Understanding Analysts

Every now and then during my CIA career, I used to talk to groups of outsiders about our analytic directorate. I'd start by telling the audience that you know you are among analysts when you hear the question, "Did you see the game last night?" and they are talking about *Jeopardy!* Always got a laugh. Never was true.

Clichés about the analyst's nature abound. We are the academics of intelligence. We read the world news section of the newspaper and ignore what's happening in our neighborhood. We are legendary introverts. We are never happier than in a debate as to whether "move" or "relocate" is the better word. We never met a weasel word we didn't like. We are long on intellect but short on common sense. We were beat up in school.

If you lead analysis, chances are you *are* an analyst, and you know these clichés don't describe you. You know that analysts span the spectra of style, tastes, and personality types. But you also know that *you* can pick out the analyst in any room after about twenty minutes. You know that we earned some of these clichés.

The "academics of intelligence"? More than any group I have encountered outside academia, we analysts loved school. We were good at it. We earned A's and B's and considered a C to be a failure. We enjoy learning and expect to be learning all our lives. We are at home in the world of the mind. We love thinking our way through tough problems. And we even think about thinking.

But we choose a life *outside* academia. We yearn to turn our brainpower into action. Without an interested customer, we feel incomplete. We have various degrees of patience in our quest to produce useful analysis—I have worked with some analysts who could wait a year or two for their research to get into the hands of a customer and others who craved daily contact with a customer. But analysts at both ends of that particular spectrum share a powerful resentment if they suspect their analysis will not be used by some customer to make a decision.

"Legendary introverts"? Well, we have more than our share. By that I mean that compared to the general population, a population of analysts would have a significantly higher percentage. What is the percentage? Surely the CIA's analytic directorate has studied it? Of course not; we were probably afraid of what we would find. Even at the height of the fascination

13

with the Myers-Briggs personality test, which includes an evaluation of the tendency toward introversion or extroversion, I never saw an effort to quantify our overall breakdown. But I'm confident that well over 50 percent of analysts are introverts. I'd bet that also applies to knowledge workers and intellectuals anywhere. Of course, in the intelligence business, put analysts next to our partners—the highly extroverted policy makers and case officers—and we will look painfully shy by comparison.

Obsessed with words? Absolutely. Analysis is useless if not communicated, and words remain our primary communication medium. We labor to find the precise word to convey our meaning. Endless studies of intelligence failure, blaming analysts (rightly) if the audience misunderstands our message, make us work hard at rooting out ambiguous terms.

This obsession is connected also with our reputation for loving so-called weasel words. These are the qualifiers—may, almost certainly, possibly, probably—that litter our products. They are intended to communicate that we are making a judgment rather than stating a fact. They are intended to communicate our level of confidence in that judgment. And they convey our conviction that nuance matters. "It is likely to rain tomorrow" means something different than "It might rain tomorrow." Inexperienced customers of analysis often lose patience over this. "Well, which is it? Rain or not?!" they demand, considering us wimps. I used to tell my analysts that it takes more courage to stand up to such customers than it does to make the prediction. Analysis is no place for wimps.

But as much as analysts yearn to be understood—respected—outside their profession, I have seen them too many times *yearning to be understood by their own leaders*. I have seen many veteran analysts become leaders and founder on their own misperceptions about the men and women they led. It is not that they suddenly forgot what analysts are like. Rather, in the situations I witnessed, I believe these leaders simply didn't take time to think deeply about the nature of their workforce. Over the years, I saw enough leaders (not the majority of leaders, mind you, but too many) fall into the same attitude traps.

Some Classic Traps

All Analysis Is the Same

You would think no former analyst would fall for this. A leader of analysis who has been an analyst surely must understand that it is a rich and complex discipline, with distinct approaches to address distinct needs. But leaders of analysis are humans too, and some of them fall victim to the human prejudice that "my experience defines reality." So you might get a new team leader who spent years as a trade analyst flogging his political

analysts for more data. "Surely this must be quantifiable!" Or you might get a veteran military analyst demanding that her economists define the economic "center of gravity."

