

# **CYCLOPRAXIS AUTHORS and AUTHORIZING**

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CycloPraxis has been established as a useful method of identifying and matching work styles to the needs of a business unit as the business develops from an idea, into growth, then profits, and finally lasting customer appreciation.

Praxis is a Greek word meaning “habitual or established practice”. Translated to one’s business routine, it implies the way one naturally does their job. There are many ways to describe praxis; adjectives such as creative, driven, sympathetic, excellent problem solver, organized, efficient, and decisive are all examples. Unfortunately, these adjectives are relative and imprecise. Tests have been derived which measure behavior and personality – key elements of praxis. Myers-Briggs, and Enneagram are two very popular evaluations yielding 16 and 9 “types” respectively. Still, we see many situations where describing a specific job as simply marketing, sales, contractor, or even a trade such as nursing could attract someone with the right background but with a very inappropriate work style.

CycloPraxis is the mapping of worker praxis to the lifecycle stage representing the maturity of any given business unit. For the purposes of cyclopraxis the lifecycle stages are defined as authoring [startup], building [early growth], capitalizing [late growth and maturity], diversifying [really authoring/building a new business unit], and extending [decline]. Authors, builders, capitalizers and the captains who manage them, diversifiers, and extenders best staff these lifecycle stages. Various elements of the praxis of each have been well researched. Authors are responsible for undeterred championing of the initial idea. Builders are personally credited with necessary and important first accomplishments. Capitalizers seek maximum returns by carefully adhering to processes and being mindful of boundaries. Extenders keep both accumulated wisdom alive and key customers supported for as long as possible. Diversifiers and Captains play special roles as managers in the capitalizing stage. Each group has a natural way of working [praxis] that happens to align with the needs of the business as the business moves from lifecycle stage to stage. For more information, see the appendix at the end of this paper. Or better yet, download the companion article “Cyclopraxis in the Business World” available at [www.cyclopraxis.com](http://www.cyclopraxis.com).

This paper is written for Authors [and for those who would like to understand how the author relates to others]. The first section focuses in on the description of the author. This section is followed by how the author is perceived by and works with others. Now the stage is set to examine how the author will perform in the midst of business units in various stages of growth. Lastly, the author’s positive and negative contributions to the startup of a small business unit are discussed.

## **THE AUTHOR**

### **OVERVIEW**

The author praxis is tremendously valuable in the business world. They play a key role in the formation and success of many businesses. The two key beneficial characteristics of the Author are their creativity and their strength of conviction toward their positions. The ‘strength of conviction’ attribute leads others to observe that authors are passionate about their ideas, are risk takers, resist

being found wrong, and are poor listeners. Another characteristic of authors is the propensity to work at a high level of abstraction where 50 percent may be complete enough.

The Author's life is a creative adventure full of exciting possibilities. They constantly look to the environment for opportunities and possibilities. Authors see patterns and connections not obvious to others and at times seem to be able to see into the future. Some Authors are keenly perceptive of people and the today-world around them. They experience a wide range of feelings and intense emotions – mostly positive, but at times negative. Authors are revolutionaries who see possibilities/concepts/challenges, initiate projects, and then apply great energy to getting them underway. They value harmony and good will and bring a zest to life that draws others to their association. They require depth and authenticity in their close relationships and strive for what they believe to be open and honest communications. They dislike routine, schedules, and structure.

Authors as a group are above average in intelligence, willing to take risks, uncomfortable in environments in which they are told what to do, want things done quickly, and are fond of seeing things done their way. They are accustomed to being the dominant person in their business unit. For them, their business IS their life. Business brings challenges, personal pleasure, and an opportunity to be both independent and in control.

Authors have considerable skill in designing approaches to complex problems -- the more complex the problem the better. Due to immense mental capacity, the author will take in the total picture of all issues and propose a unique solution – a solution not likely to be discovered with more traditional, logical, sequential, and ordered problem solving methods. In addition they like to do lots of things at the same time, thereby creating some problems of time management and stress of missed deadlines.

There are times when the author sees an opportunity and their insight and intuition tells them it is right. At such times, they become impulsive and rush into a decision, feeling the chance will disappear if not seized. Other times, decisions will be reached cautiously based on sound analytical reasoning after a period of careful collection of information. Still other times, Authors will seek the opportunity to share latest proposals and hear what others have to say. Even though the Author prefers to generate ideas by themselves, they frequently share them with others at an early stage. Colleagues may be caught off guard by these two different approaches and with the forcefulness that an Author champions either.

Author's minds are a continual source of novel ideas and spontaneous creativity. It is not enough to have an idea. The idea must be revolutionary and visionary. Each arrives with sufficient excitement and clarity that the author leaps to champion the new idea in addition to all the previous ideas. Once an existing idea is articulated and thought through well enough to be convincing to others [perhaps 50% is complete enough], the author's energy is already onto the next. Many authors become regularly distracted from further completion of existing ideas by this next promising possibility. To the author this seems like healthy behavior. Others see quite differently.

Authors have a strong need for others to acknowledge the value of their idea. Such acknowledgement is easy for other authors to give since it is their very nature. But such acknowledgement is very difficult for builders – busy executing on a previous idea where the return on effort is higher – to provide. Capitalizers and Extenders experience similar difficulty. If the idea's value is not

acknowledged, the author will simply crusade harder – until an acknowledgement is earned. The common coping tactic by builders, capitalizers, and extenders is to realize that acknowledging the value of the idea is different than taking any action. A common error by extenders, capitalizers, and especially builders is to take a position that the new idea is without sufficient merit under present circumstances to warrant further consideration. An Author will respond by crusading harder – an activity which is probably counter productive.

Authors struggle with repetition and under-deliver when placed in environments with too much structure. They find predictable situations boring. Kindred to these observations are the reality that Authors dislike working in the details. Authors are more energized to sell their idea than to complete the design. Authors would prefer to be promoting their idea than listening to others; and when they do listen, they often manifest a short attention span. Authors are difficult to understand when they talk in the abstract. These communication preferences often earn the author the reputation of poor teamwork.

One's vantage point can have a powerful influence on one's perception. As might be expected, authors see other authors as normal well-adjusted workers. And from the author's vantage point the other praxes are unimaginative, slow on the uptake, are stuck in yesterday's world, live a predictable existence, are afraid of risks, and are mired in endless detail. These are all valid observations considering the vantage point. Other workers who are so tied up in the day-to-day operational issues that they cannot see the longer-term opportunity quickly frustrate the Author.

