

# Sāls LETTER

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*Information and tips for pharmaceutical executives*

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## **The top 10 pharma companies by 2013 revenue**

1. Johnson and Johnson
2. Novartis
3. Roche
4. Pfizer
5. Sanofi Aventis
6. GSK
7. Merck
8. Bayer Health Care
9. AstraZeneca
10. Eli Lilly

The earnings reports for the biggest of Big Pharma are all in. Bayer reported last week, making it possible to see how they stacked up as they came into the new year. There are no big surprises. Pfizer ([\\$PFE](#)) and Merck & Co. ([\\$MRK](#)), with ongoing patent issues and reorganizations, saw their positions fall a couple of notches, and AbbVie ([\\$ABBV](#)), having been spun off from Abbott Laboratories ([\\$ABT](#)) at the beginning of the year, didn't quite make the top 10. Its disappearance allowed Eli Lilly & Co. ([\\$LLY](#)) to make the list. It also helped Bayer HealthCare move up a couple of notches. Here's [last year's special report](#) if you make comparisons. After the major patent crashes of 2012, last year was more of a transitional period. Johnson & Johnson ([\\$JNJ](#)), Novartis ([\\$NVS](#)), Roche ([\\$RHHBY](#)), GlaxoSmithKline ([\\$GSK](#)), Eli Lilly and Bayer saw their revenues rise, although only J&J and Bayer had an appreciable change. Bayer's pharma revenues, combined with its consumer health unit, saw revenue growth of 7.6% based on dollars. J&J's number was up 6.7%, driven in large part by its pharma division. The others were flat or had growth of less than 3%. Pfizer, Sanofi ([\\$SNY](#)), Merck & Co. and AstraZeneca ([\\$AZN](#)) were on the revenue-eroding end of the spectrum. Patent losses on blockbusters figured into most of the declines. Merck, whose revenues were off 6.8%, lost the patent on [Singulair](#). Pfizer, which has yet to get past the sales erosion from the 2011 patent loss of [Lipitor](#), saw its revenues fade 6%. Interestingly, Lipitor generics also rained on AstraZeneca's revenue parade, cutting sales of its cholesterol-lowering drug [Crestor](#) by 9% for the year; AZ's revenues were off 8% across the board. Sanofi's revenues were down 5.7%, undermined by a host of issues, including the patent loss on [Plavix](#).

## **The 10 best-selling drugs of 2013**

1. Humira
2. Enbrel
3. Remicade
4. Adavir / Seratide

5. Lantus
6. Rituxan
7. Mab Thera
8. Avastin
9. Herceptin
10. Crestor

There has been talk in recent years about how the industry should expect fewer blockbusters and how drugmakers need to look toward selling more products for fewer dollars, euros, pounds or yen. But it is the big sellers, the blockbusters--no, megablockbusters--that drug execs aspire to develop. And a look at the top 10 best-selling drugs globally can't help but impress with its big numbers. First of all, each of the top 10 best-selling drugs in the world knocked out more than \$5.5 billion in sales last year, according to data provided by the market intelligence gurus at [EvaluatePharma](#). Together, the top 10 turned in \$76.38 billion in sales. Yes, that's more than \$75 billion in sales from just 10 products. One other drug, Eli Lilly's ([\\$LLY](#)) [Cymbalta](#), topped the \$5 billion mark, but having lost its patent in December, it's headed for a serious nosedive this year. The treatment categories that these 10 represent are also pretty interesting. The top three best-selling drugs, [Humira](#) from AbbVie ([\\$ABBV](#)), [Enbrel](#) from Amgen ([\\$AMGN](#)) and Pfizer ([\\$PFE](#)) and [Remicade](#), which Janssen shares with Merck ([\\$MRK](#)), all treat rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and other autoimmune diseases. [Rituxan](#), Roche's ([\\$RHHBY](#)) cancer drug which comes in at No. 6, is also used frequently for RA. By the way, Roche has the most drugs on the list--three--with colon cancer treatment [Avastin](#) and breast cancer treatment [Herceptin](#) falling in behind Rituxan, which is approved for a number of uses, including chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

## **Black box warning for antidepressants spelled the death of litigation**

There used to be a legal specialty built by plaintiff attorneys around filing lawsuits against antidepressant makers and then settling them. But the [black box](#) warning put on antidepressants in 2004 has turned out to be a shroud for the once lucrative legal business.

