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High Potential Trait Indicator: Leadership Potential

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Private & Confidential

Norms : Sample Norms

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## About this report

The High Potential Trait Indicator (HPTI) measures six key traits which affect work performance. Most importantly for you, it also indicates the sorts of approach someone may use if they achieve a senior leadership position, and suggests where that style might be most effective.

## What is potential? What is personality?

There are as many different definitions of potential as there are types of success. Broadly speaking, 'high potential' means a high probability of success. In this case, it is the probability of succeeding in a senior leadership position.

Personality is a stable psychological concept that influences our thoughts, emotions and behaviour. Personality is unlikely to change significantly throughout adulthood.

Each trait measured in the HPTI is stable and consistent across career spans, although particular traits are less variable over time and more important to particular careers or situations than other traits.

## Understanding your report

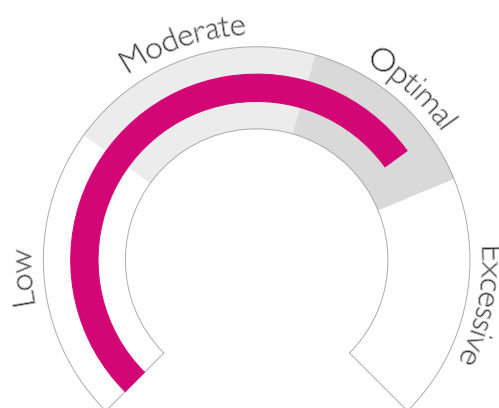
The HPTI traits are important, but are not the only ingredients of senior leadership potential and effectiveness. The following factors will also play a part:



The more you understand your strengths and development needs in all these areas, the more likely you will match your actual performance to your potential. Effective leaders continually work on self-development.

Each section in this report discusses how personality traits are related to senior leadership capacity.

## Interpreting your scores



We tend to interpret high scores on tests as 'good' and low scores as 'bad'. This is often not the case, and is definitely not true for the HPTI.

As you will see from your results, scores on each trait are described as 'Low', 'Moderate', 'Optimal' or 'Excessive'.

Optimal scores fit very well with most senior leadership roles.

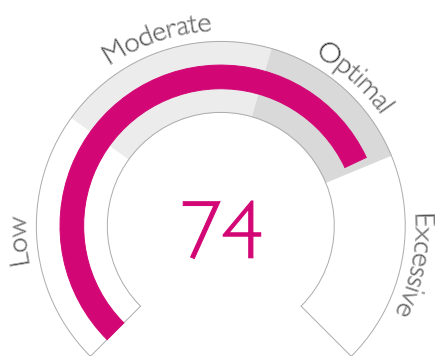
You may be able to adapt your moderate traits to senior leadership roles, particularly if it is quite close to the Optimal zone.

A 'Low' or 'Excessive' personality trait may reduce your senior leadership effectiveness in certain contexts, but may suit other specific roles.

The key point is that every set of scores indicates a preferred leadership style and the report offers some ideas which could help develop leadership behaviours: just because you scored outside the optimum band does not mean you cannot lead.

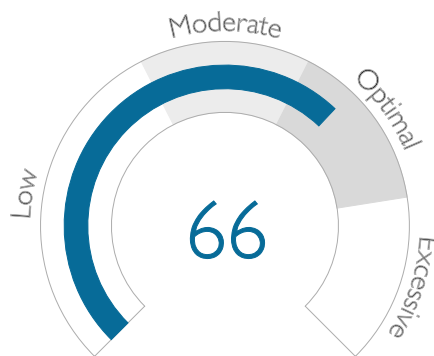
## Conscientiousness

Those who rate themselves as being highly conscientious tend to be focused on goals and how to reach them. They will usually be self-motivated. Those who score lower on this trait tend to be more easy-going, spontaneous and open to new insights.



