# ABLE®

## Assessment of Basic Leader Effectiveness®

### Feedback Report for:

John Doe

High Performing Systems, Inc.

Confidential

# Assessment of Basic Leader Effectiveness® (ABLE®)
# Assessment of Basic Leader Effectiveness - Staff® (ABLE-S®)

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# Assessment of Basic Leader Effectiveness®

This report contains valuable information that has been prepared especially for you. After reading this report, you will have a better understanding of the process used to gather, analyze and act on information that pertains to your leader effectiveness profile. At the end of the report, you will find confidential individualized feedback and specific areas for you to work on in order to continue your professional growth and development.

The Assessment of Basic Leader Effectiveness (ABLE®) is a questionnaire based on over fifteen years of research by High Performing Systems, Inc., and is designed to provide quantitative information regarding the effectiveness of a leader's skills and potential improvement areas. The questionnaire has been administered and validated in numerous industries, both nationally and abroad. Findings suggest a strong relationship between results of the ABLE and actual job performance. High Performing Systems, Inc., maintains an active database to provide state-of-the-art comparisons and information for developing leaders.

The ABLE provides a 360° view: The leader, the leader's boss, team members reporting directly to the leader and, in some instances, the leader's peers fill out similar questionnaires regarding their perception of the leader's effectiveness on each skill dimension. The ABLE has a pre- and post-assessment capability making it possible to track perceived performance over time.

The ABLE measures nine basic leader skill dimensions proven to be the most essential to high performing leaders. Each skill dimension supports the others, and they are often exercised simultaneously in executing day-to-day responsibilities. On the following pages are brief descriptions of each of the nine basic leader skill dimensions. They are not designed to be comprehensive, but rather to provide you with an overview of the critical elements of each dimension.

# Leader Effectiveness Skill Dimensions

Motivation - This dimension addresses the ability to assess the expectations and needs of team members and to use the appropriate process to guide individuals and the team toward task accomplishment. The leader must understand how his/her own personality and leader style can affect motivational strategies. A leader must ensure the existence of a reward system which is fair in the perception of the team. Team members should receive recognition for their contributions and have the confidence that the leader really cares about them as individuals. Role modeling is a key ingredient in the motivation process, with the leader setting the example of what is expected from team members.

Decision Making - Leaders must make decisions in an effective, accurate and timely fashion while understanding the implications and impact of those decisions on the team members and the team. Decision making skills include identifying problems, securing necessary information and processing that information competently in order to reach conclusions and take actions. A crucial element is the capacity to identify cause and effect relationships. The leader must ensure that key personnel are involved as needed throughout the decision making process.

Stress Management - Teams operate within an environment of stressors every day. Those in leadership positions are subjected to increased negative stress while carrying out the responsibilities of their jobs. The skill a leader demonstrates in handling a crisis, assisting others in learning from mistakes and not allowing small concerns to become overwhelming reflects how well that leader can manage stress. Leaders set the example. Team members react to what they hear the leader say, how he/she says it and how the leader behaves. Leaders must learn to assess their own stress levels, as well as those within the team, and act to modify counterproductive practices and procedures.

Performance Counseling - Feedback to team members on their work performance is critical to the successful operation of any team. This dimension addresses leader skills in working with team members to determine evaluation plans, provide timely feedback on performance and interact constructively to maximize their potential. It also encompasses counseling that is problem-focused and solution oriented, providing on-the-spot recognition (praise) or correction and assistance in career evelopment. The leader must assess each team member's contributions to the accomplishment of the team's goals for continued development of individual potential.

Goal Setting - The leader must establish the overall direction of the team and the priorities which guide the job-related requirements. This process requires setting high but realistic goals for team members and the team as a whole. Team members must have a clear understanding of how their work contributes to the objectives of the team, and team members need to establish career goals which are supportive of the team's goals. Goals must be assessed continuously to ensure that they are current and continue to serve the best interests of both the team and team members.

Delegation - This dimension includes skills that enable a leader to determine job requirements, accurately assess team member capabilities and combine these for task assignments. A basic requirement is the assignment of necessary authority to a team member to empower him/her to fully accomplish job requirements. A goal of delegation is the development of team members' skills, knowledge and abilities.

Communication - Of the nine dimensions, communication is the most critical. The leader's skill in communicating instructions, expectations, decisions, pending changes, etc., determines to a great extent the team's ability to operate effectively. Leaders must exhibit the ability to listen to others and provide appropriate feedback. Particularly important is listening to team members to ensure clarity of work requirements, sensitivity and responsiveness to individual problems and team issues.