The debate over whether the warning was a good thing ultimately has yet to be settled, however. A study in the June issue of *British Medical Journal* found that there has

been an increase in suicides among teens and young adults in the U.S. since the black box warnings were added and antidepressant use in those groups has fallen off. U.S. courts once brimmed with hundreds of lawsuits against Paxil producer GlaxoSmithKline (\$GSK), Cymbalta maker Eli Lilly (\$LLY) and others. Now only a few remain, according to the *Indianapolis Star*. Houston lawyer Andy Vickery was one of those attorneys who flourished in the days when the media was full of reports of people on antidepressants who committed suicide, or murder, or both. But Vickery, the only trial lawyer to win an antidepressant suicide case before a jury, said that business has all but vanished. He won a \$6.5 million judgment against GlaxoSmithKline in a 2001 case tied to a Wyoming man who three years earlier shot and killed his wife, daughter and granddaughter, before turning the gun on himself. The case settled after GSK appealed. In fact, most of the cases were settled. But the Wyoming case is believed by Vickery and others to have been a turning point, leading the FDA to more closely examine the tie between antidepressant use and suicidal actions. The suicide warning, added for adolescents in 2004, was extended to include young adults in 2007.

### **Study: Suicides rise in wake of 'black box' warnings on antidepressants**

In 2004, the FDA warned the public that antidepressant use could increase the risk of suicidal thoughts or actions in adolescents--and it required all makers of antidepressant drugs to add to the drugs a dreaded "black box" warning. Now a group of researchers from Harvard is presenting rather compelling evidence that the FDA's action might have been a mistake. In a study published in the *British Medical Journal*, the researchers report that attempted suicides by adolescents increased 21.7% two years after the FDA's warning, as antidepressant use fell by 31%. Attempted suicides among people between the ages of 18 and 29 soared 33.7%. The researchers came to those numbers by analyzing insurance claims data from 11 companies, using reports of drug poisonings to determine suicide attempts. "After the widely publicized warnings we saw a substantial reduction in antidepressant use in all age groups," said the study's lead author, Christine Lu, an instructor at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute, during an interview with *Bloomberg*. "Warnings, especially widely publicized warnings, may have unintended consequences." The FDA's actions against antidepressants had ramifications well beyond America's borders. In 2008, the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency in the U.K. looked over the FDA's review of antidepressant safety

data and concluded that the risk of suicide did indeed increase in young people who were taking the drugs. It proceeded to order a revising of the labels on a broad range of antidepressants, including Eli Lilly's (\$LLY) Prozac, Pfizer's (\$PFE) Effexor, and GlaxoSmithKline's (\$GSK) Wellbutrin.

### **Big Pharma, Big Biotech prepare for showdown in next-gen psoriasis market**

The good news for Eli Lilly: Its experimental late-stage psoriasis drug has topped Pfizer (\$PFE) and Amgen's (\$AMGN) blockbuster Enbrel in a head-to-head study. The not-so-good news: It's not the only one. Lilly (\$LLY), Novartis (\$NVS), Celgene (\$CELG), Amgen, AstraZeneca (\$AZN) and more are accelerating toward FDA approval, with the first decisions coming as soon as next month. Their next challenge? Standing out from the crowd. Lilly's candidate, ixekizumab, surpassed Enbrel in a Phase III study, with 31% to 41% of patients achieving clear skin after 12 weeks of treatment compared with just 5% to 7% of Enbrel patients. The results were strong enough to back a regulatory filing in the first half of next year, the Indianapolis drugmaker said. Obviously, Enbrel won't be Lilly's main competition--or anywhere close to it--if and when ixekizumab makes it to market. Just last month, Novartis' in-development secukinumab topped Enbrel in another Phase III study, which saw more than half of the patients in the experimental drug arm achieve a skin clearance rate of 90% or more. Just 20.7% of the patients in the Enbrel arm hit that mark.