This can go deeper than a simple confusion over terms. When I led the establishment of CIA's Office of Terrorism Analysis after 9/11, we imported many managers to help lead the new organization. Most of these hit the ground running, and I was proud how productive the office became in just weeks. But a few of the new managers struggled to understand that they weren't in Kansas anymore. One came from a career analyzing slow-moving issues, and he struggled to adjust to the front burner. The policy maker appetite for counterterrorism (CT) analysis was unlike anything he had ever dealt with. He was the doctor who couldn't accept the "meatball surgery" normal at the combat field hospital. Another could never seem to grasp that the customers for her targeting analysts were not in the White House. Rather, her analysts needed to identify leads that CT operations officers could follow. In a real way, White House policy makers wanted to understand the enemy, while the ops folks often simply wanted to *find* the enemy. A different analytical approach is required for each.

All Analysts Think Like I Do

This is related to the "all analysis is the same" mistake, but is both more subtle and more powerful. It can be central to what an analytic leader thinks is achievable in our work.

Two primary approaches to finding answers are rationalism and empiricism. As James Bruce (2008) has written in an insightful essay on epistemology and intelligence,

> In sharp contrast to the rationalist who believes that knowledge is the product of the human mind, the empiricist insists that "sense observation is the primary source and ultimate judge of knowledge and that it is self-deceptive to believe the human mind to have direct access to any kind of truth other than logical relations." Rather than dwelling on reason, the empiricist's focus is on observational data. (Kindle location 2789)

A leader who is principally a rationalist can easily get tripped up dealing with a subordinate who leans toward the empirical. An old joke captures the dilemma. A rationalist and an empiricist share a compartment on a train from London one summer. Looking out the window at a field of sheep, the rationalist notes, "Those sheep have been shorn." With a glance, the empiricist comments, "On *this* side."

Profound differences occur even within the school of rationalism. You will find *deductive* thinkers who draw specific inferences from general

Chapter 2 | Understanding Analysts **15**

principles. (Oranges are fruits. Fruits grow on trees. Therefore, oranges grow on trees.) Or your deductive analyst might say, "Missile programs always conduct a test launch before going into mass production; there has been no test launch of this new missile; therefore, this missile is not yet in mass production." *Inductive* reasoners work in the other direction, drawing a general conclusion from observed particulars. (Every crow we have seen has been black. All crows probably are black.) Or your inductive analyst might reason, "All life we have discovered has required liquid water. To find life on other planets, we should look for liquid water." Other analysts tend toward *abductive* reasoning. Abductive thinkers craft a hypothesis to explain available data. They might infer, for example, "The regime has intervened six times to prop up its currency, but it has taken no action to stem inflation. The regime must be more concerned about revenue from trade than domestic discontent about food prices."

Empiricism and all three types of rationalism have their place in analysis. James Bruce (2008) convincingly argues that the best intelligence analysis comes from consciously and actively mixing the disciplines. But few analysts—and few of their leaders—think about which type of reasoning dominates their own thinking, much less which is most appropriate for the question at hand.

I fell into this trap when I first had to lead military analysts who had been trained as imagery analysts. The world of imagery analysis tends to be empirical. Many imagery analysts will draw conclusions based on what they see and be silent if they see nothing. An imagery analyst's observation, "The tanks are all in garrison," is a powerful reality check for a customer who is nervous about Saddam's immediate military intentions. But as their leader, I would get frustrated when I would ask some of these analysts to judge Saddam's longer-term military intentions. They would ask, "How can we know what is in Saddam's head?" "You are paid to understand Saddam's military thinking," I would reply. And then we'd look blankly at each other. Eventually, I broke out of this trap. The resolution came when we combined our approaches. I would come up with a hypothesis or two about what Saddam might do militarily, and they would think through, "Well, if he wanted to do that, he would need to do *x,* and in its early stages you might see *y.* I'll check the imagery to see if *y* is happening."

I encountered an even deeper division later in my career, when I took over CIA's Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation, and Arms Control Center (WINPAC). WINPAC is known for its technical analysts, physicists, biochemists, and many flavors of engineers. My academic studies had focused on political science and history. In the world of engineering, truth is an absolute. Something works or it doesn't. It can or it can't. It is testable and replicable. In the world of historians, the interesting truths lie in *why* something happened, but the truth of "why" rarely can be absolutely established in human behavior. So a political analyst and historian will spend

much more energy on reasonable speculation than any engineer would be comfortable with. I learned that I could, with a certain amount of pain, get my engineers to speculate about the future in their areas of expertise. But it was pretty clear that I never convinced them that such informed speculation is part of their job.

