

The background of the entire page is a photograph showing the silhouettes of several people standing in a modern office or lobby. They are positioned in front of a large glass window that looks out onto a cityscape with various buildings and greenery. The lighting is bright, creating a high-contrast scene where the people are dark against the lighter background.

Managing for High Reliability: Team Interactions, Leadership, and Communication

A Customized Report Prepared for **YOUR COMPANY**

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Running a small business is a monumental effort. To stay competitive, you need a high-performing team that can solve problems, find opportunities, and identify potential threats—a team that is highly reliable in the face of adversity.

To build such a team, you need data that reflect your team's perceptions and attitudes regarding working together. You also need your team's input on how you as a leader can better help them succeed.

Grounded in cutting-edge management research, this report identifies how you and your team compare to similar businesses on a variety of measures. It also provides recommendations you can implement to increase performance in each area.

Key Concepts

- ***Leader Communication Style.*** Communication is important. But communication is a two-way street, and your employees can often provide you with insights that help the business. This part of the study involves all of your employees providing perceptions of your communication style, which is priceless input you can then use to develop your own skills and reap the rewards that follow.
- ***Leader-Follower Relationship Quality.*** Employees who perceive a high-quality relationship with their supervisors are much more likely to perform better than those who perceive a low-quality relationship with their supervisors. Knowing where you stand in this regard for your team in general will help you understand ways in which you can better motivate and inspire high performance among your employees.
- ***Group-Process Quality.*** Are your employees “on the same page?” Do they have a good sense of each others' strengths and weaknesses? Do they learn from mistakes? High-performing teams have these qualities—and more. An assessment of the quality of specific group processes will help you start to unlock your team's competitive advantage.
- ***Team-Interaction Quality.*** Good teams are ones in which all members both contribute and receive valued information and resources. In addition to understanding the quality of your team's group processes, it's important to know how they perceive their interactions within the team because it will give you the insight needed for building team strength.
- ***Organizational Support.*** When employees perceive that their company values their contributions and cares about their well-being, they tend to increase their effort and be more satisfied. Knowing your employees' average rating of organizational support provides yet another springboard toward building a high-performing team.

Below are your results based upon input from your employees. Please note that these are *average* results, provided to give you the big picture regarding your team's perceptions and behaviors.

Next to your average scores, you will see the overall average of all companies surveyed as part of this study. That way, you can get a sense of how your team compares with the average scores from similarly sized firms.

Managing for High Reliability: Average Survey Results

Focus Area	Your Firm (average)	Your Firm (standard deviation)	Overall Average
<i>Leader Communication Style</i>	Pending your participation	Pending your participation	To be determined
<i>Leader-Follower Relationship Quality</i>	Pending your participation	Pending your participation	To be determined
<i>Group-Process Quality</i>	Pending your participation	Pending your participation	To be determined
<i>Team-Interaction Quality</i>	Pending your participation	Pending your participation	To be determined
<i>Organizational Support</i>	Pending your participation	Pending your participation	To be determined

Notes

1. Your firm's average ratings are the arithmetic mean of your employees' responses.
2. Your firm's standard deviation is an indication of how widely varied responses were among your employees. About two-thirds of your employees' individual scores were within a standard deviation above or below your firm's average rating. For example, given a mean of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 0.5, you could estimate that about two-thirds of ratings were between 3.0 and 4.0.
3. This is the overall average is the arithmetic mean of all companies sampled for this study. Compare this number with your own firm's average to see if you are above or below average in any of the categories.

OK, so now what?

Why this matters. Many of the categories of employee behaviors and perceptions described above have positive relationships with key aspects of employee behavior—including levels of employee performance and creativity. These are areas that the best firms care about and address intentionally.

What you should do. Armed with the data in this report, you are well-poised to start building a high-performing team. In particular, based on your employees' responses, you now know how to prioritize your efforts. Below are some of the best practices toward increasing each area of performance.

