

Communication Effectiveness Feedback Report

Sample User
11/19/2007 1:44:55 PM

Introduction

The following information is provided to help you navigate the information this is included in your Communication 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 Communication 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 category, 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 question 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.

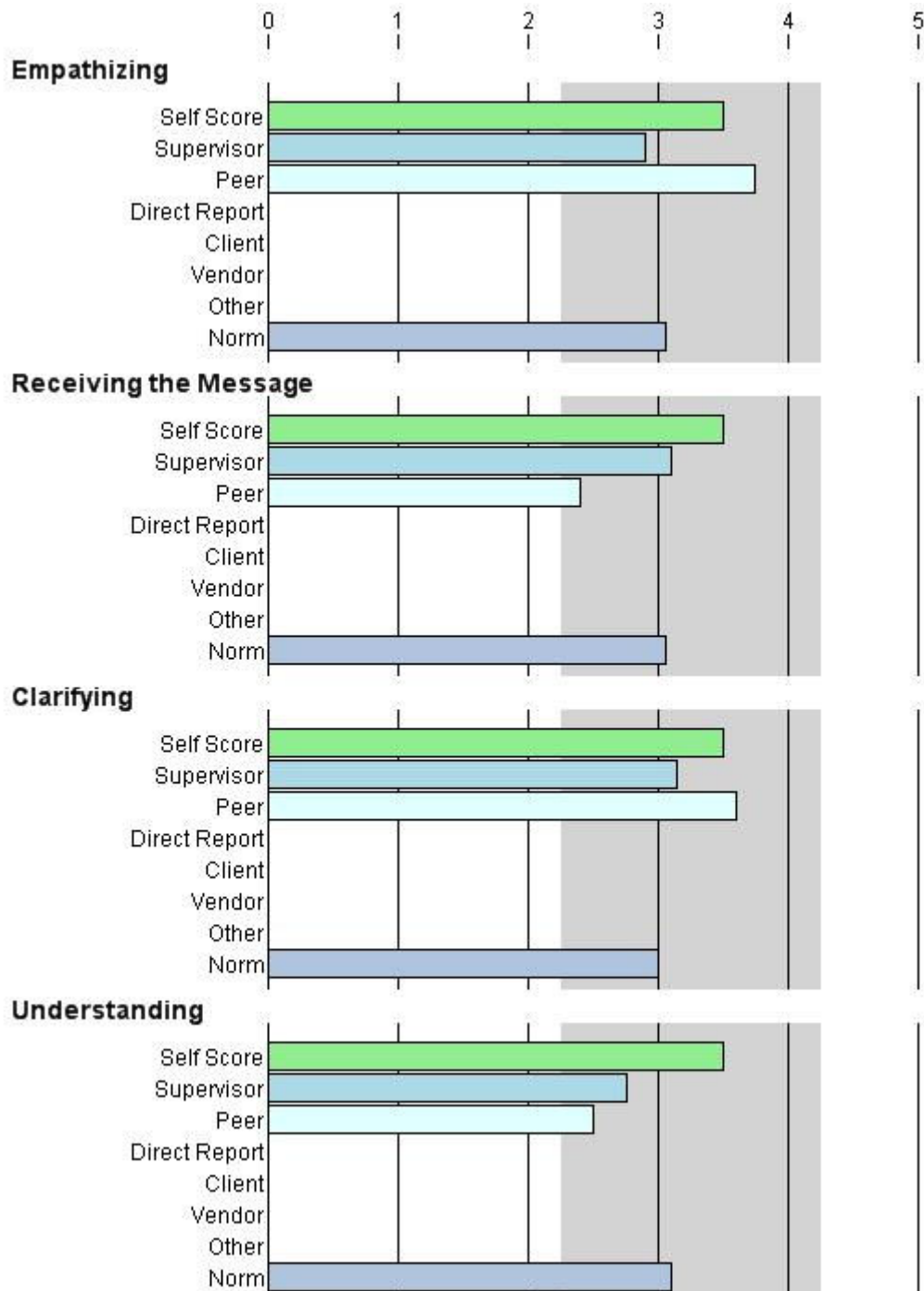
5. Development Plan

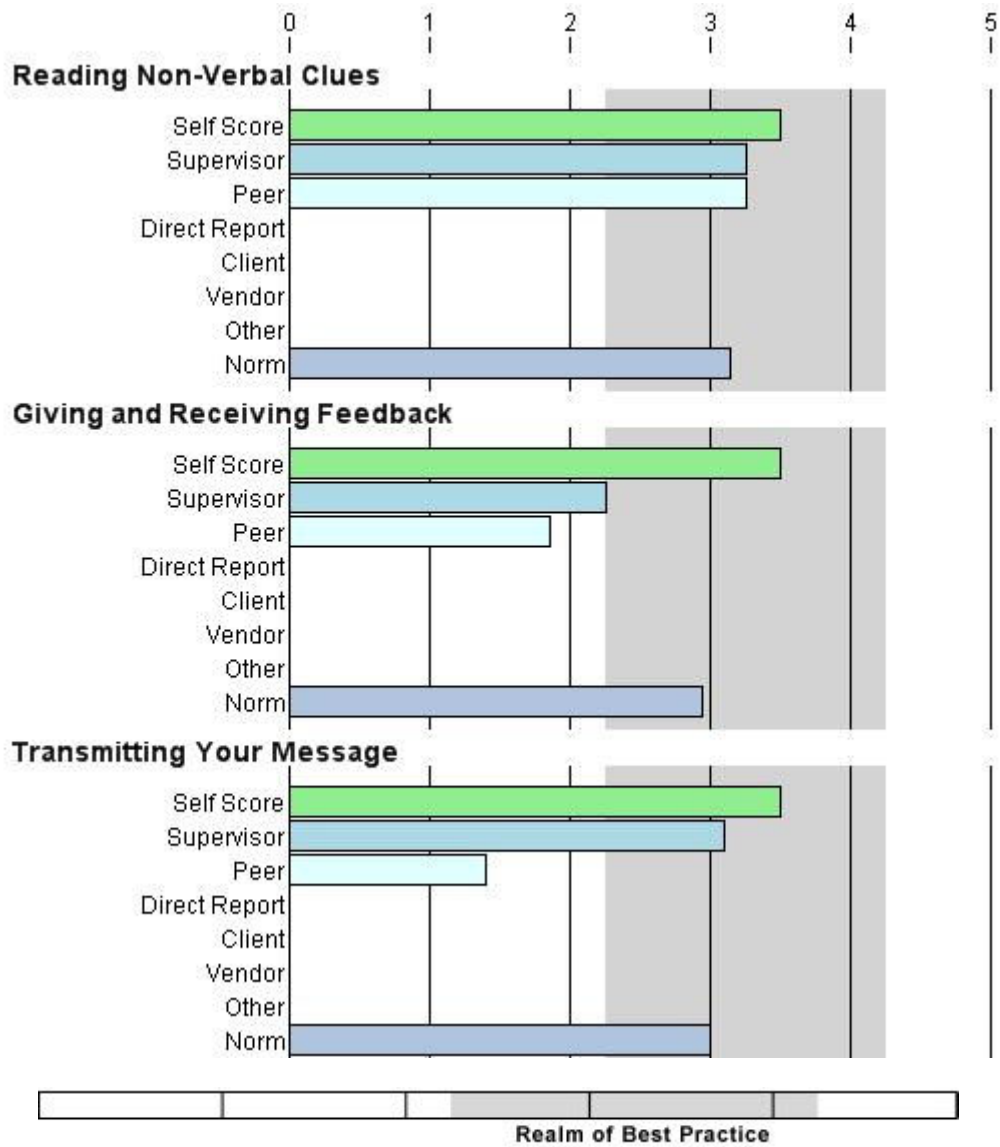
The development plan aggregates the five lowest scoring questions and puts them into a one page template. Individuals can use this template to record the specific actions they plan to take, as a result of their feedback, over the next twelve months. Individuals may draw upon the general guidance offered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



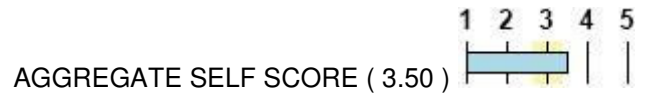


Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.

Communication Effectiveness Profile

EMPATHIZING

This section on Empathizing examines the extent to which you think about the perspectives and feelings of others when they are communicating with you, and the degree to which you adjust your style to accommodate them. This category asks the question: How well do you create a climate of warmth and sincerity, where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts because they know you will listen?



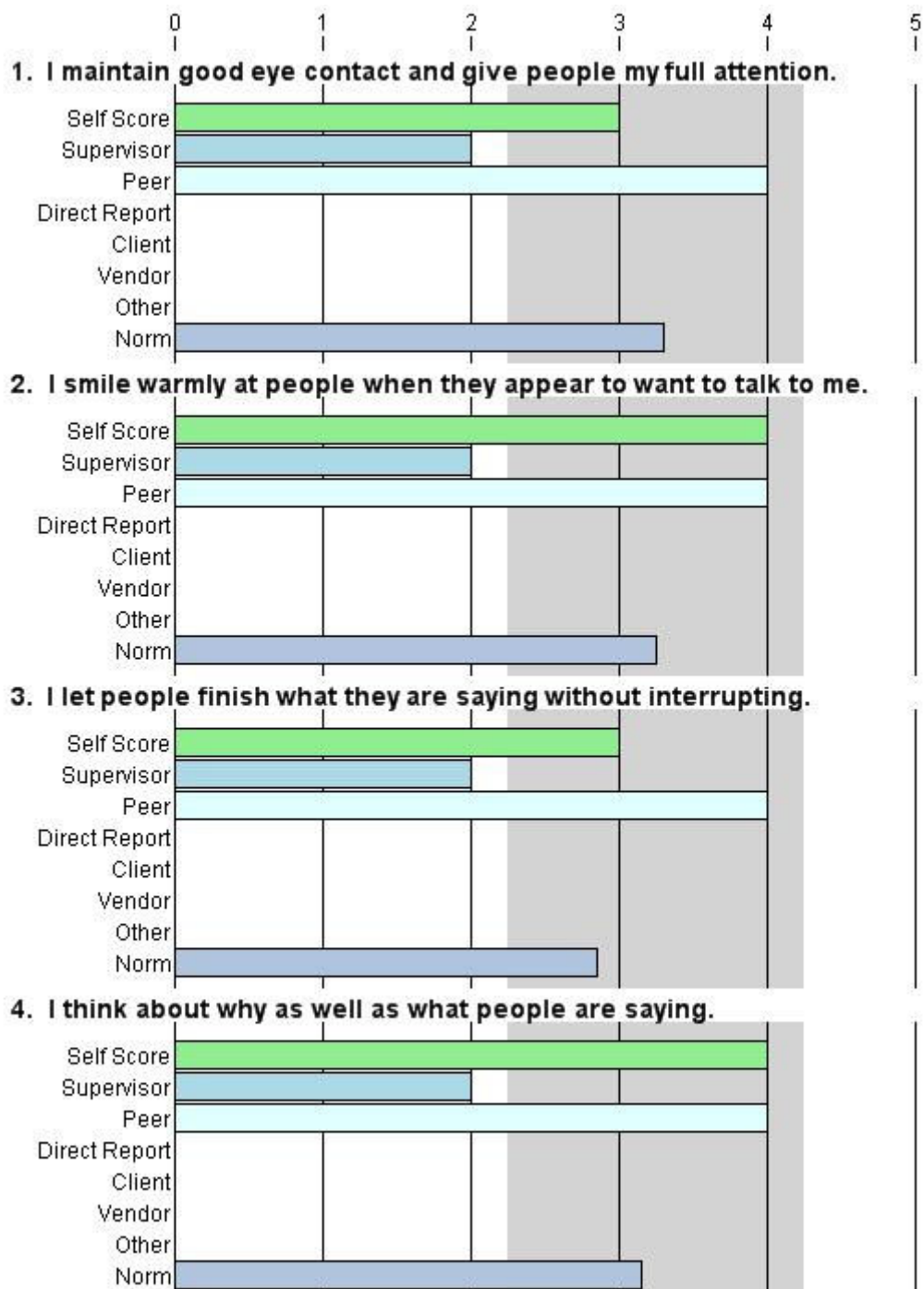
Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

Scales predominantly in the ones and twos (occasionally and almost never) suggest that you have a more transactional communication style, where a discussion or conversation is only a functional exchange of words. You are not likely to consider any circumstantial context or feelings, and you show a tendency to push your own agenda or communication priorities at the expense of the other party. An individual who scores low in this area will usually keep their communication very direct, putting personal outcomes or needs at the forefront. They tend to interrupt frequently and guess what the other person is going to say before he or she says it. Because of this, they often miss important parts of the overall message and create the impression that they have only a limited attention span for deeper or more complex issues.

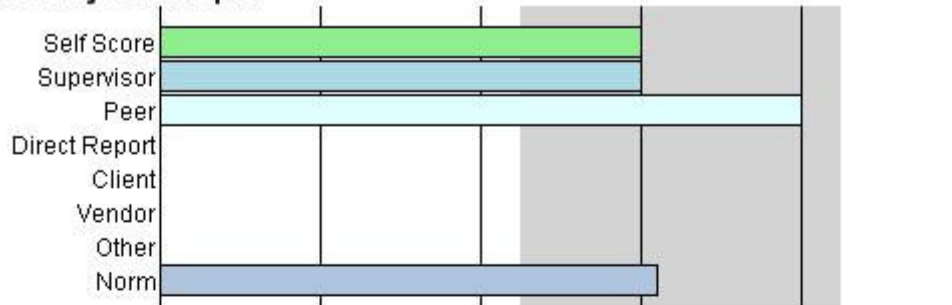
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives (almost always and very frequently) suggest that you naturally generate a spirit of warmth toward others, and offer lots of help and support in facilitating an easy flow of two-way conversation. You usually listen attentively and adapt or adjust your personal style to suit the situation as much as necessary to create the best possible climate. A high score indicates that the individual is likely to spend as much time as necessary engaging in small talk or conversation that helps them understand where the other party is coming from so they can offer supportive and insightful comments that can help to open up the discussion. This means that they will seek to establish the most appropriate communication climate for the circumstances, and offer an empathetic ear.