Team Development -The foundation of any organization is made up of its separate teams. The ability of team members to work efficiently together and interact effectively determines the success of the team. Leader skills include the ability to create a climateof trust within the team by developing cohesion and openness while ensuring individual role clarity. Leaders must also actively reduce inappropriate competition and encourage collaboration where shared responsibility is appropriate. Effective leadership is evident when team members have a perspective of "we" versus "I" as they participate in job related equirements.

Conflict Resolution - Conflict is inevitable in the workplace and can be constructive. Leaders must be skillful in resolving conflict, particularly the conflict that arises from competition for resources, personality differences, misunderstandings, policies, procedures, etc. Leader skills involved in resolving such conflicts non-defensively include: talking openly with team members to evaluate all sides of an issue, taking action to change impending events, recognizing goal achievement and following up when corrective action has been implemented. Unnecessary conflict detracts from task accomplishment and wastes resources. In extreme cases, it can drive valued team members out of the organization. It is imperative for the leader to take steps to resolve conflicts and ensure that team members feel confident that they are heard, valued and utilized properly.

# Leader Effectiveness Profile

The ABLE is a feedback tool which provides a baseline of your perceived leader effectiveness with regard to the nine basic leader skill dimensions. Careful review of your leader effectiveness profile will give ideas for improvement and provide a basis for dialogue with your boss and team members. The ABLE feedback also identifies specific training needs for becoming a more effective leader.

Interpreting the Results
Each dimension in the leader effectiveness profile is based on a scale of 10 to 50. On this scale, 10 constitutes the lowest range of effectiveness and 50 represents the highest. Notice the distribution curve in Figure 1. Average performance is indicated by a score in the range of 30-40. If your score in a particular dimension is below 25, then your performance in that area is perceived as unsatisfactory; the 25-29 range is below average; 30-40 is average; 41-45 is above average; 46-50 is outstanding.
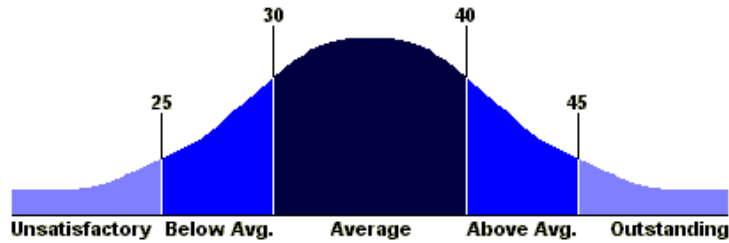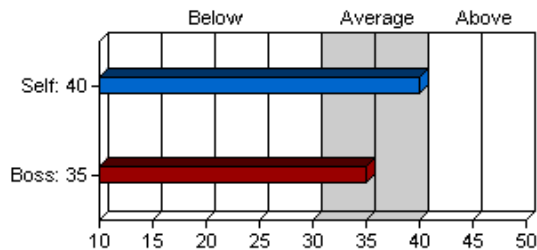


Figure 1
Distribution Scores

Your profile reflects your effectiveness in each of the nine basic leader skill dimensions as perceived by yourself and others at the time the ABLE was administered. Your "self" assessments for each dimension are graphically represented, first in comparison with the scores from your boss and then in comparison with an average of the scores from your team members. A composite graph is also shown for ease in comparing all scores.

Your individualized feedback will be presented in a format similar to that shown in Figure 2. Any ratings with differences of 5 or more between your own perception and those of other raters should be explored. This is particularly important if another's perception is less than your own. Look for any patterns or trends that might appear in the rating schemes. You should try to understand and align perceptions.



Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on…

l   Handling stress well when things go wrong.
l   Actively seeking to reduce on-the-job stress.

Figure 2
ABLE Sample Graph

Notice the text to the right of the sample graph (see Figure 2). This information is helpful in pinpointing opportunities for further exploration and improvement. Specific challenge areas within each dimension are listed as areas "you need to work on...." This additional information appears for any statement receiving a score of 30 or below on the boss and/or directly reporting team member assessments. Self-assessed low scores are not itemized.

Your results may or may not produce all the categories seen in the sample in Figure 2. The actual graphs and text revealed as part of your confidential, individualized feedback are based on the responses which you, your boss and team members selected when completing the ABLE questionnaires. What is displayed for a rated leader is a customized overview for each dimension and a listing of items where any raters perceive your leader effectiveness to be below average (below 30). Your confidential individualized feedback is located in the back of this booklet.

