. I have added some additional links and FREE resources in this written document. I hope you find all of this information valuable to help you build your organization.

If you'd rather listen to this webinar, click here:

https://magnaleader.co/TQ_Webinar

Enjoy ,
Dr. Kevin Gazzara
Senior Partner - Magna Leadership Solutions

Introduction

Michelle: Hello, I am Michelle Pizer, and welcome to the third season of Crack the Leadership Code. You will be learning how to lead with confidence, make a difference and build a corporate career that you love and I am your host. I created this Summit because I am passionate about leadership and creating workplaces that are nicer places to be.

Studies show time and time again that leadership makes a real difference. And the best is when you are confident in your leadership and know that you are making a difference, and you can't help but be on your way to building a career that you love. To help you improve your leadership, I am interviewing incredible people like Doctor Kevin Gazzara who is our guest today. I am excited to bring Kevin on, but before I do let me introduce him by reading his bio.

For the last 20 years Doctor Gazzara has provided useful tools to organization to make work fun and engaging. Kevin is currently a senior partner at Magna Leadership Solutions, and the co-author of the book The Leader of OZ. He's a world-renowned speaker and executive coach for many Fortune 100 companies.

Kevin: I am delighted to be here Michelle. Thanks for the opportunity I appreciate it.

Something You Don't Know About Me

Michelle: My pleasure. And before we talked about how you crack the leadership code. Can you tell us something that you love about your own career?

Kevin: Well I have always kind of had this talent to help people, and I like to simplify complex topics - people see perspectives and truly give them different way to think on their own, I mean I've kind of adopted to what I would look at as my father's philosophy. And his quote was, "It's always the Good Samaritan's Business" and that is if I can help to influence and create the next generation of corporate leaders, then I'm feeling like I am contributing and that really would continue my dad's legacy.

Michelle: I love that, and I have never heard that expression before, so it's always the Good Samaritan's business.

Kevin: It's all about helping others and giving back.

Cracking the Leadership Code

Michelle: So what is your take on how to Crack the Leadership Code?

A leadership professor at 5 Universities, and he's many guest lecturers at Stanford and UC Irvine. Kevin spent 18 years of Intel Corporation in product management and was the designer and owner of Intel's first line of mid-level management development programs that taught other 40000 managers. So Kevin I want to welcome you to our interview today and thanks so much for being here.

Crack the Leadership Code – Using the Task Quotient Assessment

Kevin: Well I like to use analogies, and what I would say is that leadership is like what Dorothy experienced in The Wizard of Oz in that movie. You've always known how to get back home and you just need the right tools experience and confidence to help you get there, and most times the tools are right in our own backyard. So, my answer as to how to Crack the Leadership Code..... is stop looking to others and get the tools to help build your own confidence and get the best results.

So today what I would like to do is to give you the kind of tools, and to all of the participant that listen to the end of this session they will get free access to my 5-Minute Leadership Tool that will help them get their job back to a home that they love to be. And just like Dorothy did when she tapped her slippers together three times to take her back to Kansas. So today I am going to talk about leadership from a completely different angle, that I will guarantee none of your other speakers are going to provide this perspective.

The 5-Minute Leadership Tool

Michelle: I am getting excited. So you mentioned this five-minute leadership tool, can you tell us about it and what it is and how it has developed and all of that kind of stuff?

Kevin: Sure, I would be glad to, you know the 5-Minute Leadership Tool as I'm calling, here for this webinar, it's something that I had to develop when I was completing my doctorate in organizational leadership. My doctoral research and dissertation that I started back in 2000, identified how to statistically prove motivation and FLOW.

I wanted to find out how did you do this, and ever since my undergraduate work which was in engineering, I have always been highly analytically curious and a problem solver. And fortunately, in 1989 I had the chance to go to work for a small computer chip company Intel, it was the chip industry leader and I got a chance to work there for 18 years.

