



# TIME MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

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F E E D B A C K R E P O R T

**ActionCOACH**  
business coaching

**Sample Report**  
**7/22/2010**



## 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.

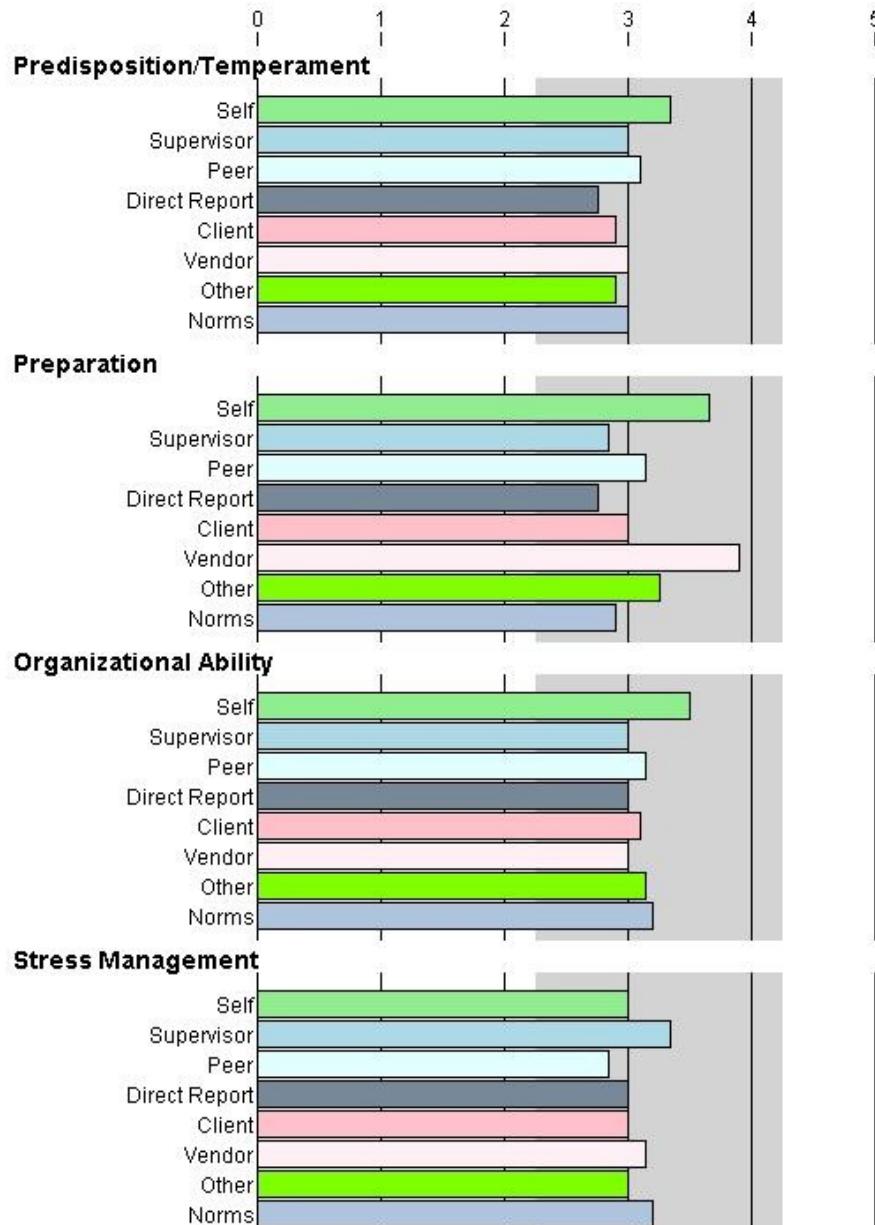
### **Note on 360 Degree Feedback**

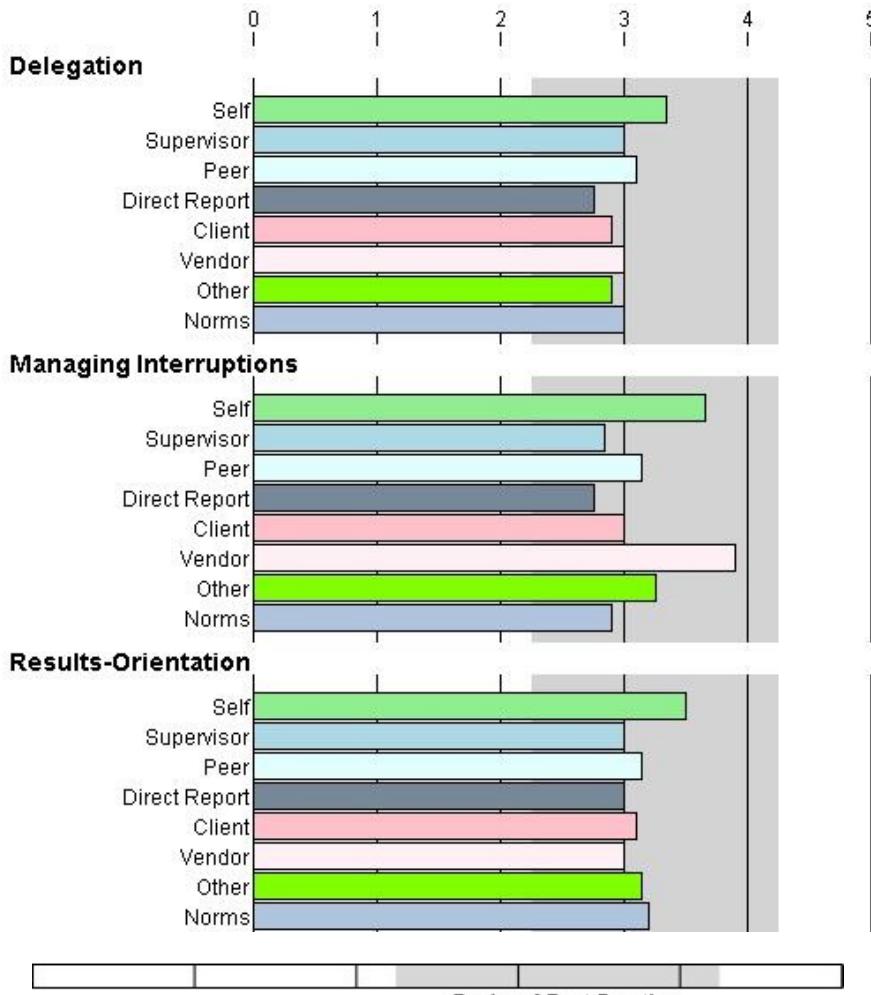
If you received feedback from your supervisor, direct reports or peers using this assessment, please note the following: Ratings responses from all persons who completed the assessment are averaged to produce the results in the 10/10 Report, Course and Reading Suggestions, Development Plan, and Coaching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



## OVERALL SUMMARY

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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?"



