



# **TIME MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

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F E E D B A C K   R E P O R T



**Sample Report**  
**3/25/2011**



# INTRODUCTION

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The following information is provided to help you navigate the information this is included in your Time Management 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 Time Management 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 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**

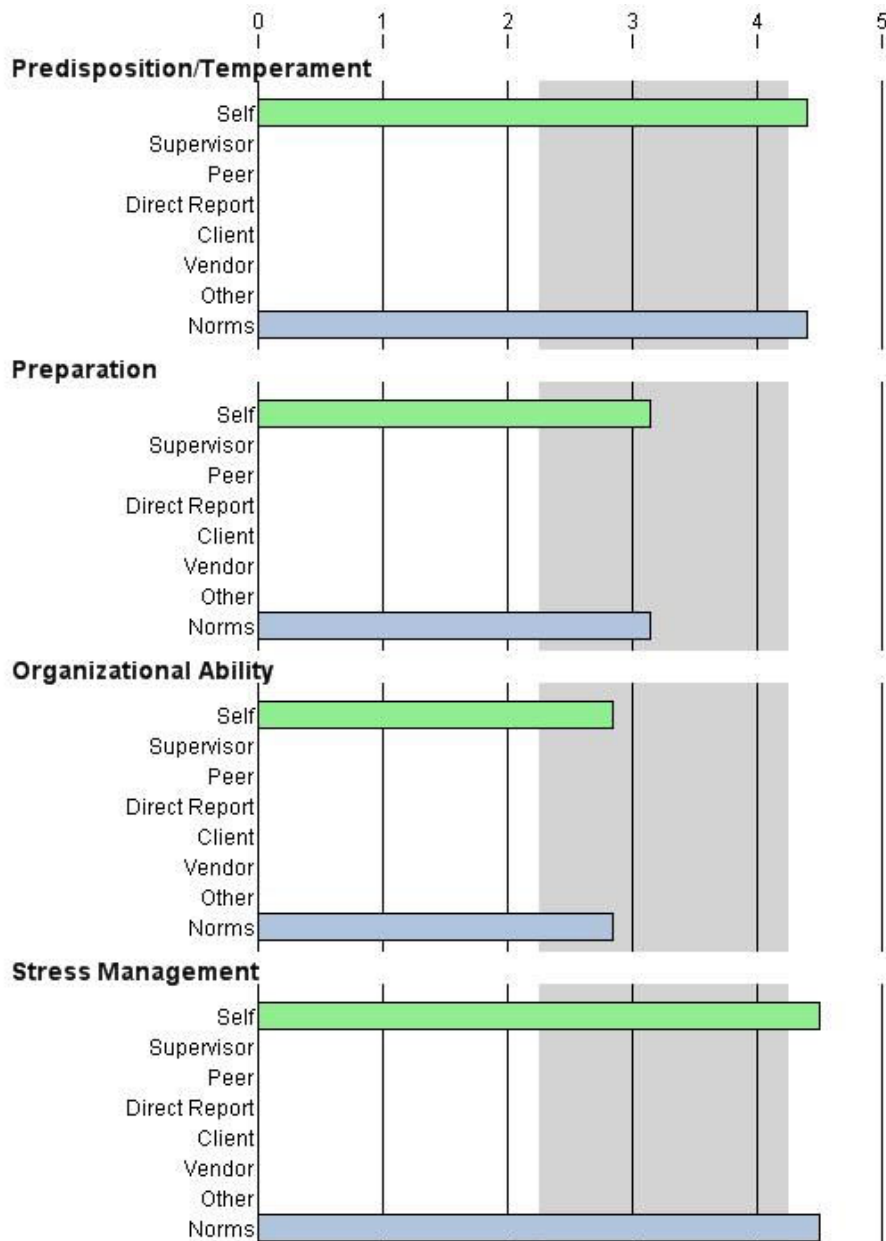
The overall output report includes detailed coaching tips for the five lowest scoring questions. These coaching tips provide not only information about the particular questions, but provide some specific advice on what individuals might do to improve their skills or learn new behaviors in the future.

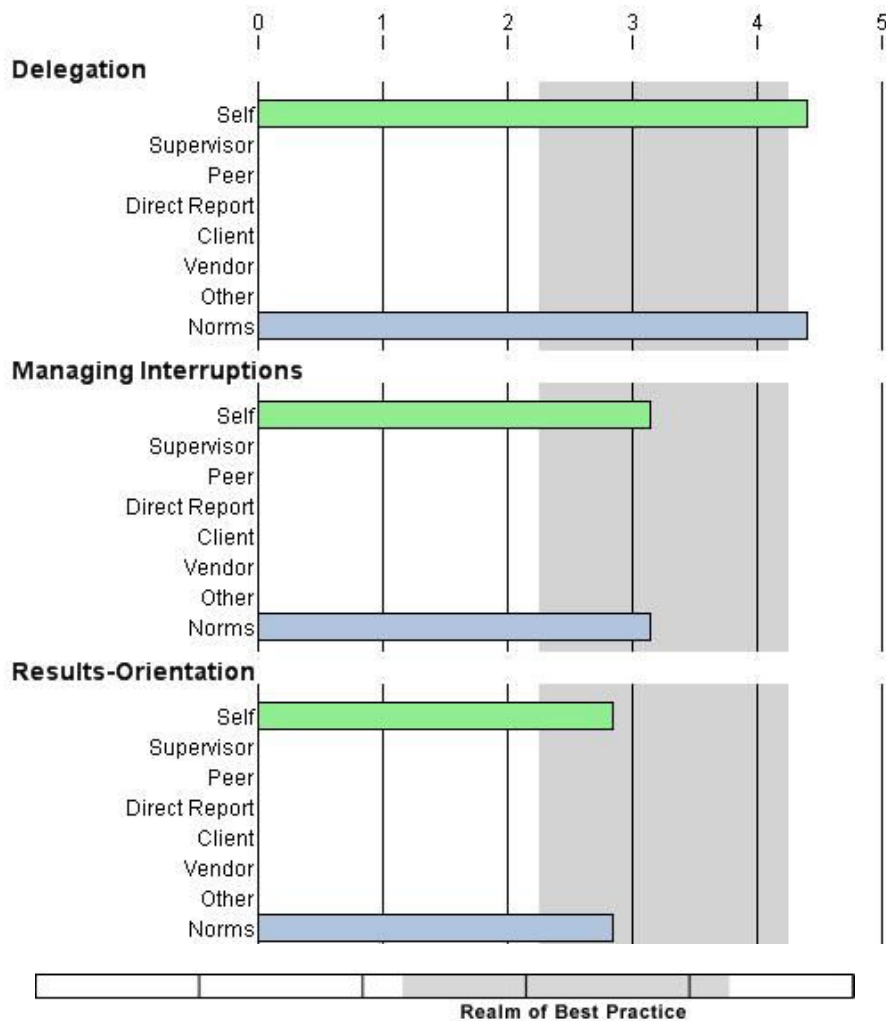
## **Note on 360 Degree Feedback**

If you received feedback from your supervisor, direct reports or peers using this assessment, please note the following: Ratings responses from all persons who completed the assessment are averaged to produce the results in the 10/10 Report, Course and Reading Suggestions, Development Plan, and Coaching Tips.



# OVERALL SUMMARY



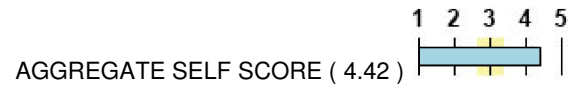


Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.



# PREDISPOSITION / TEMPERAMENT

This section on Predisposition/Temperament looks at your basic character predisposition and temperament and internal levels of "drive." It asks the question: "How much do you feel the pressure of time-how hard do you drive yourself?"



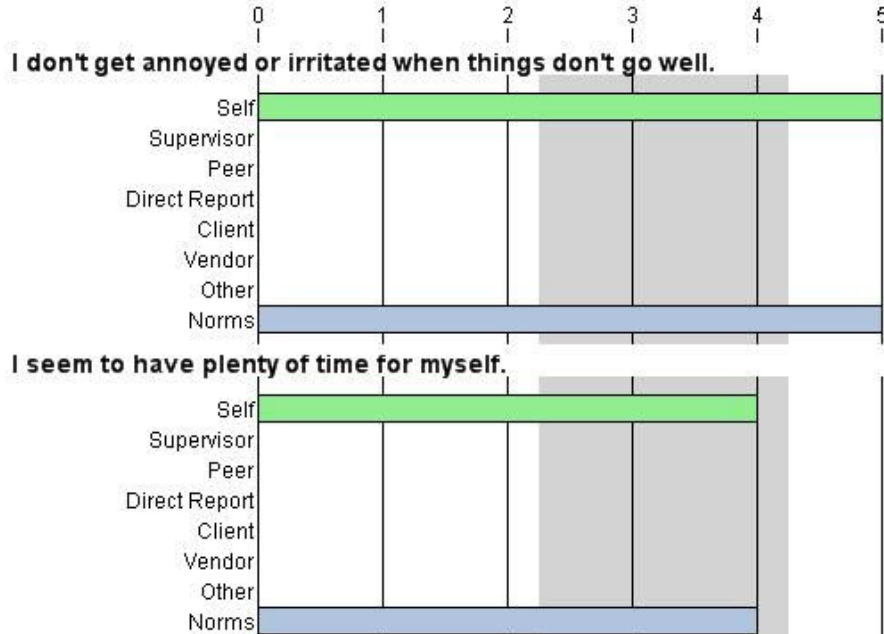
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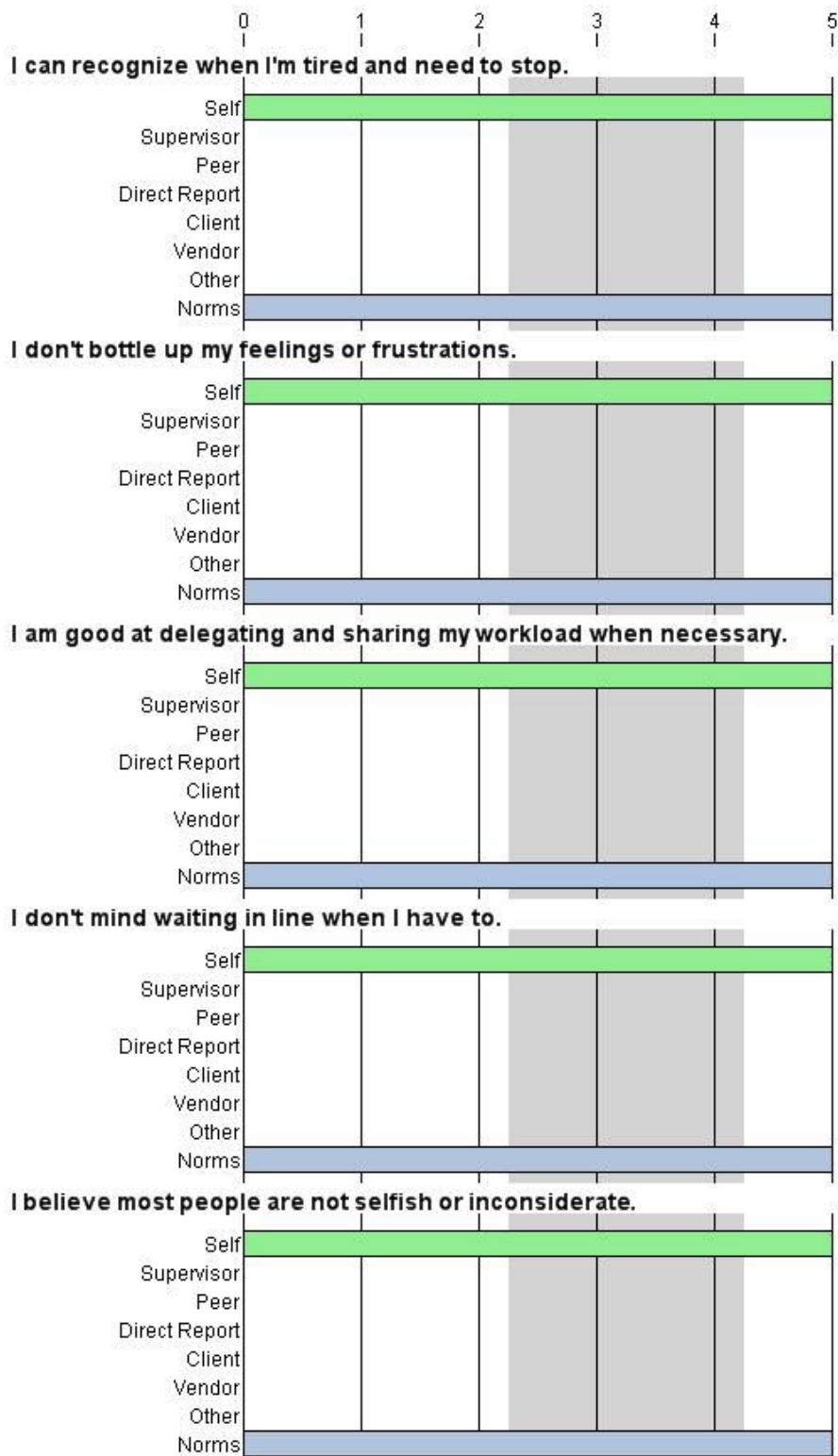
### LOW (less than 2.75)

