THE FOLLOWER PROFILE

And

The Performance and Relationship Questionnaire

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INTRODUCTION

The Performance and Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) is designed to help you gain a better understanding of followership as well as to help you examine your effectiveness as a follower.   This booklet presents a brief introduction to the concept of followeship and a summary of the research upon which the Performance and Relationship Questionnaire is based. The two dimensions of followership assessed by the Performance and Relationship Questionnaire are explained in some detail.

You may have previously used the Performance and Relationship Questionnaire to assess yourself as a follower. Additionally, now you have the opportunity to validate your perceptions by choosing your leader, or some other person, whom you have selected, to also describe your follower style and the effects that you as a follower have on others through the PRQ. Your results, The Followership Profile, will show how you see yourself in your role as a follower. You can compare your perceptions of yourself with the observation of your leader or the person you selected to give you feedback and use the results to develop and improve your effectiveness as a follower.

A MODEL FOR EVALUATING FOLLOWERS AS PARTNERS
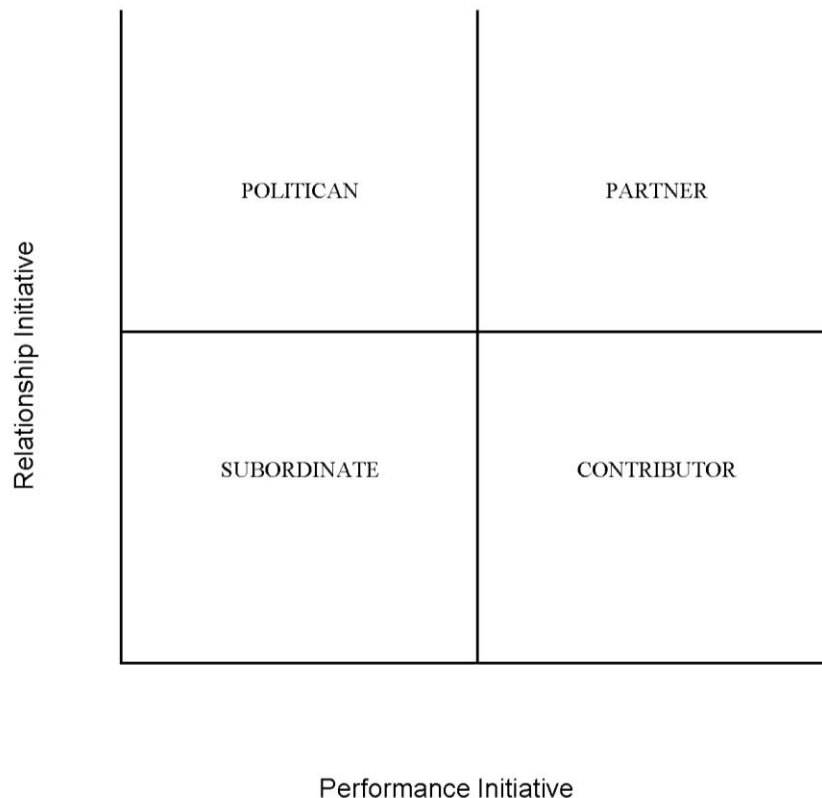
PARTNERS AND OTHER FOLLOWERS

The best followers know that they cannot be fully effective unless they work in partnership with the leader. This requires both a commitment to high performance and a commitment to developing working relationships with partners (including their boss), whose collaboration is essential to success in their own work. These followers are intent on high-performance and recognize that they share the responsibility for the quality of the relationship they have with their leaders. These followers are partners, but the two dimensions that define partnership (performance initiative and relationship initiative) also describe three other follower rolls that are familiar to organizational leaders: the subordinate, the contributor, and the politician. Please note that these three roles are important to groups and organizations as well, not all followers should necessarily be partners in all situations. Differences within a style can be as important as differences of style.

TYPES OF FOLLOWERS

Subordinate. The subordinate is the "traditional" follower who does what he or she is told - competent at a satisfactory level but not one to whom the organization looks for leadership or to whom challenging assignments are given. The subordinate keeps a job and may rise in a seniority - driven organization but demonstrates neither sensitivity to relationships nor a commitment to high performance. The subordinate is the only kind of valued follower in hierarchical organizations that operate with orders from the top and obedience from the bottom. In organizational settings where this is desired behavior, "good" followers will exhibit these characteristics even when they are fully capable of and even desirous of behaving like individuals described in other quadrants of this analysis. It can also be the style of a somewhat or completely disaffected follower who is not interested in giving anything extra, or whose job is not one of his or her primary concerns.