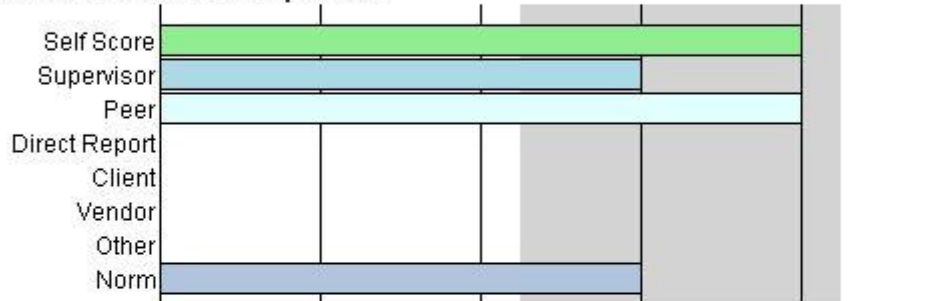


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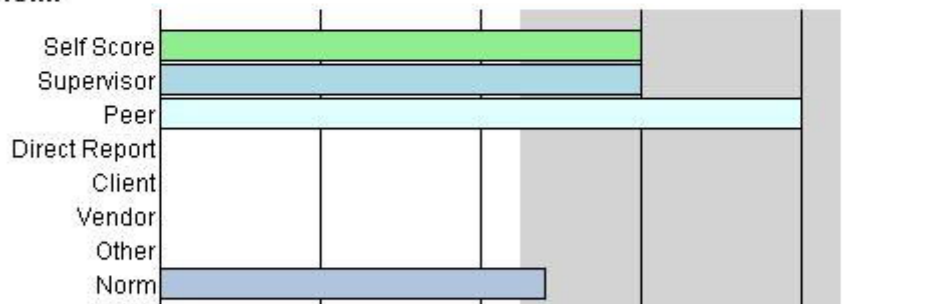
5. I show genuine interest when people are talking to me, whatever the subject or topic.



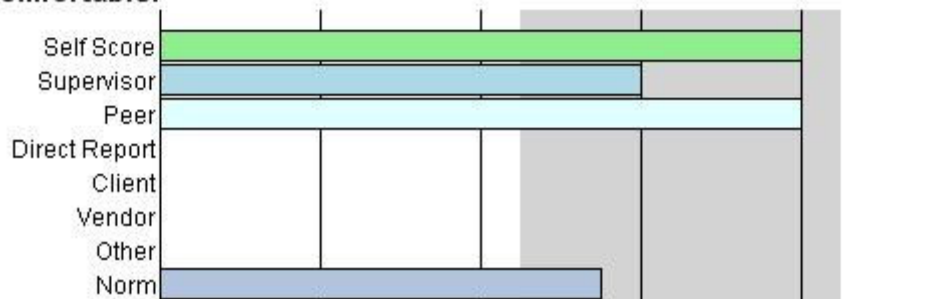
6. I use a variety of careful questioning approaches to help understand the other person.

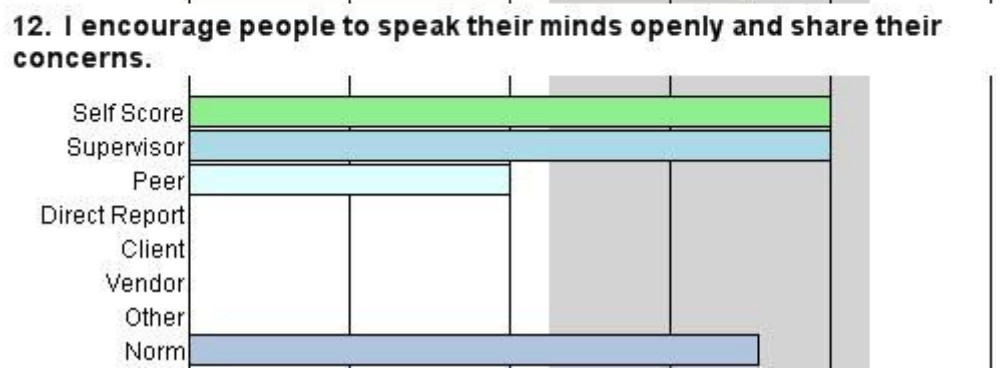
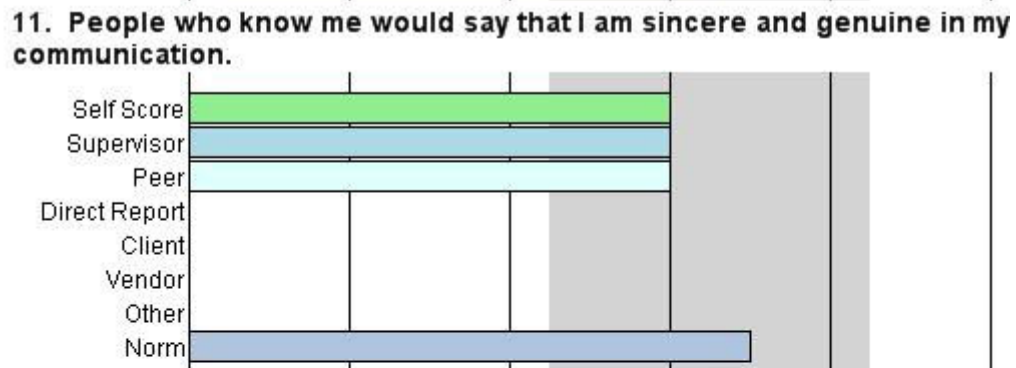
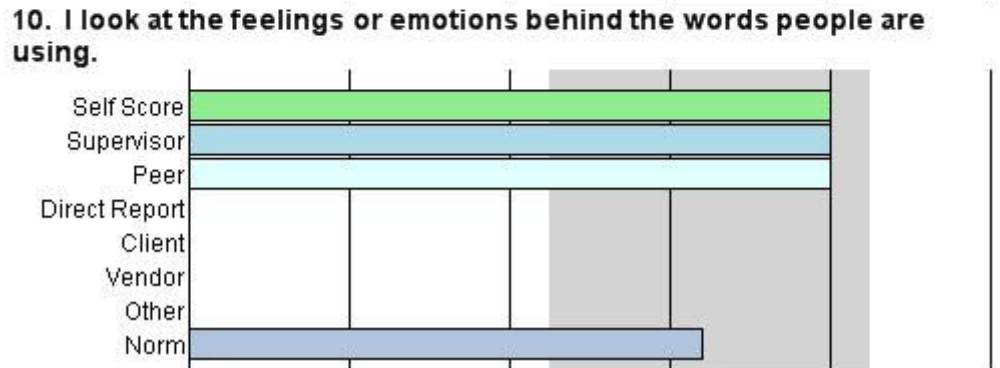
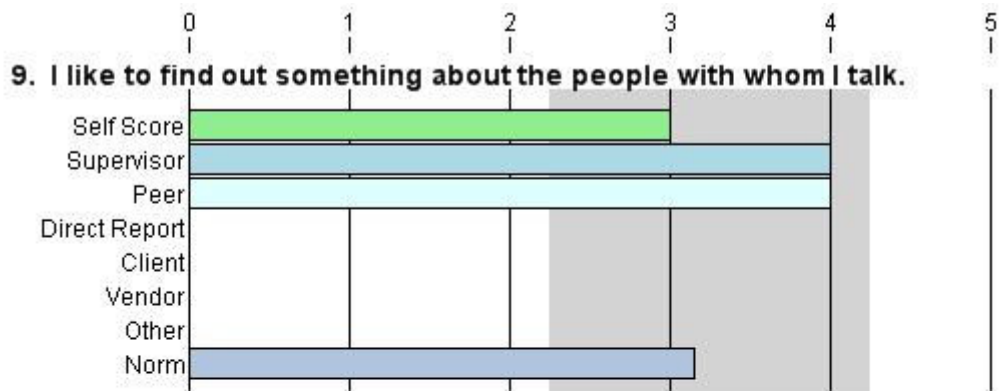


7. I generally mirror people's facial expressions when I listen to them.



8. I engage in as much "small talk" as necessary to help people feel comfortable.





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This section on Empathizing examines the extent to which you think about the perspectives and feelings of others when they are communicating with you, and the degree to which you adjust your style to accommodate them. This category asks the question: How well do you create a climate of warmth and sincerity, where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts because they know you will listen?

Improvement actions

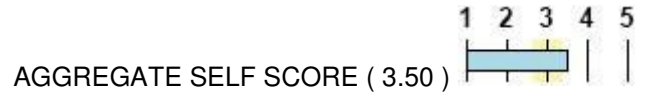
Low scorers need to develop an ability to generate more warmth and sincerity in all their conversation, and show genuine care and interest in what other people have to say on a consistent basis. This will involve being more patient, taking more time to engage in small talk, and trying to appreciate the other persons feelings and emotions just as much as the words that they hear.

Empathizing

- Try to smile at people more often, and be as friendly and sincere as you can when they are talking to you.
- Make a strong effort to put yourself in the other persons position and to imagine what they might be feeling or where they might be coming from in sending their message.
- Let people express their thoughts and feelings fully without interrupting, as much as you can.
- Discover an area of common interest about the other people with whom you communicate regularly, and use this to help build your relationship with them.
- Openly share your interests with other people, and encourage them to share their interests with you.

RECEIVING THE MESSAGE

This section on Receiving the Message looks at how well you listen to and successfully process what others are saying (verbal and non-verbal messages) before you respond. This category asks the question: How attentive or empathetic are you in a listening situation so that you can fully appreciate what the speaker is trying to convey?



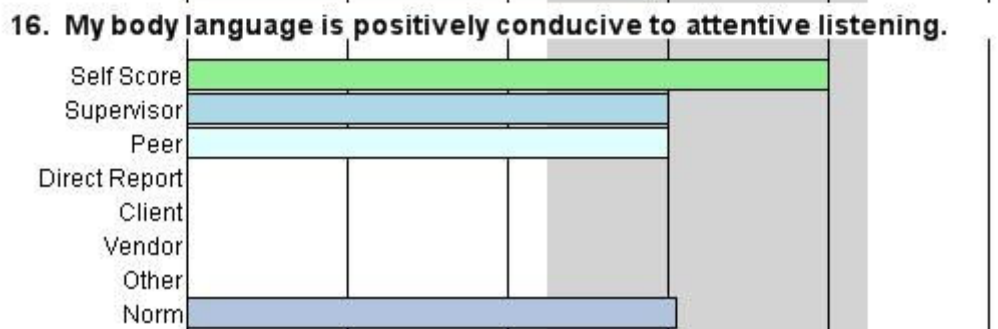
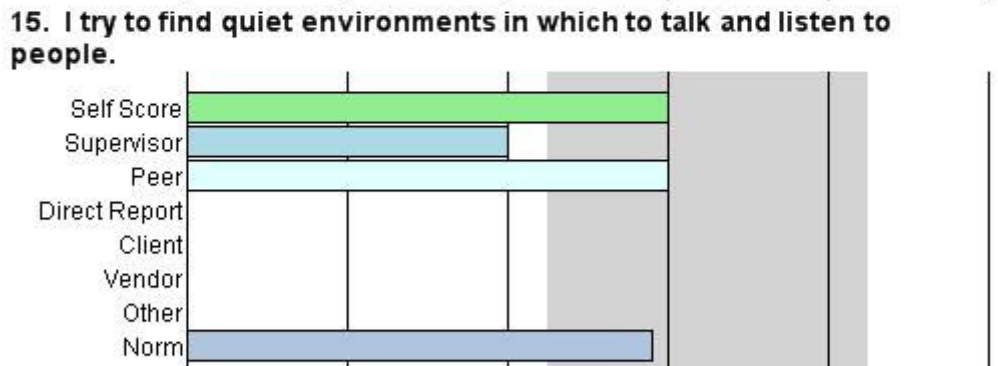
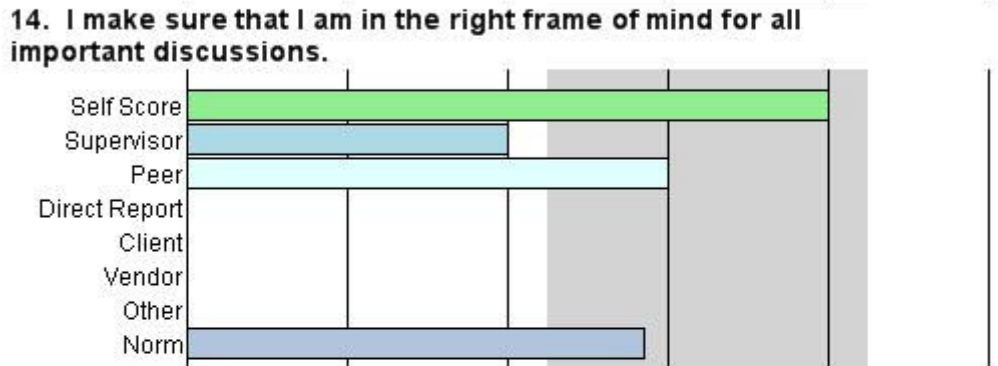
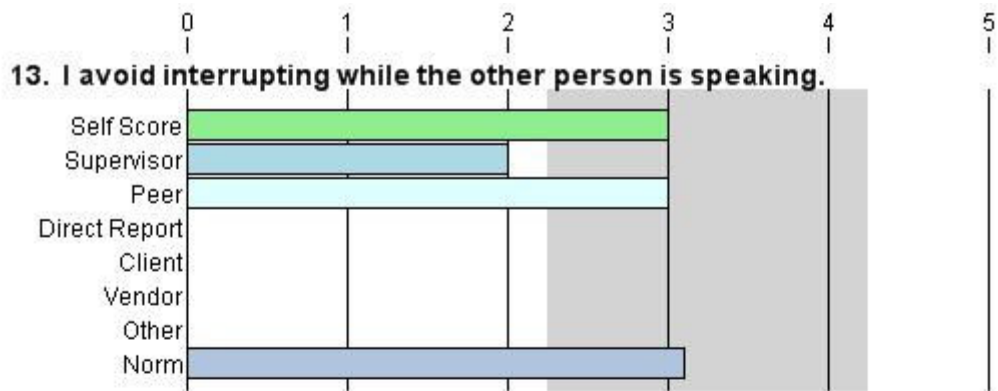
Interpretation

