



Research Summary Number 13

Development of the Discovery Leadership Profile for the Public Sector

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Abstract: Discovery Learning created a comprehensive, but concise and efficient multi-rater assessment tool for providing feedback to leaders in the public sector about their performance in that unique environment. It is administered online. Fifteen leadership competencies critical for that sector were identified through a focused evaluation involving sector professionals. Assessment items for these competencies were carefully selected and tested. Statistical analysis revealed any redundancies. As a result of this thorough process, the Discovery Leadership Profile of the Public Sector was created.

Development of the Discovery Leadership Profile for the Public Sector

The Need

Professionals working in public sector at the middle and middle-senior level have special challenges for leading and managing others; success depends on performance in leadership competencies particular to that profession. The use of multi-rater assessment tools with this population has encountered barriers due to “business language” used in the surveys and a lack of some competencies that are unique to the public sector work place.

The Goal:

Create an affordable, valid, and reliable multi-rater assessment tool that:

- focuses on key leadership competencies specific to the public sector profession,
- has a manageable number of items, and
- can be easily administered online.

The Process

The Discovery Leadership Profile for the Public Sector was constructed in four steps: 1) identifying public sector leadership competencies, 2) prioritizing these competencies, 3) identifying survey items, and 4) validating the competencies and items.

Step 1: Identifying Public Sector Leadership Competencies

A plan was established to explore four different resources to identify appropriate competencies for the Discovery Leadership Profile for the Public Sector. This initial exploration focused on public health professionals. These sources included: an existing healthcare-related leadership survey used with the 2003 Scholars of the Southeast Public Health Leadership Institute; a comprehensive categorization of leadership competencies based upon 10 research-based leadership development surveys which were commercially available; a survey of public sector professionals; and a thorough assessment of public sector leadership literature and interviews with prominent public sector leaders. Thirty three competency categories were identified.

Step 2: Prioritizing Public Sector Leadership Competencies

The next step was to identify the most relevant competencies for public health leaders from this list of 33 competencies. Alumni of a regional Public Sector

Leadership Program were asked rank 33 competencies from two perspectives: relevance of each competency for public sector employees and the ten competencies they thought were most important. Table 1 displays the categories receiving the most “top ten” votes along with the relevance rating for each category

Table 1. Top-rated of 33 Categories

Importance ranking	Relevance
1. Communications	4.85
2. Decision Making/Follow Through	4.72
3. Teamwork	4.46
4. Flexibility	4.23
5. Vision/Mission	4.41
6. Strategic Planning	4.28
7. Motivating Others	4.46
8. Crisis Management	4.08
9. Conflict Management/Negotiations	4.15
10. Change Management	4.23
11. Relationships	4.15
12. Subordinate Support and Development	4.10
13. Effectiveness/Proactivity	4.10
14. Delegation	4.03
15. Organizational/Cultural/Political Sensitivity	4.08
16. Creativity/Innovation/Risk Taking	3.92
17. Project Management	3.87
18. Customer Focus	4.03
19. Personal Awareness	3.92
20. Diversity/Sensitivity	4.05
21. Balance	3.74
22. Time Management	3.87
23. Coaching	4.03
24. Quality	4.13
25. Cross Functional/System Management	3.78

From the list in Table 1 and the information collected in Step 1, 15 competency categories were identified for inclusion in the survey. Table 2 displays these 15 competencies.

Table 2. Fifteen Most Critical Competencies

Direction & Strategy
Follow Through & Accountability
Conflict & Negotiation
Communication
Developing & Mentoring Others
Diversity
Complex Systems
Collaboration
Self Management
Teams
Change
Innovation
Client/Customer Service
Integrity & Trust
Decision Making & Problem Solving

Step 3: Identifying Survey Items

Using the Discovery Learning Leadership Competency Library and the literature review of public sector leadership competencies, each of the 15 categories was seeded with survey items. These items were presented and discussed in a conference call with more than a dozen public sector leaders. Topics included the adequacy and completeness of competencies and items. Fifteen professionals participated in a follow-up conference call, and seven participated in a modified Delphi process in which they further considered the items and converged on 68 items.

Step 4: Validating Competencies and Survey Items

Data were collected on 68 items from 103 public sector managers. These data included responses from 132 bosses, 457 peers, and 250 direct reports. Statistical analyses were completed. Table 3 lists the 15 competency categories along with the Cronbach’s Alpha for each category. This statistic measures internal consistency of the survey. It tests that the items in the category are measuring the same underlying attribute. A score of 0.85 indicates high reliability. All the scores were considered acceptable. The

entire list of items scored 0.98.

A separate test, Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient, measures the strength of relationship between two items. A strong relationship (coefficient of 0.70 or higher) between two items can indicate that the items are measuring the same or similar concepts. After analysis of the Pearson’s Correlation Coefficients for the 68 items, the survey was shortened to 62 items. Data on these final items were analyzed to produce an average score for each survey item by rater group: self, bosses, peers, and direct reports.

Norms (average ratings) have been calculated for each rater group – self, boss, peers and direct reports. These average ratings are available from Discovery Learning and are found in the Discovery Leadership Profile for the Public Sector Facilitator Guide.

Training/Participant Materials and Support Processes

To support the administration of the Discovery Leadership Profile for the Public Sector, a facilitator guide was created. To support the participants in benefiting optimally from the feedback, a workbook titled *Maximizing Your Results* was created.

Table 3. The Public Sector Leadership Competency Model and Cronbach’s Alpha

Direction & Strategy	0.87
Follow Through & Accountability	0.85
Conflict & Negotiation	0.78
Communication	0.87
Developing & Mentoring Others	0.86
Diversity	0.87
Complex Systems	0.78
Collaboration	0.85
Self Management	0.86
Teams	0.89
Change	0.84
Innovation	0.87
Client/Customer Service	0.87
Integrity & Trust	0.82
Decision Making & Problem Solving	0.87
Overall Scale	0.98

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