

# Schachter Monthly

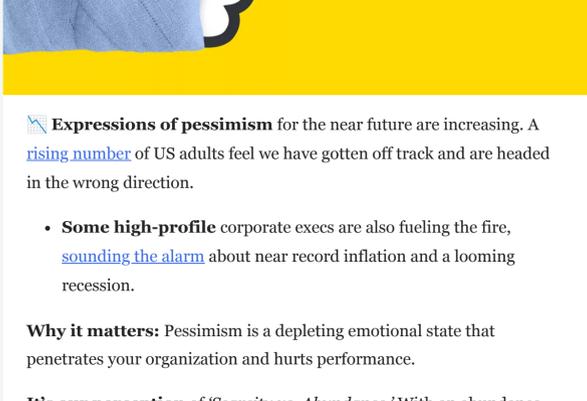
By Ephraim Schachter • Jun 14, 2022  
Smart Brevity® count: 5 mins... 1264 words

🎉 **Happy June** to my senior leaders in Business, HR, Academia and Nonprofits! Here are this month's insights and actionable tools & tips.

📁 **Catch up on Schachter Monthly!** Missed any of our past issues? You can now access downloadable versions dating back to last November's launch, [here](#).

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## 1 big thing: Leading others to overcome pessimism



📊 **Expressions of pessimism** for the near future are increasing. A [rising number](#) of US adults feel we have gotten off track and are headed in the wrong direction.

- **Some high-profile** corporate execs are also fueling the fire, [sounding the alarm](#) about near record inflation and a looming recession.

**Why it matters:** Pessimism is a depleting emotional state that penetrates your organization and hurts performance.

**It's our perception** of 'Scarcity vs. Abundance.' With an abundance mentality, people feel unthreatened and make better-conceived decisions that serve the long term and growth.

- With a scarcity mentality, people assume a defensive crouch that restrains their openness, creativity and calculated risk-taking.

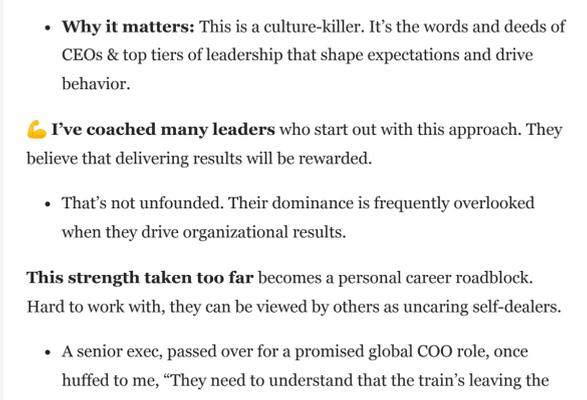
**The bottom line:** while scarcity is a cyclical fact of life, a scarcity mentality is bad for business.

- **Soon enough**, hiring will slow down, growth proposals will be back-burnered. Your people will be looking at you for signals.

🎯 **My POV:** The role of leadership is to build faith and positive expectancy. Chiefs, EVPs and SVPs must rescue the tone to lead the enterprise and its stakeholders through this. Embrace these principles:

1. **Deliberately project confidence** in the organization's ability to steer through and come out better.
2. **Explain the 'logical positives'** while being honest and realistic about actual scarcity.
3. **Over-communicate** with each constituency to maintain alignment and to calibrate course.
4. **Be more available** on an individual basis to others.

## 2. Save your culture from 'zero-sum'



**What's new:** A leader's tendency to influence others via dominance could lead to a zero-sum mentality, per [recent research](#).

- **Why it matters:** This is a culture-killer. It's the words and deeds of CEOs & top tiers of leadership that shape expectations and drive behavior.

👉 **I've coached many leaders** who start out with this approach. They believe that delivering results will be rewarded.

- That's not unfounded. Their dominance is frequently overlooked when they drive organizational results.

**This strength taken too far** becomes a personal career roadblock. Hard to work with, they can be viewed by others as uncaring self-dealers.

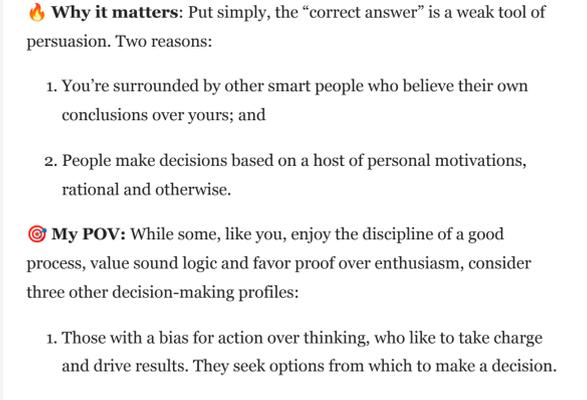
- A senior exec, passed over for a promised global COO role, once huffed to me, "They need to understand that the train's leaving the station!"
- **I replied with a question:** "And when the train arrives at its destination and no one's onboard, have you succeeded?"

🌟 **There's organizational damage, too.** This research shows that the behavior not only alienates and distances others from the leader, it infects others who model the behavior, themselves. This reduces cohesiveness and collaboration, breeding an "each to their own" culture.

🎯 **My POV:** If you're in the C-Suite, articulate, promote and reward a balanced set of the following competencies to leverage the benefits of dominant and participative behavior in combination:

1. Demonstrating a bias for action and results
2. Including relevant stakeholders
3. Actively listening
4. Assuming personal accountability for shared processes

## 3. The downsides of showcasing your expertise



**What I'm seeing:** Many senior professionals seeking to win support for an idea or initiative, stress their own skill and knowledge as the rationale.

