

K E R  G E

Success is a great feeling

a feeling we all deserve to experience



STYLES ASSESSMENT

W H I T E P A P E R

This paper demonstrates how the Styles Assessment reflects the latest leadership and high-performance team development science.

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Origin Story of Styles

The creator of the "Styles" program was John Cundiff, a business coach and trainer from Tucson, AZ, who observed and mapped human behaviour under pressure during his time in Vietnam as an entrepreneur and former military member. He discovered that people tend to use one of four primary coping mechanisms, which he called a "Style." John studied under Dr. Fernando Flores and Werner Erhard to further develop this work. In 1991, John met Travis Carson, who created the more comprehensive Market Force System (MFS) as an organizational execution model to help individuals perform at their best during critical moments at work. The MFS includes numerous instruments, such as Talent Mapping, Team Development, and the Workflow Model. The Styles Framework is the essential compass underlying all the instruments because it provides self-awareness about how we react under pressure, which is necessary to use any other framework effectively.

The impact of the MFS tools was studied at Colliers International, where over 8,000 employees worldwide were trained in the program for over 13 years. The metrics focused on revenue generation and service delivery, and the outcomes were tremendous. Producers using the MFS generated more than twice the revenue of their counterparts, while professionals rated 43% higher on their employee Net Promoter Scores. The MFS fostered an environment of diversity, respect, and understanding, promoting a culture of high-performance teams that achieved their goals while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. The former Chief Learning Officer of Colliers, Craig Robbins, confirmed that the Market Force course had the highest correlation with accelerated revenue growth and improved performance out of all the courses in the Colliers University core curriculum.

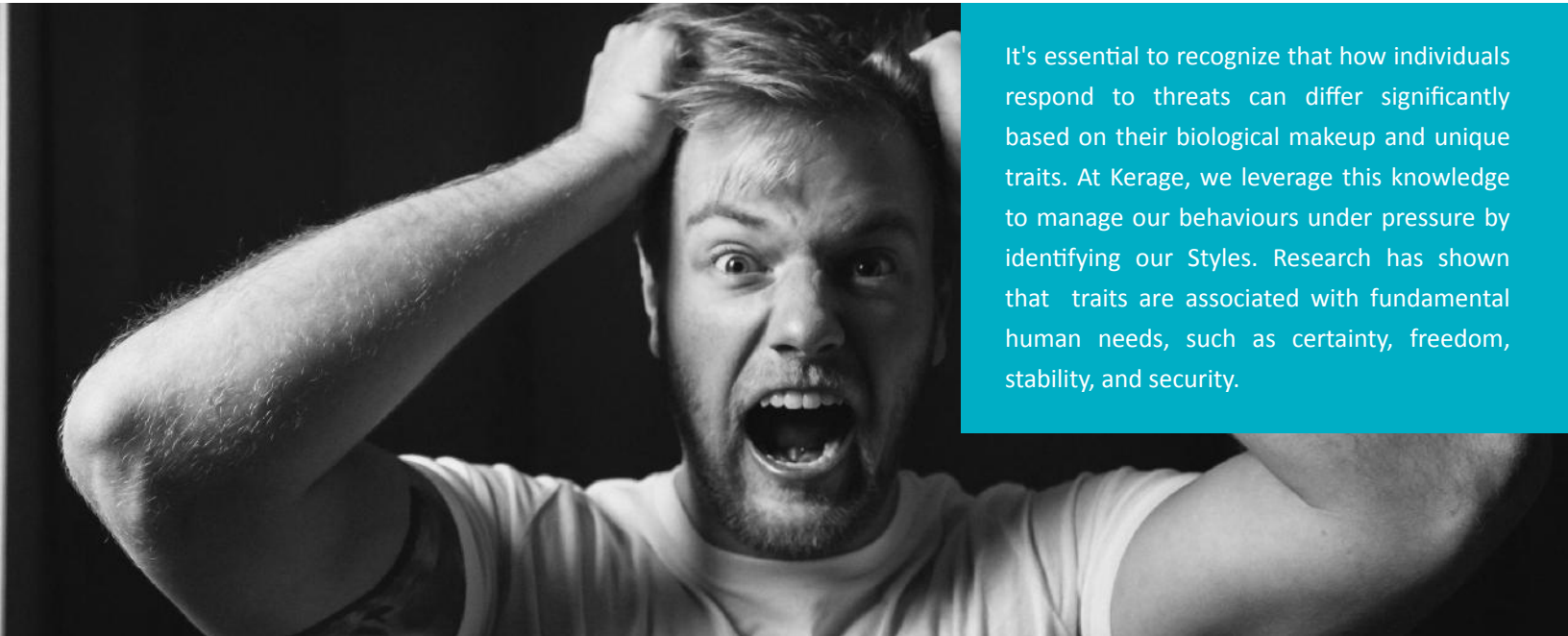
In 2020, Travis co-authored the book "Diamond Goldfish," which focuses on the forty-five-year history of Styles and includes various client examples that showcase its impressive results. The program aims to create a shared language and methodology for managing stress, promoting a work environment where employees can thrive and add value to the organization's goals. Moving from the business sector, the MFS is also used in government, where "The Market Force tools produced specific measurable results. Using the tools, County Attorney managers designed a system of compensation for all 300 employees based on the results each employee produced. This was radical in a government culture." as stated by Steve Neely, Former Pima County Attorney, Tucson, Arizona. The MFS provides similar advantages in the private sector to the public sector.

