

## Executive Derailers—Strategic Leadership Experience

### **Impulsive**

Describes individuals who are impatient, unpredictable, even overly imaginative, and though original thinkers, lack common sense. Their approach is “Ready! Fire! Aim!” While energetic and intelligent, they are unable to learn from mistakes and might be prone to taking ill-advised risks.

*Individuals might derail because they are seen as being too radical or having poor judgment, which can make it difficult to sell ideas to decision makers. They might have poor self-restraint, particularly when they think others do not “get it.” While they come up with great ideas, people with this derailer have difficulty implementing or executing their ideas. They also are likely to be seen as undependable and unreliable because they lose interest before the job is done.*

### **Low Tolerance for Ambiguity**

Describes individuals who are tactically or operationally rather than strategically focused. While good at implementing others’ ideas or strategies, they might have difficulty stepping up to increased complexity and/or ambiguity as well as focusing on the future versus the here and now.

*Individuals might derail because they are seen as overly concrete thinkers who can’t conceptualize or think “outside the box,” and because they resist moving from doing to seeing (a visionary role) and ensuring that things get done.*

### **Arrogant**

Describes individuals who are overly self-assured or confident and often self-promoting. They might overestimate their own abilities, seem self-absorbed or inconsiderate (perhaps bruising the egos of others), or be perceived as too independent (not needing or valuing others).

*Individuals might derail because they are seen as being condescending, promoting their own career over others, not accepting feedback as valid, and attributing little value to others’ points of view.*

### **Micromanaging**

Individuals are often described as being micromanagers or perfectionists. They are seen as controlling and demanding of others. Their results orientation and cautiousness might render them controlling and overly involved in subordinates’ activities. They are overly tactical and often have workload problems.

*Individuals might derail because others resent their level of meddling and detail orientation. They might miss opportunities to become more strategic because they get caught up in tactical details. When priorities change, they resist changing course accordingly.*

## Self-Promoting

Individuals are described as gregarious, charming, and persuasive—perhaps excessively so—as well as melodramatic and self-promoting. They might find (sometimes shrewd) ways of taking attention or credit from others.

*Individuals might derail because peers and subordinates might resent their tendency to monopolize attention or take credit for other's contributions. They might have manipulative ways to articulate or show off that they are special or unique and might be seen as narcissistic.*

## Volatile

Describes individuals who have difficulty controlling their emotions and are perhaps moody and quick to anger. Others might describe them as possessing short attention spans, frequently changing interests and enthusiasms, and “taking a roller coaster ride through life.” These people tend to lack tactfulness.

*Individuals might derail because they are seen as too moody, have unstable relationships and job histories, and fail to express emotions appropriately.*

## Risk Averse

Individuals with this derailer are described as indecisive, too deliberate, ambiguous, or reluctant to take unusual or unconventional actions. They also might fear change.

*Individuals might derail because they miss opportunities to capitalize on good ideas. They are seen as being reactive (versus proactive), not willing to work outside their comfort zone, and requiring predictability.*

## Defensive

Individuals with this derailer might be described as argumentative or skeptical, tense, perhaps paranoid or suspicious, focused on protecting their own interests, and likely to resist coaching and feedback (perhaps because they are easily hurt by criticism).

*Individuals might derail because they are seen as hard to coach/manage and as being “high maintenance” because of their tendency to challenge authority or supervision. They generally feel mistreated, perhaps because they take criticism personally.*

## Imperceptive

Describes individuals who are not naturally inclined to read others' behavior, intent, and motivations. They might not understand how to read others' reactions to their own behavior and are likely to have poor personal insight because they are not introspective or self-doubting.

*Individuals might derail because they lack self-awareness; might misread or misunderstand others' behaviors, intentions, or reactions to their own behavior; and might not pick up on social or political cues.*

## **Approval Dependent**

Individuals with this derailers seek and need praise and reassurance from others, particularly superiors. They might be compliant and conforming.

*Individuals might derail because they are not willing to “rock the boat,” and they avoid confrontation or taking unpopular stands (particularly with senior management). They also might miss opportunities to stand up for their team if an issue is controversial.*

## **Eccentric**

Individuals are often described as creative and, accordingly, different from others, perhaps to the point of being unorthodox or even odd.

*Because their ideas are sometimes strange or unfamiliar, they are derailed when their judgment and credibility are questioned.*