



FIRO Business® Leadership Report

Developed by Allen L. Hammer and Eugene R. Schnell

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J. SAMPLE
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INTRODUCTION

Working in an organization means working with other people. How you interact with and relate to many different kinds of people plays an important role in your success at work. This report demonstrates how your results from the FIRO Business® assessment can help you understand your interpersonal needs and how you interact with others in your organization. Information from the FIRO Business tool can help you maximize the impact of your actions and behavior at work, identify options for increasing your job satisfaction and productivity, and explore alternative ways to achieve your goals.

As you read through this report, keep in mind that all instruments have limitations. The FIRO Business assessment provides information on your fundamental interpersonal relations orientation. It is a measure of interpersonal needs in the areas of involvement, influence, and personal connection. It is not a comprehensive personality assessment, nor is it a test of abilities, career interests, or success.

Each of the first five sections of this report (see the list below) describes your preferred approach to the topic and indicates some of the strengths and challenges of your approach. Each section ends with “developmental stretches”—strategies you might try, new thoughts you could entertain, feedback you might seek in order to stretch yourself to develop new capacities as a leader. The “Next Steps” section, at the conclusion of this report, helps you plan how to use the developmental stretches to enhance your interpersonal effectiveness.

How Your FIRO Business® Leadership Report Is Organized

- Relating to Your Coworkers
- Relating to Your Manager
- Relating to Your Direct Reports
- Handling Negotiation and Conflict
- Making Decisions and Setting Priorities
- Next Steps

RELATING TO YOUR COWORKERS

One of the important aspects of being a leader is “leading across,” or managing your relationships with your coworkers. People have different levels of interest in interacting with their coworkers, and those levels strongly influence how much time and energy they devote to interacting with others on a daily basis.

The chart below shows four possible levels of interest in interacting with others. Your level of interest, based on your responses to the FIRO Business assessment, is shown in bold.

LEVELS OF INTEREST IN RELATING TO COWORKERS

Likely to spend most of your time and energy interacting with coworkers rather than working independently on your own projects

Likely to spend at least half your time and energy interacting with coworkers rather than working independently on your own projects

Likely to spend at least half your time and energy working independently on your own projects rather than interacting with coworkers

Likely to spend most of your time and energy working independently on your own projects rather than interacting with coworkers

Your Strengths in Relating to Coworkers

Your results, based on your responses to the FIRO Business assessment, show that you have very high interest in spending time and energy interacting with coworkers rather than working independently on your own projects. This suggests that:

- You pride yourself on being a team player and believe you do your best work when you can interact and collaborate with others frequently.
- You are likely to jump into a group project or join a team without taking the time to analyze what will be involved or who else will participate.
- You communicate your opinions and feelings to whomever you are with so that everyone will know where you stand.
- You welcome assignments that provide opportunities to work with a wide variety of others, especially in large groups.
- You are very comfortable being front and center in public situations (e.g., open meetings, staff meetings, team projects), readily offering your opinions and expertise or actively facilitating others' participation.
- You probably have a large network of people on whom you can call for support or for help on a project, or just to share information.

Possible Challenges of Your Approach to Coworkers

- You may find yourself pulled in many different directions and perhaps unduly influenced by the last person with whom you interacted who had a strong opinion.
- You may not be able to finish reports or projects because you allow coworkers to continually distract you.
- You may end up spending too much time socializing and not enough time engaged in efficient, task-oriented work.
- You may continually revisit issues and keep talking about them without making a decision, or you may think out loud to many different people and not make it clear when you have made a decision.
- You may invite others with little real experience or expertise to join meetings, teams, or projects without considering the impact this may have on the group's efficiency.
- In public situations, you sometimes talk too much or say things about which you should have been more discreet.

Developmental Stretches

- If you have to work alone on a project, you may need to reenergize by connecting with others and discussing your progress.
- Periodically devote some private time to reviewing all your tasks and setting priorities.
- Think strategically about which projects or assignments are best for your team and your career; don't automatically agree to join everything you are asked to join.
- If you work with a particularly social group of coworkers, consider arranging time outside of work when you can all get together and socialize, perhaps by volunteering in the community, playing sports together, or meeting for dinner on a regular basis, so that you can stay on task when at work.
- Learn how to better manage or facilitate meetings so that they are more efficient and effective for you (and for others). Become skilled at effective group facilitation techniques that allow for broad participation and that lead to closure.