# Leader Effectiveness Profile

These itemized descriptors can be invaluable when trying to pinpoint factors which may have contributed to the perceptions held by your boss and others. Do not debate whether their perceptions are right or wrong, but rather explore what has prompted their responses. Often, the items listed provide a springboard to help everyone articulate their  perceptions more clearly.

The graphs are designed to provide additional information which might be helpful. Note the shaded area running vertically between 30 and 40 on the graph. This indicates the broad area that comprises average performance in each of the leader skill dimensions based on national norms across numerous industries. The scores to the right of this shaded area are considered to be in the above average zone.

Scheduling meetings with your boss and team members will be the most important part of the process. The ensuing discussion is the way you can gain true insight into others' perceptions of your basic leader skill effectiveness. The numerical ratings tell but half the story. A healthy dialogue with your boss and team can set the stage for true understanding and growth. As the rated leader, you then have the choice of how you respond to your feedback.

## Confidentiality

High Performing Systems, Inc., handles all processing and scoring of assessments in a prompt, accurate and confidential manner. Individual confidentiality is carefully guarded at all levels. Direct feedback is given to the leader graphically as previously described. For directly reporting team member responses, composite results are given; individual answers are not revealed. If less than three team members respond, a truly accurate reading and respondent anonymity may not be possible; therefore, the team results in this instance are not reported.

# Leader Effectiveness Action Plan

This section focuses on the developmental objective of the ABLE and will make the most significant contribution to your professional development. By taking the time to complete this Leader Effectiveness Action Plan, you will be taking the first step toward increasing your skill proficiency.

To gain the greatest benefit from this powerful information tool, you need to keep an open mind and not become defensive. This is often hard to do. Remember, there is no absolute right or wrong in this assessment. More important than any particular numerical rating is understanding why certain perceptions might be held. In reality, we often find it difficult to remain objective and open to feedback and to hear someone else's viewpoint. We often decide that "the questions weren't any good," "my boss doesn't know what I do," "my team doesn't understand what I'm up against," "someone just has an ax to grind," and so on…. Try to clear these thoughts from your mind and psychologically prepare for the feedback session. Look at this as an opportunity to learn more about yourself and the people with whom you work.

You are encouraged to meet with your boss as soon as possible after receiving your feedback booklet. Use your ABLE feedback as a basis for discussion. You will find that the ABLE is a useful communication tool for talking about important aspects of your job that might not have been discussed before now. You might want to share the graphs that represent your boss' scores. As you review the graphs for each dimension, ask for specific feedback on areas needing improvement; solicit specific observations in areas where the rating fell below 30; address any gaps of 5 or more; define the expectations your boss has for you; ask your boss for career development assistance and training in weak areas. When you meet with your boss, there are several feedback do's and don'ts that you should keep in mind:

| Do: | Don't: |
|---|---|
| Keep an open mind | Argue specific points |
| Stay positive | Criticize your boss or team members |
| Ask for more later | Defend your position |
| Take notes | Explain your rationale |

Hold a similar meeting with your team members as a group. A group meeting can create a feeling of safety and make team members feel that they can speak more openly without fear of retribution. You, as the leader, set the tone. Begin by thanking your team members for taking the time and interest to provide you with feedback. It is not recommended that you show your team members your Leader Effectiveness Profile. Instead, simply explain the ABLE process in general terms and ask for specific feedback on areas where your team members indicated that you need improvement, areas in which they want you to keep doing what you have been doing and areas in which they feel you are skilled.

Ask your team members how you can help them become more successful. Validate what the ABLE feedback indicated while being careful not to react defensively or "body slam" individuals giving you feedback. Team members may be hesitant about voicing their opinions and concerns. Listening with an open mind and closed mouth will pay tremendous dividends to you in the future. Ask yourself why they see things as they do, instead of explaining your side of the story. Try not to dominate or hurry the conversation, leap to conclusions, appear distracted or disinterested or lose your temper. LISTEN. Use open-ended questions, such as "Can you tell me more about that?" or "Can you give me more specifics about that?" to draw more information from your team members.

The following worksheets are a framework to use during your feedback sessions with your boss and team members. After reviewing your Leader Effectiveness Profile make some notes prior to the meetings; then use the sheets to record additional information shared during the actual meetings.

# Boss' Meeting

How I think my boss would describe me:

Areas that my boss identified as challenges for me:

Areas that I see as primary challenges:

Expectations my boss has of me:

What resources or help do I need from my boss in order to be more successful? How have I communicated these needs to my boss?

