



INSIGHT. EVIDENCE. INSPIRATION.



Leadership Blind Spots

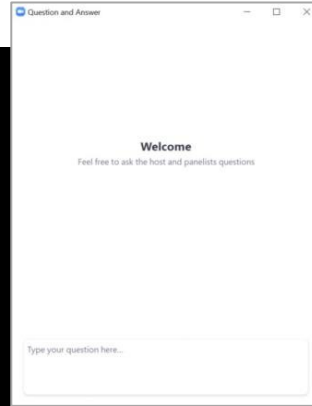
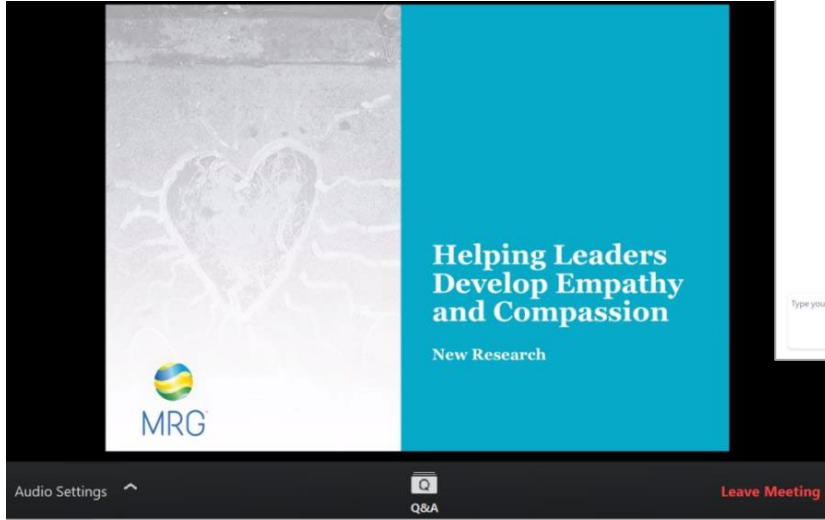
How to Identify and Address Them Through Coaching

Lucy Sullivan
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Head of Research and Education, MRG

Andrew Rand, Ph.D.
I/O Psychologist, MRG





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after the webinar:

-  Slides
-  Recording
-  Q&A

Today's Hosts



Lucy Sullivan



Kayla Burnett



Have a question?

Hover over the bottom of
your screen to get the tool
bar. Then click Q&A.



INSIGHT. EVIDENCE. INSPIRATION.

Management Research Group is a global leader in designing assessments that foster a deep self-awareness and impact people in profound and meaningful ways with solutions for Leadership, Motivation, and Personal Development.

MRG conducts extensive research on effective leadership behavior, leveraging a database of more than 1.2 million assessment participants.



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Agenda

1

The Business Case for Self-Awareness

Why are we
here?

2

New Research

5 New Findings
about Leadership
Blind Spots

+ Q&A

3

Coach to Close Awareness Gaps

Addressing
blind spots

4

Case Study

A closer look at how
a coach
approaches blind
spot coaching

+ Q&A

Audience Poll

**In your coaching work,
how often do you try to address a
coachee's blind spots?**

A.

**It's a major focus of my
coaching and development work**

B.

**I spend a moderate amount of
time on blind spots**

C.

**I work on blind spots
occasionally**

D.

**I'm not actively trying to address
blind spots in my coaching work**

The Business Case for Self-Awareness



Leadership skills can make – or break – careers.

In a study exploring why CEOs got fired, the top 5 answers weren't related to financial performance – they were linked to leadership.

31%

Poor change management

28%

Ignoring customers

27%

Tolerating low performers

23%

Denying reality

22%

Too much talk, not enough action

Source: [LeadershipIQ](#) *Why the CEO Gets Fired*

Implementing relevant leadership training is a challenge.

Source: [Forbes](#)
How Does Coaching Actually Help Leaders?

Global spending on leadership training is as much as \$350B.

But 60-85% is projected to be “scrap learning” – learning that is delivered but not applied.

Meeting leaders where they are is critical to developmental success.

70% of participants in a Harvard study ranked the customization of development programs to leaders' existing skills sets as in the top 3 most important factors in program success – top out of the 5 factors studied.

