

A Step Forward in Assessment

Accounting for Overkill and Versatility

Rob Kaiser

KAPLAN DEVRIES INC.

1903 G Ashwood Ct.
Greensboro NC 27455
336.288.8200

rkaiser@kaplandevries.com

Presented at the 9th Annual Conference of the

INTEGRATED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

November 6, 2004



Bob Kaplan

- Pioneering work on exec dev't at CCL in 1980s
- "Beyond Ambition" (1991)
- SKILLscope for Managers
- Began this work in early 1990s
- We teamed up in 1997

Learning Objectives

• Identify common oversights in typical assessment

• Recognize deceptively simple solutions.

• Develop a plan to apply them.

What we know
about leadership

How we
assess leaders

A Curious Disconnect

What we know
about leadership

How we
assess leaders

Case: Rodney Strong

Oversight #1

Overkill is rampant. But do we assess it?

Frequency Rating Scale

How often does Rodney do the following?

- Lets people know clearly where he stands on issues. Declares himself.

never rarely sometimes often always
- Direct; a straight-shooter. Tells people candidly what he thinks.

never rarely sometimes often always

Effectiveness Rating Scale

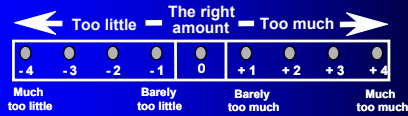
How effective is Rodney on the following?

- Lets people know clearly where he stands on issues. Declares himself.

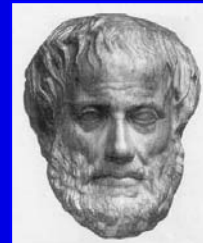
ineffective adequate effective very effective extraordinarily effective
- Direct; a straight-shooter. Tells people candidly what he thinks.

ineffective adequate effective very effective extraordinarily effective

How to measure overkill?



Aristotle's notion of virtue

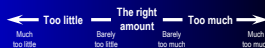


Deficiency

VIRTUE

Excess

The "Curvilinear" Rating Scale



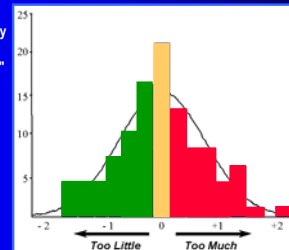
- Lets people know clearly where he stands on issues. Declares himself.

-4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
- Direct; a straight-shooter. Tells people candidly what he thinks.

-4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4

Detecting Excess Too

Item text:
"Lets people know clearly where she stands on issues. Declares herself."



Average subordinates' ratings for 107 executives.

Versatility

The ability to turn the volume up or down depending on the situation.

Versatility isn't moderation in all things. Extreme situations call for extreme measures.

What are the truths about effective leaders?

For every truth about leadership there is an equal and opposing truth.

Case: Linda Newhart

Oversight #2

Lopsidedness is rampant. But do we assess it?

How to measure lopsidedness?

1. Have to measure overdoing.
2. Have to conceptualize leadership as two-sided.

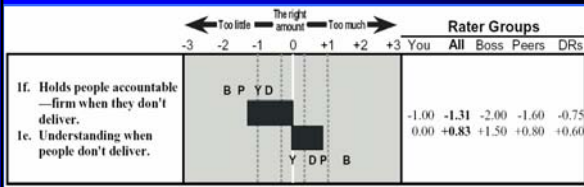
The Two-Sidedness of Leadership



Complex Versatility

The ability to freely draw upon opposing virtues, unrestricted by bias in favor of one and prejudice against the other.

Lynda Newhart



Forceful & Enabling

Forceful Leadership

Leading off of your own intellect and energy

taking charge, taking stands, having leadership presence, being decisive, setting challenging expectations for people, holding them accountable, making tough calls, asking probing questions, and so on.

Enabling Leadership

Creating conditions for other people to be forces in their own right

empowering them, being receptive to where they stand on issues, being responsive to their needs, understanding when they don't deliver, sharing the limelight, and so on.

From Virtue to Vice

- Going overboard corrupts an otherwise valued quality
- "Strengths become weaknesses"

Leadership Versatility Index®



Copyright 2002 by Kaplan DeVries Inc. All rights reserved. Patent Pending.

What's it like using this scale?

- Less restricted, more room to express

Expect multiple raters to show more agreement

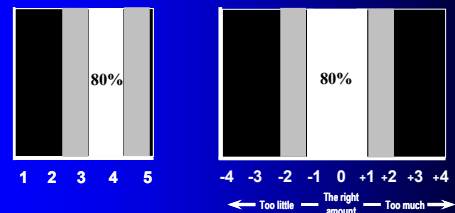
	Traditional Scales*	"Too little/Too much" Scale
Superiors	.44	.50
Peers	.36	.44
Subordinates	.30	.47
<i>Average</i>	.37	.47

* Based on Conway & Huffcutt's (1997) meta-analysis

What's it like using this scale?