Date for follow-up meeting:

# Team Meeting

How I think my team would describe me:

I need to do more of the following:

I need to do less of:

I need to continue doing the following the way I do now:

Suggestions for improving communication between me and my team:

Date for follow-up meeting:

After you have met with your boss and team members, the next step is to develop an action plan for making improvements. Begin by referring to the list of specific areas needing improvement that appears under each dimension graph in your Leader Effectiveness Profile. In addition, develop a list of those areas in which you have shown strong leader skills.

The next step in the Leader Effectiveness Action Plan process is to ask yourself if you experienced any negative emotions or defensive reactions to your boss' or team members' responses to your questions. If so, these may be blind spots that need your attention and work/effort.

Next, identify your two strongest areas from the Leader Effectiveness Profile. Write these in the blanks next to the numbers below:

1. _____

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

    d. _____

2. _____

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

    d. _____

Identify four ways in which you can capitalize on each of these strengths. Write these next to the four letters under the appropriate numbers above.

Now identify your two weakest areas from your Leader Effectiveness Profile. Write them next to the numbers below:

1. _____

    Action: _____

    Resources: _____

    Action: _____

    Resources: _____


2. _____

    Action: _____

    Resources: _____

    Action: _____

    Resources: _____

Identify two ways (e.g., attend seminars, regular meetings with team members, etc.) you can improve in each of these areas. Be as specific as you can in determining the steps you should take (action) as well as any assistance required to be  successful (resources).

Identify any items you rated as a strength that your boss and team members did not.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Finally, review the Leader Effectiveness Action Plan and use the information from the worksheets on the previous pages to identify the behaviors you need to focus on immediately in order to become more effective. Establish your personal action plan and start your further development right now!

To track your individual progress as an effective leader, you should participate in subsequent assessments. As you prepare for these follow-up assessments, bear in mind that there will be a change in the expectations your boss and team members have for you. You should have discussed some specific actions to be taken to improve your leader effectiveness. Therefore, they will have a higher set of standards that they will expect you to live up to and by which they will measure you. If you make no positive change in your effectiveness between now and the time of your followup, the ratings you receive will tend to be lower. In other words, you must make some positive improvements just to maintain the ratings you received on this original assessment. The good news is that actively involving your team members in this process can produce positive results.

Administration of a follow-up ABLE is normally scheduled between two and six months after the original feedback is given and, barring any change in reporting scheme, should involve only those who participated in the initial assessment to be most meaningful. Ask your boss to help you make this happen.

# Leader Effectiveness Action Plan

Now that you have reviewed your ABLE profile, it is time to initiate your action plan. This section provides specific behaviors for integration into your action plan to increase your leader effectiveness. Study your Leader Effectiveness Profile and then identify which of the following behaviors you need to focus on immediately.

## Motivation

☐      Discuss with your team members their needs and aspirations, demonstrating that you care about them as people.

☐      Set the example for what you expect from each team member. Be a role model for excellence.

☐      Find ways to give frequent recognition to deserving team members; make this recognition both visible and sincere.

## Decision Making

☐      Identify all aspects of a problem when practical before making a decision. Don't "shoot from the hip."

☐      Spend time anticipating the future. Include others as a valuable resource and a means for examining alternative perspectives.

☐      Avoid the trap of procrastination. Prioritize decisions to be made and set a time frame for making them.

☐      Follow up on important decisions. Design a plan to evaluate the results once a decision has been implemented.

## Stress Management

☐      Do not postpone problem solving. Confront negative issues as they arise and encourage team members to do the same.

☐      Learn stress reduction and relaxation techniques and practice them on a routine basis. Set a good example.

☐      Prevent molehills from becoming mountains. Keeping things in perspective is important and takes practice.

☐      Gather the information necessary to determine the boundaries of an issue and resolve it in a timely manner.

☐      Above all, create an atmosphere of teamwork to encourage open, honest communication.

## Performance Counseling

☐      Performance goals must be established jointly between the leader and each team member. These goals must be in writing and understood by each person involved.

☐      Performance counseling must include both the positive aspects of job performance and the areas which warrant improvement.

☐      Provide feedback. Counsel in private; reward in public.

☐      Provide feedback on work performance in a timely manner.

☐      Always provide specific examples of what was done correctly and what requires improvement.

## Goal Setting

☐      Spend time to ensure that team members understand the goals of the organization.