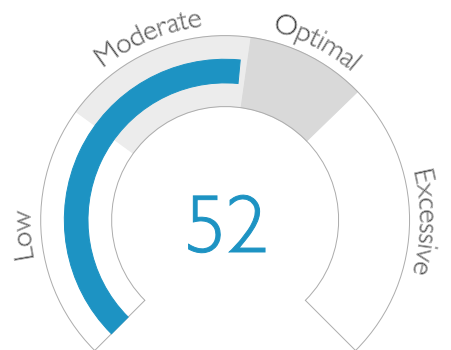
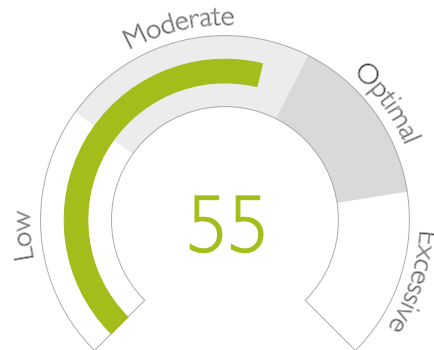
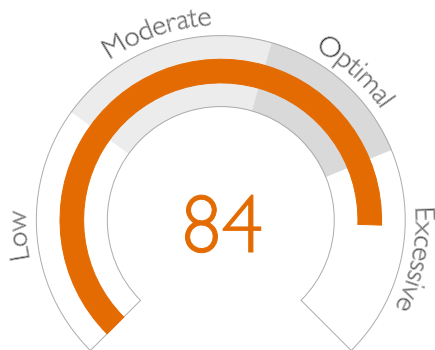
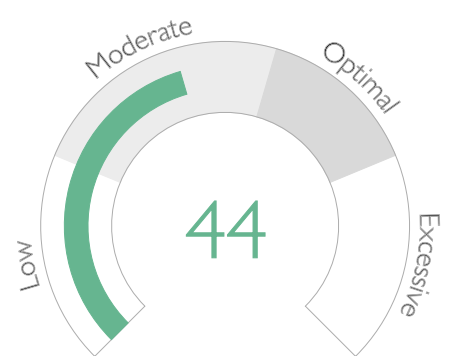
## Adjustment

High adjustment scores suggest calmness under pressure and fewer feelings of stress. Those who report lower adjustment tend to experience more stress and worry.



## Curiosity

Those with high curiosity scores often like novelty, learning and variety. By contrast, lower curiosity suggests a liking for tried and tested methods and consistency.



## Risk Approach

Those who score high on risk approach tend to be proactive in confronting challenging situations and difficult conversations. A lower risk approach typically indicates a more passive or reactive response to potential risk.

## Ambiguity Acceptance

Those with high ambiguity acceptance usually thrive on uncertainty and complexity. Those who find it more difficult to cope with ambiguity may like situations where there are clear-cut answers and solutions.

## Competitiveness

High competitiveness scores are typical of people who enjoy positions of power, influence and recognition. Less competitive people prefer cooperation and collaboration; they may dislike the spotlight.

## Acting on your report

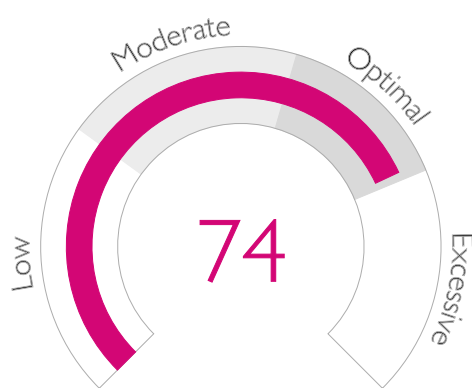
HPTI does not claim to predict your future career and whether you will become a senior leader. Many factors contribute to achieving our goals: some are outside our control; we can work on others such as our skills and knowledge. While the traits that HPTI measures are relatively stable, you can develop and change the behaviours that they drive, and find types of work and environment that suit your style best.

As you read:

- Try to think of specific relevant examples from your own work that illuminate the points made.
- Tick statements you particularly agree with and put a cross beside those you disagree with. No assessment can sum up a human being with absolute accuracy.
- This report reflects your responses. Think about why you might have described yourself in that way.
- Try to think about which trait or traits, will help you to achieve your own goals in your present role.
- This report might prompt you to articulate your longer-term goals more fully and clearly. A lot of us never do this explicitly. You might begin to see the career developments that are realistic.
- Think about your colleagues. How are they similar or different from you? Are there any of your own traits that you see in others? Do you find others, with very different personality traits, challenging to work with? It may be useful to ask them to take HPTI and then compare results.

Set SMART goals to develop skills, experience and knowledge. SMART goals are:

- **Specific:** identifies a very particular behaviour that can be developed. It's not a matter of opinion whether the goal has been reached or not.
- **Measurable:** has a particular number or quantity which can be measured.
- **Actionable:** involves doing very specific things.
- **Realistic:** is possible and achievable not just a piece of wishful thinking.
- **Timely:** within an appropriate and clearly defined time frame.



