

Leadership Report Card — How would your employees rate you?

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"You manage things; you *lead* people." -- Grace Hopper

Everyone instinctively knows the difference between a **manager** and a **leader**. Managers keep the organizational machinery running smoothly. Leaders decide what the machinery is for. Management is the form; leadership is the substance. Leaders inspire action, teamwork, confidence, and creativity with their visions of the future. Look around your own organization. The leaders are easy to spot. They're the ones who keep everyone focused on **outcomes**, not processes, who set priorities and goals, who have the insight and courage to say what's important and what's not.

But where do top leaders come from? Some would say they're born, not made. Others would say from the top business schools. Ironically, few organizations offer leadership training or reward or encourage emerging leadership skills. Is there anything you can do to turn your managers into leaders? One strategy might be to **seek guidance from those being led.**

In hierarchical organizations, everyone receives a formal performance evaluation from his or her supervisor, but few organizations provide a way for employees

to rate the quality of the supervision they receive. **What if performance evaluations worked both ways?** Wouldn't direct feedback about supervisory quality give employees more responsibility for and control over their organization's effectiveness? And wouldn't managers become more sensitive to the leadership skills that count most in their own organization?

The report card below **gives employees a chance to say which leadership skills are most important to them** and to tell the boss how he or she is doing in those areas. Some bosses will feel threatened by such a report card. If you do, ask yourself what you might not want to hear. Some employees will legitimately fear retribution from honest assessments of their bosses' performance. Anonymity should therefore be an option. When appropriate safeguards are provided, such as a third-party interviewer, employees can honestly express their opinions.

Managers using this report card in their own organization may be tempted to interpret the results by simply adding up and weighting the numerical results. If you are so tempted, be aware that counting and list-making are substitutes for thinking and leadership. Your employees are offering you invaluable information that deserves your careful consideration. Use the results to open a dialog that could turn a supervisory relationship into a team effort that acknowledges common goals. It is no coincidence that leaders tend to **stay in touch** with the rank and file of their organizations, taking an active interest in day-to-day operations and often knowing staff personally.

The report card goes against some powerful psychological forces. Everyone naturally sees a supervisor as a parent figure and tends to act out his or her own parental issues with that supervisor. Most people are afraid of being punished for "talking back," which is why they are nervous about telling supervisors what they really think and feel. You can either reinforce those fears by **acting** like a parent (which is the only way some know to get the work done), or you can act like a **partner** and offer this report card as a tool for strengthening that partnership.

The Report Card

Here are some needs and expectations one might have of a supervisor. Use the two columns below to say (a) how important each particular need is to you, and (b) how well the supervisor named below meets that particular need or expectation. Score on a 0-5 scale, where a 0 means that the need is not important to you at all, and a 5 if it is extremely important. Similarly, rate the supervisor 0 if that need is not being met at all and a 5 if it is being fully met (considering its importance). You may wish to remain anonymous, if you fear retribution, but including your name will call this supervisor's attention to your particular concerns and identify areas where the supervisory relationship can improve.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR:	How important? (0 - 5)	How well met? (0 - 5)
Informs you of organizational objectives and priorities		
Keeps you informed of policy matters		
Informs you of your assignments		
Provides specific guidance about your assignments and plans		
Gives you the right amount of autonomy and responsibility		
Encourages freedom, innovation, and creativity		
Provides leadership toward goals		
Inspires you with visions of outcomes		
Provides ongoing feedback about the quality of your work		
Rewards performance		
Encourages your professional advancement		
Consults you about decisions that affect you		
Understands what you are doing		
Expresses interest in your work		
Provides stimulating feedback and discussion		
Coordinates with other related work		
Encourages teamwork and cooperation		
Represents your interests and concerns to upper management		
Provides the resources needed to do your job		
Responds to criticism and suggestions for change		
Is honest, accessible, and easy to talk to		
Sets priorities and allocates resources accordingly		
Delegates appropriately		
Manages finances responsibly		