Contributor. This type of follower behaves in an exemplary way: works hard and is known for the quality of his or her work. This person rarely seeks to understand the perspective of the boss, however, and generally waits for direction before turning to new challenges. Although this person is thorough and creative in obtaining the resources, information, and skills that are needed to do the job, the interpersonal dynamics of the workplace are not of primary concern. Therefore, this person rarely shares her or his expertise and knowledge. These individuals can develop into full partners by gaining skills and perspectives on the relationship initiative dimension. Alternatively, their personal inclinations can be accommodated and their work value maximized by allowing them to focus on what they excel at and feel comfortable doing, and by removing or minimizing aspects of the job that call for interpersonal relationships with the boss. In the end, these types of followers are working for themselves and present a leadership challenge to fully engage them in the enterprise of the work group because they are the very followers whose feedback bosses most need.

Politician. The politician gives more attention to managing relationships than to maximizing performance. This person possesses valuable interpersonal qualities that are

often misdirected or misunderstood. Followers such as these are usually sensitive to interpersonal dynamics and are valuable for their ability to contribute when interpersonal difficulties have arisen or might arise. They can provide valuable assistance to the leader because they are willing and able to give insights into group relationships. They are also usually well-networked and can be a valuable resource during times of disruptive change and turbulence. Often they have "the ear" of the leader and represent the work group to that person. At the same time, these followers may take advantage of their interpersonal relationship with the leader and promote themselves at the expense of their peers. In addition, they can neglect the defined aspects of their jobs in favor of the more relationship-oriented or political aspects of their relationships with the boss. This is a particular problem when others rely on them for job performance. Politicians can become full partners by focusing on job performance and learning how to balance these two concerns, or they can be accepted as they are and given responsibilities that call primarily for the skills and inclinations they possess. Politicians also present a leadership challenge – to channel their interpersonal skills into a catalyst for high performance.

Partner. The partner is committed to high performance and effective relationships. In fact, the energy given to the development of relationships serves the purpose of gaining the kind of understanding that leads to plans and actions that anticipate new directions and contributions that serve unmet needs. Organizations that anticipate and keep pace with change in the global environment are characterized by leaders who encourage partnership and followers who seek to be partners.

DIMENSIONS OF THE PRQ

The four types of follower styles described above can be identified by behaviors on the performance initiative dimension and relationship initiative dimension. The PRQ provides you with your follower style based on your own self assessment as well as your follower style based on the assessment of your boss or some other person who you asked to be your observer. There are forty statements on the PRQ. Respondents were asked to report on the extent to which a person is accurately described by each statement. The forty statements form eight separate scales. Scales one through four measure performance initiative and scales five through eight assess relationship initiative. There are five statements for each scale, resulting in a score for each of the eight scales. Overall scores are also provided for the performance and relationship initiatives.

PERFORMANCE INITIATIVE

Performance initiative refers to the follower's active efforts to do a good job. A person who demonstrates a great deal of performance initiative finds ways to improve his or her own performance in the organization, which might include improving skills, sharing resources with team members, and trying new strategies. The people at the high end of the scale understand that their future depends on the future of the organization and are not content to simply do what they were asked to do yesterday. At the low end of the scale one still finds satisfactory performers, whereas at the high-end one finds experts who lead their fields and whose contributions strengthen the performance of the organization.

To assess this dimension of followers' initiative, we need to consider the extent to which the follower thinks of ways to get his or her assigned job done, the extent to which the follower treats himself or herself as a valuable resource, how well the follower works with coworkers, and what view the follower takes towards organizational and environmental change. Followers differ in the extent to which they take positive initiatives in each of the four domains described by the scales that follow:

Doing the Job

Followers vary in the extent to which they strive to be as good as they can be at what they do. At one end of this continuum are the followers who go through the motions, performing the tasks that are assigned to them up to the minimum standards required to keep their jobs, and doing little or no more. At the other end of this continuum, followers care deeply about the quality of their performance. They set their own standards, ones that are higher than the minimum prescribed by the organization, and that are focused on superior performance rather than on merely meeting defined standards. For these followers, work is an important and integral part of their lives. They take pride in what they do and apply high personal standards for performance from which they can derive personal satisfaction. The five statements that define *Doing the Job* are:

- Measures own performance against objective standards.