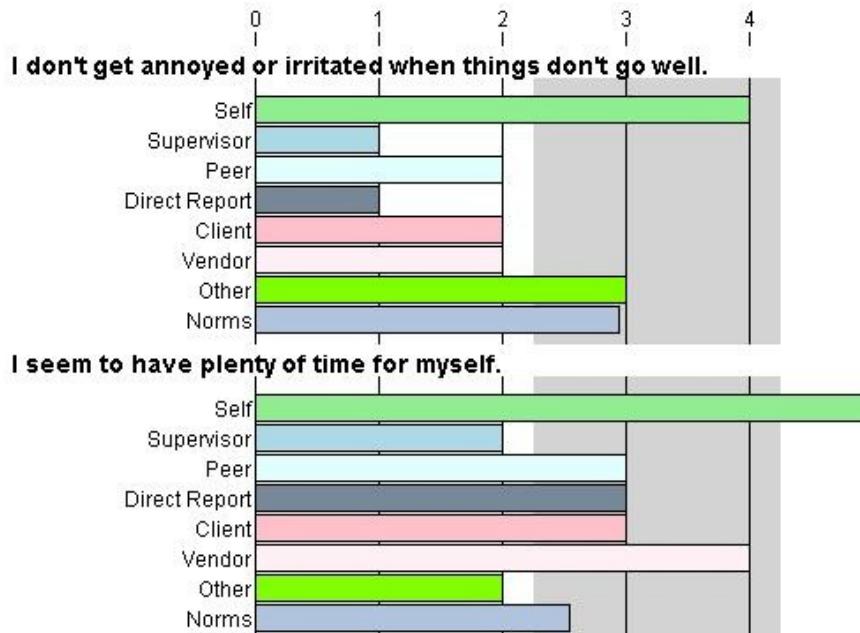
### Interpretation

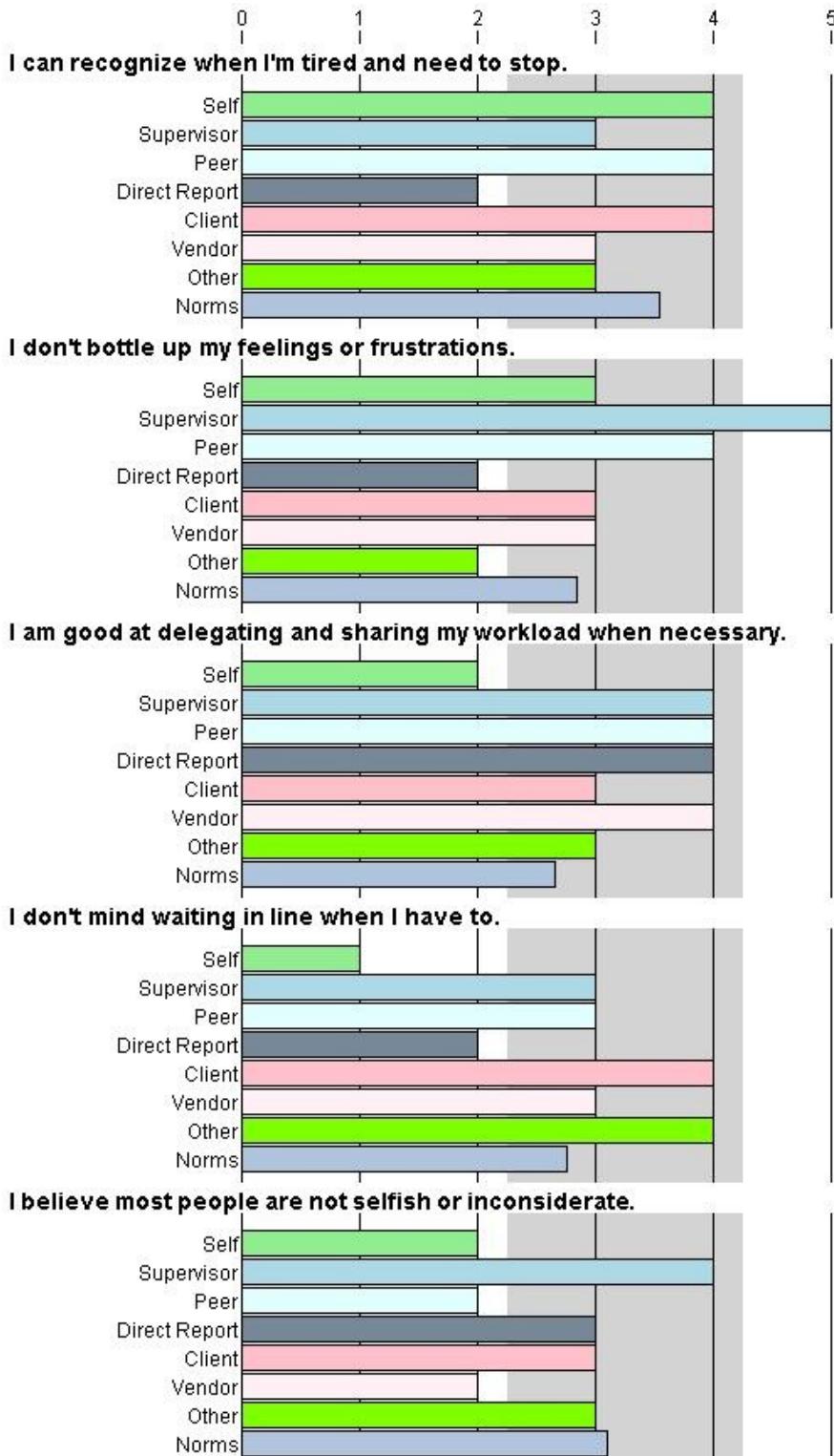
#### LOW (less than 2.75)

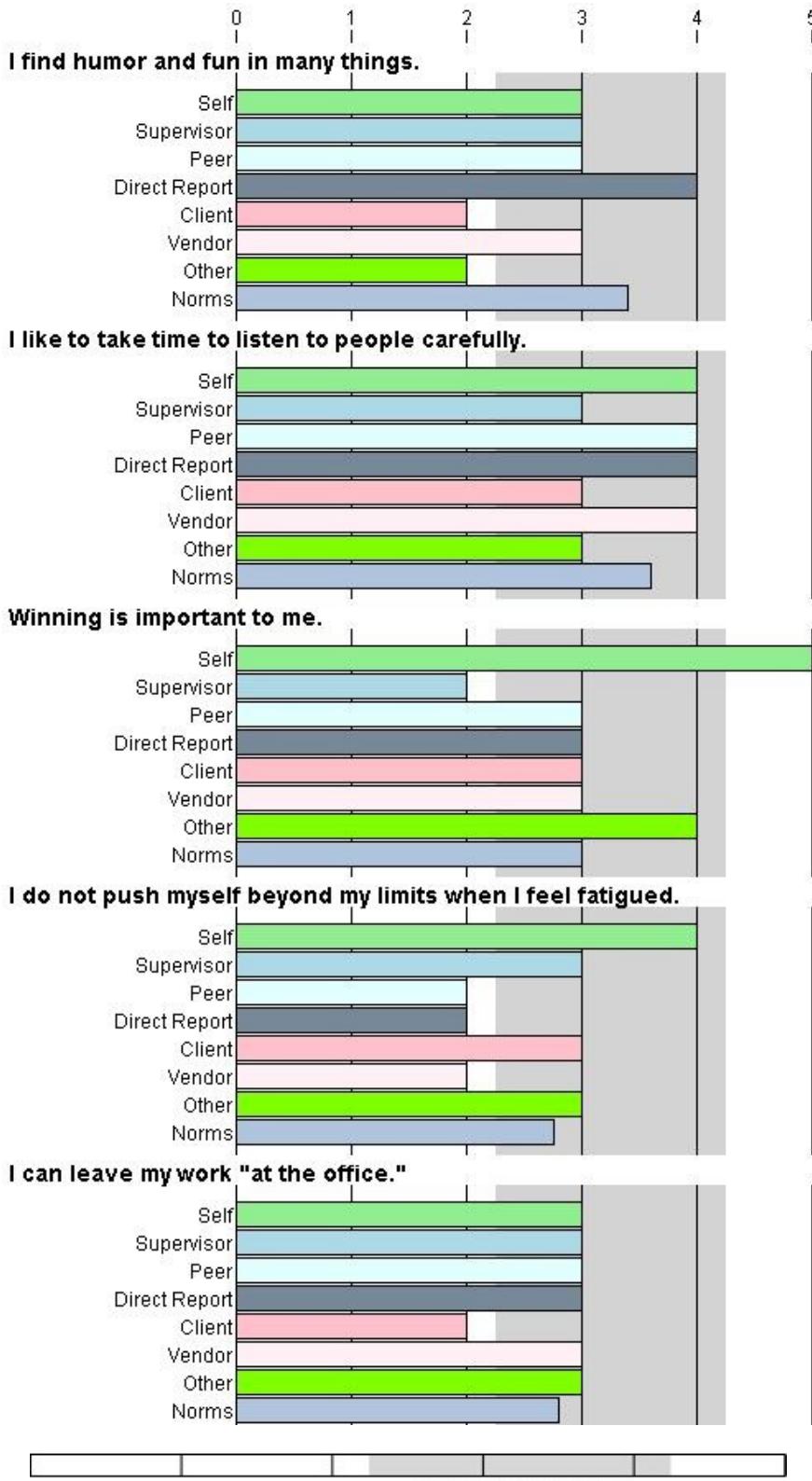
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest "Type A" behavior. This means that you are likely to see life in general as competitive, and feel constantly pressured by time. You tend to be tough on yourself and others. The Type "A" personality gets things done 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?"



