

Coaching Effectiveness Feedback Report

Sample User
11/5/2009 8:12:02 AM

Introduction

The following information is provided to help you navigate the information that is included in your Coaching Effectiveness report.

1. Overall summary chart

The summary results chart provides a quick visual representation of your scores in seven competencies that make up the Coaching Effectiveness profile. The scores to concentrate on are those above 3.5 (strong) and below 2.75 (need further development). Please note that these competency scores are averages; individual question scores can be viewed by clicking on the individual competency link.

2. Category description pages

This report contains three sections for each of the seven competencies. The first of these three sections explains the competency, lists average scores, and then provides high and low score interpretation notes. The second section provides a graphical representation of individual question scores. The third section provides broadly-based improvement actions for those individuals wanting to develop their competencies.

3. 10/10 Report

The "10/10" Report page provides the raw scores for the 10 highest scoring questions and the 10 lowest scoring questions out of the 84. It also identifies which competency each questions is from.

4. Course and Reading suggestions

Development suggestions for the two lowest scoring competencies, including training courses and specific books that may provide some useful additional information, are included here.

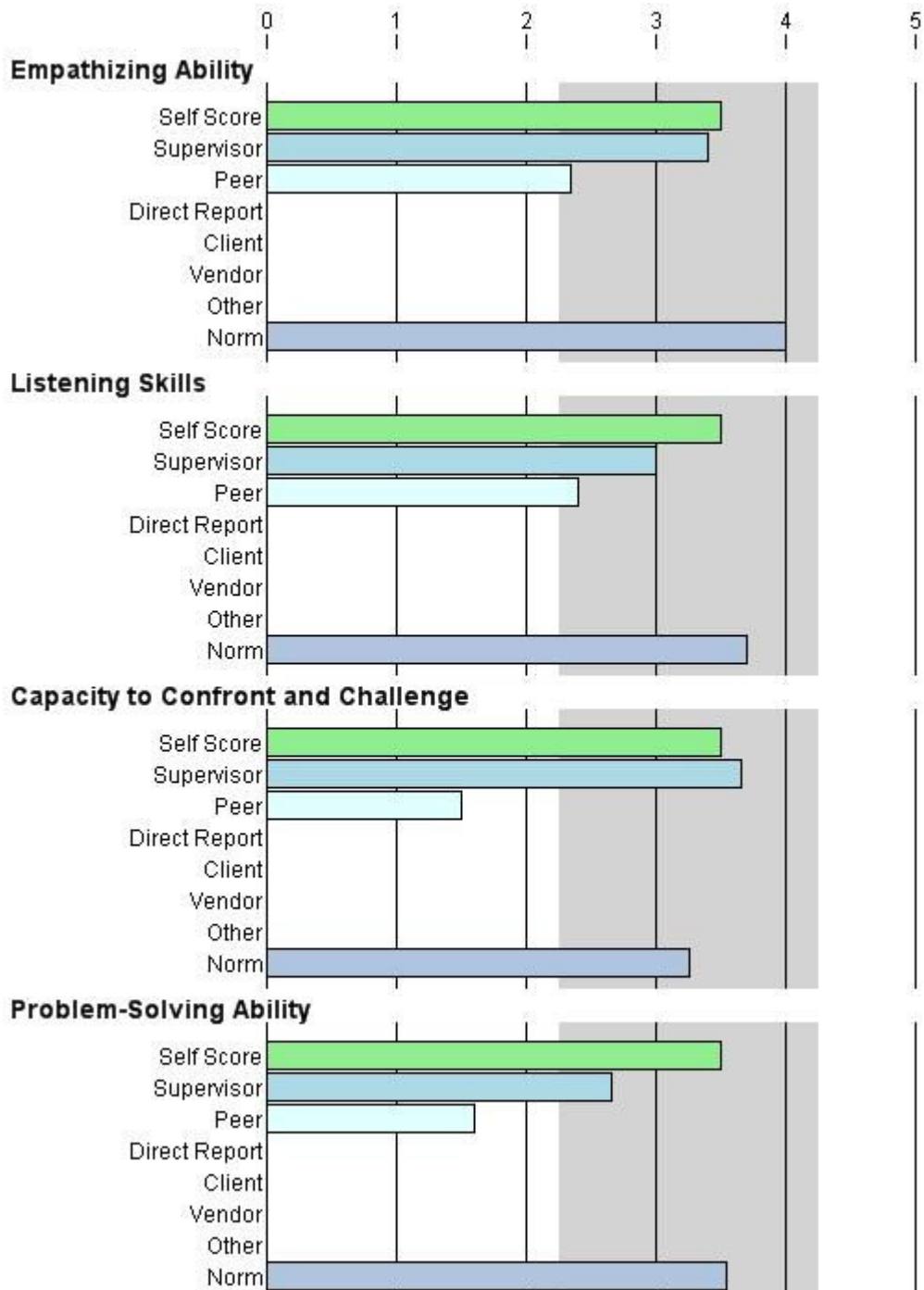
5. Development Plan

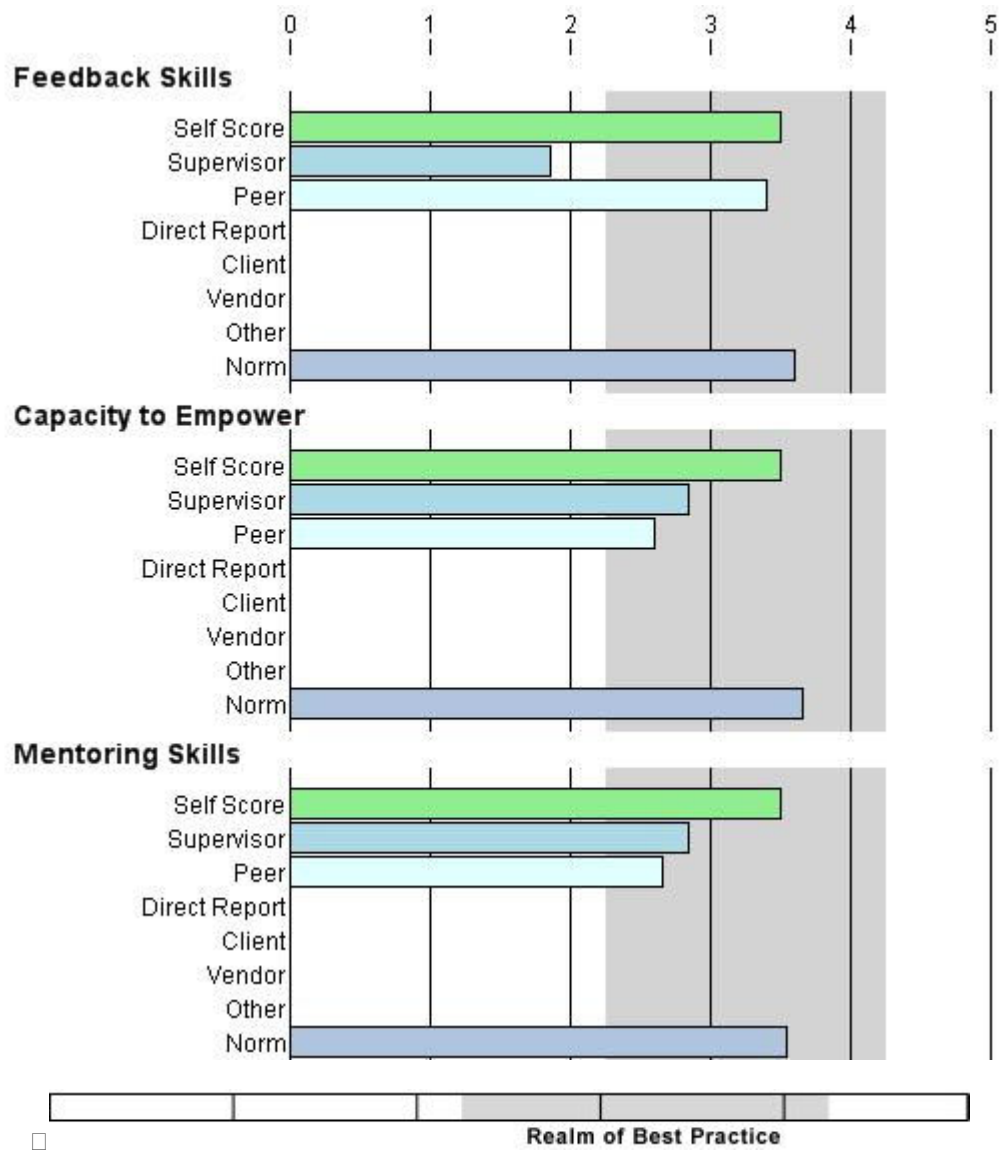
The development plan aggregates the five lowest scoring questions and puts them into a one page template. Individuals can use this template to record the specific actions they plan to take, as a result of their feedback, over the next twelve months. Individuals may draw upon the general guidance offered in their feedback report, or draw upon the "coaching tips" (see next section).

6. Coaching tips

The overall output report includes detailed coaching tips for the five lowest scoring questions. These coaching tips provide not only information about the particular questions, but provide some specific advice on what individuals might do to improve their skills or learn new behaviors in the future.

OVERALL SUMMARY



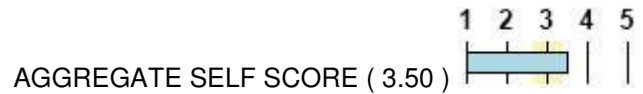


Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire. □

Coaching Effectiveness Profile

EMPATHIZING ABILITY

This section on Empathizing Ability looks at the extent to which you create a positive climate for coaching communication and demonstrate an understanding of the other person's view point and feelings. It asks the question: "How well do you build a spirit of trust and sincerity so that people will feel that you identify with them and their feelings and issues?"



Interpretation

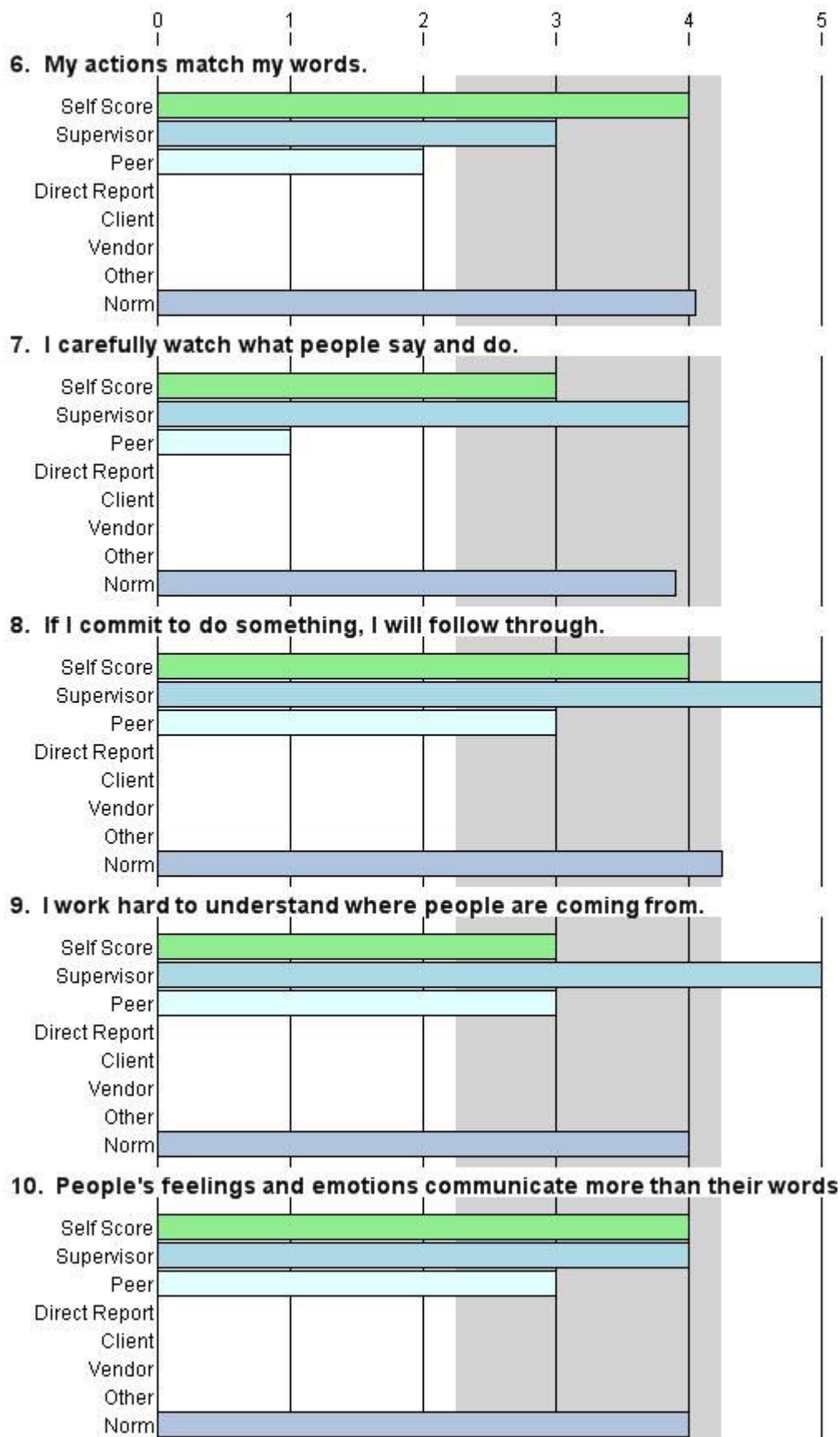
LOW (less than 2.75)