### **Listen to celebrity drug ads? Patients do hear, but they don't obey**

Celebrities are making more and more appearances in pharma's DTC advertising, from Jon Bon Jovi repping Pfizer's (\$PFE) Advil to Rascal Flatts signing on to help promote Pfizer's new over-the-counter Nexium. The way drugmakers see it, celeb endorsements help their meds score with patients the same way they help sell consumer goods. Or do they? Not so much, according to a new study published in the *International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing*. In fact, the presence of a celebrity endorser in a disease-specific DTC ad has a "negligible" impact on consumers, its authors say. In the study, researchers showed respondents ads featuring a celebrity--actor Harrison Ford or actress Ashley Judd--or ads with altered images that reflected the age and sex of the two celebrities without giving away their identities, *Pharmafile* reports. Participants then completed

questionnaires detailing their reactions. While study respondents did pay more attention to the celebrity-containing ads and view them as more credible, that didn't translate into influence. The personal relevance of the advertisements--not the celebrities making the pitches--affected consumer attitudes toward the ad and company. "This research demonstrates that even if consumers deem the celebrity as more credible and pay significantly greater attention to the ad, it does not change the desire to act and search for more information, discuss the disease with their doctor or ask for a prescription," joint author Brent Rollins of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine said, as quoted by *Pharmafile*. So if celebrities aren't getting the job done, where should pharma turn? Two words: the Internet.

### **Repros gets a lift from a head-to-head testosterone study**

Repros Therapeutics got a boost from its announcement that its late-stage testosterone treatment beat out the topical Androgel in helping patients with low testosterone, or hypogonadism. Androgel performed particularly poorly in the study, beaten out by the placebo as well on one of the primary endpoints for sperm concentration. Repros (\$RPRX) says its treatment, Androxal, also came out on top on the number of complete responders in the study. Repros shares had jumped 13% by mid-morning on Thursday after taking some twists and turns on the market. Repros is shooting to add some luster to its label with this study, one of two comparing its therapy with a competing testosterone treatment. The Texas-based biotech had to delay its expected filing for the therapy after running into trouble with regulators at the FDA, who questioned their selection of patients in a pivotal study. Now the plan is to file in the fourth quarter, hoping to add some positive comparison results in the process.

### **Advances in Robotic Surgery**

Surfing is a huge part of Charles Scalice's life. So when the Seal Beach resident was diagnosed with cancer in February 2012, he searched for the least invasive treatment option, one that would give him the best shot at a good outcome and allow him to get back on his board as quickly as possible. Like hundreds of thousands of other Americans, Scalice chose robotic surgery. After undergoing the procedure at UC Irvine Health, Scalice is now free of rectal cancer and back riding the waves at Sunset Beach. "I believe in robotic surgery," Scalice said. "I've had surgery before and I know what it's like to be cut open." Widely introduced in 2003, the minimally invasive da Vinci robotic

surgical system has revolutionized a range of procedures most notably urological, gynecological and colorectal. While da Vinci still dominates the robotics field, Titan Medical is looking to carve out its own niche targeting ear, nose and throat operations with its smaller Sport system, due in 2015. Robotics is even expanding to other treatments such as the robot-controlled proton radiation delivery system at Loma Linda University Medical Center. "The benefits of minimally invasive surgery are enormous," said Dr. Naghmeh S. Saberi, assistant clinical professor in UC Irvine's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. "It decreases the time the patient is in the hospital, recovery time is much faster, there is no large incision to heal or major scars, and patients can return to work or their normal lifestyle more quickly."

Here's how it works: Specialized surgeons, not robots, guide the procedures by hand movements while viewing a high-resolution 3-D image of the surgical site on a computer console. Small instruments and cameras inserted into the body through small incisions are precisely controlled by robotic arms. The tiny instruments and arms can go where human hands can't, and the imaging improves on normal eyesight. Originally conceived as technology that could someday allow surgeons to perform operations from hundreds of miles away via satellite link, robotics continues to evolve. The new generation, the da Vinci Si HD, allows two surgeons to work together on separate consoles, able to switch control at any time during more complex surgeries.