☐      Have team members establish their own goals, then work with them to ensure that the goals are realistic and measurable. Compare their individual goals with the team's goals.

☐      Take time to review team member job descriptions. It is important that all team members are clear about their roles in the workplace and how their goals fit with those of their co-workers and the team.

## Delegation

☐ Express trust in your team members. Give them a job to do and leave them alone. Select one from a list of priorities to allow them time to learn as they do.

☐ Make sure that the team member who is given the delegated task is also given authority to ensure total task completion.

☐ Avoid looking over team members' shoulders, but require periodic reports to ascertain the current status of delegated tasks.

## Communication

☐ When giving directions or task assignments, take time to ask a team member what his/her understanding of the assignment is.

☐ When receiving directions or task assignments from your boss, take time to relate back your understanding of the instructions given and the time frame established for accomplishment.

☐ Practice listening closely to team members and your boss. Effective listening involves hearing words spoken, interpreting the nonverbal gestures and assessing the emotional element present during the communication.

## Team Development

☐ Establish clear goals for the team. Involve team members in the process when and where appropriate.

☐ Get team members actively involved in problem solving activities. Demonstrate sincere interest in their ideas and solutions.

☐ Create opportunities for the team to gather socially during off-work time. Support these activities by providing team members on-the-job opportunities to schedule and sponsor these events.

## Conflict Resolution

☐ Make a practice of negotiating differences of opinion for team members. Refrain from taking sides in disputes and expect more emotion to be expressed than the substance of an issue. Be patient and allow feelings to be vented until the real issues are actually surfaced and can be addressed.

☐ Encourage team member suggestions for ways to improve. Be prepared to have some of your own practices challenged. Facilitate these conversations non-defensively to reduce tension and to allow exploration of alternate methods and practices.

☐ Review policies and procedures to determine if revision is necessary. Ensure adequate resource allocation to support requirements.

In addition to the areas listed on the Leader Effectiveness Action Plan, my boss, team members and I have identified the following areas as opportunities for growth and improvement:

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

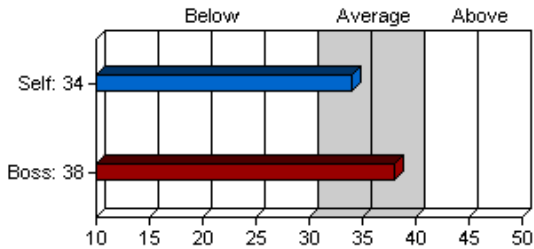*Your own confidential, individualized feedback begins on the next page.*

## Motivation

Below    Average    Above

Self: 42

Boss: 44

10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50

Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...

## Decisionmaking

Below    Average    Above
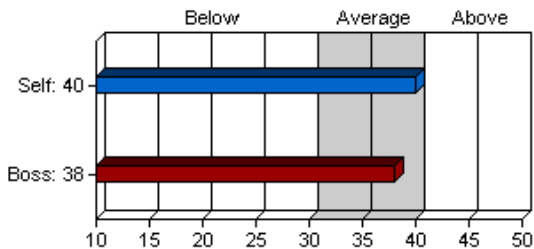
Self: 34

Boss: 38

10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50

Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l   Evaluating results of solutions implemented to solve problems.

## Stress Management

Below    Average    Above

Self: 34

Boss: 38

10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50

Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l   Discussing mistakes calmly in terms of causes and remedies.

## Performance Counseling

Below    Average    Above

Self: 40

Boss: 38

10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50

Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l   Evaluating employee performance against agreed upon goals.
l   Providing accurate and timely feedback on work performance.

## Goal Setting
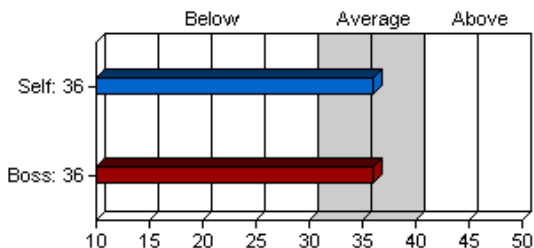
Below    Average    Above

Self: 36

Boss: 36

10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50

Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l   Revising goals/objectives as required to keep them realistic.
l   Setting goals for your work group as a whole.

## Delegation

Below     Average     Above

Self: 38

Boss: 42

10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50
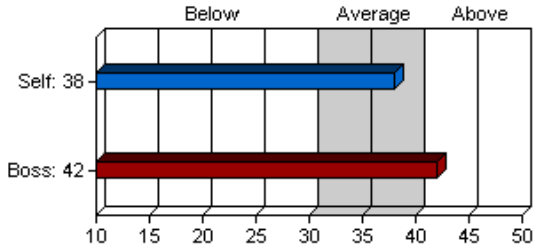
Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...