Kerage Un Limited acquired the rights to the MFS intellectual property and 2022 and now includes it as part of their full package of product and service offerings. At Kerage, we use the this comprehensive system to enhance the understanding of human behaviour under pressure by incorporating additional neuroscience and behavioural theory insights. The material has served clients from various industries, spanning over 40 countries, and has emerged as a trendsetting standard in developing high-performing teams, leaders, and organizations. Notable clients include Avis, Microsoft, Starbucks, Procore, WeWork, the Cayman Islands Government, the University of Arizona, and the Pima County Attorney's Office.

PHELPS, S., CARSON, T. & COOPER, T. (2020). Diamond Goldfish - Excel Under Pressure & Thrive in the Game of Business. 9 INCH Marketing, North Carolina, USA. ISBN: 978-1-7326652-7-9



What happens when We Feel Threatened?



It's essential to recognize that how individuals respond to threats can differ significantly based on their biological makeup and unique traits. At Kerage, we leverage this knowledge to manage our behaviours under pressure by identifying our Styles. Research has shown that traits are associated with fundamental human needs, such as certainty, freedom, stability, and security.

Increased heart rate

Feeling threatened can activate the "fight or flight" response, increasing heart rate and blood pressure.

Increased cortisol levels

Cortisol, a stress hormone, can increase when people feel threatened. This can affect the body, including increased blood sugar levels, reduced immune function, and decreased bone density.

Activation of the sympathetic nervous system

Feeling threatened can activate the sympathetic nervous system, leading to a range of physical responses, such as sweating, shaking, and rapid breathing.

Reduced activity in the prefrontal cortex

The prefrontal cortex, responsible for executive functions such as decision-making and self-control, can become less active when people feel threatened. This can make it more difficult for people to regulate their emotions and behaviours in response to the threat.

Thayer, J. F., & Lane, R. D. (2009). Claude Bernard and the heart-brain connection: Further elaboration of a model of neurovisceral integration. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 33(2), 81-88. doi:10.1016/j.neubiorev.2008.08.004

McEwen, B. S. (2007). Physiology and neurobiology of stress and adaptation: Central role of the brain. *Physiological Reviews*, 87(3), 873-904. doi:10.1152/physrev.00041.2006

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Arnsten, A. F. (2009). Stress signalling pathways impair prefrontal cortex structure and function. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 10(6), 410-422. doi:10.1038/nrn2648q

Impact of stress on the Team

Threats can lead to fear and anxiety, manifesting as increased nervousness, restlessness, and worry.

When people feel threatened, they may become more aggressive or hostile. This can take the form of verbal or physical aggression toward others.

People may become less open to new experiences and more resistant to change when they feel threatened. This can be a way to protect themselves from further perceived threats.

People may become more alert and attentive to their surroundings when they feel threatened, constantly scanning for potential dangers.

