

Servant Leadership Profile-360 (SLP-360): Using the Results

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The 360-degree Servant Leader Assessment instrument should be scored on the same basis as the Self-Assessment Instrument. An average score on all positive factors (1, 3-7) of 5.6 or above indicates a strong servant leader. A score below 5.6 indicates that work needs to be done on certain factors. The negative factor 2 is scored in the reverse so that anyone scoring less than 2.0 demonstrates the qualities of a servant leader, whereas scoring above 2.0 indicates that work is required.

The purpose of the 360-degree instrument is to enable the person being evaluated to see how others see that person acting as a servant leader. As with the participant's self-scoring assessment, his or her own standards or level of evaluation will determine the results. No two people will agree on what constitutes strongly agree or disagree on the 62 different items. What you end up with is a composite picture of how the individual is seen. Who has been asked to complete the 360 will also have a bearing on the validity of the results. Those who work more closely with the person being evaluated are more likely to provide an accurate assessment than those who have only casual connections with the individual or no recent interactions. For that reason, it may be useful to separate the assessments into those with a direct daily or weekly connection to the person being evaluated, i.e., they work in the same department, and those who evaluate the individual from afar or on limited occasions and only in certain situations, such as heads of other departments, board of directors, and supervisors outside of the individual's department. Of course, not all of the 360-degree assessments will be scored on the same basis, but the collective result should give an aspiring servant leader an indication of where further work is required. What the 360 does provide is a benchmark for later evaluations of the same person to see if there have been changes in the interval. Annual evaluations are the best measure of changes that have been made and how others observe or respond to these changes.

To really determine how one functions as a servant leader, the participant needs to compare his/her scores with those of his/her peers, direct reports, colleagues, etc. When there is a significant variation of more than one point between the two, this indicates that the participant has a view of herself/himself that is not shared by others. The use of these instruments in many different organizations has indicated that there is likely to be the greatest discrepancy between how the individual sees himself/herself and how others see them in the area of pride and abuse of power. The participant most often seems himself/herself as vulnerable and humble whereas those who observe or experience this person's leadership find them to be abusive in their exercise of power and egotistical or proud. Now that the problem is identified, corrective action may now be initiated.

Here is an actual example of how a 360 was used to improve the listening skills of a manager of a radio station. The manager had scored himself very high as a good listener 6.2 (on questions 2, 7, 18, 36, 43, 59, and 62). He was shocked and somewhat dismayed to discover that his direct reports gave him an average score of 1.6 on the same questions and particularly number 2, which asked whether the Supervisor listens actively and receptively to what others have to say, even when they disagree with the Supervisor. When the manager sought to justify what a good listener he thought that he was, he pointed out that whenever someone came into his office he asked

them what they wanted to talk about and then listened carefully to what they had to say on any issue. When his staff were questioned collectively about how good a listener he was, they all agreed that he started every meeting by asking for their input but after a few moments or when he disagreed with what he was hearing, he would launch out on his own views and there was no longer an opportunity for their input as he just kept talking until he announced what the solution or course of action was to be. Naturally, they did not see him as a good listener. When this was pointed out to the manager he was surprised and after he got past his normal defensive state, he agreed to let his subordinates monitor his listening and offer an assessment of each meeting or interaction without any retribution. Then there was to be a follow-up assessment through a specific written listening self-assessment and 360 so that progress could be monitored, and further corrective steps taken if necessary. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that all staff who had recently resigned from the radio station cited the failure of the manager to listen to them as one of the main reasons for their departure. The original servant leadership 360 had shown that improvement was necessary.

In another situation, a chairman who had a lot of pride in his children would begin many committee meetings by asking a member about his or her child as a pretense to brag about his own children. He was trying to be cordial with his colleagues, but such action was understood differently by his colleagues and the 360 degree assessment led to bringing this anomaly into the open as a poor way of establishing rapport with his colleagues.

The point is that the 360 degree assessment is not an end in itself, but a means to create awareness of issues or deficiencies that needs to be dealt with if servant leadership is to flourish. On the other end, it also serves to confirm in which areas the person is performing well as a role model and should be seen as an example to others. When the self-assessment and the 360 degree are used at regular intervals, they indicate progress made or not made and the level of satisfaction with this servant leader. The instrument is designed to evoke improvement not to condemn.