

Challenging Questions for Independent Leaders

On this Independence Day holiday, and during this holiday weekend, in the midst of fireworks and fun, leisure and lightness, fun and frolic, how about taking a few minutes of quiet and solitude to reflect on how you're doing as a leader, manager or supervisor?

Does your leading, managing and supervising performance and behavior provide cause for celebration? Here's a not-quite-lighthearted way to find out.

Our readers outside the US can either join in, or save the questions for a suitable holiday weekend of their own.

You'll need some data, so begin by answering these questions, rating yourself on a scale of 0 = Rarely or never to 3 = Always, pretty much without exception:

1. My mission, objectives, and goals reflect my highest values and principles.
2. My vision is in alignment with my organization's mission.
3. My team is committed to achieving our company's goals and objectives.
4. I lead my people by example. I walk my talk. I am in integrity.
5. I have the skills and resources necessary to perform my tasks effectively.
6. My team members have the skills and resources to be optimally productive.
7. My team members understand the benefits of working together in a unified direction.
8. I observe on-the-job activity and am available for questions and feedback.
9. My team members establish priorities for tasks to be accomplished.
10. I listen carefully to my team members and encourage them to express their opinions.
11. I resolve conflict as it occurs, and consider the best interests of all concerned.
12. I inform my team members about changes, policies, and procedures that affect them.
13. I am firm and fair-minded when dealing with my co-workers.
14. I have the best interests of my co-workers in mind.
15. I recognize optimal performance, and express appreciation in a timely manner.
16. I delegate responsibility, accountability, and authority effectively.
17. My team members receive adequate training, coaching and participation on the job.
18. When I delegate a task, I trust my co-workers can do the job and I do not interfere.
19. I encourage initiative, involvement, and innovation from my co-workers.
20. I use constructive feedback to optimize the productivity of co-workers.
21. My decisions are consistent with corporate policies, procedures, and objectives.
22. I take calculated risks, and develop contingency plans for major decisions.
23. I develop objectives and performance standards with my people.
24. I systematically evaluate the performance of my people.
25. I motivate my people to do their best on the job.

Now, add your scores (out of a possible maximum of 75) and use the result to ponder these questions for self-reflection:

- As a leader, manager or supervisor, how did you rate yourself? Are you a real firecracker (50 or better), or a dud (less than 25), or somewhere in between?
- How do you think others would rate you? Better or worse? How do you know? Do you care?
- What positive change(s) could you make in your capacity for leading, managing or supervising over the next year that would improve your 'score'? Where you gave yourself a '0' or '1', what would make your 'score' higher?

And here's a few bonus questions that go beyond work on this holiday weekend:

- Will you likely depend on alcohol, drugs, excessive sugar or caffeine — or some other substances — to relax and enjoy this holiday?
- Could you experience true and real pleasure, happiness and OK-ness without them?
- What might your experience be this holiday without dependence on external stimulants to give you a boost — to artificially make you feel joyful or happy?

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