The consequences of feeling threatened:



More anxiety & fearfulness



Heightened aggression



Reduced openness



Increased vigilance

Cacioppo, J. T., & Gardner, W. L. (1999). Emotion. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50, 191-214. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.50.1.191

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What does stress cost Organizations?

Investing in people is an excellent strategy for any organization. By enhancing working conditions and fostering positive employee relationships, organizations can reduce operating costs while maximizing productivity.



The expenses related to stress in organizations differ based on factors like industry, size, and location of the organization, as well as the specific reasons causing tension in the workplace. However, studies suggest that the annual cost of workplace stress on organizations in the United States alone is billions of dollars.

According to the American Institute of Stress, workplace stress can cost U.S. businesses up to \$300 billion yearly in lost productivity, absenteeism, turnover, and healthcare expenses. Another National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health study highlights that job stress results in an estimated \$200 billion yearly in healthcare costs and missed work for U.S. employers.

It's essential to note that these estimates may not reflect the full extent of the cost of workplace stress, as they do not account for indirect expenses like the impact on employee morale and the potential long-term health effects on workers.

In summary, as per the Harvard Business Review article, "Employers should provide organization-wide opportunities for connection and also promote these ongoing, deeper one-on-one conversations between managers and direct reports as well as between colleagues. "How are you?" should always be followed up with "How can I help you?" especially at the manager level. The importance of empathy and authenticity cannot be overstated."

Harvard Business Review (Greenwood & Anas, 2021). It's a New Era for Mental Health at Work. <https://hbr.org/2021/10/its-a-new-era-for-mental-health-at-work>

American Institute of Stress. (n.d.). Workplace Stress. <https://www.stress.org/workplace-stress>

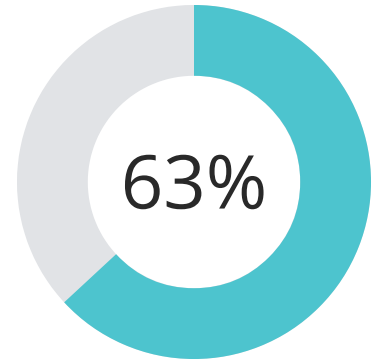
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (n.d.). Stress at Work. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/stress/>

Build psychological Resilience with Style

What percentage of people will benefit from increased resiliency?

Based on the Cigna Resilience 2020 US Report, it was discovered that approximately 63% of the surveyed full-time workers possess only low or moderate resilience when it comes to promptly bouncing back from obstacles and handling adversity. The Cigna study included the participation of 16,500 people.

Cigna Resilience Index. (2020). Cigna Resilience Index: 2020 US Report. <http://cignaresilience.com/>



Build team psychological resilience using Styles to neutralize stress due to:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Heavy Work Loads | Lack of Control |
| Time Pressures | Poor Communication |
| Interpersonal Conflict | Work-Life Balance |
| Job Insecurity | Physical Working Conditions |
| Cultural Differences | Stereotypes |

“The Market Force approach is unique in that it is focused on results. In contrast to many team building approaches in which the primary goal is to improve group dynamics, the primary goal in our work with Market Force was the development and implementation of one or more team projects. This approach was extraordinarily effective since it converted techniques into action from day one.”

Martha Gilliland, Former Vice Provost, University of Arizona





Seek Certainty Control Style

People with the Control Style are the visionaries with an idea and a focus on the future. They like to ensure that everyone is aligned to that future vision. When stressed, it helps to have others understand their vision and help them get back in touch with the big picture.

⚡ Threat to vision alignment = Uncertainty

The Control Style takes an assertive stance that relies on the ability to create a future vision. Often thinking up to five years in the future, they are the big-picture thinkers.

When under pressure, the Control Style will often revert to dictating and trying to get the situation or people back to what they "should" be doing. With this stance, they can be deemed a "bully" as they attempt to bring certainty to the future in a way that feels like manipulation to others.

A developmental opportunity for those with a Control Style is to engage with more Influence energy and empathize with those around them. This leads to increased engagement with others who can then support their vision.

When others notice someone with a Control Style under pressure, they have the opportunity to get the big picture front and centre and show how everyone is moving in that direction.