RELATING TO YOUR MANAGER

Another important aspect of being a leader is “leading up,” that is, managing your relationship with your manager. Different people like to work with managers who have different kinds of characteristics. Three distinct managerial styles are described in the chart below. The style most important to you in a manager is shown in bold.

MANAGERIAL STYLES

Involves and brings people together and makes you feel a part of it all

Provides direction and focuses on goals and tasks

Encourages, supports, and shows a personal interest in you

Your Preferences in a Manager

Your results suggest that you like a manager who brings people together and aligns everyone to a vision and common objectives. The characteristics you find least important in a manager are setting a direction and providing a clear set of expectations, roles, and responsibilities. Your best performance may be stimulated by a manager who:

- Involves the team in identifying problems and achieving consensus about priorities
- Gets you working with others to solve these problems
- Tries to create a team identity that promotes collaboration and provides a sense of belonging
- Allows you and others opportunities to participate; asks for the ideas and opinions of all team members
- Contributes to the team as a peer and does not flaunt his or her authority
- Provides access to others who can help
- Brokers visibility with others for you
- Recognizes the contributions and accomplishments of team members and celebrates team successes
- Builds alignment through involvement and engagement
- Ensures that everyone is treated fairly and equally in terms of workload and policies
- Encourages diversity and brings in people who may have different ideas or approaches

Possible Challenges of Your Preferences

Given what you want from a manager, some issues are likely to surface, as noted below. This list offers points for you to consider and evaluate. Keep in mind that a manager's style is influenced by many factors, including personality, interpersonal needs, and life experiences, and thus it is difficult to predict exact issues in your relationship with your manager.

- You may want your manager to be more participatory and democratic and less directive than he or she is comfortable being.
- You may want your manager to be more accepting of others' ideas and opinions.
- You may want your manager to be more engaged and involved in the day-to-day work of the team.
- You may want your manager to interact with the team as a peer with a particular expertise rather than as a manager.
- You may lose motivation quickly if your manager does not immediately recognize your contributions.
- You may resist your manager's attempts to define your role and responsibilities and thus may be seen as difficult or confrontational.

Developmental Stretches

- Be explicit with your manager about how much recognition you need, how often, and for what.
- Don't take it personally if your manager doesn't include you in everything; talk to your manager about what you want to be included in.
- If your manager doesn't give you enough feedback, ask for more on a regular basis and also seek feedback from your colleagues.
- Find colleagues who share your interests or knowledge and arrange to exchange information frequently.
- Establish a relationship with a mentor who can offer feedback, provide advice, and give you the recognition you need.

RELATING TO YOUR DIRECT REPORTS

Just as it is important for you as a leader to be skillful in leading across and leading up, it is also critical that you be skilled at “leading down,” that is, managing your relationships with the people who report to you. People have different preferences for how much they like to be in charge of others. See the chart below for the alternatives. Your result is highlighted in bold.

ORIENTATIONS TO DIRECTING OTHERS

Likely to enjoy managing and directing others

Largely depends on the situation and what is expected of you

Likely to prefer working on your own projects rather than managing others

Your Strengths in Leading Direct Reports

Managers and leaders often feel that they are *supposed* to be in charge 100% of the time. Your results indicate that you frequently assume leadership or management responsibilities. You are inclined to offer direction whenever there is an opportunity to do so (although there may be some exceptions), even when your role or the expectations for the work are unclear. You do not shy away from the opportunity to lead others. This doesn't mean that you will always be an effective leader; it just indicates that you welcome the chance to take charge. When you lead direct reports, your leadership is characterized by:

- Sharing thoughts and perspectives while also creating a healthy reciprocal exchange with others and remaining open to being influenced, particularly by experts and authorities
- Creating systems to support operations and improve productivity
- Delegating authority and relying on others to accept assignments, report concerns, and resolve problems while staying within guidelines and responding to changing conditions
- Designing processes—progress reviews, ongoing review of metrics, organizational learning exercises—to maintain strategic focus; making adjustments to work procedures as necessary
- Coaching others by providing developmental assignments, gathering feedback, and engaging in joint problem solving
- Striking a balance between careful preparation before launching into new areas and tackling problems quickly so as to create momentum
- Making corrections based on the input of end users and higher authorities, without being overly sensitive to their expectations
- Negotiating changes to operating guidelines and challenging formal authority when needed to be effective

Possible Challenges of Your Approach to Direct Reports

- Your need for structure and organization may be impractical in certain situations (e.g., a start-up operation, when there is a lack of funds for infrastructure), particularly when things are going well.
- Your penchant for giving direction may be viewed by others as micromanaging, stifling, or interfering.
- You may neglect informal systems that are helping to support productivity, such as skunk works, work-arounds, and shadow systems.
- You may become overextended with all the duties and tasks you are directing, leaving little time for your personal life and leisure activities.
- Direct reports may not be ready to take on as much responsibility as you want them to assume.
- It may be difficult for you to allow spontaneous conversation and to support unstructured problem solving.