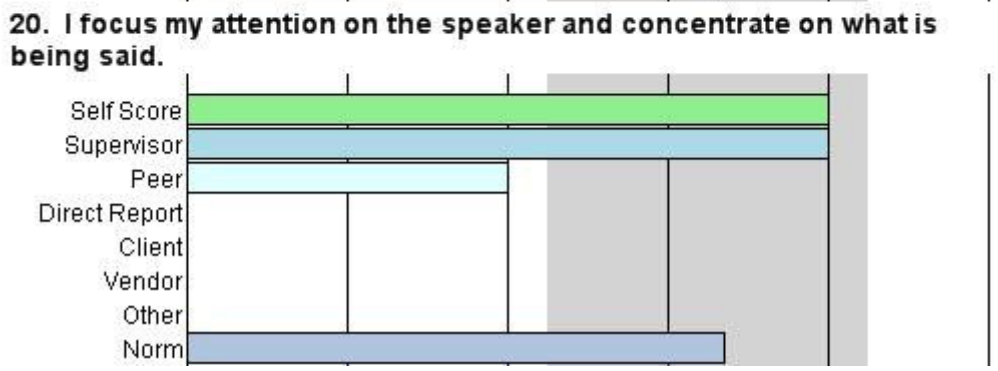
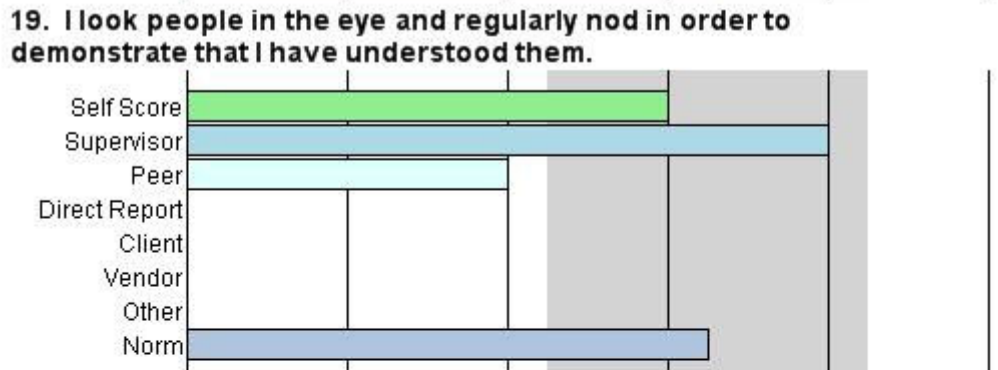
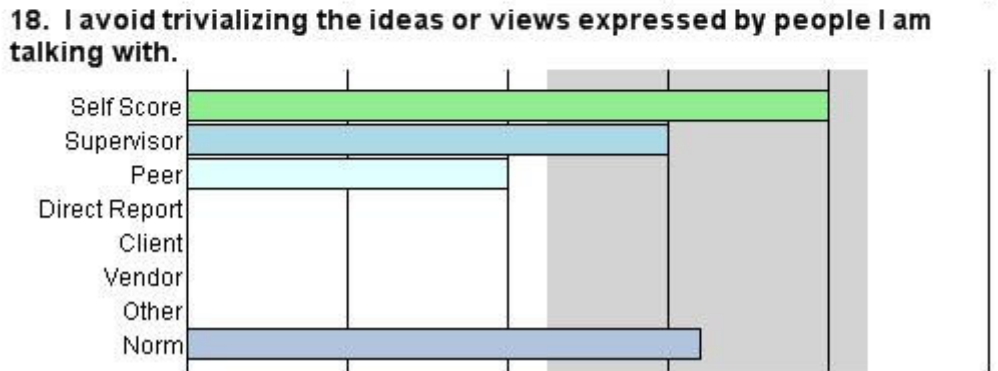
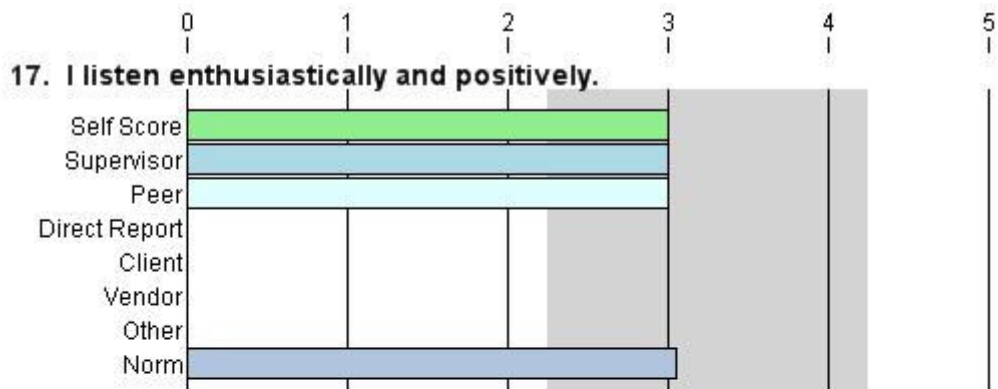
LOW (less than 2.75)

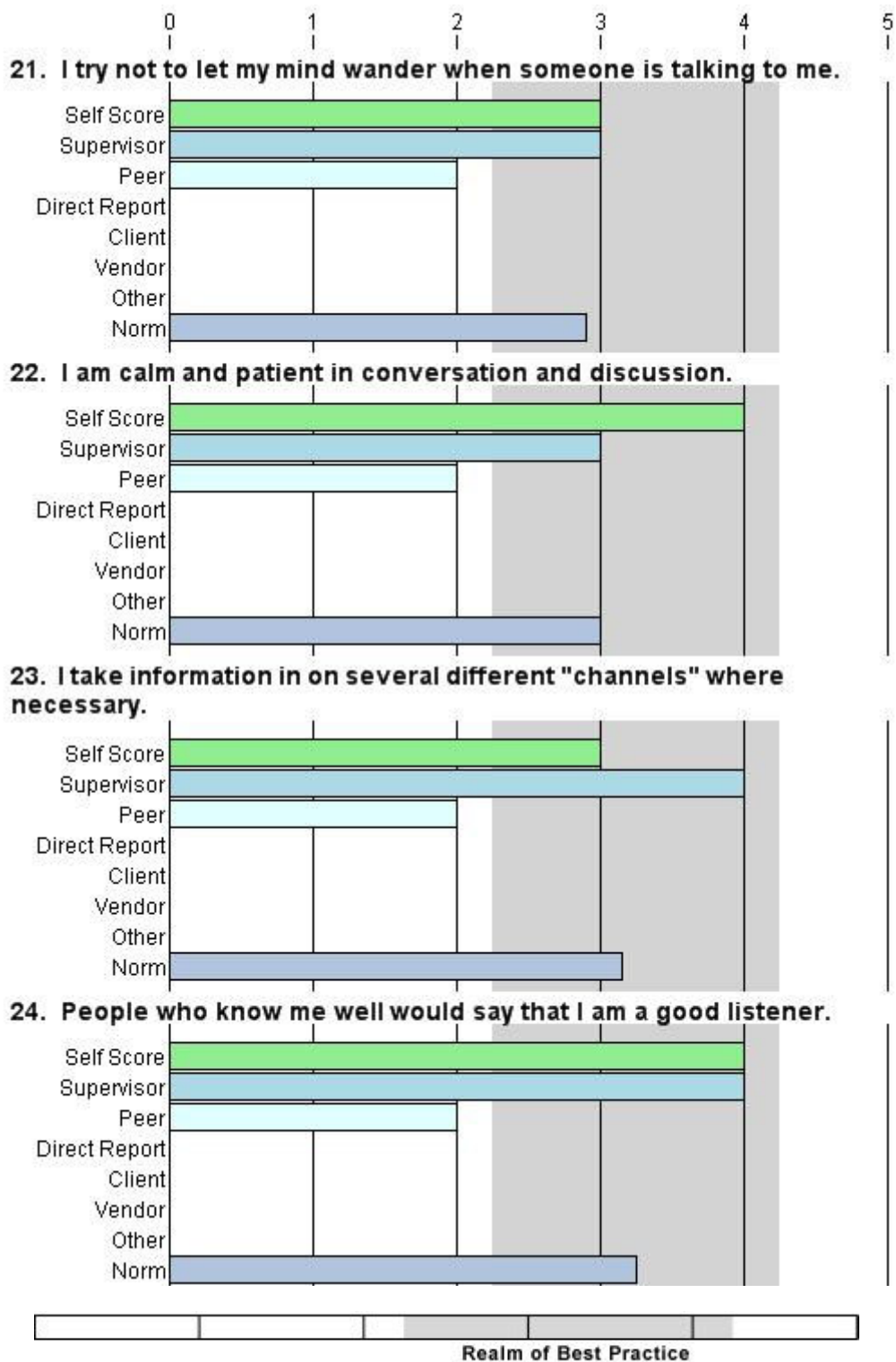
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos (occasionally and almost never) suggest that you do not always fully appreciate what people communicate, and thus you miss important components of the overall message. You are also prone to being easily distracted, and tend to jump into conversations before the other person has finished speaking. An individual who scores low in this area is likely to find communication frustrating or even confusing. This is sometimes the speaker's fault, but more likely it is one result of poor listening habits—the listener hasn't focused or taken enough time to hear the complete message, and the mind has been allowed to wander to other things and other priorities or tasks.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives (almost always and very frequently) suggest that you are an attentive listener and appreciate the tenor of most communications, in whatever form they are conveyed. You are genuinely interested and you try to concentrate on what people are saying, maintaining a calm and patient demeanor so people can get their message across without interruption. A high score suggests that the individual is an appreciative and attentive listener who freely gives all their attention to the speaker in order to hear and appreciate the complete message. A person who scores high in this area makes an especially valuable contribution when important or complex information needs to be communicated for insight or comment.







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This section on Receiving the Message looks at how well you listen to and successfully process what others are saying (verbal and non-verbal messages) before you respond. This category asks the question: How attentive or empathetic are you in a listening situation so that you can fully appreciate what the speaker is trying to convey?

Improvement actions

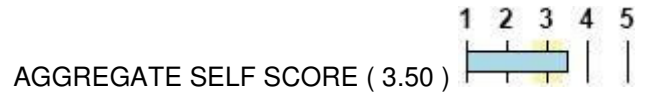
Low scorers need to speak less and listen more. To do this, they need to find more-conducive listening environments, avoid interrupting, and keep their minds from wandering. Most of all, they need to try to quietly hear the whole message being communicated, without jumping in too soon.

Receiving The Message

- Nod or show that you have understood in other ways at regular points in any conversation.
- Maintain as much direct eye contact as you can, and show genuine and focused interest in the communication.
- Look to avoid generally showing any distraction, physical or mental, as much as you can.
- Aim to be as calm, quiet, and patient as you can in general conversations (especially with quieter people).
- Focus on and between the words that you hear in order to appreciate the senders full communication.

TRANSMITTING YOUR MESSAGE

This section on **Transmitting Your Message** looks at the extent to which you use a range of communication methods and means to get your message across to others successfully. It asks the question: **How well do you ensure that the transmission of information that is important to you is communicated in language that is clear, concise, and consistent?**