Similarly, the other praxes – from their vantage points -- see non-conforming behavior by the author. The mainstream praxes' list of adjectives would include: intolerant, impatient, poor listener, unfocused, reckless. These vantage point observations are developed in greater depth in later sections.

## UNDER STRESS

At times everyone is forced to work in stressful conditions. A dearth of ideas or faltering of creativity rarely causes stress for the author. Instead, stress develops when:

- There is insufficient time to reach a necessary point of completion because there are too many remaining details

In this situation the stress is caused by an uncompromising time and completeness objective. The author will often toil day and night at great personal sacrifice in order to prove their idea feasible and correct. This behavior is the ultimate conviction for the idea. Other situations that cause stress for the author include:

- When someone with authority launches even a simple challenge to the author's idea
- When team members are not ready to engage with the idea because they either are completing other projects or the idea is not sufficiently detailed
- Interfacing with people of different praxis who are more structured, less time urgent, or more organized.

Notice in each of this second group of situations, another person[s] – likely of a different praxis -- causes the stress. In these situations an author frequently responds with even stronger arguments and more vociferous championing for their idea. This is usually a counter-productive response by the author because it rarely has the intended effect with the other party. Indeed, such a reinforcing response by the author frequently causes the other party to exercise their authority in an absolute and final manner.

## THE AUTHOR PRAXIS IN OTHER PERSONALITY TESTING

Meyers Briggs is a popular work preferences assessment tool. Candidates are measured on 4 continuums

- Extroversion to Introversion E/I
- Sensing to Intuition S/N
- Thinking to Feeling T/F
- Judging to Perceiving J/P

There 16 resulting combinations, not at all equally distributed.

An Author's analytical creativity comes most frequently from N and T [Intuition and Thinking] preferences. The Author's championing comes from E [extroverted] preferences. So the Meyers Briggs ENTP is the best match to the cyclopraxis Author. The introverted intuitive and thinking INTP is also creative, but are more the quiet scientist type with less obvious championship. The final type with intuitive and thinking – ENTJ – also has the creativity of authors. However the TJ combination also makes excellent builders and the ENTJ more frequently winds up in building assignments. The ENFP can also be good with creative ideas [more artistic and less analytical than the ENTP above] and shares the enthusiasm for championing their creations. INTP's are also noted for creativity but are more the quiet scientist type and more likely to be expert-extenders engaged in research.

The Enneagram is another popular personality testing model available for free from a variety of places [see [www.enneagraminstitute.com](http://www.enneagraminstitute.com)]. Subjects are scored on each of 9 dimensions yielding a multiplicity of combinations that are difficult to map to functions and professions. Hence, corporate usage is low. The primary descriptions [Achiever, Helper, Loyalist, ...] yield a thought provoking series of options to staffing an authoring business. Authors are sure to score well on the Reformer, Investigator, and Enthusiast dimensions. Authors will likely score lowest on the Helper, Loyalist, and Peacemaker dimensions.

## TYPES OF AUTHORS & NEAR AUTHORS

Not everyone who is creative, visionary, comfortable with risks, or quick to champion their position is a successful author. Successful and productive authoring requires the combination of ALL these characteristics in the right balance. There are a number of near-author situations worthy of discussion:

- The Visionary. Some workers skilled in their roles have an exceptional talent for predicting trends. They may identify the future in supply chain, buyer behavior, globalization, or technological breakthroughs. Such visionaries are of great value to any business unit. However, they would not be authors unless they are also exemplary risk takers and unyielding crusaders.
- The Researcher. Labs around the world – in firms, educational institutions, and government departments -- are filled with very smart and very creative researchers/scientists. Only a few are Authors; most are content to quietly pursue their contributions. Publications in technical journals are their common way of expressing success. Their risk tolerance and aggressive crusading is quite different from the Author described by CycloPraxis. Researchers share more in common with Extenders/Experts than with Authors.
- The Tinkerer. Plenty of people tinker in the lab or at home and are the source of lots of novel ideas. The classic image is one of the basement inventors who cleverly automate tasks around the home. And corporate labs are full of invention archives they failed to take to market. A tinker becomes an author when they elect to invest the personal time and energy to champion one of these ideas and undertakes the risk to see the idea through to a

logical handoff because they believe that the idea is broadly significant and want the agreement of others. If a logical handoff does not occur because of insufficient championing or caution in accepting risk [such as may happen by simultaneously pursuing other endeavors], then they are a tinkerer instead of an author.

In the preceding paragraphs, the modification of Author with the adjective “productive” begs question of whether there are unproductive authors. And the answer is “of course”. The most obvious example is a worker displaying Author praxis who has not [as of yet] produced a successful product, process or business method. Indeed this Author may be unproductive by some measures, but not cyclopraxis measures. More commonly an author is unproductive if they champion their idea too aggressively. An overbearing campaign can chase away supporters who are eventually needed for political capital [large company] or venture capital [small startup]. Not realizing when to stop as judged by a diversifier or capitalizer can be a fatal flaw even though by the author’s standards additional crusading opportunity remains. An author can be equally unproductive if they switch their support from idea to idea too quickly. If the author backs off their campaign before the initial idea is well accepted and firmly entrenched, the initial idea is likely to wither and collapse. The author may believe [according to their value set] that they are behaving in a strong way; but diversifiers and captains judge the application of energy on the new idea as a weakness of the original plan. Both these mistakes are unproductive use of the author’s talent.

In a cyclopraxis sense an unsuccessful Author is one who lacks one or more of the key qualities – creative, visionary, risk comfortable, and crusading – and will consequently be found to have another different primary praxis. Most workers try their hand at several different functions and praxis before finding an area of greatest comfort. For example, a worker may be visionary, creative, and like to champion their ideas but may lack the tolerance for the risk to follow those ideas through to completion. They simply don’t commit. Such a worker would be unsuccessful at authoring and would likely find they perform better and derive more satisfaction in a building, diversifying, or extending role.

#### AUTHORS IN LARGE BUSINESSES

The large company is advised to retain sufficient numbers of authors in order to periodically reinvent itself. Diversification is another word applied to this process of reinvention. The author-diversifier will be many times more effective than capitalizers or extenders in assuring continued growth through diversification; and the author will be more likely to take the necessary initial risks than builder-diversifiers. Retaining authors is different than retaining the best capitalizers, builder, or extenders. Firms are advised to understand the special needs of the author and develop appropriate working environments and reward/retention programs. See the companion paper “Applying Worker CycloPraxis to the Paradox of Why Large Firms Fail to Innovate” available at [www.cyclopraxis.com](http://www.cyclopraxis.com) for more understanding of this topic.