But when I was working there I was always perplexed with the teams that I was working on. And they were all doing very similar work and certain people loved their jobs, and other people hated it. When I did my doctoral research, I noticed there were patterns for each of the teams, and the patterns were not so much about the different task that they did but it was more about the mixture of task that they were doing.

Task Types

Now there is some very good research that we're done by a guy named William Daniels in his book Breakthrough Performance, that segregate work that we all do and into the three task types. And the mixture of the three task types is what I did my research on. I wanted to see was there a relationship between the mixture task that we get that would change our productivity and motivation while we are being in the zone. And what I would love to do right now is if you would just let me quickly describe the three task types for the listeners so that they have an idea of what the heck I am talking about. Is that alright?

Michelle: Yes, go ahead.

1) Routine Tasks

Kevin: Okay here they are. First there are what we call Routine Task and this is work that is anticipated and has an immediate need to be accomplished in the moment, or within a very short period of time. These are tasks that we want to do which are more methodical and, such as responding to emails I am sure a lot of the listeners do that. Entering data or even assembling something that usually can't be worked on until it arrives, but of course when you must do it, it really can't be delayed. And these routine tasks are usually more tactical and short-term focus. And the good news is that research shows us this according to the tool, that you are going to see or get at the end of the presentation.

It is that the research shows us that most of us will prefer to do these routine tasks only about 20% of the time, so that's the first one.

2) Troubleshooting or Problem-Solving Tasks

The second type of tasks are troubleshooting or problem-solving tasks, so this is work that's unforeseen. However, like routine tasks, these tasks have an immediate needed to be accomplished in the moment or within a very short period. These are tasks that we do that are much more kind of a quick fix and are unpredictable, such as repairing something or responding to a customer issue. Or maybe we're dealing with an employee issue that's come to a head and needs to have an immediate resolution so that the team can move forward. And these troubleshooting or problem-solving tasks are also usually more tactical and short-term focused. The research has shown us that most of us will preferred to do these about 30% of the time.

3) Project Tasks

Finally, there is the third one which is Project Tasks. This is work that is known and can be planned for, however unlike routine tasks they don't have that immediate need to be accomplished in the moment or in a short period of time, they are a little bit longer-term. These tasks are ones that we may do that are much more deliberate, such as building something that may have many interdependent parts or delivering a software release or possibly completing a business plan. A good example might be when we complete our taxes, so that's a project kind of task. And project tasks are usually more strategic and longer-term focused. The research has shown us that most of us will prefer to do these about 50% of the time.

Michelle: I have two questions, 1) how can we use this tool – and 2) how can I structure my day but how can this tool be used?

Applying the Task Type Tool

Kevin: Well your thinking is absolutely moving in the right direction. I mentioned in my response to the last question, although the tool can be used to identify your own tasks mixtures, really expanding it from the individual work where you as a manager can be used more with to colleagues that work with you, rather than just for yourself. What we found is this can have a drastic impact to the morale, and ultimately the retention of individuals within an organization.

Crack the Leadership Code – Using the Task Quotient Assessment

What I found was in my doctoral dissertation research, was that each one of us has one preference for one of 496 different mixtures of these tasks. When we execute the mix on a regular basis, I have proven that it increases motivation engagement and empowerment. Once you know how to structure your own time to get more out of the task types that you need and want, the more you are going to want to help others to do the same. Discovering this task mixture approach really gave me the foundation to expand it, not only from individuals but for groups and teams to be successful.

Michelle: That's brilliant.

Kevin: Well we will hold that response up to the viewers, or the listeners to this to see if they think the same by the end of this webinar.

Michelle: I guess so and I know, but I'm just thinking that if only I could organize my day to make my preferences, then I will be a happier person.

Kevin: Well I have proven that, and that's what we are going to help the other people listening to the webcast do the same thing.

What This Means to Your Organization

To me, I mean this is what leadership is all about, it's not only attracting and retaining the best talent, but it's about keeping the talent motivated and engaged so that you can get the best and most innovative work out of everyone.

