ACUMEN® Leadership Work*Styles*™
Individual Feedback Report

Steve Sample

August 2014
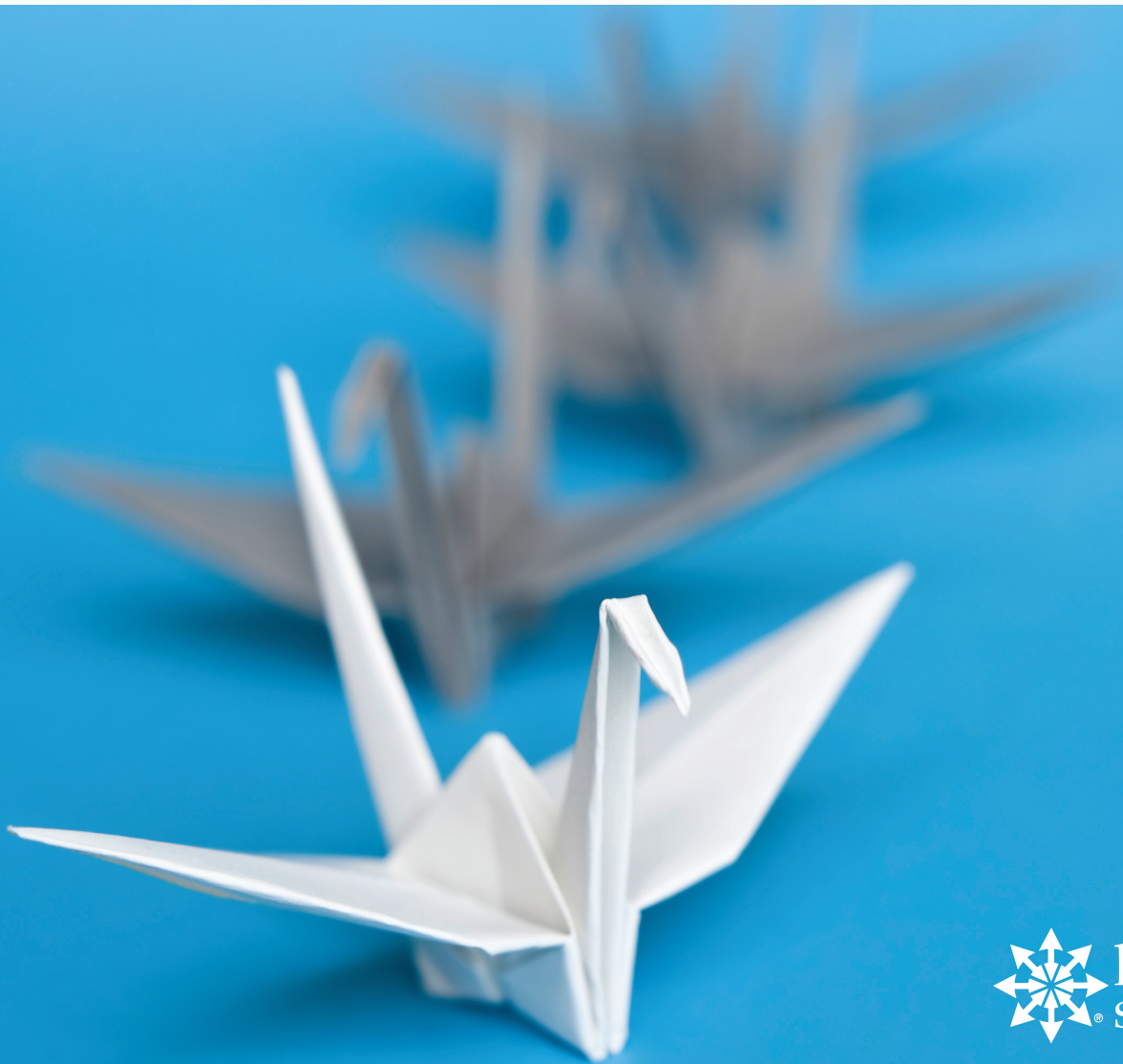
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Purpose of This Report

Your ACUMEN® Leadership Work*Styles*™ report provides you with insights and concrete suggestions for improving your success as a leader. Leadership Work*Styles* is based on over 30 years of research with several hundred thousand leaders.

How to Use This Report

Quickly review the report and highlight important messages.

Carefully read key parts of the report to prioritize important learnings.

Create an action plan; check out your assumptions with colleagues.

Act!

Review your progress with a coach every three months.
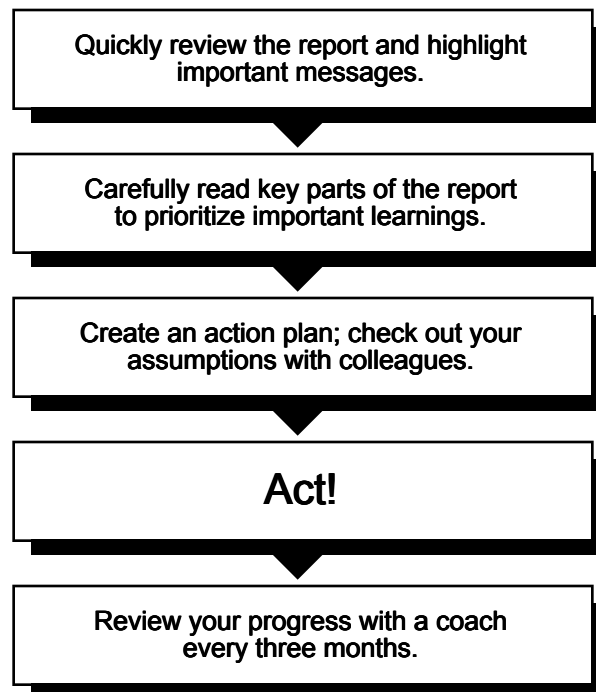
Why Use This Report?

Research shows that leadership style has a significant impact. A wide variety of studies have shown that the strongest predictors 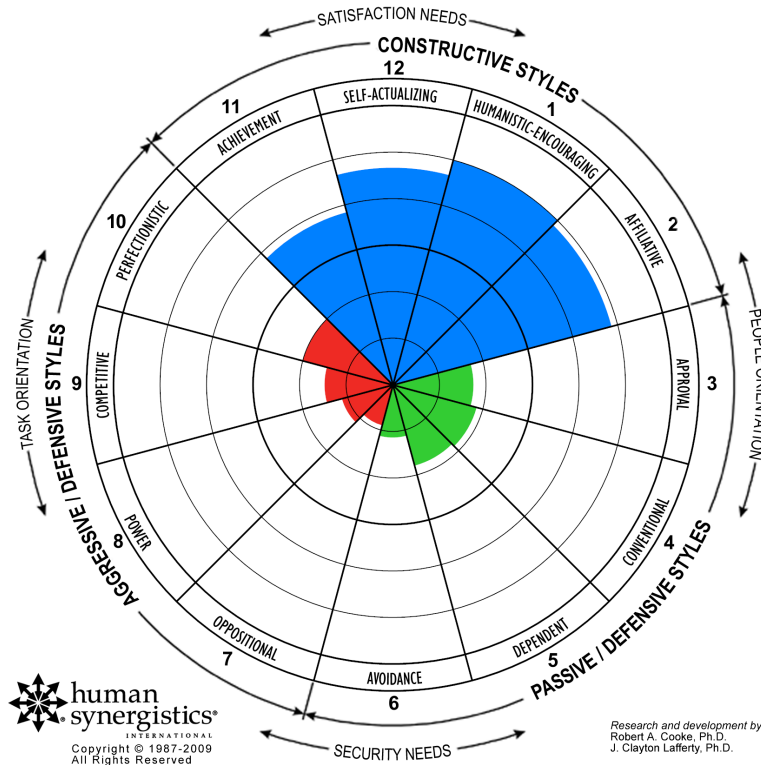of effectiveness are personal and interpersonal skills like empathy, communication skills, and the ability to work with others, in addition to IQ and technical skills. It is not just **what you know** that determines effectiveness, but **who you are.**