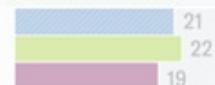
Source: [Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning 2023 Global Leadership Development Study](#)

Success Factors for Leadership Development Programs

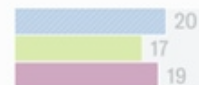
Rank 1 Rank 2 Rank 3



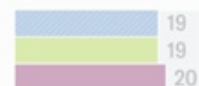
Compatibility of the program with existing knowledge and skill sets of employees



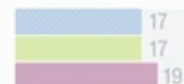
Strong leadership development strategy



Support from top management



A culture of learning and talent development



Sufficient resources (time and budget)

n=1,274

About the Study



What are leadership blind spots?

Behaviors where **the leader's perception of themselves** does not align with **how their colleagues perceive them.**

How do we know?

Data.

Using a 360 behavioral assessment, we define a **Blind Spot** as a dimension where a leader's **Self Score** differs from their **Average Observer Score** by 30 or more points.

ALIGNMENT



BLIND SPOT



The LEA 360™ Assessment

How we discover where leaders' perceptions differ from their observers'.

Assessment: LEA 360™

- Measures 22 behaviors from four perspectives:
 - Self, Boss, Peer, Direct Report
- Behavioral measures make it easy to apply in practice
- Semi-ipsative question design makes it hard to game, delivering authentic results

Specific,
and
value-
neutral

SAMPLE SELF QUESTION

When I have set an objective, I

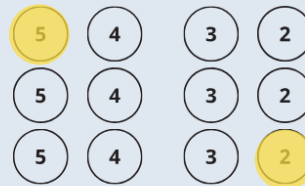
(a) make it happen

(b) follow it up

(c) explain it thoroughly

MOST

NEXT



SAMPLE OBSERVER QUESTION

When this person sets an objective, they

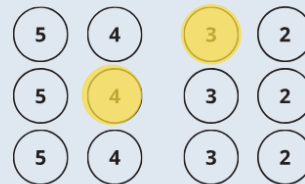
(a) make it happen

(b) follow it up

(c) explain it thoroughly

MOST

NEXT



Captures
order &
magnitude

What does it mean to measure BEHAVIOR?

4 things to understand about the measurement used in this research (LEA 360™).

DESCRIPTIVE

Measuring what a leader is doing – *not how well* they are doing it.

NEUTRAL

High scores are not universally good; low scores are not universally bad.

CONTEXTUAL

The assets and liabilities of any behavior are dependent on the goals of the individual, role, and organization.

MALLEABLE

Behavior profiles aren't "hard wired" like personality traits; they can be changed with targeted development.

The 360 Assessment

How we discover where leaders' perceptions differ from their observers'.

SELF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

| When I have set an objective, I | MOST | | NEXT | |
|---------------------------------|------|---|------|---|
| (a) make it happen | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| (b) follow it up | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| (c) explain it thoroughly | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |

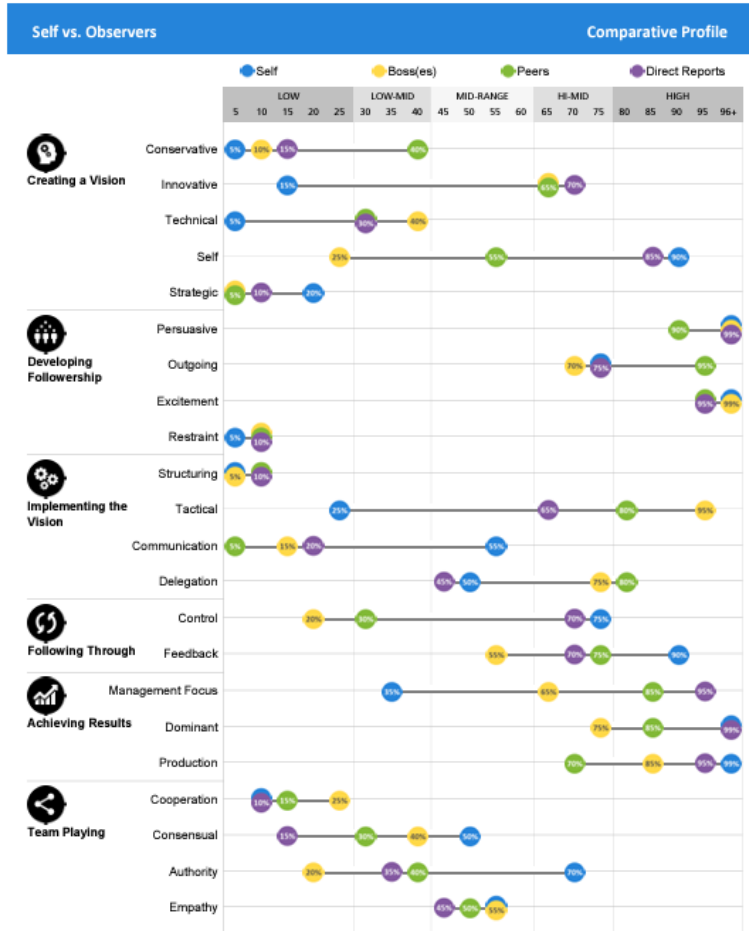
OBSERVER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