The fortunate thing is I have been very fortunate to use the tool, this tool that we are going to give away today, I have used it with over 10,000 people. Most importantly, if you can leverage this with small teams to help them rebalance their tasks among individuals, rather than having to do this dreaded reorganization or restructuring your departments, I mean that's really where the incredible value is.

But what we found is that through all our research that most of the organizations really do have the right people, they just haven't put them in the right seat, or the right size seat, on the right bus. Now Michelle in addition to the link that we are going to provide to everyone for the free five-minute leadership tool, the listeners will also get instant access as well to a four-page case study that I have done several years ago on simple task-rebalancing, that they can use as a template to help them.
https://magnaleader.co/TQ_Case_Study

Michelle: That sounds fantastic, because I am thinking about how sometimes you don't have that much choice about how you can reorganize your tasks.

Kevin: In many jobs that we do, that we sometimes have the opportunity to do some change, but a lot of times you don't you pretty much has to do what has to be done in the moment. But once you know what you need to look for, then you can look for other opportunities in the future about what are the kind of things that I want to talk to my boss about doing. Do I have too much routine, or not enough troubleshooting or too much project work whatever.

Crack the Leadership Code – Using the Task Quotient Assessment

But now you will be given a statistically validated tool, to say hey if you can move me closer to this balance, I have got a better chance of being a highly motivated engaged and creative individual. Pretty much every organization that I have ever worked with through my years at Intel, and as well as for my last nine years of consulting, every organization wants and needs this. So why not give them something that's validated so that you can talk about what's going to make you happy, motivated and engaged, as opposed to just saying "hey here is what I think". So now you will have something to really anchor that request upon.

Michelle: And one of the things that I am curious about, because you mentioned there is so many, like there were four hundred and something I didn't quite catch the number, of different task combinations. Within each task type do you have a subtask or something, like I just wasn't quite sure how you got to that number?

How We Determined the Task-Type Mixtures

Kevin: If you look at the tasks that we do, pretty much everything can fall into one of the three tasks types. And there are 496 different mixtures, if you just do the math, you can see that if you split 100 up in 3 different ways what the different percentages are, because they are all interdependent on each other, that you will end up coming up with different task mixtures.

One mixture could be, 100% project, 0% routine, and 0% troubleshooting. And then another mixture might be 33%, 33%, 33%, where all the task percentages are the same. There are 496 different mixtures. The good news is this tool will help you identify your one, then you will instantly be able to say, hey is this job that I am working on aligned or unaligned with the kind of things that motivate me.

I've worked with lots of organizations, ten thousand of these assessments, and dozens of organizations with probably close to a thousand people in different team sizes. The great thing that I have found from is that generally these organizations require you to get a certain amount of work done, usually on a weekly or monthly basis. If you have some level of autonomy of how you can structure it per day, rather than doing, let's say all your project work on Friday which we know doesn't work, then structuring your week just a little bit differently makes all the difference. This is not rocket science, structuring the flow of your work just a little bit differently gets you to a point where at the end of each day, or the end of each week and the end of each month, that things just feel a whole lot better and you are still doing the same thing. If you have some of that flexibility within your job, you are going to be successful and happy at the same time

Structuring Your Life

Michelle: So, I am keen to hear some success stories that you have had because it sounds like it's such a great tool. I just want to ask you, so in structuring any particular day, once I know my preferences for how I want the three task types, is that what I try to build into each day, is that the ideal?

Kevin: Absolutely, and the key is if you can structure your day, and it's not just your work day, because a lot of times people will have a specific need for more project work. But what they make sure that they do is when they go home they don't plop themselves on the couch and watch TV for 5 hours. What they do is they have a project that they are going to work on.