- Sets clear and challenging personal performance goals.

- Judges her or his performance against what the best can do.

- Solicits feedback on her or his performance.

- His or her performance is used as a model for how to do the job.

Embracing Change

A third dimension of follower initiative is the follower's orientation to change. In many cases, a follower's reaction to change is to ignore it or hide from it. Change is threatening and confusing, altering the time-honored and familiar. Some followers actively take the initiative to resist change, finding ways to prevent things from being done differently. At the positive end of this dimension are the followers who look for new and better ways to do things because they are committed to continuous improvement and see change as the vehicle for continuous improvement. These followers see change as an opportunity for improvement for themselves and their organizations. Such followers anticipate change. They can be extremely effective as agents for change, by explaining to their coworkers the advantages of doing things differently; showing by example how different doesn't have to mean worse. The five PRQ statements that measure *Embracing Change* are:

- Easily adapts to change to meet new challenges.

- Acts as if adjusting to change consumes too much energy.*

- Is the first to identify problems when change is proposed.*

- Makes suggestions for new initiatives.

- Talks about the benefits of change.

*Reverse Scored

Self as a Resource

Another important aspect of follower performance initiative resides in the extent to which the person treats him or herself as a valuable but limited resource. Some followers pay little attention to their own well-being, neglecting physical, mental and emotional health. Although this may yield some short-term benefits for the organization if the follower is effective in important ways, in the long run such neglect is likely to lead to burnout or stagnation (depending on the other aspects of follower performance initiative). Followers who will be effective over the long haul recognize that they are their own most valuable resource and take care to maintain their own physical, mental and emotional health by balancing work and other interests (family and friends, community activities and relations, physical and nutritional fitness). The five statements measuring *Self as a Resource* are:

- Demonstrates self-confidence with an internal belief that he or she is an important asset.

- Takes action to ensure balance in her or his life.

- Plans personal priorities as carefully as work priorities.

- Knows when to say "enough."

- Takes the initiative for her or his continued growth and development.

Working With Others

The final dimension of follower performance is working with others in the organization. At one extreme is the follower who cannot work well with others and therefore is continually involved in arguments and disputes, irritating everyone in the process. These followers actually interfere with the performance of others in the organization. In contrast, some followers work alone. They do not have difficulties with others, but they do not really work with them either, their performance is solely dependent on what they themselves do (or so they think). But many followers take advantage of working with others, to varying degrees. When followers work effectively with others, they are able to balance their own personal interests with the interests of others, discovering a common

purpose and working to achieve common goals. That means emphasizing cooperation over competition, finding success in the success of the whole group instead of self achievement only. The statements assessing *Working with Others* are:

- Helps coworkers solve problems even if they get the sole credit.

- Works out conflicts and disagreement with coworkers.

- Is perceived by coworkers as someone who will help with their problems.

- Works to understand coworkers' points of view.

- Is energized by competing with coworkers.*

    *Reverse Scored

RELATIONSHIP INITIATIVE

Relationship initiative refers to the follower's active attempts to improve his or her working relationship with the leader. People who demonstrate a high degree of relationship initiative find ways to help the leader succeed because they know that "you can't succeed if your boss fails."

The other absolutely vital, but typically neglected, dimension of follower initiative that has to be understood is the follower's relationship to the leader. On the relationship initiative dimension there are several questions to be explored: To what extent does the follower understand and identify with the leaders vision for the organization? Does the follower actively try to engender mutual trust with the leader? To what extent is the follower willing to communicate in a courageous fashion with the leader? How actively does the follower work to negotiate differences with the leader? At the low end of this dimension people accept the relationship that they are given. At the high end they work to increase openness and understanding in order to gain a perspective that can improve their choices as a partner. The following scales described relationship initiative:

Building Trust

Followers can take the initiative to act in ways that will build their leader's confidence and trust in them. This means that the followers will look for and take advantage of opportunities to demonstrate to the leader that she or he is reliable, discrete and loyal. Followers who demonstrate these qualities to their leaders will in turn be asked for their opinions and reactions to new ideas. Followers who do not seek out such opportunities for building trust, who do not understand or see as important this aspect of their relationship with their leaders, will be treated accordingly and will not be in a position to help their leaders as much as they might. The five statements assessing *Building Trust* are:

- Completes and follows through on assignments and action items.