### **Curiosity Is as Important as Intelligence**

There seems to be wide support for the idea that we are living in an "age of complexity", which implies that the world has never been more intricate. This idea is based on the rapid pace of technological changes, and the vast amount of information that we are generating (the two are related). Yet consider that philosophers like Leibniz (17<sup>th</sup> century) and Diderot (18<sup>th</sup> century) were already complaining about information overload. The "horrible mass of books" they referred to may have represented only a tiny portion of what we know today, but much of what we know today will be equally insignificant to future generations. In any event, the relative complexity of different eras is of little matter to the person who is simply struggling to cope with it in everyday life. So perhaps the right question is not "Is this era more complex?" but "Why are some people more able to manage complexity?" Although complexity is context-dependent, it is also determined by a person's disposition. In particular, there are three key psychological qualities that enhance our

ability to manage complexity: **1. IQ:** As most people know, IQ stands for intellectual quotient and refers to mental ability. What fewer people know, or like to accept, is that IQ *does* affect a wide range of real-world outcomes, such as [job performance](#) and [objective career success](#). The main reason is that higher levels of IQ enable people to learn and solve novel problems faster. At face value, [IQ tests](#) seem quite abstract, mathematical, and disconnected from everyday life problems, yet they are a powerful tool to predict our ability to manage complexity. In fact, IQ is a [much stronger](#) predictor of performance on complex tasks than on simple ones. Complex environments are richer in information, which creates more [cognitive load](#) and demands more brainpower or deliberate thinking from us; we cannot navigate them in autopilot (or Kahneman's [system 1](#) thinking). IQ is a measure of that brainpower, just like megabytes or processing speed are a measure of the operations a computer can perform, and at what speed. Unsurprisingly, there is a [substantial correlation](#) between IQ and working memory, our mental capacity for handling multiple pieces of temporary information at once. Try memorizing a phone number while asking someone for directions and remembering your shopping list, and you will get a good sense of your IQ. (Unfortunately, [research](#) shows that working memory training does not enhance our long-term ability to deal with complexity, though [some evidence](#) suggests that it delays mental decline in older people, as per the “use it or lose it” theory.) **2) EQ:** EQ stands for [emotional quotient](#) and concerns our ability to perceive, control, and express emotions. EQ relates to complexity management in three main ways. First, individuals with higher EQ are [less susceptible](#) to stress and anxiety. Since complex situations are resourceful and demanding, they are likely to induce pressure and stress, but high EQ acts as a buffer. Second, EQ is a key ingredient of [interpersonal skills](#), which means that people with higher EQ are better equipped to navigate complex organizational politics and advance in their careers. Indeed, even in today's hyper-connected world what most employers look for is not technical expertise, but [soft skills](#), especially when it comes to management and leadership roles. Third, people with higher EQ tend to be [more entrepreneurial](#), so they are more proactive at exploiting opportunities, taking risks, and turning creative ideas into actual innovations. All this makes EQ an important quality for adapting to uncertain, unpredictable, and complex environments. **3) CQ:** CQ stands for curiosity quotient and concerns having a [hungry mind](#). People with higher CQ are more inquisitive and open to new experiences. They find novelty exciting and are quickly bored with routine. They tend to generate many

original ideas and are counter-conformist. It has not been as deeply studied as EQ and IQ, but there's some evidence to suggest it is just as important when it comes to managing complexity in two major ways. First, individuals with higher CQ are generally more [tolerant of ambiguity](#). This nuanced, sophisticated, subtle thinking style defines the very essence of complexity. Second, CQ leads to higher levels of [intellectual investment](#) and knowledge acquisition over time, especially in formal domains of education, such as science and art (note: this is of course different from IQ's measurement of raw intellectual horsepower). Knowledge and expertise, much like experience, translate complex situations into familiar ones, so CQ is the ultimate tool to produce simple solutions for complex problems. Although IQ is hard to coach, EQ and CQ can be developed. As Albert Einstein famously said: ““I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.”

