

ACUMEN[®] Leadership WorkStyles[™]

Individual Self Report

Steve Sample

November 2013

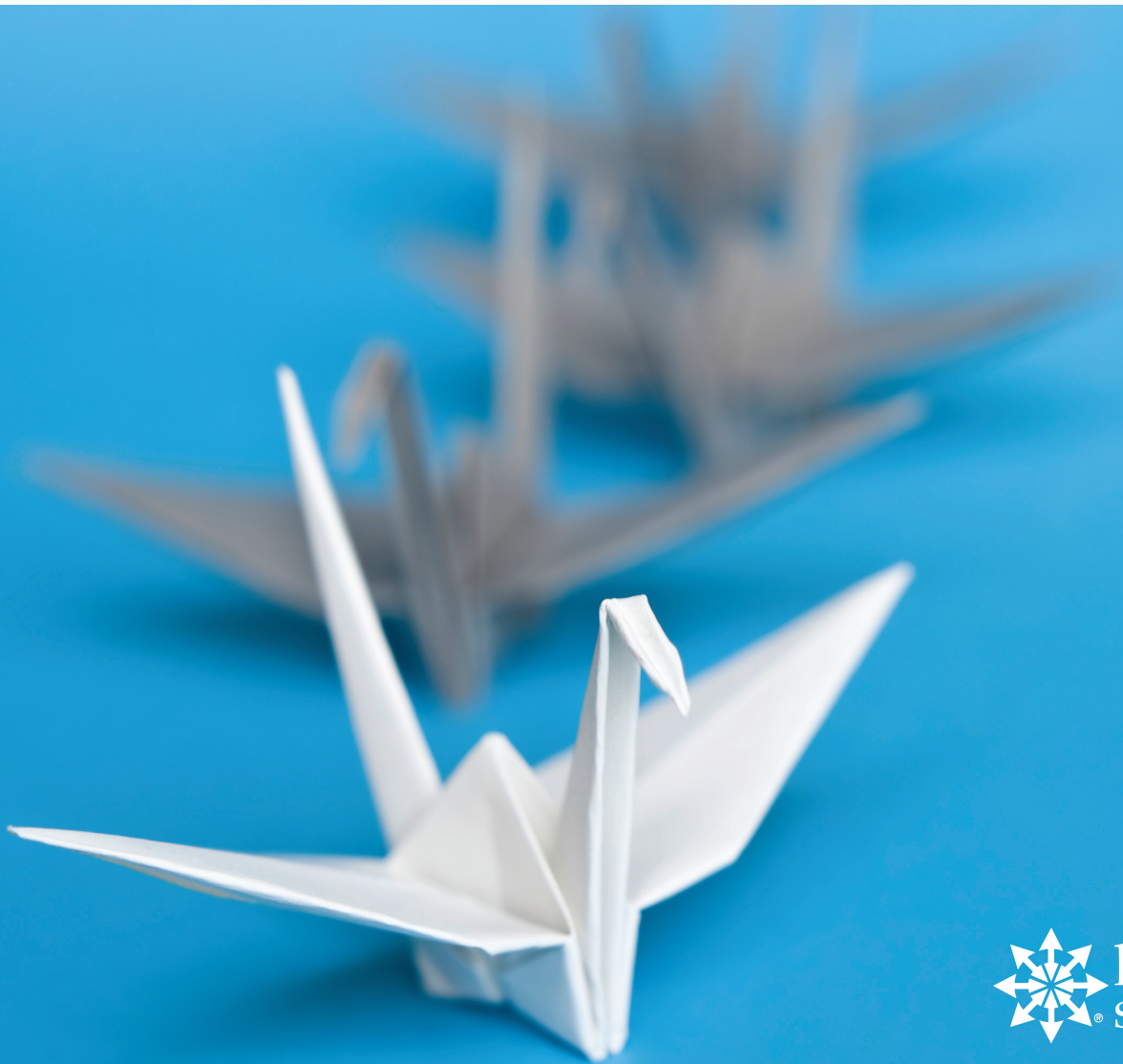


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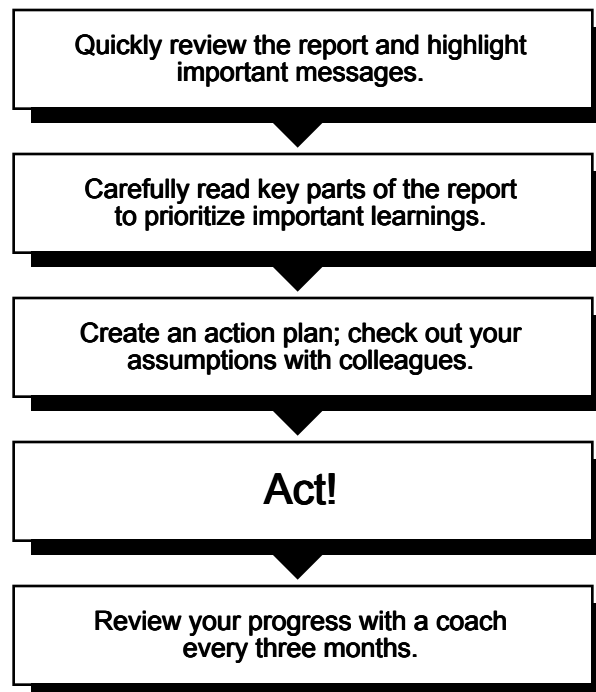
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Purpose of This Report