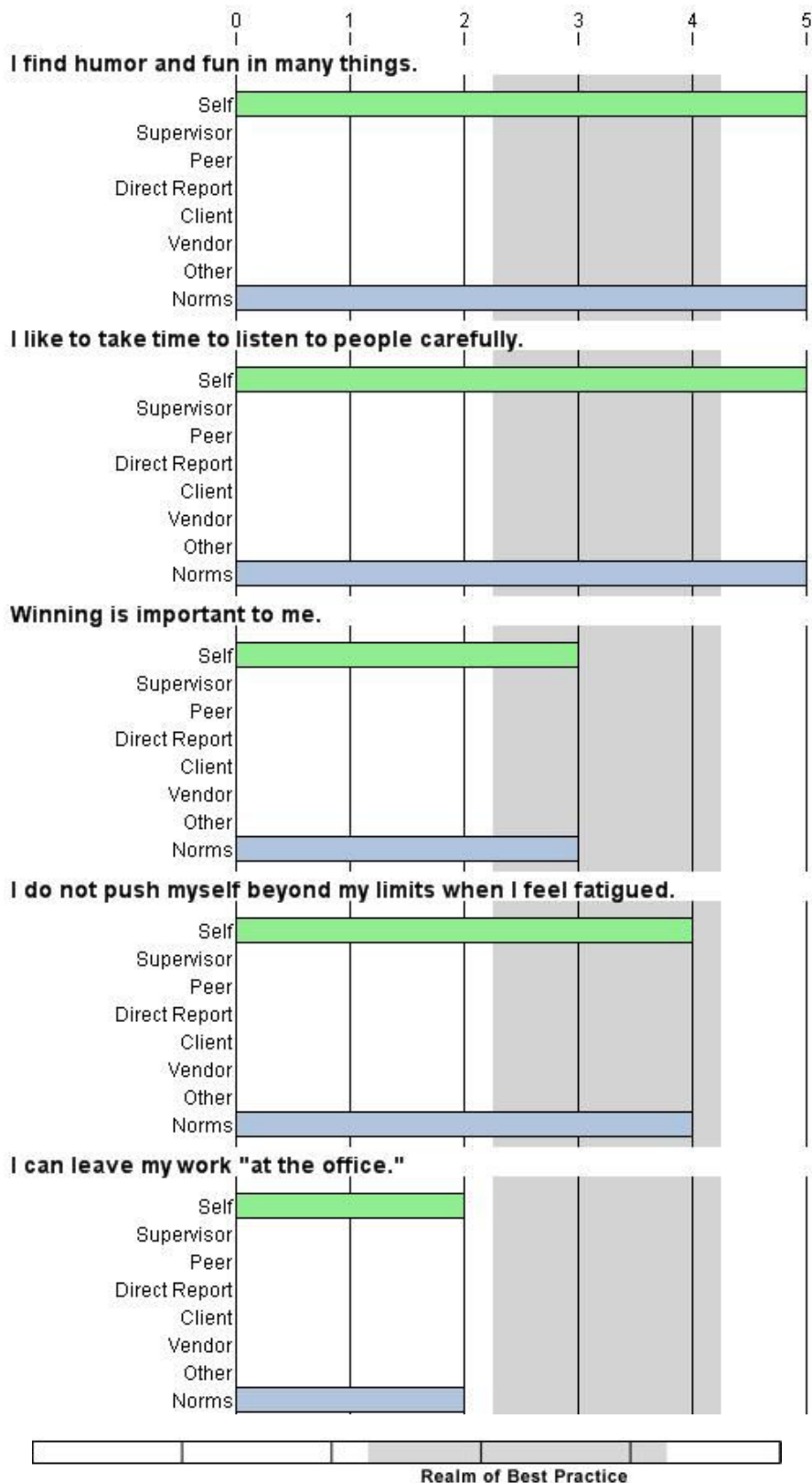
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest "Type A" behavior. This means that you are likely to see life in general as competitive, and feel constantly pressured by time. You tend to be tough on yourself and others. The Type "A" personality gets things done and is usually action-oriented. However, this behavior type takes a lot on, pushing themselves and others quite hard. Some Type A's will cram a lot into their day and thus impress those around them with their capacity to manage time with great pace and energy. However, the Type A often becomes overly obsessive about cramming in as much as possible, and sometimes fails to set aside enough time for contemplation or even time to relax or quietly reflect on where they are going.

### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest a so-called "Type B" behavior. This means that you are likely to be calm and relatively laid-back, and can relax, wind down, and easily avoid competitive pressures and unnecessary deadlines. The Type "B" tends to have fewer balls in the air. He or she works at a steadier pace than the Type A, and generally is quite good at controlling their pace and energy. A Type B is less likely to be a slave to the clock-sometimes even deliberately missing a deadline in order to maintain a healthy balance between work and a satisfying personal life (knowing others might think they are being less productive).







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

**This section on Predisposition/Temperament looks at your basic character predisposition and temperament and internal levels of "drive." It asks the question: "How much do you feel the pressure of time-how hard do you drive yourself?"**

### **Improvement actions**

The Type "A" person can learn how to devote more time to their personal life and relationships. They should avoid setting so many deadlines and targets and begin focusing on improvements wherever there are "1" or "2" ratings. This approach of concentrating on low scores first should be used for every competency.

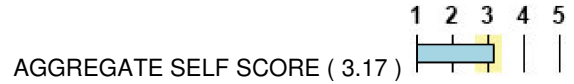
### **Predisposition/temperament**

- Design in more personal time to relax, reflect, think, and pursue gentle recreation, as often as you can.
- Stop working when you know that you are tired and clearly achieving less than your best.
- Try not to fill up your day with as much activity, targets, and priorities.
- Plan this different and slower approach into your day at first, until it becomes more natural for you.
- Clearly separate your work from your leisure time, and keep the two apart as much as possible.



# PREPARATION SKILLS

This section on Preparation Skills examines how well you prepare yourself for important tasks or personal priorities facing you on a daily or weekly basis. It asks the question: "To what extent is planning ahead an integral part of your time?"



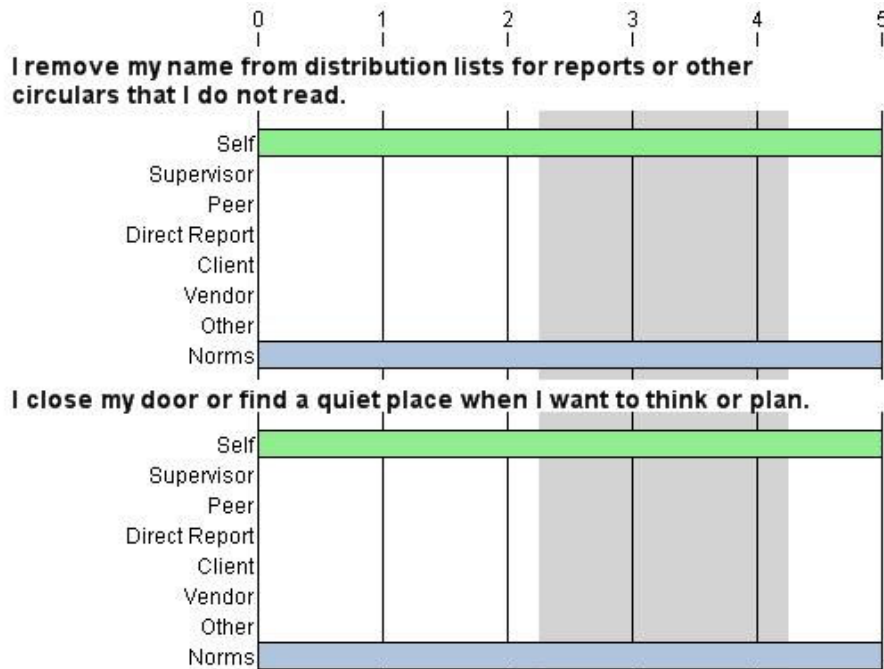
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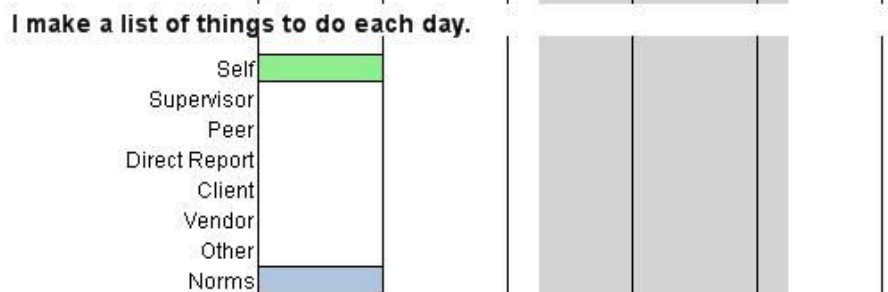
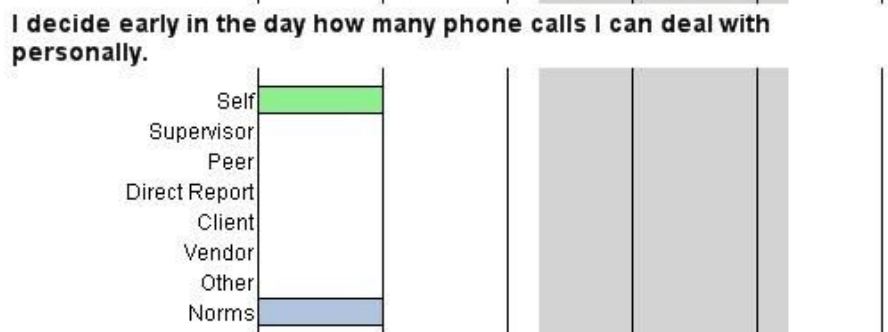
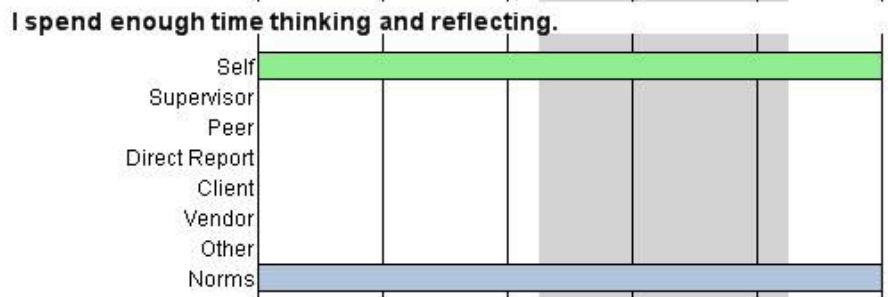
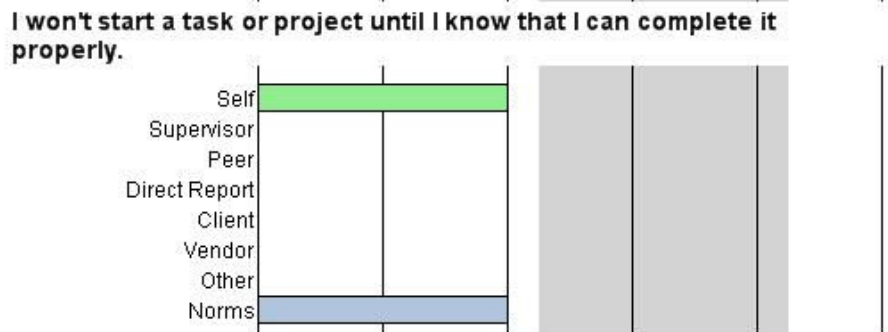
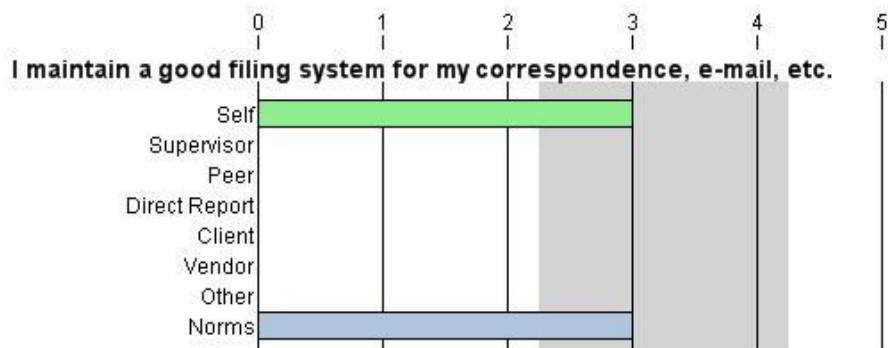
### LOW (less than 2.75)