How to Interpret a Profile

Leadership
Work*Styles* Scales

1. Humanistic-Encouraging
2. Affiliative
3. Approval
4. Conventional
5. Dependent
6. Avoidance
7. Oppositional
8. Power
9. Competitive
10. Perfectionistic
11. Achievement
12. Self-Actualizing

Reading the Percentile Scores

The sample profile above shows assessment ratings on the 12 personal characteristics measured by Work*Styles*. Work*Styles* displays the results as percentiles by comparing actual ratings to Human Synergistics' large norm base of professional leaders. The six concentric circles mark the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, 90th, and 99th percentiles, with the 99th percentile represented by the outermost circle.

- For example, if you score in the 90th percentile on the 1 o'clock scale, it means 90% of the leaders in the norm base had ratings lower than yours on the 1 o'clock—Humanistic-Encouraging—scale. Only about 10% had higher ratings.

- The largest shaded areas reflect which personal characteristics dominate your work style.

- The smallest shaded areas show which personal characteristics have a small influence on your work style.

Scale Groupings

The outer ring shown on this sample profile illustrates the 3 broad styles underlying the 12 Work*Styles* scales. These 3 styles provide a meaningful way to group your results into more general categories:

Constructive: (11, 12, 1 and 2 o'clock positions) characterize self-enhancing thinking and behavior that contribute to one's level of *satisfaction*, ability to develop healthy relationships and work effectively with *people*, and proficiency at accomplishing *tasks*.

Passive/Defensive: (3, 4, 5 and 6 o'clock positions) represent self-protecting thinking and behavior that promote the fulfillment of *security* needs through interaction with *people*.

Aggressive/Defensive: (7, 8, 9 and 10 o'clock positions) reflect self-promoting thinking and behavior used to maintain one's status/position and fulfill *security* needs through *task*-related activities.

Your Self Profile
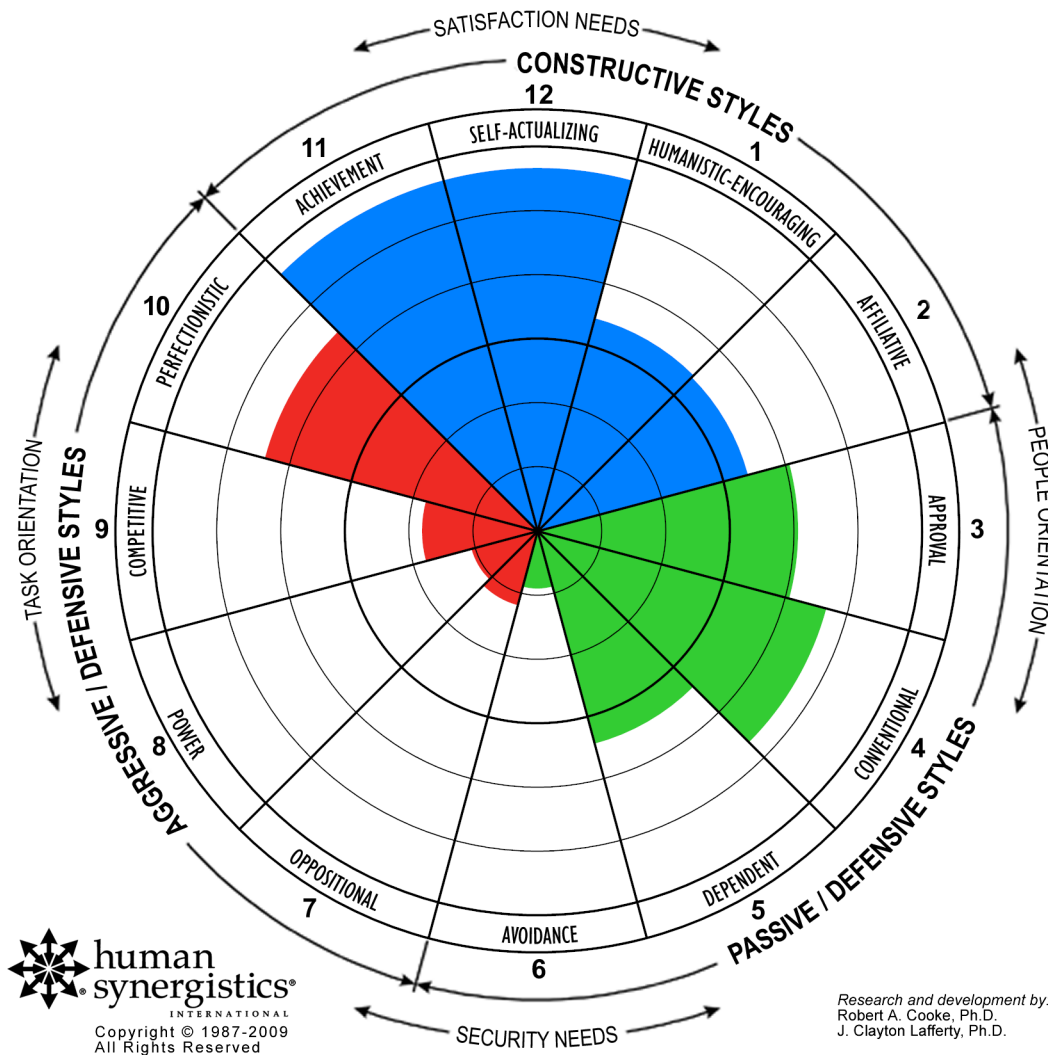
Leadership Work*Styles* Scales

1. Humanistic-Encouraging
supportive, motivates others, patient

2. Affiliative
friendly, warm, trusting

3. Approval
needs approval from others, forgiving, overly generous

4. Conventional
conforming, reliable, restrained

5. Dependent
a follower, deferential, submissive

6. Avoidance
apprehensive, self-doubting, tense

7. Oppositional
questioning, negative, critical

8. Power
authoritarian, controlling, easily angered

9. Competitive
boastful, self-centered, needs to win

10. Perfectionistic
demanding, results-oriented, driven

11. Achievement
enjoys challenges, strives for excellence, decisive

12. Self-Actualizing
enthusiastic, creative, confident

Self-Perceptions: Summary

Potential Strengths

- Strives for reliability and dependability

- Sets realistic yet challenging goals

- Respects others; very open to their input

- Able to focus on details without losing sight of the big picture

- Likes to work with others; wants to feel part of a team

- Well organized; good problem solving skills

Potential Counterproductive Tendencies

- May not always trust own judgment or intuition

- May be resistant to change

- Too easily influenced by others

- Strong desire to avoid conflict may prevent expression of genuine disagreement

Your responses indicate that you see yourself as a person who is moderate and considerate, and who has high regard for others. While your strongest interests appear to center around people, your self profile also indicates a strong drive for achievement and a determination to succeed. Although you possess capacities for strong leadership and decisive action, your profile reflects a tendency towards conformity and a strong interest in gaining others' approval—traits that can cause self-restraint to the point where it may inhibit innovation and open discussion of important issues.