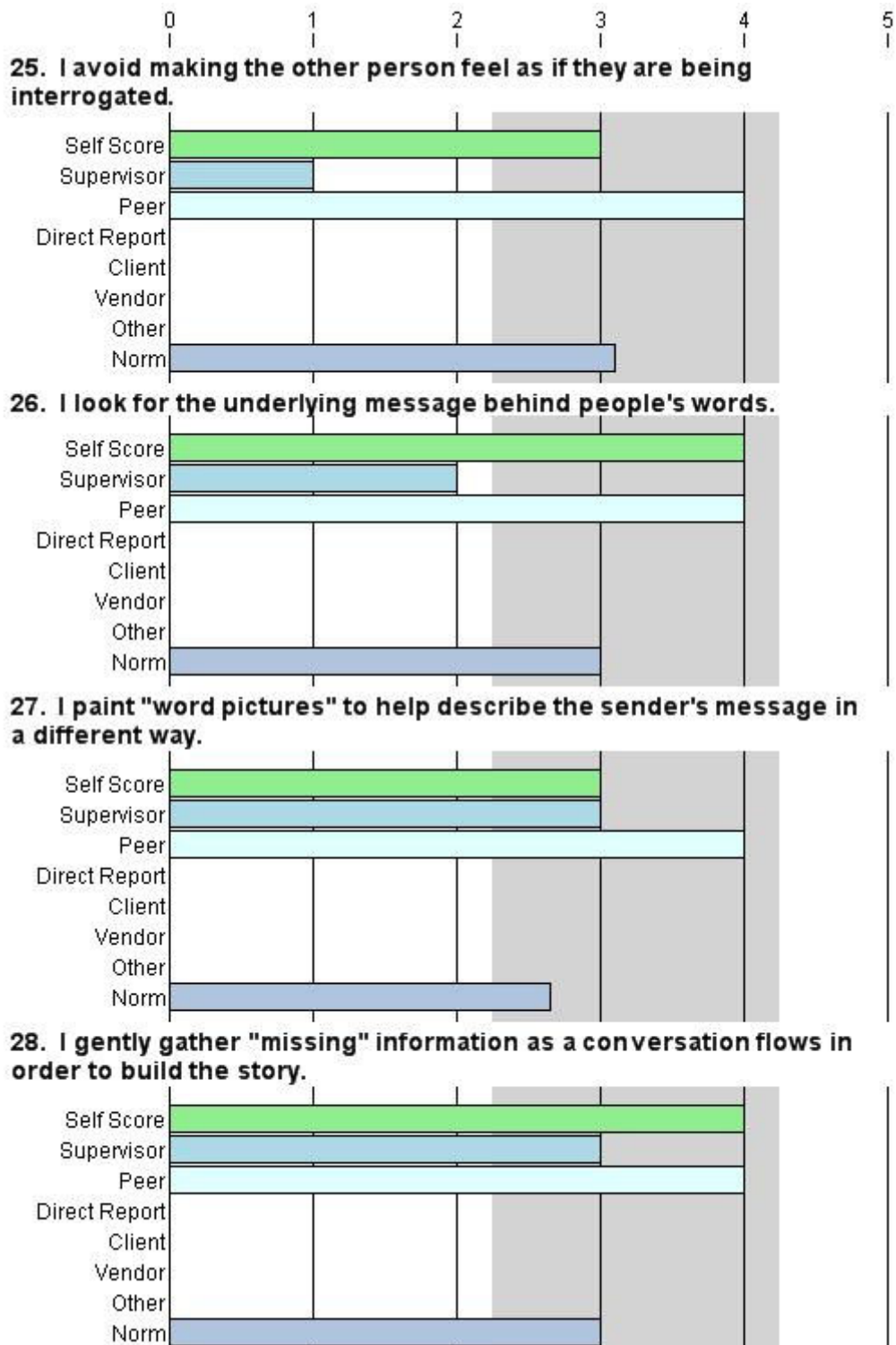
Interpretation

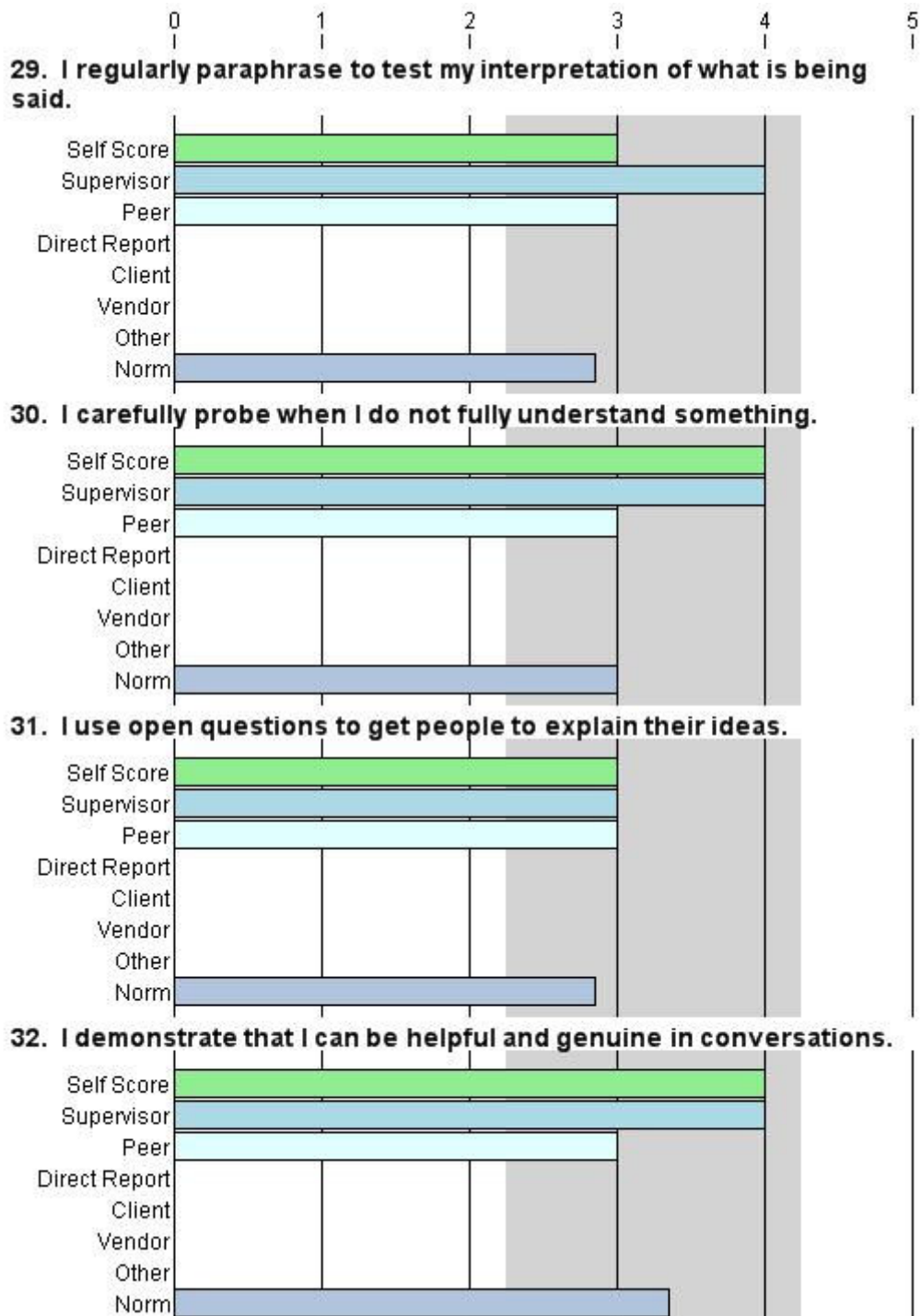
LOW (less than 2.75)

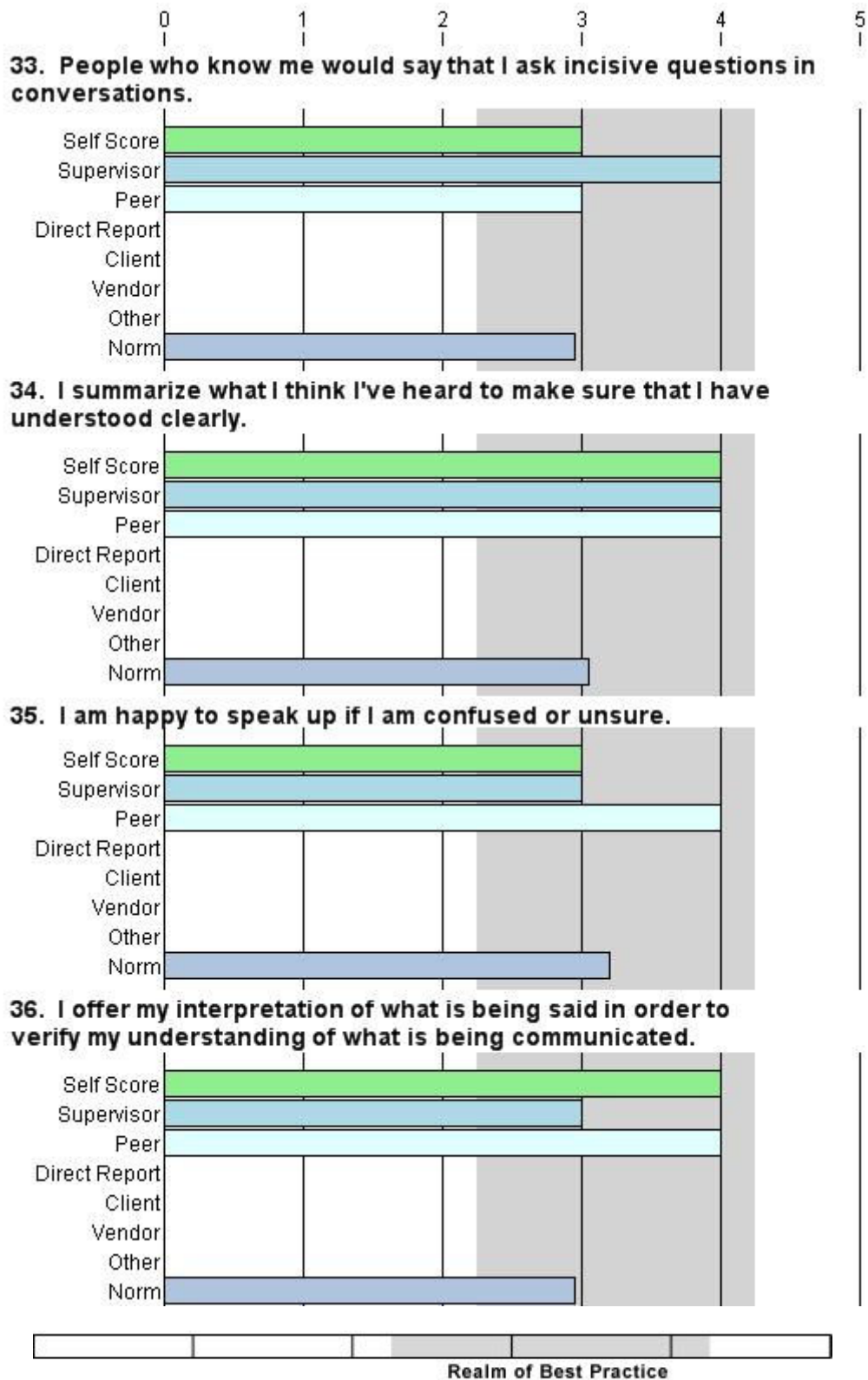
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos (occasionally and almost never) suggest that you are prone to forget the needs of different audiences to which you communicate. You also do not always select the most appropriate communication channels (you use mainly one single communication or delivery style, regardless of the situation). For a low scorer, communication is a challenge something to get over-and-done-with as quickly as possible. Transmitting your message is regarded as a chore that often yields mixed results in terms of other people listening or understanding and acting appropriately on what they have heard.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives (almost always and very frequently) suggest that you think carefully about the way you transmit your message and the communication style that you adopt in order to communicate effectively. To do this, you try hard to always be clear, concise, and consistent in what you say and do. A high scorer is usually acutely aware of the power to communicate and influence people successfully through good preparation, understanding of the audiences needs, and use of a variety of ways to communicate to ensure that every individual is given the best opportunity to appreciate the message.







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This section on Transmitting Your Message looks at the extent to which you use a range of communication methods and means to get your message across to others successfully. It asks the question: How well do you ensure that the transmission of information that is important to you is communicated in language that is clear, concise, and consistent?

Improvement actions

Low scorers need to think more about different individual and group preferences in terms of receiving information, and should think about the impact that different channels and styles can make on the ultimate understanding of a message (and, therefore, the success of the entire communication effort).

Transmitting Your Message

- Recognize that your actions are likely to speak most loudly when communicating with others.
- Do things to support your verbal messages to help people understand where you are coming from.
- Practice varying your personal communication approach to suit the different situations that you encounter.
- Avoid complex, jargonized, or overly technical communications to audiences that may struggle to understand or act upon your message.
- Deliver all of your messages in a slow and measured way, taking account of the particular needs of the subject and the audience.

CLARIFYING

This section on Clarifying looks at the extent to which you use careful and incisive questioning techniques to successfully translate the words and actions of the other party in order to understand their meaning. This category asks the question: How well do you gently question and probe the other person in a conversation or discussion, in order to ensure that you accurately interpret their message?



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

Scales predominantly in the ones and twos (occasionally and almost never) suggest that you rarely use questions to increase your understanding, or your questions are somewhat vague or give the impression that you have not been listening or are not interested in all they have to say. An individual with a low score generally engages in highly transactional discussions and conversations; questions of clarification are asked only rarely. These individuals are unlikely to summarize or paraphrase the senders message, thus creating the impression that their mind is elsewhere. They will usually ask questions only when they want more information on subjects that are of interest to them.

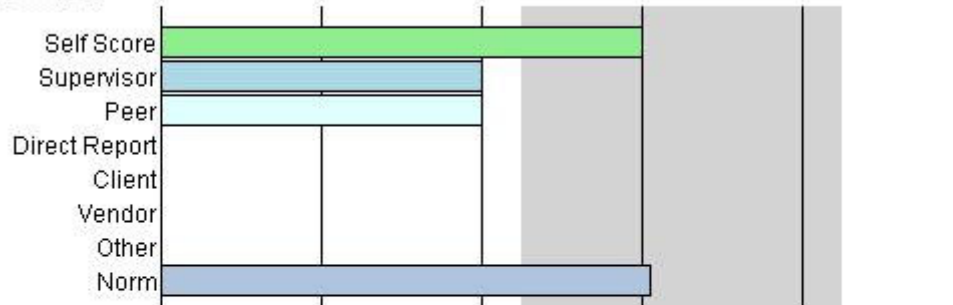
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives (almost always and very frequently) suggest that you are skilled at using a variety of conversational techniques in order to check information without making the other party uncomfortable, or feel that they are being interrogated. You generally adopt a gentle and careful questioning approach whenever you feel unsure and are not clear about the message being transmitted.

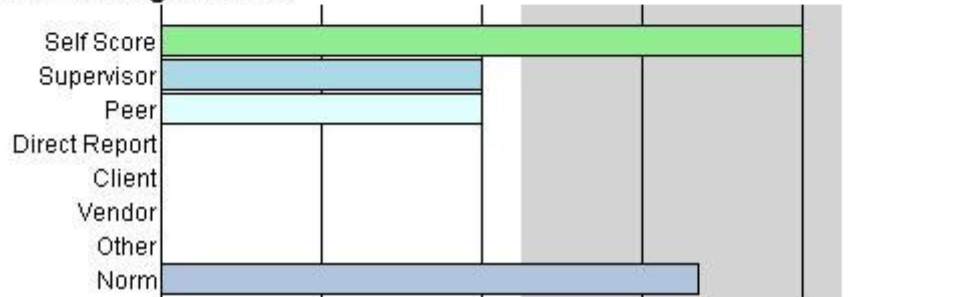
A high score suggests that the individual is likely to create a climate in which the speaker sees that the listener is concentrating and trying to completely understand the communication. This is achieved by using questions to demonstrate openness and demonstrating a genuine desire to understand, rather than showing off superior knowledge or asking a question for the sake of saying something.

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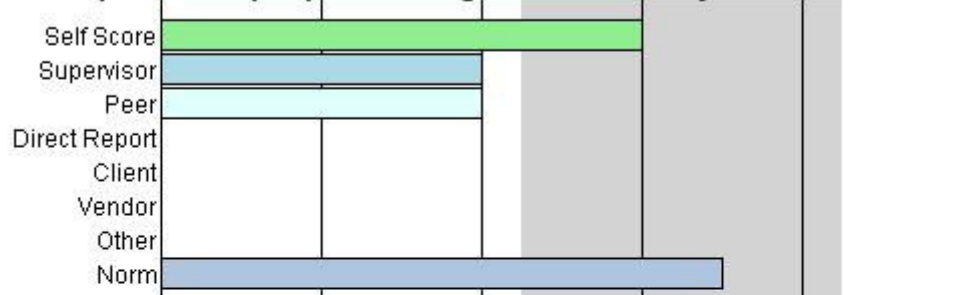
37. I avoid assuming that the other person's perspective is the same as mine.



