Group Styles Inventory [GSI]

Team Development

Like individuals, work groups have their own personalities or styles of interaction. These styles are reflected in the way group members interact with one another and approach the task to be accomplished.

The GSI measures the constructive and defensive elements of group processes with the 12 styles used by the Life Styles Inventory (LSI) and the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI). This common language establishes a link between individual, group and organizational development efforts. The GSI also measures an individual team member's perception of the group's interaction on a task or problem-solving situation. The combined responses of the group become the group's needs assessment, identifying behaviours for the group to change and build or strengthen to better achieve synergy.
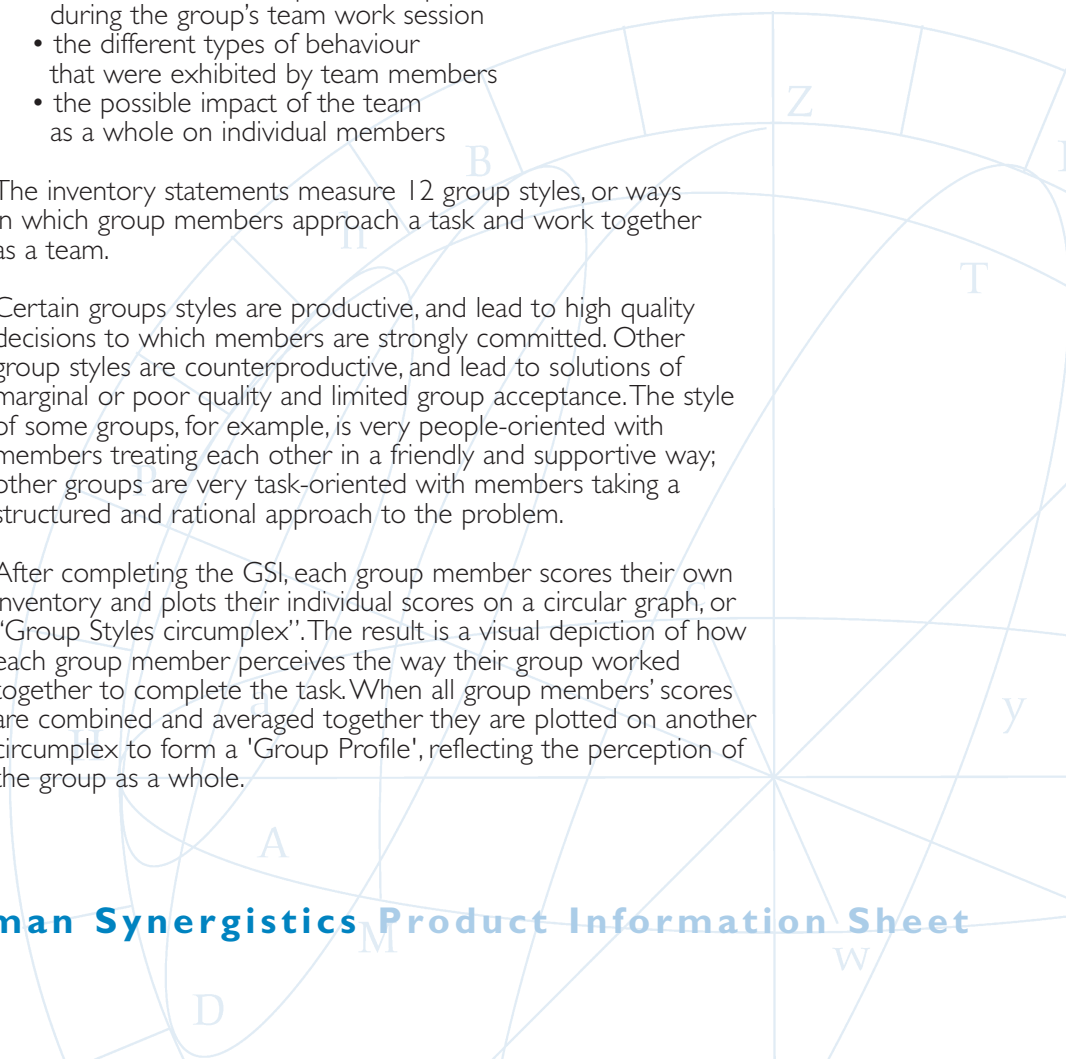
The Process

