



The Value of Multi-rater Profiles



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THE CREATOR OF **SOcial STYLE**[®]

THE VALUE OF MULTI-RATER PROFILES

A growing number of companies are deploying multi-rater and 360° surveys as part of the company's performance evaluations, employee training and leadership development. These tools offer compelling benefits in the areas of training and development. This whitepaper looks at multi-rater profiles within the context of interpersonal effectiveness training (IET). It specifically looks at the most common IET models — DiSC, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Social Style — and their use of multi-rater and self-rater profiles.

MULTI-RATER AND SELF-PERCEPTION TOOLS

Social Style, MBTI and DiSC all use profiles in teaching their models. MBTI and DiSC self-perception profiles collect responses from the program participant only. Social Style programs typically are taught using a multi-rater profile, although self-perception-only profiles are an option.

Using a self-perception instrument provides information that looks exclusively inside the person at his or her own feelings, intentions and beliefs. These profiles can be completed quickly either online or using a paper format.

Self-perception profiles are typically convenient and inexpensive ways to introduce IET concepts. But in many cases, the multi-rater instrument adds considerable value to the insight gained.

With multi-rater profiles the colleagues of the participating employee complete a

survey about the participant in addition to the participant's own self-perception profile. By gathering multi-rater feedback Social Style identifies how behaviors actually impact others. When individual self-perception is combined with others' perceptions, a much-more accurate picture of an individual's working style and relationships is achieved.

TRACOM's research has established that in more than 50 percent of the time, most of us view our individual Social Style differently than others view us. While this may be fodder for a comedy routine, the ramifications for organizations are far from amusing.

Achieving accurate understanding is not unique to those using the Social Style multi-rater instrument. While MBTI and DiSC tools measure subjective insight into what a person thinks about him or herself, those perceptions can change over a short period of time. Research conducted by Howes and Carskadon showed that a large portion of their participants retested much differently from their initial MBTI assessments, receiving very different type profiles.

Research from the Hay Group points out, "The higher people move up in an organization, the more likely they are to overrate themselves and develop blind spots that can hinder their effectiveness as leaders (*Figure 1*)."

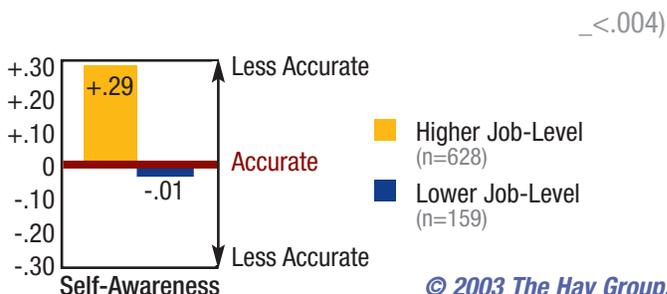
They have established a direct correlation between high performance and accurate self-awareness.

Ninety-five percent of training professionals found it more valuable to have both a self-rating and feedback from others as opposed to a self-rating alone.

Leflein Associates

360°s are a type of multi-rater profile that attempts to capture information about a person from all angles. In the workplace this typically includes a person's superior(s), colleagues and direct reports.

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A key element of Social Style is Versatility, a measure of how effectively a person works with others. TRACOM's research shows that people with low Versatility (as seen by others) have an artificially high view of their own Versatility. This translates to the fact that those who could potentially benefit the most from Versatility training believe they need it the least.

Examples of blind spots that can be addressed through the use of multi-rater profiles include:

- 72% of people with “very low” Versatility saw themselves as having higher Versatility, with well over 40% placing themselves substantially higher.
- Only one-fourth of people with “very low” Versatility scores from others actually rated themselves as “very low”.

There is evidence that higher Versatility people grade themselves more strictly than lower Versatility people. TRACOM attributes this to their understanding that there is always an opportunity for improvement. Historically, research on 360° feedback has indicated that high scorers have a tendency to deflate their own ratings.

Training professionals understand the significance of these instruments. In the Leflein study, an overwhelming percentage of those training executives surveyed found it more valuable to have both a self-rating and feedback from others as opposed to a self-rating alone (95% vs. 5%).

Participants also recognize the benefits in a recent survey of the multi-rater profile. More than 80 percent of program participants said it “made me more aware of challenges and opportunities that I would not otherwise have considered.”



While increasing self-awareness is helpful in understanding oneself, building strong relationship skills requires an understanding of how one is seen externally by others. A multi-rater profile provides that insight. TRACOM has found when many of its participants see the disparity in their self-perception and others perception of them, it offers some of the best motivational learning opportunities for them.

When individual self-perception is combined with others' perceptions, a full picture of a person's working style and relationships can be seen.

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