And a lot of times once you start looking at your life kind of holistically, if you are not getting it at the workplace you can get it at home, and by looking at everything collectively you can really build a great balance, but it's understanding what do I have too much of and what do I have not enough of, it gives you the autonomy to do something different.

Success Stories

Michelle: I get it that's really smart, obviously I think it's really smart, but tell us about some success stories that you have had, because clearly it's smart and I would love to hear how it's been applied?

Kevin: The interesting thing about using this tool on either an individual level or within small groups, is that we successfully demonstrated that it can be applied at any level of an organization. That's a question that usually comes up. And we've used it from Portland Maine with a kitchen staff of a small nursing home, to Portland Oregon with the CEO and his executive staff of a very large industrial Construction Company.

As I mentioned a previous answer, there was the four-page case study that I mention in the previous question that listeners can see a step-by-step process that we use, we just expose everything to you. They can copy them and just apply the 5-Minute Leadership Tool. Our big success story was one that we did with the Information Technology Team. When we did this with the IT team which is what the case study talks about.
https://magnaleader.co/TQ_Case_Study

Results

Is in a single day workshop we worked with a team of 18 engineers and their manager and were able to help the reorganize their task mixtures that turned into an immediate \$50,000 US, direct cost saving to the manager in one day. No organizational reorganization required! So, they got a very good return on their 8-hour investment. But more importantly when we completed an organizational health assessment for that Fortune 100 company 90 days after they had applied this, we found some surprising results. For me there were two crucial findings that kind of solidified the importance of using a leadership approach like this.

The first result was the manager was able to raise the level of employee job satisfaction over the 90 days by 26%, which is astronomical in behavioral science.

And then the second result, which the readers won't find in the case study, but hopefully they will get from listening to this webinar, is that the manager was able to reduce the undesirable turnover. The people he wanted to keep, which he was running an annual turnover rate of 17% went to 0%. He was able to keep 100% of his people, and he maintained this 0% turnover for 18 months. So as a manager, this allows you to spend more time focusing on yourself and your staff, rather than constantly trying to hire new talent and retain unhappy talent. For me, that's really the mark of a great leader and that was really the intention of ultimately how to move from an individual application of the tool to a team application.

Re-restructuring

Michelle: What a great result, that's fabulous. One of the things that I am wondering, the 18 months comes around and then the 19th month someone leaves. I am just wondering about all the work getting done, does the team have to reorganize, like I am just thinking because everyone has different preferences, so how does it work in terms of recalibrating the work that gets done?

Kevin: When you read the four-page case study, it will give you all the gory details, but I will give you the high level, even though I am probably kind of revealing some of the mystery here. Ultimately when we brought the team together, by using this tool along with a couple of other tools that are described in the case study, is we gave the people an opportunity to get an understanding of what motivates them and what doesn't motivate them.

FLOW

As I mentioned earlier on about the concept of FLOW or being in the zone. I was fortunate enough to be able to work with the author kind of developed the tool the 5-minute tool that you are going to see at the end of this webinar. What we are were able to do is once people understand what motivated and demotivated them, they plodded all their work for a normal week that they did. They looked at where they needed more routine troubleshooting or project task or less.

With everyone in the room and the manager as the auctioneer anyone could buy and sell, mostly we will just start with selling. We could sell anything that they did to anyone else in the room. So, people that were looking for more routine work were bidding on routine work. And people that look for more troubleshooting work were bidding on that and so forth. Because the team is the one that's actually doing the buying and selling, and not the manager, but the rebalance of task. Because it happens at the individual level, there is no buy-in problem, because they done the selection not you as a manager and this takes the manager out of the scapegoat equation.

I think the other thing that incredible valuable, and kind of think as you alluded to, is that you get to the end of the day and you are going to have this bucket of stuff that nobody wants to do. As you will see in the case study, that's a main reoccurring theme that we see in just about every one of these rebalancing events that we have ever done, from the kitchen staff in Portland Maine to the CEOs in Portland Oregon.