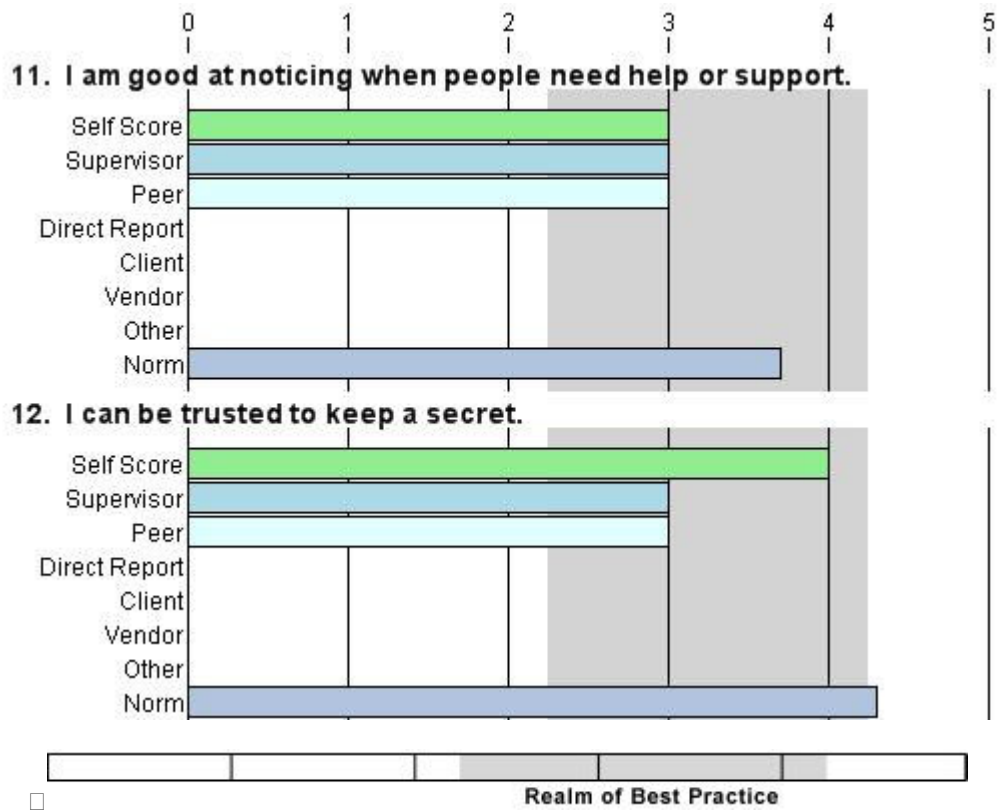
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you are more "cool" or aloof about other people's issues (and perhaps even deliberately distance yourself from them). You might not easily appreciate when people need sincere advice or support. Even when you find yourself in a "deeper" conversation, you might be oblivious to the depth of people's feelings or emotions about an issue. An individual who scores low is generally not counted on as a useful "sounding board" for other people's problems or concerns; people will seek out others who appear to be "warmer" and more accommodating. Low scorers send mixed or confused signals, arising from differences in what they say and what they do. Others will likely prefer to keep their relationship with you superficial, or restrict it to mainly analytical issues.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you generally like people and enjoy building strong and rewarding relationships through your conversations with them. You are likely to make a sincere effort to understand other people's issues and challenges, and therefore quickly "tune in" to their underlying feelings about a subject or issue. A high scorer in this area quickly gains a reputation as someone to whom people can freely talk in confidence and go to for helpful and patient guidance. High scorers are likely to be seen as balanced, non-critical, and highly reliable in terms of any commitment that they make, and good listeners.







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This section on Empathizing Ability looks at the extent to which you create a positive climate for coaching communication and demonstrate an understanding of the other person's viewpoint and feelings. It asks the question: "How well do you build a spirit of trust and sincerity so that people will feel that you identify with them and their feelings and issues?"

Improvement actions

Low scorers need to develop their attentive listening skills and try not to judge what people say in terms of what they themselves would do. Although it is extremely difficult to do in the short term, low scorers need to first think more deeply about how other people might be feeling and why before they offer any comment or response.

Empathizing ability

- Aim to be as positive, sincere, and open as possible in all your conversations with people that you meet.
- Be sensitive to people's feelings or emotions, as well as their words.
- Try to develop as much trust between yourself and the person you are coaching, by being as genuine and honest with them as you can.
- Make sure that you always meet any commitments you make.
- Make sure that your deeds match your words, even if it means putting yourself out.

LISTENING SKILLS

This section on Listening Skills looks at your ability to hear as well as understand other people, and to quickly discover their full communication or overall message. It asks the question: "How attentively do you listen so as to understand other people and help them to successfully share what they are thinking and feeling?"



Interpretation

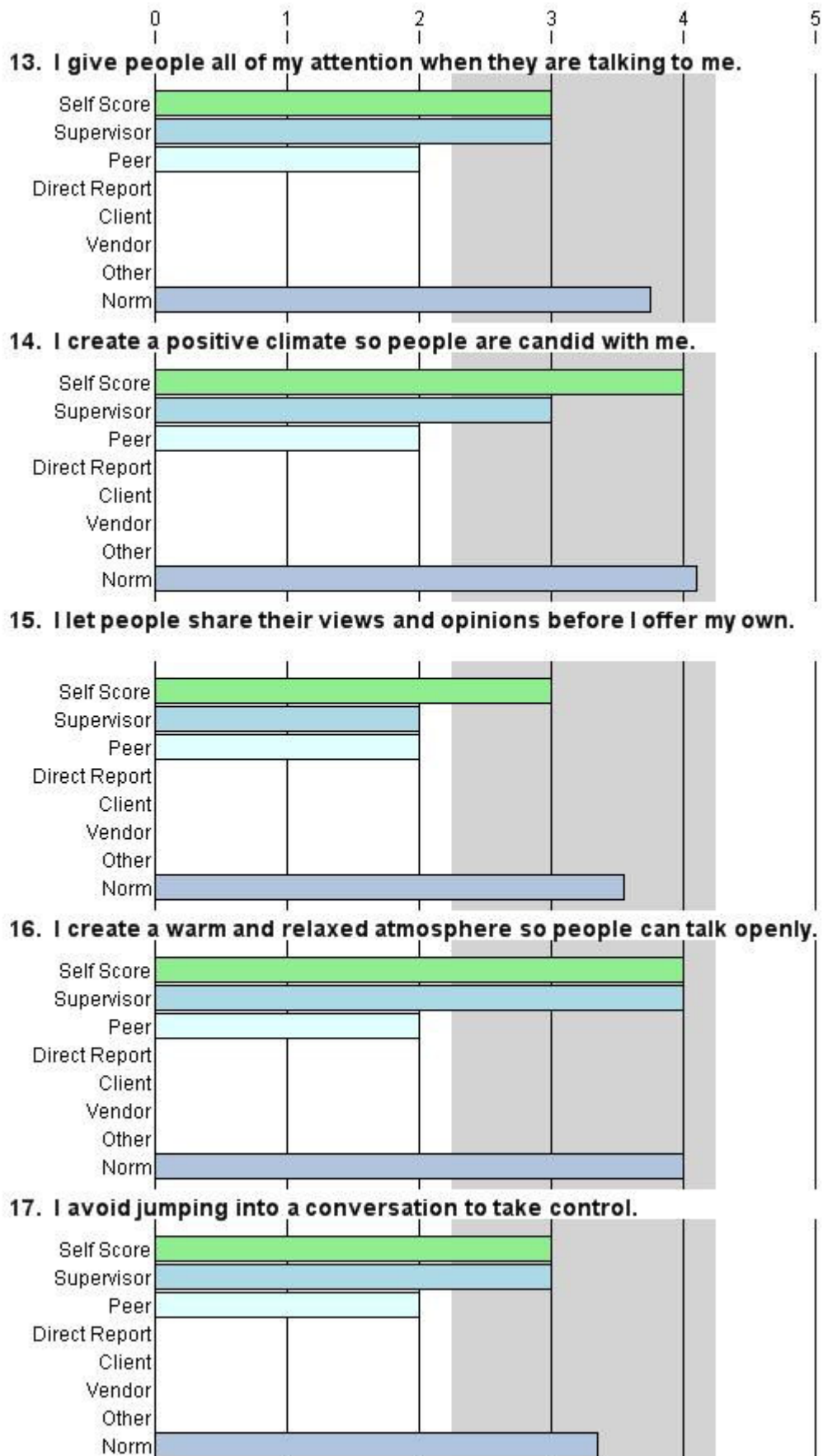
LOW (less than 2.75)

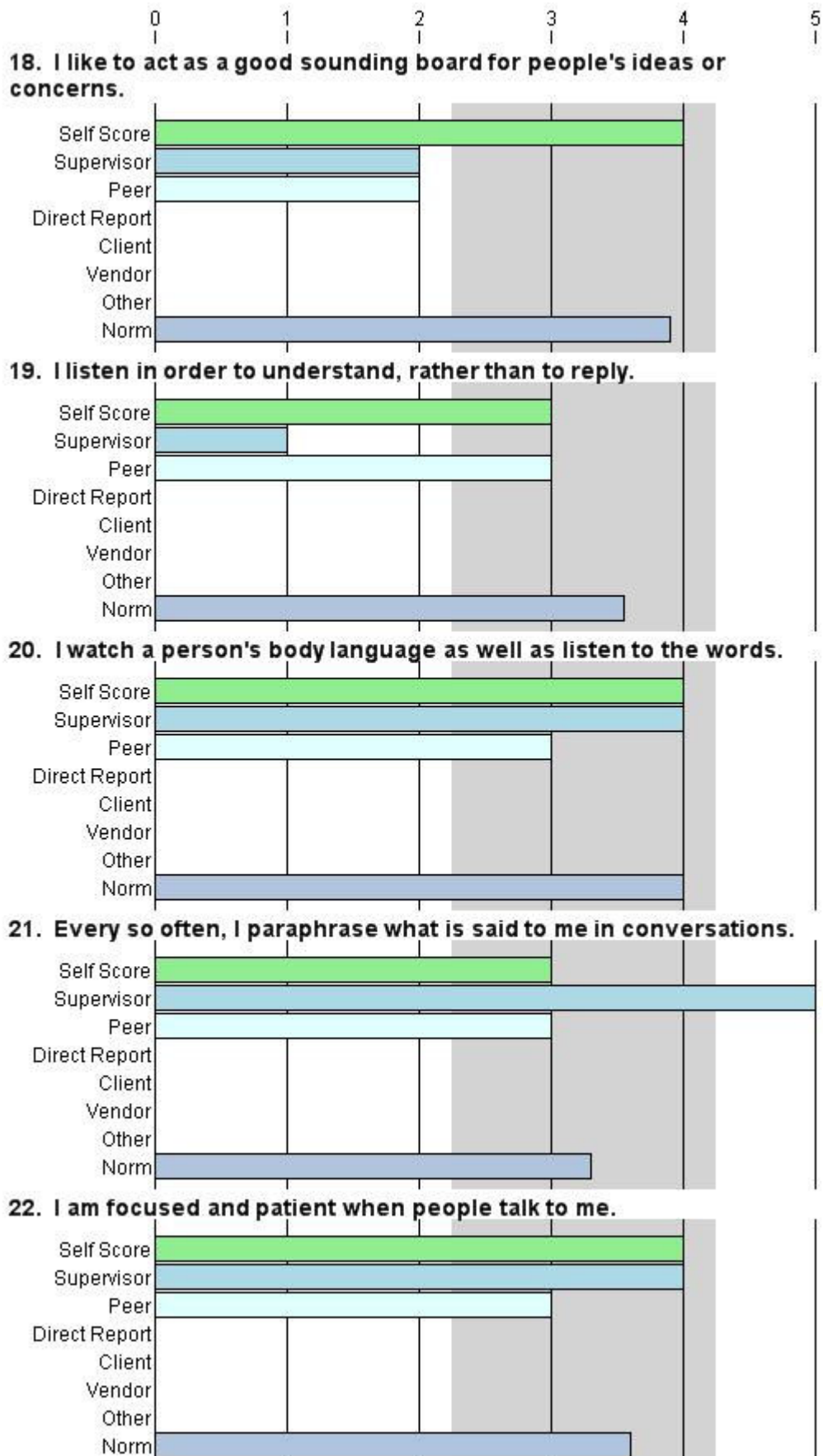
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you do not give your full attention to people when they express their ideas or concerns to you, and probably listen in order to reply, rather than to understand. You might be selecting or living in an inappropriate listening climate. You tend to interrupt people before they finish speaking, as well as let your mind wander off track. An individual who scores low in this area is not generally sought out as a coach because people fear that what they have to say will not be fully valued or given the attention needed for coaching guidance or advice. Low scorers tend also to be impatient and distracted and are not likely to devote much time to careful coaching or support.