| When this person sets an objective, they | MOST | | NEXT | |
|--|------|---|------|---|
| (a) make it happen | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
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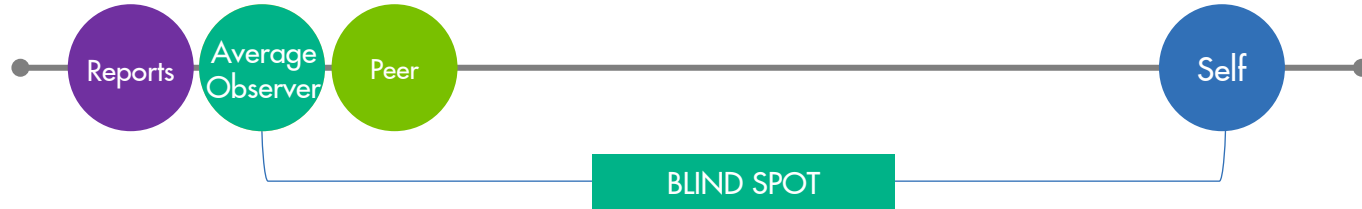


The LEA 360™ Assessment

How we discover where leaders' perceptions differ from their observers'.



How we calculated blind spots



1. Calculated average observer score on each LEA behavioral dimension. This score incorporates the perceptions of bosses, peers and direct reports.
2. Found blind spots: Identified the behaviors for which the difference between self and observer score ≥ 30 .

How is the research conducted?

39,628 Leaders
all management levels



2014-2024

65% are at the Department Manager level or higher

70+ Countries



54% Male

34% Female



12% other or not reported

All Industries



20% work onsite

65% work hybrid

15% work remotely



Of those reporting (21%)