Analysts Are Thinking Machines

There are three manifestations of this trap. I have seen leaders fall into each of them. The first is the leader who seems to forget the analyst is human. The second is the leader who thinks his job is to program the thinking machine. The third is the leader who forgets analysis is as much art as science. Let's examine all three.

The first mistake is to forget that analysts are humans too. Richards Heuer (1999), one of the founders of today's analytic tradecraft, certainly realized that analysts are all too human. He centered his landmark work, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis,* on the observation that analysts are inescapably human, and they unconsciously will make all the errors of reasoning to which humans are prone unless active steps are taken to compensate. But some leaders believe that once they have taken Heuer's prescribed precautions, the analyst's human nature has been dealt with. These leaders learn the hard way that any group of analysts will have a full set of human emotions, including ambition, jealousy, insecurity, laziness, and selfishness. (Analysts, of course, have all the positive emotions too, but these rarely are problematic.)

The best literature on leadership instructs the leader to understand the human relationship between herself and her subordinates, to bring out the best in them and overcome the worst. I'm not re-creating those lessons in this book. But if a leader of analysts doesn't attend to those lessons, she will lose the trust on which her leadership depends. *You are not leading if no one is following you, and they won't follow you for long if you don't understand human needs for respect, security, fulfillment, and the rest.*

The second dehumanizing mistake is to regard analysts as "thinking machines" to be programmed. I have seen this in leaders who become not just supportive of, but obsessed with, critical thinking techniques. They tend to think that if you teach—and then enforce—critical thinking skills and structured analytic techniques, your analysts will happily crank out sublime products. They also tend to presume that if two competent analysts apply the same fine techniques to the same problem, they will come up with the same answer. Data in; answer out. This oversimplifies analysis and overcontrols analysts. It ignores the reality that people who are paid to think generally resent being told *how* they must think. It also reveals a deep arrogance on the leader's part. He or she thinks, "It is my job to *make you* a good analyst." A healthier mindset is, "It is my job to *help you*

become the best analyst you can be." I'll talk more about the upside and downside of prescribed analytic tradecraft and structured analytic techniques in chapter 4.

Connected to the "thinking machine" attitude is the third dehumanizing mistake: forgetting that analysis can be an art. Art is a uniquely human endeavor. Part of analysis is certainly *craft*. Part of improving analysis is to refine the craft. Certainly CIA's definition and refinement of "analytic tradecraft" improved the average quality of our work over the last two decades. But at its best, analysis is *art* too. The art of storytelling. The art of creating an insightful and compelling narrative that will move a customer to useful action. The art of finding the right word, a powerful example, a memorable phrase. Some analysts will only ever be craftsmen. But some will master their craft and go on to become artists. They not only need less guidance from their leaders, they occasionally need to be liberated from guidance. Sometimes they need to be free to produce the unconventional, to occasionally ignore the rules of the craft, to step away from the formulaic. The analyst who is an artist usually does not need a supervisor; she needs a patron.

The art-craft distinction was first evident to me with those imagery analysts I mentioned above. The *best* imagery analysts I worked with didn't struggle with hypotheses like the ones I talked about. Indeed, they were masters at generating their own hypotheses. I considered them "artists" of imagery analysis. And they would bemoan the imagery analysts who were mere craftsmen, limiting themselves to commenting on what they saw. The craftsmen would talk about the *movement* of military units. The artists would talk about the *behavior* of military forces, including the idiosyncratic behavior of certain units that have their own "style."

I Am Their Most Important Influence

In some situations, this is generally true. And, the more effective leader you are, the *more* true it is. But it is never completely true. In many situations, the analyst's most important influence is other analysts—for good or ill. Ignore this reality at your peril.

What is true in junior high can be true in the world of analysts. As a parent, you like to think your influence guides your kid through his school day. But you know that sometimes peer pressure trumps your best efforts. How does this play out among analysts?