## Conscientiousness

### Your Score

You seem to be very conscientious in your work and have great leadership potential, though bear in mind the other ingredients for senior leadership success outlined at the beginning of this report. This means you invest a lot of time in your work even though you are probably better organised than most of your colleagues. Strong motivation to get on and finish tasks is part of your make-up: you tend not to put off tasks and decisions.

You possibly rate your own achievements, and may value success at work more than many other people. Missed deadlines, lateness to appointments and lack of motivation can frustrate you.

There is a danger you may become a perfectionist which might hold up work and frustrate others. People with your level of conscientiousness are more likely to display workaholic behaviours which may have a negative impact.

Although your level of conscientiousness is optimal for senior leadership, you may have to motivate and direct others who are less conscientious. Remember they can still be effective. Find outlets for their skills and abilities, but don't take others' lower drive as a personal challenge or insult.

Whatever their score on the traits HPTI measures, everyone should continue to work on them and develop their skills to be prepared for new challenges and more responsibility. Below are some ideas for development activities. Choose the ones which seem most relevant to your present situation and for your future career.

### Developing your senior leadership style

If you want to build on your existing characteristic behaviours to get a more rounded leadership style, these ideas may help:

- Work on your frustration with those less conscientious than you. Create teams with different types of people, make a point of noting their different contributions.
- Develop a rating scale for work quality from 1 = 'unacceptable' to 10 = 'perfect'. Somewhere around 6 or 7 will be 'fit for purpose' and most work needs to meet that quality standard. Only very critical jobs need to score 8-10.
- Experiment with different types of leadership role on smaller projects and team exercises. Given your profile here and other strengths, which areas do you feel most effective in: creative or process-driven roles; those relating to people or to things?

### Definition

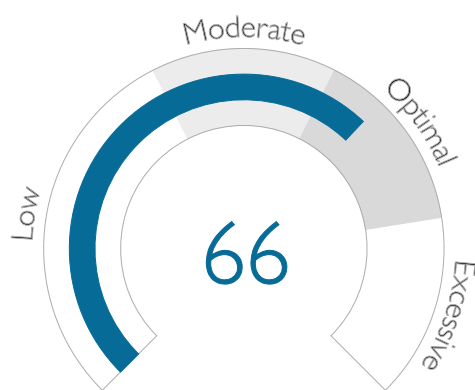
Conscientiousness combines self-discipline, an organised approach to work and the ability to control impulses which others might give in to. Highly conscientious people tend to make concrete plans. They motivate themselves to work. They seem driven to achieve goals.

Individuals with lower conscientiousness are more casual about deadlines and quality control but may be open to new ideas. They seem to 'go with the flow'.

### Implications for senior leadership

Those who are highly conscientious are attentive to detail and ensure tasks are completed to higher standards, but there is a danger that over-conscientious leaders may undervalue more spontaneous insights and hunches, thus missing opportunities.

Leaders with low conscientiousness can miss details, may have trouble setting individual and team goals, but are very adaptable, open to new insights and tend not to get stressed or overworked.



## Adjustment Your Score

You react much more calmly to stress at work than others and are unlikely to blame yourself for events that are beyond your control. At work you are usually even-tempered, calm and productive, even in stressful situations. You are much less likely to experience anxiety or frustration with yourself or others at work. Instead, you feel positively about your work and others'.

Your score suggests you have real potential as a senior leader in this respect (remembering the other skills and characteristics that contribute to great leadership which are mentioned earlier in this report.) Ability to adjust to pressure and stress becomes more important the more senior the job as more is at stake.

Whatever their score on the traits HPTI measures, everyone should continue to work on them and develop their skills to be prepared for new challenges, changing times and more responsibility. Below are some ideas for development activities. Choose the ones which seem most relevant to your present situation and for your future career.

## Developing your senior leadership style

If you want to build on your existing characteristic behaviours to get a more rounded leadership style, these ideas may help:

- Other people react more overtly to stress than you. Your calmness might be misread as disengagement and coldness, so ensure you talk to people and sympathise if they are obviously stressed.
- Some stress aids performance: too much calmness might reduce performance below optimum levels. Occasionally seek out situations which challenge you and make you slightly uncomfortable. That is the essence of senior management; the ability to manage change rather than be derailed by it. You may be suited to change management in terms of organisational activity.
- Because you are resilient to most stress, you may have less practice than others in dealing with strong reactions to extremely stressful or challenging situations. Test out your limits when you feel prepared, the consequences of failure are low and you have support.
- Everyone needs activities that can reduce general stress. So try to do physical exercise, avoid excessive working hours and find hobbies that relax you.
- Be mindful of how your actions affect others, and consider how you communicate with others with low adjustment. Things that do not bother you may worry others.