People are important to you and play a key role in your value system and in the way you run your life. As a result, you are frequently able to establish good working relationships with others, practicing many of the basic principles of participative management. In terms of social orientation, you are the type of leader who:

- wants to be liked by others

- tends to be respectful and agreeable

- is somewhat insecure about your social skills

- avoids conflicts when possible, showing restraint and an interest in compromise

- is easy to get along with

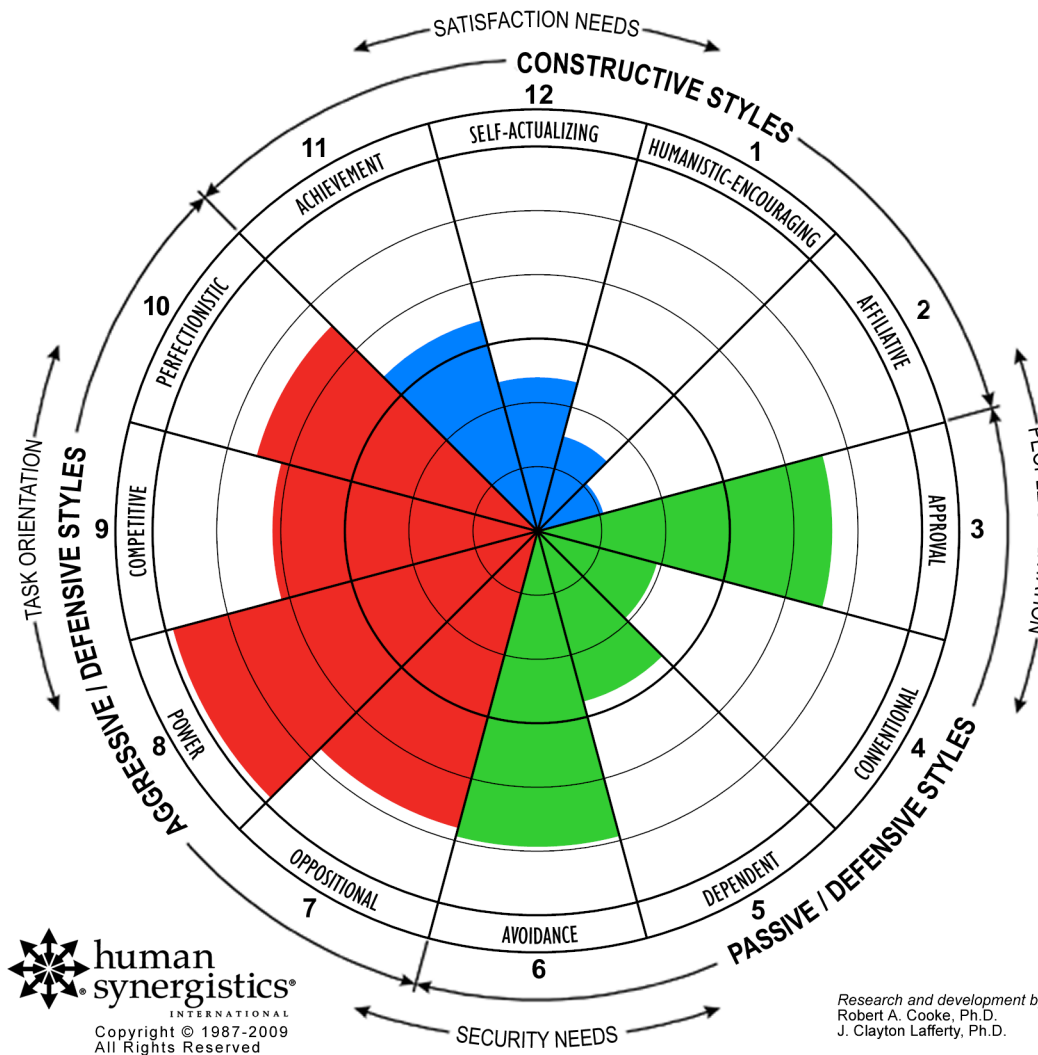Other key factors in your leadership style are related to your reported high need for achievement, which is usually associated with the ability to organize information and to think and act independently. While your self-assessment notes the presence of a tendency to look to others for approval and conform to expectations, you also describe yourself as willing and able to form your own opinions and take independent action.

In terms of task-related skills, leaders like you:

- enjoy work and the challenges it offers

- are conscientious workers, working in a deliberate and consistent way

- work effectively with others, respecting their unique skills and experience

- have skills in the areas of goal setting and planning, and can consistently execute project strategies

Your self profile suggests some conflict between following your own intuition about how to run things versus adhering to more conventional, routine approaches. While you have some confidence and faith in your judgment and abilities, your need for security may prevent you from being more self-reliant and independent.

7   Self-Perceptions: Summary

Description-by-Others Profile

n = 5

Leadership WorkStyles Scales

1. Humanistic-Encouraging *supportive, motivates others, patient*	**5. Dependent** *a follower, deferential, submissive*	**9. Competitive** *boastful, self-centered, needs to win*
2. Affiliative *friendly, warm, trusting*	**6. Avoidance** *apprehensive, self-doubting, tense*	**10. Perfectionistic** *demanding, results-oriented, driven*
3. Approval *needs approval from others, forgiving, overly generous*	**7. Oppositional** *questioning, negative, critical*	**11. Achievement** *enjoys challenges, strives for excellence, decisive*
4. Conventional *conforming, reliable, restrained*	**8. Power** *authoritarian, controlling, easily angered*	**12. Self-Actualizing** *enthusiastic, creative, confident*

Others' Perceptions: Summary

Others may see you quite differently than you see yourself. Some people find it difficult to make sense out of differences between their self-concepts and how others see them. However, it is important to remember that others interact with you based on their perceptions of your leadership style, not upon how you see yourself. As a result, their perceptions offer you a valuable perspective that you can use to develop your insight and your leadership effectiveness.