Is that you are going to come up with a bucket of stuff, and when you are paying people like you are paying \$120,000 for a design engineer in IT. What you will find is mostly tactical stuff is going to fall out, and if you can remove that stuff from the people that you are paying high dollar to, and give it to people that, that is their job - one you have employed someone additional and second you don't have to bring in an additional \$120,000 designer to do 5 to 10% of their work for things that they really shouldn't be doing, and that's how the process helps.

Michelle: Do you know what it reminds me of, it reminds me of when I first started working, where there was a typing pool because there were obviously no computer and that thing, and it's like having people - and then we had computers but then you had your own support like a secretary person who did all of your typing and did all of your documents for you. Then suddenly, we can all tie it and we can all do it, so it's applying some of that stuff, I guess.

Global Workforce Impact

Kevin: And here is what's happen is that overtime particularly as we become more Global and things are getting more distributed and more work is being done more remotely. And as we go through different economic cycles, as staff gets cut back, and back, and back usually what happens is the administration people go first. Then you end up paying people \$75 an hour to run copies and answer routine emails and so forth. Until you look at it holistically, like for the example I used with 18 people, until you realize that it's happening about 2.5 hours per person, what you realize is hey there is a 40 or 50-hour a week job just by pulling out 2 or 3 hours per person.

Crack the Leadership Code – Using the Task Quotient Assessment

So they can go and do the real work that's necessary to drive the organization to be successful. When I was at Intel, I managed staffs that we're fairly large, and it was getting them where I could have tapped into their talent and skill, rather than giving them things that I know that they could do but didn't motivate them. By the way I could have more of an administrative person doing that. First, I kept the administrative person happy because that's what they wanted to do. Second, I kept the engineers happy, because that's what they didn't want to do. To me it's just that simple, but I just don't see it as a common practice today in any workplace. This is one of the reasons that I've been successful as a manager. Using the tool to help people get a different perspective for a way that they've never really looked at the common day-to-day activities makes all the difference.

3 Tips to Improve Your Leadership Brand

Michelle: As a leadership expert, what three tips would you recommend to our listeners to improve their own leadership brand.

Kevin: It is incredibly important to build your own brand, I mean this is really what you stand for and who you are. It's critical for your longevity and success in any industry. Most of us don't think about this on a regular basis and we really should. So here are my three best tips for you.

Leadership Tip #1

My first tip is to take 5 minutes and identify your ideal task mixtures so that you can restructure and rebalance your time and FLOW of your professional and daily activities. It's much simpler than you think, and in this way every day, every week, and every month you can feel motivated and engaged with the work that you are doing yourself and then you can figure out how you want to do this with others.

Leadership Tip #2

My second tip is, don't travel this leadership journey that you are doing alone. I mean solicit help from experts, mentors, coaches and colleagues, so that you are learning, and success can happen in the most accelerated way possible. You have heard that old adage about life is too short, well my theory is life is too short only if you don't make the best of it. Get the help when you need it and get others to travel that Journey with you, just like Dorothy did with her journey in the Wizard of Oz.

Leadership Tip #3

You know that I do a lot of executive coaching, my third tip is that there are a ton of great leadership books and articles and information out there. You must block your time on personal and professional schedule, so that you become a role model and a consummate learner and this leader of the source analogy in your field. I mean you want to be an attractor of other leaders, and if you don't make the time, life will completely overwhelm you, and at the end of the year you will be right where you started with no progress made.

As a coach, what I have found is that people are much more of being rafts than kayaks in the river of life. The people that we are coaching throw themselves in this river and the flow just takes them wherever. I think what we need to be is we need to be kayaks, that's who the leaders are. It's a little bit more work but you are going to control where you're going, and you are going to get there faster and you are going to avoid the rapids, but it's going to be a little bit more work. You must make the time, and you must make the effort, you have the paddle in the water to make sure that you are going to get where you want and need to be. If you do that at the end of the day you might be a little bit more tired, but you are going to be a whole lot more motivated and engaged. And this is a message I think not only should we do in our work environment, but as parents and with our kids that we need to encourage them to do the same.