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

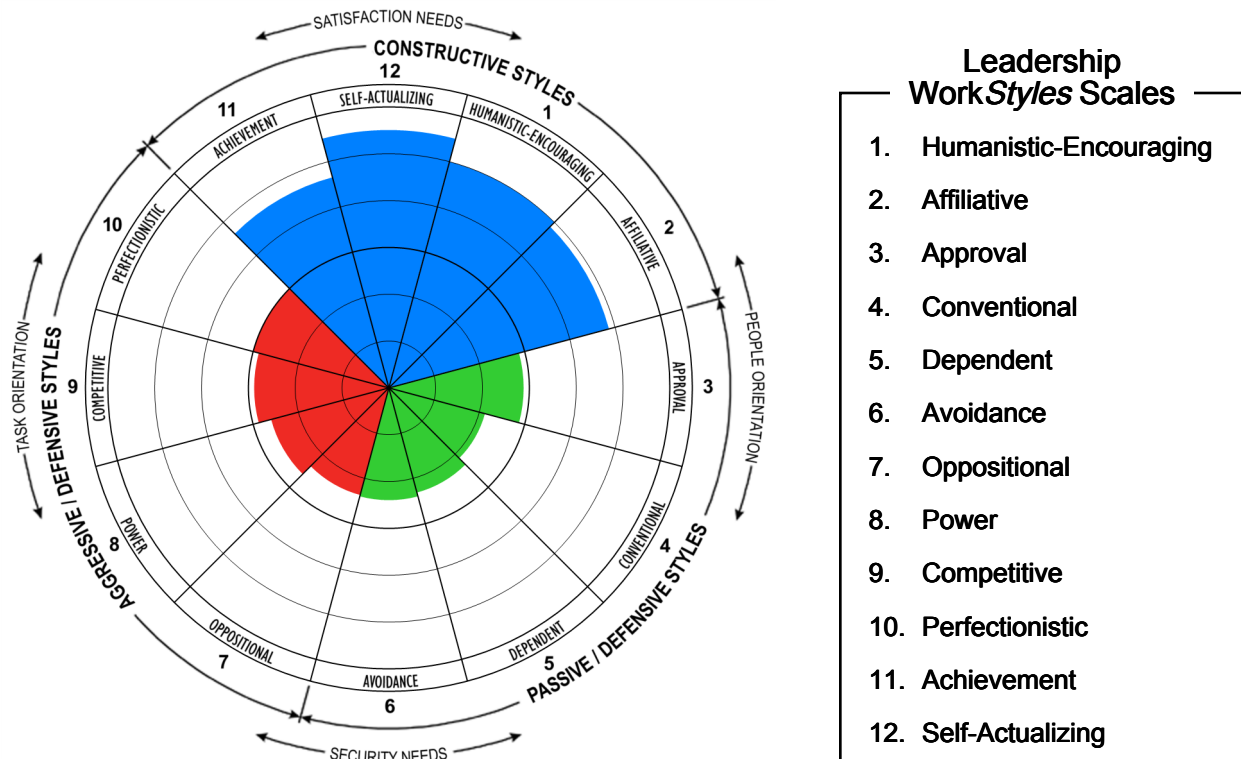
How to Use This Report



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



Reading the Percentile Scores

The sample profile above shows assessment ratings on the 12 personal characteristics measured by WorkStyles. WorkStyles 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