Potential Strengths

- Highly motivated to succeed
- Strong desire to take charge
- Exhibits high energy
- Willing to take chances
- Able to direct others when conditions require authoritative action

Potential Counterproductive Tendencies

- May find it difficult to trust others
- Strong dominating tendencies, may not accept or encourage input from others
- Forceful style may antagonize others
- May focus excessively on tasks, ignore team development issues

Others perceive you to be a driven, aggressive leader who sets very high performance standards. They see your style as assertive, demanding, and reflecting a personal preference for authority and control. You appear to place great value on hard work. Others also see you as a manager who communicates strong concerns and possibly even worries about potential difficulties or problems in the team's output. Leaders rated in this way are often able to accomplish a great deal and certainly bring a strong work ethic to any team, but may well put considerable pressure on themselves and on others.

Others describe you as compelled to take on heavy workloads and reluctant to empower others; thus, while you place high demands on yourself and others, you are probably not able to use all the energy and talents that the team has to offer. They see you as demonstrating little confidence in their ideas or abilities, and as being critical of others. While your criticisms may be intended to help others clarify their thinking or to help the team discover more effective solutions, others do not readily see this. They see you as primarily concerned with your view of work and your own agendas, and quite aggressive about those issues.

Ways others might describe your work style include:

- competitive and perfectionistic
- trusts own judgment; you like to do things in your own way
- asks tough questions

- driven to succeed and is often successful

- wants to be seen as extraordinarily competent and possibly as better than others

- likes to be the center of attention

- results oriented and willing to work very hard to get results

- very focused on work and not very focused on relationships

Leaders rated in this way have a strong interest in contributing to the work process and are quite persistent and determined workers. Others see pluses and minuses in your approach to work. On the plus side, you are very focused on quality and results. You have initiative, the willingness to state your point of view, and persistence in your work efforts. On the minus side, they see you as being short on relationship and teamwork skills, and too focused on doing things your way. You are not particularly sensitive about others' feelings or needs, and because of this you can be difficult to work with or for.

Self vs. Description-by-Others Profiles

Self
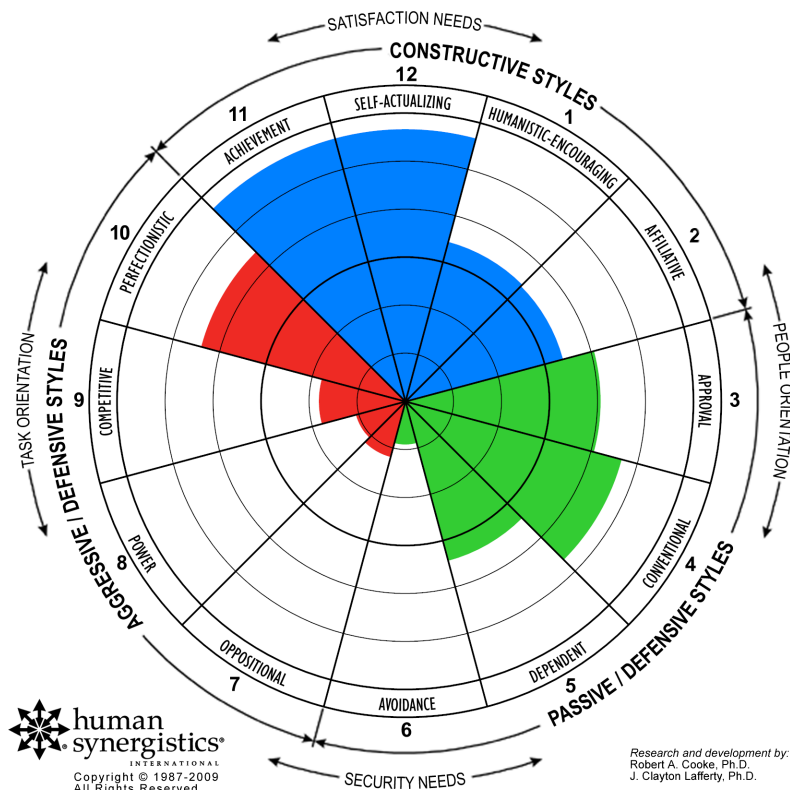
Description-by-Others

Spread of Opinion

n = 5
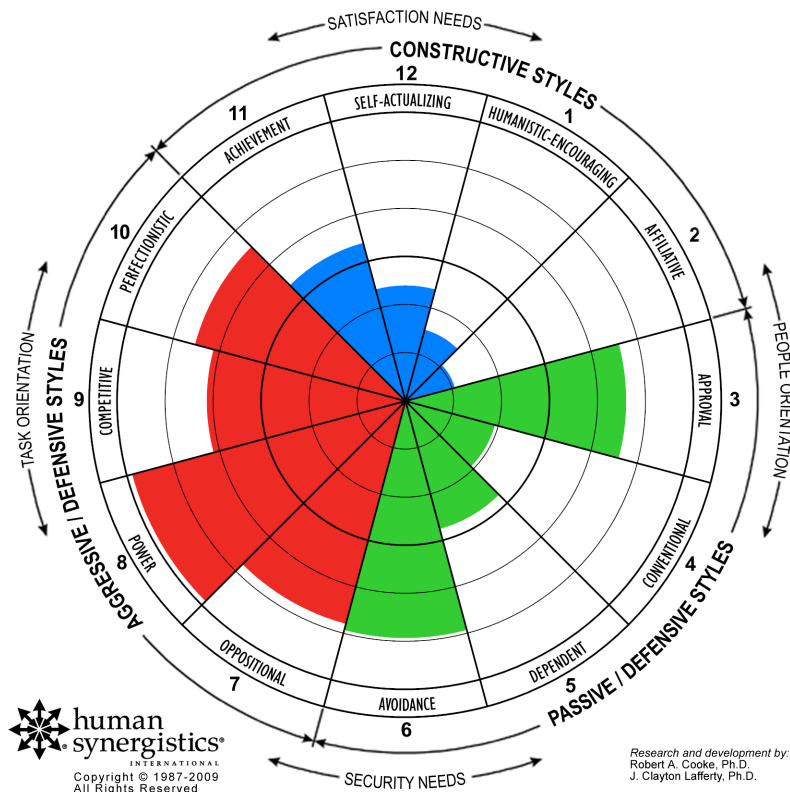
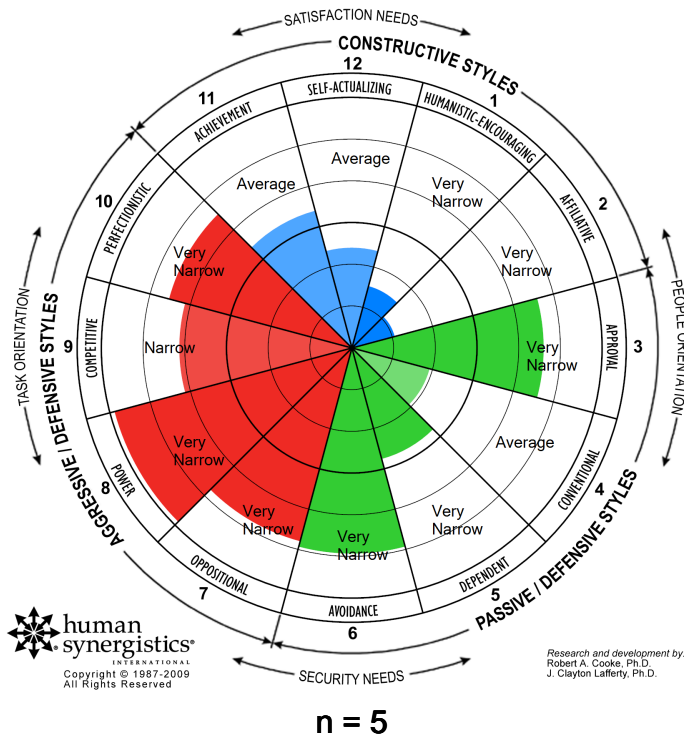Dark shading represents a very narrow or narrow spread of opinion and denotes a standard deviation among respondents' ratings that is lower than that for 10% or 25%, respectively, of the sets of respondents in the sample. In contrast, light shading represents a wide or very wide spread and a numerically high standard deviation (greater than that for 75% or 90% of the people in our sample). Moderate shading represents an average spread of opinion, with your standard deviation falling between the 25th and 75th percentiles on the distribution.