Developmental Stretches

- Create ways to defer and minimize your inclination to overly direct others and provide structure (e.g., write down ideas for providing structure but don't act on them for 72 hours; your delay may allow someone else to learn by initiating action).
- Decline to offer your point of view and learn to ask more questions and inquire about the ideas of your direct reports, especially when they seem to be trying to get you to change your position.
- Be clear about whether you are providing your direct reports with optional suggestions or politely telling someone what you want done.
- Learn to postpone decisions that don't need to be made right way; consider whether a decision is premature; set a date for when you can revisit the issue with your direct reports and achieve closure.
- Schedule regular time to review your duties and formally delegate work to others.
- Develop a trusted inner circle of colleagues and/or staff who will honestly tell you when you are taking on too much or providing too much structure.

HANDLING NEGOTIATION AND CONFLICT

Working with others often involves having to negotiate and resolve differences. This report explores three broad strategies people use to reach an acceptable solution. If the first strategy doesn't work, they typically have a backup approach. The third approach is one they may use as a last resort. Your preferences regarding the three strategies used to negotiate and handle conflict are shown in the chart below.

NEGOTIATION AND CONFLICT STRATEGIES

Your primary strategy is to rely on formal authority and attempt to legitimize your position.

Your backup strategy is to empathize with the position of others and understand their personal motive.

Your strategy of last resort is to identify common goals and appeal to common interests.

Your Approach to Handling Negotiation and Conflict

Your results suggest that the first strategy you will use when negotiating is a power-based approach. You rely on formal policies, procedures, laws, rules, or standards; make an executive decision; appeal to higher authorities; assert what you can and cannot do; pull rank; or stand firm on a decision only you can make. Your backup strategy will be to make a personal connection, show that you deeply understand and can empathize with the other party's position, and offer to make concessions in order to increase good feelings between you and the other party. You will try to emphasize loyalty and the ongoing relationship between you and the other party. You are least likely to attempt to resolve differences by engaging others in finding common ground—a sense of the bigger goal on which you can agree despite your differences. Your strategies have these advantages:

- You make clear the rules, parameters, and boundaries for the negotiation. You are likely to assert yourself when others try to work outside those boundaries or try to exploit a difficult situation.
- You approach negotiations and conflict situations with a good sense of the advantages and power each party has. You are aware of your vulnerabilities and those of the other party.
- You strive to get all the specific positions, requests, and demands on the table.
- You make a strong appeal to address and resolve any conflicts quickly so that you can resume productive work toward your goals.
- Given that your backup strategy is to use an empathetic, personal connection, you are careful to reserve the right to make a personal appeal; at an early stage you begin accumulating background information about individual interests and motives that may be useful later.

Possible Challenges of Your Approach

- You may move too quickly to a firm position, causing others to do the same, rather than exploring interests and deeper needs that are feeding the conflict or that might be used as the basis for exchanges and creative agreements.
- You are more inclined to look for a winner and a loser in a conflict or negotiation than to seek a win-win solution. You may become too competitive or too quickly dismiss the concerns of the other party. Your orientation may make it difficult to find creative solutions that allow everyone to win something.
- You may become too heavy-handed, using rules, policies, or formal authority to press for a result. This may cause resentment or lead the other party to only marginally support a solution.
- You may find it difficult to fall back on empathy and appeals to personal interest after having first emphasized authority, rules, and demands; others may see this sudden change in approach as inauthentic, which could reduce trust.
- Because your strategy of last resort is to find common interests and larger goals, you may not create an understanding between the parties of how differences may be part of something larger. The other party may feel that the negotiation or conflict is based on personal, private differences that have no larger implications.

Developmental Stretches

- Early in the negotiations, build agreement and trust by developing rules and standards for a fair process to work through differences.
- Ask many questions to make sure that all the facts and relevant information are brought out before asserting what you want and why.
- Outside of the negotiations, explain your approach to neutral parties and ask them if they think you are becoming too competitive.
- Avoid appealing to personal interests and loyalty until you are sure the other party believes that you are not going to take advantage of them or their vulnerabilities.
- If tensions are high and trust is low, consider bringing in a third party to assure that you are being fair and that your agreement is consistent with a larger set of goals and common interests. If the agreement fits your organization's priorities, it is more likely to endure.