## Unpredictable Work Hours Are Stressing Too Many People Out

In the modern workforce, control over your time is a valuable form of currency: for many, it's an equal aspiration to getting rich (if it's any proof, “control your time” has almost 200,000,000 more mentions on Google than “make more money”). And yet as jobs become ever more dependent on online connectivity and technology, more of us are losing control over our time. Workers at the top and bottom of the economic spectrum feel the loss of control dearly, and technology is often the culprit. Whether it's a buzzing smartphone or software that tracks our whereabouts, the more hard to predict our schedules become, the less real flexibility many of us have. Researchers, company executives, and advocates fought for decades to increase workplace flexibility. I remember my own initial experience of it: my Blackberry and VPN didn't yet feel like a yoke, but rather a truly empowering instrument that allowed me freedom to work on my terms. Now, the fight for flexibility feels like a red herring, masking the huge erosion of agency over our own time, whether at work or not. What if it's not about flex, but about helping managers and workers set good boundaries, so that we all feel a reasonable level of control over our lives? What if the problem isn't one of flexibility, but variability? Today, workplace flexibility *is* the goal for many firms and its implementation is [increasing](#) across the board. But we can no longer kid ourselves that increased “flexibility” is enough to cope with increasing work variability. Here are two powerful examples, from opposite ends of the income spectrum. Retail workers are often forced to work hours

that may seem flexible but in truth are just highly variable. Software that helps retailers optimize staffing against levels of store traffic creates chaos for working families, as *New York Times* reporter Jodi Kantor so vividly illustrated in a [recent story](#) featuring days in the life of a Starbucks barista, Jannette Navarro. Kantor writes, “in interviews with current and recent workers at 17 Starbucks outlets around the country, only two said they received a week's notice of their hours; some got as little as one day.” From a corporate perspective, scheduling software takes a time-consuming task away from store supervisors and does it much more efficiently. Using analytics to schedule workers on an as-needed basis saves labor costs and also ensures adequate staffing during peak periods. But are the upsides enough to compensate for the havoc wreaked on workers' lives? Starbucks quickly [promised](#) to revise its scheduling practices so that work hours must be posted at least one week in advance.

While the problem is vastly more challenging for those at the bottom of the economic ladder, those who work in well-paid, white collar jobs also feel the effects of variability. Employees at Boston Consulting Group, one of the most elite workplaces there is, suffered the stress created by lack of control over their work hours. Deborah Lovich, a BCG Partner who engaged Harvard Business School Professor Leslie Perlow, [writes](#): “The big problem wasn't so much the long hours and incessant travel. Our consultants expected that when they joined BCG. Rather, Perlow discovered, it was the complete lack of predictability or control they had over their daily lives.” “[When](#) consultants woke up in the morning, they literally had no idea how many hours they would be putting in that day. When Perlow asked them in the morning how long they expected to work that day, they underestimated by up to 30 percent. For data-driven people like us, those numbers really hit us.” Lovich worked with Perlow to offer BCG employees predictable time off. Simple interventions, such as giving team members more control over how they define their schedule, raised productivity and intent to stay with the company. Whether we are low-paid hourly workers or highly-salaried professionals, we are witnessing a shift: What was originally a case for greater flexibility has morphed into a need to control increasing variability. In the end, it's control over your day that empowers people and gives satisfaction at work. We all must have control over our time in order to function and create solid families and normal lives. Jannette Navarro's lack of control over her shift schedule helped cripple any sense of routine for her son, and made basic steps towards gaining a leg up, such as getting a driver's license or finish

her education, impossible. Leslie Perlow's work with consultant teams found lack of control over one's schedule drives dissatisfaction and turnover. Those who have been influential in demanding workplaces with greater flexibility need to think holistically about what happens next. Leaders in work redesign not only have to make work more flexible, but make work hours more predictable.