Your styles are listed in the table below, starting at the top with those with the strongest agreement (narrow spread of opinion) and ending with those with the weakest agreement (wide spread of opinion).

Spread of Opinion among the People Describing You

The profile above builds on your Description-by-Others results by showing the spread of opinion among those who described you.

- The styles with dark shading are those along which the spread of opinion is narrow (your respondents agree);

- the styles with light shading are those along which the spread is wide (your respondents disagree);

- and the styles with moderate shading are those along which there is neither strong agreement nor disagreement.

More technically, the shading depicts the amount of variation in respondents' descriptions of you along each style (i.e., the standard deviation). The length of the extensions reflects the relative extent to which the styles characterize you; in contrast, the shading reflects the extent to which your respondents' descriptions vary compared to the variance in the descriptions of the 4,500 people in the norming sample.

	STYLE	SPREAD OF OPINION
7	Oppositional	Very Narrow
2	Affiliative	Very Narrow
1	Humanistic-Encouraging	Very Narrow
10	Perfectionistic	Very Narrow
5	Dependent	Very Narrow
6	Avoidance	Very Narrow
8	Power	Very Narrow
3	Approval	Very Narrow
9	Competitive	Narrow
11	Achievement	Average
12	Self-Actualizing	Average
4	Conventional	Average

Breakout of Ratings from Different Sources

Different people see you in different situations. For that reason, the ratings from different sources—bosses, peers, direct reports, etc.—are displayed separately in the breakout profiles that follow. The display of the boss's ratings requires at least one respondent whom you identified as your boss, while the minimum requirement for each of the other sources is at least three respondents.

Be cautious about the conclusions you draw by comparing these profiles, or by comparing these profiles with the composite feedback profile from all respondents shown earlier. Ratings from a small number of others are less statistically reliable than ratings from a larger group. For example, if one or two people moved elsewhere, their replacements might describe you somewhat differently, even if your leadership style has not changed. To be a concern, there must be large differences between the ratings from different subsets of people. Resist the temptation to overanalyze small differences.

Individuals can give different ratings because:

- they differ in their personal observational skills

- people remember different events, and remember them differently depending on whether the event touched one of their "hot buttons"

- they may feel apprehensive about the possible personal consequences of giving a leader unflattering (but accurate) ratings

- some people are well placed to observe the full range of your leadership style, others less well placed

  This should not lead you to believe that your ratings depend entirely on who rated you. The reality is that they are rating the same person—you—seen in mainly the same situations. Research on 360 degree leadership feedback has repeatedly found that most respondents typically provide similar ratings of the same leader, even though there is room for one or two respondents to be quite different.

  Despite these caveats, the breakout profiles provide information about how you are perceived by different levels in the organization. Use them to help decide where you might go to seek answers to the question:

  "What can I do differently from what I have done in the past?"

      13   Breakout of Ratings from Different Sources

Breakout Profiles

Description-by-Others Profile
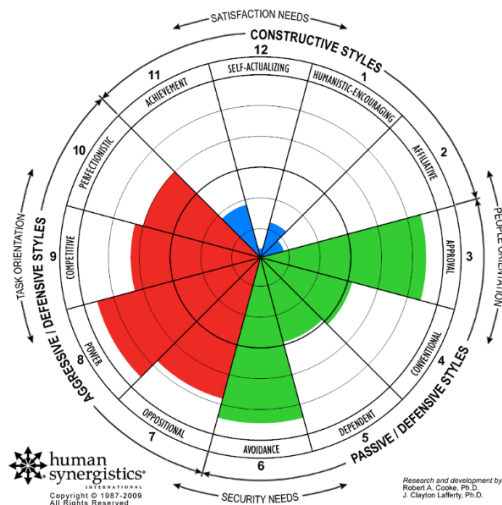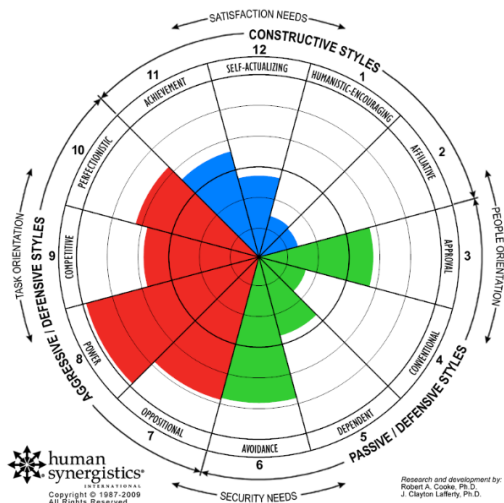### N = 5
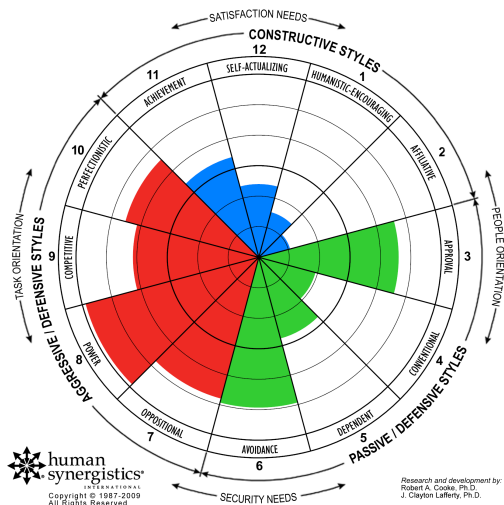
John Doe
N = 1

Direct Report
N = 3

Others' Perceptions:
A Closer Look

This section of your report provides a detailed analysis of the feedback from others. Although your self-perceptions are important for understanding your intentions, the perceptions of others are very useful for understanding how to improve your effectiveness. Others respond to you based on how they see you behave, which may be different from how you see yourself.

Impact on Task Accomplishment

Key Assets

Others' ratings say the heart of your work style is your drive to succeed on projects and tasks. Assets include:

- a focus on getting results

- the ability to set high standards for performance

- good discrimination skills and the ability to analyze issues

- a capacity for taking independent action

- a high energy level

- persistence and determination

- a willingness to stand alone and speak up for what you believe in

- an interest in examining matters and playing the devil's advocate

- the ability to see the big picture and focus on details

These qualities indicate that you value work, are highly motivated to achieve, and want to have a significant impact on the work process. Such analytic skills, energy, and persistence can be very valuable to a work team, but are much more valuable when complemented by good social skills.