- Keeps confidences even when it would be an advantage not to.

- Completes assignments even when he or she has little personal interest in them.

- Keeps commitments.

- Works actively to earn trust.

Courageous Communication

Part of building trust includes being honest, even when that is not the easiest thing to do. This aspect of relationship initiative is important enough to consider in its own right. Some followers fear (often with good reason) being the bearer of bad news and are likely to refrain from speaking unpleasant truths. This can range from the classic notion of the yes-person to simply refraining from speaking one's mind when that might be uncomfortable for the speaker and listeners. But followers who take the initiative in their relationship with their leaders are willing to speak the truth even when others may not enjoy hearing the truth, in order to serve the goals of the organization. A follower who exhibits courageous communication takes risks in order to be honest. The statements that measure *Courageous Communication* are:

- Says things the boss may not want to hear but needs to know.

- Lets people know when he or she disagrees with leader.*

- Persists until boss understands her or his point of view.

- Speaks up if leader makes a decision that conflicts with group goals.

- Informs leader when he or she is not contributing to group or organizational goals.

    *Reverse Scored

Identifying With the Leader

Followers vary considerably in the extent to which they understand and empathize with the leader's perspective. Many followers simply do not. Viewing the leader as something distant and not quite human, they do not try to think about how things look from the leader's perspective or what the leader's goals or problems might be. In organizations with clear hierarchical structures and relatively strict chains of command, it is probably quite natural to see this element missing in the typical follower's approach to the leader. Followers may even be encouraged to think of their leaders as sufficiently different (i.e., superior) as to defy understanding by mere mortals. In contrast, some followers have thought more dispassionately about their leaders, understand their

aspirations and styles, and have developed sufficient respect for the leader to adopt those aspirations as their own. These followers understand the leader's perspective, do what they can to help the leader succeed, and take pride and satisfaction in the leader's accomplishments. The five statements that address *Identifying with the Leader* are:

- Feels good about the leader's successes.

- Has a clear sense of what is important from the leader's perspective.

- Asks the boss's advice when faced with problems that he or she cannot solve.

- Wants to be identified with the leader.

- Tests her or his ideas and plans against the leader's vision for the unit or organization.

Negotiating Differences

The follower's approach to differences that arise between leaders and followers is important. A follower who is oriented toward improving her or his relationship with the leader is in a position to negotiate or mediate these differences. In the case of a difference of opinion between a leader and follower, the follower may engage in open or hidden opposition to the leader's decisions, hiding his or her differences of opinion and quickly agreeing with the leader regardless of true personal opinion. Alternatively, the follower who is concerned about the leader-follower relationship will understand and air these differences appropriately in order to have a real discussion that may persuade either party or lead to a compromise that is satisfactory to everyone. The five statements that measure *Negotiating Differences* are:

- Speaks up when disagreeing with the boss.

- Participates in "gripe sessions" about the boss and others in positions of authority.*

- Requires assistance in matters of judgment.*.

- Persists with his or her own ideas even when the boss is not wild about them.*

- Negotiates a compromise when there is an honest disagreement with the leader.

*Reverse Scored

THE FOLLOWER PROFILE REPORT

Your PRQ results, *The Follower Profile*, consist of three pages with two types of information. The first type of information is your own self-assessment results; the second reports the results of the observer you chose to describe you as a follower.

All of the results are shown as "standard scores." Since each statement can receive a score of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and there are 40 statements, the minimum numerical or "raw" PRQ score is 40 and the maximum is 200. The standard scores are calculated by looking at the distribution of the raw scores for a very large number of people who completed the PRQ in the past. "Standard" means that the raw scores are distributed on a bell-shaped curve, with the lowest actual numerical PRQ score receiving a standard score of zero and the highest being 100. The average score is 50. About two thirds of all scores fall between 33 and 66, so a score of 60 or above can be considered high, an area in which one is exhibiting a relatively high degree of effective followership. A score of 40 or below can be considered low, an area in which one's followership effectiveness should be further developed.

On the first page of your personal Follower Profile Report (page 20, Appendix I) the eight scales of the Performance and Relationship Questionnaire are presented in two groups: Performance Initiative – Self Assessment and Performance Initiative – Observer Assessment.