In an analytic organization, the aggregate of analysts' behavior defines the organizational culture. You can influence the culture, but they are its enforcers. If your analysts in general tend to be sloppy, insular, complacent, or arrogant, you have a culture to change. Without active, persistent, multilayered work to develop a new culture, the old culture will enforce its norms. Analysts, being human, want to fit in. Analysts, being analysts,

will analyze what this culture rewards and punishes, and they will adjust accordingly.

And I am not simply talking about the analysts' style of behavior. Analysts enforce substantive assessments as well. People presume that it is management that enforces analytic "party lines." This can be true—bureaucracies can try to protect themselves by enforcing a desired consistency of message. But just as often, the analysts themselves enforce their party lines. Experts are particularly adept at this because they can marshal masses of evidence and historical trends to justify maintaining the current line of analysis.

In his brilliant article, "Why Bad Things Happen to Good Analysts," the late Jack Davis (2008) calls this phenomenon "tribal think." He provides a good illustration of "tribal think" at work with the case of a CIA analyst writing before the fall of the Berlin Wall. The analyst argued that the impediments to German reunification were crumbling. As Davis describes,

> This was a bold and prescient departure from CIA's prevailing expert opinion. His well-informed and well-intentioned colleagues each asked for "small changes" to avoid an overstatement of the case here and a misinterpretation of the case there. After the coordination process had finished . . . a reader of the final version of the paper would have to delve deeply into the text to uncover the paradigm-breaking analysis. (Kindle location 2596)

So, what can you do to balance such negative peer pressure among your analysts? Start by determining reality in the situation. Are you dealing with a culture or one bad apple among your analysts? If the problem is a narrow one, breathe a sigh of relief and fix it. If the problem is cultural, you have your work cut out for you. I talk elsewhere in this book about a healthy analytic culture—I won't replay that here. For now, remember a few basic principles. Social media theorist Clay Shirky (2010) points out that a culture is "a community's set of shared assumptions about how it should go about its work, and about its members relations with one another" (Kindle location 1835). Launch a communication *campaign* to challenge the assumptions that are producing the negative behavior. Next, one of the products of a strong culture is a sense of identity. Launch a campaign to implant a new, positive, productive identity in your workplace—a healthier sense of "who we really are." And finally, anytime you are changing a culture, anytime you are taking on *the many*, multiply your influence by enlisting allies. Find analysts whose hearts are in the right place and get them actively displaying the behaviors you want. Try also to enlist a few opinion-makers of the old guard—the owners of the "tribe think." It won't be easy, but if you can get one or two of them to see the sense of change, they can be a powerful force for good.

Ten Things Analysts Hate

Leaders cannot always make their subordinates happy. There will be times when you need to make choices that ruffle feathers. You will be compelled by priorities that your subordinates dispute. And there will be situations in which you only have unattractive options and your subordinates are firmly in denial.

But the leader should at least be *aware* when he is likely to irritate the people on whom he depends. Avoid doing it needlessly. And when you must anger them, go in with your eyes open. You consciously will make a withdrawal on the bank of trust they have for you, and you must look for opportunities to make a deposit as soon as possible. And make extra time to communicate your reasoning.

Here is a list, by no means exhaustive, of things guaranteed to irritate your analysts.

1. *Being told how to think*. Knowledge workers in general, and certainly analysts, think of themselves as brains for hire. They don't like being told how to use those brains. This is not a rejection of training, although they will be quick to grouse about training they think is beneath them. Rather, it is a rejection of what, in the Navy, we call "rudder orders."

   Normal orders to the helmsman tell him what course to steer. "Come right to course 270," for example. "Rudder orders" are when you not only give the helmsman the new course to steer but tell him how many degrees of rudder he is to use to come to that course. "Right 15 degrees of rudder . . . ease your rudder to 10 degrees . . . ease your rudder to 5 degrees and steady on course 270."