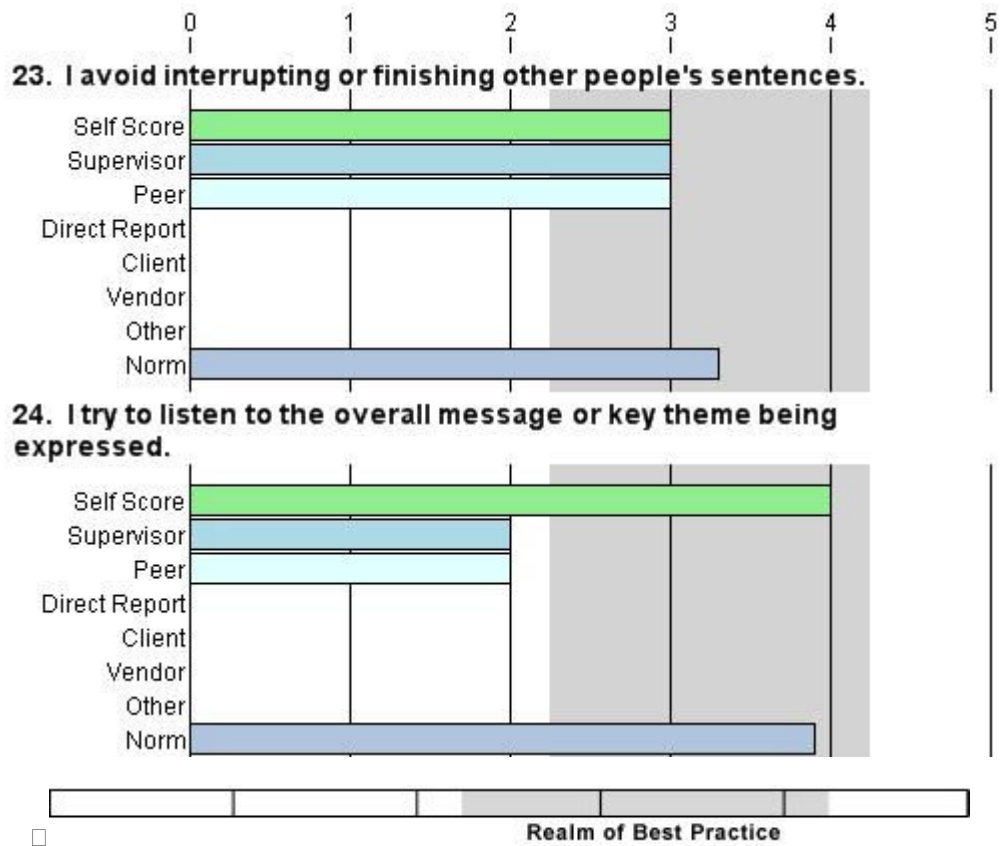
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you recognize the value of focusing attentively and concentrating on what people are communicating when looking to provide appropriate coaching. You tend to look for the best possible climate for people to talk, allow them to speak without interruption, and carefully assess what they are saying.

A high scorer will quickly demonstrate interest and appreciation for what people have to say, and the patience and temperament necessary to guide and offer ideas or concerns. These kinds of people create a quiet, comfortable atmosphere for conversation, and deserve their reputation as reliable sources of support and encouragement.







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This section on Listening Skills looks at your ability to hear as well as understand other people, and to quickly discover their full communication or overall message. It asks the question: "How attentively do you listen so as to understand other people and help them to successfully share what they are thinking and feeling?"

Improvement actions

Low scorers need to become more empathetic listeners. They should take more time and pay more attention to people when they are talking to them. They can start to do this by maintaining good eye contact, not interrupting, paraphrasing and summarizing what they hear, and trying to discover all of what people are seeking to convey.

Listening skills

- Find the right kind of climate to listen properly without distraction.
- Give people that you are seeking to coach your full time, attention and concentration.
- Focus on their needs and listen for as long as possible, with minimal interruption.
- Play back what you hear from time-to-time, to demonstrate that you have heard properly and have not let your mind wander.
- Learn how to read body language (your own and other people's) to enhance your listening skills.

CAPACITY TO CONFRONT AND CHALLENGE

This section focuses on your Capacity to Confront and Challenge. It looks at the extent to which you help people face up to their personal issues and/or problems in order to deal with them successfully. It asks the question: "How successfully do you work with people to perform an honest appraisal of their shortfalls and encourage new thinking and strategies to overcome them?"



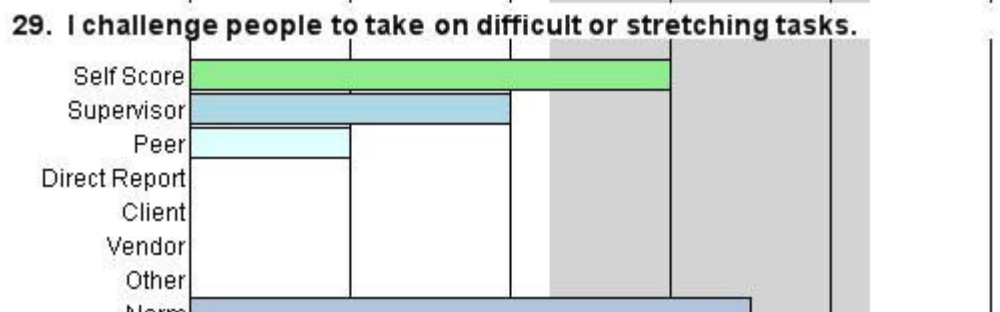
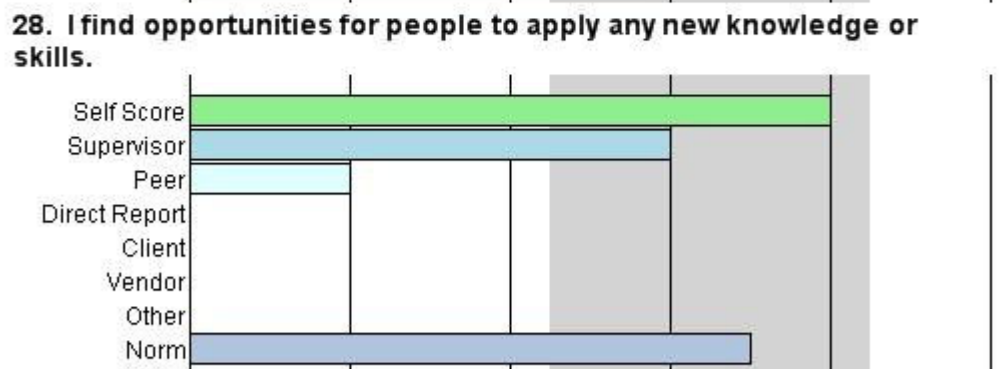
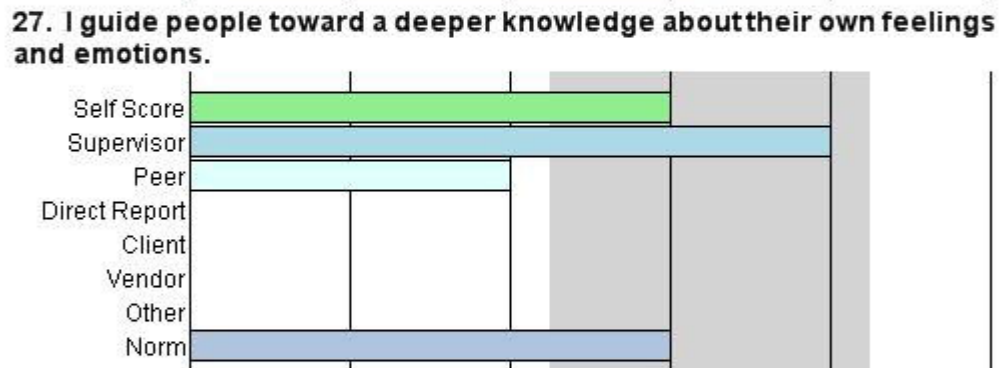
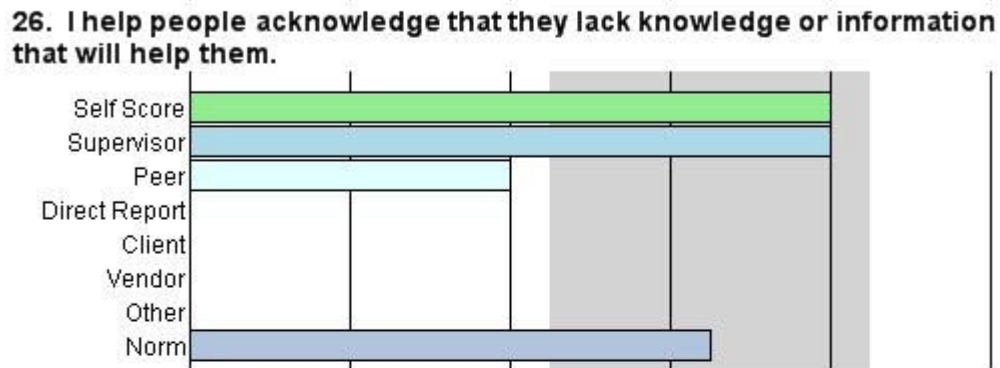
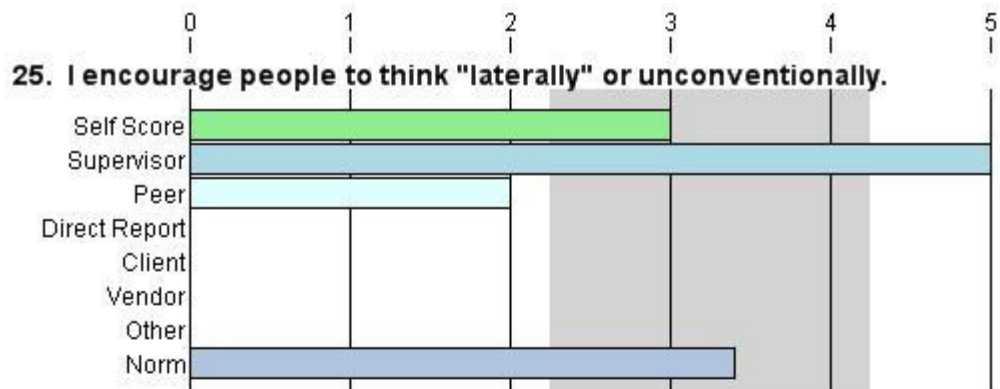
Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you rarely challenge people to think about issues they face in new or different ways or encourage them to reflect more deeply about performance shortfalls. You are likely to tolerate mediocrity and thus do not help others improve or confront their "average" performance. An individual who scores low in this area is likely to find performance coaching more difficult because they are not willing to get people to reflect on their poor or average performance or strive to reach higher or better goals. This type hesitates to offer full and candid feedback, and might even fear the negative impact that criticism has on individuals when it is offered.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you are effective at playing "devil's advocate" in a balanced and constructive way. You help individuals understand that they can and must do something about their difficulties and concerns, and you help create in them a healthy intolerance of average or mediocre performance or outcomes. A high scorer uses a variety of different ways and means to help people critically focus on their performance as a basis for improvement. They are perceived as firm but fair in their dealings with people and solution-focused in terms of future courses of action in coaching situations.

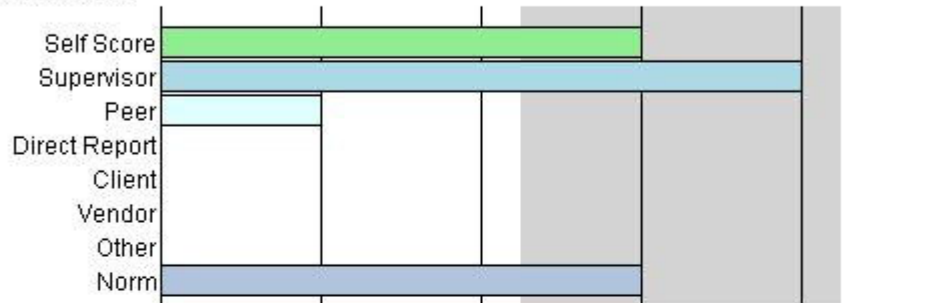


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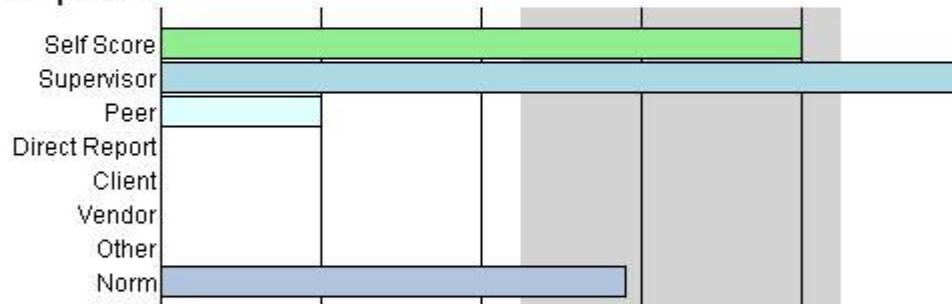
30. I help people to identify the "root" causes of problems or issues they face.



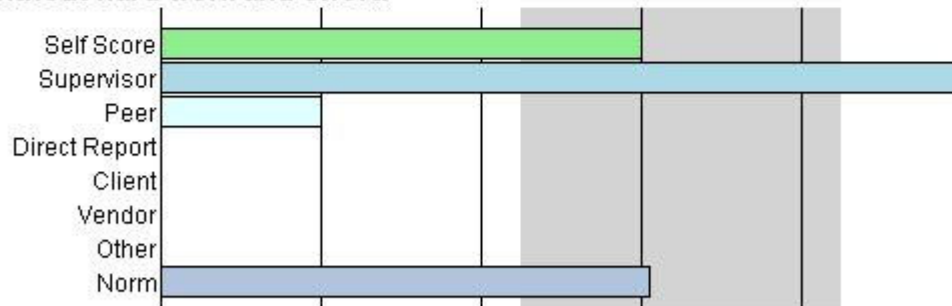
31. I point out performance shortfalls directly and without undue hesitation.