## Communication

Below     Average     Above

Self: 34

Boss: 40

10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50
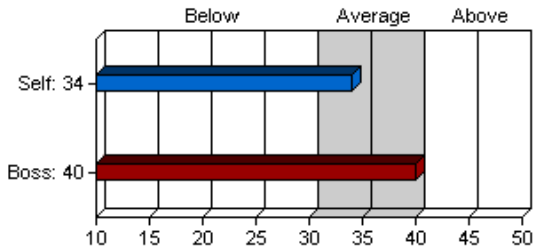
Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l   Providing timely information on pending changes.

## Team Development

Below     Average     Above

Self: 38

Boss: 44

10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50
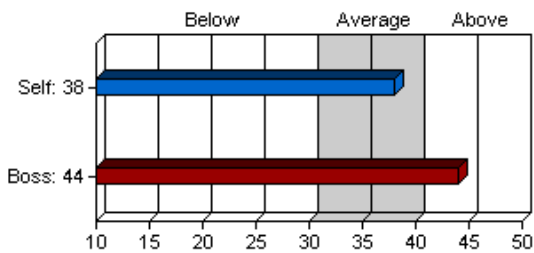
Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l   Clearly defining employee roles.

## Conflict Resolution

Below     Average     Above

Self: 38

Boss: 42

10  15  20  25  30  35  40  45  50
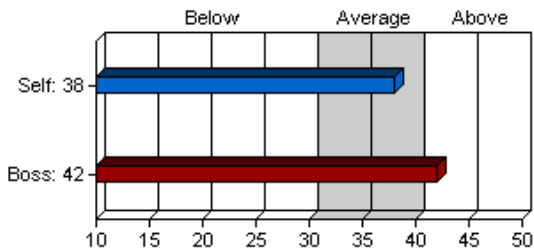
Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l   Dealing constructively with issues that cause conflict.

## Motivation
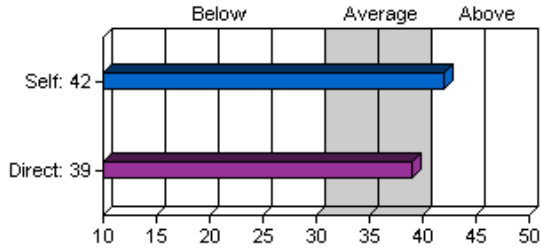
Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
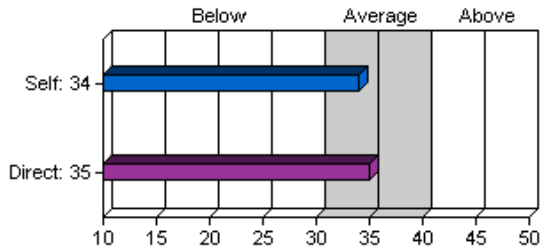
## Decisionmaking

Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l    Accurately identifying problems and their causes.
l    Making decisions in a timely manner.

## Stress Management
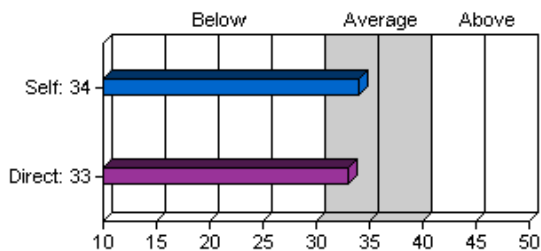
Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l    Handling stress well when things go wrong.
l    Staying calm in a crisis.
l    Discussing mistakes calmly in terms of causes and remedies.

## Performance Counseling
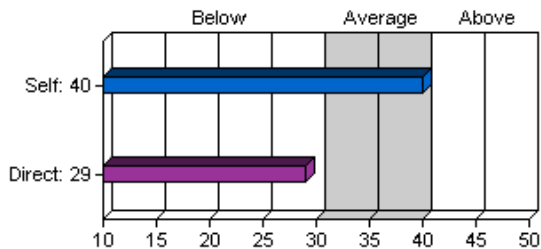
Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l    Involving employees in deciding how their work performance will be evaluated.
l    Evaluating employee performance against agreed upon goals.
l    Providing accurate and timely feedback on work performance.
l    Being prompt in letting employees know how they are doing.