All Generations

BOOMER

14%

X

50%

Y

20%

Z

2%

5 New Findings about Leadership Blind Spots





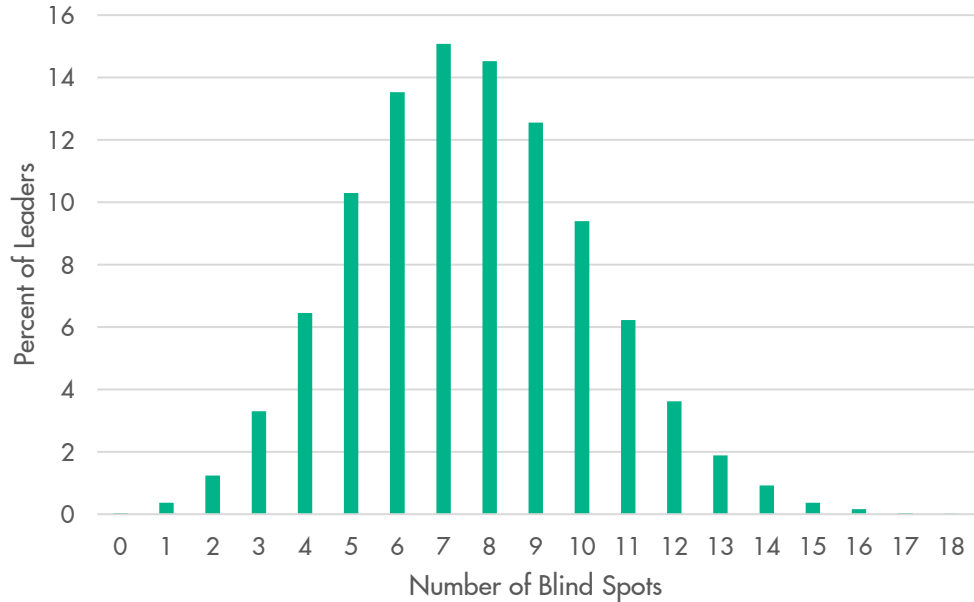
1

Blind spots are
common.

1

Blind spots
are common.

Leaders have an average of 7.6 blind spots
out of 22 leadership behaviors.





2

There are 3 blind
spot behaviors
leaders are likely to
overestimate.

2

There are 3
blind spot
behaviors
leaders are
likely to
overestimate.



BLIND SPOTS

Leaders believe they place **greater** emphasis on...

1. **Self:** working independently & making their own decisions
2. **Tactical:** involved in the day-to-day; working fast & adapting quickly
3. **Delegation:** leveraging help from others & giving them ownership

The bottom line?

Leaders are more likely to overestimate how often they make decisions independently, seize opportunities and adapt, and delegate to others.




3

There are 2
behaviors leaders
are likely to
underestimate.

3

There are 2 behaviors leaders are likely to underestimate.



Leaders believe they place **less** emphasis on...

BLIND SPOTS

1.

Communication: explaining clearly & keeping others informed

2.

Control: making sure things get done & delivering on promises

The bottom line?

Leaders are more likely to underestimate how thoroughly they communicate, and how frequently they ensure everyone is meeting commitments



4

There are 5 behaviors where leaders & observers are likely to align.

4

There are 5 behaviors where leaders & observers are most likely to align.

Leaders and their observers are most likely to be aligned on...

1. Persuasive
2. Outgoing
3. Excitement
4. Restraint
5. Empathy

The bottom line?

Leaders are more likely to be aligned on some of the behaviors associated with interpersonal relationships.

5

Blind spots are
relatively universal.

5

Blind spots
were
consistent
across
many data
segments.

Management Level



Region
(North America, Asia,
Europe, Australia &
New Zealand)



Leader
Gender

Observer
Gender



All Industries



Work
Location



Generation

BOOMER

X

Y

Z

Questions



Let's Get Practical

Addressing Blind Spots
with Coaching



Let's Get Practical

Addressing Blind Spots with Coaching

1 Understanding the tool & how to use it

2 Where do blind spots come from?

3 How do you address them as a coach?

4 Case Study: Coaching for two common blind spots

What does it mean to measure BEHAVIOR?

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The Coaching Work

In 3 Phases

INTERPRETATION

Help them understand what their scores mean



CONTEXT

Talk through what they are trying to achieve and identify what matters



ACTION PLAN

Determine what they're going to do to make changes

Where do Blind Spots come from?



What goes into it?

The internal AND the external.
Everything a leader does in their
head is in this score.

What goes into it?

The moments the participants are
directly working with their observers.
Context matters A LOT in observer
scores.

3 ways to address Blind Spots as a coach

1. **Maintain Perspective**

- Remind your coachee of what these mean – and what they don't.
- Awareness gaps are opportunities, not accusations.
- Some will hit harder at a person's self-perception. Give them space for those feelings.

3 ways to address Blind Spots as a coach

2. Go back to the foundations

INTERPRETATION



CONTEXT



ACTION PLAN

Reiterate an essential aspect of the LEA assessment: low scores aren't bad, high scores aren't good.
It's descriptive, not evaluative.

3 ways to address Blind Spots as a coach

3.

Leverage resources and input to take meaningful action.

- Supplement the data with qualitative feedback. Ask people. Get context.
- Leverage resources from your assessment provider (but not to the point of overwhelm). Identify key action items that feel possible.
- Be intentional and accountable. Identify what you'll do and set reminders to make it stick.