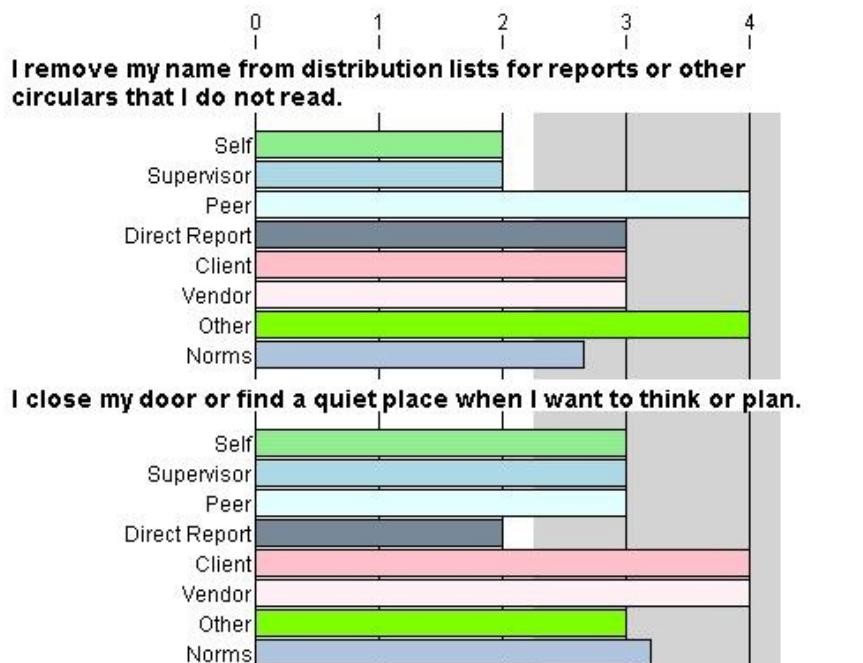
### Interpretation

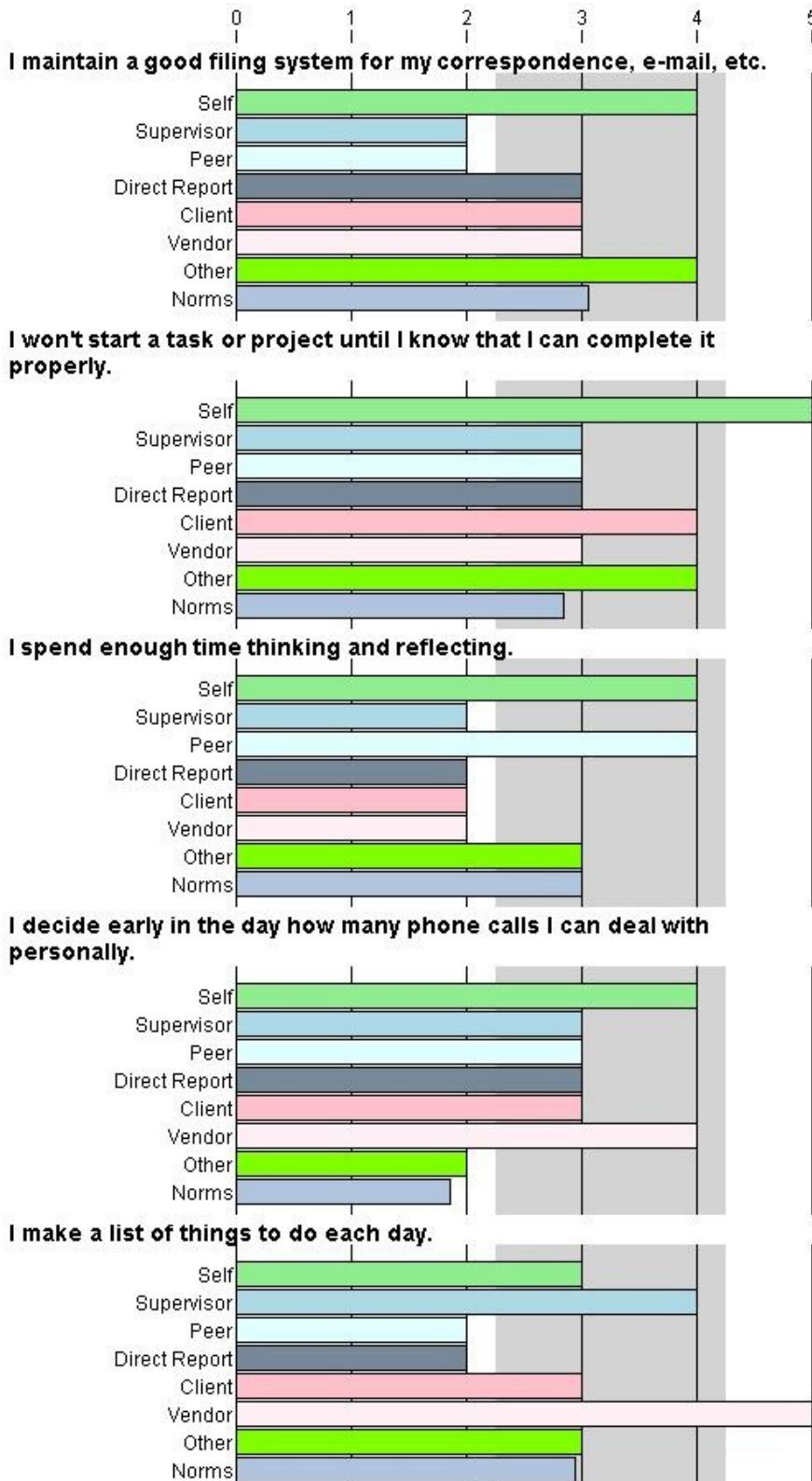
#### LOW (less than 2.75)

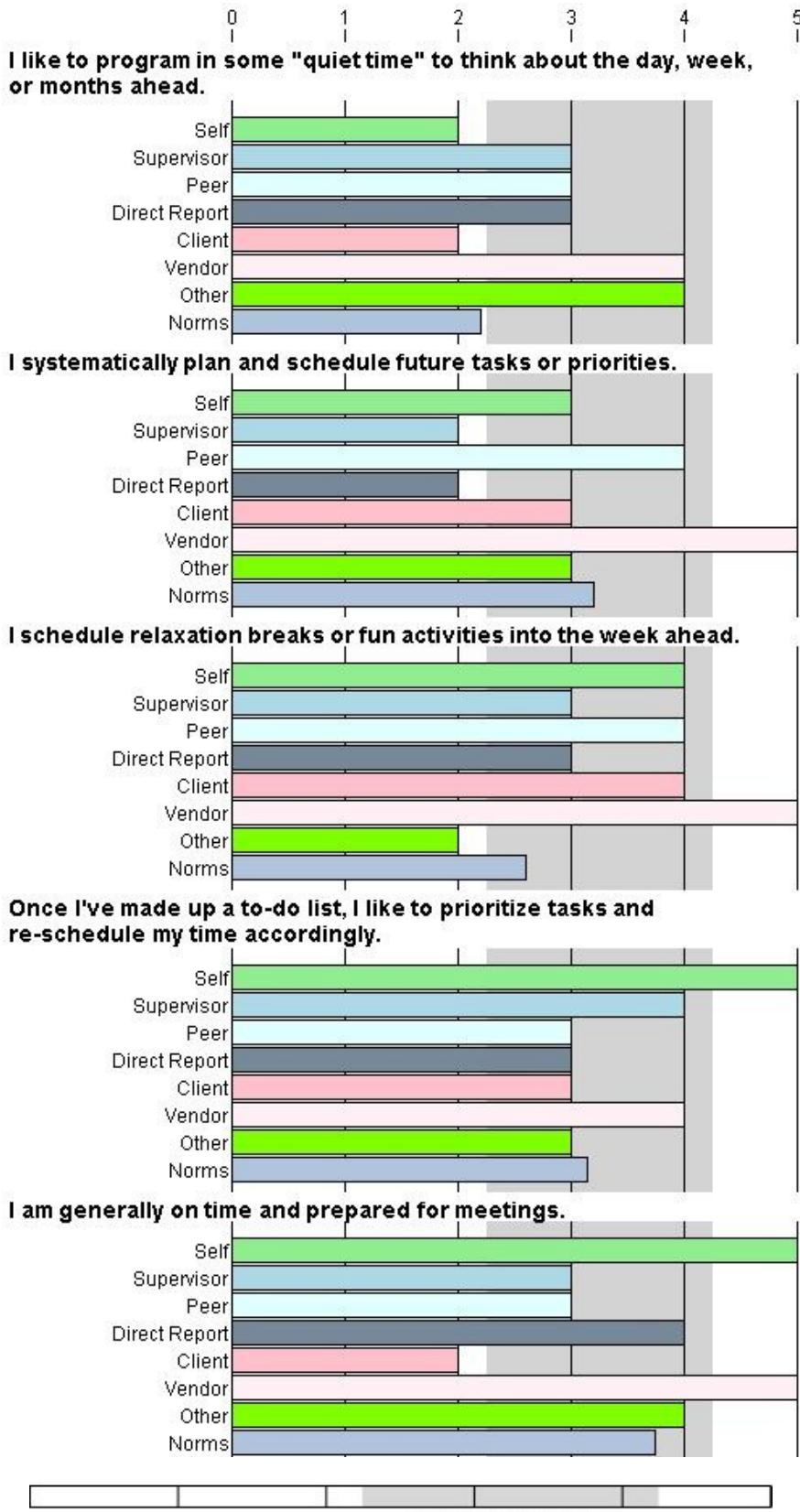
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you neglect planning or setting priorities and perhaps too often let events or interruptions dictate what your day will be like. The low scorer is likely to feel squeezed by time to the extent that they can do 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?"



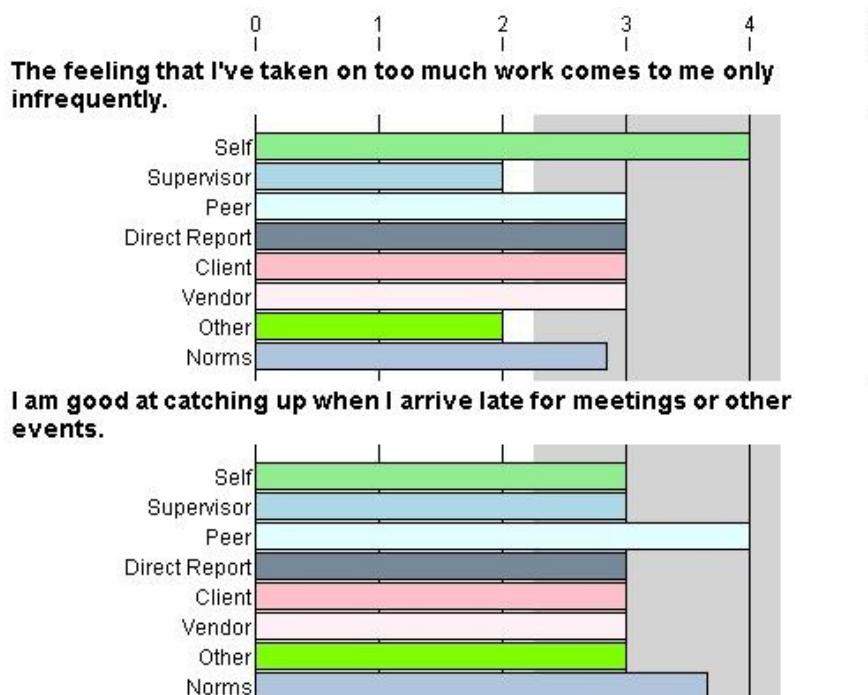
### Interpretation

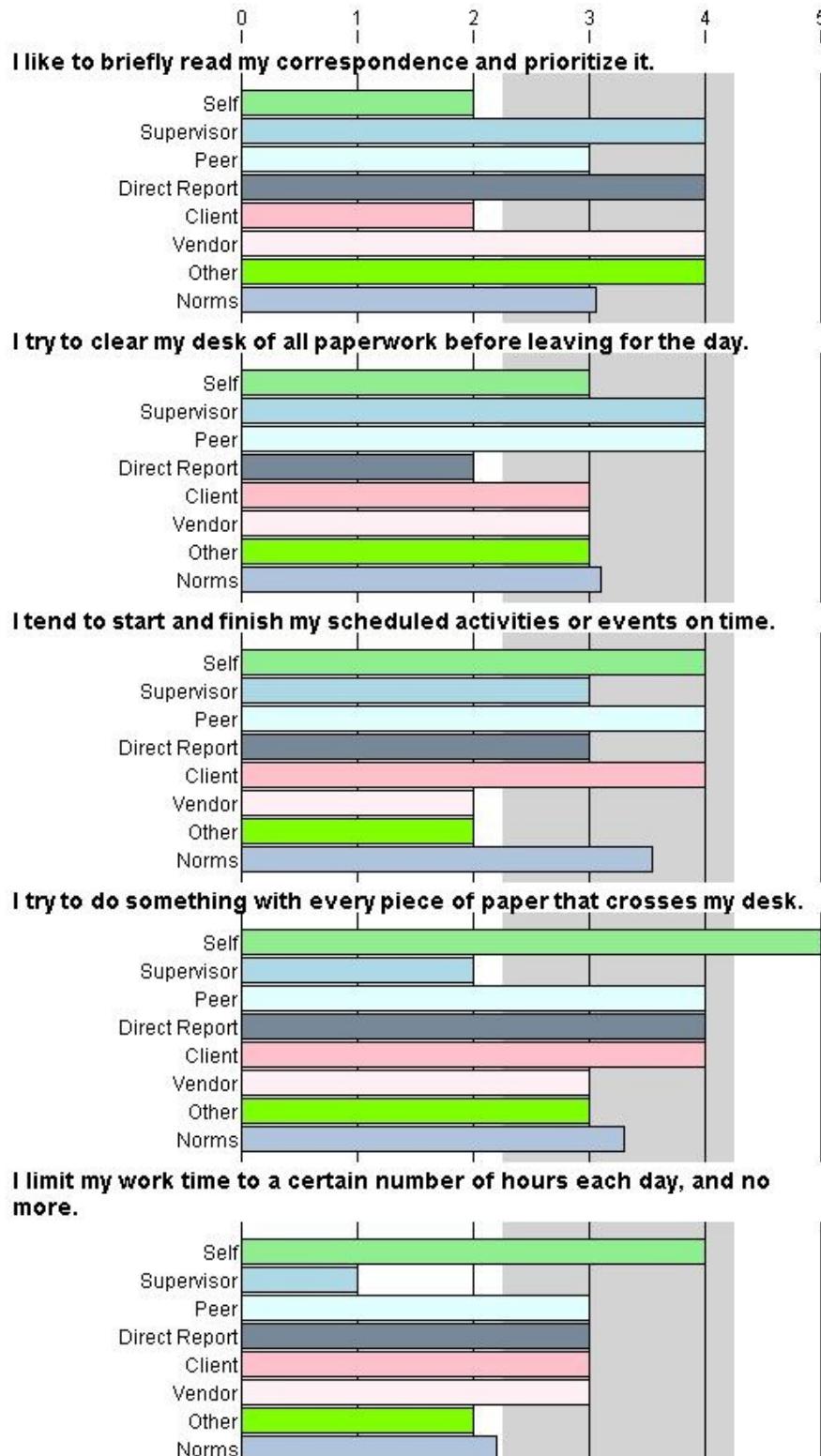
#### LOW (less than 2.75)