In large organizations, authors are quick to see the need for innovation and can usually visualize where the organization should be going in the long term. Maximizing the contribution that authors can deliver to the business unit calls for some special practices:

- Staffing: Author retention requires special programs which reward in ways an author appreciates.

- Skills: The author must be up to date on all the latest developments in related fields. This necessitates spending large amounts of time keeping abreast through the web, journals, conferences, etc.
- Systems: The author needs just the right equipment at their disposal. Without their sandbox, ideas can't be explored.
- Structure: The author's organization is really a non-organization. Structure stifles them.
- Strategy: The author must know the business unit's strategy; else ideas might be misaligned and not receive further attention.

There are substantial deviations in the preceding list from the norms of a successful capitalizing operation. Special attention is requisite.

### AUTHORS IN SMALL BUSINESSES

Many authors leave large companies because they are unable to fulfill their authoring dreams. Other authors – hearing that large companies have an idea stifling structured culture -- never give large companies a try. Therefore, authors are frequently the startup seed and energy of small companies. These authors are commonly called entrepreneurs. Author-Entrepreneurs are usually successful getting things going, but are frequently challenged to continue on with successful companies. Watch for the companion paper “Applying CycloPraxis to the Challenges Faced by the Startup Business” soon to be published at [www.cyclopraxis.com](http://www.cyclopraxis.com).

Authors frequently start a business and therefore have senior positions and coveted title of owner/founder. As the business unit transitions from pure entrepreneurship to entrepreneurially oriented yet professionally managed, the very personality traits that made the founder-entrepreneur so successful initially can lead to subsequent demise. Unfortunately, it's almost impossible for the author to see this happening. From the author's vantage point everything looks fine – frequently they judge the others as being in the wrong. The situation presented to the others is a difficult one because the combination of owner-founder power coupled with the author's conviction when championing an idea intimidates most who would otherwise undertake necessary and appropriate business building steps. Authors can drive away the very builders their ideas need to succeed.

We learned earlier that authors regularly discover new ideas which they get excited about and begin to champion well before their existing idea has progressed far enough with its team of builders. Often the builders are asked – with owner-founder authority -- to put aside the original idea in favor of the new idea. If the builder succumbs to this practice – even once -- then the author can be counted on to repeat the pattern multiple times. No ideas will ever make it to commercialization. And the builders will quickly frustrate since their values of focus and accomplishment are denied. Large firms tend not to have this problem since authors do not gain owner-founder authority. Small companies are advised to stay focused on the author's original idea through to completion.

Most authors have either a technical or a sales background, or they know a particular industry well. They typically want things done in their own way. They may be more intelligent or have better intuition than their employees, who come to rely on their leader's omnipotence. And authors tend to be doers rather than managers, have not had formal management training, and are likely to hold typical corporate practices in low regard. Authors reject meetings, written plans, detailed organization of

time, and budgets as the trappings of bureaucracy. The author thinks “We got here without these things, so why do we need them now?” Unfortunately, at this stage of corporate development the nature of the organization has changed – and so must the business unit’s senior management. The owner-author can deal with the situation in one of five possible ways:

- Try to develop new praxis – difficult but possible
- Resign and let others bring in a professional manager to run the organization
- Move up to chairperson and bring in a professional manager while still staying involved
- Continue to operate as before and ignore the problems hoping they will go away.
- Sell out and start another business.

Some do try to change their praxis, but fail. Others merely give the illusion to turning the organization over to professional managers – in reality they stay very much in control.

The most important element of an Author’s praxis from the standpoint of making organizational transitions is the author-CEO’s desire for control. Founder-authors generally experience great difficulty in relinquishing control of their businesses. The typical author-CEO values control as both an end in itself and a means to other ends. This personal preference has no doubt been reinforced in a variety of ways for a long time.

Author’s may use any of the leadership styles – from Autocratic to Laissez faire. Most however use a Consultative or Participative style where the author is involved in discussions about decisions, but ultimately reserves the right to make final decisions. The involvement of employees increases as the technology and complexity of the business increases. The next most common is Directive style where the author frequently tells employees of decisions because the author believes they know best for all involved.

## **THE AUTHOR AND OTHERS**

Authors are most at home with other authors. However there are many more builders, capitalizers, and extenders than authors. So Authors would do well to develop sound relationships with the other praxes. These are the people who deal with the practical, tangible, and who push to get jobs done on time and in completed in neat order. At times these relationships are quite necessary. It is frequently a builder who must carry the idea to the next step, or just as frequently it is a capitalizer or diversifier who will provide the approvals and support to commercialize an idea. Authors who ‘connect’ with the other praxes on the other praxes’ [not the author’s] terms will always realize the greatest successes.

### **AUTHOR SEES OTHER PRAXIS**

Authors judge others by the very same criteria that make them excel at what they do. As a result, the other praxes do not fare well in an Author’s evaluation. The other praxes do not have the same creativity nor the same willingness to take risks as the Author. Capitalizers and extenders initiate less. No praxis crusades as hard. It is hard to match the vision of an author. And the other praxes value traits in which the author sees little value: Capitalizers value structure and efficiency, Builders value completion and focus, Extenders value affiliation.

To the author, the other praxes are simply incorrect in the way they approach work situations. Yet authors comprise only a percent or two of the working population. Therefore the other praxes tend to discount an author’s critical judgment of the mainstream praxes. The other praxes intuitively know

they are in the majority and the author part of a small minority. As a result the author who is critically judgmental about members of mainstream praxes has their opinions simply ignored [unless of course the author is the founder].

#### OTHER PRAXIS SEE THE AUTHOR

Everyone looks at the world from his or her own individual perspective through one's unique lens – a concept appropriately called vantage point. Most judge what they see based upon their own vantage point and draw conclusions based upon their individual norms. This concept is simply illustrated using physical characteristics of different cultures. Westerners traveling in the Orient often remark that people from those cultures are short. Orientals meantime feel that they are average and that Westerners are tall and chubby. As long as Orientals and Westerners are in their home cultures, neither group feels discomfort nor inconvenience at these relative differences. However, when either population is not amongst their native population such simple differences can cause discomfort and inconvenience. A Westerner living in an oriental country might have to seek specialty stores for clothing and might find the close seating in some restaurants uncomfortable. An Oriental living in a western country might similarly find clothing difficult to find in small sizes. Or an Oriental wishing to play team sports in a western nation might find their small size places them at a disadvantage against western athletes. It cannot be too difficult to extend this logic from physical size to praxis traits such as risk tolerance, creativity, vision, initiation, and crusading.

