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russell consulting

RCI's 360° Leadership Assessment & Development Services

Understanding & Assessing the
Competencies of Leadership



A Service of RCI



RCI's 360° Leadership Assessment Services

Assessing Your Leadership with 360° Feedback

How well do you provide the leadership that your team or organization needs to be most effective? What do people really need from you as a leader? You have probably pondered these questions from time to time, wondering how you could improve as a leader.

Well, why guess?! Ask the people you lead! What are *their* perceptions of your leadership behaviors and style? Your effectiveness as a leader is actually best assessed by those with whom you have frequent contact. Because they know what they need from you to be successful in their jobs—and because they are in the best position to assess whether you follow through on your leadership commitments—hearing their assessment of your leadership behaviors is essential to really improving the quality of your leadership.



Given the name “360° feedback” because it collects and then summarizes data on your leadership behaviors as perceived from multiple sources and all directions—your direct reports, your peers, your boss, and even yourself—this method can give you powerful insights into opportunities for your personal change and improvement.

The Benefits of 360° Feedback

Exploring different perceptions. Perhaps the most important value of 360° feedback to you is that it offers a view of your performance from multiple perspectives. Since different people both expect and experience different behaviors from you, the multi-rater feedback process ensures that the feedback data you receive reflects this diversity of perspective.

Personal improvement plan. Another important benefit of 360° feedback is that it gives you valid data on which you can build a plan for personal improvement. Without feedback on specific leadership behaviors, it's hard to know what you need to change to enhance your leadership style. With data that indicate both specific areas of strength and areas for improvement, you can begin working on improving your leadership behaviors.

Focus on the right behaviors. Without this information, grounded in the perceptions of the people with whom you work, you are simply stabbing in the dark. By providing you with specific data on specific leadership behaviors, 360° feedback helps you focus on improving the behaviors about which people care most.

Conducting 360° Feedback in the Right Way

Focus on development rather than evaluation. Multi-rater feedback is most effective when it focuses on leadership *development* rather than *evaluation*. While leadership evaluation is important for a leader's growth, the 360° process is designed to work best as a developmental tool. You are more likely to listen to the data that you get from the multi-rater process if the focus is not on "how am I doing?" but rather on "where can I improve?". The primary purpose of 360° is to give you data on your leadership behaviors to enable you to improve your leadership. It's *not* intended to replace the performance review or appraisal.

Instead of creating anxiety and defensiveness in the leader (which could happen if the feedback were used to determine a person's pay raise or future with the company), the multi-rater process should create understanding and lead to action for change.

Guarantee confidentiality. If the people giving the leader feedback on his or her behaviors believe that the leader will know who said what about them, these people may be less than honest in giving feedback. Honesty is the foundation of an effective system. If they shade or misrepresent their perspective due to a desire to avoid conflict or concerns about retaliation, the feedback won't be helpful to the leader. For this reason, the 360° process must ensure absolute anonymity and confidentiality.

Follow-through. Leaders who go through a 360° process can benefit from just understanding how they are perceived. Since the purpose of the feedback process, however, is on *action* and *change*, the feedback must lead to creating and implementing a leadership development plan. Development of the plan, in turn, should be followed by a facilitated follow-up session where the leaders discuss (a) how they shared their insights from the feedback with others and (b) the actions they have taken to address areas for improvement. Without a formal follow-through by the organization, the leader may lose his or her focus on improvement and slip back into old patterns. A follow-up discussion seminar reinforces personal accountability for change and improves the effectiveness of the process.

A Model for Leadership

In their book *The Leadership Challenge*, James Kouzes and Barry Posner identify five core competencies of effective leaders. These core competencies are *challenging the process*, *inspiring a shared vision*, *enabling others to act*, *modeling the way*, and *encouraging the heart*.

These competencies are the basis for the **Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)**—which we often use in our 360° leadership assessment programs.

Challenging the Process

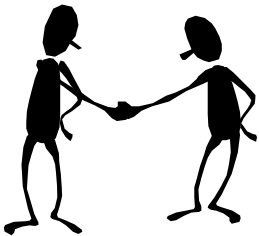
Leaders are pioneers—people who seek out new opportunities and are willing to change the status quo. They innovate, experiment and explore ways to improve the organization. They treat mistakes as learning experiences. Leaders also stay prepared to meet whatever challenges may confront them. To **Challenge the Process** involves *Searching for Opportunities* and *Experimenting and Taking Risks*.

Inspiring a Shared Vision

Leaders look toward and beyond the horizon. They envision the future with a positive and hopeful outlook. Leaders are expressive and attract followers through their genuineness and skillful communications. They show others how mutual interests can be met through a commitment to a common purpose. To **Inspire A Shared Vision** involves *envisioning the future* and *enlisting the support of others*.

Enabling Others to Act

Leaders infuse people with spirit-developing relationships based on mutual trust. They stress collaborative goals. They actively involve others in planning, giving them discretion to make their own decisions. Leaders ensure that people feel strong and capable. **Enabling Others to Act** involves *fostering collaboration* and *strengthening others*.



Modeling the Way

Leaders are clear about their business values and beliefs. They keep people and projects on course by behaving consistently with these values and modeling how they expect others to act. Leaders also plan and break projects down into achievable steps, creating opportunities for small wins. They make it easier for others to achieve goals by focusing on key priorities. **Modeling the Way** involves *setting an example* and *planning small wins*.

Encouraging the Heart

Leaders encourage people to persist in their efforts by linking recognition with accomplishments, visibly recognizing contributions to

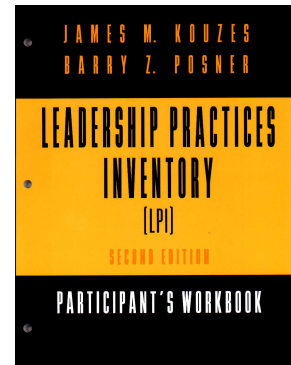
the common vision. They let others know that their efforts are appreciated and express pride in the team's accomplishments. Leaders also find ways to celebrate achievements. They nurture a team spirit that enables people to sustain continued efforts. Encouraging the Heart involves *recognizing contributions* and *celebrating accomplishments*.

RCI's 360° Leadership Assessment Services

RCI facilitates an exploration of the dimensions of a leader using both standardized instruments like the LPI (which explores 30 key leadership behaviors) and its own leadership assessments customized around the needs of its clients.

Computer-based or paper survey. The process can involve either a standardized or customized set of questions that explores people's perceptions of the leader's behaviors. Russell Consulting provides 360° feedback services through both standardized and customized leadership assessment surveys. RCI also offers both a computer-based and network version (where the respondents complete an electronic survey) or a paper and pencil survey.

Free sample 360° survey & report. Contact Russell Consulting for a free copy of a leadership assessment survey and an example of a typical leadership feedback report. We can help you develop a *customized* leadership assessment process for your organization.



Contact Russell Consulting

Learn more about RCI's leadership assessment and development consulting and training services. Call RCI today.

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