

Learning on the Run 1: Johari Window

How might you structure 360° feedback to clarify at a glance, what is already known, what more might be disclosed and what might signal further reflection?

The Request. A director of a regulatory agency wanted to hold a retreat of her management staff. Her purpose was to build relationships by having a straight conversation among everyone, “to get it all out on the table”, as there were several “undiscussables” that needed open and candid attention. She expected each individual manager to create a written self-development plan emanating from the retreat discussions and that these plans would be transparent among the team with progress checks and follow-ups. The retreat would be an chance to give and get feedback in order to support each even more, and become more aligned about leadership decisions. They were also committed to begin planning follow-up retreats with each of their staff groups.

Larger Context. Two of the unit managers were constantly in disagreement based on leadership style, different discipline and customer service philosophy. This disagreement was evident in their respective teams. There was to be a follow-up retreat for both these service groups to help integrate the model and direction given to their regulated customers.

Consulting Intervention. After a leadership pre-meeting to build the guidelines, process and outcomes desired, we interviewed each manager individually. The interview questions essentially focused on their role, strengths and development possibilities as a leader as well as how their colleagues were contributing to or inhibiting themselves and the leadership team. In creating the summary document for each individual, we included many individual comments rather than only themes. We used our own judgment as to what to include. Our thinking was that including even one remark would allow the manager the opportunity to ask for additional feedback from everyone present at the retreat if they desired.

The structure we used for feedback was an adaptation of the Johari Window. It was arranged as follows:

	Self-feedback: The stuff you already know about yourself	Comments that may signal further reflection for your learning about you
Other-feedback: The stuff they know and believe about you	<p>1.</p> <p><i>Box 1: Stuff You & Others Already Know.</i> This is the stuff that you and at least some of your colleagues feel that they know about you, both your strengths and leadership challenges that might be areas for self-development.</p>	<p>2.</p> <p><i>Box 2: Comments for Further Learning.</i> These are comments by your colleagues, both strengths and challenges. I didn’t hear you comment on these areas and perhaps, for that reason, they may be areas to reflect on further and solicit more feedback about.</p>
Unknown to others on team	<p>3.</p> <p><i>Box 3: Potential Self-disclosure.</i> Stuff in box 3 are areas that you mentioned, but nobody else did. They may represent the stuff you have kept private, but could choose to disclose if you decide the trust you build by being more transparent is worth any risk you might feel.</p>	<p>4.</p> <p>Possible assumptions and ?s to test</p> <p><i>Box 4: Stuff I Made Up.</i> After listening to you and your colleagues, I made up a few assumptions or questions that I imagined you having. The stuff in this box is purely what I would be thinking about if I were in your shoes. And of course I am not you and we haven’t had a chance to talk further. I put them there for you to ignore, correct for a better fit or consider and test out with your colleagues or me—what ever makes sense to you.</p>

Last Line. One way to structure feedback based on interview data is to use the Johari Window to organize the comments from the client and others.

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