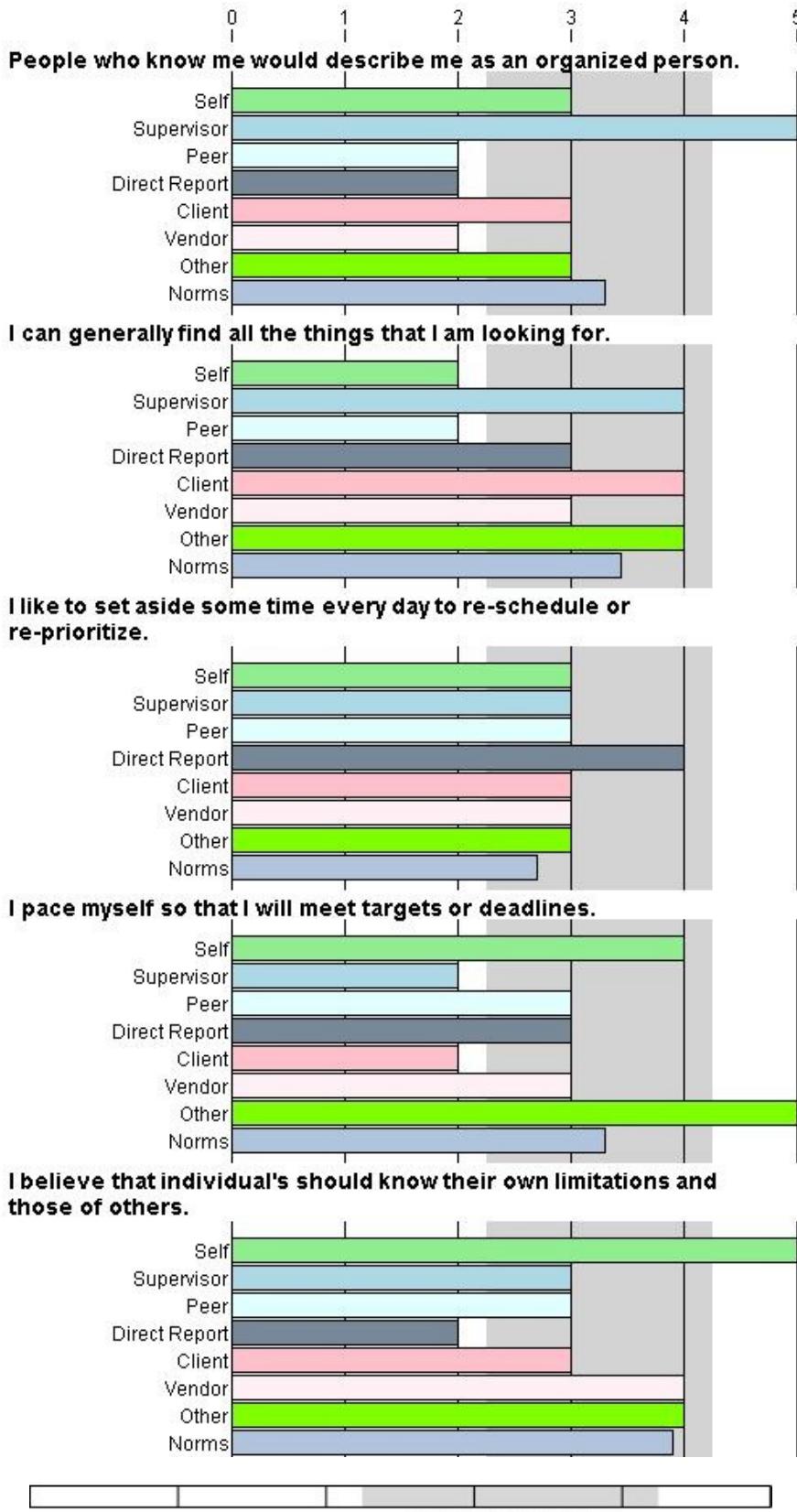
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you spend "little or no time" in systematically organizing your workload. You tend to tackle only the next tasks that face you, with limited forethought. A low score suggests that you believe there are more tasks 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?"



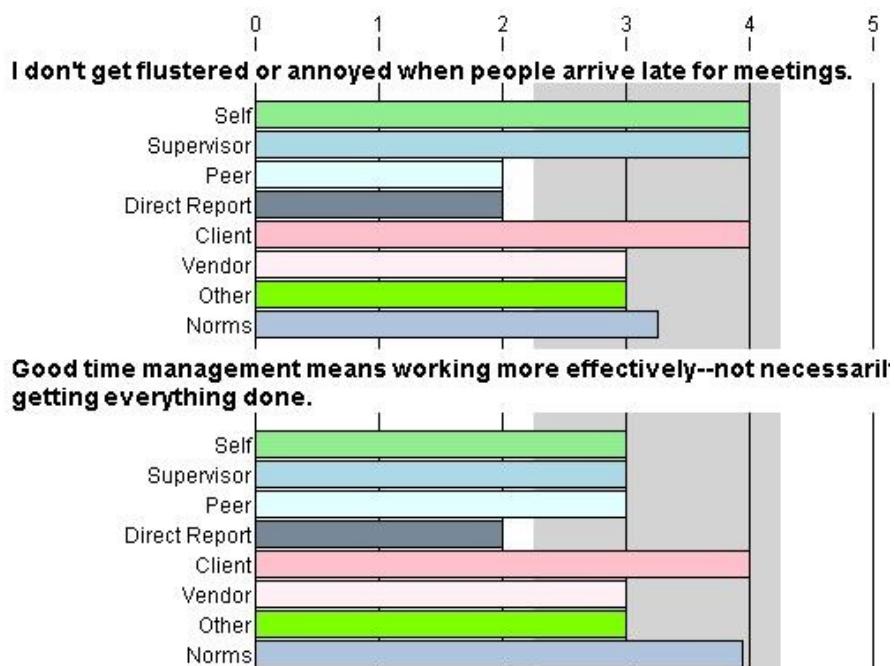
### Interpretation

#### LOW (less than 2.75)

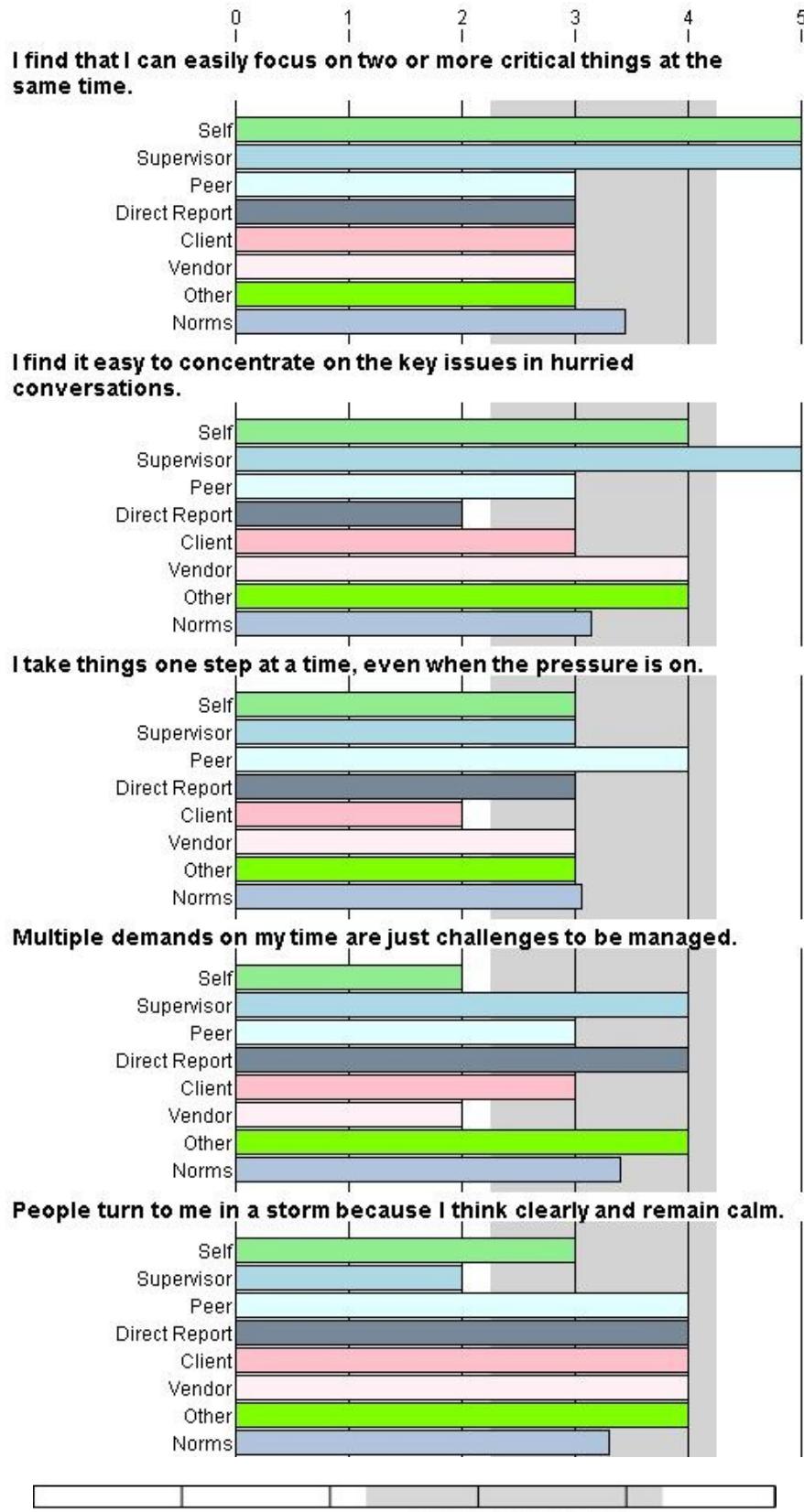
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that pressure distracts you and tends to throw you entirely off-course, causing potential strain and worry. A low scorer in this section is likely to become flustered, disorganized, or destabilized by high levels of 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?"