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Kearney, E., Shemla, M., Knippenberg, D., & Scholz, F. (2019). A paradox perspective on the interactive effects of visionary and empowering leadership. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.OBHP.2019.01.001>

Abernethy, M., Bouwens, J., & Lent, L. (2010). Leadership and Control System Design. *Management Accounting Research*, 21, 2-16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.MAR.2009.10.002>



Seek Freedom Influence Style

Individuals who value freedom often emphasize their ability to make independent decisions, express creativity, and maintain autonomy while bringing meaning to those around them. During elevated stress, they may benefit from support to vent as they work through things by talking it out.

⚡ Not being acknowledged = Trapped

Some people value their independence and seek more freedom to explore and be creative. This desire is often linked to their propensity for openness to experience, which is associated with curiosity and innovation.

When under stress, those with an Influence Style may exhibit a flight or "migrate" response as they turn to the next "shiny" opportunity. This often makes others view them as "flakey." If they are not able to escape, they are prone to becoming impatient, moody, and upsetting those around them due to their greater ease in moving quickly and their natural curiosity and willingness to explore new situations.

A developmental opportunity for them is to slow down with grit and get tasks completed. They can even combine their superpower of people engagement to work collectively with a team to accomplish tasks to the end. Others can help them by listening and having a good time as they complete what needs to be done.

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Wilson, G. D. (1981). Personality and cortisol: Test of two hypotheses. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 2(5), 393-396. doi: 10.1016/0191-8869(81)90067-4

Jokela, M., Elovainio, M., Nyberg, S. T., Tabák, A. G., Hintsa, T., Batty, G. D., ... & Kivimäki, M. (2013). Personality and all-cause mortality: Individual-participant meta-analysis of 3,947 deaths in 76,150 adults. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 178(5), 667-675. doi: 10.1093/aje/kwt006

Seek Stability Power Style

Individuals prioritizing stability typically prefer a well-organized and structured lifestyle. In times of stress, they may need support to focus on priorities while ensuring no shame, blame, or guilt.

⚡ Not working together = Instability

The desire for stability could be linked to the trait of conscientiousness, which is associated with being organized and responsible.

When confronted with stress, people with conscientiousness and a Power Style are more prone to tolerate, hunker down and prioritize structure and routine as they tolerate the situations. Because they take on the tasks with minimal complaint, they can be viewed as "pushovers".

A developmental opportunity for the Power Style is to highlight priorities and discern the most worthwhile and quality actions. When they are in a stressed state, others can support individuals with the Power Style by helping them focus on the priorities in a supportive manner as everyone works together as a team.

Roberts, B. W., Chernyshenko, O. S., Stark, S., & Goldberg, L. R. (2005). The structure of conscientiousness: An empirical investigation based on seven major personality questionnaires. *Personnel Psychology*, 58(1), 103-139. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.2005.00301.x

Digman, J. M. (1997). Higher-order factors of the Big Five. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(6), 1246-1256. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.73.6.1246

Brosschot, J. F., Gerin, W., & Thayer, J. F. (2006). The perseverative cognition hypothesis: A review of worry, prolonged stress-related physiological activation, and health. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 60(2), 113-124.

Gross, J. J., Sutton, S. K., & Ketelaar, T. (2012). Relations between affect and personality: Support for the affect-level and affective-reactivity views. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38(5), 629-641.

Seek Security Authority Style

Those with the Authority Style prioritize quality, high standards, and reliable practices. They need to know that standards will be upheld. During times of stress they will heighten their assessments and go to higher authorities. To help them, others can give them space to review and talk about their concerns out loud while sharing how much has been learned from them.

⚡ Not having value seen = Insecurity

The Authority Style has high standards and wants to securitize future solutions by understanding and learning from the past.

When confronted by stress, those with an Authority Style may "disappear" in hibernation, critique, and roadblock action. Their developmental opportunity is to see the vision everyone is working towards and use their quality lens to support future endeavours.

Others may support those with an Authority Style by giving them space to review the situation and share their concerns and information.

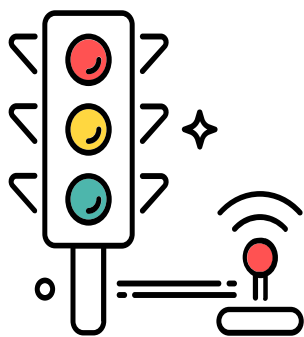
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Gross, J. J., Sutton, S. K., & Ketelaar, T. (2012). Relations between affect and personality: Support for the affect-level and affective-reactivity views. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38(5), 629-641.