38. I give people time, attention, and encouragement so they can get their message across.



39. I respect other people's feelings when I offer my comments.



40. I piece together all the different parts of what people say and do to make sense of it.

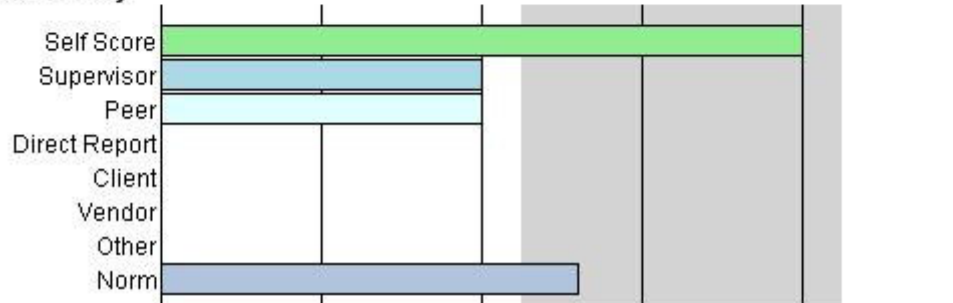


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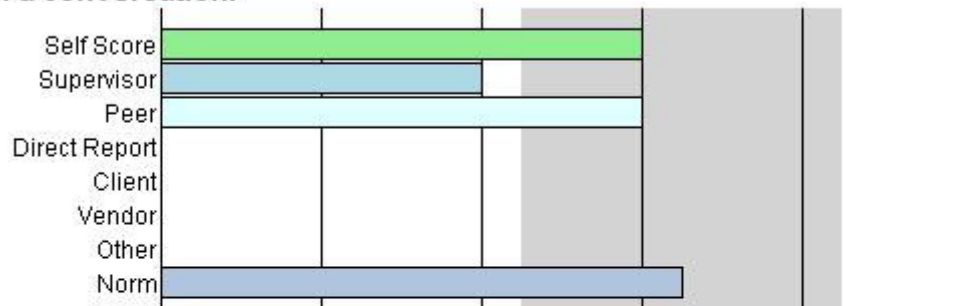
41. I ask the other person to re-phrase their message when I am confused.



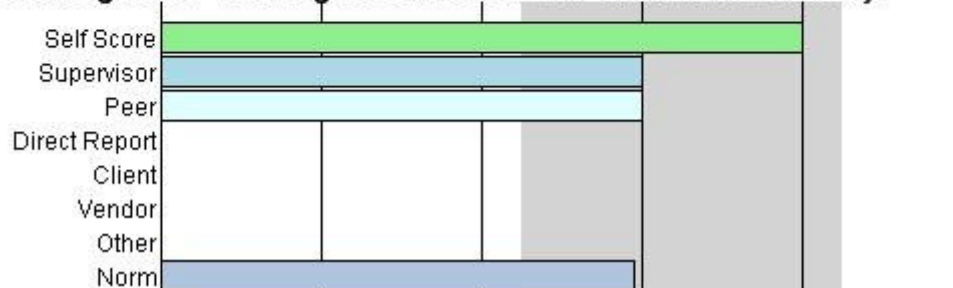
42. I suspend judgement about what is being said for as long as necessary.

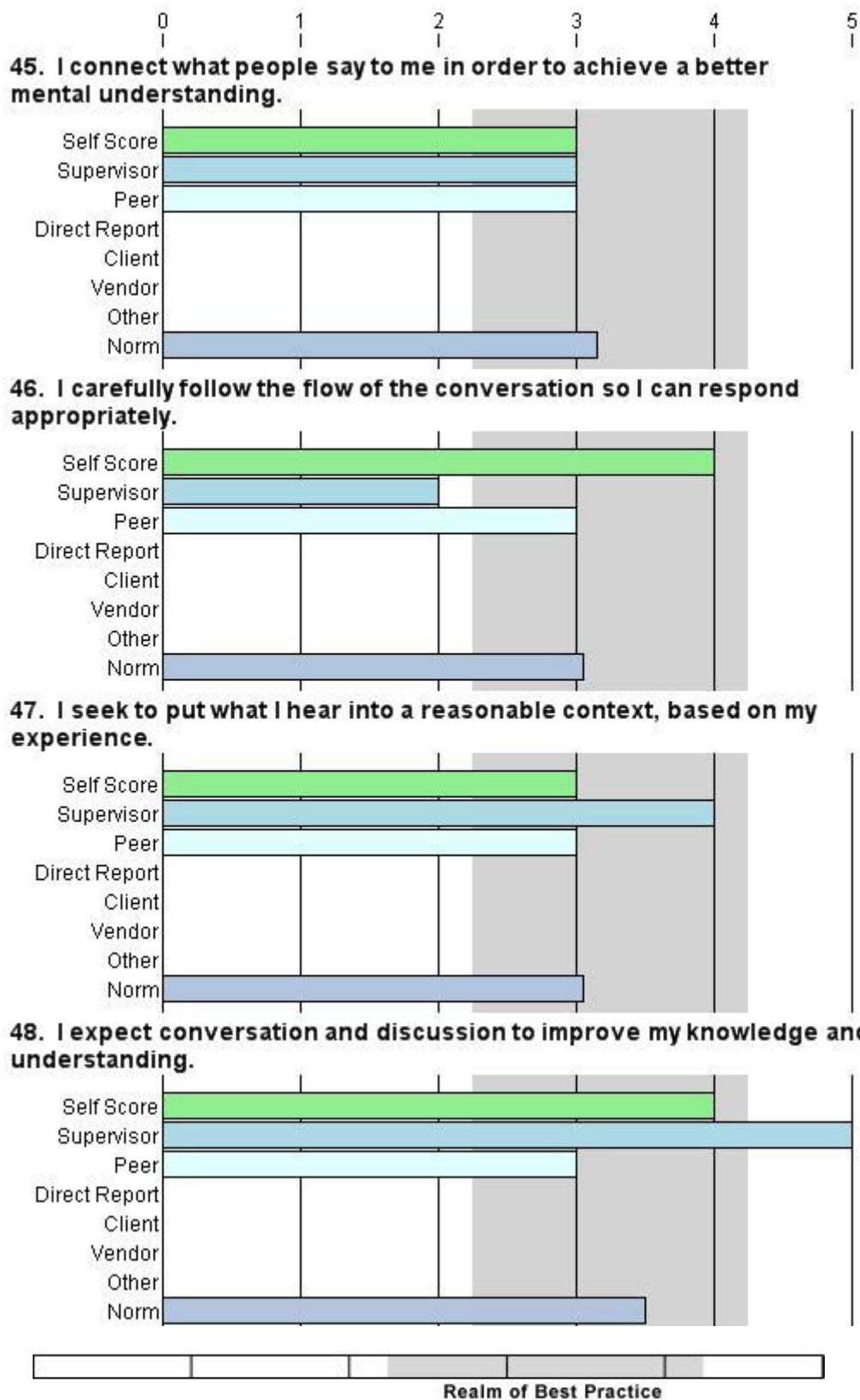


43. I correctly identify the level of someone's feelings and emotions in a conversation.



44. I am good at "reading between the lines" wherever necessary.





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This section on Clarifying looks at the extent to which you use careful and incisive questioning techniques to successfully translate the words and actions of the other party in order to understand their meaning. This category asks the question: How well do you gently question and probe the other person in a conversation or discussion, in order to ensure that you accurately interpret their message?

Improvement actions

Low scorers need to practice asking genuine and sincere questions when their understanding in a discussion is less than it should be. They should also practice asking different kinds of questions and offer simple summaries of key points at appropriate conversational intervals.

Clarifying

- Rehearse asking questions in a variety of different ways to get people to say more or to elaborate fully on what they mean.
- Use more paraphrasing, examples, and analogies, or ask the other person directly to explain what they are saying in a different way.
- Summarize points frequently and make sure that you have understood each statement that has been made as a discussion unfolds.
- Look to elicit more information whenever necessary to ensure that your knowledge and understanding about what is being said is balanced and complete at all times.

READING NON-VERBAL CLUES

This section on Reading Non-Verbal Clues looks at the extent to which you pick up on body language and tone of voice in order to understand the complete communication message. It asks the question: How well do you assess the other persons feelings and meaning by looking beyond the spoken words that you hear?



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

Scales predominantly in the ones and twos (occasionally and almost never) suggest that you generally miss or misinterpret non-verbal clues given by others because you dont appreciate what they mean. Because of this, you are not likely to be good at reading other people, sensing the climate for communication, or spotting general discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal messages. A low scorer tends to be almost completely reliant on the words that people use in communication (words are only about 10% of the entire meaning) and oblivious to clues from facial expressions, movements of the hands or feet, changes in inflection and tone, and other clues that help paint a complete picture of what people are saying and feeling.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives (almost always and very frequently) suggest that you are tuned in to the non-verbal clues or signals that are deliberately or accidentally offered by other people in different kinds of communication. You are usually alert to the signals and are able to interpret them successfully. A high scorer focuses as much on non-verbal communication as they do on the words being spoken, and constantly looks for reinforcement of underlying feelings or inconsistency. They tend to almost intuitively read people and situations, even where words are few or non-existent.

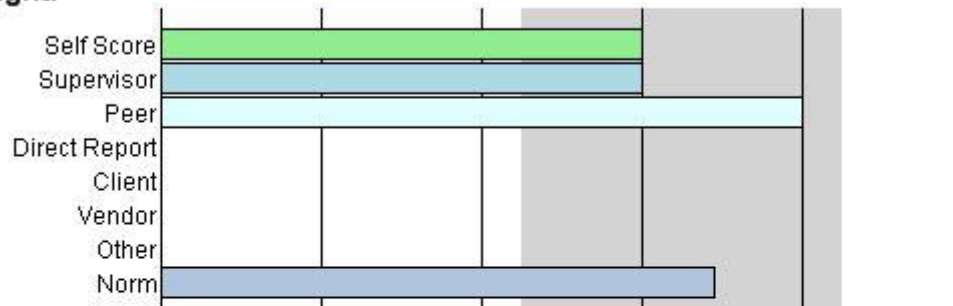
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49. I quickly sense when a person's feelings do not match their words.



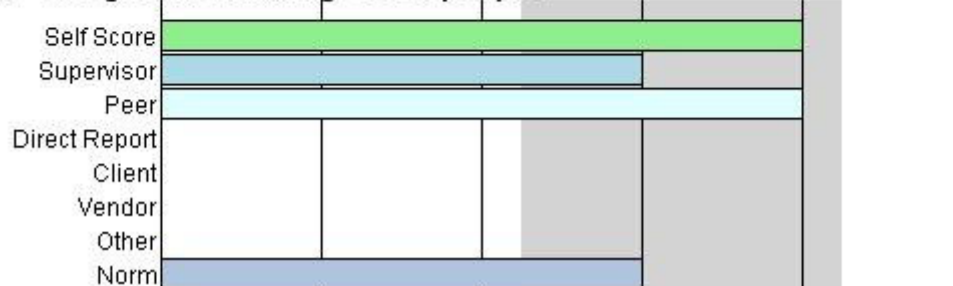
50. I can tell when the other party is distracted or their mind is somewhere else.



51. I can tell when the climate for open communication is not quite right.



52. I am good at "reading" other people.

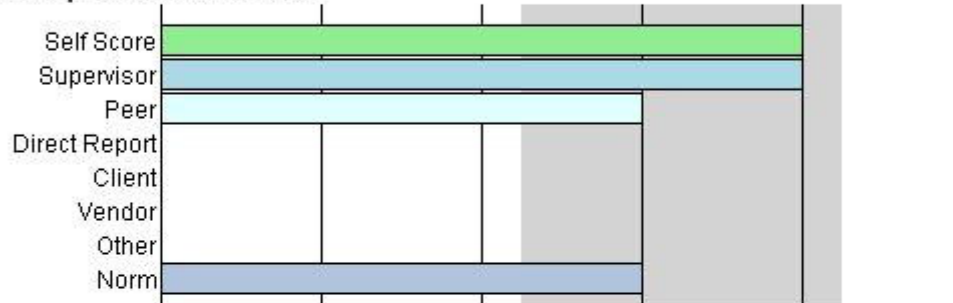


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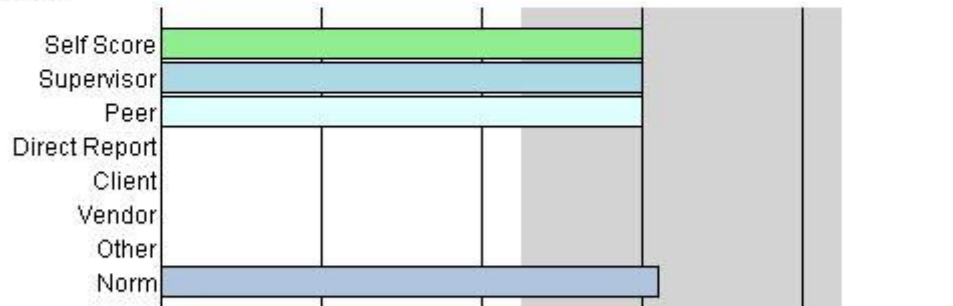
53. I watch people's facial expressions and hand movements very carefully.



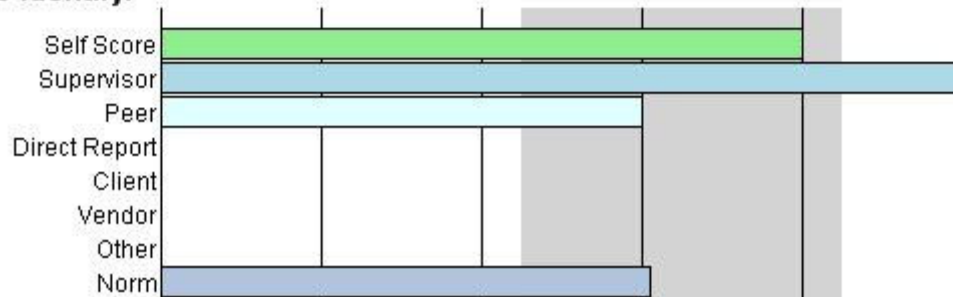
54. I adjust my communication style if I feel that I am losing the other person's attention.