## Goal Setting
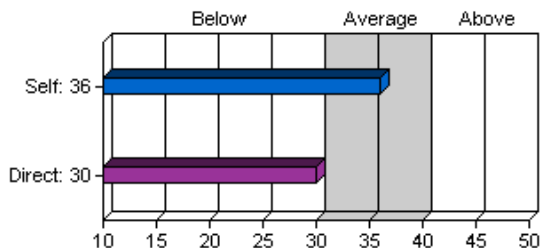
Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l    Establishing effective priorities for direction.
l    Revising goals/objectives as required to keep them realistic.
l    Setting goals for your work group as a whole.
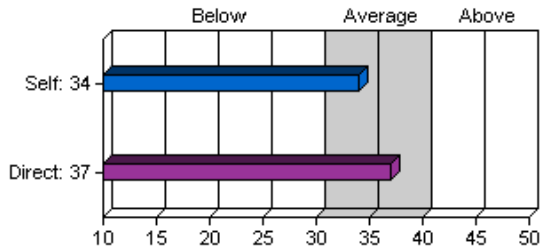l    Involving employees in setting their own goals.

## Delegation
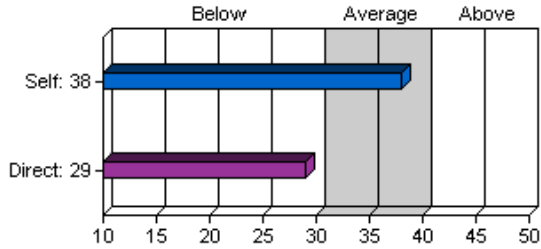


Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l   Knowing what to delegate.
l   Clearly assigning responsibility for task accomplishment.
l   Knowing to whom to delegate.
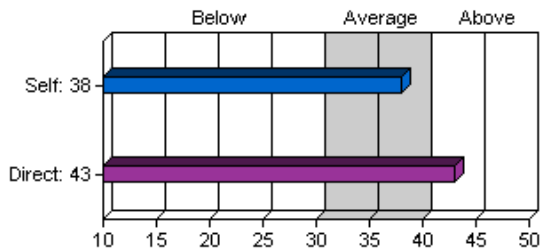l   Clearly assigning authority to employees for task accomplishment.

## Communication



Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
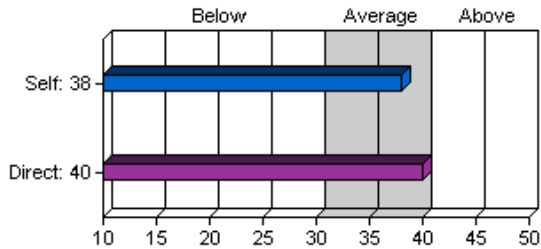l   Giving clear directions to employees.

## Team Development



Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...
l   Assisting in developing employee work related skills.

## Conflict Resolution



Based on the ratings you received, you need to work on...

## Motivation

This dimension addresses the ability to assess the expectations and needs of team members and to use the appropriate process to guide individuals and the team toward task accomplishment. Role modeling is a key ingredient in the motivation process, with the leader setting the example of what is expected from the team.
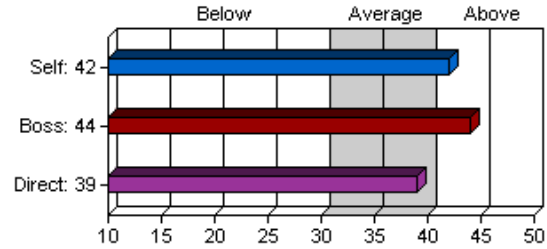
Self: 42
Boss: 44
Direct: 39

## Decisionmaking

Leaders must make decisions in an effective, accurate and timely fashion while understanding the implications and impact of those decisions on the team members and the team. Decisionmaking skills include identifying problems, securing necessary information and processing that information competently in order to reach conclusions and take actions.

Self: 34
Boss: 38
Direct: 35
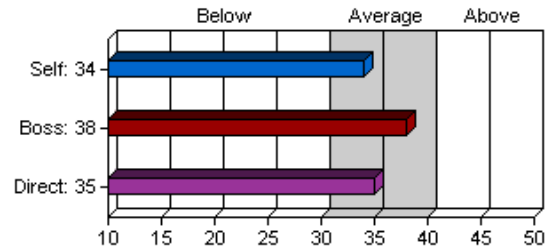
## Stress Management

The skill a leader demonstrates in handling a crisis, assisting others in learning from mistakes and not allowing small concerns to become overwhelming reflects how well that leader can manage stress. Leaders set the example.