   As with the helmsman in very restricted waters, there will be times when you must tell your analyst what you need him to do and tell him precisely how to do it. This might be the case when a deadline is ludicrously tight, or when some of your analyst's normal array of options for proceeding will backfire. You might have to say, for example, "I need you to analyze the Yemeni president's options. I want it to be a single page examining these three sources. In fact, I need you to open the piece with source number three. And I need this on my desk by 6:30." You can be confident that, hearing this, the analyst will be thinking, "Well, why don't you just do it yourself?" If you find yourself having to give such specific directions, you *must* at least amplify with an explanation of each constraint.

   But such specific direction should be the exception, not the rule. If you are routinely providing such direction, the analyst will hear

one message: "I don't trust you." And the analyst will return the sentiment.

2. *Being told the "right" answer*. Analysts are independent thinkers, not your scribes. If you want to do the thinking for your unit, hire a different kind of subordinate to take dictation.

   One of your legitimate jobs is to tell an analyst when you are not convinced that he has given you the right answer. You have not found his evidence or reasoning compelling, and he must do more to make his case, or he must broaden his list of possible explanations. This would be a case of you representing the customer and holding your analyst's work to a high standard.

   It is also legitimate to fully discuss the topic with your analyst. You will find yourself sitting down with her, listening to her findings, kicking ideas around, and offering your own thoughts and experience.

   But it is not legitimate to pronounce the "right" answer and then close your mind to alternatives. That is ideology, not analysis.

3. *A draft stuck in your in-box*. Every analyst has experienced this, and every analyst hates it. She has worked hard to research a topic and to craft her findings into lucid prose. She has regarded this as her most important work, a serious investment of her time and energy that you have endorsed. And now that she has done her best on it, she has turned it in to you for review. And it is sitting there . . . ripening in your in-box. Your excuse—and often it is actually true—is that you are busy with other inescapable priorities. But what she hears is that the least important thing you are doing today is more important than her labor of weeks or months.

   There is no single solution to this dilemma. You will certainly have instances where more pressing business prevents you from reviewing the draft promptly. But there are a handful of things that, depending on the situation, may be available to ameliorate the problem. First, communicate. Honestly communicate your best prediction of how soon you are going to be able to turn to the paper. Second, *read* it as soon as you can. Reading it is not the same as reviewing it critically. But that first quick read will tell you whether the paper is ready to be reviewed, or whether it needs more research, a different structure, or clarification of some points. Sometimes that quick first read will serve to immerse you in the paper, and you'll find yourself finished with the review that you had intended to put off. Third, remember you are not the only competent reviewer in your organization. (If you are, that is a business bottleneck you need to fix.) Sometimes you just need

to get over yourself and hand the paper to a colleague to review. Finally, deal with the analyst's perception of your disrespect. Find a way to convince her that her product is, indeed, important to you and that she is a valued member of your team whose time you do not regard as disposable.

4. *Not getting credit.* This is also connected to respect. Analysts crave respect. Due credit for their work is both a sign of, and an avenue to, respect.

This is harder than it sounds. The business of analysis generally is the business of supporting someone else who will take an action. The analyst usually is behind the scenes. The action taker—who, by the way, bears the risk—will get the credit or blame for the action. Analysis might be the catalyst for a brilliant action but will rarely be given credit for it.

Another difficulty in handing out proper credit is the team approach to much of today's analysis. The cooperative production of analysis has become the norm in many analytic organizations, with the lone analyst being an anomaly. Doug MacEachon, CIA's senior leader of analysis in the mid-1990s, used to complain that the list of contributors to our papers had gotten so long that he began looking for "Best Boy and Key Grip." With credit being given to a list of names, the name of the principal author or intellectual leader of the project can be lost in a sea of trivial contributors.

The newspaper world deals with this strain with bylines at the top of articles and contributors at the bottom. This approach is unavailable in today's CIA. Although we went back and forth on this point in my career, when I retired the policy was to publish papers without the names of the drafters. The reasoning was twofold. First, the personal security of the analyst was protected in case the paper leaked. Second, our philosophy was that every paper is a product of the organization—drafters, collectors, collaborators, reviewers, designers, and printers—and the whole organization stands behind it.

The final difficulty in giving credit can be found in the schizophrenia of the analysts. As an executive, I frequently called or sent a note to the lead author of excellent papers, telling them how impressed I was with their product. *Every* time I did this, the author demurred. "Oh, thank you, sir, but I can't take credit for this. There were many of us and . . ." Well, bless their hearts.