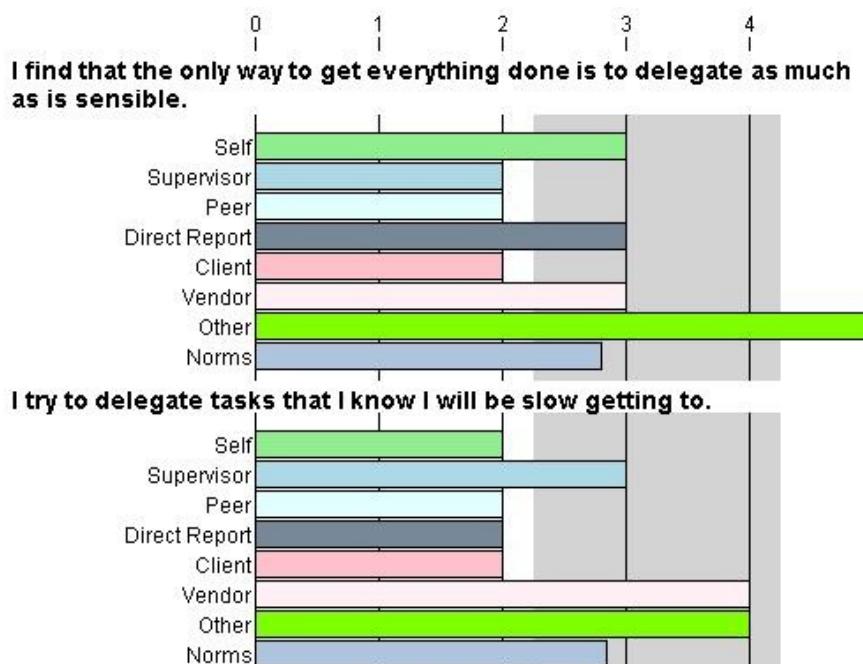
### Interpretation

#### LOW (less than 2.75)

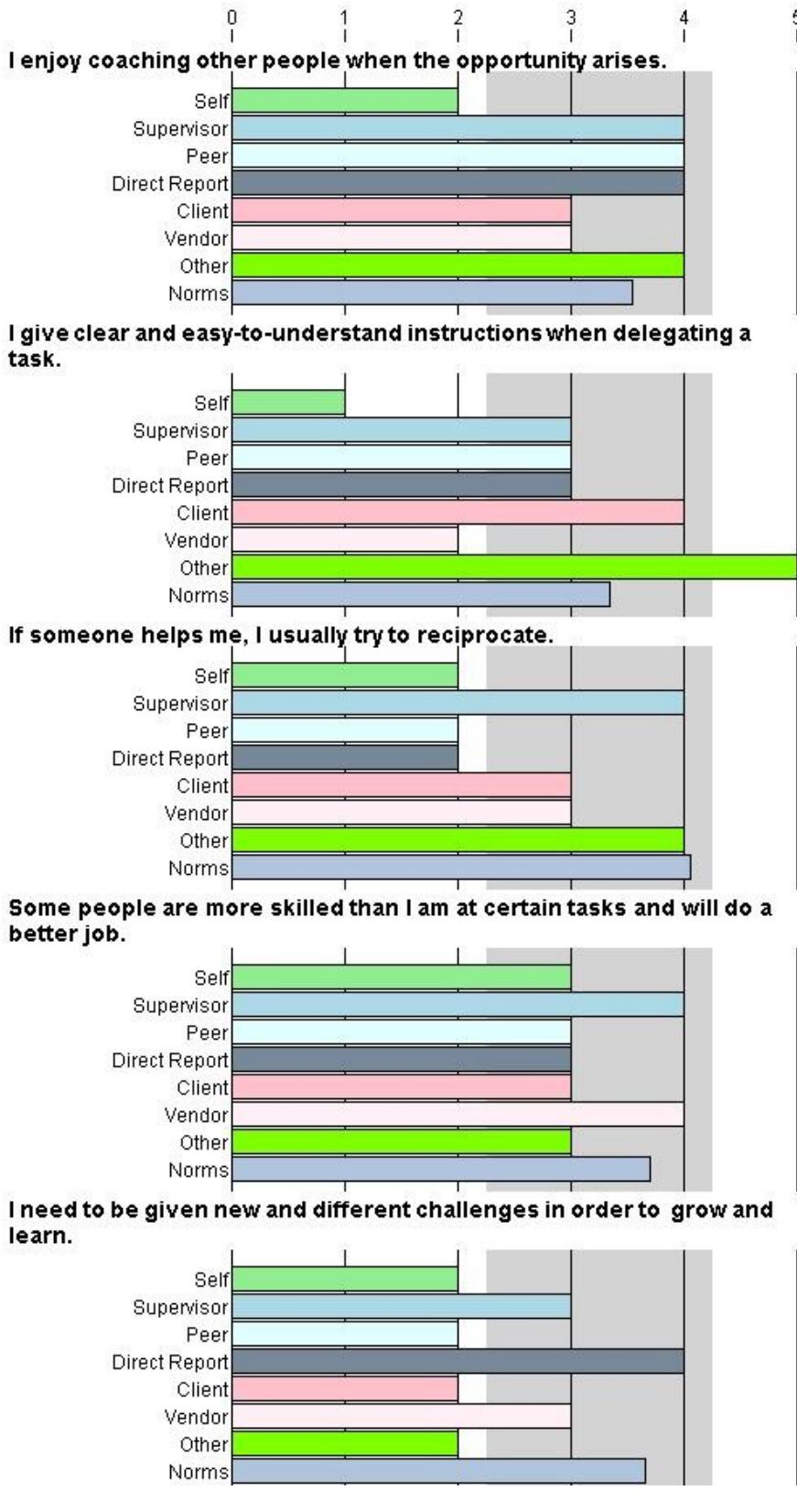
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you probably take on too much work, and think that asking others for help is a sign of weakness or failure (or that people around you are less capable or less skilled than you are). An individual who scores low 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?"



