

**HBR'S 10 MUST READS  
ON MANAGING PEOPLE,  
VOLUME 2**

**BY HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW**

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## Measuring yourself on the three imperatives

Are you performing all the activities necessary to be an effective boss?  
To get some sense of where you stand, assess yourself on the following questions:

Manage yourself		I need to make progress	This is a strength
1.	Do you use your formal authority effectively?	1 2 3 4	5
			This is a strength if you consider it a useful tool but not your primary means of influencing others. You make clear why you do what you do—and even share your authority with others when possible and appropriate. You focus more on the responsibilities that come with authority than on the personal privileges it provides.
2.	Do you create thoughtful but not overly personal relationships?	1 2 3 4	5
			This is a strength if your relationships are rich in human connections but always focused on the purpose and goals of the team and the organization. You avoid trying to influence people by befriending them.
3.	Do others trust you as a manager?	1 2 3 4	5
			This is a strength if people, particularly your own, believe in your competence, intentions, and values. You demonstrate concern for their individual success.
4.	Do you exercise your influence ethically?	1 2 3 4	5
			This is a strength if you consistently identify stakeholders, weigh their interests, and try to mitigate any harm that your actions may cause as you attempt to accomplish a greater good.

<b>Manage your network</b>	5. Do you systematically identify those who should be in your network?	This is a strength if you are always aware of which people and groups you and your team depend on, and vice versa, as circumstances change.	1	2	3	4	5
	6. Do you proactively build and maintain your network?	This is a strength if you create and sustain relationships with those in your network, connect frequently with them, and support their needs.	1	2	3	4	5
	7. Do you use your network to provide the protection and resources your team needs?	This is a strength if you protect your team from distractions and misunderstandings, use your network to solve problems inside and outside the team, and secure the funds, people, and other resources it needs.	1	2	3	4	5
	8. Do you use your network to accomplish your team's goals?	This is a strength if you form coalitions of network members to support your team's goals and help others in your network achieve theirs. Your network colleagues believe in your competence and character.	1	2	3	4	5

(continued)

## Measuring yourself on the three imperatives (continued)

		I need to make progress					This is a strength
		1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Manage your team</b>	9. Do you define and constantly refine your team's vision for the future?	This is a strength if you've defined your team's purpose and the goals, strategies, and actions that will take you there. You constantly gather information, discuss your plans with others, and refine your ideas.					
	10. Do you clarify roles, work rules, team culture, and feedback about performance for your team?	This is a strength if your people feel a strong sense of "we"—that they're all pulling together toward the same worthwhile goals. They know how they individually contribute and what the team's work involves. They receive regular feedback from you.					
	11. Do you know and manage your people as individuals as well as team members?	This is a strength if you interact equitably with all team members individually. You delegate, strive to help people grow, and constantly assess their performance. You hire people who both fit the team and add diversity, and you deal with performance issues quickly.					
	12. Do you use daily activities and problems to pursue the three imperatives?	This is a strength if you regularly consider how every problem, obligation, or event can help you build your team, make progress on its goals, develop people, and strengthen your network.					

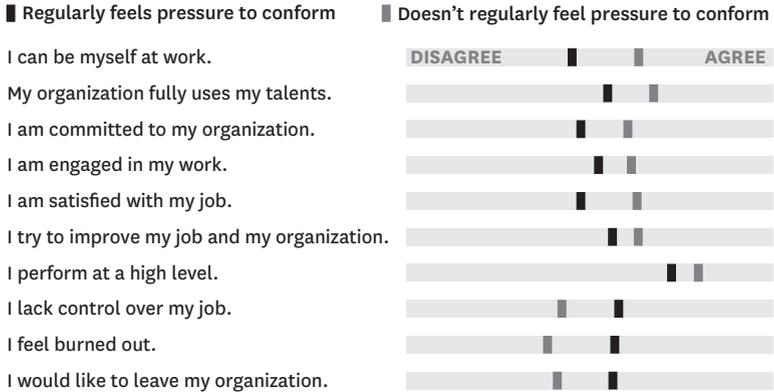
**How did you do?** Did your responses cover the whole range from 1 to 5? If you consistently assessed yourself at 3 or above, you should be skeptical. In our experience, few bosses merit high ratings across the board. Did you give yourself mostly 3s? Take care not to hide in the middle, telling yourself, "I'm OK—not great, but not failing either." And don't be satisfied to stay there. "I'm not failing" is the watchword of those who are comfortable—and stuck.

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## The perils of conformity

Organizations put tremendous pressure on employees to conform. In a recent survey of 2,087 US employees in a wide range of industries, nearly 49% agreed with the statement “I regularly feel pressure to conform in this organization.”