Despite all these complications, start with the reality that analysts crave respect. Find ways to identify their individual contributions

and give them credit accordingly. The single biggest trick in all of this: PAY ATTENTION!

5. *Being misquoted.* This is connected to the analysts' craving for respect and credit but runs in the opposite direction. All analysts fear having something they didn't say being held against them. An intelligence failure happens and this misquote is an albatross dangling from their necks.

Leaders of analysis are prone to violating this sensitivity. Frequently, we speak for the analysis, paraphrasing its key findings, and drawing them from our imperfect memory. Frequently, we synthesize the analysis, working to find the essence of the thought, the pure idea shed of distracting and (sometimes important) nuance. Occasionally, we prove we are human by completely misunderstanding an analytic line, getting it wrong, but then dutifully giving credit for the incorrect line to the analyst we thought it came from.

What can we do about this? Make your best effort to quote your analysts accurately. When you are synthesizing their points, consult them. When you strip away their nuance, ask yourself (and them) what you are risking. And most important, establish an environment that *requires* them to speak up when you have been stupid. Finally, my mother's rule: when you have made a mess, clean it up.

6. *Bullies.* There is something deeply psychological in this one, but I'm not competent to diagnose it. I just know it's true. Analysts hate bullies. Deeply. Viscerally.

And, as in junior high, they encounter bullies frequently. They encounter the rough and ready "men of action" who dismiss them as "some Poindexter" who couldn't survive in the real world. They encounter people of power who press them to give analysis a subservient spin. They even encounter other analysts who are intellectual bullies, using their logic or expertise to beat into silence any who disagree. And of course, they encounter you, their leaders, some of whom brook no dissent. If you are one of those, have no doubt: your analysts hate you.

What is required of you here? First, help your analysts understand when and how to stand up to bullies. Second, help your analysts thicken their hides and ignore much of the bullying they encounter. Finally, make certain that their analysis is not being influenced by the bullying—that they are not caught up in the emotion of the situation and losing their objectivity.

7. *Having to answer the same question over and over.* In the heart of every analyst is the hard-bitten general, saying, "I hate to win the same ground twice!" They like to feel like they are getting somewhere. Once they feel that they have satisfactorily answered a question, they hate to have to come back to it for the same customer. From my experience, this amounts to "hate" in two situations. One situation arises when the analysts' leader says, "I think it is time to update the customer on this topic." In response, the analyst reflexively chooses from the following menu of responses: (1) We wrote on that just recently; (2) Nothing has changed in the situation; (3) Did the customer specifically ask for this? They feel like your request breaks their momentum and moves them back two squares.

The other situation arises when the customer disliked the answer he got the last time and wants a reexamination. This triggers mild irritation when the analyst suspects the customer is skeptical. It triggers a much stronger emotion when the analyst thinks the customer's mind is closed. "Since you don't believe anything I am telling you, why do you keep asking me?" The analyst smells an ideologue and perhaps a bully.

The leader's best tool here is situational awareness. Ask, What is really going on here? Did we really report on the situation "recently"? My experience is that analysts' definition of "recently" is off by several months. Is the customer hard to convince for a good reason? Then it is incumbent on us to work harder to find the best evidence, to make the most compelling case, and to challenge our own assumptions. Is the customer really trying to bully the analysts? In such cases, at some point it is your job to draw a line and say to the customer, "enough." As I saw DDI Jami Miscik tell senior customers several times, "You have seen our analysis; it hasn't changed; we will update you when significant new evidence emerges."

8. *Having to listen to "idiots."* Oddly, this was especially a gripe of my best analysts. Who are the idiots? Any analyst whom your analysts regard as sloppy, or dilettante, or biased. They are analysts with whom your analyst must coordinate drafts or analysts sending their own inferior products to your customers. At heart, most good analysts wish that these "idiots" were not allowed to publish or speak. You'll hear them complain, "They're just putting noise in the system, confusing our customers!" But as leaders, we not only fail to silence "those idiots," we must require our good analysts to deal with them and their message.