Blind Spots in Practice

Coaching Case Study

Robin, 41, Director of Customer Experience | SaaS Company

Time at organization: 9 years

Time in role: <1 year

Rose through the ranks from an individual contributor role, where she was known as a star performer

Promoted to Director 8 months ago, now has 3 management-level direct reports

Some concern from her management that she's struggling to find her footing in the new role

In coaching, she's personable, hard-working, and eager to succeed, but feeling overwhelmed and unappreciated in her new role, both by her manager and direct reports



Blind Spots in Practice

Coaching Case Study

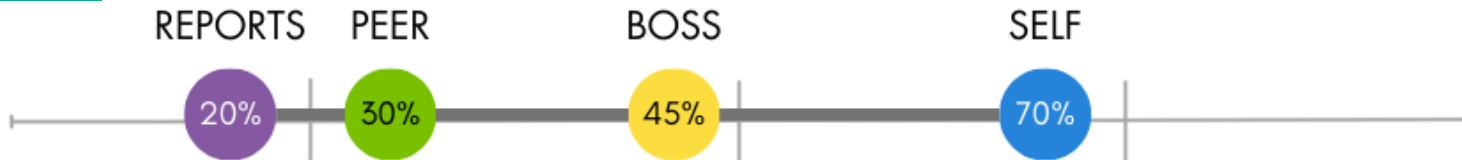


Two Blind Spots in Robin's data seem like they may be related – and relevant.

DELEGATION



CONSENSUAL



Blind Spots in Practice

Coaching Case Study

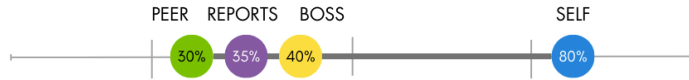


INTERPRETATION

CONTEXT

ACTION PLAN

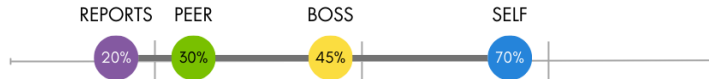
DELEGATION



What does it mean?

Enlisting the talents of others to help meet objectives by giving them important activities and sufficient autonomy to exercise their own judgment.

CONSENSUAL



What does it mean?

Valuing the ideas and opinions of others and collecting their input as part of your decision-making process.

Blind Spots in Practice

Coaching Case Study



INTERPRETATION

CONTEXT

ACTION PLAN

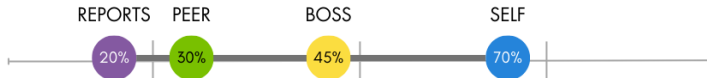
DELEGATION



Why?

This could explain some tension, particularly with Direct Reports. Robin overestimates how much responsibility she's giving to others – so she may feel overworked, while her reports may feel they're not trusted.

CONSENSUAL



Why?

Robin believes she's seeking input from her team, but they're not experiencing things the same way. Her reports, in particular, may see themselves as excluded from decision-making – which has the potential to breed resentment.

Blind Spots in Practice

Coaching Case Study



INTERPRETATION

CONTEXT

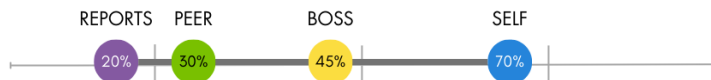
ACTION PLAN

DELEGATION



What can Robin do about it?
Start small.
Be quicker.
Give more space.

CONSENSUAL



What can Robin do about it?
Be curious about others' perspectives.
Ask more questions.
Show appreciation.

What are leadership blind spots?

Opportunities for leaders to find greater self-awareness and develop themselves in ways that will really matter to themselves, and to those around them.



On the way to
your inbox...

1.

Slides and recording

2.

Blog post wrap-up with
answers to more of your
questions

3.

Bonus! Crib sheet on
coaching to address blind
spots

Questions



Upcoming Events with MRG

Certifications

LEA 360™

September 10

October 15

IDI™

September 11

December 4

Pre-register for
our next **FREE**
webinar!

Use the link in
the chat





Thank you.
Stay in touch.

Contact Us



research@mrg.com