Up till now, this paper has described the Author and suggested how the world looks when viewed through the Author's lens that is calibrated to the Author's norm. Now, it is time to turn the discussion and see how the Author looks to other praxes when viewed through these other lenses. Authors may have difficulty accepting how they are viewed against other norms. It is important for Authors and non-Authors alike to realize that the Author population is a very small minority compared to the ranks of Builders, Capitalizers, and Extenders. So just as the foreigner might have to do things differently and work harder to adapt when outside their native culture, Authors might have to do things differently and adapt in order to accomplish certain goals when working with Builders, Capitalizers, and Extenders. Such adaptation is difficult. Authors prefer to lead with their strengths, continue with their norms, and be more author-like. After all when viewed through the Author's lens, such behavior seems perfectly natural. But failure to adapt may lead to dis-engagement by the Builders, Capitalizers, and Extenders at which point the Author loses important the support.

#### AUTHORS IN A WORLD OF BUILDERS

The Builder appreciates many of the qualities of the Author praxis. Builders appreciate creativity, risk taking, and initiation and try to contribute some of their own. So builders are comfortable sharing the success in these qualities with Authors. Builders also share the Author's visionary qualities. The similarities end here and the differences in the two praxes fuel debates on how to launch a business. The pragmatism trait of Builders tires quickly of the Author's repeated crusading. The Builder sees repeating the message as wasted energy that would be better spent in making progress on some of the endless details. An even bigger disconnect is occurs over differences in focus. As soon as an Author detects their initial idea is gaining some traction [typically with a group of builders], the Author's creativity kicks back in hatching new ideas. The Author looks to the closest builder [typically the same ones working on the original idea] and starts to champion these new ideas. The builders – even



ten of them for every author -- are still hard at work accomplishing the tasks necessary for initial idea. If the author is in a position of authority, tensions mount quickly between examining the new idea [defocusing] and continuing to make progress around the original idea [focusing]. Other miss-matches may also exist.

Very early in the startup of a business unit, the number of Builders will grow to equal the number of Authors. At this stage, the authors have strong positions of authority and the business unit can act harmoniously as an authoring business unit. Shortly thereafter the number of Builders will exceed the number of Authors and perhaps grow to be ten times larger. At this point in time, the Author[s] will find that the culture of the company has changed to a building praxis and that the Author's norms will no longer have much success in leadership or decision-making. At this point, many authors push their style even harder; a tactic almost guaranteed to fail in the long run. The author would do better to adapt to a builder style in 3 key areas:

- *Focus*. Seek pleasure from the fact that a large number of builder's are had at work on the Author's original idea. Resist the temptation to introduce new ideas as those new ideas will both defocus the team and not be appreciated. The original idea needs the dedicated focus of the Builders to realize the further development necessary to succeed with customers.
- *Don't oversell*. Seek others with whom to continue the crusade. The builder is sold. Borrow the Builder's pragmatic approach and seek out others – customers, partners, and investors – who are not sold. When selling, keep the message short and crisp. Watch how the builders are doing it.
- *Be Wrong*. Participate in the building by trying some things and showing what does and doesn't work. Instead of sharing ideas, share results of actual trials. Be especially willing to have your hypothesis proven wrong. Especially in the building state, more is learned from mistakes.

When the author is in a position of authority, taking these steps signals they are capable of continuing as leader. When the author is not in a position of authority, not taking these steps causes a loss of confidence on the part of the builder who is in authority. Any loss of confidence will further erode the Author's influence in the developing organization.

#### AUTHORS IN A WORLD OF CAPITALIZERS

The Capitalizer and the Author share little in common. Capitalizers outnumber Authors as much as fifty to one in many firms, so it's usually the Author is the foreigner and must adapt. Capitalizers nickname Authors "idea people" which the Author interprets as complimentary; while at the same time, Capitalizers hold Authors in low regard, as they are low producers against standardized metrics. Capitalizer's see Author's as overconfident, unstructured, difficult to understand, not paying attention to financials, and impatient and impractical with details. Capitalizers value structure and predictability; the Author has little regard for such organization. Capitalizers focus on doing the most here and now; authors are visionary and look well beyond the immediate horizon. Capitalizers increment; Authors revolutionize. All these observations are Capitalizers looking at Authors through the capitalizer's lens. However, since capitalizer's are so numerous, such observations tend to be the majority view. Given the choice, a capitalizer will ignore or walk away from an author. Only if the capitalizer needs the author or if the author suppresses some of the natural tendencies of their praxis will the capitalizer engage with the Author.

Fortunately, Author-employees and Capitalizer-employees rarely come into contact in a young growing business unit. The interaction is more frequent between Authors and Capitalizer-advisors

[many advisors are ex- capitalizer/captains who achieved senior management status or are capitalizer praxis professionals such as lawyers and CPA's]. Advisors appreciate the gifts of the Author [or they wouldn't put up with praxis characteristics which when seen through their lens are odd]. Advisors are willing to compliment Authors for excellence in authoring praxis traits. At the same time, Advisors have a duty to assist in moving the business unit successfully from authoring to building and ultimately to capitalizing. Therefore Advisors will constantly push the Author to at least learn to interact effectively with Builders and ultimately Capitalizers. If the Author fails to learn successful interaction skills, then the advisor will recommend a Builder or Capitalizer to replace the Author's position of leadership.

Authors and Capitalizers also come into contact in the process of diversification in a large existing business unit or firm. Diversification occurs when a business unit in the capitalizing stage needs to renew its business. In order for diversification to work effectively, a senior captain amongst the capitalizing must *allow* and *sponsor* the activity. Successful diversifier-captains seek out and encourage authors to lead an early stage diversifying activity. They will request that their chosen Author report only to the diversifier-Captain thereby shielding the Author from contact with other capitalizers – an interaction which would be less productive. The diversifier-Captain is generally willing to accommodate the Author's unique style in order to seed the diversification and will temporarily overlook risk taking, crusading, disregard for process, and changing focus. To further enhance the working connection, the Author is advised to adapt to the diversifier-Captain's praxis in 4 critical areas:

- *Money metrics.* The capitalizer praxis is motivated by maximizing the effectiveness of the operation as measured by increasing sales and profits -- money metrics. The author is advised to modify the championing of the creativity, appeal, and visionary aspects of their idea and replace with a solid well analyzed value proposition including money metrics.
- *Power.* Captains improve their esteem by gaining power within the organization which in turn is done by facilitating the success of capitalizers who toil toward daily contributions. [Authors esteem is fed by people listening to their ideas; they care much less about power]. An Author can maintain good support from a diversifier-Captain if the author understands, contributes, and enhances things which improve the esteem of the Captain.
- *Structure.* Captains design, implement, and then become curators of the capitalizer's structure. Any change that substantially alters the existing structure will have negative effect on employee satisfaction and current business results. Unless absolutely, Authors should avoid suggesting and championing ideas which might require substantial alterations to structure.
- *Follow through.* Capitalizers expect jobs to be 99%-plus correctly completed before anyone moves on. Capitalizers will not speak highly of any praxis not meeting their +99% standard. Authors on the other hand are notorious for believing their contribution has been made when the job is just half done. [Half done is as measured by capitalizers. Of course, the author looking through their lens, believes they are fully done]. If authors wish positive perception and recognition in a capitalizing environment, they will have to follow through far more than they might otherwise.