Best Practices

Improving Your Leader Communication Style and Leader-Follower Relationship Quality:

- Ask your employees for advice on how you might improve your communication. Research suggests that supervisors who ask for honest—even negative—feedback from their employees reap significant rewards in the form of respect and performance.
- Err on the side of communicating more with your employees rather than less. It's extraordinarily easy for supervisors to think they are communicating enough with their employees while their employees continue to need more information.
- Remember that *the only message that counts is the one that's received*. Ask your employees to discuss their interpretations of what you're trying to convey. That way, you'll be able to correct potential misunderstanding.
- Run effective meetings by respecting starting and ending times, providing an agenda, asking for input on the agenda beforehand, staying on topic, and encouraging employees to discuss agenda items openly—even if they disagree with you or others.
- In general, praise your employees in public, correct them in private.

Improving Group-Process Quality and Team-Interaction Quality:

- Start by trying some of the suggestions in the category above. Model the behaviors you'd like your employees to use as they interact with each other.
- Following a specific event—for example, completing a project that involved all or most of your employees—have an open discussion about what went well and what could have been improved. Focus on specific examples, but be absolutely sure to keep the discussion about ways to improve in the future. Avoid any personal attacks—keep it civil and productive. Keep a record of “lessons learned” that everyone can review prior to the next similar project.
- Integrate contributions to the team into performance appraisals. Strongly consider starting a formal performance appraisal system if you don't have one already.

Improving Organizational Support:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect. Explain your rationale behind decisions and procedures.
- Be a supportive supervisor. On a regular basis, express an interest in your employees—both in their work and in them as people who have numerous concerns outside of work.
- Recognize superior performance. Always thank your employees for their work and encourage them to provide input regarding ways the company could improve its performance.
- Take care of your people, and they'll take care of you. Listen to them and take their ideas seriously.

More information about this study and its author, Ben Baran, are below.

Please feel free to contact Ben Baran with any questions or comments.

About This Study

In addition to giving you a rare insight into key aspects of your team's behavior—*completely free of charge*—your participation in this study supports the completion of Ben Baran's dissertation, which he needs to complete to earn his Ph.D. in organizational science from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

This study is open to any small business with at least 4 total employees (including you). As the business owner or primary manager, here are the steps to completing the study and [getting your free report](#).

1. Notify Ben that you'd like to participate (e-mail ben@benbaran.com).
2. Ben will contact you to learn more about your business. He'll then send you a survey that you (and/or your primary managers) will complete. He will also send you a note to forward to your employees to let them know about the study. Within your survey, you and/or your primary managers will rate the performance of your employees and answer a few questions about yourself and your business. You will be asked to provide the e-mail addresses of your employees as you rate them. This is necessary so Ben can accurately track and link the data. Your employees' e-mail addresses will not be used for any other purpose.
3. Once you complete your survey, Ben will send a different survey to your employees. In this survey, your employees will provide input regarding the facets of behavior described in this report (see p. 2).
4. After all of your employees and the other firms in the study complete their surveys, Ben will analyze the data and prepare the final reports for you.

Please note that this study has been fully approved by UNC Charlotte's ethics committee and all data will be treated with the highest level of security and confidentiality.

About Ben Baran



Ben Baran is a management researcher, consultant, U.S. Navy veteran, and former public-relations professional. A veteran of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, he led the guided missile destroyer USS Preble during more than 500 hours of complex operations from the California coast to the North Arabian Gulf. In his research and consulting—which focuses on organizational behavior, human resources, and strategy—Baran has delivered solutions to organizations across the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

He holds a master's degree in industrial and organizational psychology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he is currently a Ph.D. candidate in organizational science. Baran's research has appeared in a number of scholarly journals, including the *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, *Military Psychology*, and the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*. Also a small-business owner, he is the co-founder of **Whinot LLC**, a web platform that provides crowdsourced consulting solutions. Previously, he earned bachelor's degrees in political science and communication from Villanova University.

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