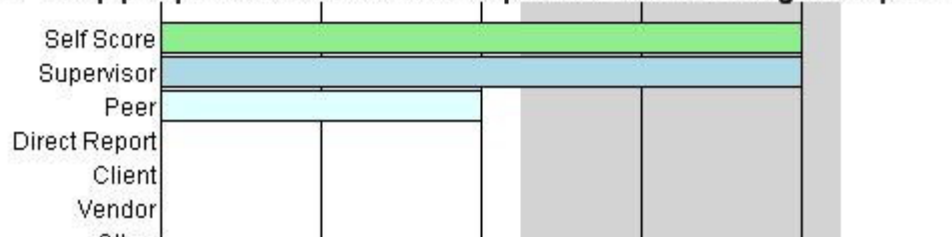
32. I encourage people to solicit feedback about themselves from their peers.

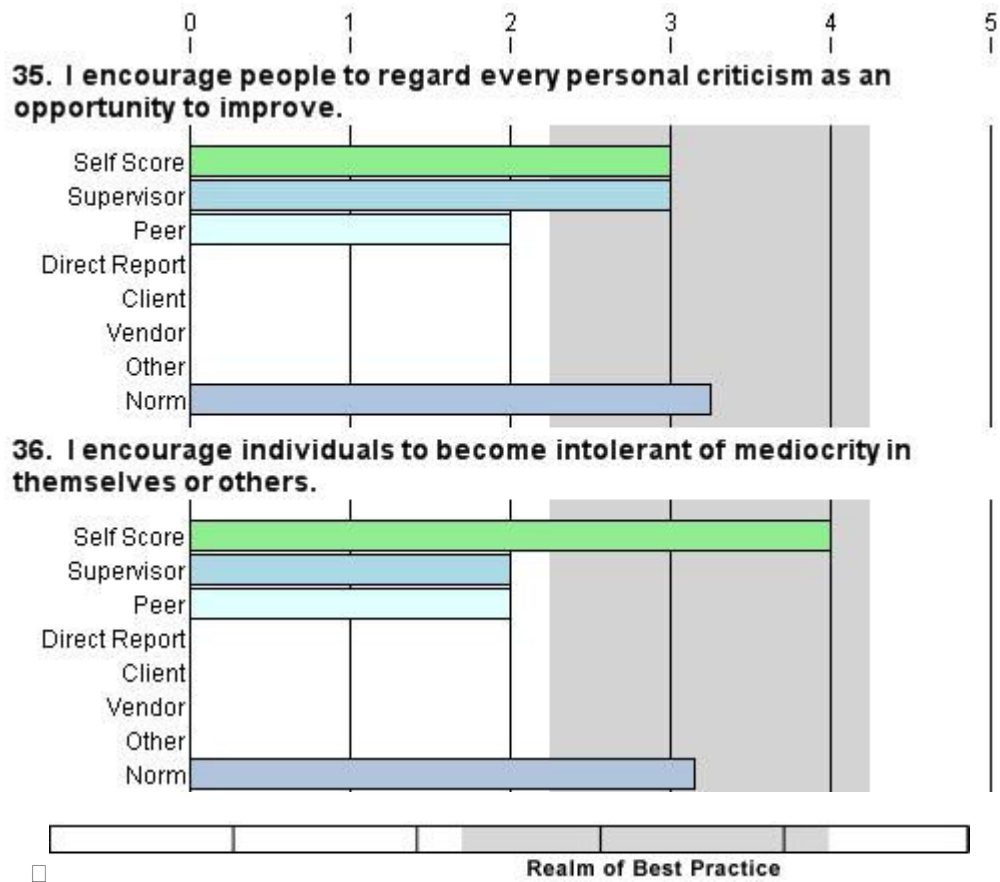


33. I work with people to set targets that are not easy to reach without hard work and effort.



34. I help people to break down their problems into manageable parts.





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This section focuses on your Capacity to Confront and Challenge. It looks at the extent to which you help people face up to their personal issues and/or problems in order to deal with them successfully. It asks the question: "How successfully do you work with people to perform an honest appraisal of their shortfalls and encourage new thinking and strategies to overcome them?"

Improvement actions

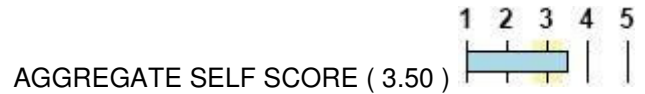
Low scorers need to become more comfortable providing direct and candid feedback to others about performance and encouraging them to stretch to overcome poor or average performance. To do this, they should practice asking probing questions, and challenge individuals to think deeply and creatively about new or different approaches they can take as alternatives to the current situation.

Capacity to confront and challenge

- Develop a set of useful questions that you can ask people to help them reflect upon whether their current approach or actions represent the best they can achieve.
- Use your questions to encourage people to solicit feedback on themselves from others as a healthy part of personal growth and learning.
- Challenge people to focus on their development needs honestly, and on what they plan to do to address them.
- Encourage individuals you coach to look at the deeper root causes of their challenges or issues.
- Identify specific tasks or projects that can challenge and stretch people's skills, or get them thinking in new directions.

PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITY

This section on Problem-Solving Ability assesses your ability to find appropriate methods and means to analyze people's problems or concerns and then explore avenues that might lead to solutions. It asks the question: "How well do you provide people with a contextual framework that helps them think about their problems and possible solutions?"



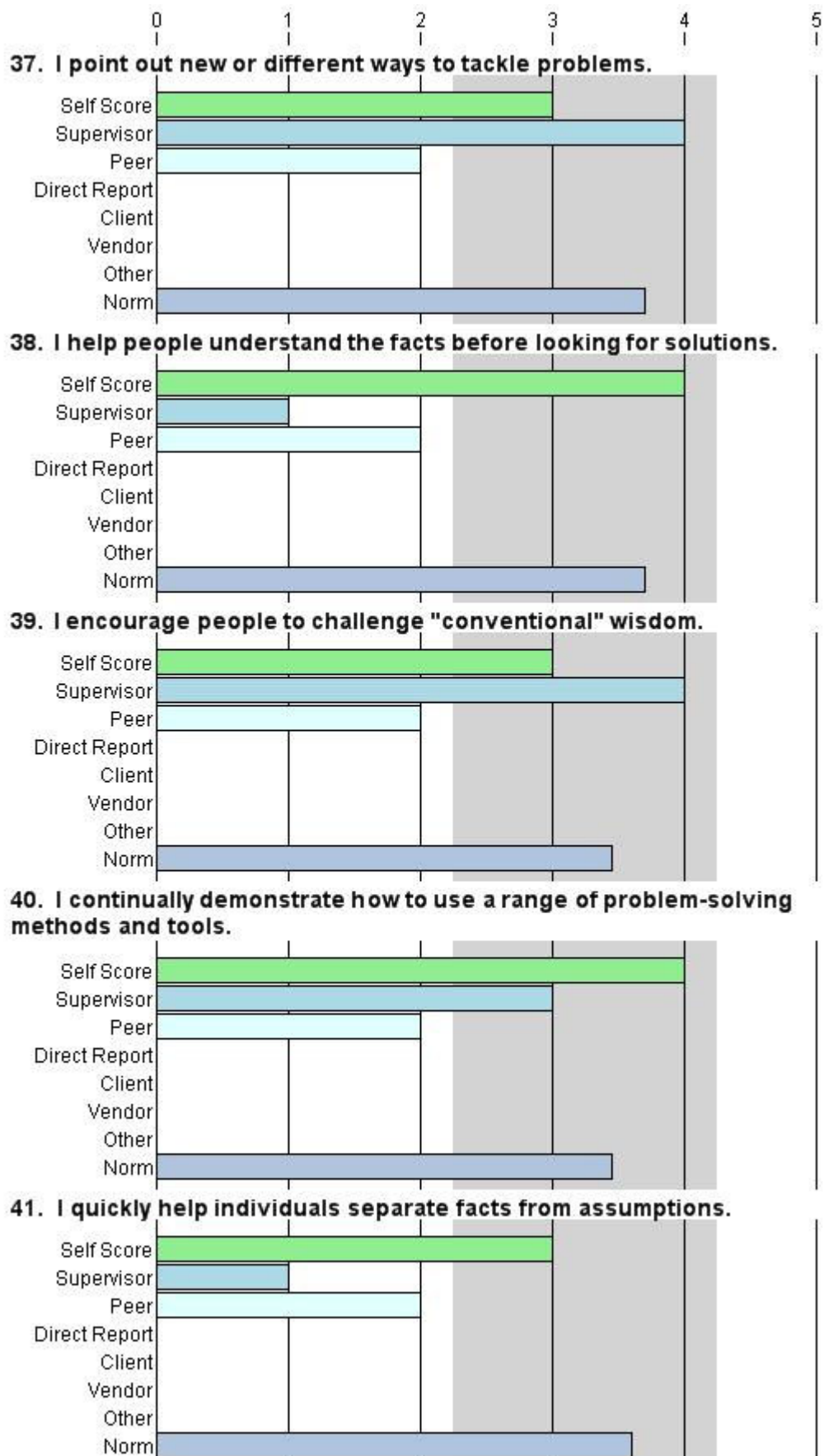
Interpretation

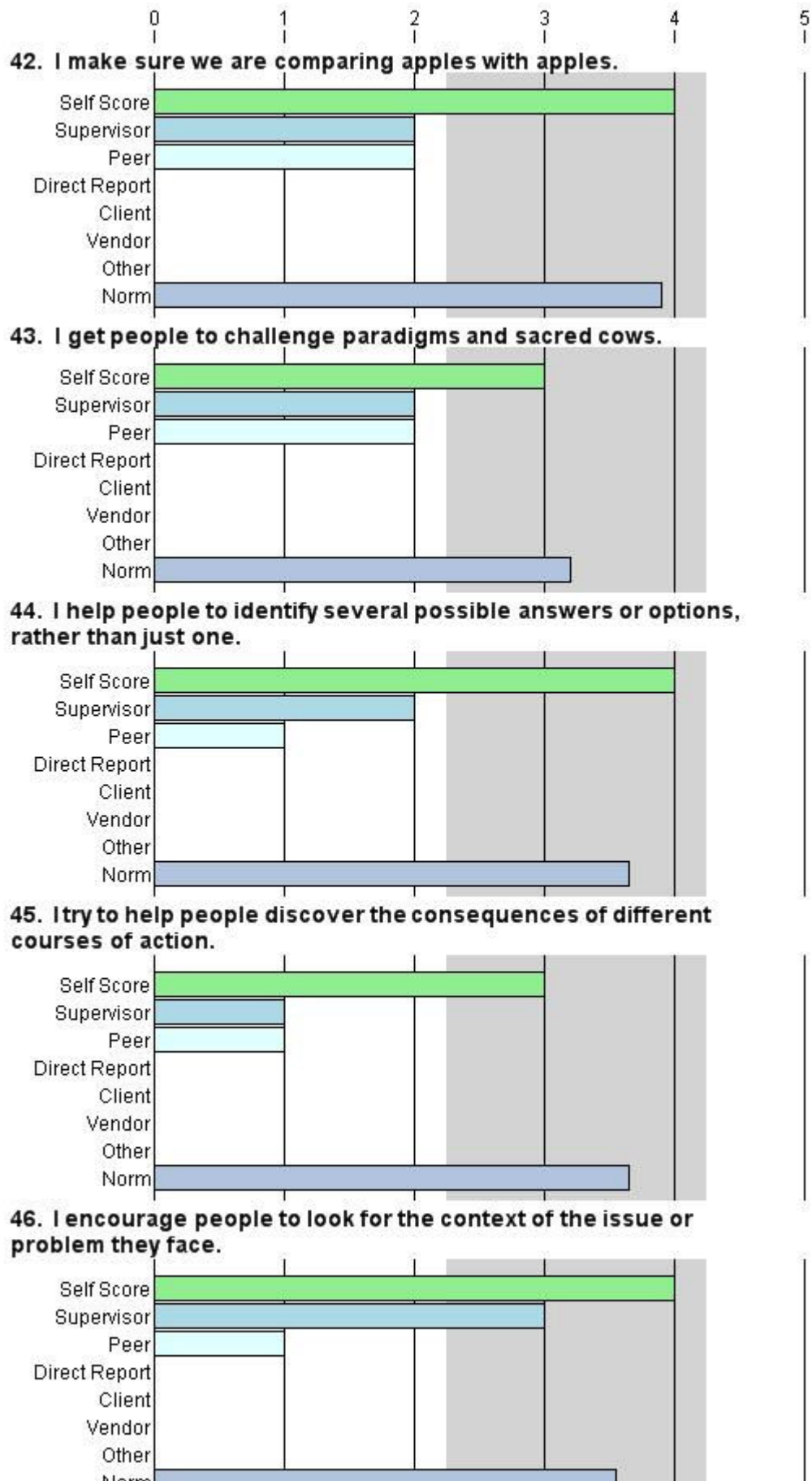
LOW (less than 2.75)

