

Manipulators and Accommodators: Their roles in ethics disasters



**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS PLANNING
ASSOCIATION (EBPA) - ETHICS SEMINAR -
FEBRUARY 2, 2012**

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The Unholy Duo



- Large scale, systemic frauds/crimes frequently require participation of two specific personality types:
 - Manipulators
 - Accommodators

Manipulators and Accommodators



- Huge frauds or crimes require collaboration, frequently unwilling, between those who conceive of the wrongdoing and those who are essential to perpetrating it
 - The conceivers: the Manipulators
 - Their assistants: the Accommodators
- Manipulators conceive the fraud, but, because of its complexity or magnitude, they must enlist the aid of others to effectuate the fraud
- Accommodators are those “others”
- Note: not all frauds require both Manipulators and Accommodators
 - Individual embezzlers
 - Bernie Madoffs

Manipulators and Accommodators



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Manipulators and Accommodators



- A surprisingly small number of skilled Manipulators—perhaps as few as one—can perpetrate enormous acts of wrongdoing
 - Worldcom, which we will discuss in a moment, may have had as few as one--CFO Scott Sullivan, though a jury found that CEO Bernie Ebbers was indeed the catalyst
- Alternatively, literally millions of Accommodators can be involved . . .

The Holocaust: The Classic Example



- Only Hitler and a very small cadre of his henchmen knew, from the outset, the full magnitude of the “final solution” for the Jews.
- They were the Manipulators, but required a huge bureaucracy of Accommodators to carry out their plot
 - Opinions vary sharply on the willingness of the German people to participate. [The Guardian Article]
 - Nonetheless, the crimes could not have been committed without accommodation by those who lacked the moral courage to say “no”

Manipulators and Accommodators Compared—Drivers



Manipulators	Accommodators
A Vision	Recognition
Greed	Approval
Ego	Affiliation--member of the “team”
Need for Control	Conflict Avoidance
Power	Contribution to an organization
Money	

Manipulators and Accommodators--Attributes



Manipulators	Accommodators
Need for control	Willing to cede control to others
Dominance	“Go to” people
Amorality	Followers
Risk takers	Rationalizers
Cost/benefit—risk/reward analysts	Reverence for authority/respect for chain of command
Order givers	Eager to be a part of something larger than themselves
Adept at reading people	Motivated by more than simply money
	Often see or have limited alternative options
	High achievers

Manipulation Techniques



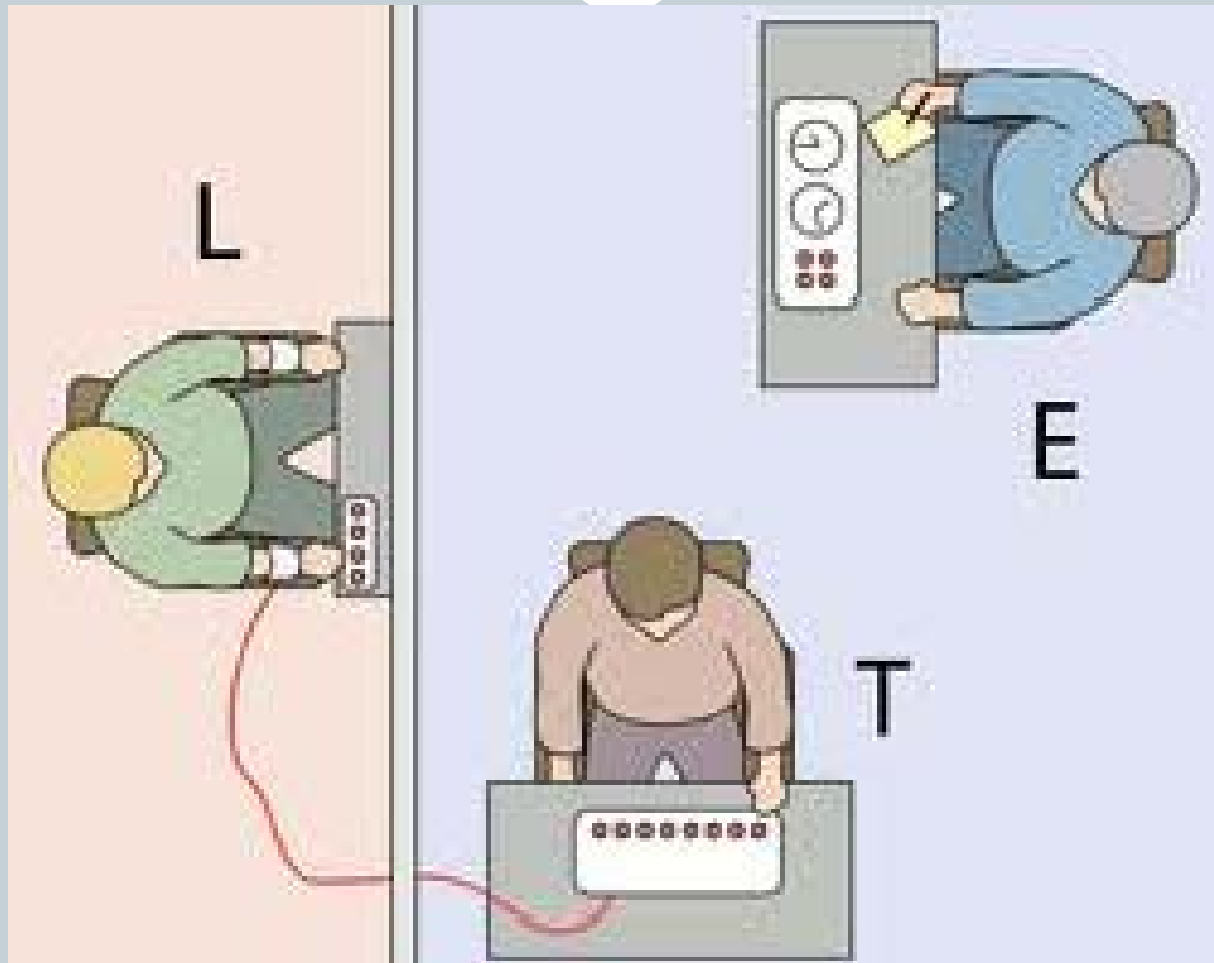
- Personal power: loyalty or fear
- Positional power: respect for authority
- “It’s not really illegal”
- “Do it just this one time”
- “The team is counting on you”
- “I take full responsibility”
- “This work is important”
- “You can’t bail out on us now”
- Flattery or confidence: “I came to you because I knew I could trust you”