- Raters use more scale points

Should spread scores out; pull extreme scores into relief



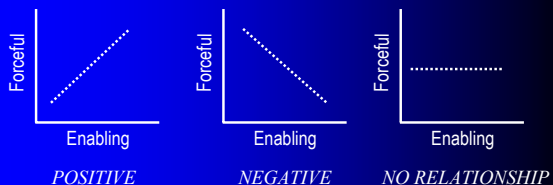
"Our company uses a five-point scale in the 360° that is part of our annual performance appraisals. What happens is almost all the respondents give you a 3 or 4. They don't use the full scale. So what you get is this ridiculous thing where your highest score is 3.9 and your lowest is 3.3.

So the 360° doesn't differentiate. It doesn't identify the problem players. And it doesn't help you sort out your strengths and weaknesses."

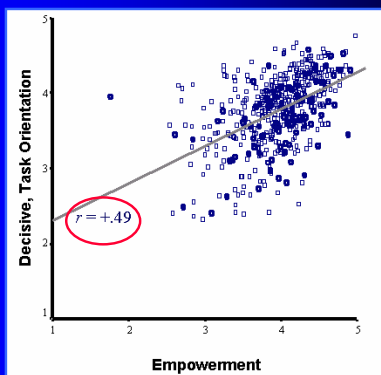
— Senior Line Executive

Forceful and Enabling Leadership

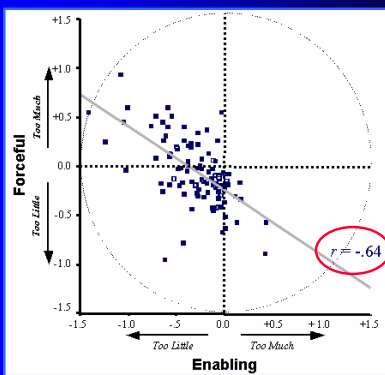
How do the two relate statistically?



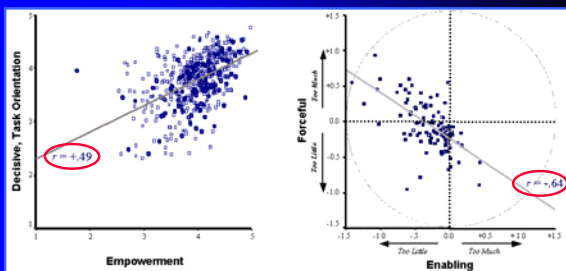
What Prior Research Has Found



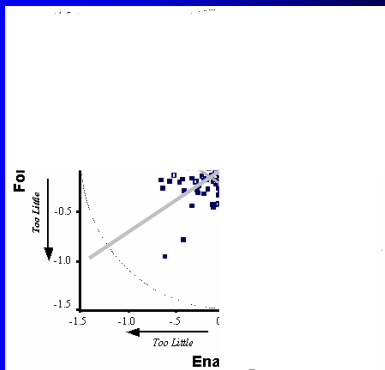
What We Have Found



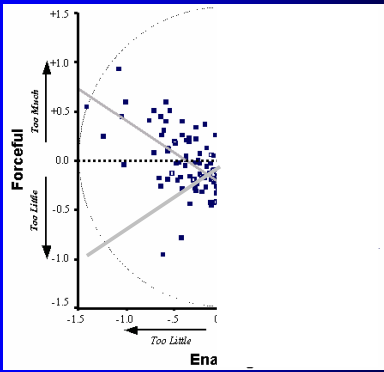
Why the Difference?



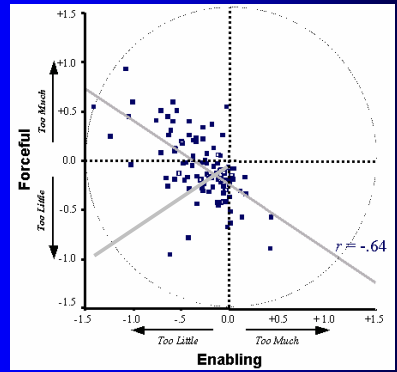
Why the Difference?



