Catalyst Leadership Team Assessment

Companion to Catalyst Leadership | John Coné

You have now assessed your own leadership. Return to the beginning and read each statement again. This time ask: How accurately does this statement describe the leadership team of which I am a part?

Consider the leadership team as a whole. Do not average individual leaders in your head and do not focus on its strongest or weakest member. Make a judgment about the leadership environment the team collectively creates.

1 — Rarely or almost never true
2 — Occasionally true
3 — Sometimes true
4 — Usually true
5 — Consistently true

Rate each statement as a description of the leadership team as a whole. The original first-person statements are retained; use the team perspective for every rating.

1. SEE THE SYSTEM

1. When an important problem persists or recurs, I look beyond the people closest to the problem to understand the conditions producing it.

Team rating (1–5): _____

2. Before intervening in a performance problem, I try to understand the situation, performers, requirements, consequences, and feedback surrounding it.

Team rating (1–5): _____

3. I distinguish between symptoms requiring immediate attention and underlying system conditions that may repeatedly produce those symptoms.

Team rating (1–5): _____

4. When circumstances change unexpectedly, I look for where information, authority, expertise, relationships, or other system conditions are helping or preventing an effective response.

Team rating (1–5): _____

5. I consider not only whether the system can produce today's required performance, but whether it can generate capabilities we may need tomorrow.

Team rating (1–5): _____

6. When performance disappoints, I resist attributing the problem too quickly to individual motivation, competence, or effort.

Team rating (1–5): _____

TEAM SCORE: ____ / 30

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2. FIND THE LEVERAGE

7. When facing a consequential problem, I resist equating a long list of actions with a strong response.

Team rating (1–5): _____

8. I deliberately search for places where a focused intervention could produce a disproportionate effect on the system.

Team rating (1–5): _____

9. When considering an intervention, I ask not only whether it could solve the immediate problem but what capability it might leave behind.

Team rating (1–5): _____

10. I look for leverage in connections, information flows, decision rights, assumptions, incentives, access, and opportunities to experiment—not only in organizational structure or resources.

Team rating (1–5): _____

11. When several possible interventions exist, I consider which would make the organization less dependent upon me or another single source of intelligence.

Team rating (1–5): _____

12. I look for places within consequential work where solving today's problem could increase our capacity to solve unfamiliar problems in the future.

Team rating (1–5): _____

TEAM SCORE: ____ / 30

3. CHANGE THE CONDITIONS

13. I help people gain access to relevant expertise and knowledge across organizational boundaries.

Team rating (1–5): _____

14. I help important information reach the people capable of exercising judgment about it rather than allowing hierarchy, function, geography, or technology to trap it.

Team rating (1–5): _____

15. I push authority for discovery and experimentation close enough to the work that people can test reasonable ideas without unnecessary escalation.

Team rating (1–5): _____

16. I create an environment in which people can acknowledge uncertainty, surface bad news, challenge assumptions, and report unsuccessful experiments without unreasonable personal risk.

Team rating (1–5): _____

17. I create opportunities within normal work to turn experience into learning rather than relying primarily on occasional reviews or formal development activities.

Team rating (1–5): _____

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18. I recognize and reinforce people who create capability, make useful knowledge travel, and help others become more capable—not merely those who personally deliver immediate results.

Team rating (1–5): _____

TEAM SCORE: ____ / 30

4. EXERCISE CATALYST JUDGMENT

19. Before providing an answer I already know, I consider whether providing it is actually necessary.

Team rating (1–5): _____

20. I distinguish situations requiring compliance with a known answer from those in which discovery should remain open.

Team rating (1–5): _____

21. I use Direct leadership when urgency, consequence, certainty, or accountability genuinely requires it rather than simply because directing is faster.

Team rating (1–5): _____

22. When the desired outcome is sufficiently clear, but others should own execution, I transfer meaningful authority rather than continuing to control how the work is done.

Team rating (1–5): _____

23. When neither the solution nor the precise destination can be fully known in advance, I create conditions for discovery rather than prematurely imposing an answer.

Team rating (1–5): _____

24. I combine Direct, Empower, and Catalyze within the same situation when different parts of the work require different leadership responses.

Team rating (1–5): _____

TEAM SCORE: ____ / 30

5. MAKE CAPABILITY GENERATIVE

25. After consequential work, I help people distinguish what happened from what was actually learned from the experience.

Team rating (1–5): _____

26. I ask what people or the organization are now capable of doing that they could not do—or could not do as well—before the experience.

Team rating (1–5): _____

27. I help important learning travel beyond the team, function, or location in which it originated.

Team rating (1–5): _____

28. When learning travels, I encourage people to combine it with their own knowledge and circumstances rather than simply copy the original solution.

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Team rating (1–5): _____

29. I help uncover expertise, experience, relationships, technologies, and other capability ingredients that already exist in the system but have not previously been connected.

Team rating (1–5): _____

30. When we solve an unfamiliar problem, I deliberately look for ways to make what we learned increase our capacity to address the next unfamiliar problem.

Team rating (1–5): _____

TEAM SCORE: ____ / 30

6. MULTIPLY THE CATALYSTS

31. I notice people throughout the organization—not only formal leaders—who already display catalytic behaviors.

Team rating (1–5): _____

32. When considering someone's leadership potential, I notice whether the person connects others, reframes problems, crosses boundaries, enables experimentation, makes learning travel, and builds capability in others.

Team rating (1–5): _____

33. I deliberately give emerging Catalysts consequential problems for which the answer is not already known.

Team rating (1–5): _____

34. I sometimes allow another person to catalyze work I could handle more quickly myself because developing that person's capability has future value.

Team rating (1–5): _____

35. I am developing people who are increasingly capable of catalyzing important work without my involvement.

Team rating (1–5): _____

36. I encourage the Catalysts I develop to help other people develop catalytic capability.

Team rating (1–5): _____

TEAM SCORE: ____ / 30

You need not calculate an overall score for yourself or your leadership team. The profile is more useful than the total.

Neither is a verdict. A high score is valuable only if the behavior is useful in the work you face. A low score matters most when it limits your ability to address consequential work.

Ask: Which of these strengths can I use? And: Which of these constraints is getting in the way?

This is not a mathematical formula. It is a prompt for judgment. Consider choosing one—or at most two—areas on which to focus.

Remember, the purpose of this assessment is not to tell you what kind of leader you are. It is to help you decide where changing the way you lead could most increase the generative capability of the system around you.

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