- **By the numbers:** In a live session I conducted last week, 35% of incumbent and aspiring graduate school deans selected "over-reliance on expertise" as their #1 "base of social power."

🔥 **Why it matters:** Put simply, the "correct answer" is a weak tool of persuasion. Two reasons:

1. You're surrounded by other smart people who believe their own conclusions over yours; and
2. People make decisions based on a host of personal motivations, rational and otherwise.

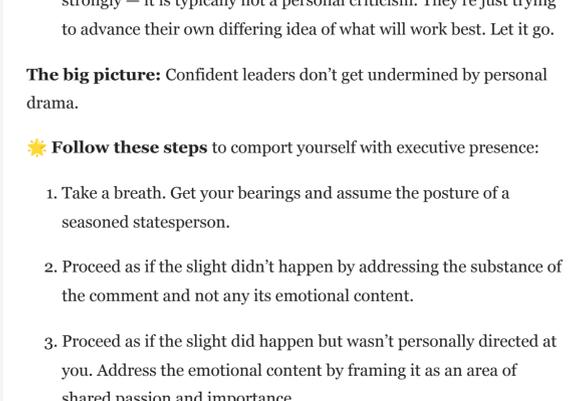
🎯 **My POV:** While some, like you, enjoy the discipline of a good process, value sound logic and favor proof over enthusiasm, consider three other decision-making profiles:

1. Those with a bias for action over thinking, who like to take charge and drive results. They seek options from which to make a decision.
2. Enthusiastic colleagues who most trust their own intuition and enjoy recognition.
3. Relationship-based consensus seekers who prioritize colleagues' feelings as a predicate before committing to a decision.

**The bottom line:** Think of your expertise as table stakes. It got you invited into the leadership space. Higher persuasion skills are required now.

👉 **Go deeper:** For some classic theory, see French & Raven's "The Bases of Social Power," [here](#).

## 4. Pro tip: Don't take it personally



🌟 **One of the top five** self-defeating behaviors I see exhibited by otherwise talented, aspiring executives is when they react personally to the actions and remarks of others.

- **Why it matters:** Knocked off-balance, they assume a defensive posture and then behave out of reaction and without regard to the long-term.

**The bottom line:** Instead of advancing their interests, they give away some of their own power.

🗨️ **My thought bubble:** I'm not sure that the Buddha contemplated the corporate org chart, but the principle of compassionate detachment from outcomes is the way to go.

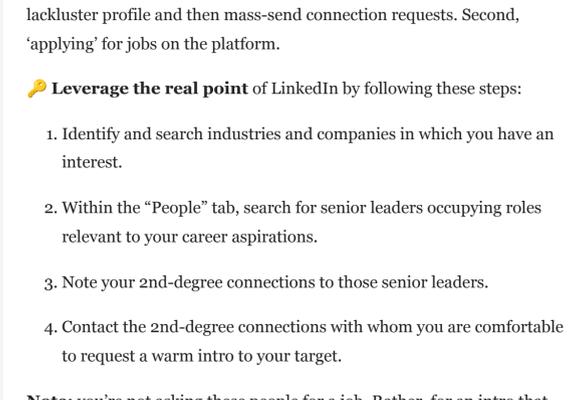
- **It's not about you.** When someone disagrees with you — even strongly — it is typically not a personal criticism. They're just trying to advance their own differing idea of what will work best. Let it go.

**The big picture:** Confident leaders don't get undermined by personal drama.

🌟 **Follow these steps** to comport yourself with executive presence:

1. Take a breath. Get your bearings and assume the posture of a seasoned statesperson.
2. Proceed as if the slight didn't happen by addressing the substance of the comment and not any its emotional content.
3. Proceed as if the slight did happen but wasn't personally directed at you. Address the emotional content by framing it as an area of shared passion and importance.

## 5. Career corner: The real point of LinkedIn



👉 **The most valuable thing** about *LinkedIn* is its capacity to produce warm introductions to other people of professional value to you.

- **Why it matters:** A warm intro allows you to benefit from someone else's good name and accelerates others' positive perception of your credibility and trustworthiness.

**My POV:** We're all familiar with the adage, "It's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know." That's correct ... to a point.

- **Try this instead:** "It's not what or who you know, it's who *they* know."

📊 **By the numbers:** There are 8.2 million C-level executives on [LinkedIn](#). If each has a mere 300 connections, that means there are close to a quarter billion people out there who can introduce you. The true figure is likely higher.

🚫 **There are two big mistakes** committed by too many aspiring execs re LinkedIn. First, waiting until they are out of a job to fumble together a lackluster profile and then mass-send connection requests. Second, 'applying' for jobs on the platform.

👉 **Leverage the real point** of LinkedIn by following these steps:

1. Identify and search industries and companies in which you have an interest.
2. Within the "People" tab, search for senior leaders occupying roles relevant to your career aspirations.
3. Note your 2nd-degree connections to those senior leaders.
4. Contact the 2nd-degree connections with whom you are comfortable to request a warm intro to your target.

**Note:** you're not asking these people for a job. Rather, for an intro that may be mutually beneficial at some point down the road.

📧 **Thanks for** checking in with us this June. *Please invite your friends and colleagues to [sign up](#) for Schachter Monthly.*

- 🗓️ See you in July!

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