

***Full Spectrum Management,***  
***By J. Michelle Sybesma, Professional Skills Consulting***



**H**ave you ever wondered what makes some people successful in business while still others try and fall short? Is it how neat your desk is, or how effective an executive assistant that you hire? These factors play a role of course, however more importantly; the answer is the manner in which we view every aspect of the business we conduct.

In our youth, we are taught that the primary colors, Red, Yellow and Blue, are different from other colors. They cannot be created by combining other colors. We are also taught that the secondary colors, Green, Orange, and Purple, are created using primary combinations. Without primary colors, secondary colors would not exist. The value in this lesson can also be applied as a basic business theory.

If we consider these primary colors to be basic in nature, it is easy to see how most people can effortlessly think in terms of primary colors. Basic business functions allow each person to operate daily while accomplishing the necessary tasks it takes to achieve goals set for them and keep their job. Managers excel to the top of their game by being able to see not only the

primary/basic functions but also the secondary or more complex functions. An excellent manager recognizes that a business will function best when he or she meets the “Full Spectrum” approach needed to keep all aspects of that business in balance. In artistic terms, we might say a “Full Spectrum” is not properly illustrated, if there is too much Red and not enough Green. Complex management thinking offers the ability and insight to see beyond just ensuring that primary and secondary thinking are implemented, but also the appropriate level of balance occurs.

Have you ever had an employee who could only focus on meeting your managerial requests one at a time? At review you indicated that they need to improve their timeliness, a primary “Red” type request. After a few months of working on this request they achieve this goal. At the next performance review you discuss a need for change in a new area. They need to become a proactive planner for the team meetings. They begin to master these “Yellow” challenges. However, they begin showing up prepared to the team meetings running 5-10 minutes behind. You let them know that timeliness

has once again become an issue. This person is frustrated, because they feel as a manager “you are never happy”. They do not see the value of what both Red and Yellow produce towards the business. Instead of thinking more abstract “Red + Yellow = Orange,” they simply find frustration in seeing that you wanted them to be Red and NOW you want them to be something else. They are drawing the basic conclusion that you “will never be happy”. In Full Spectrum Management, you must recognize that a secondary expectation is not a natural response for everyone. When possible, you must teach teams the value of becoming first secondary color thinking individuals and ultimately a secondary color thinking unit. If the individuals understand the need for blending basic needs together with balance, it helps to make this transition.

A complex management issue may leave the question, “Is it good or bad to have the person on the team who functions *uniquely?*” Those are the “Chartreuse Green” thinkers who miss the obvious, yet have a knack for filling a role no one else can. In short, YES they are very valuable to the right team.

If, as a manager, you recognize a need to balance a unique quality color to complete your spectrum, and you find that color valuable, stand by your decision. A resulting problem is that the primary color thinker does not understand the value of Chartreuse Green. You must keep in mind your role, as manager, requires you to balance the powerfulness of these colors. It would be easy to indicate you do not need to "justify" your decision to hire or keep Mr. Chartreuse. This is not actually true. If you appropriately value the Yellow and Blue team players, you must explain why a simple application of their strengths do not effectively serve this need, and that it does not mean you value their input any less. Stand up for your convictions and dispel the misunderstandings before they bring about upset in the spectrum. Not giving credence to the fact that someone does not understand your decision does not make their

misunderstanding go away. It simply frustrates it. Unaddressed, this creates a distraction that detracts from your ability to produce Full Spectrum Management.

A wise manager may indicate a different set of expectations to different team members. This is perfectly acceptable, as long as you stand by the value in those decisions and command the respect of your team. Do not get so micro-management oriented that you do not share the final mission with the team players. A primary thinker will remain primary unless taught the value of secondary colors. This does not mean they always need to produce them. They may serve a basic function that is critical to the team.

Once an individual sees the value in secondary thinking, expect a natural evolution to occur. These individuals are your natural managers-in-training. Do not give your staff the answers; give them the questions to develop the

skills to provoke the answers. Rely on these skills to help you achieve the greater balance.

Additionally, understanding the value of other departments will result in the success of greater overall company objectives and help in secondary thinking for your team. Your team may only be responsible for the right side of the spectrum. However, you must show them the rest. The other departments make up the other portions of that spectrum. Accounting Departments have nothing to account for without Sales. Sales Departments have ill-handled Marketing budgets, if not for Accounting Departments. The best way to achieve Full Spectrum Management is to focus on the management of this objective through both education and encouragement, while staying aware of the emotional impact of all attempts to balance this goal.

*J. Michelle Sybesma is a consultant and speaker with Professional Skills Consulting, and works with several of Indiana's most rapidly growing companies. For more information email [info@SkillsConsulting.com](mailto:info@SkillsConsulting.com) or visit their website at [www.SkillsConsulting.com](http://www.SkillsConsulting.com).*