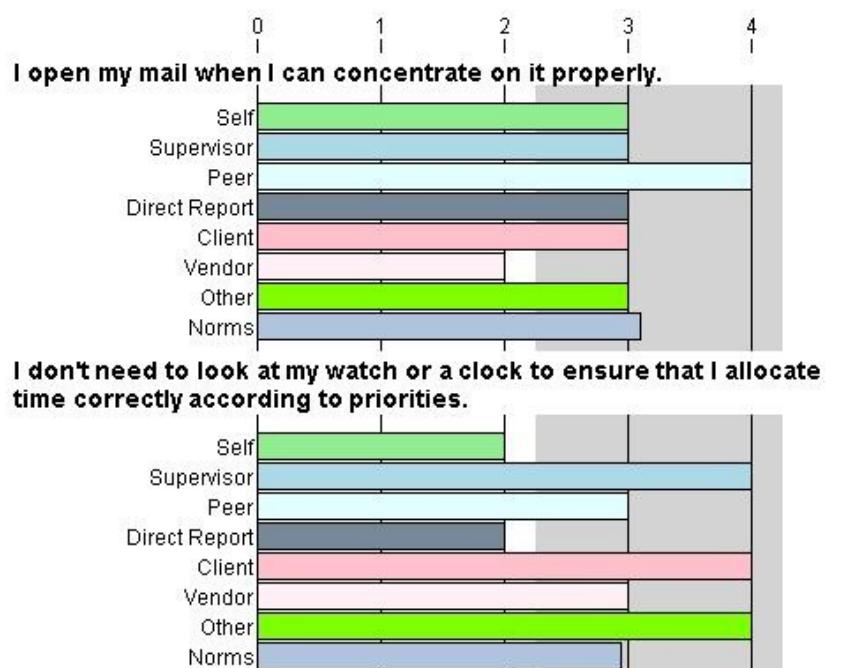
### Interpretation

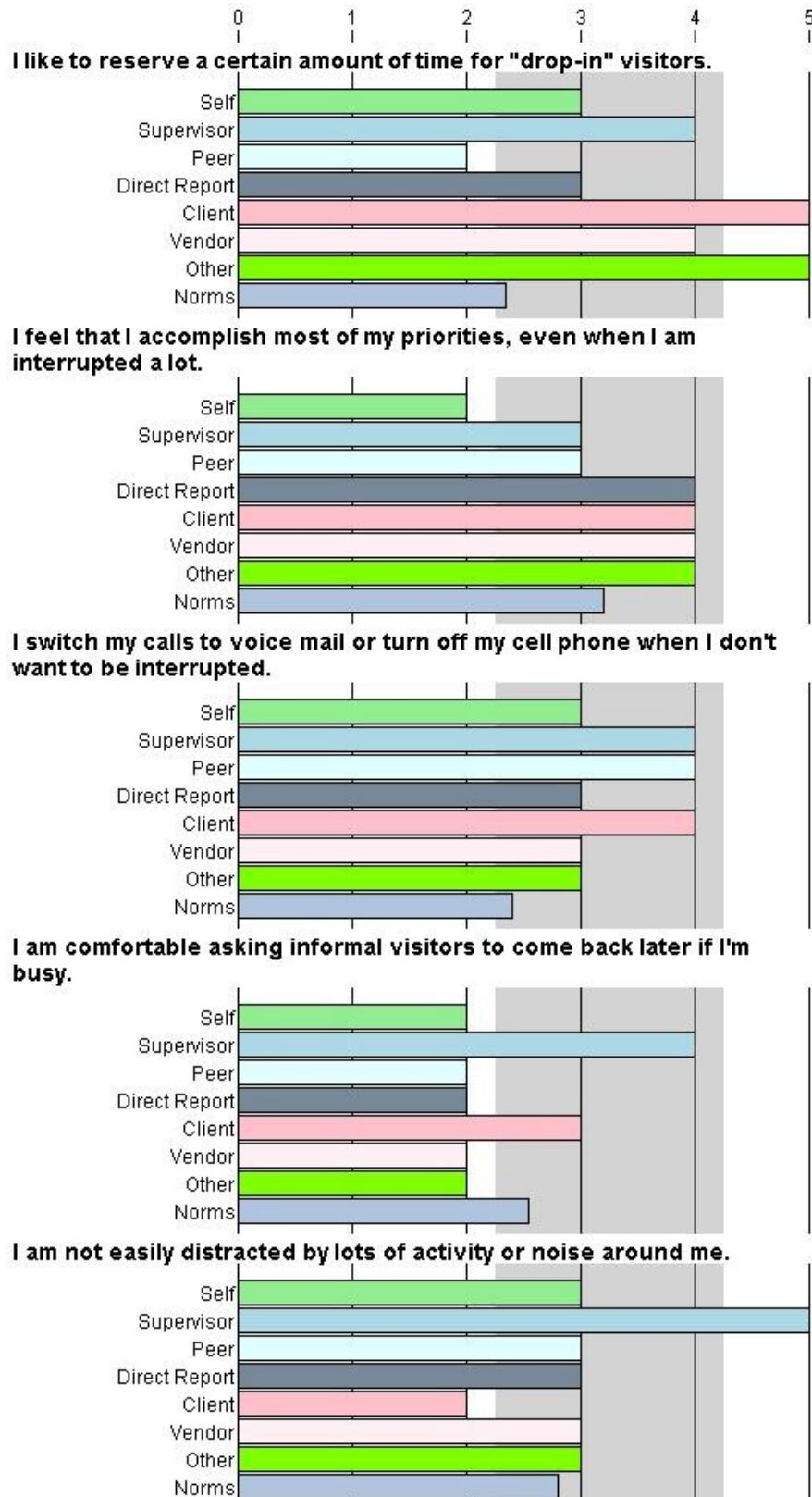
#### LOW (less than 2.75)

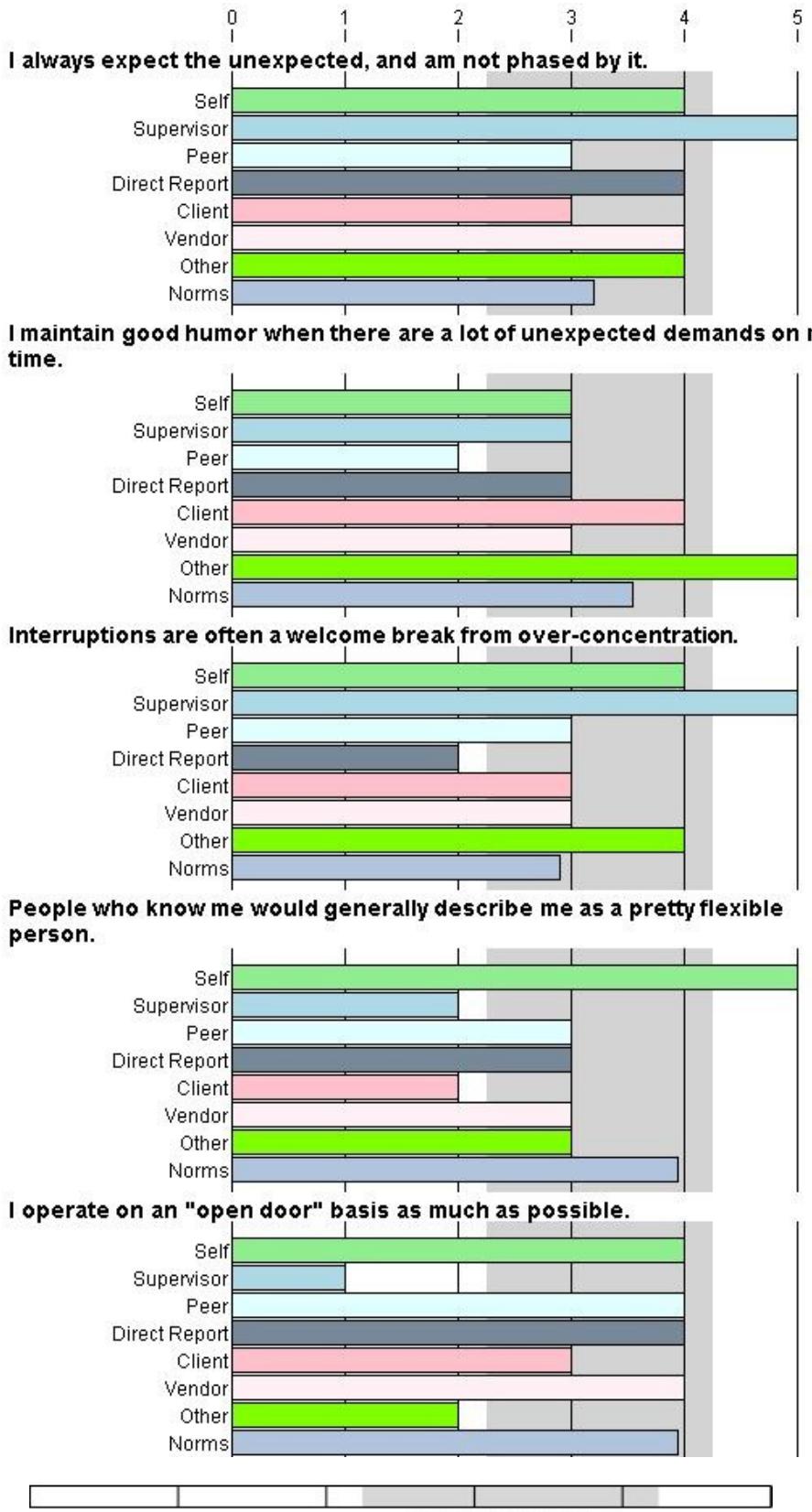
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you probably let interruptions steer you off-course and get in the way of greater priorities. Those whose scores are high in this area unwittingly give indications that it is okay for others to interrupt them when 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

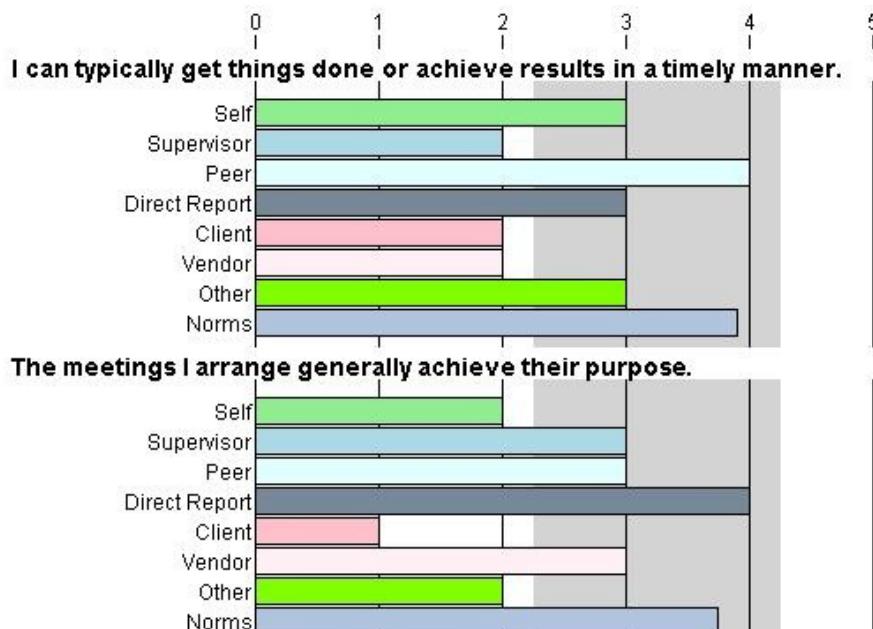
#### LOW (less than 2.75)

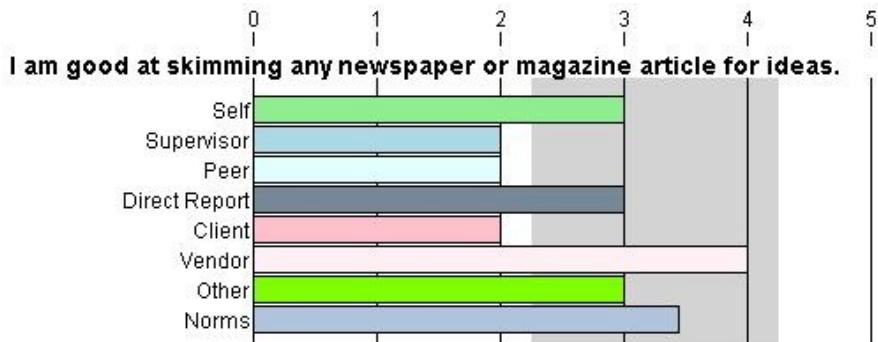
Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you do not spend enough time thinking about which tasks or activities can move you closer to your goals. Low results-orientation can also mean incorrectly seeing all activity as being synonymous with productive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

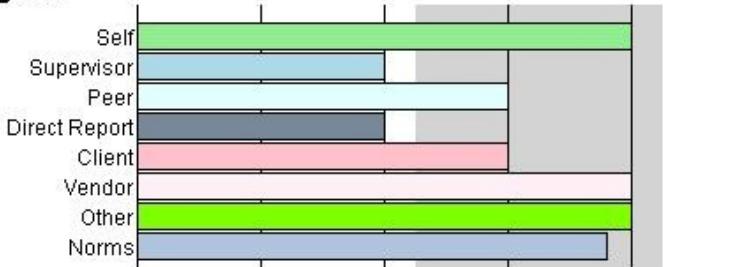
#### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

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.