A Focus on Tasks, Not Team Processes

Others' feedback strongly suggests that you are most effective in focusing on tasks and activities, as opposed to working closely with others. Depending on your exact role and responsibilities as a leader, this may work if your team operates in a very independent and empowered basis. On the other hand, your profile suggests that it would be very difficult for you to empower others fully, so this strongly independent work style is probably a source of project management and communications difficulties within the work team. Not only do team members need clear and consistent communication around projects and tasks, but they also need a supportive, patient manager and leader to guide their efforts.

Other implications associated with your work style include:

- While you are likely to set very high performance standards for yourself that propel you to high levels of achievement, these same high standards can be very hard on fellow team members, especially if they are not provided the steady, consistent support of their leader.

- Because of your high standards, subordinates may find they are constantly falling short of your standards and receiving criticism when they would not only like to receive, but need to receive, some acknowledgment and recognition for the good work that is already completed.

Watching for Controlling Tendencies

Others see two sides of your tendencies to be aggressive and act independently. On one hand, your initiative and self-reliance can be productive for you as an individual contributor to the team. On the other hand, others see you as someone with very strong needs to feel in control and be in charge. These needs are in direct conflict with a leader's role to develop people and coordinate the mix of skills, talents, and perspectives that different team members bring to the team. Your strong controlling style can interfere with tasks requiring cooperation and coordination—the hallmarks of teamwork.

The most effective leaders reflect a strong work ethic and a focus on results. However, they complement these traits with a demonstrated interest in working with and through others. They make conscious efforts to maintain good interpersonal relationships. They are comfortable in the role of contributing to and coordinating teamwork, rather than having a strong need or desire to control or dominate the work process.

While your fellow team members credit you with the strong work ethic that is a critical factor in managerial effectiveness, they also rate you as having traits that probably make it difficult for you to exemplify to others what it takes to be a team player. Others describe you as:

- demonstrating strong needs to take charge and to do things in your own preferred manner

- being resistant to input and ideas of other team members

- having needs to win and focus on your own achievements instead of team goals

- being so assertive that you are sometimes experienced by others as overly aggressive

- tending to focus on problems (what is wrong) instead of solutions (how we can make it work)

As a result, others probably experience that you demonstrate little confidence in their ideas or abilities and are critical of their perspectives. If true, you may be unwittingly losing great opportunities to take advantage of the diverse skills and perspectives of other talented team members. Research very clearly shows that the most effective leaders are open to new perspectives, fully use the input and abilities of other team members, and consciously work to encourage others to contribute.

Decisiveness and Flexibility

Leaders rated in this way are very decisive and quick to act. They tend to believe many things are clear and easily categorized as "right or wrong," "good or bad." Others' ratings indicate that you have a tendency to see the world as "black or white." On the positive side, this allows you to:

- think quickly, make quick decisions

- offer your group a strong sense of direction

- express your opinions in an open and direct way

Your candor in saying what you think can be a positive attribute in helping others to understand your perspective. When urgency is an issue, this type of work style is a key asset. On the less positive side, your style can interfere with:

- approaching decisions and problem solving in an open, inquisitive way that allows the team to explore new ideas and solutions

- allowing others to express their point of view in a comfortable manner, especially those who are less confident and may be intimidated by your assertive style

Part of the reason some people see things as black or white is they are confident and self-assured of their point of view; therefore, they naturally feel comfortable approaching things in a self-centered way. You may not recognize this tendency as much as others do, but it can have wide-ranging effects on your performance. Based on others' feedback, it appears a key issue for you is to be more open and flexible in how you plan and execute tasks.

Seeking Perfection

Others describe you as having very high expectations. Overall, this is a good thing. A wealth of research confirms that setting higher goals leads to higher performance. High goals motivate people to work harder, and to look for creative ways to be more efficient. Because of your high expectations, you are more likely to achieve a higher level of task accomplishment. It is important to you that you do not just do a good job, but a great job. You do not aim for "good," you aim for "best." For this reason, you are more likely to acquire technical expertise than many other people. One aspect of this may be your greater attention to detail. More than other people, you will persist in ensuring that everything is just right. This usually reflects itself in a higher level of quality. All these are important assets, and help you be successful.

However, leaders seen this way may also be impractical at times. Driven by the need to maintain an aura of great competence, they may set or agree to goals that are unrealistically high. For this reason, you may find it harder than other leaders to be objective in recognizing expectations that have been set too high. And because you hold yourself to such high standards, you are likely to feel it more keenly whenever you fail to hit your target.

Because both your self-image of high competence and your status with others are very important to you, you are likely to have a lot of emotional energy about any failure to hit your targets. You want to look strong, not weak or incompetent. For leaders with your profile, this emotional energy can get channeled in several directions. Some directions are productive: the initiation of decisive action to overcome hurdles and get tasks back on track. However, some directions are

counterproductive: denying that problems exist (rather than admit weakness), and blaming others (rather than admit responsibility). Because of your forceful style, team members may hesitate to bring suspected problems to your attention, because they may be afraid of being blamed for it or getting into an argument. Even if 95% of the time your reaction is to take reasonable diagnostic and problem-solving steps, if you shoot the messenger the other 5% of the time, you will be amazed at how quickly people stop volunteering to be a messenger.

Finally, in negotiating with other people to solve task-related problems, you may also tend to seek a "perfect" solution when a more pragmatic approach would suffice. Your high need for perfection and strong desire to win can make it difficult for you to reach agreements about methods for moving projects forward or bringing a project to conclusion. Though you prefer quick solutions, in this respect your current work style may actually prolong the process. It can cause other team members to become impatient or antagonistic. To adjust these tendencies, remember that most problems do not need a perfect solution, only a solution that works.

Insights from Research

As you might expect, controlling and aggressive leaders are seen as the *least* effective leaders in terms of managing relationships, communications, or team motivation—skills that are at the core of a leader's people-management role. But you might be surprised to learn that aggressive leaders are also seen as less effective in what might be understood as exclusively project or task-oriented competencies, such as planning, problem solving, innovation, quality improvement, and efficiency. Wearing an aggressive, controlling style is like wearing weights while doing a sport—it can only slow you down and may lead to injury. The work team system requires much more give and take and patience, in addition to any hard skills you have to offer. Leaders who are open-minded, flexible, and socially skilled are far more effective in their jobs, earn higher salaries, and are less likely to derail from an increasingly responsible career path.

The Next Step

This suggests a clear next step for you to optimize the drive and determination you bring to your work: make a strong conscious effort to work with others more cooperatively and patiently. Here are some suggestions:

- Solicit ideas and share them among team members; this approach can generate alternative plans that may be better.

- Use others' skills and experience more effectively by asking for their input, thinking about their input, and letting them implement their input. Communicate your trust and empower them to perform. Each team member brings a unique mix of capabilities to the workplace, and these resources should be drawn upon to find the best solutions.