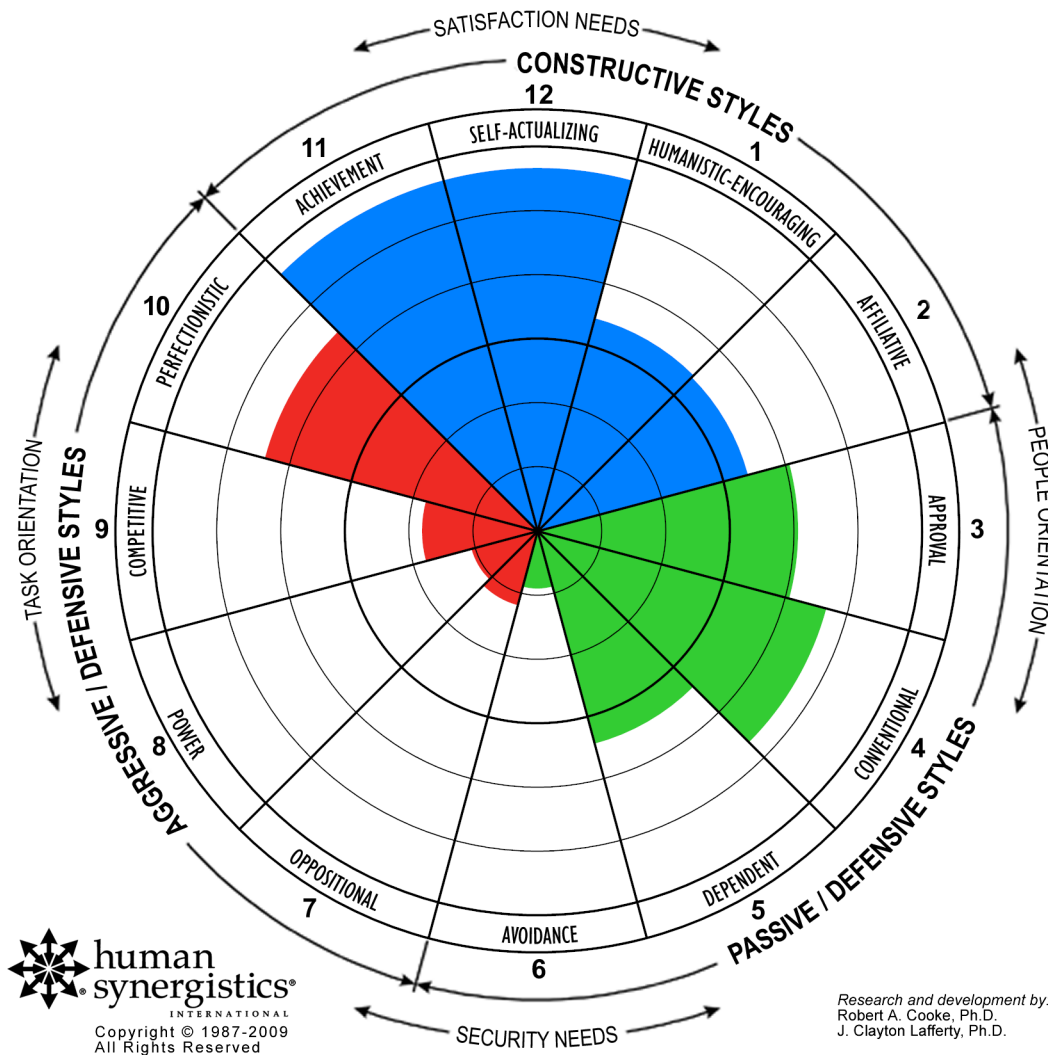
The outer ring shown on this sample profile illustrates the 3 broad styles underlying the 12 WorkStyles scales. These 3 styles provide a meaningful way to group your results into more general categories:

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 WorkStyles 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.