For the top section labeled "Performance Initiative - Self-Assessment," column one, labeled "Your Score," shows the way you rated yourself with respect to the four performance initiative scales and your overall performance initiative score. The next three columns present scores for all people in your group or organization that completed the PRQ at the same time you did. The second column, labeled "Average" shows the average self assessment score for your group. The third column labeled "Lowest" shows the lowest self-assessment score received by an individual in your group. The final column labeled 'Highest" shows the highest self-assessment score for any individual in your group. In the following section labeled "Performance Initiative - Observer Assessment" the same pattern is followed with respect to the scores provided by the Observer, the person you asked to complete the PRQ about you. Column one labeled "Your Score" shows the scores given to you by the observer you selected to give you the feedback. The next three columns present scores for all the people in your group. Column two, labeled "Average" shows the average observer scores for people in your group. The third column labeled "Lowest" shows the lowest observer scores for any individual in your group. The final column labeled "Highest" shows the highest Observer score for any individual in your group.

The second page of the report (page 21, Appendix I) presents your scores for Relationship Initiative in the same manner as the Performance Initiative scores were presented on the first page.

Page three of the Follower Profile Report is a graph with your overall Performance Initiative and Relationship Initiative scores, self assessment and observer assessment,

plotted to illustrate your follower style from your perspective and the perspective of your observer.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESULTS

Your scores are the result of your responses and those of the person you asked to give you feedback about you on the PRQ. By carefully examining your self-assessment results and comparing them with those of the observer who gave you feedback you can obtain valuable information about your role as a follower and your effects on others, on your group, and on your organization.

There are almost always some differences between how a person sees him or herself and how others see that person. What's more, we see things and people from various perspectives. Generally, you should not be concerned unless there is a difference of ten points or more between your own scores and the scores of your observer. Look especially for patterns of differences between you and your observer among the various scales and groups of scales.

If the observer's ratings are consistently higher than your self ratings, you may be a bit modest concerning your followership skills and your effect on others; many people are. If, on the other hand, you observer's ratings are consistently larger than your own, you may see yourself as being a more effective follower than others. Your self ratings may reflect an honest positive belief in yourself, but the fact that your observer sees you differently may be a critical obstacle to your followership effectiveness. Such differences are an opportunity for learning and development. These differences are considered significant when they are ten points or higher.

Often, when there's a difference between one's self assessment and others' ratings, one is tempted to try to determine which is "right." A more constructive course of action is to determine why there is a difference and what can be done about it. For some issues, you may know yourself better than the observer. On other issues the observer's ratings should probably be given more weight. In any case, large differences should be carefully examined. Such differences can help you identify issues and problems that impede your effectiveness as a follower.

HOW TO USE YOUR RESULTS

The Followership Profile information can be used to analyze and modify your own follower behavior, to develop further those personal characteristics associated with effective followership, and to consider how you might go about improving your followership effectiveness. The two overall PRQ scores, and an examination of the specific scale scores of which they are composed, can help you begin to develop your own followership potential.

Few people score exceptionally high on the two overall followership scores or on most or all of the eight scales. Nonetheless, even effective followers can learn a great deal by acting on the information provided by the PRQ. High scores help identify your greatest

strengths. You can use these to leverage development in areas in which you're not as effective as you'd like to be. Moreover, it really is a matter of degree, not of "having it" or "not having it." Low scores are guideposts for action, not signs of failure. Use low scores and especially discrepancies between how you see yourself and how another sees you as indicators of areas where improvements can be made.

Some things are harder to change than others. Most of us find it easier to learn new skills and behaviors than to learn to accept different ways of looking at things. But, again, this is a matter of degree. You do not have to become a great follower tomorrow, nor must you be at the top of every scale to be effective. Small changes and improvements can make real differences!

INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

Follow the steps outlined below to help identify strengths, areas for further development, and possible actions for improvement.

1. On which two of the eight PRQ scales did your self assessment differ most from the observer's assessment? Which two were lower and which two were higher? (Remember that differences of ten points or more are most meaningful.)

Self Score Lower

	Scale	Self Score	Observer's Score
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____

Self Score Higher

	Scale	Self Score	Observer's Score
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____

What do you think might explain these differences? Use the space below to make some notes.

2. Which two scales show the highest observer score?

       Scale   Observers' Score   Self Score

1.   _____   _____   _____

2.   _____   _____   _____

Did you expect this? Use the space below to make some notes about your thoughts.

