

## High-Performance Leadership Assessment

Leaders are often viewed as either “results” or “people” oriented. While traditional management skills and business competence get leaders promoted, our research — comprising a data set of nearly 1,400 leaders and 8,000 feedback providers — indicates that being trustworthy, showing empathy and creating meaning are the characteristics that differentiate truly exceptional leaders.

Clearly, leadership isn't an either-or proposition. High-performing leaders we've studied integrate several seemingly contradictory leadership characteristics. Our High-Performance Leadership Assessment measures a leader's ability to demonstrate – and effectively integrate – the paradoxical leadership characteristics of competence and connection.

### COMPETING DYNAMICS

Competence is the ability to drive results using business acumen, job-related expertise, sound reasoning, clear communication and accountability to deliver on promises. Connection is the ability to create trusting, inspiring relationships with followers by demonstrating commitment and passion, linking personal convictions to the organization's mission and values and behaving consistently with one's own stated values.

High-performance leaders bring together both competence and connection. This competing dynamic is essential for inspiring followers, creating an environment that encourages innovation and delivering sustainable business results.

### THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Leadership is always a relationship between leaders and those they lead. Therefore, we created the High-Performance Leadership Assessment as a psychometrically valid and reliable 180° examination of a leader's behavior. The Assessment includes both the leader's own perspective plus that of his or her direct reports and peers.

Leaders complete a self-assessment online and then invite 4 to 8 peers and direct reports to provide feedback. Each rater completes an online assessment of the leader's behavior. Our dedicated site for the feedback-givers assures each respondent's anonymity.

The High-Performance Leadership Assessment measures specific qualities and behaviors associated with each of the four pairs of competing dynamics of competence and connection, which yields eight categories. Assessment items indicate not only the extent to which the leader demonstrates each quality or behavior but also how well he or she integrates the competing qualities or behaviors.

### THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT REPORT

Each leader receives a confidential feedback report that shows the leader's own ratings and the ratings of the feedback-givers. The report includes three sections:

- **Category Summary.** Numerical scores with a bar chart visual compare the leader's self-assessment with average ratings by others on how strongly the leader demonstrates each of the eight categories. The category summary also includes the numerical difference between the leader's rating and the average of others' ratings.
- **Ratings by Item.** Each of the categories includes 5 to 8 questions, or items. Numerical scores and a bar chart visual show the leader's self-assessment and average ratings by others on how strongly the leader demonstrates each of the specific behaviors. The report also shows the numerical difference between the leader's rating and the average of others' ratings.

- Range of Responses by Item. While averages of others' feedback give the leader a snapshot of how his or her self-perceptions match those of others, averages are not sufficient to convey how similarly each feedback giver experiences the leader. The Range of Response by Item section of the report graphically depicts the spread of numerical ratings received from each anonymous feedback provider. This visual allows the leader to spot patterns in others' perceptions.

## LEVERAGING HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT RESULTS

While there is tremendous variability in how leaders demonstrate the eight categories of competence and connection, we can see definite patterns in our data set. Our findings consistently show that most leaders score the highest on items associated with traditional business competence, while the feedback givers indicate that high ratings on personal connection items are most predictive of whether or not a feedback provider considers the leader to be high-performing.

The greatest opportunity for improving leadership effectiveness therefore lies in strengthening leaders' ability to connect with followers while still leveraging their strengths in business competence. We work with leaders through individual activity, executive coaching, discussions with colleagues and large group discussions to help them:

- Obtain a general understanding of their leadership. Do they integrate competing dynamics? Or do they tend to lead from one set of characteristics (either competence or connection)?
- Identify specific strengths and weaknesses
- Identify potential "blind spots" where their self assessments do not align with perceptions of their feedback providers
- Plan conversations to investigate blind spots

- Create plans for developing weaknesses and leveraging strengths
- Learn to inspire greater employee commitment and create an environment that drives high business performance.

## REASONS TO CHOOSE THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

The High-Performance Leadership Assessment can be deployed as a stand-alone endeavor to gain insights into leaders' effectiveness or as part of a broader business initiative. Typical applications where our clients have found the High-Performance Leadership Assessment valuable include:

- Developing high-potential leaders
- Measuring the leadership culture in the organization
- Providing an initial baseline and a subsequent measure of leaders' competence and connection
- Helping leaders understand and develop inspirational leadership
- Providing the individual leader perspective in development work with leadership teams

The High-Performance Leadership Assessment is rigorous in methodology and administration, yet flexible enough to be deployed at all levels of leadership. Built on our research and informed by our experience, the High-Performance Leadership Assessment integrates measurement of the business competence that gets leaders promoted and the trustworthiness, empathy and depth that differentiate truly exceptional leaders

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