The Author should not expect a long-term relationship with the diversifier-Captain nor expect to be permitted to follow their idea through to completion. Once a diversification is successfully underway, the diversifier-Captain may re-assign the author and staff the diversification with builders. The most likely way to win a seat in the project's continuation is to show interest in the diversifier-Captain's interests [money, power, and structure] and to be willing to modify their author habits and adopt

builder skills.

### AUTHORS IN A WORLD OF EXTENDERS

In this section we only consider Expert-Extenders. The other extender types – educator and empathizer – have little interaction with authors.

The Expert-Extender and the Author share a few common praxis traits. Both have keen knowledge rich minds. Both appreciate some independence and feel that structure can get in the way. Both will crusade for the importance of what they believe in. Here the similarities end. The extender is risk adverse while the author lives for risks. The author is constantly initiating [even when inappropriate]; the extender looks for work to arrive and for others to request help or make assignments. The greatest difference is praxis is that the extender works to keep yesterday's knowledge and businesses alive while the author is always suggesting something new for tomorrow.

The polarity between 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow' results in both groups wanting to have little to do with one another. And fortunately interactions in the business world are limited. The most common interactions are when authors need a particular expertise at certain stages in early design and proof of concept. When the needed expertise is an established technology and not leading edge, the author must call upon the expert-extender for their contribution. In such situations the expert is flattered to be asked and truly enjoys providing the requested help. The Author is also pleased. The connection seems like a win-win and will remain so as long as the extender's work is considered as just a subcontracted element in the overall project. If the extender expects or the author offers a larger voice in the strategic planning and subsequent execution, the differences in their praxis will create significant friction.

On occasion an author might find himself or herself working in a business unit during its extending lifecycle stage. If this assignment is to carry out a diversification, then the discussion in the preceding section should apply. If this assignment is because the author has some specialized technical or discipline knowledge, then the author is being asked to behave in a manner similar to the other expert-extender employees. The author may have a difficult time with this assignment unless they modify their praxis traits in a few key areas.

- *Continuity.* The expert-extender appreciates the continuity of continuing with yesterday's knowledge. The author must avoid championing creative new ideas and crusade instead with equal enthusiasm for continuation of the technical or discipline area for which they are employed.
- *Patiently Listen.* Expert-extenders like to tell stories about situations where others have benefited from their assistance, and of course they like people who listen to their stories. Authors are not very good listeners, and will quickly be excluded from companionship unless they listen to their extender co-workers. These stories will be long and jump from chapter to chapter thereby requiring the author to call upon uncharacteristic patience.
- *Traditional Solutions.* Many expert-extenders are employed to solve problems brought to their attention. They are expected to propose the best solution within some well-established boundaries. Additional solutions outside the established boundaries may also exist. The extender's limited creativity, appreciation of rules, and low tolerance for risk means they easily stay in-bounds. The author – feeling their creativity is suppressed motivated to take a few risks – may start suggesting out of bound solutions to which business unit management may react negatively.

Failure to adapt to the expert-extender style will cause the author to be unhappy and unproductive with this work assignment.

The similarities between the author the expert-extender mean that that extenders can be successful in authoring roles if they are willing to increase their risk taking and become more self initiating. Sometimes the change in external factors – such as a lifestyle change to a comfortable retirement -- can trigger such change.

## **THE AUTHOR'S TASKS BY FUNCTION**

Traditional thinking has the author working in a product development function because such assignments comprise the majority of situations. There are however plenty of other opportunities for the combination of revolutionary idea and persistent championing to spawn new business.

**MARKETING.** Frequent flyer programs and no signup fee credit cards are two examples of revolutionary ideas from the marketing function. And while the Internet was largely a technical innovation, it could also be argued that a number of marketing visionaries saw the novel opportunity for a radically different distribution opportunity. Or consider the classic story of the post-it note: once invented, the authors challenge was one of finding and developing an appropriate application – a task usually considered a part of the marketing mix. Finally, another classic story: the orange juice developed for astronauts became a commercial success when promoted as such to the mass market.

More commonly, the marketing function is asked to support a product development activity by championing customer understanding. This is a critically important contribution to any development project and requires a rare mixture of creativity, intuitiveness, and analytical skill. Where no marketing-author is a member of the team, this activity may amount to little more than doing what the first cash paying early adopter customer asks for. This is not a task that can be assigned to a builder, capitalizer, or extender – the visionary selection, persistent championing, and risk taking follow-through are absent. Obviously, the marketing author must be fully aligned with the development author[s] in vision for the business unit and for the customer solution.

Another authoring stage activity for the marketing function is contribution to a business plan that certainly includes a customer and go-to-market vision. Frequently, the authors must be paired with a builder praxis who tackles the actual writing of business plan. The builder praxis orientation to task and accomplishment is much more likely to drive to sufficient completion in a reasonable timeframe.

**SALES.** Opening new sales channels or substantially different sales territories is frequently an endeavor conceived and championed by authors. For instance, Dell Computer authored a novel sales channel [direct to factory by phone and later Internet] and captured a surprising level of an otherwise commodity personal computer business. As many US brands first expanded into Europe and then Asia and China they faced risks ranging from product acceptance to business practices. The insights, the risk taking, and the perseverance of the author praxis are all necessary to succeed.

In the more common case of a product development lead authoring activity leading to a new business unit, there is typically little revenue in the authoring stage and any sales activity is typically handled in a different way. Frequently a handful of customers are identified as the designers' target, many of

whom may make some preliminary purchase commitments. Almost always these early commitments are made to the development authors rather than to someone dedicated to the sales function.

Nevertheless, several key decisions must be made during the business unit's authoring stage, which essentially define a sales model. An author praxis well practiced in the sales function would be invaluable as the decision leader for:

- Channel Strategy – direct or indirect or hybrid;
- Key customer values to employ in gaining a customer's attention – the “elevator pitch”;
- Initial customer segments around which to develop application notes and collateral reference;
- Marquee named reference accounts;

These sales model decisions are generally made as part of the total ‘vision’ that embodies the idea and the business model to carry out the idea. These decisions must be made with conviction and they will have to be championed with persistence.

