

Leveraging Genius[®]



Gap International

Leveraging Genius

Why Genius?

Humanity has always been intrigued by extraordinary performance and uncovering what has people perform in extraordinary ways. Mostly it's elusive and mysterious, revered and rare.

In today's markets, it is challenging enough to keep delivering consistent business results, let alone consistently extraordinary results. Modern markets can seem to change overnight, and often radically. Emerging technology, new competition, evolving customer demands, shifting talent considerations—it can all pull us away from being leading edge.

And so, success today begs for something nearly impossible—the ability to think and lead in a way that produces great results in any circumstance, day after day. We know businesses are likely to perform well in good circumstances, but we need the ability to deliver better and higher levels of performance in any situation.

Accessing and leveraging the best in people can make or break a company's performance and ability to be competitive. It's as important as knowledge, information, and expertise.

When it comes to replicating and building on past success, often the specific circumstances have changed, obsoleting solutions designed in that context. But the source of how we originally created the solution remains, if we can get our hands on it.

When we know the source of our greatest performance—precisely how we were thinking when we were at the top of our game—so much more is possible. We can leverage this genius repeatedly to invent any solution going forward. We can express this genius freely and apply it to our biggest challenges, unsolvable problems, and loftiest commitments.

Without study and focus, this source remains hidden. No one knows what it is until they go looking. But once clear, leaders naturally tap into this innovative, creative, adaptive way of thinking that gives confidence and power, increasing capability and capacity to lead change and make a larger impact.

When we can demystify the source of our extraordinary performance, we become bigger leaders. And bigger leaders shape organizations, markets, and the world.

WHAT THE
WORLD
NEEDS
MOST
FROM US
IS OUR
GENIUS.

The History and What is Behind it

Genius is most often thought of as a form of rarified brilliance. It is reserved for the likes of Albert Einstein, Vincent Van Gogh, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, or anyone with an exceptionally high IQ.

Over time, many have searched for what makes people brilliant, successful and “genius”, through research, studies and often an obsessive drive to discover exactly what’s behind it all.

Success has been attributed to factors like IQ, personality traits, genetics and upbringing. Some theories propose that certain factors related to success are inherent and can’t be learned. Others make a case that you can learn and grow in different (certain) domains to achieve greater performance. A person’s success could be attributed to any combination of factors, known and unknown.

With so many approaches and theories, it may be that there isn’t a universal set of ingredients that leads to success for everyone. For a leader intent on consistently achieving exceptional results, offering an individualized approach to studying past success is a critical pathway to unlocking future extraordinary performance.

The body of Leveraging Genius work has illuminated the idea that the potential for exceptional performance is not in fact limited to a select few. We have come to believe that Genius is not something you are, it’s something you have. And everyone has Genius.

Genius is the
supercharger for
extraordinary
performance

The Evolution of Genius

Over time, definitions of genius have shifted greatly. Would you be considered a genius today? Would you have been in the 1800s? Would you have had a genius in 200 BC? Explore the evolution of the term genius over time and the possibility for genius moving forward.



Ancient Rome | 753 BC-476 AD

Genius was not a person, but a spirit—that all people, places, and even eras had, and the genius spirit wasn't always productive. Genius was seen as the source of individuals' extraordinary performance— and their failures.



Renaissance Period | 1300-1700

The definition of genius greatly narrowed with the rise of the Humanist movement and its focus on the individual. Genius became a special term applied only to artists. Great works, such as David or the Mona Lisa, were thought of as the result of an artist's innate talent.



Post-Industrial Revolution | 1840-1880

Francis Galton, the cousin of Charles Darwin, believed that greatness was driven by natural ability, inherited from one's family. Published in Hereditary Genius, this work greatly influenced the way the world looked at performance as rooted in genetics—you either had it or you didn't.



Machine Age | 1880-1945

In the early 1900s the efforts to classify people based on their abilities led to the advent of IQ tests and a fascination with those who scored highest. Synonymous with a high IQ, genius came to refer to a person who excelled in science and math. IQ scores of 140 or higher were considered to be genius.



Digital Age | 1970-present

For the first time, genius is discussed as something that can be developed—not just through natural brilliance, but also as a result of hard work, practice, and perseverance. Genius now applies to exceptional performance in any area: Serena Williams, genius in sports; Steve Jobs, genius in tech. Warren Buffett, genius in investing. Genius shows up in the development of abilities to exceptional levels.



