



Team Problem Solving: *How Do You Rate?*

By Jim Stewart

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How company owners and managers execute the fundamental principles of management, make decisions by consensus, hold effective meetings, and listen “engagingly” can all have a significant effect on organizational effectiveness.

Problem solving as a member of a team or designated work group can produce outstanding results—but if the dynamics don’t work, sometimes the results can be disastrous. The following questionnaire is designed to enable individuals involved in group problem solving to evaluate their own behavior.

Take a few minutes to complete this self-assessment questionnaire. Select **1** for “very little”; **2** for “some”; **3** for “considerable”; and **4** for “great.” Answer each question, total your score, and see the next page to analyze your results.

	1	2	3	4
	<i>Very Little</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Considerable</i>	<i>Great</i>
1. Friendly and easy to talk to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Listen well to others whether you agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. State the points of view of others as well or better than they can, even though you disagree with them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Encourage others to express their ideas fully and frankly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Encourage others to express their feelings frankly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Display confidence and trust in others whether or not you agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Share information frankly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Expect others to do their very best	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Expect a high quality job from yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Think what you and your group are doing is important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Encourage innovative and creative ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Are willing to take risks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Are not defensive when criticized	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Avoid treating others in a condescending manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Avoid insisting that your views be accepted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Avoid belittling the contributions of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Avoid dominating the discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Avoid being impatient with the progress being made by the group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Encourage group to discuss disagreements and resolve (not suppress) them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Use “we” and “our” rather than “I” or “my”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Show no favorites, treat all members the same	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Give credit and recognition generously	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Accept more blame than may be warranted for any failure or mistake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Avoid imposing a decision on the group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COLUMN TOTALS: Tally each column here
(e.g., if you selected “4” for three rows, that totals up to 4 x 3=12)

TOTAL: Add all four column totals here

(continued)



If your total score is greater than 80, you are doing an outstanding job of problem solving. Your team is operating in a productive and efficient manner, and team members are motivated and feel rewarded for their participation.

Scores ranging between 48 and 79 indicate that you are making a number of successful attempts to utilize many of the effective problem-solving techniques, and you should be experiencing a degree of success, but some improvement is needed.

If your score is less than 48, chances are your team may be operating in a somewhat dysfunctional and non-cohesive manner, and results may be less than satisfying. Take a look at your style and modify your and your team's behavior as appropriate. You may also want to get feedback from team members by having them complete this questionnaire on *your* behavior, and then soliciting their ideas as to how you could/should alter your style. Good luck!

The bottom line: In effective organizations, people feel they are on a winning team and they believe they're doing something important. They are proud of the organization they work for and they feel they're making a contribution to something that's important to themselves. Effective team problem-solving can help to make these desired outcomes become more of a reality.