**OPERATIONS.** Authoring can take place in the operations departments of a firm. The pioneers who moved customer service to India were certainly had a revolutionary idea and no doubt had to crusade for acceptance. Dell and Wal-Mart are widely recognized for authoring work in supplier inventory management. And in the 1960's and 1970's the Japanese TV industry overtook the US TV industry with superior quality and just-in-time manufacturing processes.

In the more common case of a product development lead authoring activity leading to a new business unit, there is typically little operations activity in the authoring stage. The developers in the spirit of proof of concept often handle any that may occur. Far more strategic is the need to answer the question of in-sourcing or out-sourcing the various elements of operations. The elements in question could include labor, assemblies, components, customer care, purchasing, engineering, distribution, etc.. This decision greatly affects subsequent planning and work in the building stage. Obviously this decision requires visionary thinking and the comfort to make a major strategic decision with little detail. The author's skill at offering hypotheses makes the author-praxis best suited to make such bold choices

**DEVELOPMENT.** Traditional thinking assumes most authors live in a development role in the business. The author-praxis's ability to see the big picture and persistent support for bold ideas anchors visions and leads development teams through the “fuzzy front end” of projects. They work best at embracing a big picture perspective of the overall product design – an essential beginning step. An author can make a recommendation for a best in class architecture with almost a second nature that defies duplication by a dozen capitalizers following rigorous analytical approaches.

Authors often communicate their results in a disjoint series of thoughts and often in a special jargon laden vocabulary. The builders who follow often have difficulty grasping the vision and whatever of the details have been worked. Both the Author and the Builder must communicate slowly and deliberately for the project to be a success.

## **SUMMARY**

Authors are the business people responsible for launching most new businesses either as startups or new business units in established firms. The author praxis must include two key traits: the creativity

to hatch novel ideas and the tenacity to crusade for the commercialization of that idea against alternatives and unbelievers.

Authors are happiest when they have the freedom to be creative with visionary ideas, when they proudly promote their ideas, and when others are at least enthusiastically accepting their ideas. These positive motivators will assure top output from authors. Structure and process are negative motivators and will diminish an author's output. Authors are not particularly good at following rules and procedures and may therefore upset those who develop and administer them. Writing the grand plan of tomorrow is more important than following the rulebook of today. Excessive interactions with people who are perceived less creative or un-accepting of the author's ideas also de-energize the author.

Authors are energized in their daily work by the possibility that they may initiate some product, process, or business method that is both revolutionary and is found significant by others. They are further energized by the opportunity to crusade visionary ideas. And authors will thrive on facing the risks inherent in realizing a success. Furthermore, authors are happy to have others carry their idea to completion – thereby finding the time to move on to the next idea. The key operative words are: initiate, revolutionary, crusade, visionary, and risk.

The specific strengths of the author are necessary for new businesses formation. The author is valued-for and valuable-to the business for this specific contribution. At times the author can overuse these very same strengths. When overused, the author's strengths of creativity and championship and even the author as an individual become liabilities for the business.

The author's vantage point is very different from others and they don't score especially well through the author's lens. Most politely, authors see the other praxis – builders, capitalizers, and extenders – as different. More honestly they find them uninteresting, unimaginative, and unappreciative. The same is true about how others see the author. Builders are subconsciously thankful for authoring [else there wouldn't be much to build]. But authors and builders frequently clash over differences in style. Senior managers are thoughtfully thankful for diversifying ideas in the firm. But senior managers have only limited interactions with these very same authors. And capitalizers and extenders find authors somewhere between odd and annoying.

Such difficulty in acceptance by the varied praxes of a large firm explains why many authors practice their passion in small startups. In the small startup, the author doesn't have the variety of interactions of a large firm – at least initially. For the small startup to become a commercial success, builder praxis activity is quickly necessary. Either the author adapts or their commercialization success is doomed.

Similar articles about the Builder, Capitalizer, and Extender are being prepared. Watch for them at [www.cyclopraxis.com](http://www.cyclopraxis.com). Other papers on CycloPraxis available at [www.cyclopraxis.com](http://www.cyclopraxis.com) include:

- CycloPraxis in the Business World
- CycloPraxis Authors
- Author, Builder, Capitalizer, and Extender CycloPraxis Work Preferences
- Round Pegs in Round Holes ... Matching Worker's CycloPraxis to the Job
- Applying Worker CycloPraxis to the Paradox of Why Large Firms Suddenly Fail to Innovate
- Prior Research Related to Company Life Cycles and its application to the Study of CycloPraxis
- Praxis and Nurses

- Praxis and Realtors
- CycloPraxis and Crossing the Chasm
- CycloPraxis and the Inventor's Solution

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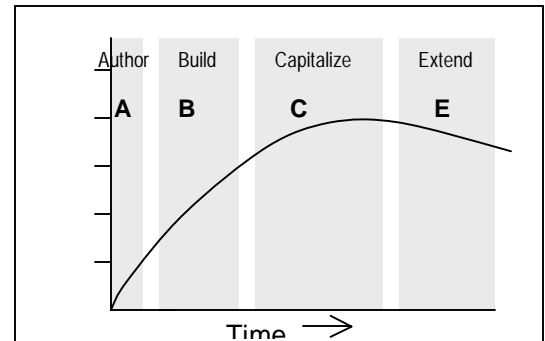
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## CYCLOPRAXIS OVERVIEW

Adapted from the paper “CycloPraxis in the Business World”, Doug Johnson, 2005, [www.cyclopraxis.com](http://www.cyclopraxis.com)

The classic match between worker and job is function: operations, manufacturing, marketing, finance, sales, development, legal, nursing, teaching, plumbing, retailing,. Business schools organize their classes this way, help wanted ads are organized this way, and career ladders are designed this way. There is another and equally important dimension to the fit between workers and their jobs: CycloPraxis. “Praxis” is one’s “customary practice or conduct”, meaning the way we naturally do things. Adding “cyclo” aligns a worker’s praxis to the stage in a business unit’s overall evolution: start-up, growth, maturity, and decline.