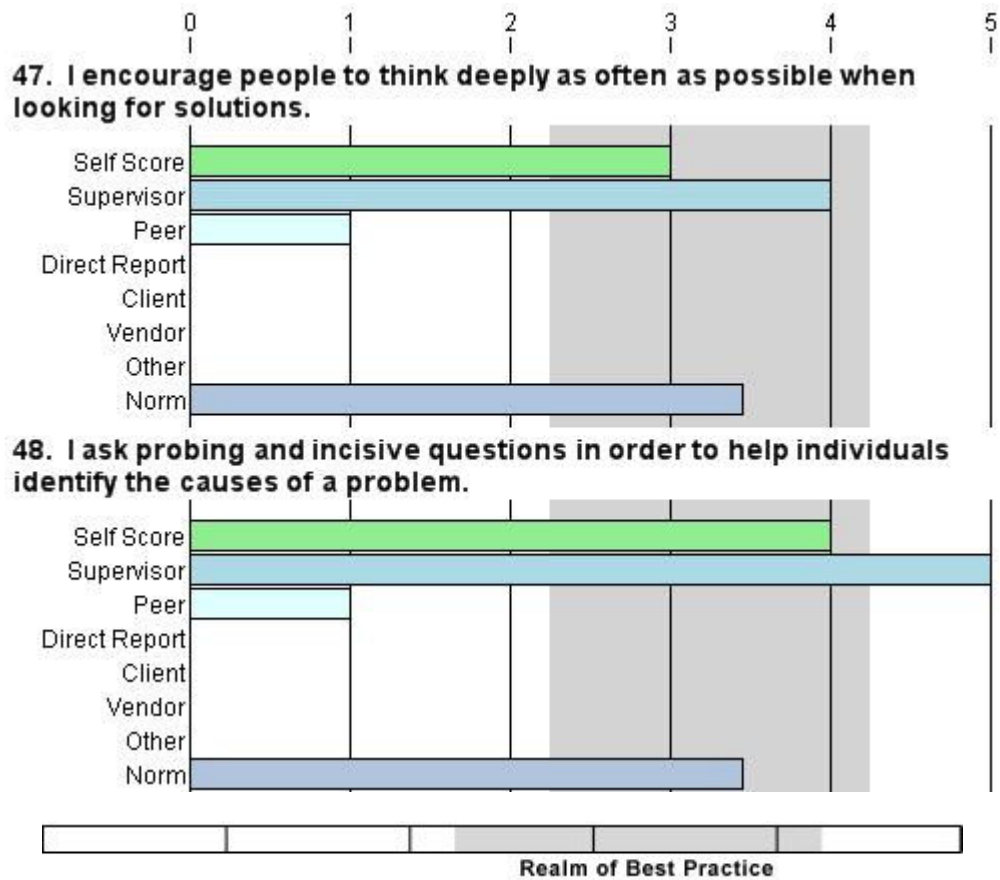
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you rarely offer creative problem-solving or problem-analysis tools, techniques, and methods when coaching individuals. You might not be helping them "think outside the box" to find a better solution or positive way forward. An individual who scores low in this area is probably ill-prepared to help people to look rigorously at the situations or circumstances they face and (through careful sifting and analysis) to come up with solutions. Such people generally lack knowledge or appropriate understanding needed to introduce useful problem-solving tools or approaches that provide new insights or that create a different contextual framework for a problem to be dealt with.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you encourage individuals to use different ways of looking at problems or issues and a range of different analytical tools. You also encourage them to generate several possible solutions and to carefully evaluate the best one, based on the evidence, that will provide the best possible course of future action. An individual who scores high in this area is perceived to be appropriately knowledgeable and understanding regarding a range of problem-solving approaches, and capable of suggesting the most appropriate of these when the circumstances are right to do so.







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This section on Problem-Solving Ability assesses your ability to find appropriate methods and means to analyze people's problems or concerns and then explore avenues that might lead to solutions. It asks the question: "How well do you provide people with a contextual framework that helps them think about their problems and possible solutions?"

Improvement actions

Low scorers need to research a range of problem-solving methods that can be usefully suggested when they seek to coach others. They can also adopt a more incisive questioning approach and get people to look at their problems in new contexts or from different angles as often as possible.

Problem solving ability

- Find ways to focus people you seek to coach on facts that they might have missed.
- Suggest tools and methods that might help their problem or issue analysis process.
- Guide people towards challenging their assumptions, even the supposed inevitability of some of the outcomes they foresee.
- Encourage people to challenge any fixed thinking paradigms that they might have.
- Help individuals to broaden their horizons when looking to solve complex issues by getting them to think outside their most immediate or familiar experience.

FEEDBACK GIVING SKILLS

This section on Feedback Giving Skills looks at the extent to which you offer useful and constructive performance feedback that is accepted and acted upon. It asks the question: "How well do you make use of a range of guidance counseling, coaching, and instructional methods and activities to help people perform at their best?"



Interpretation

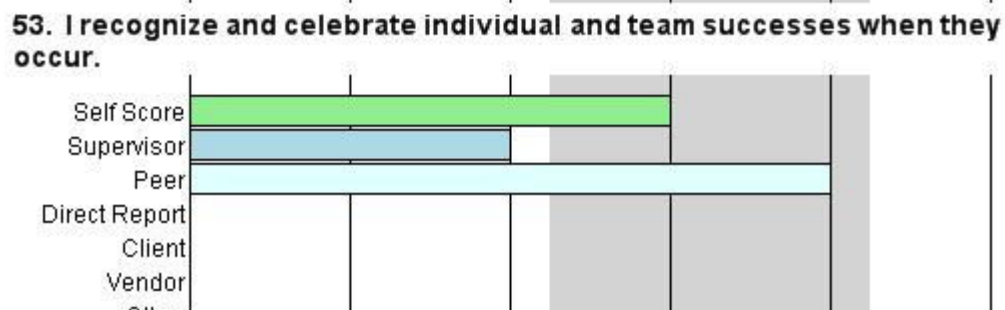
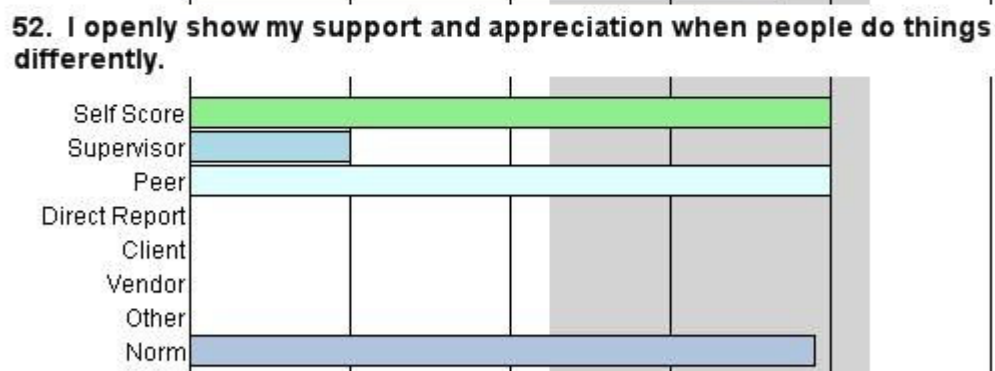
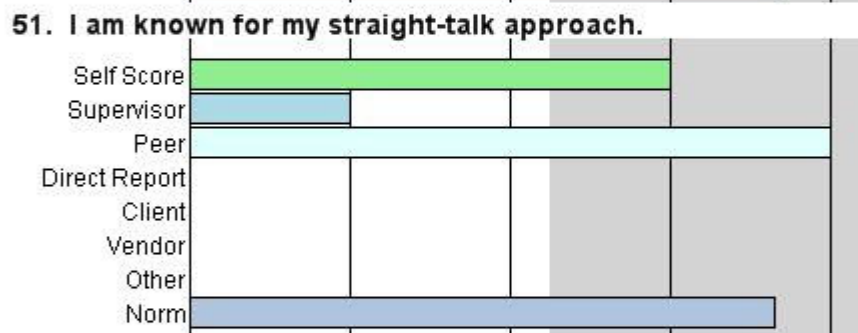
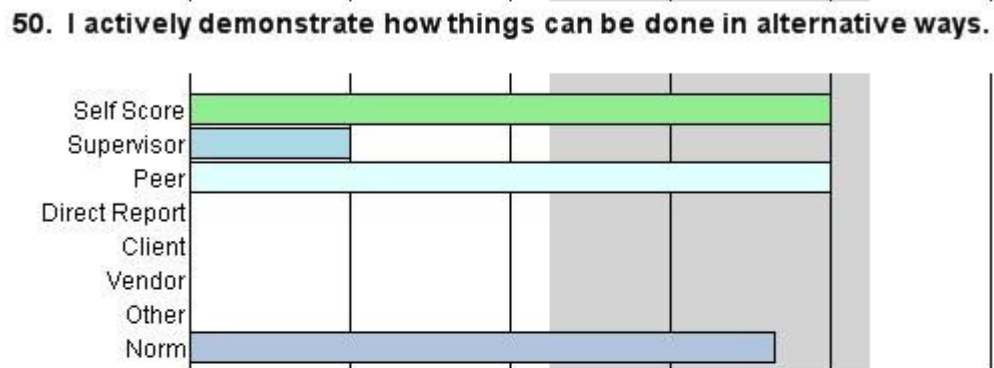
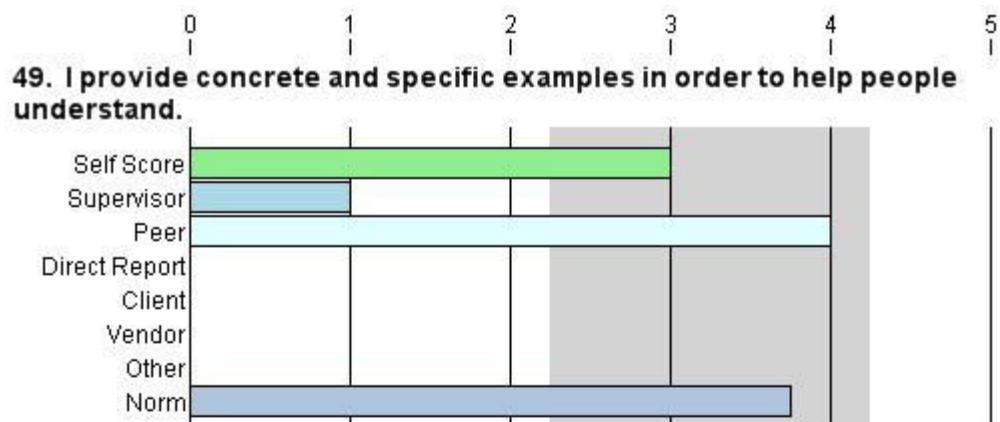
LOW (less than 2.75)

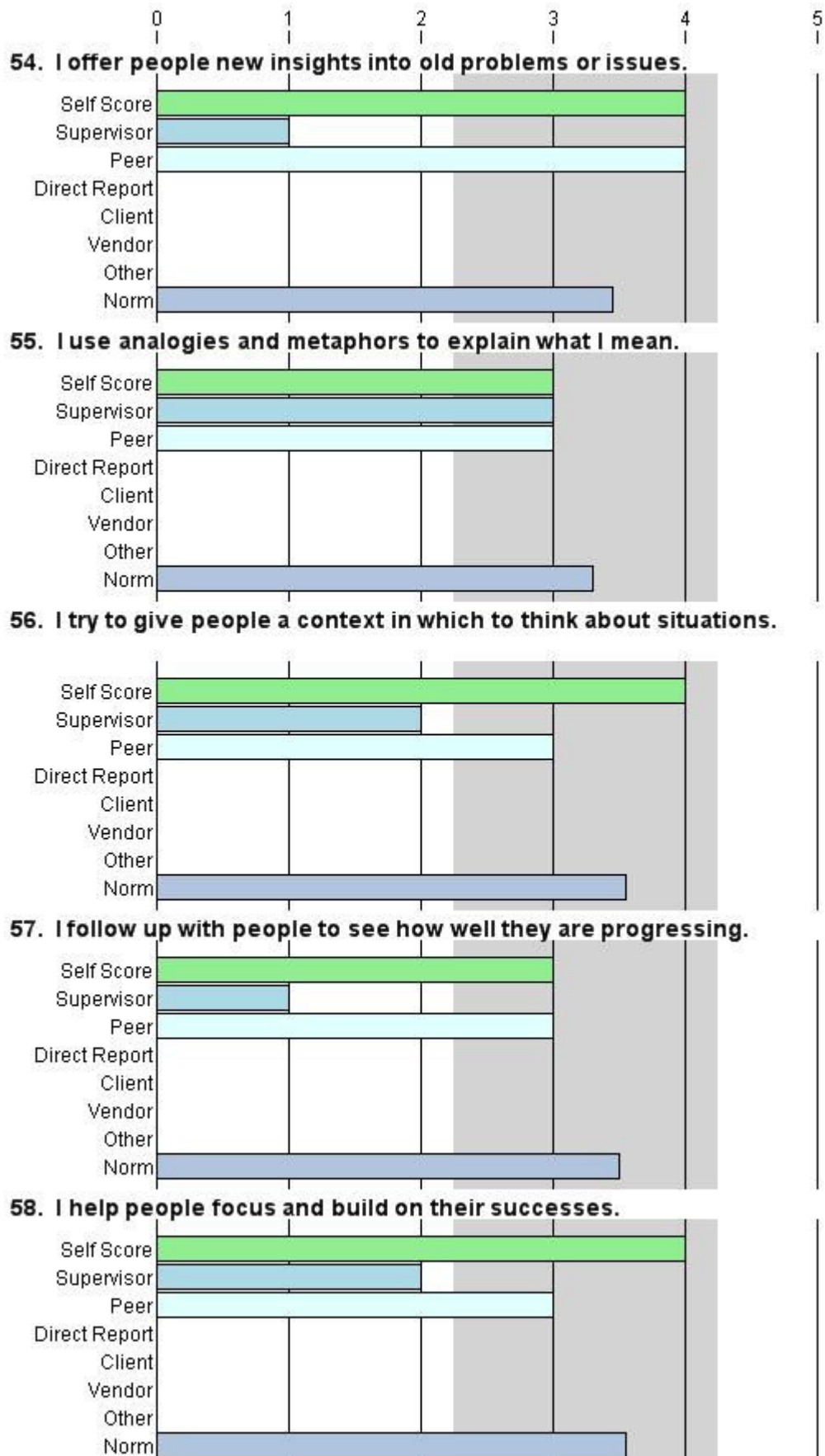
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you are less communicative than you might be in coaching others, and use feedback in a limited and less interesting way. You might occasionally offer inappropriate feedback or criticize performance or individuals before you have the evidence or a better suggestion. An individual who scores low in this area fails to offer feedback frequently enough. Individuals do not accept their counseling or instructional approach possibly because they fail to offer feedback in a variety of creative and different ways, or do not recognize and reward good performance.