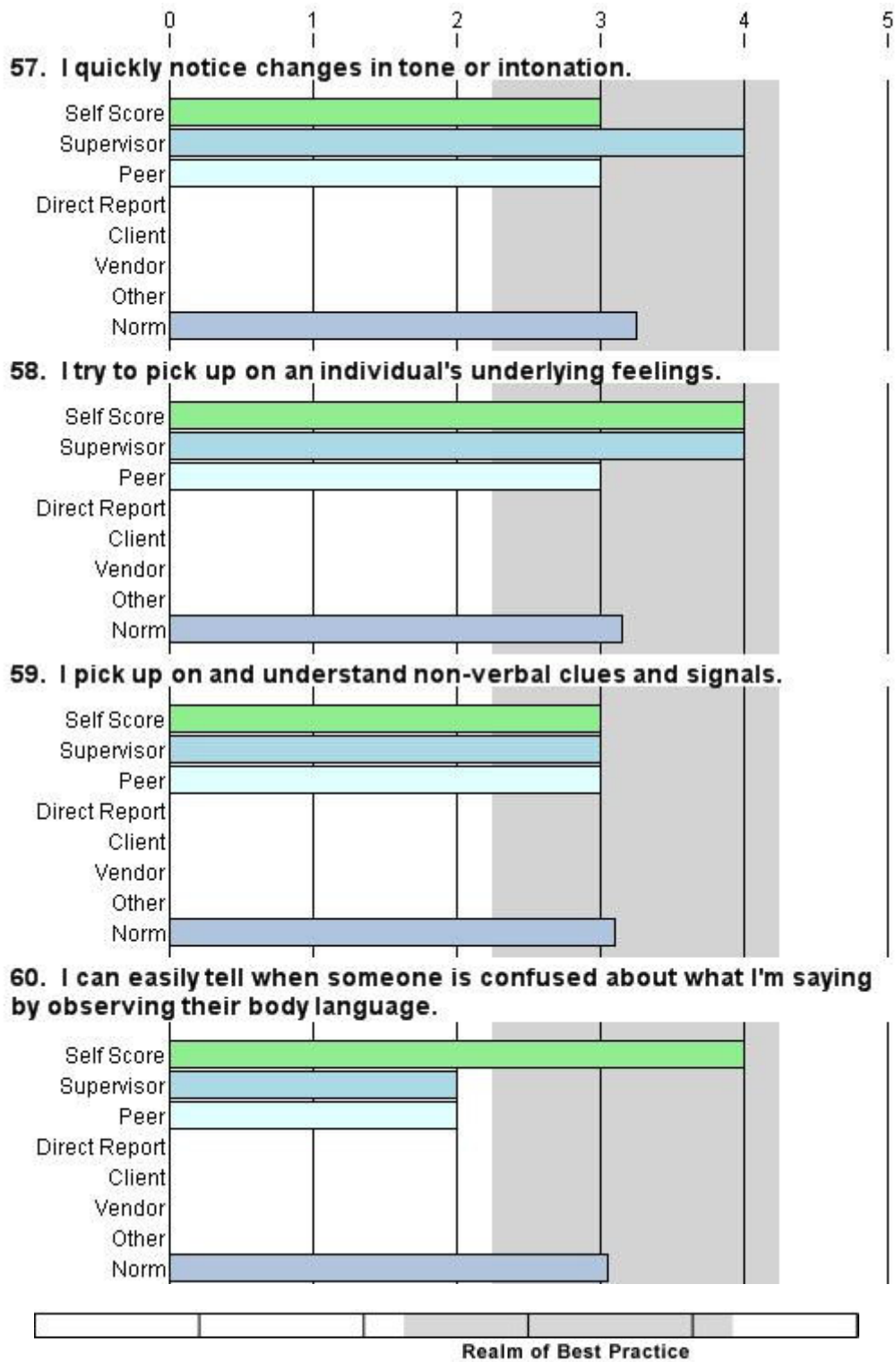


55. I am good at sensing a negative atmosphere when I walk into a room.



56. Inconsistencies between words and body language are easy for me to identify.





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This section on Reading Non-Verbal Clues looks at the extent to which you pick up on body language and tone of voice in order to understand the complete communication message. It asks the question: How well do you assess the other persons feelings and meaning by looking beyond the spoken words that you hear?

Improvement actions

Low scorers need to concentrate much more on observing the other person and listening carefully for changes in voice tone or emotional emphasis. This takes considerable practice, as well as commitment and patience, to learn how to do it and then to correctly interpret what is observed.

Reading Non-verbal Clues

- Quietly watch for the more subtle signals given by the communicator in terms of their physical actions or the tone of their voice.
- Be silent for much longer than you are used to.
- Progressively learn what the different non-verbal signals mean, above and beyond the words.
- On every occasion, assess whether the entire communication climate or atmosphere offers any extra clues above and beyond the words alone.

GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

This section on Feedback looks at the extent to which you are able to successfully offer constructive feedback to others and accept direct feedback from others. It asks the question: How open are you to offering candid feedback to others in a constructive or helpful way, and how capable are you in accepting coaching or guiding communication from others?



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

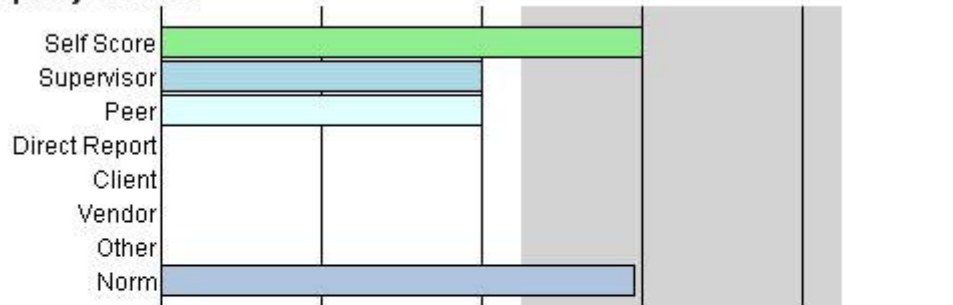
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos (occasionally and almost never) suggest that you are not a frequent giver and receiver of feedback of any sort, and might even go out of your way to avoid making constructive comment to others or letting them offer comment (positive or negative) to you. You might even adopt a silent approach or become evasive when asked to offer or take feedback. A low scorer is likely to adopt a closed communication style in which they offer little or no constructive feedback to others and, in turn, do not expect others to offer feedback to them. Conversations will tend to be somewhat mechanical and exchange-orientated, with neither party gaining the benefit of useful guiding or coaching communication.

HIGH (greater than 3.5)

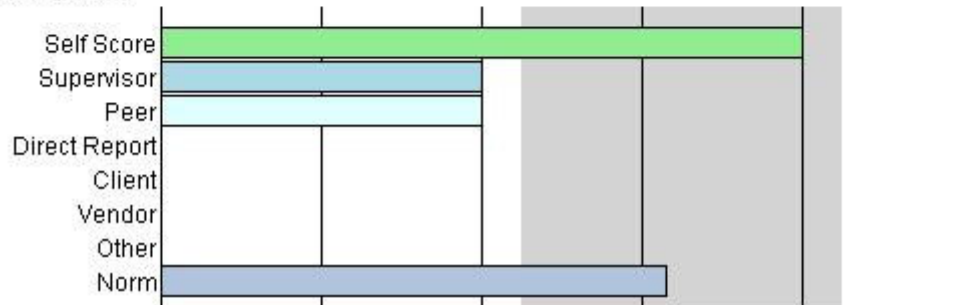
Scales predominantly in the fours and fives (almost always and very frequently) suggest that you are a frequent giver and receiver of feedback, and you see it as a positive way to improve communication and knowledge (for yourself and others). You are likely adept at giving feedback to others and in inviting others to give feedback to you (and acting on the valuable advice you receive). An individual whose scores here are high is likely to quickly establish as much conversational rapport as possible with the other person. This is usually done by suggesting that they are open to receiving and giving constructive feedback as a means of building strong relationships, as well as by having deeper or more genuinely worthwhile discussions with people.

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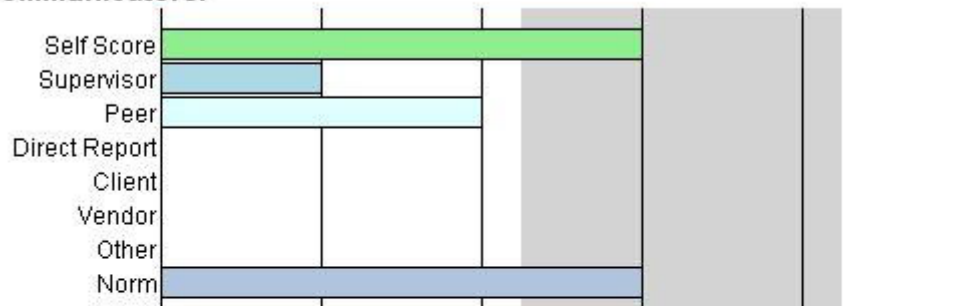
61. I try to make sure that the "air time" in a conversation is equally shared.



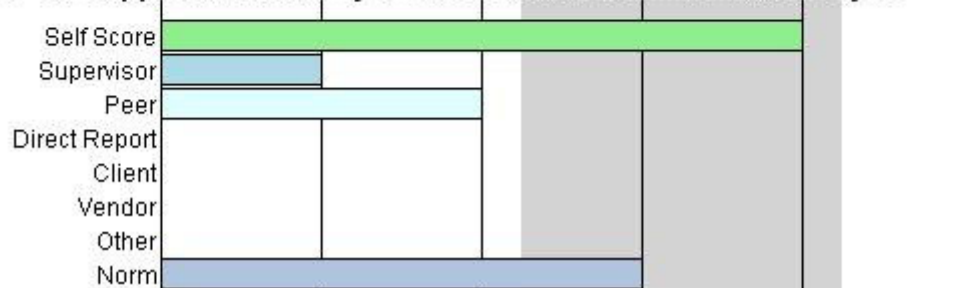
62. I find it easy to get the other person's attention when speaking with them.



63. I believe that feedback is the "breakfast" of effective communicators.



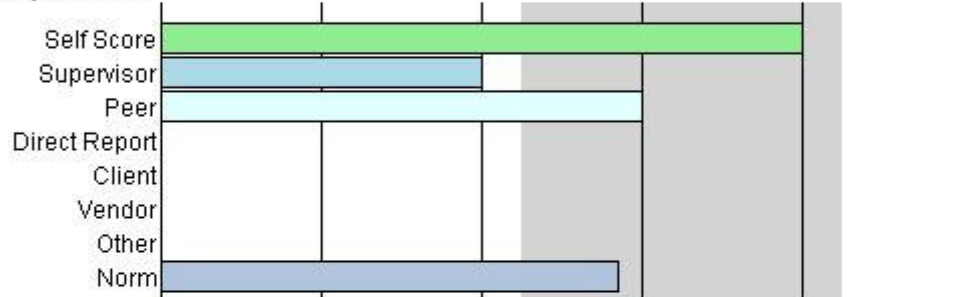
64. I am appreciated for my direct and clear communication style.



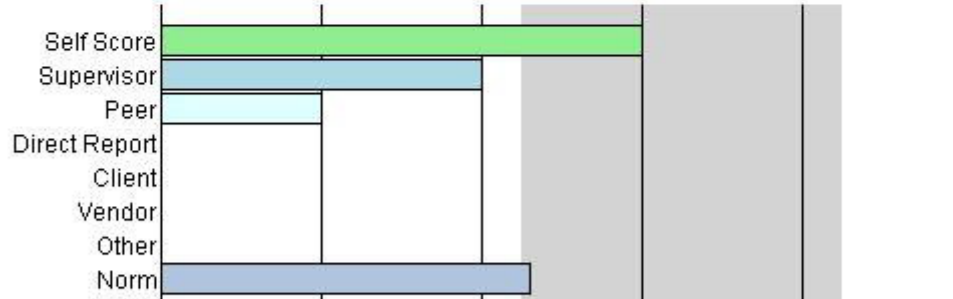
0 1 2 3 4 5
65. I openly demonstrate that I appreciate feedback from other people.



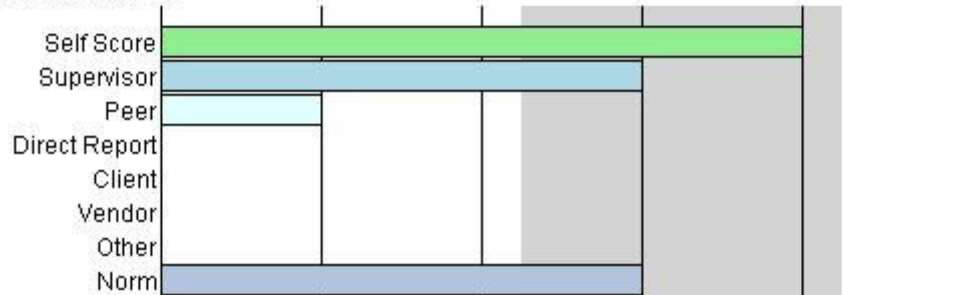
66. I avoid engaging in emotional language or negative feedback responses.