## Definition

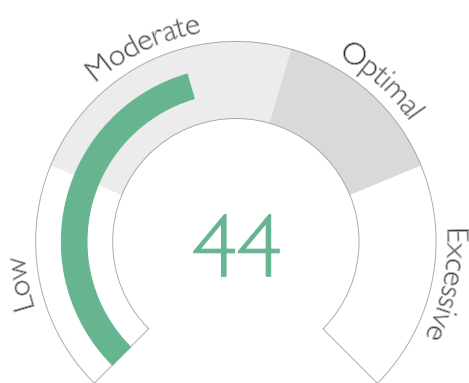
Adjustment scores indicate how individuals react emotionally to stress, external events, pressures.

People with low adjustment scores tend to think more negative thoughts and become preoccupied with negative emotions. They are more likely to be self-conscious about their work and how they behave around others. They can become preoccupied with the opinions of others and may worry about what others would see as trivial issues.

High adjustment is often related to feeling positive about one's own work and relationships. Those with higher adjustment can shrug off stresses and strains.

## Implications for senior leadership

Adjustment is important at higher levels of leadership. Senior leadership positions involve greater pressure and stress, and typically involve more varied and sometimes emotionally charged interactions with others. So being able to shrug off pressure ensures that a leader's performance is unaffected by external conditions. However, too much adjustment can also be a problem. It can make leaders seem cold and make them underestimate the real difficulties individuals and organisations face.



## Definition

This describes how people approach innovation, change, new information, methods and approaches.

High scorers tend to search for new information and alternative methods of getting work done but may undervalue existing work methods.

Lower curiosity values tried and tested approaches, can be suspicious of new information and may dislike experimenting with new techniques.

## Implications for senior leadership

It is often said that to stay the same is to lose ground, so good leaders must constantly evaluate information and look for ways to change and improve performance. Leaders who are not open to new information can stick to old ways of working long after they've become a problem. On the other hand, leaders who implement change for change's sake can demotivate staff and can drop perfectly good, established ways of doing things. Different attitudes to new ideas will be valuable at different stages in the business cycle.

## Curiosity Your Score

You seem to have some interest in new ideas and approaches at work, but sometimes prefer to stick to your own way of doing things. Your interests may change, but once you have a good idea or plan you like to stick to it. Learning new things is an enjoyable activity for you, but you also like a degree of consistency and stability. You have a fairly balanced approach. Most of the time you will listen to new information, but you are unlikely to change your methods unless presented with well-argued reasons. You are likely to have a core group of interests and routines which serve as a base for your learning and new ideas.

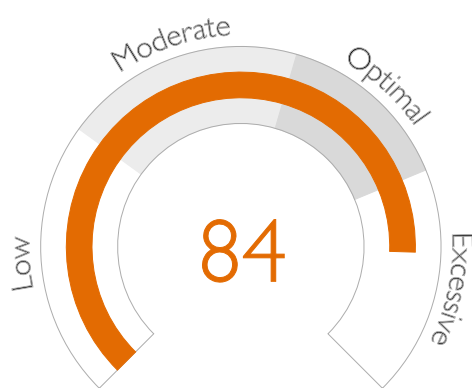
Leadership often involves carrying people through change. However, some functions require the consistent application of quality-assured techniques and some teams and organisations have to be relatively stable, or go through stable periods. You have a reasonably balanced attitude to curiosity and novelty. Leadership roles involving fundamental, all-embracing or traumatic change may be a challenge for you. Your characteristics will be invaluable at relatively stable times in the business cycle or when there is a need for some less fundamental change in business processes and structures.

## Developing your senior leadership style

If you want to build on your existing characteristic behaviours to get a more rounded leadership style, these ideas may help:

- Develop your knowledge and skills in a particular area, instead of exploring many different areas. Become the acknowledged expert.
- Avoid automatic, negative reactions to new ideas. You need good, rational arguments for change and novelty.
- If someone is pitching innovation to you make it clear what sort of evidence and arguments you want. This will save time and prevent frustration among other people.
- Use different areas of your life; sports, work, family, maybe areas like children's education to get used to different kinds of people and different approaches to problems.
- In senior leadership, new ideas, innovation and creative solutions are expected. If you tend to avoid new ideas, trends and fads, identify someone you trust to brief you on what is both new and effective.