This takes a heavy toll on individuals and enterprises alike. Employees who felt a need to conform reported a less positive work experience on several dimensions than did other employees, as shown by the average scores plotted below.



# Assessment: Are You a “Constructive Nonconformist”?

Find out how much of a rebel worker you are.

For decades, prevailing management wisdom has encouraged leaders to focus on designing efficient processes and getting employees to follow them. But conformity can hurt businesses. Innovation and high performance often result from behaviors that defy organizational norms—established ways of thinking and of doing things. How much does your company pressure you to conform? And are you succumbing to the pressure and hurting your chances of success? Take the following assessment (adapted from my ongoing research) to discover whether you’re engaging in what I call constructive non-conformity: deviant behavior that benefits the organization.

When answering these questions, focus on the past month.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Almost never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Fairly often</i>	<i>Very often</i>	<i>Always</i>
1. In the past month, how often have you refrained from opposing your team members just to avoid rocking the boat?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. How often have you publicly supported ideas you privately disagreed with?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. How often have you followed established rules or procedures, even though you suspected there was a better way to do things?	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. How often have you raised questions about the effectiveness of current processes or systems?	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. How often have you seen senior leaders challenge the status quo or ask employees to think outside the box?	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. How often have you felt pressured to conform to the cultural norms of your organization (how to dress, how to interact with others, how to do your work, and so on)?	0	1	2	3	4	5

When answering these questions, focus on the past month.	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often	Always
7. How often have you felt free to be yourself—to behave and express yourself in an authentic way?	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. How often have you been encouraged to solve problems on your own, without involving a supervisor?	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. How often has your job played to your strengths?	5	4	3	2	1	0
10. How often have you been challenged—urged to develop a new skill or to take on a task that pushed you out of your comfort zone?	5	4	3	2	1	0
11. How often have you sought information that was inconsistent with your views and might even prove you wrong?	5	4	3	2	1	0
12. How often have you and your team been encouraged to debate ideas or consider multiple perspectives before reaching a decision?	5	4	3	2	1	0

**Score: 0–24** You're lucky: Your low score indicates that you are probably very engaged in your work, are performing at a high level, and are innovating frequently. Just make sure that you don't become complacent—the pressure to conform affects everyone. Keep being the rebel that you are!

**Score: 25–30** Your score is average—and in this case, average is good. Scores in this range indicate that your ability to express yourself at work is at a healthy level, allowing you to be productive and innovative. To stay in this sweet spot, watch out for situations in which you feel pressured to conform.

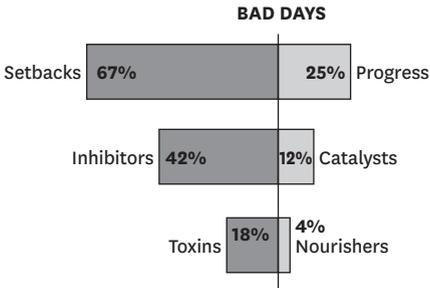
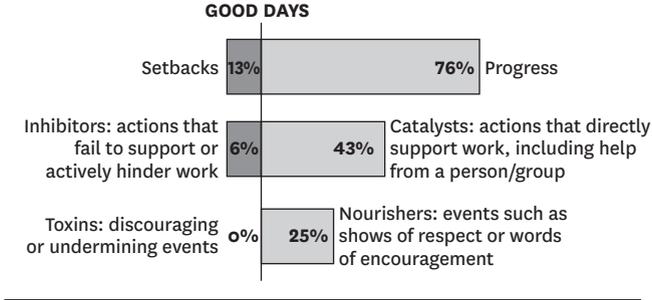
**Score: 31–39** Your higher-than-average score indicates a level of pressure that may be detrimental to your performance and your ability to innovate. You may also be disengaged. Try shaping your job in ways that allow you to be yourself and that bring out your talents and skills. Even small changes can let your authentic self shine through.

**Score: 40–60** Your high score indicates an unproductive level of conformity. You're probably disengaged, and you're almost certainly having a hard time being your true self at work. It's critical that you find ways (big and small) to lower the pressure to conform, and that starts with allowing your authentic self to shine through. Act more like a rebel, and you and your organization will benefit.

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## What happens on good days and bad days?

*Progress—even a small step forward—occurs on many of the days people report being in a good mood. Events on bad days—setbacks and other hindrances—are nearly the mirror image of those on good days.*



# The Daily Progress Checklist

NEAR THE END OF EACH WORKDAY, use this checklist to review the day and plan your managerial actions for the next day. After a few days, you will be able to identify issues by scanning the boldface words. First, focus on progress and setbacks and think about specific events (catalysts, nourishers, inhibitors, and toxins) that contributed to them. Next, consider any clear inner-work-life clues and what further information they provide about progress and other events. Finally, prioritize for action. The action plan for the next day is the most important part of your daily review: What is the one thing you can do to best facilitate progress?