What the Experts Say: Creating a workplace where employees feel included is directly connected to worker retention and growth, says Jeanine Prime, leader of the Catalyst Research Center for Advancing Leader Effectiveness. Yet many corporate diversity programs focus more on creating a diverse workforce, and too little on the harder job of fostering inclusion. Prime's organization recently completed a survey of 1,500 workers in six countries that showed people feel included when they “simultaneously feel that they both belong, but also that they are unique,” Prime says. When managers can achieve that balance, the business benefits are profound. Employees who feel included are “much more productive, their performance is higher, they are more loyal, they are more trustworthy, and they work harder,” says Christine Riordan, provost and professor of management at the University of Kentucky. Here's how to foster more inclusion on your team. **Set an example.** Inclusive attitudes start at the top. “Most people are blind to the everyday moments that leave others feeling excluded,” says Prime. Managers should take care to constantly examine their biases and behaviors. Be on the look out for what Riordan calls “micro inequities,” which occur when people are treated differently whether it's overlooked, avoided, or ignored by yourself or others. As an example, Riordan cites a woman who complained recently that when she stood with other colleagues in a group, a male colleague only shook hands with the other men. It might be an inadvertent omission, but the woman still felt excluded. “Leaders have to recognize those micro inequities in themselves and others and work to correct them,” says Riordan. **Don't diminish differences** Helping people feel that they belong isn't the same as making them feel interchangeable. Employees want their managers to recognize and value their uniqueness, says Prime, and that means acknowledging “the distinct talents and perspectives they bring to the table.” Leaders might want to say that they are blind to race or gender or sexual orientation, but that attitude can prevent them from seeing instances of ostracism, as well as the unique perspectives that employees can bring to problem-solving

and innovation. “If you say you don't see gender, then you might not recognize when woman scientists don't get mentored or aren't invited onto research projects,” says Riordan. Don't assume that people want their differences erased in order to be part of the group. **Share the spotlight.** According to Catalyst's survey, leaders who support their employees' development are more likely to foster a sense of inclusion. For instance, suggesting that employees rotate as meeting leaders might help an untested employee showcase her value to others. Handing some management responsibilities for a new project to a more introverted worker might help build his confidence and give him facetime with others. “Anything a manager can do to create a positive message that every person is valued and has equal access in that group is a good thing,” says Riordan. **Seek input** One simple way to make employees feel more included, particularly if they are more introverted, is to ask for their input and opinions in front of others. Listening to employees not only signals to them that you value their contributions, but also demonstrates to other employees that everyone has value. Plus, you get the added benefit of a diverse set of opinions. “Inclusive leaders do a good job of drawing out the unique perspectives of different followers and engaging with those different points of view,” says Prime. If an individual still has trouble speaking up or gets interrupted or talked over, keep offering her the floor, and don't be stingy with deserved praise. **Keep at it** Fostering inclusion is an ongoing process. “Being inclusive is not a 'check the box' activity,” says Prime. “It's a way of being, and you never stop working at it.” Changing practices to incorporate inclusive policies and behaviors can be difficult, but creating an environment where everyone feels they can speak up will only result in better business outcomes. Managers “have to be proactive,” says Riordan, because when they are, employees will work more effectively, and your business will reap the rewards. **Principles to Remember Do:** Check your own behavior and biases for tendencies that might make people feel excluded. Empower others it makes them feel trusted and included. Continually work at creating an inclusive culture it's an ongoing process. **Don't:** Gloss over differences people want their unique contributions to be valued. Assume diversity is the same as inclusion. Leave it to chance be proactive about promoting inclusion.

### **Most Work Conflicts Aren't Due to Personality**

Conflict happens everywhere, including in the workplace. When it does, it's tempting to blame it on personalities.