Crack the Leadership Code – Using the Task Quotient Assessment

Michelle: I have never heard that before about the kayaks rather than rafts, so I love that, I agree with you and thank you. Look I hate to cut you off but we are coming to the end of the interview and I know you have a free giveaway today. Would you use the couple of minutes left to tell our listeners all about it and how to access it?

Access Your Task Quotient Report

Kevin: Sure, so this web link is for the 5-minute leadership tool call The Task Quotient Assessment. This assessment will identify your individual ideal task mixture to keep you motivated and engaged every day. Actually, this is the first time I have ever offered this tool for free to anyone, and they will get their report instantaneously, as soon as they hit enter to answer the 15 Likert questions.

Michelle: I really wanted to thank you for this opportunity to be one of the leadership experts for the Crack the Code event. I hope that I have given some new and very different ideas to the listeners. So you will need the URL here so let me just mention it in case it doesn't show up visually. <https://magnaleader.co/GIFT>. Take a look at that and read the case study, there is lots of other information on our website: <https://www.magnaleadership.com> on this and other tools that we have. I encourage everybody to just go and use what's there, it's there to try to help other people so that's my pitch.

Closing

Michelle: That's fantastic thank you that's so generous of you. And before we go, if there was one practical step that our audience could implement today to improve their leadership skills, what would that be?

Kevin: The one thing that I will tell everyone is that regardless of the title that you have, or regardless of the people that work for you or with you. Once you start thinking about yourself as a leader, to take a leadership position to help others to give back to work and what we would call kind of a servant leadership role, the better off life is going to be for you and for everyone else. Don't hold back, don't wait until the time when you have the formal Authority, take it upon yourself to make a difference and you will be surprised what the world gives back to you.

Michelle: Yes, the world is a better place. Thank you so much Kevin, and everyone don't forget to go and access his fabulous free gift at <https://magnaleader.co/GIFT>

Michelle: Thank you so much, and to find out more about Kevin go to www.magnaleadership.com. Thanks again Kevin you have really opened my eyes, and I am going to take the test to find out what my task preferences are and structure my day as best as I can accordingly thank you. This is Michelle Pizer, the host of Crack the Leadership Code and I will see you next time.

Your Added Bonus

If you'd like to find out exactly how much it is costing you to lose your good employees, click on this link to instantly see the \$ in less than 30-seconds.

Access to the Attrition Calculator:

https://magnaleader.co/Attrition_Calculator

Short video on how to use the Attrition Calculator:

https://magnaleader.co/Attrition_Calc

I hope you enjoyed reading this transcript or listening to the webinar on the Task Quotient. You can find more Management and Leadership knowledge on our website www.MagnaLeadership.com. We are trusted advisors for executives of small to mid-sized organizations who realize an investment in emerging leaders solves their growth and engagement challenges.

Dr. Kevin Gazzara—is a senior partner and founder of Magna Leadership Solutions, based in Phoenix, Arizona. He is the author of “The Leader of OZ” www.leaderofoz.com. He is an international speaker and recognized as a Management & Leadership Expert and an Executive Coach. Kevin is a professor at 5 Universities developing and teaching programs to help others achieve their full potential. You can follow Kevin and Magna Leadership Solutions on our website: www.magnaleadership.com, on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/doctorkevin> or our Facebook Fan Page at <https://www.facebook.com/MagnaLeadership>

We would be excited to speak with you about your current leadership challenges. Please Click here to connect with one of Magna Leadership's advisors. <https://magnaleader.co/MeetMagna>

If you have any comments, suggestions or ideas, we encourage you to share your thoughts with us and our readers in the comments below.

Thank you,
Dr. Kevin Gazzara
Magna Leadership Solutions
Senior Partner