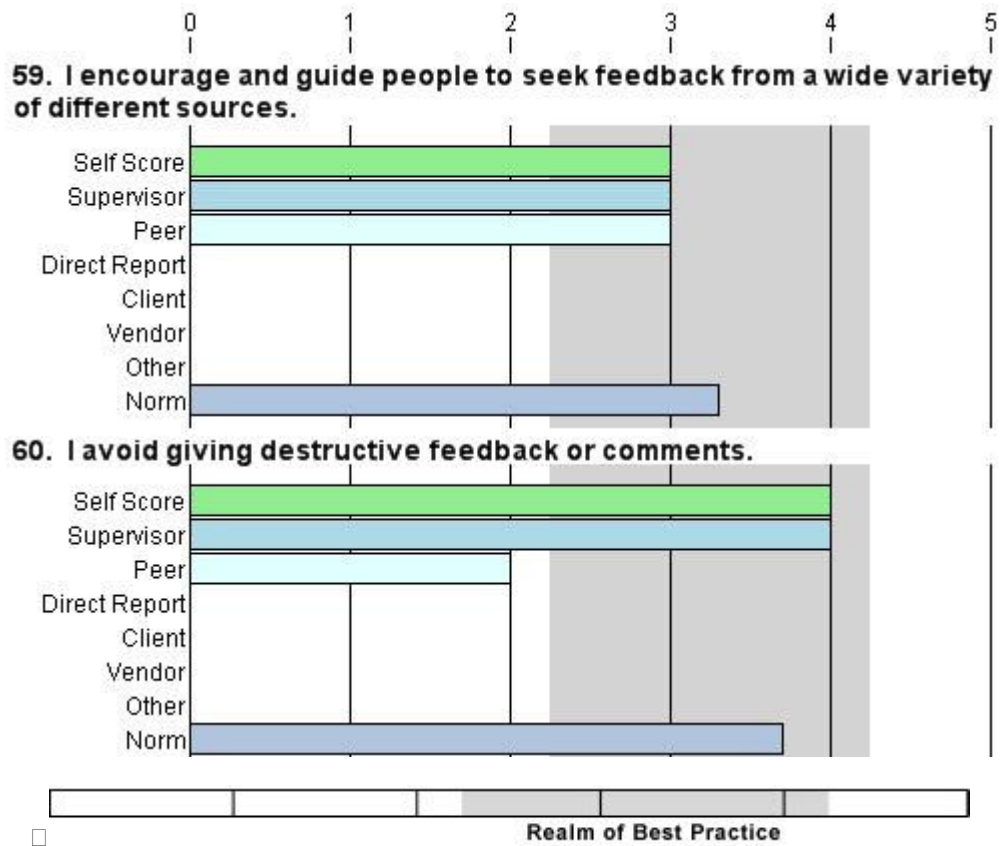
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you use positive two-way feedback as a primary means by which to offer instruction, training support, or general coaching. You therefore adopt open and flexible communication and listening styles that allow you to watch what people do, and describe ways in which they might improve or be more successful.

A high scorer will be likely to offer people "positive strokes" for their successes and, at the same time, offer insights into how they can build upon or improve their efforts still further. To do this, they will point to specific areas that can be addressed and help individuals to identify appropriate strategies.







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This section on Feedback Giving Skills looks at the extent to which you offer useful and constructive performance feedback that is accepted and acted upon. It asks the question: "How well do you make use of a range of guidance counseling, coaching, and instructional methods and activities to help people perform at their best?"

Improvement actions

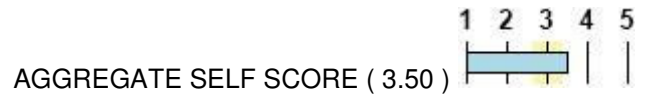
Low scorers need to watch people carefully before offering practical communication and feedback. They should praise others for their achievements and find good ways to share opportunities and insights regarding improvements, when identified.

Feedback giving skills

- Progressively build logical, clear, and concise appraisals of people's performance.
- Find suitable times and places to offer feedback genuinely, without unduly "softening" it.
- Use analogies, metaphors, and examples to illustrate what you mean
- Follow up to make sure your message has been understood.
- Take account of people's feelings when offering feedback, and only offer it if they are ready and willing to listen properly.

CAPACITY TO EMPOWER

This section on Capacity to Empower looks at the extent to which you give people the freedom or the "space" to determine how they will achieve personal goals or challenges. It asks the question: "To what extent do you create a climate of trust in which people feel that they can take risks and make mistakes in order to learn to do things in a better or different way?"



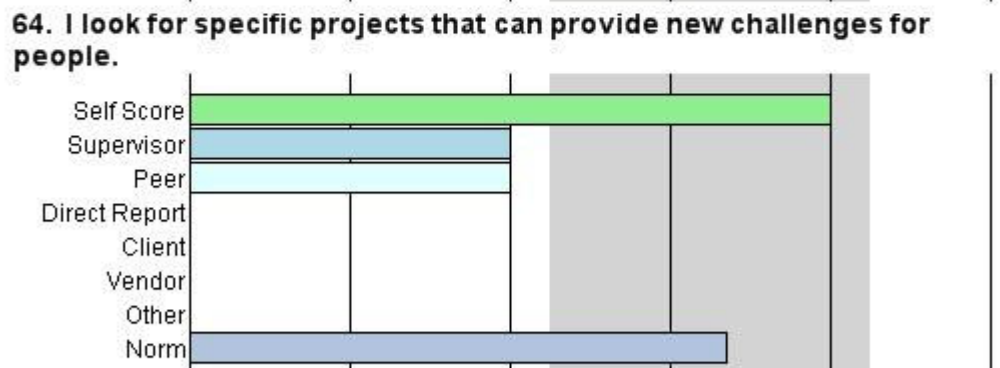
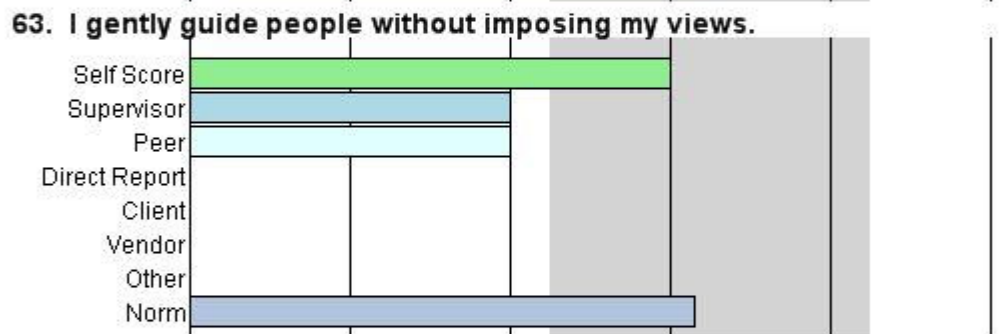
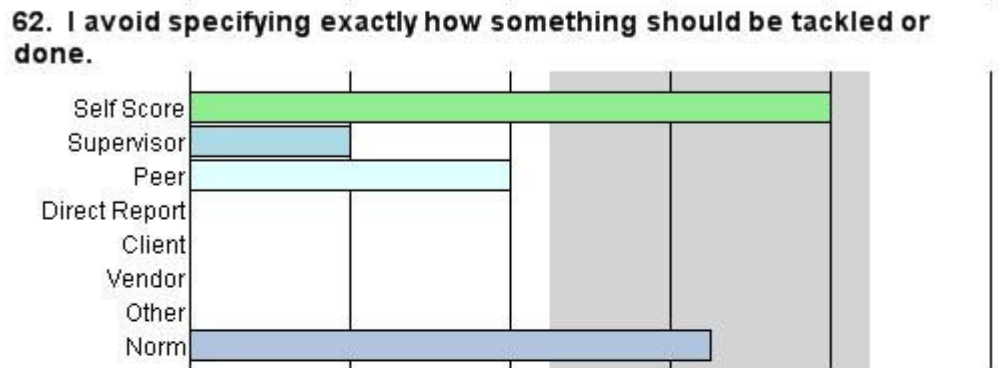
Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you rarely give people enough "space" or authority to take on tasks or projects that are at the "edge" of their capability. You tend to over-specify how things are to be done and might even intervene personally when you feel that an individual has made a mistake or is going to fail. An individual who scores low in this area tends to take on too much by themselves or only offer low-level or "safe" tasks to others (that can be supervised) or that have fewer consequences if things go wrong. You tend to give your opinions too regularly, and even take tasks and projects back from people who are not performing to your exacting standards.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you enjoy seeing people take on new and stretching tasks and personally grow by being given the "space" to take reasonable risks and different approaches. You delegate a lot of responsibility to people whom you believe are capable, and you encourage people to take on personal challenges and goals. A high scorer is likely to actively look for ways to empower individuals to take on responsibility, and even to move the limits of their "comfort zone" when handling new or different tasks. You will rarely feel uncomfortable about delegating your authority to others, and you give people as much support as they need, even when mistakes or less-than-optimal paths are chosen.

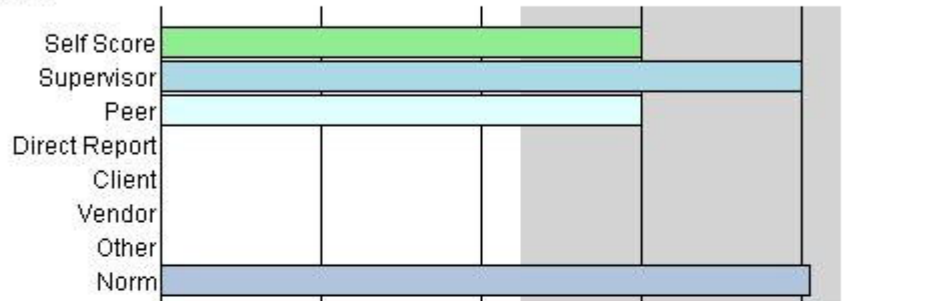


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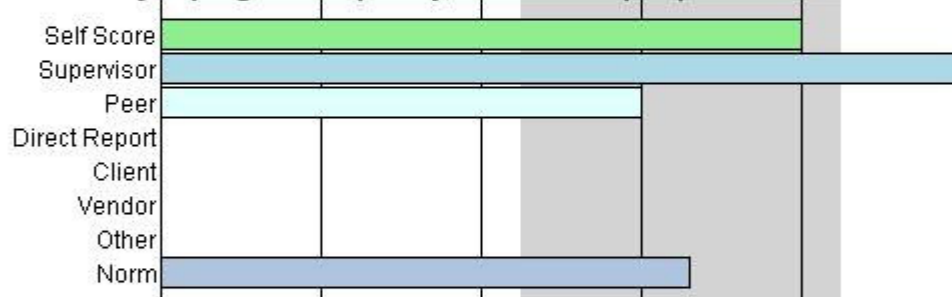
66. I support people who make minor mistakes when trying something different.