## Progress

Which 1 or 2 events today indicated either a small win or a possible breakthrough? (Describe briefly.)

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## Setbacks

Which 1 or 2 events today indicated either a small setback or a possible crisis? (Describe briefly.)

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## Catalysts

- Did the team have clear short- and long-term **goals** for meaningful work?
- Did team members have sufficient **autonomy** to solve problems and take ownership of the project?
- Did they have all the **resources** they needed to move forward efficiently?
- Did they have sufficient **time** to focus on meaningful work?
- Did I give or get them **help** when they needed or requested it? Did I encourage team members to help one another?
- Did I discuss **lessons** from today's successes and problems with my team?
- Did I help **ideas** flow freely within the group?

## Inhibitors

- Was there any confusion regarding long- or short-term **goals** for meaningful work?
- Were team members overly **constrained** in their ability to solve problems and feel ownership of the project?
- Did they lack any of the **resources** they needed to move forward effectively?
- Did they lack sufficient **time** to focus on meaningful work?
- Did I or others fail to provide needed or requested **help**?
- Did I "punish" failure or neglect to find **lessons** and/or opportunities in problems and successes?
- Did I or others cut off the presentation or debate of **ideas** prematurely?

### Nourishers

- Did I show **respect** to team members by recognizing their contributions to progress, attending to their ideas, and treating them as trusted professionals?
- Did I **encourage** team members who faced difficult challenges?

### Toxins

- Did I **support** team members who had a personal or professional problem?
- Is there a sense of personal and professional **affiliation** and camaraderie within the team?
- Did I **disrespect** any team members by failing to recognize their contributions to progress, not attending to their ideas, or not treating them as trusted professionals?
- Did I **discourage** a member of the team in any way?
- Did I **neglect** a team member who had a personal or professional problem?
- Is there tension or **antagonism** among members of the team or between team members and me?

### Inner work life

Did I see any indications of the quality of my subordinates' inner work lives today? \_\_\_\_\_

Perceptions of the work, team, management, firm \_\_\_\_\_

Emotions \_\_\_\_\_

Motivation \_\_\_\_\_

What specific events might have affected inner work life today? \_\_\_\_\_

### Action plan

What can I do tomorrow to strengthen the catalysts and nourishers identified and provide the ones that are lacking? \_\_\_\_\_

What can I do tomorrow to start eliminating the inhibitors and toxins identified? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

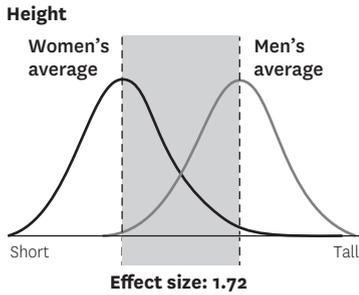
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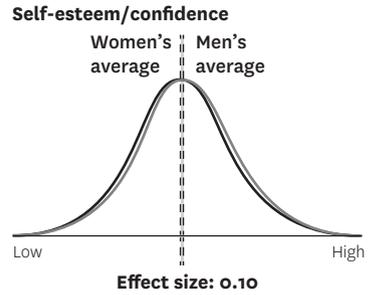
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### Meta-Analysis Graph: Height



### Meta-Analysis Graph: Self-Esteem/Confidence



*Note:* Statisticians consider an effect size of less than 0.20 to be “trivial,” 0.20–0.49 to be “small,” 0.50–0.79 to be “medium,” and 0.80 or more to be “large.”

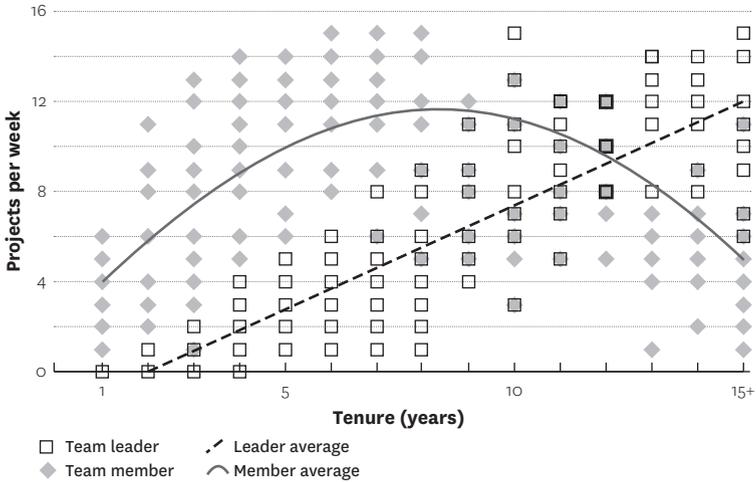
## Qualities Table

<b>Quality</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Importance</b>
<b>Competence</b>	Has the technical expertise and experience to do the job effectively	
<b>Trustworthiness</b>	Can be relied upon to be straight with you and to follow through on commitments	
<b>Energy</b>	Brings the right attitude to the job (isn't burned-out or disengaged)	
<b>People skills</b>	Gets along well with others on the team and supports collaboration	
<b>Focus</b>	Sets priorities and sticks to them, instead of veering off in all directions	
<b>Judgment</b>	Exercises good sense, especially under pressure or when faced with making sacrifices for the greater good	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>

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## Who's feeling the pain?