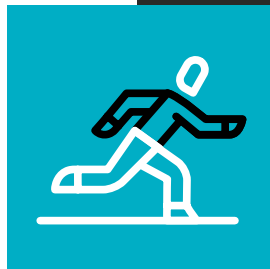
Polyvagal Theory

Identify Stress Level Control & Influence Style Affects



Control Style

When individuals with the Control Style shift from a balanced state (green) to a stressed state (yellow) they become more determined and focused, striving to establish order and control over their surroundings. They may try to "dictate" their way through the stress. However, if stress becomes too overwhelming, they may enter a freeze (red) state and exhibit intense rigidity.



Influence Style

As stress levels escalate, individuals with an Influence Style move from a calm state (green) to a more anxious and focused state (yellow). While they aim to discover creative and novel solutions to tackle any challenges, if none are immediately available they intensely desire to escape to other situations. If the stress levels continue, the extreme frustration can lead to bursts of energy (red) from a trapped perspective.

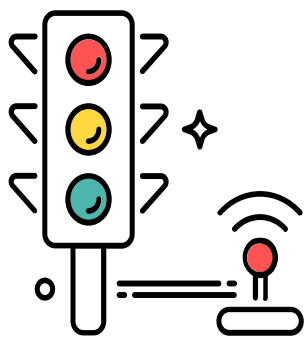
Polyvagal Theory: Porges, S. W. (2017). *The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe* (Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology). W. W. Norton & Company. Pages 1-23.

Red Zone: Porges, S. W. (2017). *The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe* (Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology). W. W. Norton & Company. Pages 12-13.

Green Zone: Porges, S. W. (2017). *The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe* (Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology). W. W. Norton & Company. Pages 13-14.

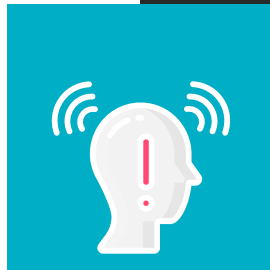
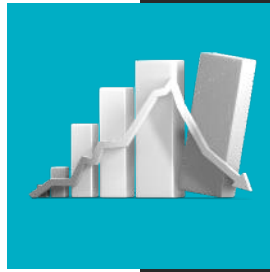
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Polyvagal Theory

Identify Stress Level Power & Authority Style Affects



Power Style

As stress levels rise, people with a Power Style may transition from a calm state (green) to a more cautious and vigilant one (yellow). They aim to maintain their sense of order and control. However, if the stress continues, they may enter a red state, characterized by extreme anxiety and feeling overwhelmed by their chaotic and unpredictable environment.

Authority Style

As stress levels rise, individuals with an Authority Style may transition from a composed and collected mindset (green) to a more cautious and anxious state (yellow). They tend to become more watchful, detecting potential threats to their safety. If stress levels continue to increase, they may enter a state of intense fear and panic (red), feeling inundated and unable to handle the situation at hand.

Polyvagal Theory: Porges, S. W. (2017). *The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe* (Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology). W. W. Norton & Company. Pages 1-23.