67. I avoid criticizing or imposing punishment when people try their best.



68. I avoid jumping in too quickly, even when people make mistakes.

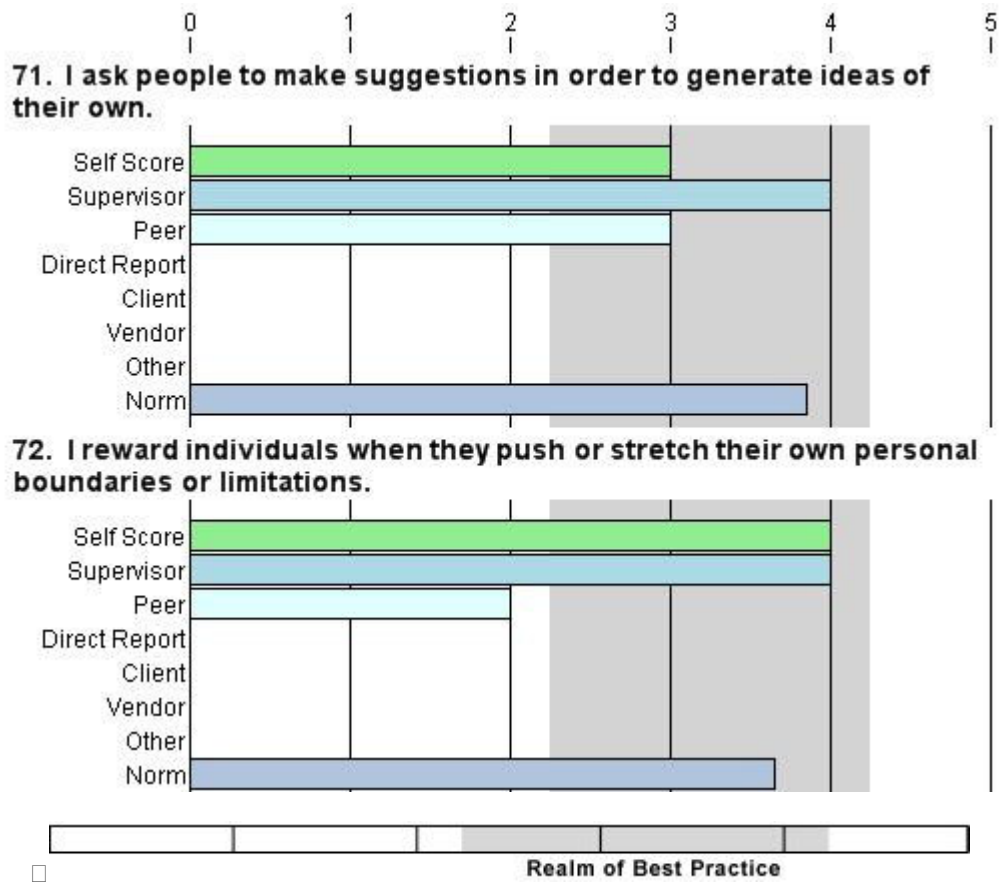


69. I encourage people to take as much responsibility as they think they can handle.



70. I offer broad direction on a task and let people design their own approach.





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This section on Capacity to Empower looks at the extent to which you give people the freedom or the "space" to determine how they will achieve personal goals or challenges. It asks the question: "To what extent do you create a climate of trust in which people feel that they can take risks and make mistakes in order to learn to do things in a better or different way?"

Improvement actions

Low scorers need to become less structured and distrusting of those around them in order to achieve results at least as good as the standards they could achieve themselves. As such, they should offer only broad directional guidance when delegating (or assigning a task) and should avoid intervening unless it is absolutely critical or the individual asks for help.

Capacity to empower

- Look for a variety of new learning opportunities for people around you
- Describe possible courses of action without specifying the exact approach and outcomes that could be taken.
- Support people when they make minor or understandable mistakes
- Reward hard work, innovation, and effort to stretch personal boundaries.

MENTORING SKILLS

This section on Mentoring Skills looks at the extent to which you provide coaching and assistance to people who will benefit from long-term guidance, and whether or not you have the skills and experience to assist them. It asks the question: "How well do you identify people who would benefit from mentoring, and then select the right way or the right people to establish such a strong and mutually-beneficial relationship?"



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

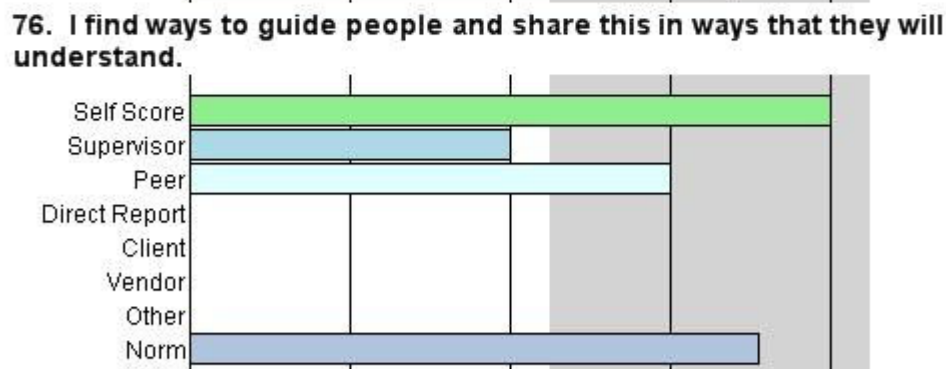
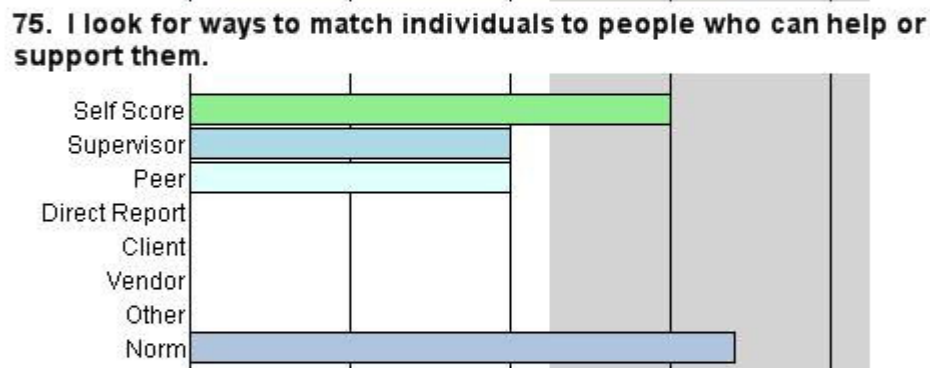
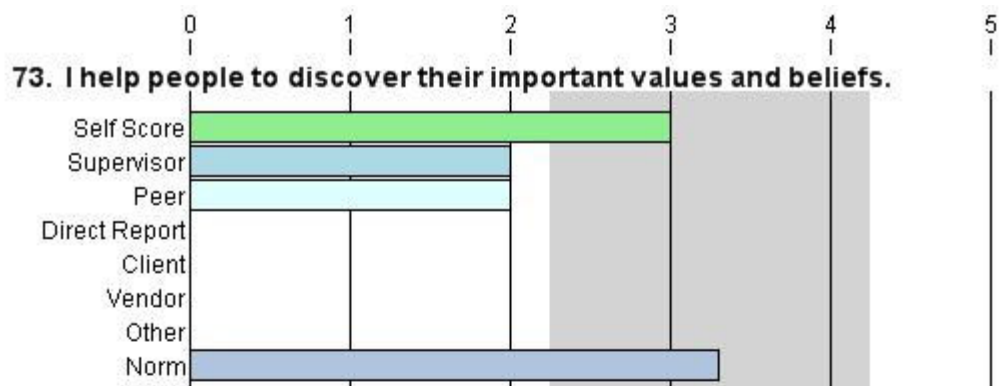
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you miss opportunities to mentor others or find other suitable people to mentor individuals who can benefit from a long-term one-to-one relationship. At the most extreme end of the scale, you offer little or no counseling support to people, and leave them entirely to their own devices.

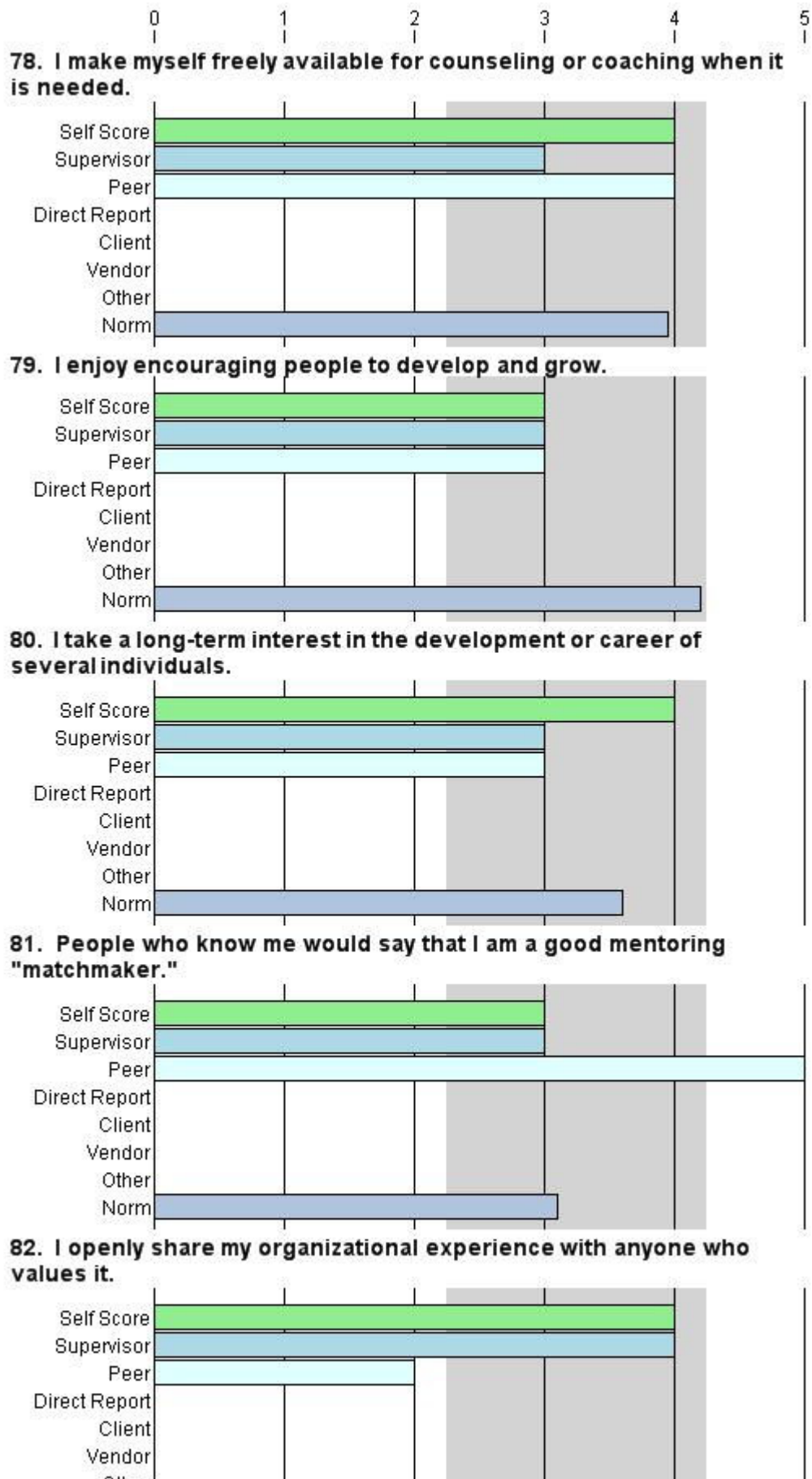
An individual who scores low in this area is likely to only offer or promote mentoring (if it is available) as part of a structured program. They tend not to identify people who would value a mentor and do not look for opportunities to match up people with needs to people with the skills or experience to help.

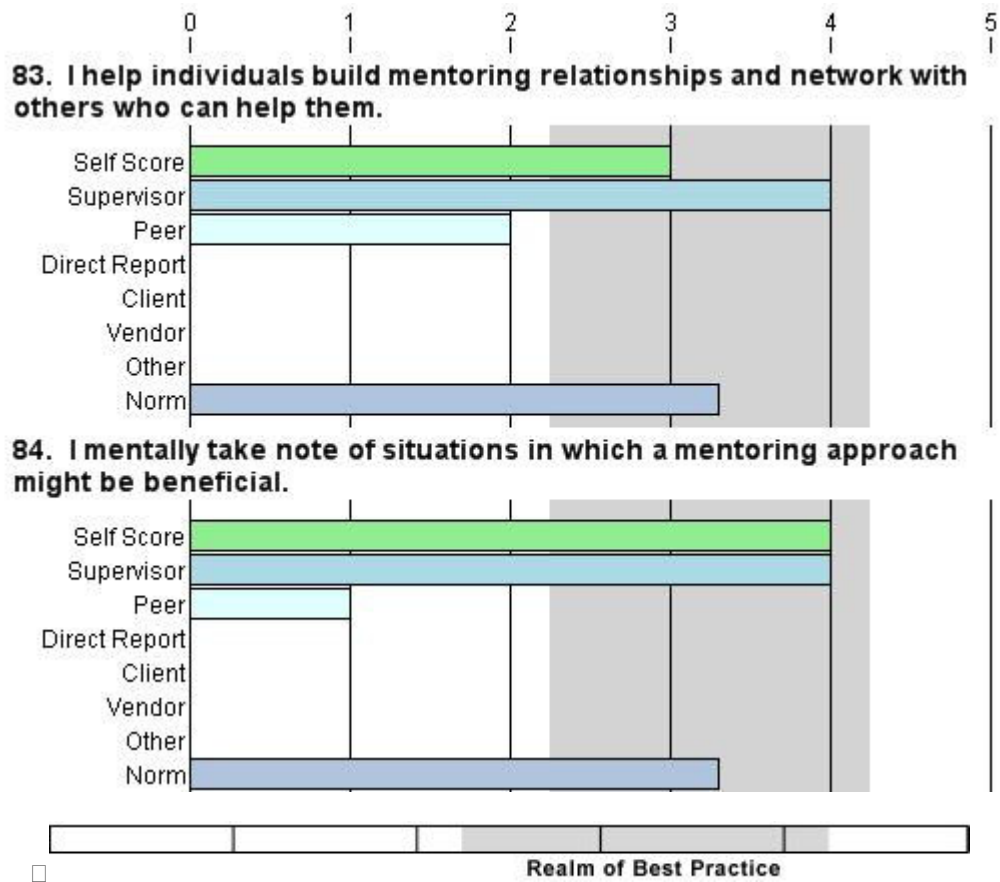
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you by nature are aware of those who would benefit from mentoring, and that you are able to identify individuals (including yourself) who are or would be highly effective mentors to others. You are adept at matching individuals to their most useful and helpful mentors, taking into account individual styles and personality.