The Milgram Experiments

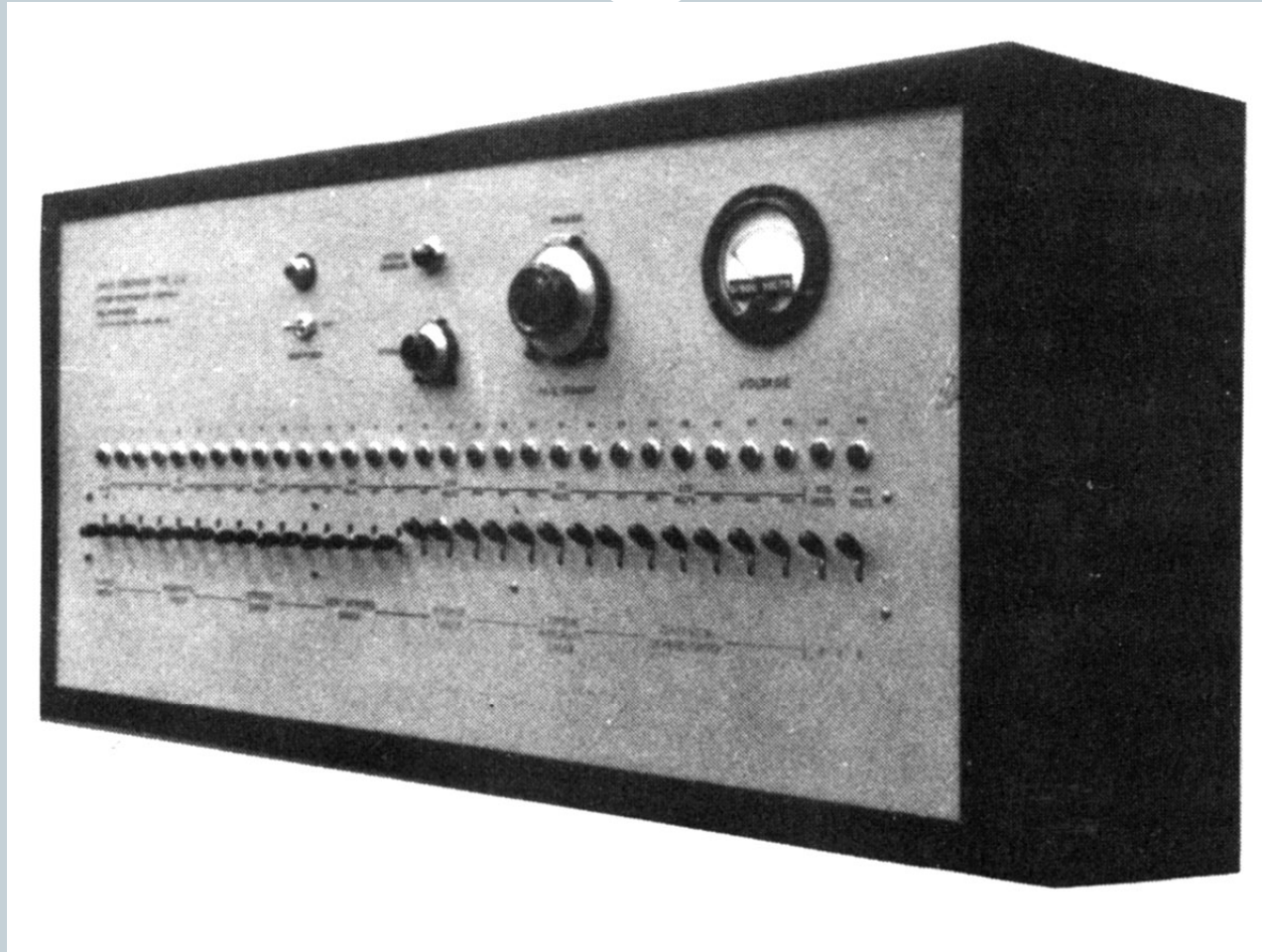


- Stanley Milgram, Yale 1962
- Sought to understand Holocaust behavior
- Subjects were drawn from a wide cross section of the population
- Subjects (“teachers”) administered electric shocks in teacher/learner “memory test” scenario
- As “learners” gave wrong answers to questions, “teachers” would instructed to administer increasingly large amounts of electric shocks t the learners.

Milgram Experiment Setup



The Milgram Machine



Questions



- What percentage of subjects “went all the way” to administering a lethal dose to the learners?
- What do the Milgram experiments tell us about the Manipulator/Accommodator theory?

Questions for Businesses Leaders to Ask Themselves



- Do you or your leaders use the techniques of the Manipulators?
- Does your culture foster or reward blind allegiance of the Accommodators?
- What can you do to reverse the potential damage that can be done by Manipulators?
- How can you empower Accommodators to overcome their natural tendencies to follow orders, right or wrong though they may be?