There are several things going on here that you have to teach your analysts to appreciate (or at least tolerate). First, "those idiots" force your analysts to hone their own case, tighten their argumentation, and clarify their points. In the end the customer gets a better product. Second, sometimes the "idiots" are right. Sometimes they simply get lucky, making a guess that turns out to be correct. Sometimes, because of their lesser expertise, the "idiots" are not as fixated on precedent and pattern as experts often are. Third, your analysts are deluded if they think the "idiots" can be silenced. Our customers will always receive analysis or pseudo-analysis from many sources; your analysts must acknowledge, compete with, and sometimes deal with those alternative views, not just wish them away. Finally, your analysts' contempt for "those idiots" reveals an arrogance you need to address.

9. *Monday morning quarterbacks.* These are the people who, after the game, pontificate about what the analyst *should* have seen, or thought, or produced. In the intelligence community, we even formalize the function of Monday morning quarterback, especially after suspected intelligence failures, with the post-mortem review. No analyst whose work has been criticized in a post mortem feels fairly treated. The analyst hears a shrill accusation, "We can't believe you missed *that!*" And the analyst sinks deeper into his cynical self. Reality seems clear, cause and effect seems inevitable, after the fact. But in the middle of the game, nothing is so clear. And unlike on the football field, where just one game is being played, in an analyst's routine, several games are being juggled—other projects and responsibilities are competing for an analyst's attention.

There are several things a leader can do to help in this situation, but the leader *cannot* do what the analysts most hope for: make the post mortem go away. If analysis is going to be a key player in decision making—in other words, if analysis is going to matter—expect it to be held up to scrutiny after each significant failure. And *our own* examination of our work is vital—clear-eyed evaluation of what we did well and what we can improve. So short of preventing the pain, how can a leader help?

The leader can brace the analyst for the inevitable. Just as decision makers cannot hide from the results of their gambles, the analysis supporting them is fair game for judgment. Knowing that such scrutiny is coming can even help keep us honest, can keep our own complacency at bay. At minimum, the leader can help the analysts steel themselves for the experience. Even better, the leader

can help the analysts discriminate between the Monday morning quarterbacks who should be dismissed, the ones who should be humored, and the ones who should be seriously engaged.

The leader can establish an environment in which constructive criticism is normal. Some businesses do this well. For example, Pixar employees are expected to give constructive feedback on each other's work (Sims 2011; Sims describes Pixar's effort to build a culture where "there's no penalty for criticizing the work"). Or look at some Army training settings, where a "hot wash-up" happens after each exercise, picking apart what decisions were made and why. Part of the leader's responsibility here is to not tolerate *un*constructive criticism.

Finally, the leader can embrace and engender an attitude of suitable humility. By "embrace" I mean the leader can visibly step up to his own responsibility for any analytic failure in his organization. By "engender" I mean the leader can consistently challenge the intellectual arrogance to which analysts are prone. By "suitable humility" I mean an attitude open to learning opportunities, dedicated to constant improvement, and acknowledging that our best is all that we can do. I distinguish this from *unsuitable* humility, to which leaders of analysis are often prone. I used to post one rule on the whiteboard at the start of meetings where my staff—all of them leaders—would assess our organization's performance: "NO WE-SUCKATHON!" This addressed a tendency to look at our work and launch into a death spiral of self-flagellation. Try to maintain a healthy balance between humility and pride.

10. *Being out of the loop.* Of things analysts hate, this might be the biggest. It is certainly the one I encountered most often in three decades of working in analysis. There is nothing more inhibiting to an analyst than the feeling that you will look stupid if you say something that others in the room *know* to be wrong because they have a piece of information you do not. If you suspect they know something you don't, you will tend to just shut up. At the same time, you will be seething because they have a secret that hasn't been shared with you. Everybody is playing this game of five-card stud, but you have been dealt four cards. More than feeling disadvantaged, you feel offended.

This is not irritation at having incomplete information. That is the analyst's world. The analyst's job starts with information gaps. And it is not irritation that *someone* knows something you don't. The foe will always know something you do not, and your job is to figure it out.

Rather, it is irritation that someone *on your side* knows something you don't. It might be a collector, it might be a partner, it might be a customer, or it might be the analyst's leader.