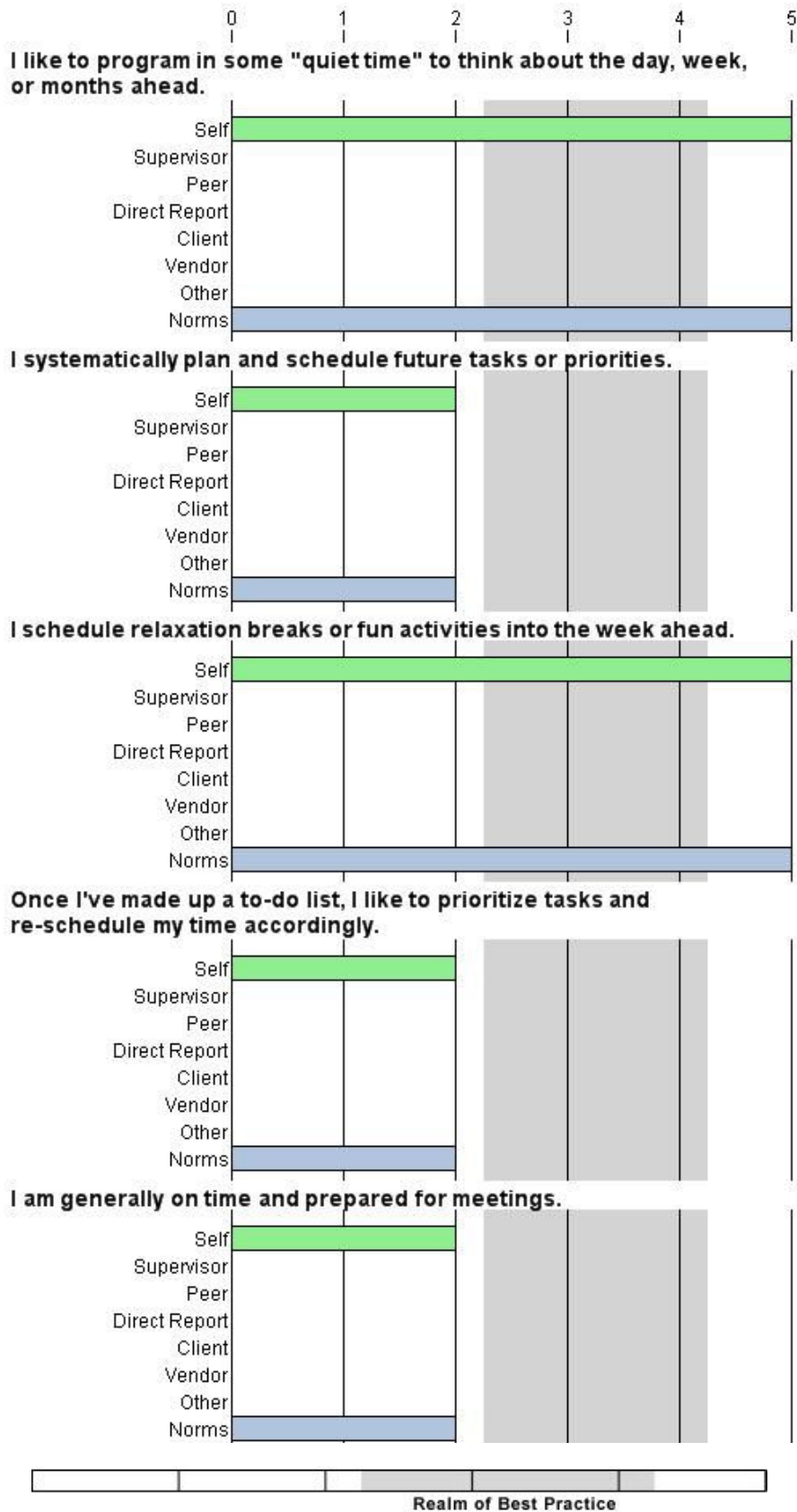
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you neglect planning or setting priorities and perhaps too often let events or interruptions dictate what your day will be like. The low scorer is likely to feel squeezed by time to the extent that they can do little or no planning ahead. This individual constantly feels that their time is not their own.

### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") are likely to mean that you are a well prepared individual or one who usually plans ahead to ensure that your known workload is tackled in a way that is sensible for you. An individual who scores high in this area finds time in every week to quietly plan or schedule ahead. This planning might be done over an extended period of time, just once or twice a week, or in short bursts, as needed.







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

**This section on Preparation Skills examines how well you prepare yourself for important tasks or personal priorities facing you on a daily or weekly basis. It asks the question: "To what extent is planning ahead an integral part of your time?"**

### **Improvement actions**

The low scorer needs to actively set aside time to plan and prepare. This will not be easy at first, and might not come naturally or happen on a regular basis, despite good intentions. Planning or priority-setting should ideally be done at the beginning or end of each day, even if it is only for a few minutes. If this proves difficult, ask a friend or partner to remind you. If possible, use a planning system, a predesigned priority-setting list, or an organizer to give you some structure and keep you from losing scraps of paper or forgetting things.

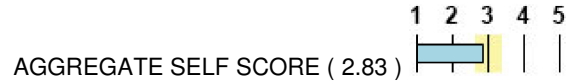
### **Preparation skills**

- Force yourself to spend at least a few minutes each day with a pen and paper, and reflect upon what is important to achieve in the day or the week ahead.
- Make a list and prioritize it into MUST DO, SHOULD DO, and NICE TO DO IF THERE IS TIME categories.
- Stick to your daily plan as much as you can, once it has been thought through.
- Ensure that breaks, quiet time, and catch-up gaps are planned into each day.



# ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY

This section on Organizational Ability looks at how well you maintain a healthy equilibrium in your life. It asks the question: "How effectively do you control your time in order to achieve a good balance?"



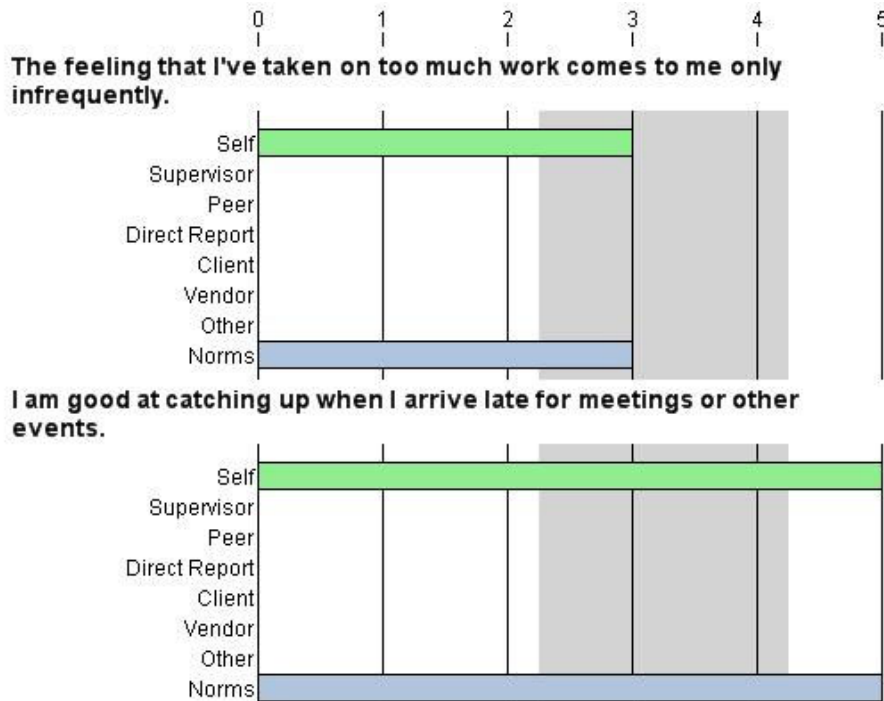
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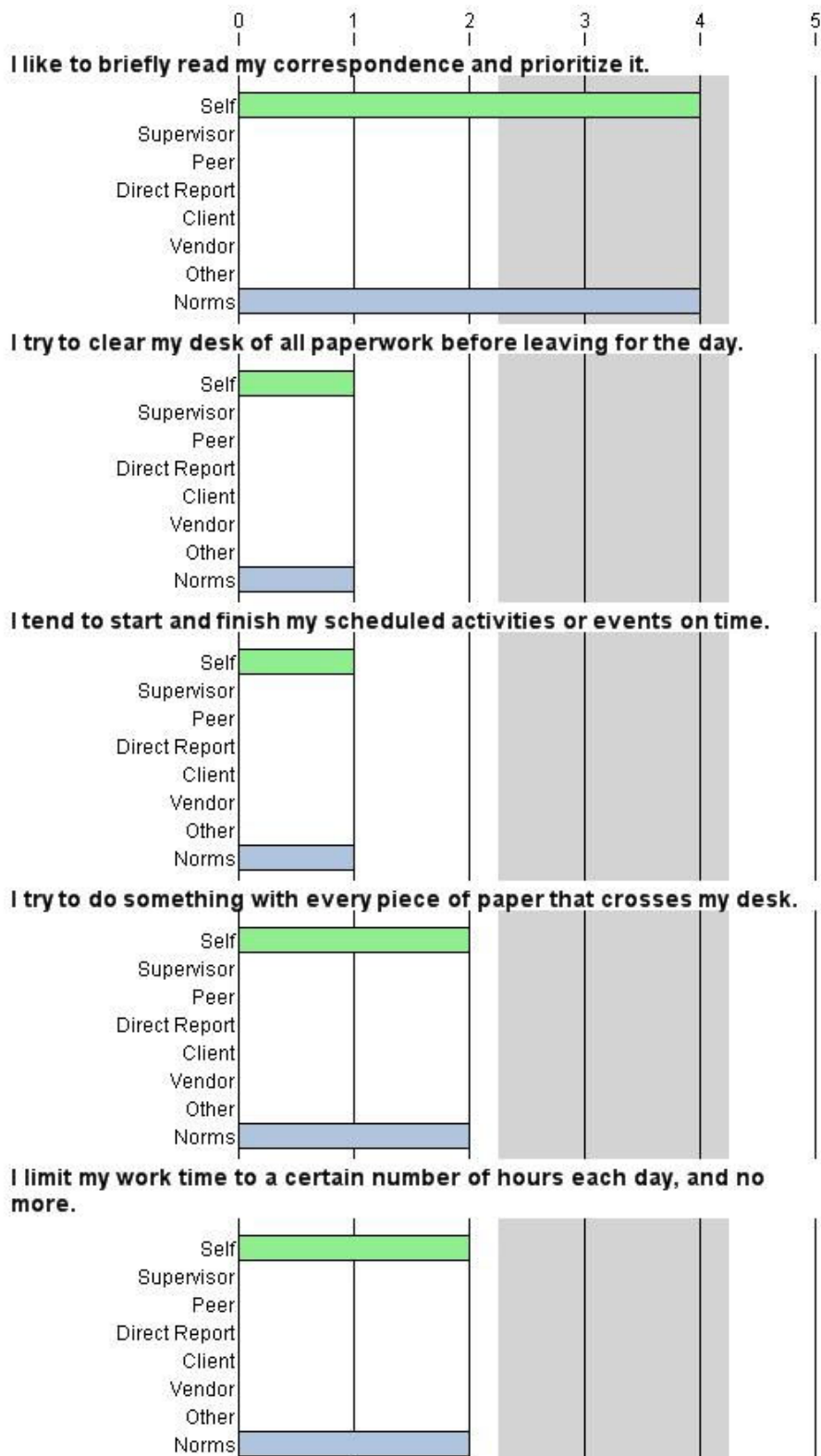
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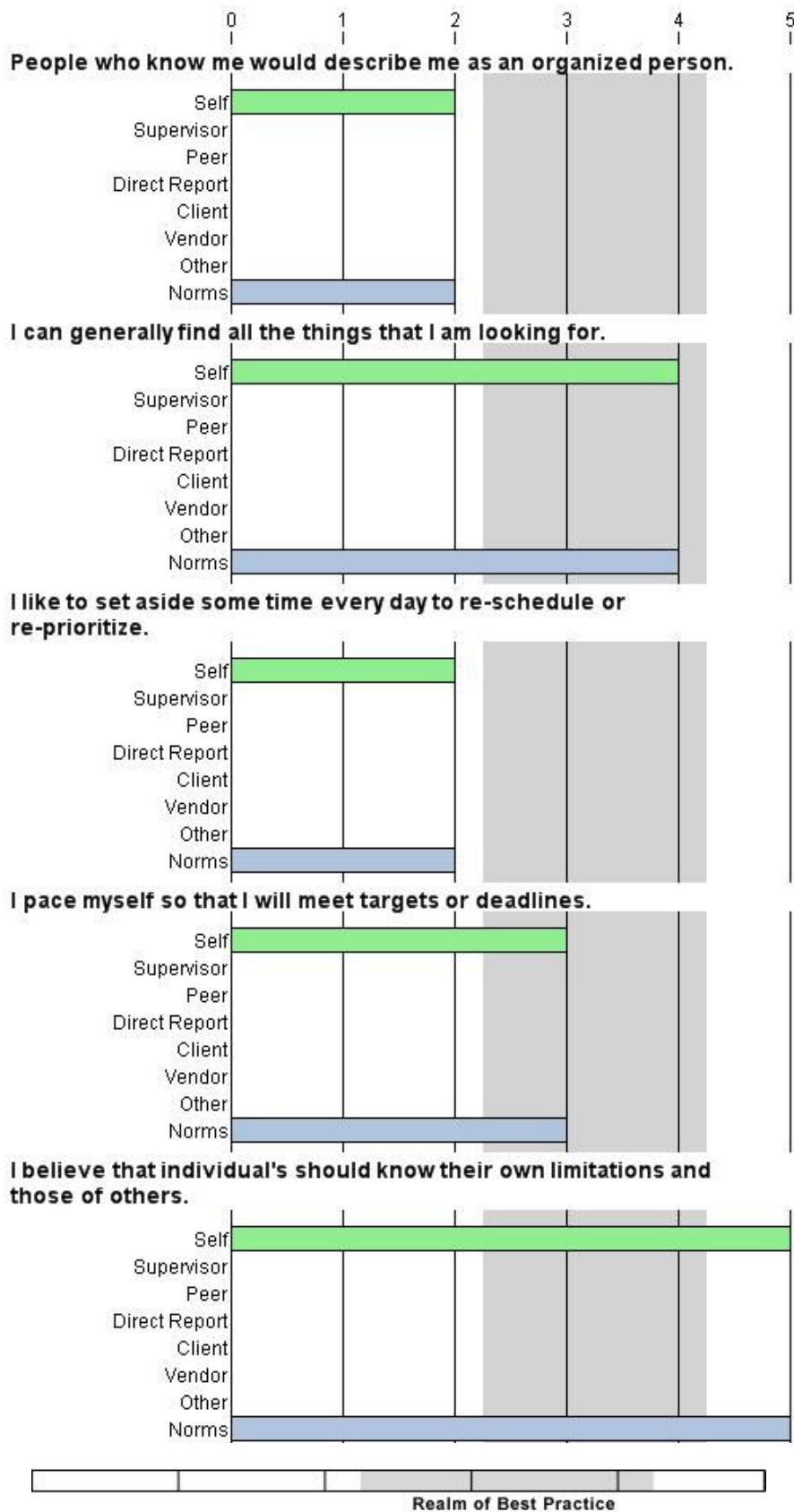
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you spend "little or no time" in systematically organizing your workload. You tend to tackle only the next tasks that face you, with limited forethought. A low score suggests that you believe there are more tasks than there is time in the day to do them. As a result, you usually take on whatever comes next or whatever seems to be most urgent, failing to organize yourself or others to be most effective and productive.

### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you are able to organize yourself and others so that significant changes in your workload are quickly accommodated and re-prioritized. An individual whose scores are high believes that personal organization is a critical tool in their time-management tool bag. They understand the need to think about the ongoing fluctuations in workload and changes in deadlines, and will reorganize themselves and others in order to achieve the best result.







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

**This section on Organizational Ability looks at how well you maintain a healthy equilibrium in your life. It asks the question: "How effectively do you control your time in order to achieve a good balance?"**

### **Improvement actions**

Low scorers need to recognize that people, resources, targets, deadlines, and available time will have to be organized in order to achieve the right results; you cannot float through each day like a piece of seaweed drifting on the sea of changing priorities. Low scorers must take charge of their personal priorities and learn that there is always an optimal sequence for tackling a series of future tasks or projects.

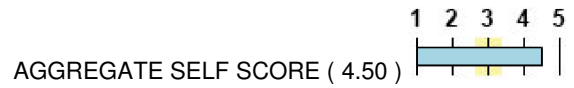
### **Organizational ability**

- Make sure that all your planned and unplanned activities of the day and week are always scheduled and re-scheduled as necessary.
- Set up a system to make sure that you can find things you need regularly, and think carefully about targets and deadlines for tasks or projects.
- Try not to make commitments until you have looked at your overall workload and worked out what is possible and how much re-organization will be necessary.
- Realistically recognize your own limitations, and those of others around you upon whom you may depend to meet your targets and deadlines.



# STRESS MANAGEMENT

This section on Stress Management looks at your ability to keep calm and stay focused when the pressure is on or a crisis occurs. It asks the question: "When the people around you are all losing their heads, can you keep yours?"



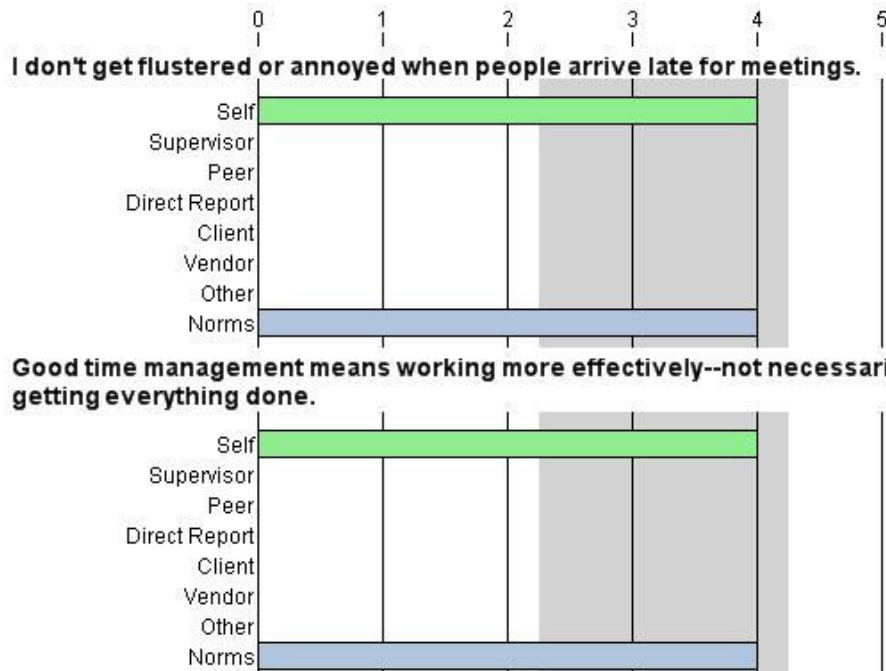
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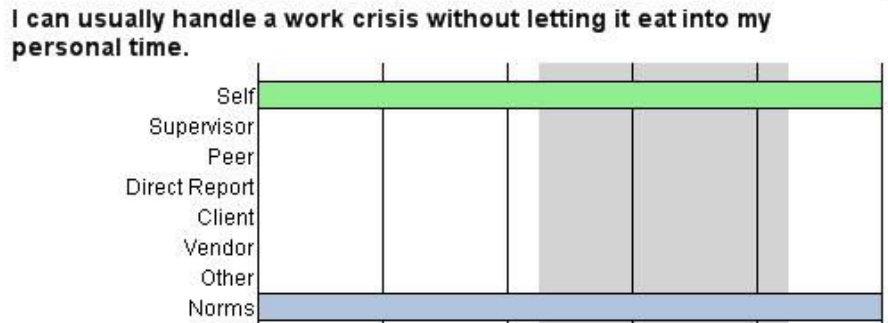
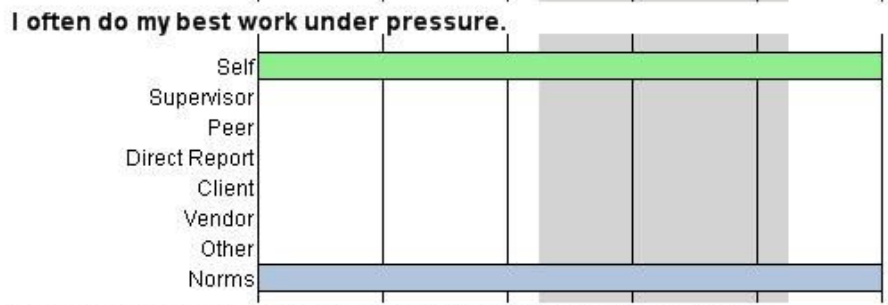
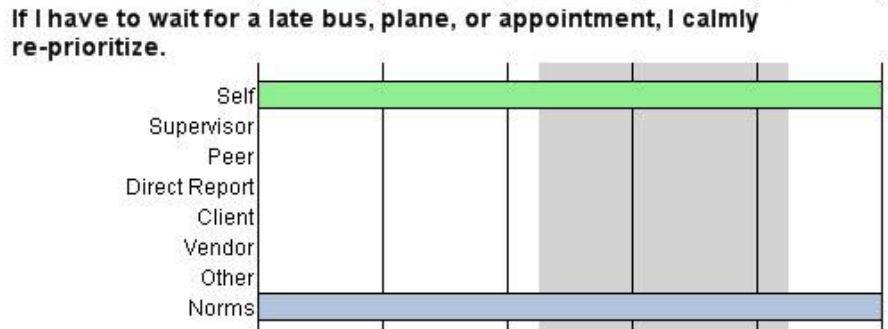
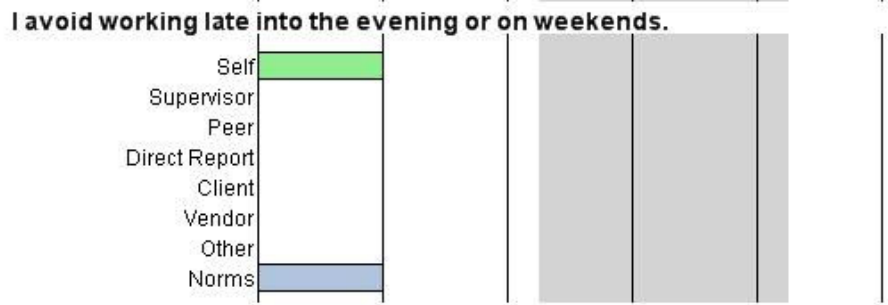
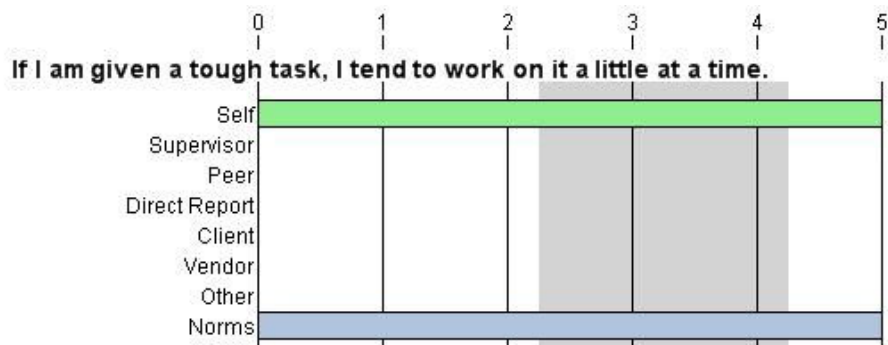
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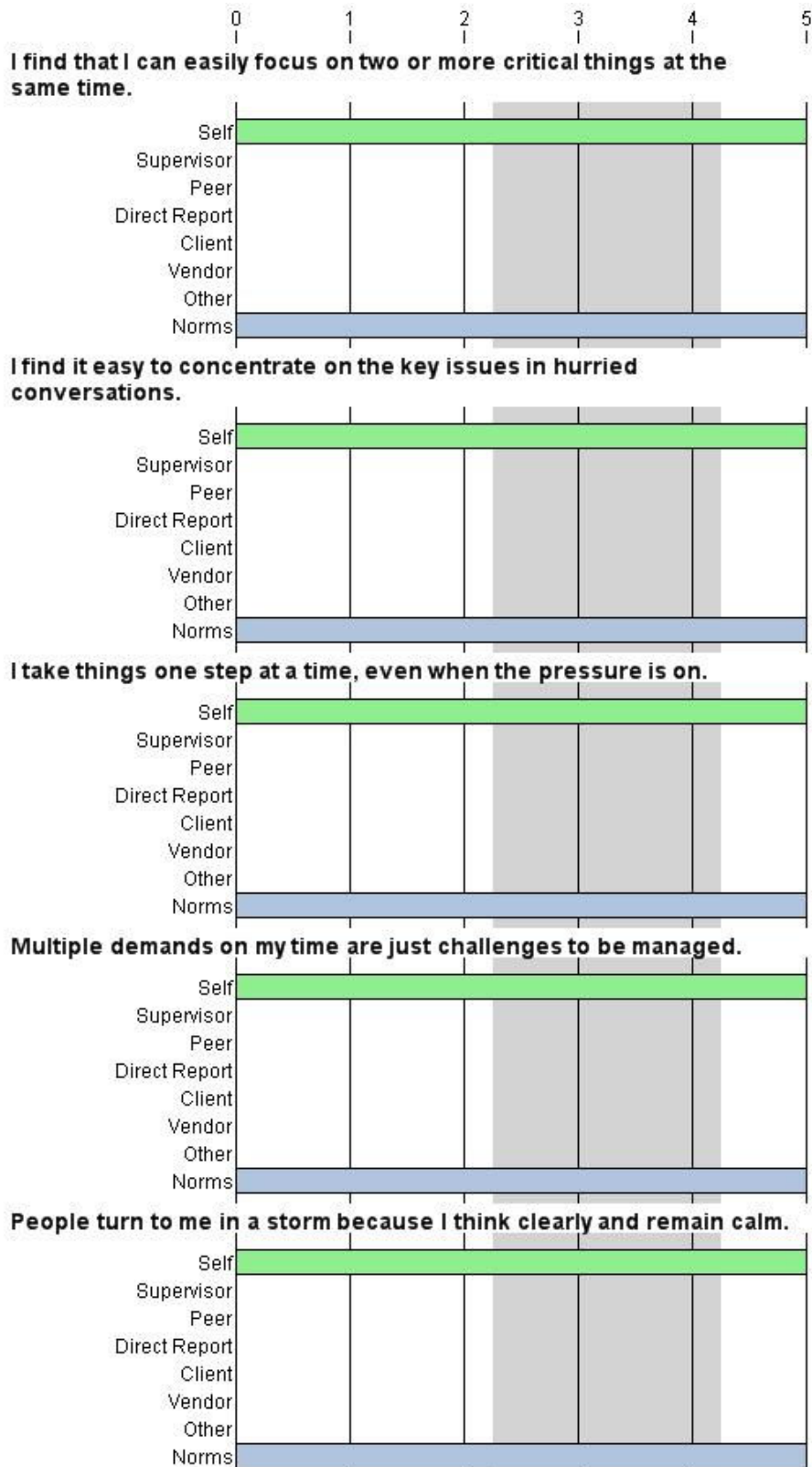
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that pressure distracts you and tends to throw you entirely off-course, causing potential strain and worry. A low scorer in this section is likely to become flustered, disorganized, or destabilized by high levels of stress during workload crises. This can lead to cutting corners, dropping priority tasks, working at home or late at night, or even causing unnecessary stress to others.

### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you manage pressure in a relatively relaxed and flexible way and generally do not see it as a threat to your key priorities. A high scorer in this section is likely to understand that pressure and stress are an inevitable part of day-to-day life, and accommodate it the best way they can. However, they tend to find creative ways to make extra time available and do not let the pressure get the best of them or encroach on personal or reflective time.







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

**This section on Stress Management looks at your ability to keep calm and stay focused when the pressure is on or a crisis occurs. It asks the question: "When the people around you are all losing their heads, can you keep yours?"**

### **Improvement actions**

Low scorers need to accept pressure as something to be managed as flexibly as possible. Strong efforts need to be made to protect planning time, thinking time, breaktime, and relaxation time when pressure is at its greatest. Ultimately, pressure should be viewed as something to be creatively managed and reduced-not endured as a long-term "norm."

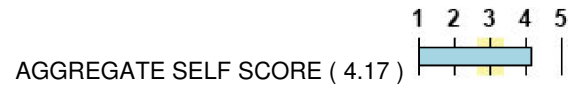
### **Stress management**

- Do some quiet reflective thinking or contemplation on the sort of pressure or crises that arise on a regular basis (or of a similar type when it occurs).
- Develop a range of flexible coping strategies that can be deployed when this occurs.
- Include more planning, stronger prioritization, delegation, more short breaks, or a number of other coping tactics into your schedule.
- Take your time and calmly rethink your most important priorities when the pressure is on or crises occur.



# DELEGATION SKILLS

This section on Delegation looks at how well you assess what you are capable of achieving and then seek ways to obtain assistance from others when necessary. It asks the question: "How effectively do you spread out your tasks or workload in order to stay personally in control or on top of things?"



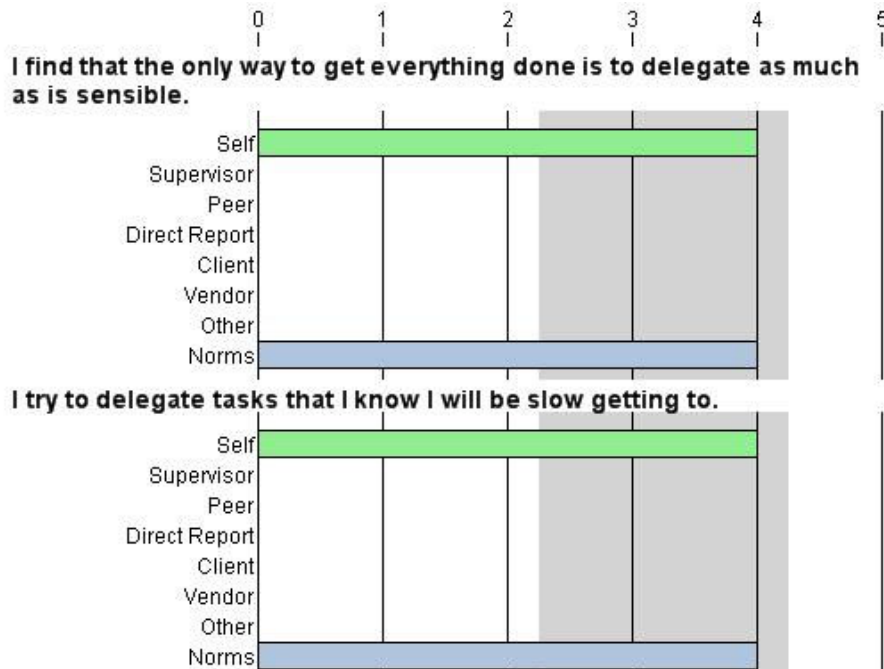
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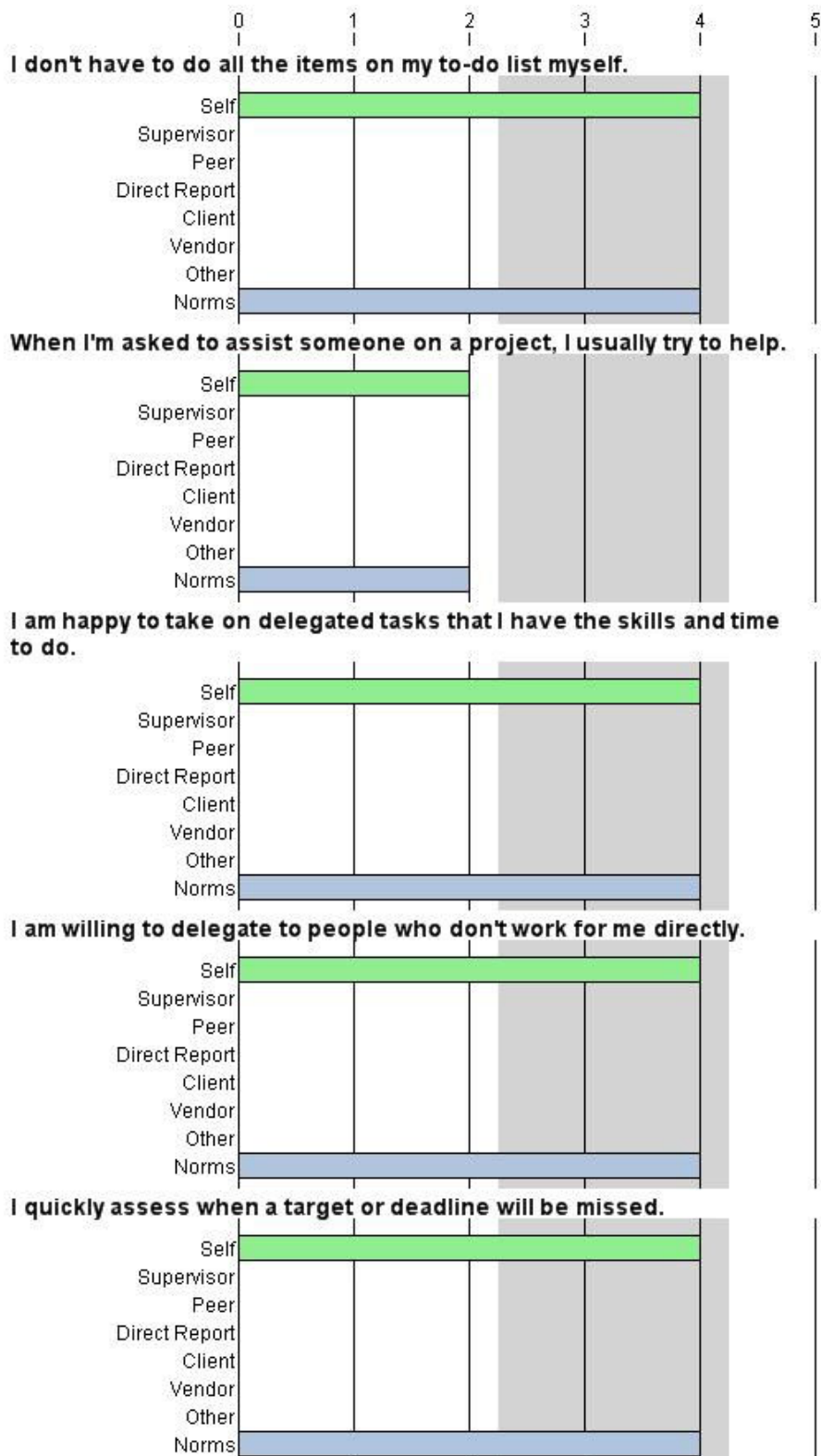
### LOW (less than 2.75)

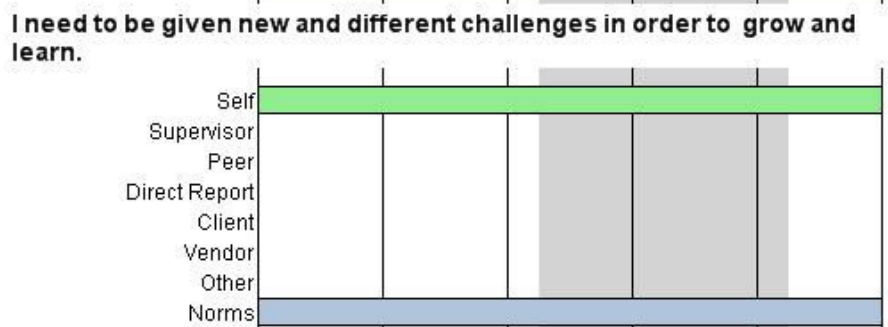
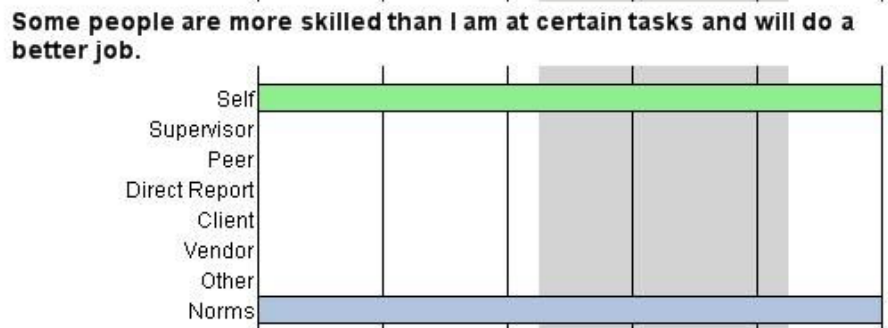
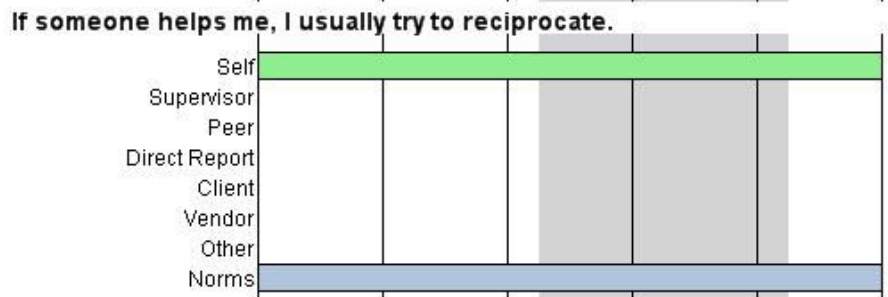
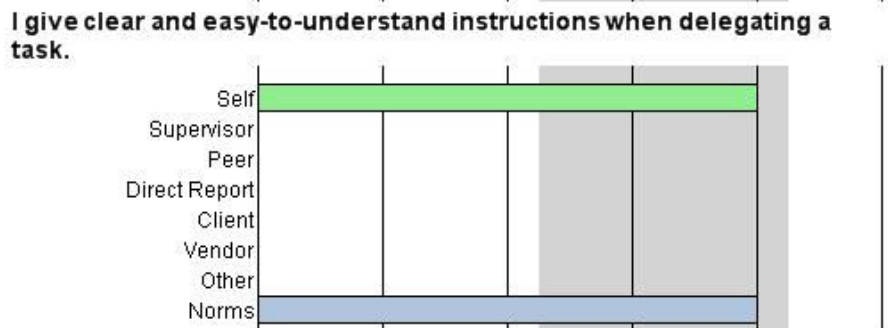
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you probably take on too much work, and think that asking others for help is a sign of weakness or failure (or that people around you are less capable or less skilled than you are). An individual who scores low in this area tends to take on most tasks themselves and has an "If a job is worth doing well, it's better to do it yourself" attitude most of the time. You might have to work harder to catch up or work longer hours than necessary because you don't spread your workload out more creatively.

### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you recognize your own skill limitations and time constraints and look to find ways to get others to help you as much as possible. A high scorer in this area carefully evaluates their own limitations against their workload and looks for ways to match people, resources, and tasks (even when they do not have people working for them directly).







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

**This section on Delegation looks at how well you assess what you are capable of achieving and then seek ways to obtain assistance from others when necessary. It asks the question: "How effectively do you spread out your tasks or workload in order to stay personally in control or on top of things?"**

### **Improvement actions**

Low scorers in this area need to invest more time and energy in sharing their skills with others and in accepting the fact that some people can tackle a number of tasks as well, if not better, than they can. Start with delegating only small tasks or trading work you enjoy (or are good at) with work that colleagues might do better. The more you use this cooperative approach, the more natural delegation will be.

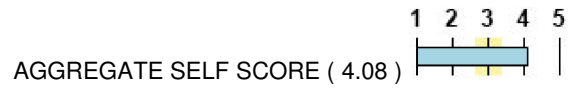
### **Delegation skills**

- Think about your colleagues around you and their skills and abilities relative to your own.
- Reflect upon the balance of workload that prevails in a given day or week (including the peaks and troughs).
- Look at your own skills and abilities and develop a list of tasks and activities that could become the basis of discussion for delegating to others, and for you to potentially take on some of their tasks.
- Consider what tasks or projects could help individuals to grow or learn new skills.



# MANAGING INTERRUPTIONS

This section on Managing Interruptions looks at how well you stay on track when unexpected events or people interfere with your plans. It asks the question: "How flexible are you in your work, should unexpected events or interruptions occur?"



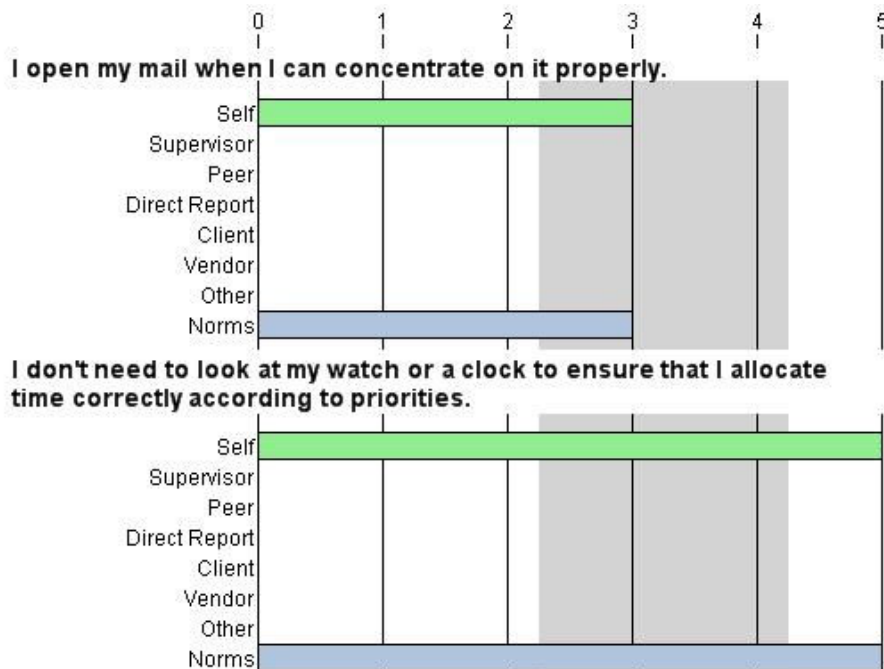
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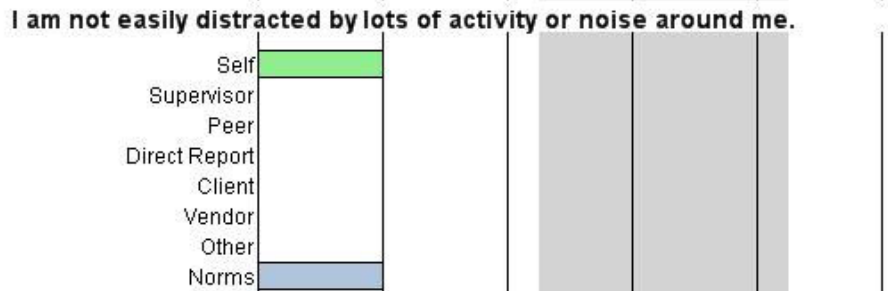
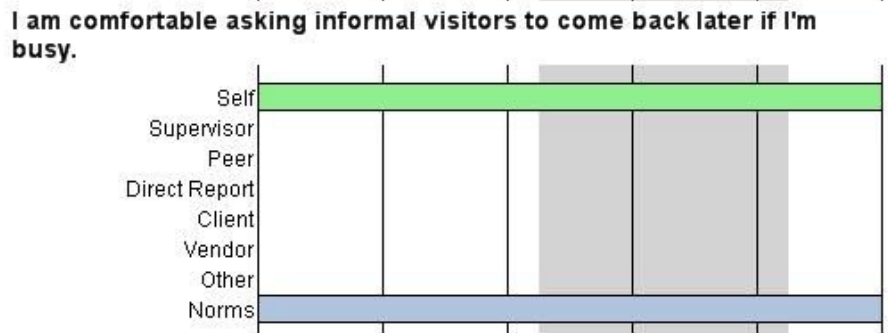
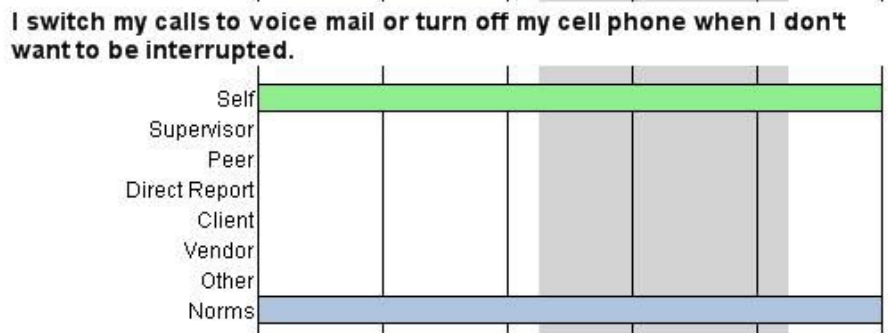
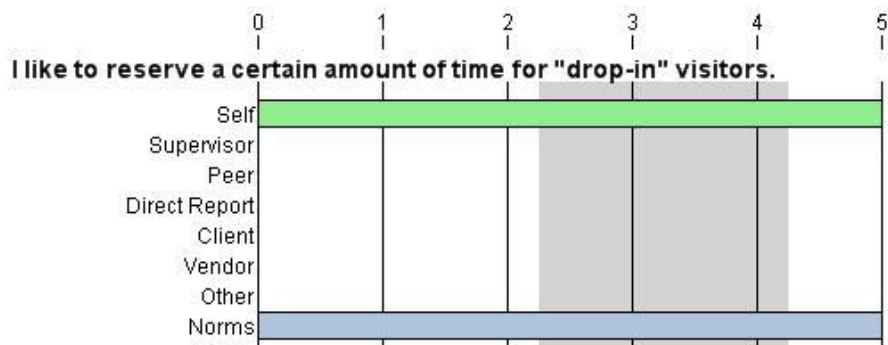
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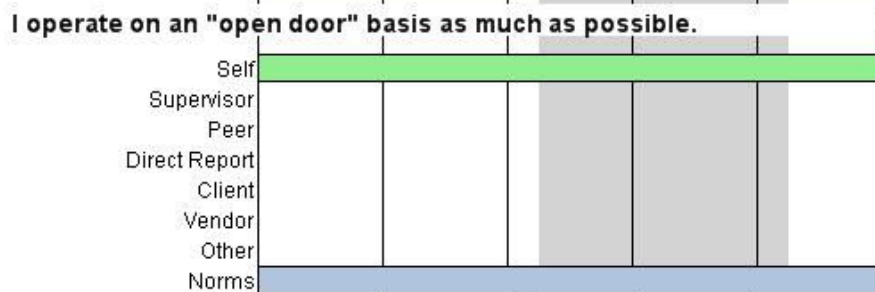
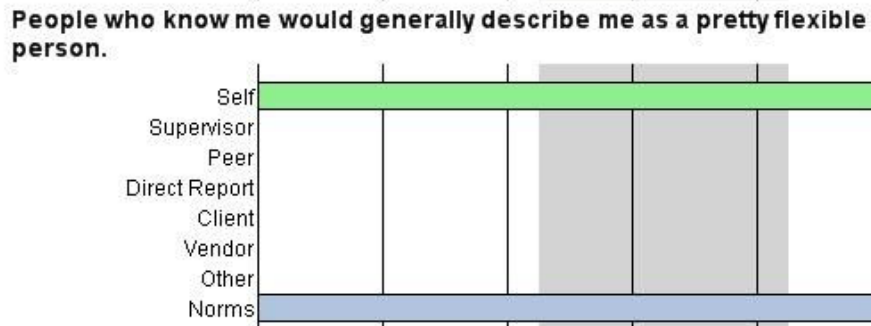
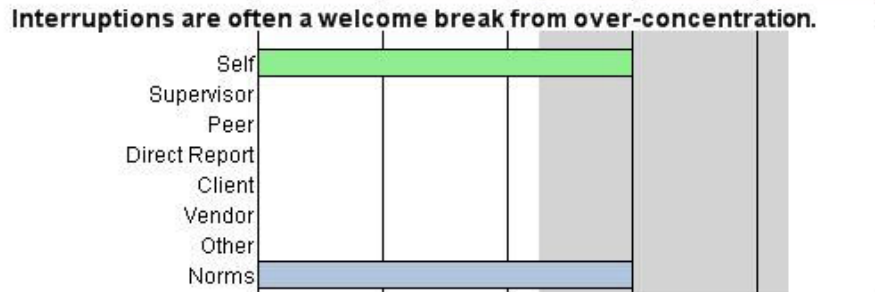
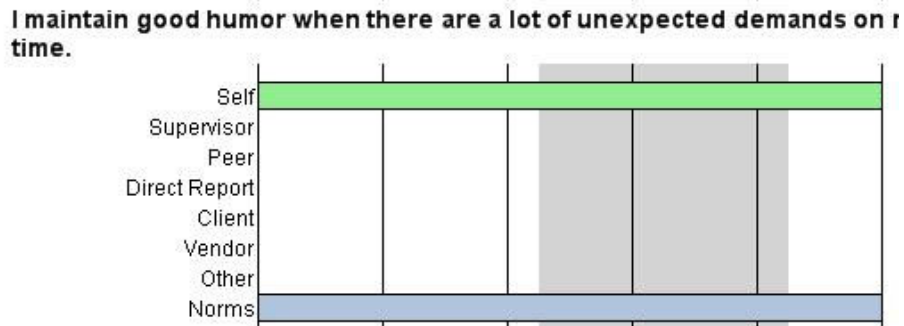
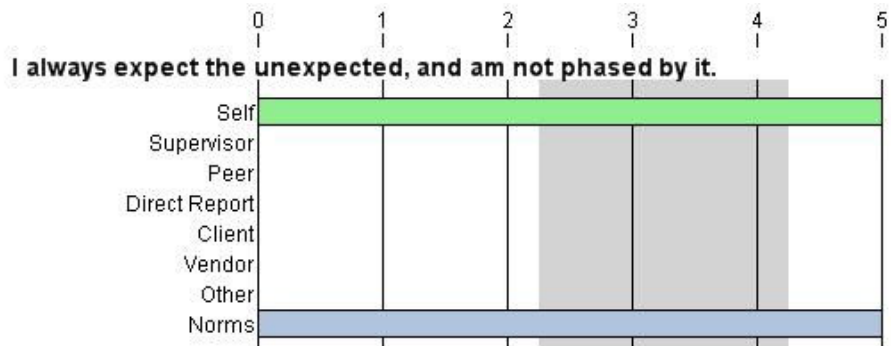
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you probably let interruptions steer you off-course and get in the way of greater priorities. Those whose scores are high in this area unwittingly give indications that it is okay for others to interrupt them when they like. A low scorer here generally dislikes interruptions and worries about when they will come (yet again!), but also tends to invite them by allowing current interruptions to take control. Other work (and some of it much more important) gets postponed or dropped altogether.

### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you take interruptions in stride, but also plan your day to accept a certain amount of unexpected variation. An individual who scores high here sends out signals that he or she should only be interrupted for important things, but also keeps these interruptions quite brief, quickly evaluating them for their importance in the broader picture.







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

**This section on Managing Interruptions looks at how well you stay on track when unexpected events or people interfere with your plans. It asks the question: "How flexible are you in your work, should unexpected events or interruptions occur?"**

### **Improvement actions**

Low scorers in this area need to spell out just when interruptions are generally not acceptable (close the door of a room, transfer calls to voice mail, etc.). In addition, low scorers need to recognize that not every interruption requires their full attention and immediate action. Instead, such interruptions should be speedily assessed and allocated appropriate time on the prioritized to-do list.

### **Managing interruptions**

- List the main interruptions that you are likely to encounter (phone calls, mail, drop-in visitors, etc.).
- Design some time into your day or your week to allow for some interruptions (but be clear about how you will manage them when they occur).
- Assess how much time you will allow before you need to prioritize your workload and get back on track, when interruptions occur.
- Be firm in managing casual interruptions from people by clearly telling them that you have important priorities that you must do first.



# RESULT ORIENTATION

This section on Results-Orientation looks at how well you maintain your focus on the results or goals that are most important. It asks the question: "How well do you distinguish between what is important and what is merely urgent?"



## Interpretation

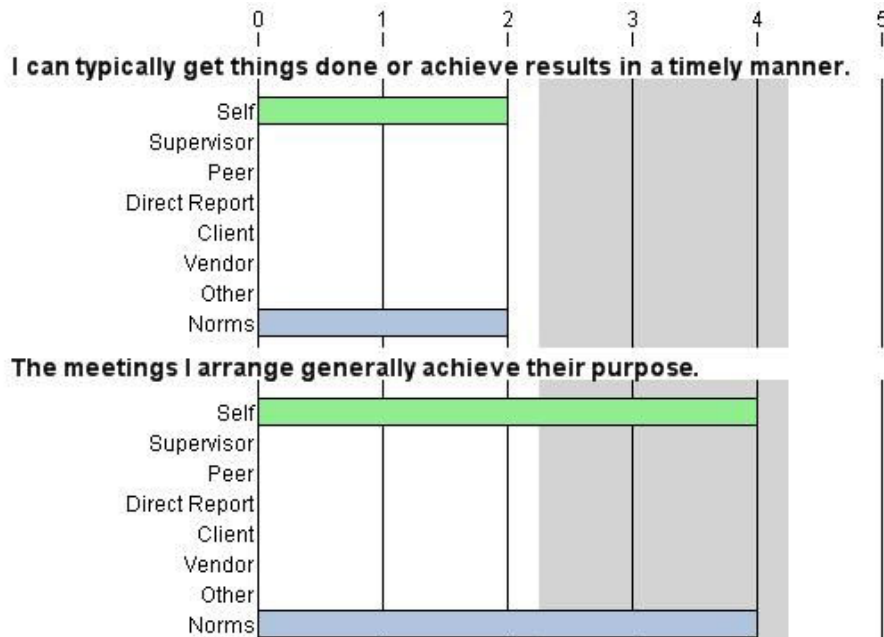
### LOW (less than 2.75)

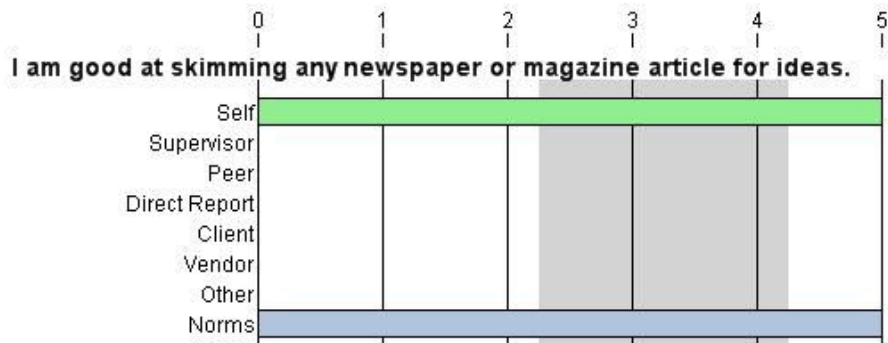
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you do not spend enough time thinking about which tasks or activities can move you closer to your goals. Low results-orientation can also mean incorrectly seeing all activity as being synonymous with productive work or output.

An individual who scores low in this area often thinks they are juggling a lot of balls in the air, but in reality might not be accomplishing as much as they think. Completing tasks or expending effort without direction ultimately means that important tasks or personal goals are not completed quickly enough.

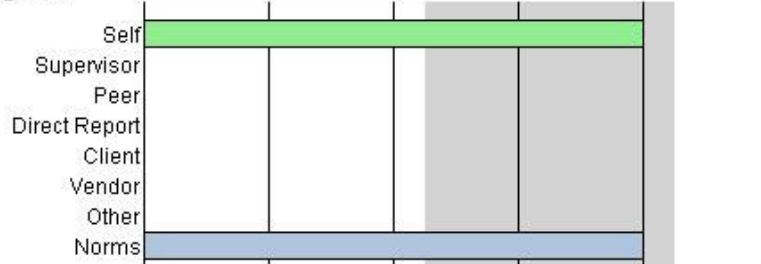
### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you usually retain a strong awareness of what is important and of a high priority. You ask others to be very clear about what they want to achieve and value most, and decide if these needs should take precedence over your own goals. A high scorer will usually understand that the tasks or projects that they spend the majority of their time doing should be tied to results that are important to themselves personally or to their organization.

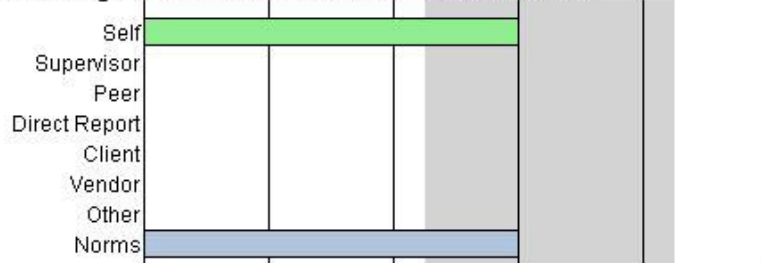




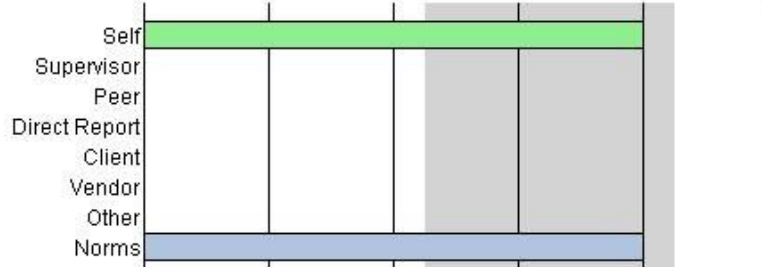
**I easily recognize the priority of important tasks, even when the task is not urgent.**



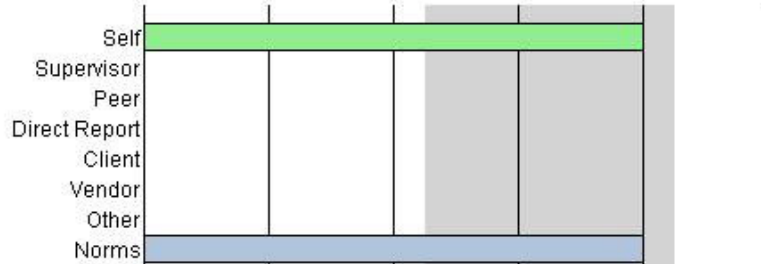
**I have personal goals to which I devote time each month.**

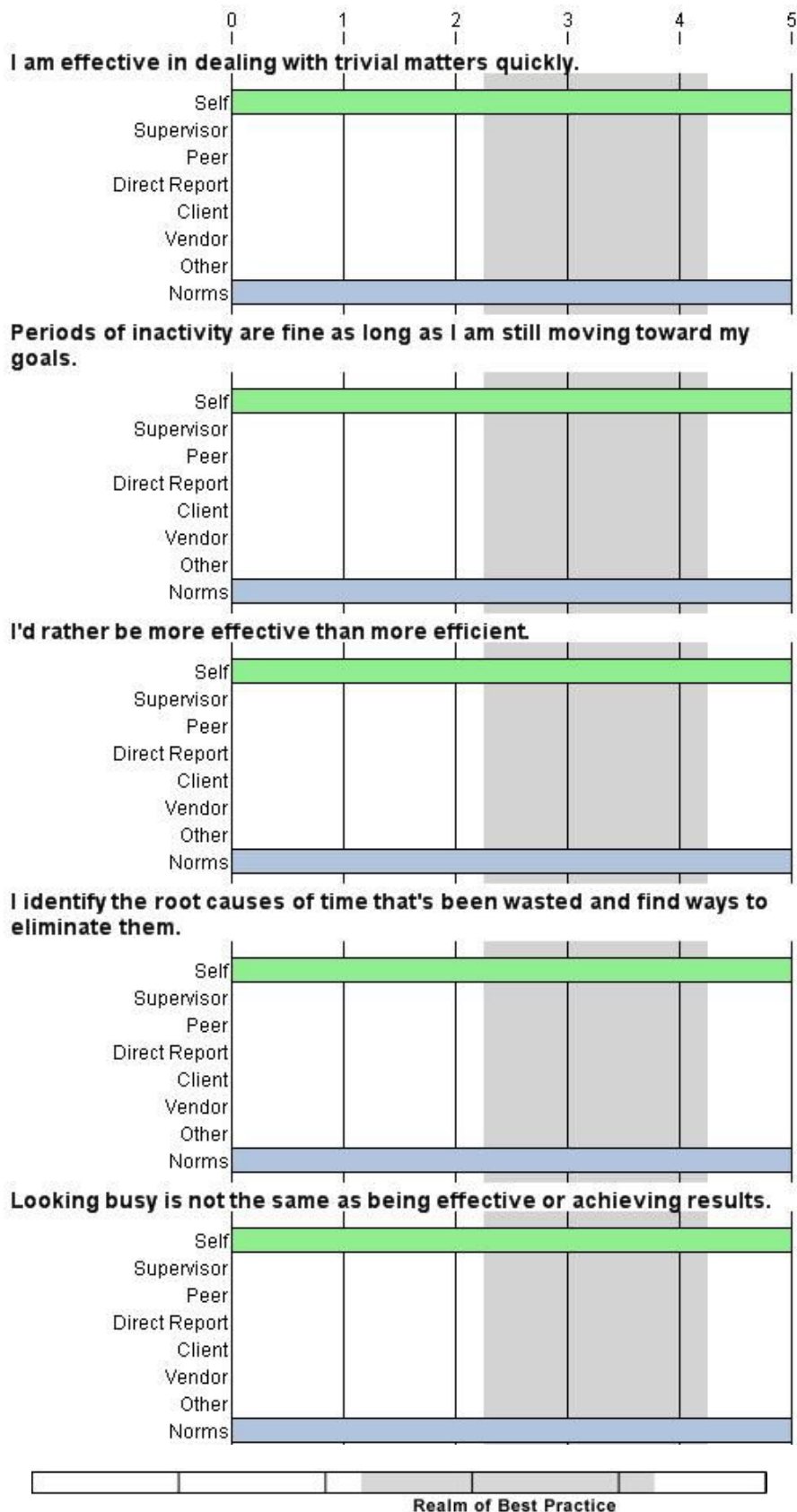


**An urgent matter doesn't command my full attention unless it is also important.**



**It is critical that I focus on the possible or likely outcomes of my efforts.**





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

**This section on Results-Orientation looks at how well you maintain your focus on the results or goals that are most important. It asks the question: "How well do you distinguish between what is important and what is merely urgent?"**

### **Improvement actions**

Low scorers need to keep an up-to-date list of what is important or what results they would like to achieve, and by when. Having done this, they should plan their work and organize their time so that anything that is trivial or of low value is dispatched quickly. A major part of the day should be devoted to moving closer to their goals.