*At one professional services firm, the employees most squeezed by multiteaming were midtenure associates—they helped with more and more projects as they gained experience. But the more senior people became, the more likely they were to lead many projects at the same time.*



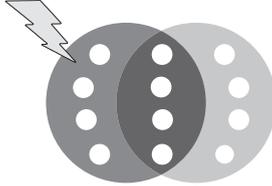
## Goals of multiteaming

(And the challenges that can undermine them)

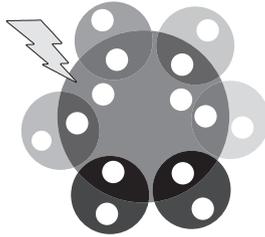
Goals for teams	Challenges
<p><b>Cost savings</b>, because team members whose expertise is not required at the moment can bill their down-time to other projects</p> <p><b>Process improvements</b> as a result of importing best practices and insights through shared members</p>	<p>Weakened relationships and coherence within teams and projects</p> <p>Stress and burnout, particularly when members end up with assignments that exceed 100% time commitment</p> <p>Interteam coordination costs so that schedules of projects with shared members don't collide</p> <p>Rocky transitions as members switch between <i>tasks</i> where their contributions are defined relative to other members' skills, adjust to different <i>roles</i> (boss on one team but subordinate on another), and learn new team <i>contexts</i> with unfamiliar routines, symbols, jokes, expectations, tolerance for ambiguity, and so on</p> <p>Reduced learning, because members lack time together to share knowledge and ideas</p> <p>Reduced motivation, because members have a small percentage of their time dedicated to any given project</p>
Goals for organizations	Challenges
<p><b>The capability to solve complex problems</b> with members who have deep, specialized knowledge</p> <p><b>Improved resource utilization</b> across projects (no one is dedicated to a project that needs only 5% of his or her time)</p> <p><b>Increased knowledge transfer</b> and learning through shared membership</p>	<p>Politics and tensions over shared human resources</p> <p>Coordination costs of aligning timelines of projects even when they are not linked by content or workflow</p> <p>Weakened identification with the organization if people feel commoditized</p> <p>Increased risk as shocks affecting one team may pull shared members off other projects</p>

## Who takes the hit?

When a couple of teams share many members, a shock to one group severely jolts the other, because people shift their efforts from ongoing work to firefighting.



When many teams share just one or two members, a shock to one group has a minor impact on the others—but the effects ripple throughout the organization.



# The “Dream Company” Diagnostic

**HOW CLOSE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION** to the ideal? To find out, check off each statement that applies. The more checkmarks you have, the closer you are to the dream.

## **Let Me Be Myself**

- I’m the same person at home as I am at work.
- I feel comfortable being myself.
- We’re all encouraged to express our differences.
- People who think differently from most do well here.
- Passion is encouraged, even when it leads to conflict.
- More than one type of person fits in here.

## **Tell Me What’s Really Going On**

- We’re all told the whole story.
- Information is not spun.
- It’s not disloyal to say something negative.
- My manager wants to hear bad news.
- Top executives want to hear bad news.
- Many channels of communication are available to us.
- I feel comfortable signing my name to comments I make.

## **Discover and Magnify My Strengths**

- I am given the chance to develop.
- Every employee is given the chance to develop.
- The best people want to strut their stuff here.
- The weakest performers can see a path to improvement.
- Compensation is fairly distributed throughout the organization.

- We generate value for ourselves by adding value to others.

**Make Me Proud I Work Here**

- I know what we stand for.
- I value what we stand for.
- I want to exceed my current duties.
- Profit is not our overriding goal.
- I am accomplishing something worthwhile.
- I like to tell people where I work.

**Make My Work Meaningful**

- My job is meaningful to me.
- My duties make sense to me.
- My work gives me energy and pleasure.
- I understand how my job fits with everyone else's.
- Everyone's job is necessary.
- At work we share a common cause.

**Don't Hinder Me with Stupid Rules**

- We keep things simple.
- The rules are clear and apply equally to everyone.
- I know what the rules are for.
- Everyone knows what the rules are for.
- We, as an organization, resist red tape.
- Authority is respected.