Self-Perceptions: A Closer Look

This section of your report provides a detailed analysis of the implications of your self-ratings. Your self-perceptions are important for understanding your intentions, and can provide insights into how behavior based on your intentions can sometimes be perceived by other people. Self-awareness of the ways you typically approach specific situations can help you adjust your behavior to fit with the needs and expectations of the teams you lead. This is one key for understanding how to improve your effectiveness.

Impact on Task Accomplishment

Your self-ratings suggest you have relatively strong interests and skills in project work, and that you seek realistic challenges that can satisfy a strong personal need to contribute to high-quality results.

Key Assets

Your self-description indicates that you are likely to bring the following benefits to projects:

- a strong need for achievement
- an interest in challenging projects, and the ability to enjoy these challenges
- a high level of ambition that brings out your judgment and analytic skills
- a focus on quality and excellence
- a preference for careful, patient planning
- a tendency to set challenging yet pragmatic goals that have good probability of success
- flexibility and a willingness to listen to others who may see critical issues from a different perspective
- an understanding that problems do arise and that they can be opportunities for innovation

Overall, you are likely to believe that completing tasks requires a rational approach. You prefer to take a careful, well-thought-out approach, rather than act impulsively or feel compelled to take quick action.

Viewing the Task as a Whole

You describe yourself as having the skills to address a task in a variety of ways. You appear to have an appropriate appreciation for global issues—the task or project as a whole. At the same time, you are able to keep track of the smaller details that

compose the whole. Many people have difficulty envisioning the most efficient approach because they either become too involved in global issues and overlook critical details, or get bogged down in minor details and lose sight of the goal.

Trusting Your Judgment

While you possess a strong foundation of talents for project work, your self-ratings suggest some aspects of your style may have room for improvement. Specifically, you may have significant tendencies to defer to others and avoid conflict. You may be too easily influenced by others. This may lead you to:

- put aside your own perspectives in deference to others
- agree too easily on project-related issues in order to avoid confrontations with team members
- avoid asking others tough questions if you feel you may be perceived as overly aggressive
- look to others for direction and guidance when you could exercise more initiative

To increase your effectiveness in managing project work, you may want to try deferring less to others and giving greater emphasis to your own judgment. Trust your own capabilities and opinions more, and be less concerned with pleasing others. Be more assertive.

Insights from Research

The research on leadership effectiveness is very clear and consistent that your achievement orientation is a key asset for your management role. Managers and executives with a strong achievement orientation are typically the most effective on a wide array of task-related competencies, including planning, problem solving, innovating, and organizing the work flow. All these skills are associated with a focus on challenges, setting stretch goals, self-confidence, and creativity.

However, the research is much less positive about your somewhat contrary tendencies to look to others for support and direction, to conform, and to be relatively unassertive. In many studies, less assertive leaders are seen as generally less effective and do not advance in the organization as quickly as more assertive leaders.

Impact on Teamwork

Strengths

Your self-description indicates that your interests in task management are complemented by a considerable desire to work with others. Your ratings indicate the following traits and skills:

- strong desire to work cooperatively as part of a team
- modesty, respect for others
- reserved and polite; easy to get along with, but hard to get close to

- considerable insight and understanding about others' needs; usually eager to respond appropriately
- considerate of others

Interpersonal Skills

People with your profile have a number of key assets in interpersonal relations. Your self-ratings indicate you:

- clearly communicate that you value teamwork
- respond positively to others; make efforts to work well in groups
- are willing and able to empower others
- respect others and want them to like you

You describe a “people-oriented” and supportive attitude that can contribute to a comfortable team climate where cooperation and differences can coexist. Research shows that people with this profile are often able to guide work teams toward consensus, and contribute to the team's efforts in a harmonious and productive way.