### **Results orientation**

- Write down your major work related goals and your personal goals for the week or month ahead, and how much time appears to be needed to work on each.
- Write down the steps and tasks that will help you to move toward these goals or targets.
- Make sure that your expected results are built into your planning, scheduling, and organizational process.
- Seek out all the regular wasted time and effort in your weekly schedule and develop a comprehensive plan to eliminate it.



## THE 10 / 10 REPORT

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### Top 10 Strengths

#### Results-Orientation

84 .Looking busy is not the same as being effective or achieving results.	5.00
83 .I identify the root causes of time that's been wasted and find ways to eliminate them.	5.00
82 .I'd rather be more effective than more efficient.	5.00
81 .Periods of inactivity are fine as long as I am still moving toward my goals.	5.00
80 .I am effective in dealing with trivial matters quickly.	5.00
75 .I am good at skimming any newspaper or magazine article for ideas.	5.00

#### Managing Interruptions

72 .I operate on an "open door" basis as much as possible.	5.00
71 .People who know me would generally describe me as a pretty flexible person.	5.00
69 .I maintain good humor when there are a lot of unexpected demands on my time.	5.00
68 .I always expect the unexpected, and am not phased by it.	5.00

### Top 10 Development Needs

#### Preparation

18 .I decide early in the day how many phone calls I can deal with personally.	1.00
19 .I make a list of things to do each day.	1.00

#### Organizational Ability

28 .I try to clear my desk of all paperwork before leaving for the day.	1.00
29 .I tend to start and finish my scheduled activities or events on time.	1.00

#### Stress Management

40 .I avoid working late into the evening or on weekends.	1.00
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#### Managing Interruptions

67 .I am not easily distracted by lots of activity or noise around me.	1.00
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#### Predisposition/Temperament

12 .I can leave my work "at the office."	2.00
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#### Preparation

16 .I won't start a task or project until I know that I can complete it properly.	2.00
21 .I systematically plan and schedule future tasks or priorities.	2.00
23 .Once I've made up a to-do list, I like to prioritize tasks and re-schedule my time accordingly.	2.00



## **COURSE AND READING SUGGESTIONS**

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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.

### **Organizational Ability**

Organizational Ability looks at how well you maintain a healthy equilibrium in your life. It asks the question: "How effectively do you control your time in order to achieve a good balance?"

#### **Course Suggestion**

- Organizing Yourself
- Workload Planning/Scheduling
- Organizing Resources
- Managing People/Teams

#### **Other Suggestion**

- Think about using a filofax or electronic organizer for the first time or more frequently.
- 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**

- The 15 Minute Organizer. Emilie Barnes: Harvest House
- Organize Yourself. Ronni Elsenberg: IDG
- 500 Terrific ideas for Organizing Everything. Sheree Bykofsky: Budget Books
- Beyond Time Management-Life Balancing Connections. Jane Petrick: IDG

### **Preparation**

Preparation examines how well you prepare yourself for important tasks or personal priorities facing you on a daily or weekly basis. It asks the question: "To what extent is planning ahead an integral part of your time?"

#### **Course Suggestion**

- Thinking/Planning Ahead
- Planning Methods/Approaches
- Scheduling Skills
- Prioritization Skills

#### **Reading Suggestion**

- First Things First. Stephen Covey and Rebbecca Merrill: Simon and Schuster
- The Art of Doing Nothing. Veronique Cienne and Erica Lennard: Clarkson Potter
- 201 Ways to Manage Your Time Better. Alan Axelrod and Jim Holtje
- Managing Your Time. John Rogers: Handbook of Management Skills, Gower



## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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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.

I decide early in the day how many phone calls I can deal with personally.  
Action to Take:

Score: 1.00

I make a list of things to do each day.  
Action to Take:

Score: 1.00

I try to clear my desk of all paperwork before leaving for the day.  
Action to Take:

Score: 1.00

I tend to start and finish my scheduled activities or events on time.  
Action to Take:

Score: 1.00

I avoid working late into the evening or on weekends.  
Action to Take:

Score: 1.00

## Preparation

**Decide early in the morning how many phone calls you have time for that day.**

The telephone has been described as the greatest nuisance among all our conveniences, and the greatest convenience among all our nuisances. It can also be the most effective tool we have to solve problems, but it at times is a nightmarish monster that devours our time and concentration, so we end up achieving very little. You need to learn how to talk back to the phone and show *it* who's the boss! Ration the demands coming down the line to you; if you don't, you will end up neglecting your other work. Try these approaches:

1. Monitor one or two days' phone calls as they come in. Write down all the necessary details; don't rely on your memory. How many were there? Did you deal with them well? How many calls were put through to you that really should have gone to others? With calls that were clearly yours, what could have been done better?
2. Treat this log-in exercise seriously: It can help you detect patterns in the calls coming in, as well as provide documented proof that you have too many things to take care of. Consider delegating some things to others.
3. Do a reality check on your own behavior. Are you trying to be indispensable by taking some calls that really could be better handled by others?
4. How do you end up with these calls in the first place? If you have switchboard operators, have they been adequately trained to know just who looks after what area? Are calls put through to you that can be better handled by someone else? (Is it a problem for you because you have to either transfer the call or try to solve the caller's problem?) A system-wide problem such as this will affect you and probably others; identify who can solve the problem, and upwardly delegate it to them.
5. Is the telephone the best way to transact a particular type of business? Many people call on the spur of the moment, but end up taking a lot of your time explaining just what it is they want. The phone does allow for rapid, two-way communication, which can help to quickly produce solutions, but the phone can also be ineffective in other situations best dealt with in writing. Sometimes it is better to communicate by letter, fax, or e-mail because you can use diagrams, maps, documents, and more detail. Learn how to diplomatically encourage this behavior, and not just with external customers: Help create a culture within your workplace of putting some (not all) communication in writing. Use the phone for what works best on the phone.

## Preparation

### **Make a to-do list each day.**

Most of us wouldn't think of taking a long road trip without a map. Why start a day without a map of where you want to go? Develop the ability to take charge of events and people you spend your time on, rather than be controlled by them. You will never escape the control trap unless you create a structure for controlling or influencing the never-ending flow of events and people in your world. Start by making a daily to-do list.

Bear these things in mind when you start your to-do list:

**1.** List everything first. It will look like a "laundry list" at first, until you start to structure it. Organize all the top-priority tasks first, and group them into categories.

Even a real laundry list involves some measure of organization: synthetics here, whites there, towels and heavier fabrics here, stained garments there, and so on. Consider what will happen to your real laundry if you do not have a system! Then do the same thing with the day's to-do list.

**2.** Make sure that you don't confuse a daily list with a weekly or monthly or yearly list. What will happen if all of this stuff doesn't get done today? Will the consequences be catastrophic, or only mildly annoying? Some things can slide and might even benefit from a little benign neglect.

**3.** Remember that although everyone will want a piece of your time, their priorities won't be the same as yours. Are you getting stuck with their problems? Is your good-natured desire to help out compromising your ability to get done what you need to get done? Have you mastered the art of the diplomatic "no" or "not right now"?

**4.** Each time you achieve something, reward yourself with something simple. Get up and go for a walk, get a drink, indulge in some non-work-focused chat with a colleague, play a computer game, have lunch. Use a big, bold penstroke to cross off another goal achieved. Keep rewards healthy and reasonably quick, however. Don't make them a reason for major procrastination. You can return to the fray refreshed and ready to knock off another item on your list.

**5.** Be realistic about what you put on your list. Break up big tasks into digestible chunks, so that the job doesn't look quite so daunting.

## Organizational Ability

**Try to clear your desk of all paperwork at the end of each day.**

Can't find what you're looking for? There might be a reason for that. Is your desk and all that it contains becoming more notable for its height and depth, rather than for its old-fashioned two-dimensional width and length? You need to process paperwork with as much effectiveness as you can muster. Otherwise, you might lose the paper war. Remember, the trick is to do at least something with every piece of paper that crosses your desk. It does not belong in a pile.

Try these approaches:

1. Put some time aside each day to process your paperwork. Filing and cleaning up are part of your real work, not trivial things.
2. Make sure that the filing system really works and that you are not just stuffing things into the drawers as if you were frantically cleaning up because your in-laws are coming by unexpectedly. The time that you think you are saving now will be lost many times over when you can't find a thing later on (and you just might be looking for that thing in a crisis). The more disorganized you are, the more crises you will have!
3. If you don't have a system of your own, deal with every document in one of the following four ways: 1. Immediately deal with it yourself as *your* priority. 2. Send it to someone else to deal with it (write a note to yourself to follow-up). 3. File it right away or put it in a tickler file so you can deal with it at a specific time later on. 4. Throw it away.
4. Enjoy the experience of having wide open spaces on your desk. Praise and reward yourself so you repeat the experience. Reinforce the behavior and get into new habits.
5. Enjoy the Zen-like serenity of absence of structure. Think of an uncluttered desk as a Zen garden that lets you unclutter your mind. You will be able to make more-effective decisions.
6. Beware of the clean-desk syndrome, however! It is sometimes better to leave paperwork on your desk rather than prematurely dispatch it. And remember that your desk is where things get done. It will be messy at times if you are accomplishing anything.

## Organizational Ability

**Start and finish every scheduled activity or event on time.**

To get the most out of each day, you've got to stay in control. This is possible if you start and finish your things on time. An impossible goal? Perhaps—but it is more achievable than you think. Here are some ways to take control of your schedule:

1. Be realistic. Don't set yourself up for failure by setting ridiculously tight deadlines. Under-promise and over-deliver.
2. Being realistic means setting priorities. It all comes back to priorities, doesn't it? Work out what needs to be done right away, and what does not. Be vigilant: Just because something is not urgent doesn't mean that it isn't important. Don't procrastinate and don't become so obsessed with trivia that you ignore or have no time for the really important things.
3. Schedule your activities so that you have variety and rhythm throughout the day. Don't punish yourself with huge tasks that are unrelentingly boring—otherwise, your concentration will flag and you will do a bad job anyway. Boredom often makes us seek opportunities for distraction and procrastination.
4. When you finish one activity, give yourself a small reward—a brief walk around, a candy bar or a snack, or something else that is pleasant.
5. Be flexible: Expect interruptions and delays (all the information you need for one job hasn't arrived, the computer system is down, and so on). Move on to something else, and move back to the first task later on. Just don't forget it.
6. Be a role model for punctuality, and try to create a culture of doing things on time, every time. Arrive on time for meetings, call people when you say you will, be available when you say that you will be available.

## Stress Management

**Try not to work late into the evening or on a weekend.**

We are our own worst enemy when it comes to knowing when to stop work and when to start living. Inside the pressure cooker, it feels like the pressure will never stop. Stop it does, one way or another. Overwork, let's be honest, does make us feel noble and self-sacrificing! The trick is to control the stress before your health and relative job effectiveness become damaged beyond control. An occasional session late into the evening or on a weekend is fine, but you have to learn how to keep it from becoming a habit. Here are some self-preservation tips:

1. The simplest way to avoid working beyond your normal hours is to do the work in "work time." This is common sense, but it is not common practice. Protect yourself from time-robbers: procrastination, idle chit-chat, doing less-threatening but lower priority tasks, and so on.
2. Be wary of peer-group pressure. Some people will stay later and later to impress others (often because of downsizing and job insecurity). Ask yourself these questions: Do I really want to be a part of this game? Does the organization send out messages—unofficially or officially—that workaholicism is okay? If the norm can be changed, there is one simple way to do it: by showing that you can accomplish just as much in normal hours as others accomplish only with overtime. The company's costs in electricity and staff time make it more important to challenge these norms.
3. Remember that your personal life is not an afterthought. The people who love you at home have just as much of a claim on your time as those at work. These are not mutually exclusive alternatives: they are complementary.
4. Don't start to use the workaholic's first alibi: *I'm only doing it for my family*. They will always prefer time with you over what you can buy them.
5. Don't use the workaholic's second alibi: *quality time*. People aren't fools: If you give them a small amount of time and call it "quality time" yet give the company more of your time, children and spouses will equate quality time with second-rate time.
6. Be prepared for trade-offs. Is there any point in being cash-rich if you are time-poor? How frantic does life have to become before something snaps? You have to budget time for the people who love you. Once you have done that, you have to be able to turn off "work" and devote all your attention to them. Work to live, don't live to work.
7. Be prepared to work outside normal hours every once in a while. If it's an emergency or a crisis, it might be the right thing to do. Problems arise when organizations are crisis-prone, however, and crises and emergencies occur all the time. Every so often, take a long and hard look at just what is in your own best interests.
8. If you work from home or are self-employed, there will be no clear boundaries in time or space about just where work ends and where living begins—unless you set them. Set those boundaries to keep you sane and they will help you produce better work when you do "go to work."