The GSI consists of 72 statements which describe:
- the climate or atmosphere that prevailed during the group's team work session
- the different types of behaviour that were exhibited by team members
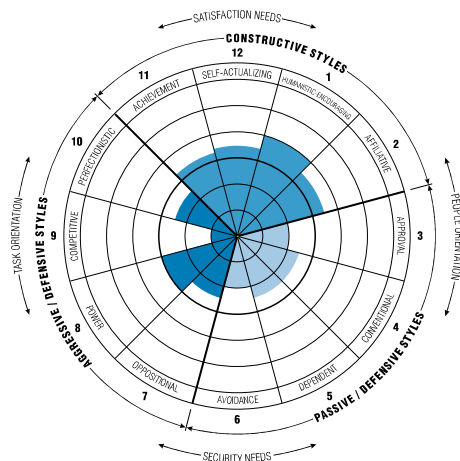- the possible impact of the team as a whole on individual members

The inventory statements measure 12 group styles, or ways in which group members approach a task and work together as a team.

Certain groups styles are productive, and lead to high quality decisions to which members are strongly committed. Other group styles are counterproductive, and lead to solutions of marginal or poor quality and limited group acceptance. The style of some groups, for example, is very people-oriented with members treating each other in a friendly and supportive way; other groups are very task-oriented with members taking a structured and rational approach to the problem.

After completing the GSI, each group member scores their own inventory and plots their individual scores on a circular graph, or "Group Styles circumplex". The result is a visual depiction of how each group member perceives the way their group worked together to complete the task. When all group members' scores are combined and averaged together they are plotted on another circumplex to form a 'Group Profile', reflecting the perception of the group as a whole.

Measuring **patterns of group** *behaviour* and *effectiveness*

SELF-SCORED

Human Synergistics Product Information Sheet

Group Styles Inventory [GSI]

Group Styles Circumplex

The Group Profile is interpreted and analyzed through group discussion to determine answers to questions such as:
- What were the most predominant styles that may have led to high or low quality decisions?
- Did the group members accept the decision made by the group?
- What factors contributed to acceptance/lack of acceptance?
- What should the group do differently next time to improve its performance?

The Group Profile becomes the group's needs assessment, identifying behaviours for the group to change or build upon if they want to become more effective in the future.

Results

Through a process of self-generated, practical feedback and group discussion, teams can understand how and why they behave in a particular style. Group members can then use this valuable information to change the way they think and therefore behave in a team situation, i.e. a team member who was argumentative and dominating, may realize this behaviour is negatively affecting their team members and the quality and acceptance of the decision made. In the future, this member will try to listen to others to reach the most effective solution.

This results in enhanced cooperation and communication, heightened innovation and stronger consensus. Because the group process is effective, the quality and acceptance of decisions is high.

The GSI is unique in that it:
- Is the only research-based inventory of its kind that provides a proven valid and reliable measure of the styles exhibited by work groups

- Is the only inventory available that enables group members to compare their perceptions of their group's performance with more than 1,000 others describing their groups
- Adds value to the group process. The GSI enables the team to gain practical, not just theoretical, knowledge of positive group behaviours that could be related and transferred back to their own workplace
- Is self-scoring, quickly involves group members, and is simple enough to use repeatedly
- Provides a low-cost solution to an expensive problem, with great potential for a high return on investment
- Is versatile; because the GSI can be used repeatedly with work groups across the organization, the inventory promotes continuous performance improvement

Applications

Organizations of every description can benefit from the GSI. The inventory can be used by any temporary or intact work groups that interact to solve problems or make decisions. Group members complete the GSI following either a *group problem-solving* simulation, or a meeting to solve an *actual organizational problem*. Simulations provide a specific problem for group members to solve, first as individuals, then as a team – and a structured process for group work.

Using the GSI with a Simulation

The GSI/Simulation combination can be used to:
- provide teams with a tool to measure change and improvement
- create a team environment that encourages innovation and sharing of ideas
- sharpen the analytical skills of team members
- help individual workers develop consensus decision-making and problem-solving skills
- improve the quality of decisions within an organization by developing synergy among organizational members

Materials

Several types of support material exist for the GSI.

GSI Participant Kit (Guide & Inventory)
GSI Scoring Supplement
GSI Leader's Guide
GSI PowerPoint Show
GSI Circumplex Wall Chart
GSI Blank Circumplex

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