Deriving Satisfaction Independently

Your ratings suggest you are not as confident with people as you may be around projects and tasks. You describe yourself as tending to conform to others and to look to others for signs of approval. This may surface as reluctance to act independently, or a hesitancy to be assertive about your point of view. If you limit your assertiveness, particularly around potentially controversial issues, you may unwittingly deny yourself and your fellow team members the benefit of your ideas or concerns. In your efforts to get along, you may actually be doing a disservice to the work group by not allowing them the full benefit of your perspective.

Further, these same deferential attitudes and concern to get along without making waves can undermine your own feelings of satisfaction. You may look to others for approval and acknowledgment for your contributions, rather than looking inward and feeling self-satisfied. This is an area you may want to reflect upon in order to develop a stronger orientation to self-satisfaction. In general, learn to trust yourself more. Give yourself the same credit that others do for your very strong set of capabilities.

Working with Differences of Opinion

People with your profile are generally effective in resolving conflict and negotiating differences. The way you describe yourself, you are very open to alternative perspectives and opinions. Your self-ratings suggest you:

- have a good degree of flexibility that contributes to reaching compromises
- have good insight into others, and are often able to understand both the objective and personal needs involved in a conflict
- generally present a non-antagonistic, respectful attitude toward others that can help in finding areas of agreement
- show a balance between social orientation and results orientation, which combine into highly productive mediation skills

Increasing Effectiveness in Conflict Situations

A potential drawback to your current work style is a reticence to take a more assertive role in conflict situations. You are probably capable of contributing your point of view more assertively without alienating or offending others. There may be times when you hold your tongue for fear of rocking the boat, even though you have good reason to believe the boat is off course.

Leaders with your profile generally prefer to take a lower-risk approach, avoiding conflict and going by the book if they think others may not be open to their ideas. This pattern may be particularly true for you in the presence of more aggressive team members who may cause you to feel stressed or intimidated. Under such conditions, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Use your skills in logic and compromise to keep the resolution process directed in a productive, problem-solving direction.
- Keep the focus on an analysis of the objective factors in the difference of opinion.
- Be willing to set limits and stick to your limits; practice saying “no” to others.
- Be assertive, stand up for what you think; communicate the reasons behind your opinion and, when appropriate, back it up with concrete facts or examples.

Relying upon your skills for objective analysis, appreciation of creative differences, and staying cool but involved will go a long way. It is important to keep your feelings about the conflict separate from the objective contents of the matter at hand.

At first, you may find it difficult to establish a balance between being considerate of team members with whom you disagree, and maintaining a firm stand. You may think you are being too rigid or insensitive, or you may confuse being assertive with being overly aggressive. However, the discomfort you feel may simply be a sign that you are giving yourself and your work team the maximum benefit of your thoughts and ideas.

Expectations of Others

Often those with a need for outside support have high expectations of others. Your self-perceptions suggest that you may expect others to be as sensitive and reinforcing toward you as you are toward them. When others do not meet these expectations, you may feel disappointed, hurt, or angry, and these feelings can interfere with personal relationships. You respect others and want to gain their regard. When they do not give recognition, you may take it personally, questioning your abilities and lowering your self-regard. Paradoxically, you may also tend to shrug off well-deserved praise and often downplay your efforts.

Insights from Research

Many years of research on leadership effectiveness indicate that a combination of achievement orientation and strong social skills is extremely effective in terms of working with and through others. People with an achieving, social style are the most effective in most of the critical teamwork roles required of a leader. These include working collaboratively with others on a day-to-day basis, providing useful

performance feedback to team members, and keeping people informed on key team deliverables. Patience, respectfulness, and an optimistic outlook are excellent assets in managing a team's output and productivity in general, and particularly related to managerial competencies such as staff development, performance feedback, team motivation, and customer focus.