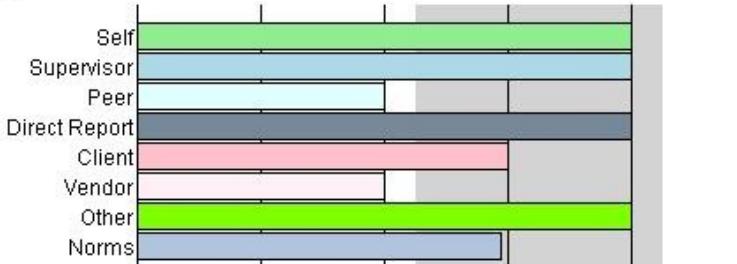
I easily recognize the priority of important tasks, even when the task is not urgent.



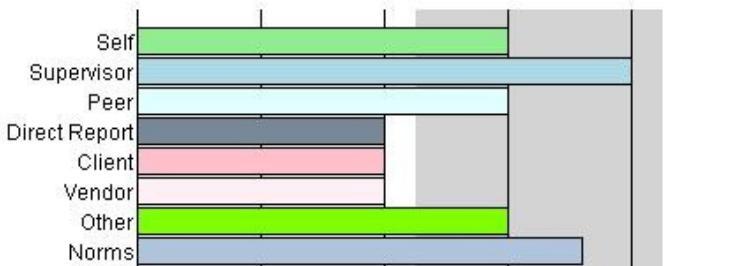
I have personal goals to which I devote time each month.

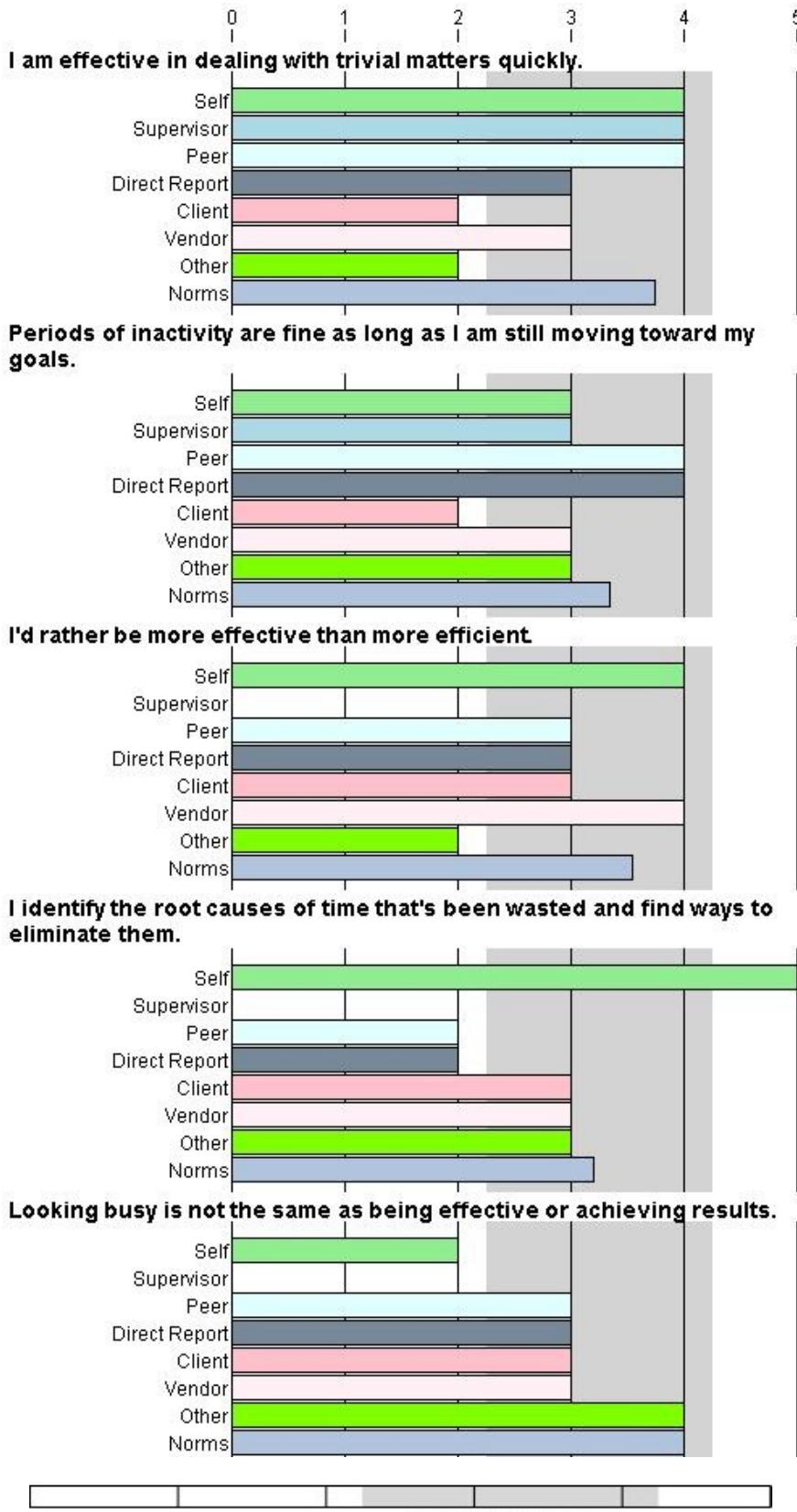


An urgent matter doesn't command my full attention unless it is also important.



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

77 .I have personal goals to which I devote time each month. 3.86

#### Managing Interruptions

68 .I always expect the unexpected, and am not phased by it. 3.86

#### Delegation

53 .I am happy to take on delegated tasks that I have the skills and time to do. 3.86

#### Managing Interruptions

63 .I like to reserve a certain amount of time for "drop-in" visitors. 3.71

#### Preparation

24 .I am generally on time and prepared for meetings. 3.71

#### Stress Management

48 .People turn to me in a storm because I think clearly and remain calm. 3.57

45 .I find it easy to concentrate on the key issues in hurried conversations. 3.57

44 .I find that I can easily focus on two or more critical things at the same time. 3.57

#### Organizational Ability

30 .I try to do something with every piece of paper that crosses my desk. 3.57

#### Preparation

23 .Once I've made up a to-do list, I like to prioritize tasks and re-schedule my time accordingly. 3.57

### Top 10 Development Needs

#### Predisposition/Temperament

1 .I don't get annoyed or irritated when things don't go well. 2.14

#### Stress Management

39 .If I am given a tough task, I tend to work on it a little at a time. 2.43

41 .If I have to wait for a late bus, plane, or appointment, I calmly re-prioritize. 2.43

#### Managing Interruptions

66 .I am comfortable asking informal visitors to come back later if I'm busy. 2.43

#### Delegation

60 .I need to be given new and different challenges in order to grow and learn. 2.57

#### Results-Orientation

74 .The meetings I arrange generally achieve their purpose. 2.57

#### Predisposition/Temperament

7 .I believe most people are not selfish or inconsiderate. 2.71

11 .I do not push myself beyond my limits when I feel fatigued. 2.71

#### Preparation

17 .I spend enough time thinking and reflecting. 2.71

#### Organizational Ability

31 .I limit my work time to a certain number of hours each day, and no more. 2.71



## COURSE AND READING SUGGESTIONS

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Here is a link to a 12 page workbook that can help you further

<http://assessments24x7.com/rsb/RSBtm.pdf>

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.

### Predisposition/Temperament

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?"

#### Course Suggestion

- Relaxation Methods
- Time Management
- Developing Patience

#### Other Suggestion

- 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

- How to Speak, How to Listen. Mortimer Jerome Adler
- Effective Listening Skills (Business Skills Express). Abby Robinson Kratz(Preface), et al.
- Emotional Intelligence. Daniel P. Goleman
- Working With Emotional Intelligence. Daniel P. Goleman

### Results-Orientation

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?"

#### Course Suggestion

- Goal and Objective Setting
- Strategic Planning skills
- Performance Management and Measurement
- Value Added Management

#### Other Suggestion

- Ask other people what they see to be of greatest value or the most important goals for the team or the organization.
- 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

- Investing Time for Maximum Return. Alec and Melody Mackenzie: Amer Media
- Leverage Your Time, Balance Your Life. John Ingram and MD Walker: Lifework
- Power Scheduling, The New Approach to Time Management. Dave De Sousa: Kendall-Hunt
- 10 Natural Laws of Successful Time and Life Management. Hyrum Smith: Warner



## 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 don't get annoyed or irritated when things don't go well.  
Action to Take:

Score: 2.14

If I am given a tough task, I tend to work on it a little at a time.  
Action to Take:

Score: 2.43

If I have to wait for a late bus, plane, or appointment, I calmly re-prioritize.  
Action to Take:

Score: 2.43

I am comfortable asking informal visitors to come back later if I'm busy.  
Action to Take:

Score: 2.43

I need to be given new and different challenges in order to grow and learn.  
Action to Take:

Score: 2.57

## Predisposition/Temperament

### **Don't let yourself get annoyed or irritated when things don't go well.**

Float, don't freak out when things go wrong. After all, some things are inevitable. People make mistakes and sometimes even rise to the level of their incompetence. Raise your threshold of tolerance for ambiguity and chaos, and learn how to control the controllable and live with the uncontrollable. For the sake of your sanity, if nothing else!