In the world of classified intelligence, this is the issue of "need to know." That is, there is a category of collected intelligence that is shown only to individuals with a certified "need to know" that material. Intelligence analysts understand the "need to know" principle intellectually, but they have too often seen it as a way of restricting intelligence to a ridiculously small circle that excludes them. They also resent that "need to know" too often is enforced by people who don't understand the analyst's work well enough to anticipate the analyst's need. They resent that "need to know" is sometimes really "need to plead"; that is, a requirement to beg for what analysts believe is rightfully theirs. And they resent that they cannot even plead for intelligence that they don't know exists.

All of these weaknesses have long been evident to senior leaders of intelligence. Several intelligence community executives, after the establishment of the Director of National Intelligence, said they would replace the principle of "need to know" with one of "need to share." This would put the burden on collectors to err on the side of sharing their information with analysts. Enforcement has been spotty, and at least some intelligence community executives don't use the "need to share" mantra anymore. The WikiLeaks and Snowden scandals show real danger in oversharing.

But the hatred of being out of the loop is not restricted to analysts in the world of classified intelligence. In the corporate world, many analysts encounter not just trade secrets but hoarders of inside information. Also I have participated in dozens of conferences where academic experts with no access to classified information would discuss substance with analysts inside the intelligence community. Almost every time, at least one of the academics would reveal a deep-seated feeling of disadvantage. Almost every time, the academic would ask questions designed to at least discover whether meaningful classified information exists that would change their assessments.

And analysts everywhere bristle when they learn that their bosses had relevant information they did not deign to share. It might be an insight about a conversation with the customer that would have changed the answer the analyst developed. It might be a boss's knowledge of a changing landscape that makes obsolete the analyst's approach to a project. Or it simply might be the boss who knows, but doesn't articulate clearly, what he or she wants the analyst's project to achieve.

So what can you do about your analysts' hatred of being out of the loop? First, as with so much else in leadership, *communicate, communicate, communicate*. Don't be the boss I just described who knows what he or she wants from the analyst but doesn't tell the analyst. If you have to make a "need to know" decision that rules against the analyst, communicate your reasoning and make a commitment to reevaluate the situation as it develops.

Second, be a loop-opening champion of the analysts. Work visibly and relentlessly to help your analysts get access to information that can help them. Bring your analysts with you to meet with customers face to face. Talk to your analysts about what the "front office" is thinking and planning. Work to get your analysts into decision-making meetings so they can see the impact (or absence of impact) of their analysis.

Third, expect that the analysts will hate anything short of perfection in this area and that you will be unable to deliver perfection. Your only obligation is to do your best to deliver progress.

All of this amounts to being attentive to the complex human individuals who call you "boss." It is about being sensitive to analysts' tendencies and diversity—what they crave and what they hate. It doesn't require pandering to their pettiness or selfishness or spoiling them in any way. And it doesn't involve protecting them from the world's harsh realities. It amounts to stepping out of your head and into theirs to bring out their best and stem their worst. They are by far your most precious asset. Motivating them, earning their trust—in simplest terms, *leading* them—requires understanding them.

KEY THEMES ●

Avoid these misconceptions about analysis and analysts:

- All analysis is the same.

- All analysts *think* like I do (they use my approach to reasoning).

- Analysts are tools—*thinking machines*—for you to use.

- I am their most important influence. (Sometimes that's true, but sometimes their peers or the workplace culture will dominate.)

Here are ten things you can expect your analysts to hate. (You don't control all ten.)

- Being told *how* to think.

- Being told the "right" answer.

- A draft stuck in your in box.

- Not getting credit for their ideas/insights.

- Being misquoted.

- Bullies (you or anyone).

- Having to answer the same question over and over.

- Having to listen to "idiots" (people whose reasoning they have dismissed).

- Monday morning quarterbacks (people who have the benefit of hindsight).

- Being out of the loop.

Don't think you are going to protect your analysts from everything they hate. Some of these things (like bullies) come with the territory. You can help your analysts respond maturely and productively. But if you trigger these irritations needlessly and repeatedly, one of the things they hate will be you.