A high scorer seeks out inexperienced individuals (or people who could benefit from some longer-term one-to-one coaching or guidance) and even intervenes directly in trying to find the most appropriate match, even if it's them.







Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire. □

This section on Mentoring Skills looks at the extent to which you provide coaching and assistance to people who will benefit from long-term guidance, and whether or not you have the skills and experience to assist them. It asks the question: "How well do you identify people who would benefit from mentoring, and then select the right way or the right people to establish such a strong and mutually-beneficial relationship?"

Improvement actions

Low scorers need to take a serious interest in people who are new to a team or an organization; people in new jobs; or people who seem to be facing special or difficult challenges. They should actively try to learn what needs these people have and who in the organization can provide long-term assistance or guidance.

Mentoring skills

- Learn as much as you can about individuals, including their beliefs, prejudices, opinions, and values.
- Gently discover whether mentoring might assist them.
- Look to create well matched mentoring relationship by drawing on your own experience or the experience of others that would provide good guidance and support for the individual in question.
- Follow up with people regularly to ensure that individuals have given quality personal time and effort to stretching themselves and growing.

THE 10/10 REPORT

Top 10 Strengths

Empathizing Ability

8. If I commit to do something, I will follow through. 4.00

Capacity to Empower

68. I avoid jumping in too quickly, even when people make mistakes. 4.00

Empathizing Ability

9. I work hard to understand where people are coming from. 3.67

10. People's feelings and emotions communicate more than their words. 3.67

Listening Skills

20. I watch a person's body language as well as listen to the words. 3.67

21. Every so often, I paraphrase what is said to me in conversations. 3.67

22. I am focused and patient when people talk to me. 3.67

Mentoring Skills

78. I make myself freely available for counseling or coaching when it is needed. 3.67

81. People who know me would say that I am a good mentoring "matchmaker." 3.67

Empathizing Ability

12. I can be trusted to keep a secret. 3.33

Top 10 Development Needs

Problem-Solving Ability

45. I try to help people discover the consequences of different courses of action. 1.67

Capacity to Confront and Challenge

29. I challenge people to take on difficult or stretching tasks. 2.00

Problem-Solving Ability

41. I quickly help individuals separate facts from assumptions. 2.00

Capacity to Empower

61. I encourage people to look for new learning opportunities. 2.00

Empathizing Ability

5. I put myself in the other person's shoes. 2.33

Listening Skills

15. I let people share their views and opinions before I offer my own. 2.33

19. I listen in order to understand, rather than to reply. 2.33

Problem-Solving Ability

38. I help people understand the facts before looking for solutions. 2.33

43. I get people to challenge paradigms and sacred cows. 2.33

44. I help people to identify several possible answers or options, rather than just one. 2.33

COURSE AND READING SUGGESTIONS

The following are general reading and course suggestions that may help you to better understand the two categories in which your scores were the lowest and to assist you in writing your development plan.

Capacity to Confront and Challenge

Capacity to Confront and Challenge looks at the extent to which you help people face up to their personal issues and/or problems in order to deal with them successfully. It asks the question: "How successfully do you work with people to perform an honest appraisal of their shortfalls and encourage new thinking and strategies to overcome them?"

Course Suggestion

- Problem Solving Tools and Methods
- Problem Solving Skills
- Creativity and Innovation
- Contextual/Critical Thinking
- Coaching Skills

Other Suggestion

- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

Reading Suggestion

- Managing Performance : Goals, Feedback, Coaching Recognition. Jenny Hill: 1997.
- Coaching, Counseling & Mentoring : How to Choose & Use the Right Tool to Boost Employee Performance. Florence M. Stone: 1998.
- Self Coaching : How to Solve Executive Coaching Issues. Ron Muchnick: 2000.
- Action Coaching: How to Leverage Individual Performance for Company Success. David L. Dotlich and Peter C. Cairo: 1999.
- The Tao of Coaching. M.Landsberg: 1996.
- Coaching for Leadership: How the World's Greatest Coaches Help Leaders Learn. Marshall Goldsmith (Editor), Laurence Lyons (Editor), and Alyssa Freas (Editor): 2000.
- Masterful Coaching : Extraordinary Results by Impacting People and the Way They Think and Work Together. Robert Hargrove: 1995.
- Masterful Coaching Fieldbook. Robert Hargrove: 1999.

Problem-Solving Ability

Problem-Solving Ability assesses your ability to find appropriate methods and means to analyze people's problems or concerns and then explore avenues that might lead to solutions. It asks the question: "How well do you provide people with a contextual framework that helps them think about their problems and possible solutions?"

Course Suggestion

- Effective Coaching Skills
- Feedback Giving and Receiving
- Creativity and Innovation
- Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Assertiveness
- Conflict Resolution

Other Suggestion

- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

Reading Suggestion

- The Official Criticism Manual. Deborah Bright: (1997)

- Catalytic Coaching : The End of the Performance Review. Garold L. Markle: 2000
- Coaching: Realising the Potential. P. Kallnauckas and H. King: 1994
- Effective Coaching (Briefcase Books Series). Marshall J. Cook: 1998
- Leader As Coach : Strategies for Coaching & Developing Others. David B. Peterson and Mary Dee Hicks: 1996

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Use the space below to write out your personal development plan for the next 12 months based on your results. Draw upon the general improvement actions in relevant areas of the report, and ideas that are suggested in the attached coaching tips.

45. I try to help people discover the consequences of different courses of action. Score: 1.67

Action to Take:

29. I challenge people to take on difficult or stretching tasks. Score: 2.00

Action to Take:

41. I quickly help individuals separate facts from assumptions. Score: 2.00

Action to Take:

61. I encourage people to look for new learning opportunities. Score: 2.00

Action to Take:

5. I put myself in the other person's shoes. Score: 2.33

Action to Take:

Problem-Solving Ability

Help people discover the consequences of different courses of action.

Many of us suffer from “action bias”: We implement many decisions and solutions before they have been adequately considered, largely because of time. Since many of our decisions will have long-term consequences, it’s really common sense to proceed cautiously before finally adopting a solution. Treat all potential solutions as tentative or okay in theory at first, so you can think through all avenues.

Taking the time to think through consequences is best done in an analytical and structured way, using a step-by-step approach to consider all the issues. Ad-hoc speculation is not nearly so beneficial.

It is important, however, that they are not tentative for very long. Once you have considered all the consequences of the decision, make it permanent, firmly and confidently, so you don’t introduce any further delay into the process.

Here are some ways to help people think through the consequences of different courses of action:

1. Encourage people to build in some “incubation” time to allow other aspects of the issue to surface before the final solution is chosen.
2. Show individuals how to make a checklist of the possible outcomes (positive and negative) that are likely to arise from their preferred solution; make sure the positives outweigh the negatives before moving ahead.
3. Suggest that people “shoot down” preferred options by posting the preferred solution on a bulletin board for a period of time, inviting people to comment (where appropriate).
4. Make sure that individuals let all interested parties know about any decision deadline. Reconvene a final group meeting to confirm the decision if it is likely to affect others.
5. Do what you can to keep people from delaying a decision any longer than what is necessary to give it proper and thoughtful consideration.

Capacity to Confront and Challenge

Challenge people to take on different or stretching tasks.

We are comfortable with what we know best. Familiar ground is safe. Nevertheless, it is from tackling new projects and taking on new challenges that we learn the most. The job of the coach is to encourage individuals to take on tasks that are likely to be at the edge of their existing capability or that present an opportunity to stretch their abilities.

Consider the following activities to help you help people stretch:

1. Assess what tasks or projects are likely to represent challenges for specific individuals if they were to be set as objectives.
2. Try to ask open-ended questions about targets—questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer. Get them to talk about what would be difficult or stretching as a target.
3. Hold one-to-one discussions or open forums in which people can make suggestions or suggest ways to reach stretching goals or objectives.
4. Try to create a climate in which people feel free to comment, criticize, play devil’s advocate, or even argue in order to arrive at the best strategy and action plan and then take responsibility for achieving those plans.
5. Encourage them to hold brainstorming sessions around major goals and targets to decide how to best achieve them.
6. Try to put yourself in the individual’s position, and anticipate how they might like to provide input into major targets or challenging projects. Then work together to design how this contribution might be made.

Problem-Solving Ability

Help people separate fact from assumption.

It is frustrating to have to deal with a situation in which someone has “assumed” information—“assumed” that the arrangements would be the same as last week, “assumed” that everyone understood. This kind of confusion is irritating, to say the least, but the impact is usually not as great as it would be if a decision or solution to a problem is based on unchallenged assumptions.

The individual or individuals we coach rarely have every piece of relevant information needed to resolve an issue. They will be tempted to complete the gaps in data by filling these “data holes” with half-complete or speculative information based on assumptions (sometimes quite reasonable assumptions, but assumptions nevertheless). This is dangerous.

The danger is that these pieces of data that are based on assumptions can often take on “hard evidence” status if they are not sorted, classified, and clearly identified. The effective coach helps people separate assumptions from hard evidence and makes sure that the two are not confused.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Encourage people to use a visual method to display data as it is gathered; mark assumptions or loose and untested data versus hard or intangible evidence with different-colored stickers or some other method to graphically distinguish these two categories.
2. Get individuals to develop a checklist of criteria in order to verify if the data can be classified as hard evidence.
3. Help people to work through the list of assumptions to see if information should be reclassified as factual.
4. Write “risk” next to each piece of data based on assumption or calculated guesswork in order to clearly convey that an element of risk surrounds actions based on this information.
5. During the problem-solving phase, work with individuals to check to see how often they make assumptions and generalizations, as opposed to using hard facts and evidence. If they depend too much on the former, they should work on gathering more hard data.

Capacity to Empower

Encourage people to look for new learning opportunities.

One definition of “maturity” suggests that learning only occurs at the final stage before death—a sobering thought! It is truly tragic to see how many people decide to stop learning. Life itself is a school, full of challenging and delightful turns of events that can shape us and extend our abilities beyond our expectations.

Having this personal zest for life-long learning in itself encourages others to see learning and development in a positive light. The ultimate objective is to create an individual momentum to keep on learning. If people are encouraged to look ahead and focus on personal development, they will not be as threatened by change.

Consider the following actions to improve your coaching effectiveness in this area:

- 1.** Who people are is NEVER who they can be. Encourage people to explore their potential informally and formally and record their thoughts and ideas for future actions.
- 2.** Openly express the belief in your general conversations that learning is everything you do; it is fun. It can come through the smallest experiences, and it is a gift. Encourage others to appreciate every opportunity to learn.
- 3.** Have a guest speaker deliver a talk on life-long learning.
- 4.** Circulate articles that help others to see new connections, possibilities, and better learning opportunities.
- 5.** Instill a sense of adventure concerning every group activity. Declare that each meeting will be a learning forum in which ideas are generated and built upon.
- 6.** Encourage people to read, research, and talk about change issues, challenges, and situations. Encourage them to share what they find with others at formal and informal meetings, and to share the information sources they found to be the most useful.

Empathizing Ability

Put yourself in other people's shoes.

It's amazing how little we know about others. (It's also amazing just how little we know about ourselves, but that's another story.) If you want to create rapport and be more empathetic, it's always a smart move to find out something about the people you are talking to or trying to coach. Think of it as background research; just put yourself in their shoes.

Consider doing the following things to become more understanding and empathetic:

1. Change the way you answer the phone. If the person on the other end turns out to be someone you know (and particularly someone you like), your verbal tone will change rapidly from that of formal dignity and efficiency to that of warmth and closeness. We have multiple voices and multiple personas or masks that we present to different people. Imagine what would happen if others only judged you by one of these voices or demeanors: You know that they would only get a partial, inaccurate view of the full range of "you's." So, too, with others. If you really want to understand other people and establish rapport with them in order to achieve things, then you need to know "all" of them.
2. Be systematic, but don't be unethical. Talk to the individual's friends and associates, and try to get a feel for what makes that person tick. Do this in a spirit of goodwill, tact, and genuine inquiry; otherwise, it will sound as though you are pumping others to get something on that person. If you are in fact doing that, then you should reconsider why you want to be a coach in the first place.
3. Consider any documentation or general information that provides some insight into another person before you offer any suggestions. This might mean reviewing files you have access to, or perhaps looking at documents they have written to get a feel for that person's approach. Again, the obvious needs to be stressed: Be ethical in all you do at all times, and keep a low profile as you do this. Also maintain confidentiality.
4. Consider interacting in situations that are not formal and official. These situations might include coffee or lunch breaks, a beer after work, a company baseball game, a work meeting conducted in informal circumstances away from the workplace, a team-building or interpersonal skills training activity—the list is only limited by your imagination.
5. Remember: Don't pry and don't invade the other person's privacy. Respect their boundaries, and be satisfied with only the part of themselves that they choose to reveal.