You might not like the sound of this approach, so consider this common-sense advice:

1. You can't always get what you want. This is a hard truth to accept in the best of times; if you punish yourself with absurdly high standards of perfection, however, you will fail on at least a few occasions. High standards are important for quality control and motivation, but if your expectations for yourself and others are too high, you set yourself up for failure. Avoid setting all-or-nothing standards and explore alternative, more-flexible strategies.
2. Be philosophic about not getting everything that you want. Perhaps it was meant to be! Look at these disappointments as second chances to refine and regroup, and try to isolate the factors that turned out to be the weakest link. Sometimes an early problem is a blessing, saving you from making far-more-dangerous mistakes later on.
3. Failure can be very instructive. Anything less than perfection is a learning opportunity. Think of alternatives, and wait for circumstances to change. They will, sooner or later.
4. Nobody likes a poor loser, but everyone likes a gracious loser who can admit that they were wrong. Accept defeat gracefully and you will be in a better position to win the next one. You might also find that others will feel a little obligated to you because you were gracious. You will be able to cash in on that obligation on the next go-round.
5. Don't get mad, get smart. Allowing yourself to be emotionally wrecked can do your health a lot of damage. Impatient people often end up being patients! Learn the strategy of patience: don't trip over your short concentration span, and don't get carried away by the heat of the moment. Most people won't remember the cause or even the details of the argument several days, weeks, or months afterward. If a proposal or request was turned down, put it aside for the time being, or continue to quietly work on it. Brutally re-evaluate to see if anything will stand up sometime later on. If so, quietly re-introduce your idea at a later stage in a modified form so that it looks like a new idea—not something that already looks shot full of holes. See if you can get authorization to do it on a trial basis.

## Stress Management

### **Break a tough task down into smaller chunks.**

As the Chinese proverb has it, a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. One extremely useful time-management skill is to break large or tough tasks down into component parts. If we don't learn this skill, we either do the task badly or become so discouraged by the immensity of it that we put it off. Here are some ways to get started:

1. Try not to be overwhelmed by the sheer size of a task. Look at it with new eyes, and try to break it into digestible chunks. Look for patterns and inter-connections—the “skeleton” beneath the skin.
2. Get others to look at the task, as well. Other people are invaluable resources: They can see things from a different perspective, partly because they have different skills and partly because they have different values and cognitive styles. Maybe they can see different ways in which the task can be broken up.
3. Once you have broken a task up into component parts, can you work out the best sequence in which to tackle the sub-tasks? What is connected to what? What comes logically before what? What cannot be done without something that precedes it being done first?
4. Be careful about the way you choose to do the sub-tasks. Sometimes it makes sense to pick the easiest ones first, and then gradually ease into the total task. This is a way of procrastinating from doing the really hard stuff, however, so be careful here, too. Such procrastination can really blow the project out of the water. Pick the worst, most objectionable, most demotivating thing to do first, and once that is out of the way, everything else is a breeze!
5. Be mentally disciplined enough to multi-task: develop the ability to switch back and forth between tasks, without losing

concentration. Think of several projects or files as being “live” at the same time. Keep more than one set of files open on your desk or your computer. Alternately, develop the skill of being able to temporarily close a file. We don’t keep all our crockery, cutlery, and pots and pans out on the kitchen counter just in case we need them, because there would be no place to prepare the food. File and remember, don’t file and forget.

**6.** Track and record the different parts of the task. Put up a progress chart that shows milestones, dates, and other critical data (for example: 10 percent done; 25 percent done; 50 percent or one-half done). Each time you complete a subtask, draw a bold line through it on a list; this will be very satisfying and very motivating! Celebrate milestones, particularly if others are involved: Give words of praise and applause at a meeting; take people to lunch; post a memo on a bulletin board or on the computer network. Praise the parts, and the whole will arrive so much quicker.

## SM-5

### Stress Management

#### **Calmly re-prioritize If you have to wait for a plane delay or an appointment.**

Our pressure points get a good working over when we are kept waiting or are delayed by a plane or a traffic jam or an appointment that has been pushed back two hours. It can frazzle our nerves and make us lose our cool (if you let it). During World War II, allied troops invented an acronym for this: SNAFU. The clean translation is: situation normal, all fouled up. Foul-ups are normal, so learn to float and go with the flow. Just make sure that you are responsible for as few of those foul-ups as possible—let others take the blame for theirs. When there is a delay, stay cool, calm, and collected—and re-prioritize. Try the following approaches to help build your effectiveness:

- 1.** Avoid creating a schedule that is too tight. Build in some slack and flexibility, or you will spend too much time trying to re-negotiate deadlines, and not enough time meeting them.
- 2.** Work on the knack of feeling calm, secure, and comfortable, even when you must be away from home base. Wherever you go, there you are. The experience of being outside our comfort zone—the cozy, familiar surroundings of our routine environment—is threatening and stressful at first, but once you rethink it, you’ll probably come to enjoy it. That way, you can appreciate being away from home base, as well as appreciate home base all the more when you return.
- 3.** When snafus occur, don’t despair. Shrug your shoulders, be philosophical, and use your schedule or planning software to juggle things around. Get on the phone to re-negotiate other commitments.
- 4.** Is the problem an opportunity? Does this delay open up more time for something else? People are usually sympathetic when you are unavoidably delayed, and will probably be willing to renegotiate when you have to see them or deliver work to them. Someone else’s screw-up can become a gift of time with which you can better prepare yourself for another task or project, now that the deadline has been pushed back.
- 5.** Investigate ways in which you can work away from work. Does the airport have a place where you can work? If so, how much does it cost? If you don’t have a laptop computer, should you get one? Can you “work” with just pen and paper, or just by thinking? Time isn’t necessarily lost just because someone makes a mistake. Don’t let their problem become your problem.

## MI-6

### Managing Interruptions

#### **Politely invite drop-in visitors to come back later, if you are busy.**

Politeness and not wishing to offend are powerful reasons why we behave the way we do, and they are why many of us have a hard time handling people who “just drop in.” We truly believe that we will offend the other person if we give the impression we don’t want to see them at that moment. Nevertheless, sometimes we really can’t afford the interruption. It would be nice to know how to ask drop-in visitors to come back later, wouldn’t it?

Here are a few ways to handle this problem:

- 1.** One of the oldest maxims of good time management is to be ruthless with time and gracious with people. Rudeness is rarely excusable (although assertiveness and directness have their uses). Be tactful. They have a right to information, but you also have a right to complete your top priority tasks. And do they really have the right to get information from you at any time? Look the person directly in the eye, keep your voice firm and level, and say something like, “I’m flat out at the

moment, X Can you come back at 2:00 P.M.? I'll be free then."

2. It's surprising just how many people will not take a later appointment when it is offered—mainly because the reason for their dropping in was not all that important to begin with.
3. Another approach is to quickly ask what they need to see you about. Perhaps you can refer them to someone else who can help them as well as or better than you.
4. Check your own motives for wanting to see anyone who walks in through the door. Perhaps you genuinely believe that an open-door policy encourages communication. Perhaps you are grateful for interruptions so that you can procrastinate on a task you dislike. Perhaps you are so insecure that you feel the visitor will dislike you if you say no. Perhaps it makes you feel important! Be honest with yourself.
5. If you ask visitors to come back later, make sure that you honor this arrangement. If people feel that you are just giving them the brush-off, that won't help your reputation or your effectiveness.

## D-12

### Delegation

**Adopt the belief that people need to be given new and different challenges in order to grow and learn.**

One of the most unfortunate side-effects of the failure to delegate is the loss of human potential. There are enormous untapped pools of human potential out there, but much of it is wasted because the people with the potential are not often given the chance to show what they can do and learn to do new things. People need to be given new and different challenges in order to grow and learn, and delegation presents the opportunity to provide those challenges. Here's how:

1. In any given workplace, there are many people who know how to do their current jobs very well who even know ways to do them better. Yet no one ever asks them how! Delegation involves trust; you have to talk with people about how they would like to go about doing the delegated job. You might find that by discussing the job with them, you will get insights into the way the place works and the ways in which things can be improved.
2. Everyone gets stale doing the same thing day in and day out. Some people are content with this, happy to have a quiet, predictable life. A fair number of others, however, are discontented and would relish the chance to try something new in a new field or a field they are familiar with. Wanting to do something almost certainly means higher levels of motivation, energy, enthusiasm, concentration, and fresh perspectives and new approaches. Can you really do without these things? Delegation provides the opportunity to get all of these things, and that's got to be good for the overall effectiveness of the organization.
3. Picking up new skills and working in new areas helps to refresh people. It helps them to become more multiskilled, and it gives them a broader perspective of how the entire organization works. New professional friendships extend communication networks throughout the organization, and help break down harmful empire-building and in-group/out-group dynamics. Delegation sets all of these changes into motion by giving people something that they can get their teeth into.
4. Delegation increases a person's sense of empowerment and motivation. Six factors critical for motivation are:
  - skill variety (the worker has a wide variety of tasks to perform that extends his/her talents and skills)
  - task identity (the job role requires a worker to complete a whole task, and not just a specialized aspect of it)
  - task significance (the individual worker's input into the whole enterprise is significant, and is perceived to be so by the worker)
  - autonomy (a worker has discretion and independence regarding task factors such as scheduling and quality control)
  - feedback (the worker gets clear information about his or her work output and performance)
  - career-path improvement (the job role expands so that the worker has better career and salary prospects).

If delegation is done well, it will have a positive impact on all of these areas.