The research on very deferential leaders also suggests that there are more effective styles of interpersonal interaction, especially for a person in a leadership role. The most effective leaders create followership in others partly by constantly demonstrating that *"I (the leader) care about you (the team member)."* They do this with the implicit self-confidence that the emotional support will be reciprocated. In their leadership roles, they are more likely to ask themselves, *"How can I help the team to feel good about itself?"* rather than, *"How can I get the people on the team to feel good about me?"* This difference in confidence and focus is extremely important. Leaders who express strong personal needs for approval from others, conformity with others, and reliance on others clearly tend to be less effective at leading others. Research shows that they are seen as less effective in the managerial roles of providing feedback, coaching, empowering, and motivating a team.

Equally important, the research also suggests that many leaders are action-oriented and not particularly self-reflective. They are "movers and shakers" rather than leaders who take time to become aware of their blind spots so they can improve. Among leaders who describe themselves the same way you do, almost all are described at least somewhat differently by others. The obvious implication is to take your own self-ratings with a grain of salt, and seek confirmation of your self-perceptions in the subtle or obvious feedback from others.

Suggestions for Development

Your self-ratings suggest 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 fellow team members 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.

Team Leadership

- ☐ Get some feedback from your co-workers about how and when you should be influential. Are there occasions when they think you should be stepping forward, but you have not done so?
- ☐ Learn to not let others dominate you, and remember that compromise is sometimes a useful tool but never a goal; when you are sure of your position, don't settle for less than the minimum outcome acceptable to you. Other people respect you for being helpful and friendly, so you can feel confident they will accept your expression of what you need and feel. As an exercise to strengthen your resolve, keep a written log of situations that have any element of conflict over the next month: for each, check off whether the outcome is "minimum acceptable," "realistic/OK," or "best possible."
- ☐ Seek training in assertive communication or conflict management. Many people with your thinking style have great difficulty saying "no" to unreasonable requests, and are slow to challenge strong-minded co-workers who are headed for a questionable course of action. With better tools for managing conflict, you will be more confident about standing your ground or confronting co-workers whose efforts are not adding to the team's success.
- ☐ Read Randy Paterson's *The Assertiveness Workbook: How to Express Your Ideas and Stand Up for Yourself at Work and in Relationships* (2000) or Nance Rosen's *Speak Up! & Succeed: How to Get Everything You Want in Meetings, Presentations and Conversations* (2007) for ways to build more assertiveness into your communication style.
- ☐ Read Robert Bolton and Dorothy Bolton's *People Styles at Work and Beyond* (2009), for a good discussion on building open, tolerant, and supportive working relationships, even with co-workers who are very different in personality and work style from yourself.
- ☐ Read Jeff Gee and Val Gee's *The Winner's Attitude: Change How You Deal with Difficult People and Get the Best Out of Any Situation* (2006), as a source for learning new negotiation strategies.
- ☐ 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

- ❑ Maintain openness and directness with others: be more comfortable about expressing disagreement or disapproval. As a development activity, think of an issue at work that is bothering you, but about which you have not yet said anything. Meet with the appropriate people to express that you are feeling uneasy about that issue, to explain the source of your discomfort, to propose one or more possible changes, and to ask for their feedback.
- ❑ Use more initiative. For example, the next time you perceive a possible problem that should be brought to someone else's attention, propose a possible solution, too. Advocate your solution with some confidence and, at the same time, be willing to modify your solution in ways that objectively make it better.
- ❑ Analyze the decision-making requirements of your job. To what extent do your decisions deal with straightforward, short-term matters, and to what extent are you involved in making more critical decisions? How would you characterize the pace of change you confront in your work? To what degree do you have the authority to make decisions without input or approval from others? If you participate in group decisions, what is your role in the group's process, and how does your approach fit with that of your team? Based on your responses to these questions, identify which decision-making strategies (see book suggestions below) are best suited to the requirements of your job. Determine to what extent you already employ these "best fit" techniques and to what extent you may need to modify your approach to become a more effective decision maker. Work on implementing those changes.
- ❑ Read *Make Up Your Mind: A Decision-Making Guide to Thinking Clearly and Choosing Wisely*, by Hal Mooz (2012), to gain insight into your decision-making patterns. Think about the conditions under which those behaviors are working for you. Also consider how you might change to be more effective in those situations where your current approaches appear to be less adaptive. Finally, consider how your decision-making tactics fit together with those of your co-workers: the team with whom you make decisions.
- ❑ Read one of the following books: *How We Decide* by Jonah Lehrer (2009), or *Smarter Choices: A Practical Guide to Making Better Decisions*, by John Hammond, Ralph Keeney, and Howard Raiffa (2002). These books are relevant for decision makers in all kinds of job roles and at all organizational levels.