The first lifecycle stage is Authoring [A – for short]. This is where an innovative idea is championed and developed and where the business is initiated. The second stage is Building [B]. This is when innovations become products, early customers partnerships form, markets explode, operations begin, finance and quality and human resource functions begin, first processes are initiated. Next comes the need to maximize output in a stage called Capitalizing [C]. In this stage the business unit reaches its full potential, generates the most substantial profits or best resource utilization, repeatedly wins customers and delivers maximum value. Since all contributions someday diminish in value, the smart business will begin Diversifying [D] by leveraging the rewards of capitalizing business units. Finally, every business unit reaches its peak and begins a long and slow Extending [E] stage. Marketplace rewards erode as demand falls and remaining competition intensifies due to standardization, saturation, and better performing alternatives. The business unit focus shifts from customer acquisition to customer retention. Knowledge experts and appreciative customer service are key volume drivers for sustained business.



Each of these four lifecycle stages of a business unit inherently attracts employees with different cyclopraxis. What entrepreneur would apply to work in an end of life business unit where opportunity identification is sharply curtailed and where the principle activity is strong individual customer intimacy? Conversely, what helpfulness-oriented employee would tackle a new venture without any customers? In between, one finds project managers who are most successful after the idea or initiative is well conceived but before the same work is done multiple times. And the most efficient at repetitive production would look at early growth challenges and exclaim “how do I get started, where are the processes?”

There is nothing new about the concept of the lifecycle of a business and the organizations that participate in birth, growth, profits, and decline. The new concept around CycloPraxis is the connection around a worker’s natural semi-conscious work style preferences and the business lifecycle. Observations of hundreds of workers in wide ranging disciplines suggest 4 meaningful praxes. The first praxis is made up of a small percentage of people that are always having fresh new ideas. A smaller percentage of those idea people go on to champion those ideas year after year until they are proven correct. Further observation identifies a second group of people who seek challenging accomplishments around unsolved problems and who see them through to completion with unwavering focus to task. This second praxis thrives upon getting-it-done, whatever ‘it’ is. Upon completion of ‘it’, they simply look for another assignment. The second group rarely has the original idea and if called upon to propose the new idea might struggle to muster the appropriate spontaneous creativity. A third praxis – and by far the majority -- thrives when there is predictability and a defined structure in which they contribute to the profitability or effective resource utilization of the business unit. They enjoy situations where their output is measured and often tied to pay. Key players are often making incremental improvements in processes, products, efficiencies, yield, and costs. A fourth praxis enjoys work environments where they can apply their expert knowledge, solve the problems of customers, or engage in training. This last praxis creates lasting value with their contribution.

The preceding lifecycle discussion is optimized around the manufacturing corporation. Nevertheless, the same lifecycle concepts can be found in many other business types. Consider a professional practice. The Authoring phase is trivially short; Building – practice startup -- must still occur. Then the professional settles into a long career of capitalizing. The extend phase may be short [sale of practice] or long [services offered part time for little or no fee while in active retirement]. Or consider a Main Street USA business that is a franchise of some established chain. Generally the business owner goes the franchise route because they have anxieties about the building phase and the franchise package permits capitalization to happen sooner.

**AUTHORS:** The authors’ – entrepreneurs, architects, and visionaries -- greatest strength is the ability to conceive and champion an idea. Authors are risk takers, relatively unstructured, revolutionary, bold, and hold a stubborn persistence to their own ideas. Authors are most fruitful when they and their idea have little organizational grounding. Many feel more comfortable working outside the processes of the large firm; consequently they initiate many startups with VC help. Those authors who do remain in large firms are the idea originators of most new business units. Others see, authors as overconfident and unrealistic about the business appeal of their ideas. Authors are most happy being creative and are constantly offering hypotheses and ideas to everyone around them. Authors are most unhappy when they are not permitted to express their creativity or when others fail to rally to their ideas.



But the same personality traits that are strengths in the author-praxis work against success later in the evolution of the business unit. Authors generally disdain details, financial controls, and aggressive marketing. They often are poor at leading, communicating, and delegating. Authors are frequently disruptive to teams due to narcissist driven competition for best idea. As a result the classic challenge facing many business units – startup or large firm -- is the succession plan of the original author-entrepreneur.

**BUILDERS** like authors are strong initiators. They play an absolutely fundamental role in the growth of new business units. In product development, they are responsible for commercializing the author's idea. Builders institute the quality control, the first operations, the delivery, the support, the financial controls, the value proposition, the sales recipe, and the first marketing collaterals. Builders are highly organized, energetic, excellent problem solvers, very pragmatic, prolific communicators, and able to simultaneously work on a phenomenal number of tasks. Builders fearlessly run lots of experiments looking for the right recipe and learn rapidly from their mistakes. They work long hours and hold accomplishing the goal above all else [even above employee relations]. The builder-praxis is driven by achievement of goal, and once achieved they need something else to build or they become unhappy.

Unlike the author, a builder needs to be better grounded either with someone else's idea or affiliated with an organization. Builders are strong drivers and push organizations hard, and so once again the same personality traits that make a builder-praxis successful in the expansion stage also limits its effectiveness later in the evolution. Builders are seen by others as impatient, insensitive to people, and overly type "A". They are poor leaders of the large number of effective capitalizers because the builder drives the capitalizer with endless urgent improvements rather than focusing on people management, team motivation, and predictability. The builder's narrow pragmatism – a strength during the building stage – not only inhibits their effectiveness at authoring new ideas but also limits their sensitivity to the motivation needs of the large sales, marketing, and manufacturing populations to follow.

**CAPITALIZERS** -- due to their attention to detail, excellence in following established processes, and their penchant for steady improvement -- are key to a business's profitable existence. Capitalizers appreciate a structured work environment and delight in repeatedly executing the plan with constant gradual improvement. The setting and meeting of work quotas energizes the capitalizer-praxis. Capitalizers have a stronger people and profit/resource orientation than either the author or the builder. Taken together, these traits increase the business unit's efficient use of resources. During the capitalizing stage, firms gain pay back on the initial investments of authoring and building the new business unit. Business revenues and operational efficiencies reach their peak. And happily, the motivated capitalizer will enjoy growing personal their financial reward.

Working together with capitalizers in this middle stage are *Captains* who fill the role of people management, strategic leadership, and continual improvement of the process and structured work environment. Captains have strong regard for hierarchy and may go by the titles of foreman, supervisor, manager, and vice president. The captain's primary responsibility is continual stewardship of the successful work output from the business unit's capitalizer population. There are lots of straightforward management and leadership tasks [planning, organizing, delegating, controlling] and tools [quality circles, continuing education, ...] associated with the captain's role.