- Set realistic goals by carefully soliciting other team members' input and perspectives on timelines and deliverables. Setting goals independently does not motivate others to feel like part of the process and will decrease commitment and productivity. Setting goals that are too difficult to achieve simply sets you and other team members up for failure and feelings of dissatisfaction. Goals which are challenging and specific give high satisfaction and fulfillment when they are reached.

The basic course of action to increase your effectiveness is clear: continue your assertiveness, your thinking and questioning, your strong work ethic and leadership, but do not let your ego get involved. Lead with the best of your professionalism and rational thinking, and consciously work to limit the impact of your ego and emotions. Lead and contribute as much as you can to a project, but do not try to dominate the project or others on the project.

Impact on Teamwork

Strengths

The drive, discipline, and assertiveness you bring to a team are all valuable assets. Others' ratings clearly show that your high level of interest in contributing to the team and its efforts are valued by others. Further, your willingness to take a stand and state what you believe in sets a tone for openness, honesty, and direct communications among the work group. When the team requires leadership from someone to help move it to action, other team members are likely to find you a stimulating, energetic, and vital personality. While at times your style may overwhelm others, at many other times your energy and enthusiasm will be exactly what the team requires to find a way to get the work done.

Relating to Others

Despite these valuable assets, your respondents see you as a person who is relatively moody, and who tends to demonstrate little interest in people and relationships. They imply that you are much more focused on your own interests and agenda than on other people and their personal needs. You may be seen as more competitive with team members than cooperative. In digesting this feedback, bear in mind that your respondents are undoubtedly appreciative of many occasions where you have been cooperative and many ways in which you have been helpful. However, their ratings also strongly suggest that there have been episodes when your interpersonally competitive and aggressive tendencies have come to the fore. Episodes that exhibit these negative aspects often form indelible impressions on other people, even though these episodes may be few in number.

Frequently, individuals rated in this way see others as difficult to get along with. You may feel that others are too needy, dependent, and demanding of attention and support. While some people are more interested in feelings and relationships, your respondents see you as having strong interests in thinking and in taking decisive action. As a result, while you may think that more feeling types of people have a right to their own interests and needs, you may also grow impatient and feel imposed upon by their ways. They are likely to strike you as soft and too emotional, while your own tendencies are to be more forceful and controlled.

Supporting and Encouraging Other Team Members

Others' feedback suggests that you are not naturally inclined to give others encouragement and support. Research clearly shows that leaders who provide others with patient support and encouragement are much more effective in motivating them to put forth their best efforts. You may intend to help others clarify their thinking or find the most effective solutions, but they perceive you as critical and relatively insensitive to their feelings and needs. Others describe you as a leader who probably is so interested and focused on the work that you may unwittingly overlook the

personal relationship skills that are so important for a leader to use in creating a climate of teamwork.

In your drive for results and emphasis on projects and tasks, you are probably falling short in demonstrating the social skills that allow others to feel accepted, at ease, and appreciated. Instead, they may be getting the impression that you are a distant, self-centered individual who cares too much about work, and too little about the other things (and people) that are important in life.

Skeptical or Optimistic—Finding the Balance

Other team members describe you as pessimistic and skeptical, and they are likely to find it hard to understand what satisfies or pleases you. Even when many things are going well, you may pinpoint the one thing that isn't meeting your perfectionistic standards. Acknowledgment of good work is necessary for team morale and a healthy working climate; make a habit of first recognizing and acknowledging that "the glass is half full," then moving on to possible improvements.

Conflict and Disagreements

Leaders with an aggressive, action-oriented profile tend to stimulate conflict, disagreement, and controversy. They often feel so strongly about their point of view and wanting it to be heard that they find it difficult to be sympathetic and see things from someone else's perspective. This can be incredibly counterproductive to effectively managing and working with others in terms of mediating communications within the work team. This lack of empathy can also be counterproductive in that you:

- may say or do things that hurt a co-worker's feelings without being aware of it

- will have difficulty compromising and looking for the middle ground—a critical asset for effectiveness in negotiations and in managing conflict

The key for your effectiveness is to monitor and moderate your competitive and aggressive tendencies. This requires playing down your needs to be seen as a "winner" and being more objective and rational about achieving team objectives. Always remember that you are a leader first, supporting larger goals, and an individual contributor second. With the role of leader comes responsibilities for staff development, coaching, support, and patient guidance. A few suggestions:

- Develop a sense of empathy for others' points of view by asking what they think and need.

- Practice tolerance and flexibility by working towards mutually satisfying solutions to problems faced by the team.

- When disagreements arise, make a conscious effort to fully use your listening skills first, only later expressing your own point of view.

This may be a difficult task for you, as others believe you are not particularly interested in, or possibly even adept at, showing patience and concern. Moreover, patience is like paint: it has to be applied thoroughly and uniformly. Every missed spot stands out. You will find, however, that efforts on your part will usually be welcomed by others. As a result, you will probably find that conflict can be resolved more easily and group decisions ultimately made more quickly.

Directions for Change

Feedback strongly suggests that these will be big challenges for you, but the research is also clear on how you can meet these challenges.

First, you can achieve your professional goals and develop better relationships with people by learning to work patiently and supportively with others. You can't motivate or work cooperatively by emphasizing criticism. Learn to use your critical abilities to help others find the best solutions to problems in an unquestionably supportive manner, rather than using your insight to find fault or to criticize. Similarly, use your energy and drive for results to involve others and stimulate their enthusiasm. This combination of your analytic skills and drive for results is a key asset, but must be directed so others feel supported and valued for what they have to offer.

Second, you can focus less on controlling projects and tasks, and more on assisting the team in achieving superior results. Work to set high goals, but only goals that are realistic, attainable, and earn the support of team members. Empower team members by allowing them to speak up for what they believe in and by carefully listening for the value in what they say. Make it clear to team members that you value the expertise, responsibility, and authority they bring to the job. The most effective leaders achieve through teamwork, not by trying to do it all on their own. They patiently and supportively work with others to bring out the best in the team, and clearly communicate that this is their priority.

Insights from Research

As noted earlier, the management research shows that an aggressive, controlling work style is ineffective in relationship-oriented competencies such as team motivation, staff development, networking, customer focus, performance feedback, and communications. Obviously, these are key areas for high-level functioning on the part of any manager or executive. More and more managers are required to spend their time mentoring, developing others, and serving as team coaches and leaders, rather than working independently as individual contributors.

The research speaks loud and clear on what personal work styles are the most effective for those in a managerial role: achievement-oriented, creative, confident, socially skilled leaders are far more effective at nearly all aspects of the managerial role. This is especially true for interpersonal management behaviors such as giving feedback, coaching, dealing with conflict, fostering accurate communication, motivating team members, encouraging initiative in others, meeting customer needs, and networking outside the organization.

Suggestions for Development

Respondents' feedback suggests a number of ways you can modify your current work style to become a more effective leader. The challenge for you as a team leader is to fully leverage all the skills and abilities you bring to the job, while at the same time developing the other members of the team as your followership. Leadership is, in fact, defined by followership, and leadership ability is determined, in large part, by the personal attributes a leader brings to the job. The following suggestions are a menu of ideas, actions, and activities intended to stimulate your thinking about ways to enhance your leadership effectiveness.