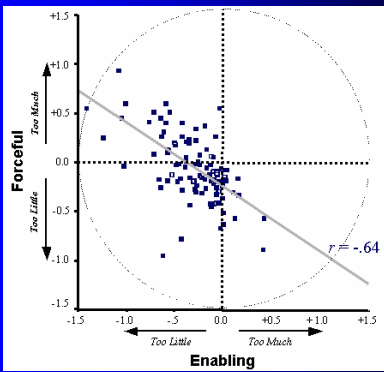
Why the Difference?



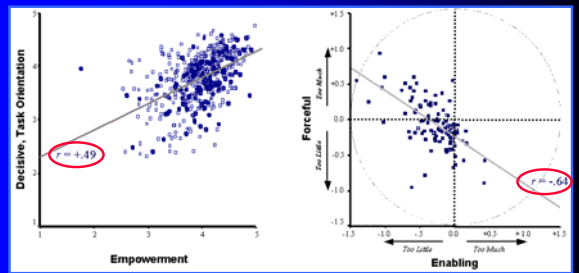
Why the Difference?



Why the Difference?



The Cost of Overlooking Overkill?



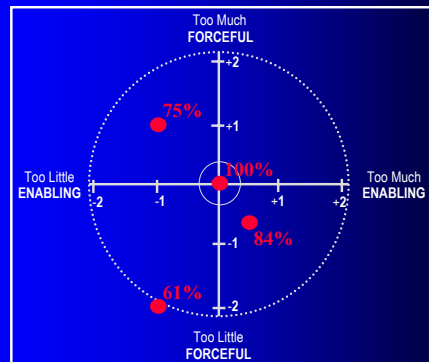
Half of the picture

The whole story

Versatility

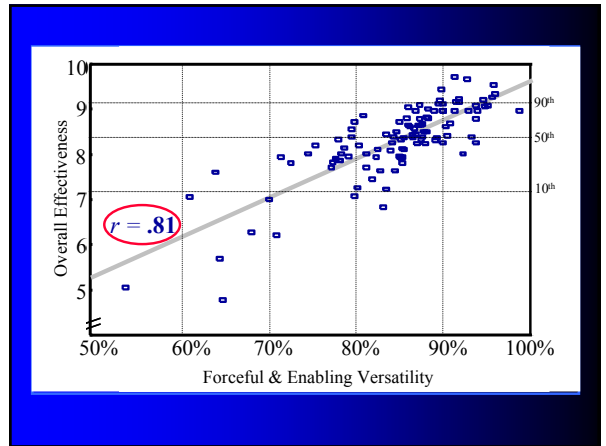
The ability to freely draw upon opposing virtues, unrestricted by bias in favor of one and prejudice against the other.

Versatility Score



Versatility & Overall Effectiveness

How do the two relate statistically?



Two Overarching Balances

Forceful-Enabling (*how you lead*)

Strategic-Operational (*what you lead*)

Strategic & Operational

- **Strategic Leadership**
- **Operational Leadership**

Positioning the organization for the future

setting long-term direction, thinking broadly about the organization, seeking ways to grow the business, aligning people with the vision and strategy, and the like.

Driving the organization to execute in the near term

focusing on results, getting involved in details, being grounded in the realities of implementing strategy, using processes to keep people on track, and so on.

Summary of Research

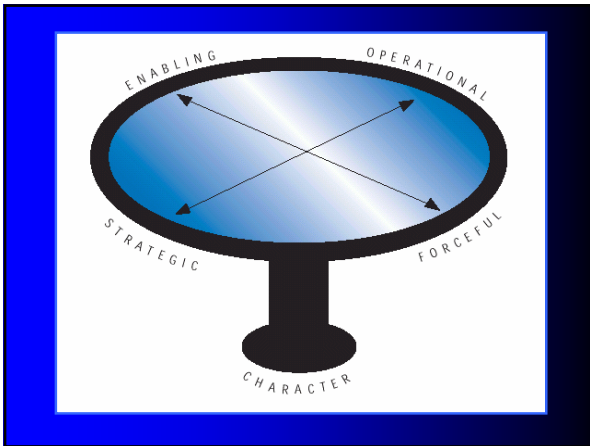
Correlations: Versatility & Effectiveness

Sample	Forceful-Enabling Versatility	Strategic-Operational Versatility
53 Execs	.50	--
79 Execs	.53	--
29 Mid mgrs	.52	.61
91 Mid mgrs	.59	.65
107 Execs	.81	.83
138 Mid mgrs	.51	.58
Weighted Avg.	.59	.68