But more often than not, the real underlying cause of workplace strife is the situation itself, rather than the people involved. So, why do we automatically blame our coworkers? Chalk it up to psychology and organizational politics, which cause us to oversimplify and to draw incorrect or incomplete conclusions. There's a good reason why we're inclined to jump to conclusions based on limited information. Most of us are, by nature, “cognitive misers,” a term coined by social psychologists Susan Fiske and Shelley Taylor to describe how people have a tendency to preserve cognitive resources and allocate them only to high-priority matters. And the limited supply of cognitive resources we all have is spread ever-thinner as demands on our time and attention increase. As human beings evolved, our survival depended on being able to quickly identify and differentiate friend from foe, which meant making rapid judgments about the character and intentions of other people or tribes. Focusing on people rather than situations is faster and simpler, and focusing on a few attributes of people, rather than on their complicated entirety, is an additional temptation. Stereotypes are shortcuts that preserve cognitive resources and enable faster interpretations, albeit ones that may be inaccurate, unfair, and harmful. While few people would feel comfortable openly describing one another based on racial, ethnic, or gender stereotypes, most people have no reservations about explaining others' behavior with a personality typology like Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (“She's such an 'INTJ'”), Enneagram, or Color Code (“He's such an 8: Challenger”). Personality or style typologies like Myers-Briggs, Enneagram, the DISC Assessment, Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument, Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument and others have been criticized by academic psychologists for their [unproven or debatable reliability and validity](#). Yet, according to the Association of Test Publishers, the Society for Human Resources, and the publisher of the Myers-Briggs, these assessments are still administered [millions of times](#) per year for personnel selection, executive coaching, team building and conflict resolution. As Annie Murphy Paul argues in her insightful book, *The Cult Of Personality Testing*, these horoscope-like personality classifications at best capture only a small amount of variance in behavior, and in combination only explain tangential aspects of adversarial dynamics in the workplace. Yet, they're frequently relied upon for the purposes of conflict resolution. An ENTP and an ISTJ might have a hard time working together. Then again, so might a Capricorn and a Sagittarius. So might any of us.

The real reasons for conflict are a lot harder to raise and resolve because they are likely to be complex, nuanced,

and politically sensitive. For example, people's interests may truly be opposed; roles and levels of authority may not be correctly defined or delineated; there may be real incentives to compete rather than to collaborate; and there may be little to no accountability or transparency about what people do or say. When two coworkers create a safe and imaginary set of explanations for their conflict ("My coworker is a micromanager," or "My coworker doesn't care whether errors are corrected"), neither of them has to challenge or incur the wrath of others in the organization. It's much easier for them to imagine that they'll work better together if they simply understand each other's personality (or personality type) than it is to realize that they would have to come together to, for example, request that their boss stop pitting them against one another, or to request that HR match rhetoric about collaboration with real incentives to work together. Or, perhaps the conflict is due to someone on the team simply not doing his or her job, in which case talking about personality as being the cause of conflict is a dangerous distraction from the real issue. Personality typologies may even provide rationalizations, for example, if someone says "I am a spontaneous type and that's why I have a tough time with deadlines." Spontaneous or not, they still have to do their work well and on time if they want to minimize conflict with their colleagues or customers. Focusing too much on either hypothetical or irrelevant causes of conflict may be easy and fun in the short term, but it creates the risk over the long term that the underlying causes of conflict will never be addressed or fixed.

**So what's the right approach to resolving conflicts at work?** First, look at the situational dynamics that are causing or worsening conflict, which are likely to be complex and multifaceted. Consider how conflict resolution might necessitate the involvement, support, and commitment of other individuals or teams in the organization. For example, if roles are poorly defined, a boss might need to clarify who is responsible for what. If incentives reward individual rather than team performance, Human Resources can be called in to help better align incentives with organizational goals. Then, think about how both parties might have to take risks to change the status quo: systems, roles, processes, incentives or levels of authority. To do this, ask and discuss the question: "If it weren't the two of us in these roles, what conflict might be expected of *any* two people in these roles?" For example, if I'm a trader and you're in risk management, there is a fundamental difference in our perspectives and priorities. Let's talk about how to