Developing Your Listening Skills

❑ Listen interactively with your co-workers. In conversations (as well as in meetings) over the next few days, make it a point to not automatically say what you think in response to a statement. Instead, reply by summarizing what you think the other person is saying and feeling. This will take patience and effort, but the payoff is learning to better understand others' perspectives. And you may prompt others to discuss important information and concerns that have not been brought up before.

❑ Legitimize others' concerns and feelings. When you restate in your own words what you thought you heard them say, include a non-judgmental observation about the emotion that lies beneath their words, such as, *"It sounds like this situation has been frustrating for you."* Continue the dialogue until they feel you have accurately heard them, on both the factual and emotional level. This prevents the issue from coming up again and again.

❑ Practice listening to opposing views. The next time someone disagrees with you, wait until they are completely finished speaking. Listen carefully to what they are saying. Then, as has already been emphasized, restate their key points and ask them to clarify, if necessary. Finally, state which points you agree with and why. Throughout the process, refrain from asking questions or making remarks while the other person is speaking. Use this process during the next week and then evaluate what differences you think it has made in your work life.

❑ For a back-to-basics education about listening skills, read *Listen Up!: How to Communicate Effectively at Work* by Eunice LeMay and Jane Schwamberger (2007). Evaluate your listening style as described in Part One. Use the communication tips, and make a personal action plan. Asking a co-worker to assist you in thinking through the questions may be helpful.

❑ Read *Are You Really Listening?: Keys to Successful Communication* by Paul Donoghue and Mary Siegel (2005). This book shows you how to replace ineffective listening habits with more effective ones through easy-to-apply techniques. While reading this book, write down at least twenty things you could do differently, starting today, to sharpen your listening skills.

Empowerment

❑ Analyze the forces affecting your ability to be empowering. What skills do specific team members lack? Is there something about the organizational culture that punishes you for empowering other people? Is there something about the nature of your team's tasks that forces you to be less empowering? How do your own values support or interfere with your empowerment of others? Do you feel empowered yourself?

❑ Meet with team members to compare their perceptions of your empowerment skills with your own. What do they think is needed for them to feel that their efforts have a great impact and that they "own" their work?

Feedback and Coaching

❑ Pay attention to your own feelings of wanting to prove a point or to be "right" each time you become involved in giving feedback and coaching. These feelings are present in all of us to some extent, to give us a way of coping with our own insecurities. However, really good coaches operate from an entirely different mind-set. Rather than telling people what to do, they are committed to helping others discover a process or solution that works for them. While coaching others, avoid the temptation to assume that you know what is best for them. Consciously focus on helping others help themselves.

Team Leadership

❑ Say "Yes, and . . ." instead of "Yes, but . . ." when responding to other people's ideas. Few ideas are born perfect, and your critical thinking style makes you quick to see the problems. But no one will keep launching new ideas if you keep torpedoing them. Instead, start by explicitly recognizing the good parts of any idea. Then, having established that the idea has merit, treat the flaws in the idea as new problems that can be solved.

❑ Ask your co-workers for their suggestions related to your work or to a particular work problem you are trying to tackle. Try out their ideas and keep them updated on the status of their inputs. Credit them publicly for originating those ideas that work well. Reciprocate by being available to your co-workers to offer your support when they need it.

❑ Make an effort to acknowledge the contributions made by your co-workers. Do this in group settings and on an individual level. For instance, make a point of thanking them for their work on a project on which you are also working. Get together with others to host an impromptu celebration at the end of the day to salute a person or group that just completed a difficult project. Practice sharing credit for successes with team members. Recognize the achievements of people on other teams who have risen to their important project challenges with success. Assess the impact of these new practices on your experience of working collaboratively with others.

❑ Take a greater interest in the personal lives and concerns of your co-workers. What kinds of interesting things do they do away from work? What motivates them? What are their best-developed skills? How are they affected by developments at work, and how do they feel about it? To build rapport and sympathetic understanding, look for chances to ask these and other questions that occur to you for each co-worker.

❑ Keep score each day on the number of arguments or debates you win, and change your way of thinking about what that number means: the best possible score is zero! This is because arguments and debates are invariably win-lose situations. One of the most important changes you personally can make is to develop skill at redefining/redirecting win-lose situations into cooperative win-win situations.

❑ Read *Getting to Resolution: Turning Conflict into Collaboration* by Steward Levine (2009), or Judy Whichard and Nathalie Kees' *The Manager as Facilitator* (2006). These books provide guidelines for fostering collaboration to meet organizational challenges for change and innovation. Meet with the other members of your team to identify ways that all of you may be hindered in your collaboration to innovate and change. For example, make a team list of "killer phrases," such as "It will cost too much," "Yes, but," etc. Make a list of all the difficulties the team encounters in trying something new. Then find ways to get around these barriers.

❑ Read about successful negotiation skills, if you have not done so already. A couple of sources are Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton's *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (2011), and David Oliver's *How to Negotiate Effectively* (2011).

❑ Leaders must always be adaptive and ready to meet emerging challenges and trends. Use the book *Winning with Transglobal Leadership: How to Find and Develop Top Global Talent to Build World-Class Organizations* by Linda Sharkey, Nazneen Razi, Robert Cooke, and Peter Barge (2012) to develop your capabilities as a leader within and beyond your team in this global world.

Project Leadership

❑ Slow down, especially when you feel pressured to go fast. Hasty action often leads to wasted effort. Follow the carpenter's rule of "Measure twice, cut once." Ask for input from others, to make sure you are on the right track.

❑ Have co-workers play the role of customers for your products and services. Discuss with them individually what they want in your product's features, quality, and timeliness. As "the customer is always right," you must deliver what they want to receive, not what you want to deliver. It would be unwise to tell these customers they are wrong to want exactly what they want, but you can take the occasion to explore different ways to meet their needs. As a learning activity, make it a point to have several such discussions at the beginning of tasks, and assess the results with the co-workers afterward.

❑ Continue to offer your problem-solving ideas to others. Doing more to explain your ideas in detail will help them understand the logic, and will speed the acceptance of your ideas. Be sure to accept constructive responses to your ideas; when others have input, they support a plan or solution more strongly.

❑ Read about quality improvement. Start with Timothy Kloppenborg and Joseph Petrick's *Managing Project Quality* (2002), Gerald Langley, Ronald Moen, Kevin Nolan, Thomas Nolan, Clifford Norman and Lloyd Provost's *The Improvement Guide* (2009), Ranjay Gulati's *Reorganize for Resilience: Putting Customers at the Center of Your Business* (2009), Kenneth Rose's *Project Quality Management: Why, What and How* (2005), Joseph Juran's classic *Juran on Leadership for Quality* (1989), or Kimberly Wiefling's *Scrappy Project Management: The 12 Predictable and Avoidable Pitfalls Every Project Faces* (2007).

Comments from Respondents

Respondents who give feedback also have the opportunity to add comments at the end of the assessment. The comments from your respondents are reprinted here, unedited and placed in a random order.

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