Self: 34
Boss: 38
Direct: 33
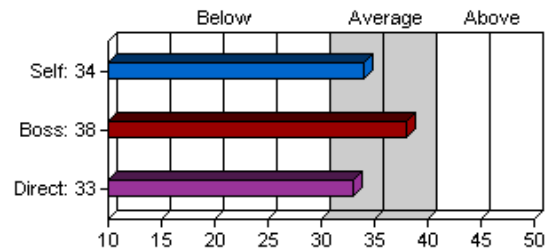
## Performance Counseling

This dimension addresses leader skills in working with team members to determine evaluation plans, provide timely feedback on performance and interact constructively to maximize their potential. It also encompasses counseling that is problem focused and solution oriented, providing praise or correction and assistance in career development.

Self: 40
Boss: 38
Direct: 29
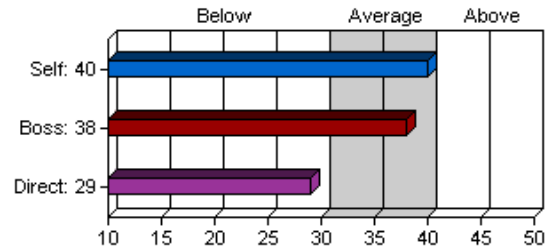
## Goal Setting

The leader must establish the overall priorities and direction of the team. This process requires setting high but realistic goals for team members and the team as a whole. Goals must be assessed continually to ensure that they are addressing the needs of the team.
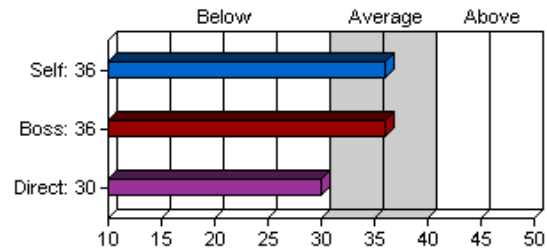
Self: 36
Boss: 36
Direct: 30

## Delegation

This dimension includes skills that enable a leader to determine job requirements, accurately assess team member capabilities and combine these for task assignments. A basic requirement is the assignment of necessary authority to a team member to empower him/her to fully accomplish job requirements.

Self: 38
Boss: 42
Direct: 29
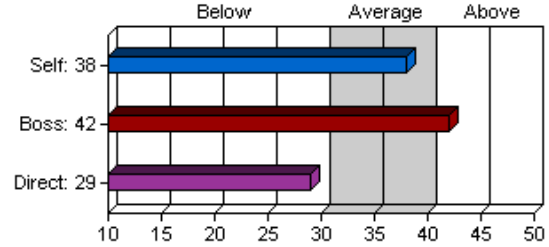
## Communication

The leader's skill in communicating instructions, expectations, decisions, pending changes, etc., determines to a great extent the team's ability to operate effectively. Leaders must exhibit the ability to listen to others and provide appropriate feedback.

Self: 34
Boss: 40
Direct: 37
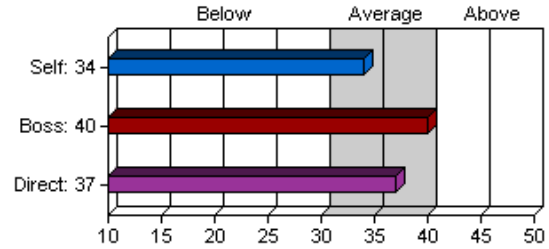
## Team Development

Leader skills in this dimension include the ability to create a climate of trust within the team by developing cohesion and openness while ensuring individual role clarity. Leaders should also reduce inappropriate competition and encourage beneficial collaboration.

Self: 38
Boss: 44
Direct: 43
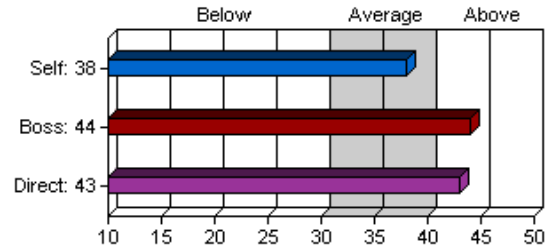
## Conflict Resolution

Leaders must be skillful in resolving conflict, particularly conflict that arises from competition for resources, personality differences, misunderstandings, policies, procedures, etc. Leader skills involved in resolving such conflicts include talking openly with team members and taking action to change problem causing situations.

Self: 38
Boss: 42
Direct: 40