optimize the competing goals of profits versus safety, and risk versus return, instead of first talking about your conservative, data-driven approach to decision making and contrasting it to my more risk-seeking intuitive style. Finally, if you or others feel you must use personality testing as part of conflict resolution, consider using non-categorical, well-validated personality assessments such as the [Hogan Personality Inventory](#) or the IPIP-NEO Assessment of the "Big Five" Personality dimensions (which can be taken for free [here](#)). These tests, which have ample peer-reviewed, psychometric evidence to support their reliability and validity, better explain variance in behavior than do categorical assessments like the Myers-Briggs, and therefore can better explain why conflicts may have unfolded the way they have. And unlike the Myers-Briggs which provides an "I'm OK, you're OK"-type report, the Hogan Personality Inventory and the NEO are likely to identify some hard-hitting development themes for almost anyone brave enough to take them, for example telling you that you are set in your ways, likely to anger easily, and take criticism too personally. While often hard to take, this is precisely the kind of feedback that can help build self-awareness and mutual awareness among two or more people engaged in a conflict. As a colleague of mine likes to say, "treatment without diagnosis is malpractice." Treatment with superficial or inaccurate diagnostic categories can be just as bad. To solve conflict, you need to find, diagnose and address the real causes and effects not imaginary ones.

### WISE MEN'S WISDOM

"Never make your home in a place. Make a home for yourself inside your own head. You'll find what you need to furnish it - memory, friends you can trust, love of learning, and other such things. That way it will go with you wherever you journey." — **Tad Williams**. "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." — **Nelson Mandela**. "The boy who is going to make a great man must not make up his mind merely to overcome a thousand obstacles, but to win in spite of a thousand repulses and defeats." — **Theodore Roosevelt**. "You cannot control what happens to you, but you can control your attitude toward what happens to you, and in that, you will be mastering change rather than allowing it to master you." — **Brian Tracy**. "I never thought of losing, but now that it's happened, the only thing is to do it right. That's my obligation to all the people who believe in me. We all have to take defeats in life." — **Muhammad Ali**. "Our greatest happiness does not depend on the condition of life in

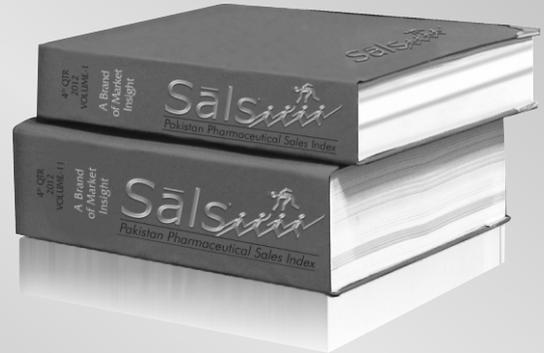
which chance has placed us, but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits.” — **Thomas Jefferson**. “There is nothing so pitiful as a young cynic because he has gone from knowing nothing to believing nothing.” — **Maya Angelou**. “No one saves us but ourselves. No one can and no one may. We ourselves must walk the path.” — **Buddha**

### Don'ts

In Dress and Personal Habits: **1.** Don't neglect personal cleanliness—which is more neglected than careless observers suppose. **2.** Don't wear soiled linen. Be scrupulously particular on this point. **3.** Don't be untidy in anything. Neatness is one of the most important of the minor morals. **4.** Don't neglect the details of the toilet. Many persons, near in other particulars, Carry blackened finger-nail. This is disgusting. **5.** Don't neglect the small hairs that project from the nostrils and grow about the apertures of the ears—small matters of the toilet often overlooked. **6.** Don't cleanse your ears, or your nose, or trim and clean your finger-nails, in public. Cleanliness and neatness in all things pertaining to the person are indispensable, but toilet offices are proper in the privacy of one's apartment only. **7.** Don't use hair-dye. The color is not like nature, and deceives no one. **8.** Don't use hair-oil or pomades. This habit was once quite general, but it is now considered vulgar, and it is certainly not cleanly.

### Business jokes

**Interview with a journalist:** A quote from an interview with the head of a growing company. Journalist asks: - So how many employees are working in your company? - Approximately half of them... **Holidays:** The boss invites his employee: - Do you like warm beer? - Of course not. - And do you like sweaty women? - No. - So you will go on holiday during the winter months. **Command:** Manager for his subordinate: - What are you doing here? - Executing your command. - But I haven't told you anything. - So and I do nothing.



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