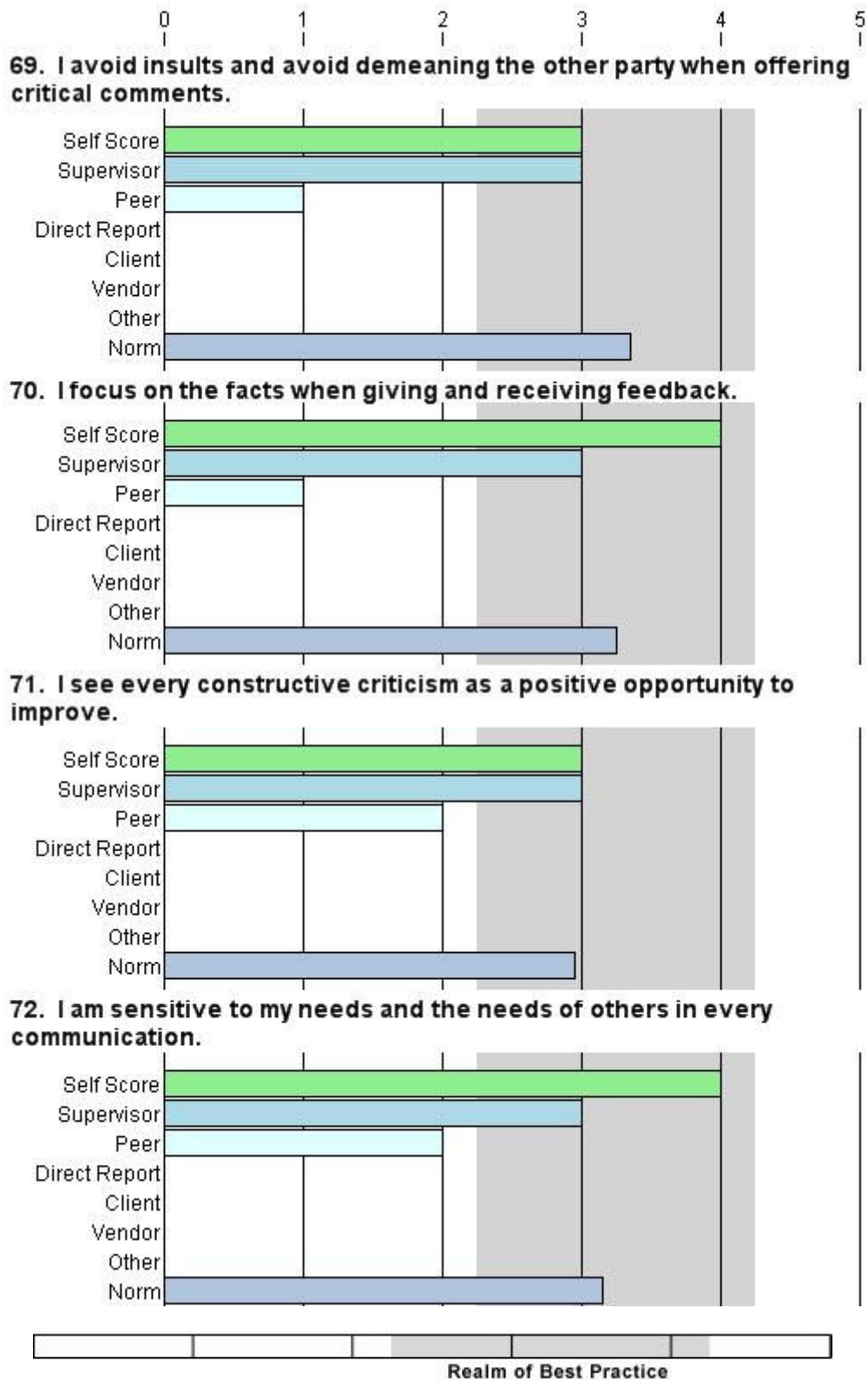


67. I am not concerned about the other party's motives for providing feedback.



68. I focus my attention on the key lesson to be given or taken from the feedback.





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

This section on Feedback looks at the extent to which you are able to successfully offer constructive feedback to others and accept direct feedback from others. It asks the question: How open are you to offering candid feedback to others in a constructive or helpful way, and how capable are you in accepting coaching or guiding communication from others?

Improvement actions

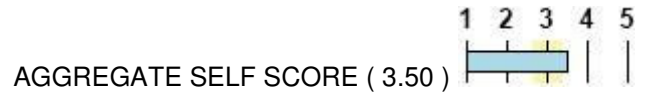
Low scorers need to accept two-way feedback as a primary means of improving the quality of communication. This means becoming less thin-skinned about feedback and more open to giving people honest but helpful feedback when it is appropriate.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

- Learn to see the giving and receiving of regular constructive feedback as a primary means by which learning and improvement can occur for yourself and others around you.
- Make notes on what you hear, or offer structured and specific feedback to others, and frequently invite people to offer open feedback to you on the same basis.
- Always offer constructive comments, not negative or destructive remarks in taking or giving feedback.
- Be sensitive to peoples feelings when accepting feedback or giving it to others (e.g. avoid destructive comments, personal attacks, gratuitous insults, etc.).

UNDERSTANDING

This section on Understanding looks at the extent to which you make sense of what you see and hear in order to engage fully in a conversation and respond intelligently, according to the circumstances. This category asks the question: How well do you reflect and process information while someone is speaking, in order to understand the key aspects of what is being communicated and how you might respond?



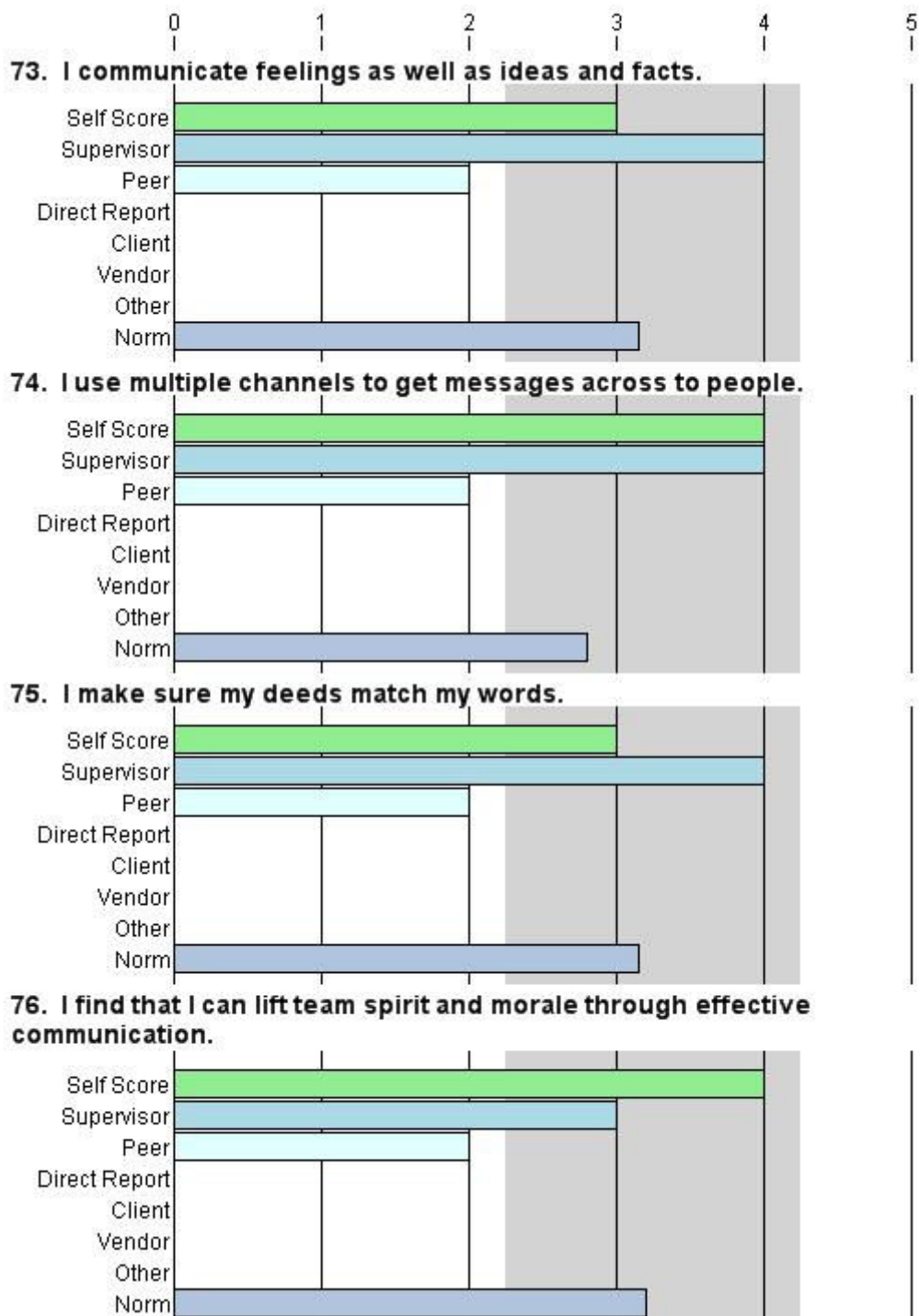
Interpretation

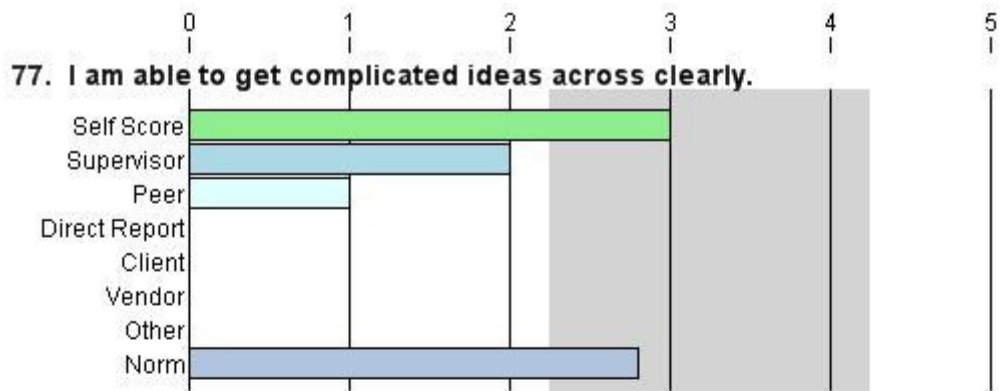
LOW (less than 2.75)

Scales predominantly in the ones and twos (occasionally and almost never) suggest that you tend to be lost in longer or more-complex conversations, and fail to spot the more subtle or underlying messages that are communicated. You do not usually take the opportunity to reduce or eliminate your confusion by asking questions, paraphrasing, or summarizing. A low scorer does not always follow another person's line of discussion or argument and doesn't find it easy to predict where the conversation is headed. As a result, they don't participate as actively in a conversation as they might and their responses are not as helpful and intelligent as they could be.

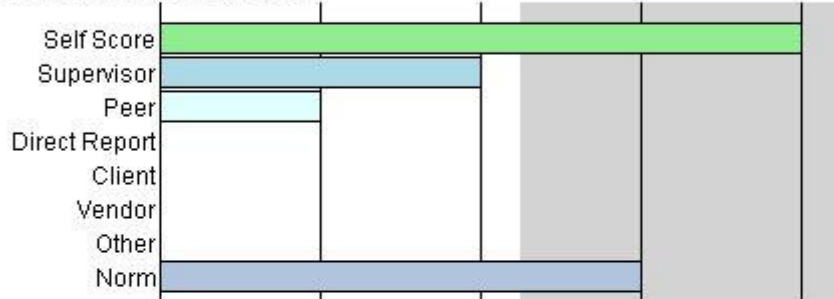
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives (almost always and very frequently) suggest that you carefully sift and sort what you see and hear when individuals are talking, and work hard to understand the entire message and respond in a way that amply demonstrates your understanding. A high scorer uses empathetic listening techniques and recognizes that they should not make judgments regarding how other people think or send their messages. They will progressively assemble the information that is communicated, and look beyond the words to feelings, emotions, and other contextual factors.

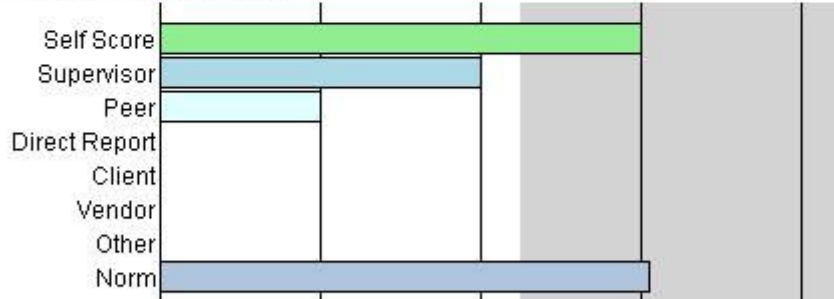




78. I deliver my communication at a pace and in a way that is comfortable for others.

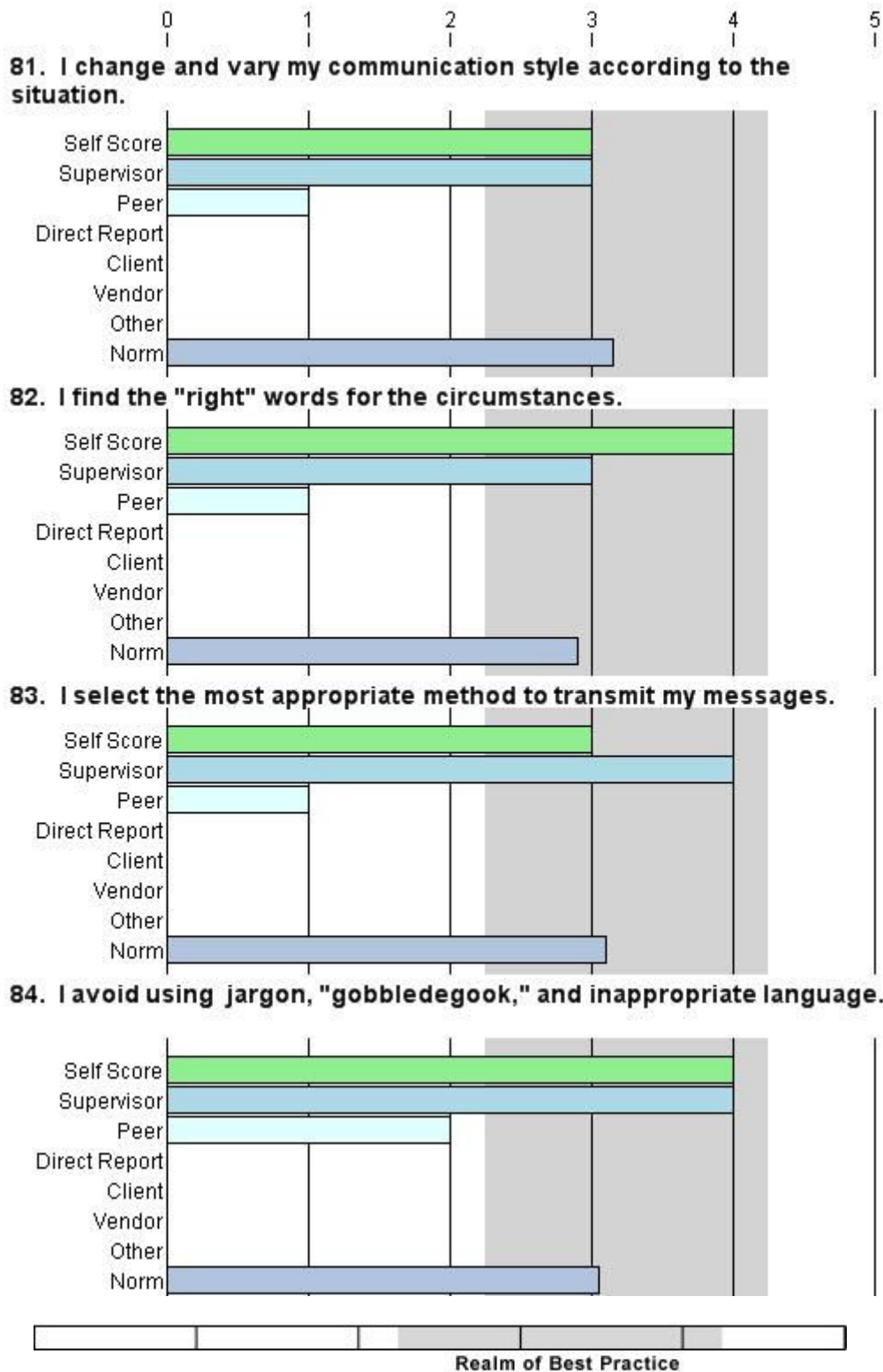


79. I say things in a variety of slightly different ways in order to reinforce what I mean.



80. I am highly conscious of the other person's needs.





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

This section on Understanding looks at the extent to which you make sense of what you see and hear in order to engage fully in a conversation and respond intelligently, according to the circumstances. This category asks the question: How well do you reflect and process information while someone is speaking, in order to understand the key aspects of what is being communicated and how you might respond?