Contributing Creative Ideas

- ❑ Increase your creative contributions to the team. Start by reading Roger von Oech's *A Whack on the Side of the Head* (2008). Read Kevin Carroll's *Think Outside Your Blocks* (2009), James Higgins' *101 Creative Problem Solving Techniques* (2006), and Phil McKinney's *Beyond the Obvious: Killer Questions That Spark Game Changing Innovation* (2012), for a variety of approaches you can use to become more innovative. Relate the reading to practical situations at work. Generate ten ideas for creative initiative. Try out your ideas with other people. Persist, as few ideas are born perfect. Everyone

knows Edison invented the light bulb, but who knows how many types of light-bulb filaments he tried before he discovered that tungsten worked?

- ☐ Ask yourself how often you and your team are “satisficers,” satisfied with things that are “good enough.” How often are you “optimizers,” aiming for the best trade-off between effort and results? How often are you “maximizers,” striving for the best possible results? How is your pursuit of innovation affected by your attitudes toward satisficing, optimizing, and maximizing?
- ☐ Hold periodic meetings with your team to engage in “blue sky” brainstorming sessions. Develop a group norm of suspending evaluative thinking within these sessions; let ideas flow without stopping to judge them.

Feedback and Coaching

- ☐ Meet with your co-workers to ask how well you provide others with feedback and coaching. Be open to the likelihood that people will have different viewpoints, each of which may be legitimate. Seek to understand their views, paying particular attention to those people who see you as less effective in these areas. Make an effort to remain open to their observations, so you can use them as a way to channel your improvement efforts.
- ☐ Talk to your co-workers to find out what kinds of feedback they value most highly. How often would they like feedback? How could feedback be structured to make it more useful to them? Pay particular attention to new team members. Find out about their unique knowledge, attitudes, and skills. What do they need to develop? How might they be able to coach you?
- ☐ Read *A Manager's Guide to Coaching* by Brian Emerson and Anne Loehr (2008). While reading the book, think about the people in the workplace to whom you provide coaching. Evaluate the extent to which your approaches in coaching others parallel those recommended in the book. Determine what you can do to alter your coaching style to become more effective. Implement these changes and re-read the book a year from now to assess how far you've come.
- ☐ Read John Whitmore's *Coaching for Performance: Growing Human Potential and Purpose* (2009).

Seek Verification of Your Self-Perceptions

- ☐ Make an explicit effort to find out whether key co-workers see you the same way you see yourself, because it is not uncommon to find differences between a leader's self-perceptions and the perceptions of his or her co-workers.
- ☐ Use *WorkStyles* to get feedback from others. You will learn the extent to which they see you the same way you see yourself.
- ☐ Have periodic one-on-one talks with appropriate people at key junctures. For example, ask for direct feedback just after an important budget meeting. Other good times might be right after scheduled project milestones (whether the team made the target or not), after conducting the formal performance review of a team member, after a problem-solving session, or after a regular team meeting. In your one-on-one conversations, ask open-ended questions which make clear that you are interested in the other person's input, not in defending yourself. For example, you might ask “*Were there any ways in*

which I might have seemed too approval-seeking [or dependent on others, apprehensive, oppositional, etc.]?" Be sure to inquire about whether you appear to be appropriately results-oriented, helpful, and concerned with others' well-being. Ask what you might do better.

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