3. Which two scales show the lowest observer score?

           Scale   Self Score   Observers' Score

1.   _____   _____   _____

2.   _____   _____   _____

Did you expect this? Use the space below to make notes about your thoughts.

4. Follow-up actions

      1. What could you do to reduce discrepancies between your self-scores and your observer's reports?

2. What are you doing that results in the highest scores (as seen by yourself and as seen by observer)? What can you do to reinforce this? What might you do to enhance and capitalize on these strengths?

3. What are you doing that causes the lowest scores (as seen by yourself and as seen by your observer)? What could you do to change this? What could you be doing differently? How might you begin to improve these scores?

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

The following suggestions may prove helpful, for your personal consideration or for group discussion:

> ➤ Do you think that popular public figures exhibit the behaviors and characteristics measured by the PRQ? Can you identify specific individuals?

> ➤ Select several scales on which your scores were relatively high and represent agreement between yourself and your observer. These scores represent areas of strength or assets, behavior and characteristics that have a positive effect on others. Try to determine how you can integrate these positive perceptions into your self-concept. You should also consider how you might expand the impact of your talents. Identify new projects, situations or areas of endeavor where your strengths will likely lead to success.

> ➤ Consider several scales on which your scores were relatively low and choose one or two that are important to you. Next try to determine specifically what you are doing or not doing in your follower role that caused these scores. Identifying the causes may be difficult. You must be honest with yourself and may also need to solicit additional feedback from your observer. Finally, determine what specific actions you must take to improve your effectiveness in the areas you identified. It may be just a matter of changing your emphasis or focus or it may involve exhibiting different behavior or developing a different personal characteristic.

> ➤ Identify and observe a "role model," someone who demonstrates strength in areas where your scores were low. Determine what it is this person does and how he or she actually behaves, to display these followership strengths. Then practice these actions. Ask others for feedback and use that information to further develop in these areas.

> ➤ Consider "partnering" with someone who has strength in an area where you are weak but who lacks some of the strengths you possess. You can then act as a coach to one another.

A FINAL NOTE

Remember, *The Follower Profile* is designed to help you to become both more informed about followership and to be a more effective follower. Improving and developing your followership skills can give you a sense of personal fulfillment; it can also help you create a better world. We wish you well in your efforts to make a positive difference.

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APPENDIX I: THE FOLLOWER PROFILE REPORT

THE FOLLOWERSHIP PROFILE
Prepared For
Cindy D Long (715)

PERFORMANCE INITIATIVE SELF ASSESSMENT		YOUR SCORE	********** GROUP SCORES **********		
			AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
I.	Doing the Job	38.35	55.34	33.67	71.16
II.	Embracing Change	47.81	51.88	40.57	65.90
III.	Self As a Resource	37.31	46.55	12.69	66.87
IV.	Working With Others	26.79	51.01	26.79	68.32
V.	**Overall**	**35.03**	**51.20**	**37.57**	**68.06**

PERFORMANCE INITIATIVE OBSERVER'S ASSESSMENT					
I.	Doing the Job	66.48	49.29	33.67	66.48
II.	Embracing Change	62.28	50.82	40.57	62.28
III.	Self As a Resource	52.09	48.81	22.54	66.87
IV.	Working With Others	59.09	43.71	17.56	59.09
V.	**Overall**	**59.98**	**48.16**	**30.93**	**59.98**

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THE FOLLOWERSHIP PROFILE
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RELATIONSHIP INITIATIVE SELF ASSESSMENT	YOUR SCORE	********** GROUP SCORES **********		
		AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
I. Building Trust	54.66	60.62	54.66	75.85
II. Courageous Communication	29.12	29.69	-3.26	52.24
III. Identifying With the Leader	55.37	55.37	35.23	67.46
IV. Negotiating Differences	48.72	57.50	48.72	81.49
V. **Overall**	**46.97**	**50.80**	**35.01**	**66.95**

RELATIONSHIP INITIATIVE OBSERVER'S ASSESSMENT				
I. Building Trust	60.38	45.72	32.61	60.38
II. Courageous Communication	39.73	48.56	29.14	64.44
III. Identifying With the Leader	59.42	50.51	35.13	64.28
IV. Negotiating Differences	40.47	53.37	35.63	74.34
V. **Overall**	**50.00**	**49.54**	**33.13**	**62.66**

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