Improvement actions

Low scorers should take all the verbal and non-verbal clues and figure out what is really being said, and why. They also should concentrate more on the overall flow or logical development of each conversation, and ask questions and paraphrase to be sure they are not misunderstanding the message.

Understanding

- Avoid judging peoples messages or intentions too quickly by concentrating on the entire communication over as long a time as necessary.
- Look for key themes or core points in conversations.
- Use questions to confirm your understanding before responding.
- Carefully assess the context in which people give you information, or the entire way in which they communicate with you.

THE 10/10 REPORT

Top 10 Strengths

Empathizing

10. I look at the feelings or emotions behind the words people are using. 4.00

Clarifying

34. I summarize what I think I've heard to make sure that I have understood clearly. 4.00

Understanding

48. I expect conversation and discussion to improve my knowledge and understanding. 4.00

Reading Non-Verbal Clues

56. Inconsistencies between words and body language are easy for me to identify. 4.00

Empathizing

6. I use a variety of careful questioning approaches to help understand the other person. 3.67

8. I engage in as much "small talk" as necessary to help people feel comfortable. 3.67

9. I like to find out something about the people with whom I talk. 3.67

Clarifying

28. I gently gather "missing" information as a conversation flows in order to build the story. 3.67

30. I carefully probe when I do not fully understand something. 3.67

32. I demonstrate that I can be helpful and genuine in conversations. 3.67

Top 10 Development Needs

Giving and Receiving Feedback

63. I believe that feedback is the "breakfast" of effective communicators. 2.00

67. I am not concerned about the other party's motives for providing feedback. 2.00

Transmitting Your Message

77. I am able to get complicated ideas across clearly. 2.00

79. I say things in a variety of slightly different ways in order to reinforce what I mean. 2.00

Understanding

37. I avoid assuming that the other person's perspective is the same as mine. 2.33

39. I respect other people's feelings when I offer my comments. 2.33

Giving and Receiving Feedback

61. I try to make sure that the "air time" in a conversation is equally shared. 2.33

64. I am appreciated for my direct and clear communication style. 2.33

69. I avoid insults and avoid demeaning the other party when offering critical comments. 2.33

Transmitting Your Message

78. I deliver my communication at a pace and in a way that is comfortable for others. 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.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Giving and Receiving Feedback looks at the extent to which you are able to successfully offer constructive feedback to others and accept direct feedback from others. It asks the question: "How open are you to offering candid feedback to others in a constructive or helpful way, and how capable are you in accepting coaching or guiding communications from others?"

Course Suggestion

- Giving Feedback
- Receiving Feedback
- Coaching Effectiveness
- Communication Skills
- Influencing Others

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

- Be Your Own Executive Coach : Master High-Impact Communications Skills for Dealing With Difficult People, Improving Your Personal Image, Learning How. Peter Delisser: August, 1999.
- Messages : The Communication Skills Book. Patrick Fanning et al.: September, 1995.
- Get a Grip on Speaking and Listening : Vital Communication Skills for Today's Business World.
- Leading With NLP : Essential Leadership Skills for Influencing and Managing People. Joseph O'Connor: February, 1999.
- Training With NLP : Skills for Managers, Trainers and Communicators. Joseph O'Connor, and John Seymour: November, 1994.
- Toward Communication Competency : Developing Interpersonal Skills. Susan R. Glaser, and Anna Eblen: January, 1986.

Transmitting Your Message

Transmitting Your Message looks at the extent to which you use a range of communication methods and means to get your message across to others successfully. It asks the question: "How well do you ensure that the transmission of information that is important to you is communicated in language that is clear, concise, and consistent?"

Course Suggestion

- Effective Team Communication
- Presentation Skills
- Speaking Skills
- Writing Skills
- Communication Channels and Vehicles

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

- Buff and Polish: A Practical Guide to Enhance Your Professional Image and Communication Style. Kathryn Volin: 1999.
- 101 Ways to Improve Your Communication Skills Instantly. Jo Condrill, et al.: 1997.
- Basic Presentation Skills. Gary Kroehnert: July, 1999.

- Feedback Toolkit: 16 Tools for Better Communication in the Workplace. Rick Maurer: 1994.
- Communicating for Change. Roger D'Aprix: 1996.
- Artful Persuasion: How to Command Attention, Change Minds and Influence People. Harry Mills: 2000.
- The Presentation Skills Workshop: Helping People Create and Deliver Great Presentations. Sherron Bienvenu: December, 1999.

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.

63. I believe that feedback is the "breakfast" of effective communicators. Score: 2.00

Action to Take:

67. I am not concerned about the other party's motives for providing feedback. Score: 2.00

Action to Take:

77. I am able to get complicated ideas across clearly. Score: 2.00

Action to Take:

79. I say things in a variety of slightly different ways in order to reinforce what I mean. Score: 2.00

Action to Take:

37. I avoid assuming that the other person's perspective is the same as mine. Score: 2.33

Action to Take:

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Show by your own behavior that you believe feedback is the “breakfast” of effective communicators.

Feedback and listening to others are key to improving any situation. It is foolish to presume that we know it all ourselves and have no need for the input of others. Effective communicators give out lots of feedback, but they also seek feedback about how they are doing. Here's how, and why:

1. The more feedback there is, the more information there is. The more information there is, the less potential there is for disaster (the *Why didn't you speak out?* or *Nobody told us* variety). Good feedback systems are good early warning systems.
2. Feedback motivates. Everyone wants to know how they are doing and how what they are doing makes sense within the bigger picture. Good feedback lets them know all of this and provides a loop through which they can learn.
3. Feedback creates transparency in organizations. People become much clearer about what everyone else is doing and why they are doing it. Everyone feels more in control and more able to understand just what is going on. If they want to know, all they have to do is ask and someone will tell them. Just tell them—don't lecture them, harangue them, score cheap shots off them, or attempt to undermine them. Just tell them.
4. Feedback restores the human dimension. It is all too easy to get caught up in number-crunching and bean-counting and then neglect the soft skills of human communication. Feedback allows that balance to be restored. Of course, numbers do need to be crunched and beans do need to be counted, but data about these operations need to be conveyed in a human way, showing some sensitivity. The more we learn about giving and receiving feedback, the more we realize that feedback is not just about the facts, but about the human context for those facts.
5. Feedback creates good leadership habits. If you seek feedback from others about your own performance, you show not only that you can take it, but that you do not take negative feedback personally (well, not too personally, anyway). There's an old saying that nothing motivates people as much as seeing the boss put in a hard day's work. If you are in a position of influence (and, strictly speaking, that includes everyone), you can be a role model for seeking feedback, as well as giving it. You can unleash a virtual contagion of feedback, and that is not such a bad thing.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Do not question the motives of someone who is offering you feedback.

Sometimes the feedback is so right and so on-target, we *have* to take it seriously—no matter who it comes from or what we think of that person. We have to learn how to separate in our minds the *message* from the *messenger*. The best communicators are not concerned about a person's motives when they offer feedback; they think only about what they are saying.

Here are some good suggestions to improve your general effectiveness in this area:

1. Try not to worry about someone else's motivation for giving you feedback. If you assume that they are merely being hostile, you will inevitably experience negative feelings. Instead, assume that their intentions are positive. Think of the feedback not as an attack upon you as a person, but rather as another viewpoint that is worth considering.
2. If there is a chance that the other person is baiting you, don't fall for the bait. Assume that their motives are as pure as the driven snow. Play it straight. Don't get upset, but do engage them in a rational discussion about the implications of the feedback they have just given. If they are not playing silly mind games, they will be pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the problems further. If they are playing games, your attitude will irritate them intensely. The winder-up will be wound up and the provoker will be out-provoked. Game over—you win either way. There aren't that many of these types of situations in real life, so relish this one!
3. There is an old maxim that goes something like this: Cherish your enemies—at least they will tell you the truth. Even people you don't like and who don't like you can give you valuable insight into reality. Don't fall for the illusion that you are 100 percent right and they are 100 percent wrong. It's certainly a pleasant illusion, and it will protect our fragile ego—but it is still an illusion.
4. If you suspect that the person giving the feedback has ulterior motives, make a mental note to think about this later, and keep listening properly in the meantime. Later on, you can think about why they might have it in for you. What is going on around here that you don't know about? Is the expression of this only-partly-concealed hostility some kind of early-warning system that you would be unwise to ignore? Suspend judgment, play dumb, play for time, and try to dig up some information about the reason for the other person's feelings. But listen to the feedback.

Transmitting Your Message

Do your best to get complicated ideas across clearly.

Poor communicators tend to make simple ideas unnecessarily complex and complex ideas even more complicated. Good communicators, on the other hand, treat simple ideas with the respect they deserve, and work hard at getting complicated ideas across clearly.

Here are some suggestions that will help you explain complex ideas:

- 1.** Start from the experience and frame of reference of the audience. Use the same language and concepts they use, and go from there. Work backwards, translating complex concepts in your “language” into simpler concepts in their “language.” Provide a written glossary or list of the terms you are explaining, if at all possible.
- 2.** Use analogies and metaphors to show similarities and contrasts. They should be practical and meaningful to your audience, without being too simplistic. Ask your audience to contribute their own to see if they are following you. Use examples, as well. Discuss actual instances, or show photos or video clips of what you mean.
- 3.** Use graphic communication if you think it will help: diagrams, flow charts, schematics—whatever works for your situation. Some people understand better if the information is put into a chart. (Others will need it presented in a different way.)
- 4.** Use plain English—not technical jargon. We challenge anyone who says this can’t be done. Einstein once said that if a mathematician can’t explain in simple terms what an equation means, he is either lying or he is incompetent. This is also a good lesson when it comes to communication. If we can’t explain what we mean in plain and simple language, how can we expect others to understand?
- 5.** Resist the urge to oversimplify. Don’t boil an idea down to the point where there is nothing left of it! People will leave unsatisfied, and won’t have the details to fill in the gaps in the big picture. That leads to assumptions and wrong conclusions.

Transmitting Your Message

Use a variety of slightly different ways to reinforce what you are trying to get across.

“Let me put that another way ...” is a great way to begin re-phrasing something. It’s a well-known fact that if an idea is expressed a number of different ways, it will sink in. Learn the tricks and you’ll be able to pull out the right one for the circumstance or the audience. Here are some tips on how to do this:

1. Veteran public speakers organize their talks into three parts:

A. Tell the audience what you’re going to tell them.

B. Then tell them.

C. Then tell them what you have just told them.

The advice is still good: preview—tell—summarize. If there is really enough meat in what you want to say, you should be able to summarize the one set of topics in at least two or three different ways.

2. Approach a topic from another point of view—usually according to the vested interests of the group. For example:

• “So that’s the head-office view of the pros and cons of the interstate shift. But what about the views of the people in dispatch, or in accounts? Let’s look at the pros and cons from their point of view.”

• “So that’s the way Americans saw the cold war. But how did the Russians see it? Let’s step into their shoes for a moment, and consider ...”

3. Approach things from a “categories” viewpoint, and work through those categories. For example, look at sales performance for a particular department, for product lines, for a divisional structure, for strategic planning, for comparative overheads ... the list goes on. This will show the troops just how they fit in to the big picture.

4. Switch focus. If you are looking at the big picture, zoom in on an anecdote or a case study that exemplifies what you are saying. If you have been taking a micro, case-by-case approach, zoom out to the helicopter view, reinforcing this with aggregate graphs, floor plans, critical-path charts, or aerial photos or footage. Use different expositional modes. Recap critical points by bringing in an approach that is in contrast to what you have been using, such as chronological or reverse chronological, scenario (multiple futures), cause/ effect, geographical, inductive (particular-to-general), or deductive (general-to-particular) approaches.

5. Make statements in general forums such as meetings or briefing sessions, and then follow up with formal and informal one-on-one sessions and smaller meetings. Change your diction or style for each. Don’t use an off-the-record jokey style for a large briefing (at least not obviously), and don’t use a formal style when it’s only two or three of you.

Understanding

Do not assume that the other person's perspective is the same as yours.

We have a more rounded, complete view of a situation when we understand what it looks like from the perspectives of others. We won't get those perspectives, however, unless we can admit that there is more than one way to perceive a situation. This is not easy: Most of us think of ourselves as tolerant and broad-minded individuals, but we are not always comfortable with viewpoints that diverge from our own. Sometimes we are right and others are wrong. Then again, sometimes others are right, and we are wrong. We won't know, however, unless we have the courage to seek out those other perspectives.

Here's how to avoid assuming that the other person's perspective is the same as yours:

1. Be ready to move beyond your comfort zone. Don't let yourself become so wedded to your own point of view that you are not willing to consider the possibility that there are other ways of looking at the same situation. Don't be frightened of new stuff, regardless of where it comes from.

2. Don't rush into things, assuming that there is unanimous agreement. There will be repercussions if, somewhere down the track, people say:

- *Nobody asked us.*
- *I could have told them, but they wouldn't listen.*
- *If only they'd checked with us first.*

Ask. Listen. Check.

3. Encourage open debate and welcome the participation of people who hold controversial views. They might not get you to change your mind, but they will force you to defend yours. Even then, the most unusual (and perhaps offensive) ideas should still challenge you and perhaps help you modify and upgrade your own ideas. When two people agree all of the time, one of them is unnecessary.

4. Remember this old play on words: *When I assume, it makes an ass out of you and me.* Never assume anything, least of all that you know what others think. Assuming means being taken for granted, and no one likes that.