The distinction between Builders and Captains must be made carefully, as many captains want to be builders and vice versa. Builders have an achievement need and are passionate about getting things done. Captains are energized by power and are very satisfied to achieve things by getting others to do them. As a result captains delegate better than any other praxis. People with a need for power feel strong when others react appropriately to them. The best executives feel good when their influence works to make their people grow and be effective. As long as they feel in control, they do not need the constant feedback that builder achievement-motivate people crave. Success is dependent upon the captain's motivational skills, management and leadership savvy, and achieving targeted profits. Success is rewarded with visible perks [corner office, company car] and formal promotions. The captain is happy when things are trending up and to the right

The author and the builder sees the capitalizer and captain as resisting change, unimaginative, unable to identify and solve problems, and too comfortable with 'average'. On the other hand, the capitalizer/captain sees the builder as disruptive, brash, and threatening to the predictable productive environment. Authors in the eyes of the capitalizer/captain are just frivolous idea guys who will likely never amount to anything. Perceptions aside, capitalizers and captains are less effective at authoring or building because neither stage is predictable, because there are no processes, and because of less developed imagination and problem solving skill. Capitalizers are reluctant to deal with the unknown. On an individual's level, capitalizers who draw building or authoring assignments frequently under-perform against management expectations. At the business unit level, the Capitalizer's traditionalism traits can scuttle important diversification. The capitalizer doesn't want their comfortable status quo to change and they frequently resist adjusting to changing market conditions. Sluggish adjustment by capitalizers and captains to a changing landscape prematurely erodes many business units

**DIVERSIFIERS:** Externally aware and enlightened capitalizers who recognize the enormous challenges a business faces with eventual obsolescence of its core value proposition encourage diversification. Simply re-applying authoring and building accomplishes diversification. Diversifier-builder encounters special challenges.

**EXTENDERS:** To maximize profits and resource utilization as the lifecycle extends the business unit should employ workers with appropriate praxes – one we call extenders. During the extending lifecycle stage, retaining existing customers is the key strategic principle. Customer retention is accomplished through a combination of expert assistance, sympathetic customer care, ongoing education of the product/service’s values, and of course just enough value at the right price. The extender praxis is comprised of educators, empathizers, and experts who are all energized by being helpful. Extenders are energized by customer satisfaction challenges, and will show tenacity and creative problem solving skills in pursuit of a solution. The resulting course of action will frequently achieve a great deal with very little invested; often the personal 1:1 helpful attention has significant impact. Extenders are also personally rewarded from both the ‘thank you’ they get from the customer and from the knowledge that their efforts are allowing the firm to build a new business somewhere else. Extenders are helpful, trustworthy, sociable, structured and enjoy the variety that comes with each customer’s unique problem. The expert-extender is passionate about reusing the knowledge they already have about products, markets, and customers. The empathizer-extender lives for the satisfaction of making a positive difference in the day of someone else. Most extenders prioritize providing their special brand of care over maximizing company profits and personal income.

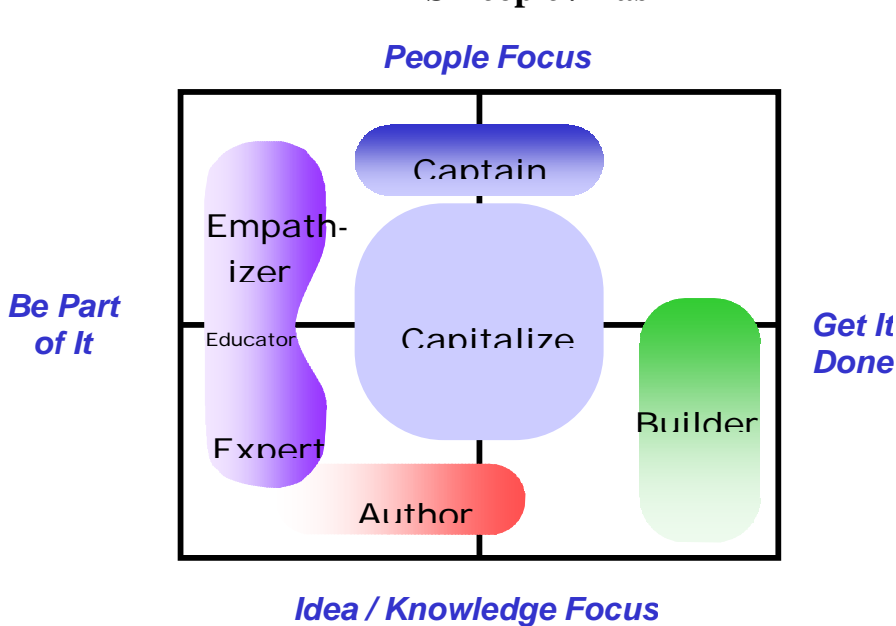
Extenders are not as effective at other business unit stages. The extender’s interest in closure, continuity, and completeness over deadlines and quotas means builders and capitalizers will out perform the extender at building and capitalizing. Indeed, a source of tension exists with capitalizers who become frustrated by the extender’s apparent disinterest in efficient delivery. Another miss-match exists with capitalizers who organize work according to a predictable schedule and the extender who extends each engagement thinking that more assistance is better.

- PRINCIPLES:** 4 simple principles of cyclopraxis assist in applying the concepts to business situations.
- #1: Workers are happiest and most productive when their praxis matches the business unit life cycle. Each stage – A, B, C, and E -- is best staffed by employees whose cyclopraxis [natural way of working] aligns with the nature of the work required in that stage.
  - #2: A mismatch is as challenging to a worker’s productivity as a function [Development vs Sales vs Human Resources vs Finance vs Etc.] mismatch.
  - #3: The praxes do not get along very well with one another and this leads to employee turnover. The reason for discord between the praxes is that they each have their unique means of dealing with any specific business problem. These unique approaches are grounded in their strengths
  - #4: The culture and operating style of any business is set by the CycloPraxis of the employees

**SUMMARY:** The preceding sections use a large number of adjectives to describe authors, builders, capitalizers/captains, and extenders. By doing so, everyone is sure to connect in some way with the overall paradigm of cyclopraxis. The downside is “descriptor overload”. Absent is a simple model for visual learners. Therefore the accompanying diagram is offered as a visual aide for the subset of the general population for which the chosen adjectives are meaningful.

One dimension is the subject of our work attention: ‘People  $\leftrightarrow$  Idea/Knowledge’. The other dimension is sense of urgency, which has surfaced as a key business driver in this modern age. ‘Get-it-Done  $\leftrightarrow$  Keep-it-Going’. Other continuums were explored including ‘risk’, ‘attractiveness of pay’, ‘customer service’, and ‘predictability’. None yield as

**PRAXIS People / Task**



performing businesses. As a result, they get it done’ focus and generally subordinate the ‘people’ focus and generally defer task. They have a strong drive to ‘Keep it Going’ and may not be the best rounded of the praxes; and the Capitalizer is best suited