The Next Evolution

Genius is thinking, and it can be discovered, shared, and maximized—everywhere, by everyone.

What We Mean by Genius

Genius is at the heart of all extraordinary performance. It is the precise way we are thinking when we are being our most exceptional selves. Genius can be discovered, shared, and maximized, giving us instant access to unparalleled levels of effectiveness and performance—more of the time—maybe even all the time.

Once you discover your Genius, you can replicate and apply it to any area you choose. To your biggest challenges. To new opportunities. To something you are passionate about. And, you can share it with others so they can apply it to goals they want to accomplish, or to achieve bigger things than they ever imagined. Discovering Genius gives leaders an edge, a new pathway to deliver top performance and dramatic results.

The Foundations of Leveraging Genius

Our work is based on the premise that how people think impacts the results they achieve. We have found that different mindsets are present when people fall short of their goals, and when they produce their most extraordinary results. For nearly 40 years, we have worked with bold, purpose-driven leaders to demystify the thinking behind their greatest accomplishments.

Since 2003, we have interviewed over 1,500 leaders from around the world in all disciplines, where we study the correlation between how people think and how they perform. During the process, we uncover the source of people's most extraordinary accomplishments. Prior to this work, people tend to attribute their biggest achievements to things like luck, fortunate circumstances, or good timing. But these explanations don't make the performance repeatable in other situations or transferrable to other people.

Leveraging Genius is a proven methodology to maximize performance of leaders, teams, and organizations that want to make a difference in the world. When people unlock their most extraordinary thinking—their Genius—exceptional performance is not serendipitous. It is predictable and repeatable.

How Genius Began and Evolved

Pontish Yeramyan, Founder and CEO of Gap International, shares how the concept of Genius started and evolved since 2001.

I was with the chief technology officer of a major household appliance manufacturer. We were talking about procurement of knowledge. About how they were going to procure knowledge of the CEO who knew so much, who had done so much, and was going to retire in a few years.

All of a sudden, it struck me. We could gather all the content, but what about his brilliance? The CEO would have been there 17 years by the time he retired. What do we do with the gold in the retiring CEO? We knew we had gold in the person coming in, but what could we do with the gold in the brain of the person going out—his thinking—so it would not just leave with him?

I started to think about how could we preserve his brilliance. I shared this with my team and then we started researching, experimenting, and hiring linguists. We developed a theory that a person's brilliance can be found in their thinking, and a methodology for distilling brilliance.

As we continued researching and working with this, we found that something very special happened when people were discovering their Genius. It was something very precious for them.

What was precious, was understanding, for the first time, what gave them their greatest moments, their biggest accomplishments, their most amazing outcomes. They had explained them by working hard, being in the right place at the right time, having a great team, or being lucky. But none of them knew the true source of their top performance until they went looking for it.

A lot of us perform well most of the time, but sometimes we really spike out at the top of our game. We study the thinking behind these moments—when we do something amazing that surprises us—we can't believe it happened. These are the moments we capture, so we can have more and more of them and accelerate our performance.

When people discover what their thinking is—it's quite tangible once you get it—they can replicate it, bring it forth, any time. And they can share it with others. So the mystery is gone. That gives people amazing power.

Be Extraordinary To Cause Extraordinary

Leveraging Genius opens the door to consistent, replicatable extraordinary performance. Discovering, clarifying, and leveraging the Genius already inside a person gives the confidence and creative power to achieve a next chapter of amazing results and accomplishments.

To remain leading edge, organizations will have to innovate and change on the inside as fast as competitors, customers, and other conditions change on the outside. Organizations can change when people change, that is, when they can evolve, build totally new solutions based on shifting assumptions, and drastically expand their perspective on the market and world. Organizational change starts with leaders at the top.

We all deliver exceptional results—sometimes. But why not all the time? When we understand the source of our biggest accomplishments, it can enable us to understand how to repeat them. Without leaders willing to step out of status quo and lead their vision for a possible—and extraordinary—new future, all roads lead to normal.

Any leader can take the opportunity and rise to the challenge of generating consistent success all of the time. We all have it in us.

Leaders must be
extraordinary to
cause the
extraordinary.

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