

Megabytes vs Megahertz

Understanding depth and agility and knowing how to apply it

When you boil things down to the elemental values, businesses succeed or fail based on two things. First – is the value of the products or services they offer. The second is the quality and effectiveness of the people in the company who bring those products to market, deliver the services, and support the customers who buy them. It's really that simple – Products and People. Get those two things right and you quickly rise to the top of the food chain and dominate your market.

Product is by far the easier of the two for companies to master. Not because anyone can conceive and develop a successful product, but because the process of creating it is somewhat quantitative, algorithmic, and measurable. Follow a few basic rules around innovation, market analysis and segmentation, demand assessment, and customer journey, and you're likely to succeed with launching a product which will satisfy a target segment of the market.

People ... well, that's a whole other matter. Nothing algorithmic or quantitative about people (*follow along as I contradict myself later in the article*). Most companies and organizations simply and subjectively rely on the expertise and experience of the people they hire to effectively manage the product process. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, but surprisingly, seldom do companies go back and reassess people failure as the cause of their deficient product strategy execution.

There is one reality which many companies completely miss, which relates to the title of this article, and which can serve as a proven and tested leadership paradigm. Let me lay out the case through a simple example.

Jim is a 30+ year industry veteran, having worked for several companies in his specific field. At his current company he has contributed to three successful solution launches and now has been invited to the office of his SVP to discuss a new project.

In the adjacent seat in that same office sits Karen, a super-bright, bursting with personality go-getter who graduated a few years ago from a top school with a cum laude degree and has been with the company since then.

The SVP brings two projects up for discussion.

The first involves a quick turnaround of a failing project which is sinking fast and with it, threatens to affect other adjacent projects. It will need an adrenaline shot to revive, quick thinking to react and to be flexible and adjust to continually changing and unpredictable conditions. Big dollars are at stake from the hemorrhaging operation.



The second project looks to build a foundation and establish a beachhead in a new market which the company has yet to exploit. Methodical analysis and scenarios planning will be required up front, and the company fully expects that products and revenues will take a few years to realize. No budget yet for the project but it will probably be appropriate for the task at hand.

Which project will the SVP assign to Jim and Karen respectively?



Does the experienced industry veteran take on the financial crisis project? After all, years dealing with issues in this industry must have readied him for a situation just like this one? And does Karen's excellent educational background and smarts give her the ammunition to jump into the highly strategic undertaking which may define the future of the company?

Let's re-examine. In [Johnny and the Impossible Task \(clgpro.us\)](http://clgpro.us), another article on a related topic, I tried to define the Megabytes vs Megahertz paradigm:

“Megabytes vs Megahertz. Depth or Speed. I will fall on a stereotype, but a proven one. Older, more experienced individuals will bring to the task a richer database of expertise, but they will take longer to process the data to arrive at a decision. Younger professionals carry less data in their experience portfolio, but once presented with sufficient information will make rapid decisions and move the process along more expeditiously. It is good to consider this in the framework of making a decision on who to delegate a given type of responsibility to – one that needs deeper analysis but slower decisions, or one where speed of action is paramount.”

You probably see that the SVP in fact has a very clear choice here and should have the leadership experience to differentiate between what really is a very unambiguously set of decision criteria.

There is a very high probability that Jim, the industry veteran will not succeed if assigned the crisis project. His **Megabytes** of experience will contribute little when faced with having to make on the spot decisions requiring quick thinking and the processing of streams of data coming at him from all directions. He will likely fall back on his deep analysis capacity to review, rethink and reimagine all decisions, all while the ship sinks deeper, faster.

Karen, on the other hand, will likely have the confidence to make those **Megahertz** fast and critical decisions and, even though they may not all be spot-on, her wit and energy should compensate with courage to fast fail whenever a poor decision is made, redirecting the course toward a different, improved decision. She will thrive when challenged to move things rapidly toward resolution.

DISC Profile Assessment

Most decisions like the one this SVP will make are not as clear cut and can benefit from some of the advanced personality tools available today in the market. For example, The Megabytes vs Megahertz equation can be elegantly solved in the face of a delegation decision by assessing the candidates along four axes: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness (**DISC**). The profile assessment result will provide empirical data to help with and support the kind of decisions this SVP will be making, but the DISC profile can also help in building and organizing entire teams to create effective alignment between team members in their shared pursuit of objectives and set upon goals.



To learn more about profiles, please access our [DISC Assessment Resources](#).



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