## Definition

Risk approach indicates how someone deals with challenging, difficult or threatening situations.

People who score high consider a broad range of options, choose whichever they believe to be the best one and then act quickly. They are willing to confront challenges directly and immediately.

Individuals with lower risk approach scores tend to avoid challenges or conflict until they have no other choice.

## Implications for senior leadership

Leaders should be able to confront problems, take calculated risks, have difficult conversations and consider a range of options. They often need to react as quickly as possible rather than putting off difficult tasks. In essence, courage is an important part of a leader's armoury. However, if leaders react in an emotional way, without thinking, they may find they are making problems worse. This might cause stress and a feeling of being out of control.

So, different leadership roles will require different attitudes to risk: for some leaders, risk must be addressed quickly, in other cases a more considered attitude is essential.

## Risk Approach

### Your Score

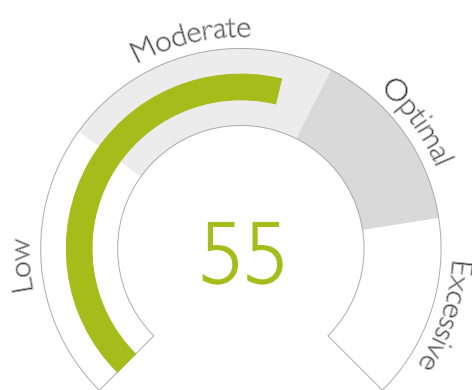
You seem to prefer to confront difficult situations straightaway and solve any problems as soon as they arise. Solving problems will tend to be more important to you than how this impacts on other people's feelings. You take risks at work, and handle challenging projects even when they may be stretching your own knowledge or abilities.

Senior leaders deal with risk everyday: some say it's the defining element in the leadership role. Calculated risk-taking is a key part of certain leadership jobs. Sometimes, as in the need to make redundancies, leaders find themselves disliked and blamed, while still needing to take unpopular decisions. Senior leadership positions in expanding and changing organisations, or those seeking to recover from a difficult period will really appeal to you. You are likely to be comfortable handling these sorts of issues but you may be prone to an excessive interest in risk and enjoyment of confrontation, which may reduce your effectiveness. Your tendency to take risks will allow you to seize opportunities, but at times may lead to major mistakes as you go beyond your skills and knowledge. You may get a reputation as someone who does not weigh up the consequences of your actions.

## Developing your senior leadership style

If you want to build on your existing characteristic behaviours to get a more rounded leadership style, these ideas may help:

- Learn more about your colleagues' levels of risk approach and understand when you need to be a bit more cautious or diplomatic with certain people.
- Focus your energy on the problems or challenges that offer the greatest benefits. Avoid getting caught up in conflicts that are not a good use of your time.
- Your risk approach style has many advantages, but others with a more cautious approach may find you aggressive or confrontational. Be aware of this. Add to your arsenal of techniques for addressing difficult issues: assertiveness training will be important for someone with your style.
- Risk can be stressful. Make sure you look after your physical health and develop mental techniques for relaxing.
- Risk can be addictive. Make sure you put in place systems to evaluate the riskiness of new ideas: the more fully developed the better. Always insist on a downside analysis for any plan to assess the worst case scenario.



## Definition

Ambiguity acceptance describes people's reaction to complexity and contradictory information: situations where outcomes, decisions and evidence are not immediately obvious or clear.

Individuals with high ambiguity acceptance enjoy such situations.

Individuals with low ambiguity acceptance prefer straightforward problems, situations and solutions.

## Implications for senior leadership

Ambiguity acceptance becomes more important at higher levels of leadership. Leaders are constantly presented with mixed information, conflicting opinions and different options. They must be able to cope and thrive when faced with them, deciding on important issues without being overwhelmed.

High scorers will often like and thrive in this sort of situation. Ambiguity acceptance can be a characteristic of businesses and organisations which have flexible policies.

On the other hand, people with lower scores may be fitted to lead organisations where clearly documented business processes and guidelines are essential to meet contract requirements, ensure quality, or meet technical necessities. In

## Ambiguity Acceptance Your Score

You are likely to accept complex, unclear situations, even though you prefer a degree of stability and structure at work. You see complexity and uncertainty as challenging and sometimes interesting. However, if people or situations get too ambiguous you may find yourself feeling less comfortable. Structured tasks, objectives and methods should form the basis of your work, but they should not be too structured: you prefer some flexibility in how you get things done.