Leadership Versatility Index®

FORCEFUL ENABLING

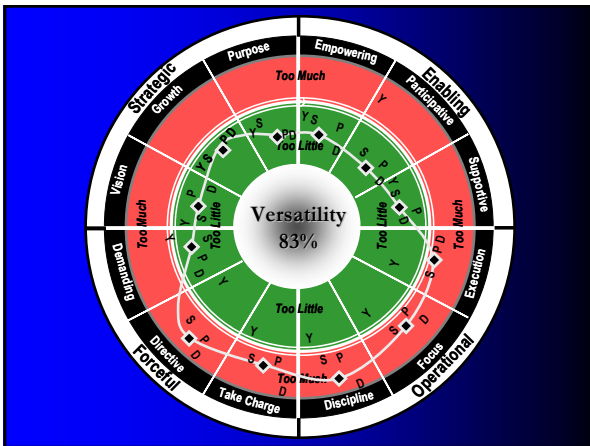
STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL



Forceful & Enabling – Average Ratings Sam Sample

	The right amount					Rater Groups				
	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	Y	All	S	P	D
1f. Takes charge—in control of his unit.										
1e. Empowers subordinates; able to let go.										
2f. Lets people know clearly and with feeling where he/she stands.										
2e. Interested in where other people stand. Receptive to their ideas.										
3f. Makes tough calls—including those that have an adverse effect on people.										
3e. Compassionate. Responsive to people's needs and feelings.										
4f. Holds people accountable—firm when they don't deliver.										
4e. Understanding when people are not able to deliver.										

Legend: All (black box) = All Commentors (12); S = Supervisors (2); P = Peers (5); D = Direct Reports (10).



The Outer Work of Dev't

Do less. Be more selective. Use a counterweight.

Do more. Don't hold back or avoid it. Compensate.

The Inner Work of Dev't

Underrating yourself . . . get the strengths to sink in.

Crooked thinking . . . straighten it out.

Prejudicial attitude . . . get over it.

Blind spot . . . turn around.

Faulty gauge . . . recalibrate.

Upshots

1. Leadership models used to assess leaders ought to be simple enough to remember and yet complex enough to be interesting.

Upshots

2. Most of our assessment tools overlook key things that we know about leadership.
 - Overkill is everywhere—strengths taken to an extreme. How can we not assess for it?
 - We all talk about versatility, agility, balance. Leaders frequently lack it. How can we not assess for it?

Upshots

3. There is a revival of the "focus on strengths" movement. Be wary of simple models and prescriptions.
 - It is all too natural to over-value what we are good at; be on the lookout for strengths overused.
 - The step prior to leveraging strengths is to accept them in the first place. Does your client internalize her strengths?
 - Assignments that exploit a strength rob the manager from stretching to develop a more well-rounded repertoire.

Upshots

4. What does it take to assess versatility?
 - One, define leadership in terms of opposites.
 - Two, capture overdoing it—because half of lopsidedness is overdoing one side.

Upshots

5. The central development need for leaders is arguably lack of versatility.
 - Versatility is key to effectiveness.
 - But versatility is the exception, and lopsidedness the rule. Fewer than 10% are truly versatile.
 - Lopsidedness taps into a most basic, and unfortunate, tendency in human beings to go one-dimensional, to think in black-and-white terms, to polarize.

Coaching Opportunities

1. Assess for overkill as well as deficiency and strength.

Coaching Opportunities

2. Too-little and too-much ratings can open the door to the inner work of development.

Coaching Opportunities

3. Working on lopsidedness offers an opportunity to harness the power in tension:

Coaching Opportunities

3. Working on lopsidedness offers an opportunity to harness the power in tension:

- *Establish that what is responsible for the lopsided behavior is a one-sided mental model, usually a highly charged one.*

Coaching Opportunities

3. Working on lopsidedness offers an opportunity to harness the power in tension:

- *Ask the leader: what is the opposite of the thing you emphasize and identify with?*

Coaching Opportunities

3. Working on lopsidedness offers an opportunity to harness the power in tension:

- *Demonstrate that defining yourself with one side creates a blind side.*

"Certainly I believe in strong leadership. And have no use for go along-get along, feel good."

Coaching Opportunities

3. Working on lopsidedness offers an opportunity to harness the power in tension:

- *Point out that leaders can't compensate for limitations unless they value what they lack.*

Coaching Opportunities

3. Working on lopsidedness offers an opportunity to harness the power in tension:

- *Remember Heraclitus: "People do not comprehend how a thing at variance with itself is in agreement."*

A Step Forward in Assessment

Accounting for Overkill and Versatility

Rob Kaiser

KAPLAN DEVRIES INC

1903 G Ashwood Ct.
Greensboro NC 27455
336.288.8200

rkaiser@kaplandevries.com

Presented at the 9th Annual Conference of the

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF EDUCATION

November 6, 2004