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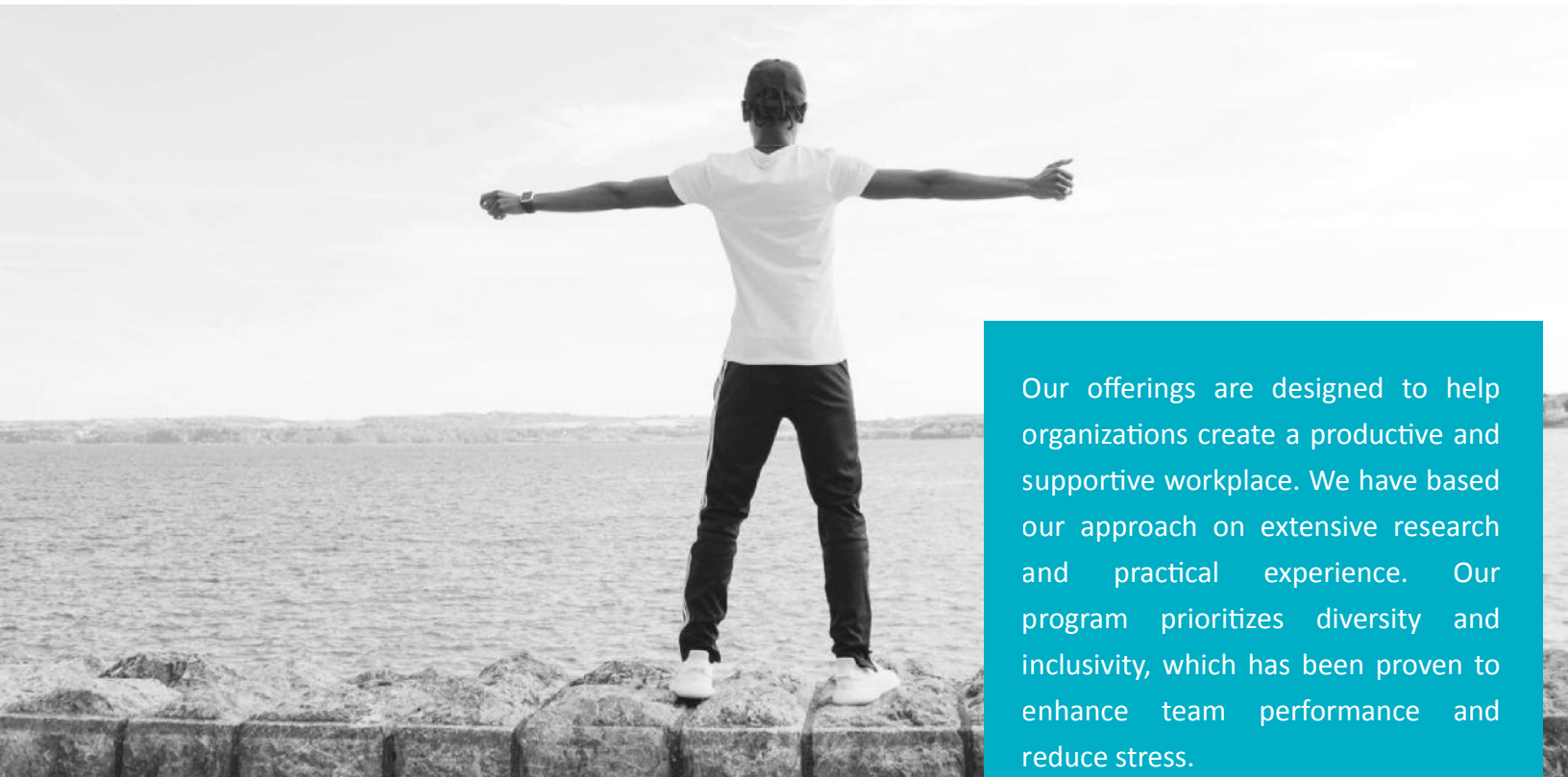
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Final Analysis

“I used Market Force [Kerage Styles] to link 1,000 people within 18 different countries in Eastern Europe, of which several countries had recently been at war and still are today. We used Market Force to build trust through learning and laughter.”

Hadley Dean, CEO Echo
Prime Properties – Helsinki,
Finland

Bring harmony to your life with Kerage Styles.



Our offerings are designed to help organizations create a productive and supportive workplace. We have based our approach on extensive research and practical experience. Our program prioritizes diversity and inclusivity, which has been proven to enhance team performance and reduce stress.

Kerage Un Limited offers many exceptional instruments, such as the Styles Assessment, that are valuable resources for individuals working in business and government. It aids in developing a genuine connection among team members and cultivating a deeper appreciation for diversity. The primary objective of this program is to create high-performing teams. Kerage products and services have been embraced by both large and small corporations and governments because of their simplicity and proven effectiveness. When organizational challenges arise, the Styles Assessment offers a shared language that can be used to tackle obstacles that impede team progress. As the world continually changes, invite Kerage to act as a guide toward success, empowering individuals and groups to achieve their full potential.