You may enjoy some complex problems, but dislike it when people regularly send mixed messages or are not direct with you. You usually like to have a yes or no answer to a question, and clear solutions for most problems.

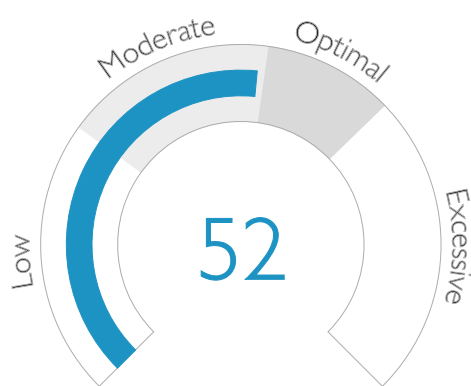
Senior leadership often involves dealing with a lot of ambiguity. Leaders face problems where there are many solutions, basing their decisions on uncertain and incomplete information given by people with mixed motives. You slightly prefer simpler, clearer problems and information so your leadership potential would probably suit an organisation that has some structure, with clear guidelines for performance and behaviour and relatively straightforward success criteria. However, you may not enjoy working in organisations that take away all judgement and present work pre-packaged. You are likely to get bored without some complexity and ambiguity. You may find organisations or business that you see as overly rigid, dogmatic or authoritarian difficult to work with.

## Developing your senior leadership style

If you want to build on your existing characteristic behaviours to get a more rounded leadership style, these ideas may help:

- The capacity to make use of mixed information and thrive in complex situations is very important for leadership. Use your moderate level of ambiguity acceptance to search out information and thrive in complexity when possible, but to also be decisive when necessary.
- Learn and consider the value of people who have much higher and lower levels of ambiguity acceptance. Those with lower ambiguity acceptance tend to be better with detail and structure, while those with higher ambiguity acceptance thrive with uncertainty and complexity. Your mid-point range means you may be able to understand both approaches more than those with extreme scores and help to clarify communication between many different colleagues.
- Explore different situations and understand the level of specificity you need in your job, and the level of flexibility in your job where you work most effectively.

such cultures, high scorers might get bored or over-complicate simple issues.



## Competitiveness

### Your Score

You can probably work in fairly competitive environments, but may find intense competition stressful or difficult. Friendly competition is enjoyable, in your view, but very aggressive, 'winner takes all' competition does not appeal to you. You care less than some people about winning, though when you do you are quite pleased.

You can be equally happy leading and being led. However, you are likely to get less satisfaction than other people from being in a position of power or from feeling you are better than others at your work. This means you can be flexible in different types of roles at work and may not need frequent recognition or awards to stay motivated.

While you could lead in moderately target driven, competitive environments, you will also need a degree of collaboration to feel completely at home.

### Developing your senior leadership style

If you want to build on your existing characteristic behaviours to get a more rounded leadership style, these ideas may help:

- Use less important, perhaps leisure, activities to test out your competitive instincts.
- Strengthen a range of leadership skills in emotional intelligence, influencing and assertion.
- Learn more about how teams work. This is a growing area of organisational focus. Good leaders will often build strong teams round them and this would suit your style.
- Identify less competitive team members and let them set competitive targets. Both very competitive and more collaborative parts of an organisation are critical to effectiveness
- Praise others' work. They may be more reliant on external praise than you.
- Look at the sector your organisation works in and rate exactly how competitive it is. On this basis look at your internal procedures and systems.

### Definition

Competitiveness describes people's relative desire to win, need for power and reaction to winning and losing.

Individuals with higher competitiveness need to feel that their achievements are recognised and appreciated. Higher competitiveness can drive performance and a desire to self-improve.

Individuals with lower competitiveness feel less need for control and are less focused on rewards or recognition.

### Implications for senior leadership

Many leaders are very competitive and competition can be used to improve team performance. Competitive people often rise to positions that give them more power or influence. Competitiveness is positive when it is used to encourage group performance improvements, but not when leaders compete simply to bolster their egos. Where group efforts are key, a leader with low competitiveness is essential to draw in varying talents.

HPTI is part of a range of assessments that empower businesses to transform the performance of their teams and individuals – and deliver an immediate impact on their organisation.



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