MAKING DECISIONS AND SETTING PRIORITIES

Every leader must make decisions and set strategic priorities for the organization. The chart below outlines three approaches that you as a leader can use to make decisions. Your preferred decision-making method is in bold.

DECISION-MAKING METHODS

Striving for common understanding and consensus

Pushing for closure, consistency, and follow-through

Promoting candor, openness, and depth of commitment

Your Approach to Decision Making

Your results indicate that you actively engage a wide range of persons while making decisions. You likely use input from others extensively, and people usually have a good sense of what is on your mind. Guiding a group through a decision-making process feels natural to you.

When faced with routine decisions, you likely create structure for discussions, advance specific ideas and proposals, and rely on technical expertise. Similarly, when faced with new and unfamiliar decisions, you likely apply standards and guidelines, determine how to make the best decision, and propose procedures. Advantages of your decision-making approach include the following:

- Demonstrating consistency in how you handle routine and nonroutine decisions
- Creating a framework and architecture that promote ongoing ownership and responsibility
- Planning ahead to ensure that you have the time, expertise, resources, and authority needed to explore all dimensions of a problem or a pending decision
- Laying out expectations and goals so that everyone is clear about his or her role in making the best choices
- Building guidelines and processes that ensure competence and accountability
- Shaping ideas and directing attention toward particular facts, issues, or problems to ensure proper implementation of adopted decisions

Possible Challenges of Your Decision-Making Approach

- When overdone, creating structure and direction may be experienced as micromanagement, meddling, or disrespect for the professional judgment of others.
- As people grow accustomed to your consistent emphasis on procedure and order, they may exhibit less individual initiative or fail to change procedures that are no longer working.
- Because you put less emphasis on mutual support, you may find that when decisions are implemented, a quiet resistance has accumulated, leading to avoidance or lack of persistence when an obstacle arises.
- With lower levels of attention to mutual support, your decisions may be viewed as too businesslike, dismissive, or unresponsive to growing resentment or morale problems.
- Due to your reluctance to accept direction or yield to pressure from others, your decisions may be seen as protective, defensive, or out of touch.
- You may become stressed when others engage in decision-making processes that rely on deference to protocols, obliging others' priorities, or sharing control.

Developmental Stretches

- Don't strive for order and consistency at the price of creativity and responsiveness to unique conditions. Appoint a devil's advocate or adviser who will alert you when your decisions are stifling innovation.
- Get expert help in making complex decisions that encompass buy-in and individual support from others. An outside expert can also help you monitor your need to micromanage and learn to strategically apply pressure where and when it is truly needed.
- Acquaint yourself with the depth of expertise in your staff and organization. Some staff members may not be good at articulating the wealth of their experience. Review résumés and create a knowledge map of your organization. The more you appreciate the background and judgment of your staff, the more you can rely on them to make decisions independently.
- Make deliberate efforts to allow others to talk with you one-on-one about their personal reactions and concerns. Allow time in these conversations for the other person to ask you probing questions related to your decisions, and be prepared to talk about your personal motives and reactions.
- Ask someone you trust to listen for individuals who are not voicing their frustrations and reservations in public. Meet with those people to hear their point of view; you are not obligated to take their advice, but you will be demonstrating a special interest.
- Don't overreact when others attempt to make decisions or provide structure for you. Instead, postpone your response until you can carefully think through the situation. Consider how you can cooperate; don't interpret every request as a command.

NEXT STEPS

The developmental stretches identified for you throughout this report suggest ways to develop your leadership effectiveness. Look at the stretches as promising avenues for you to explore, not as reasons to feel discouraged. Every person who receives this report gets lists of developmental stretches, just as you did. But each person's list differs because everyone has different interpersonal needs and preferences.

Review the first three sections of this report, which describe how you relate to your coworkers, manager, and direct reports.

- Identify the groups with which you *most* need or want to develop your working relationship at this time. If all three are important, prioritize them. Your relationships with all three may be good, but there is probably room for improvement.
- In the section that is most important to you now, look over the developmental stretches. Don't try to do all of them at once. Instead, pick those that are the most important for you to develop and to which you are willing to commit yourself. You can go back and work on the others later.
- Now, write a short plan for each developmental stretch that you have identified as most important. What are the steps you will take to learn new behaviors? When will you complete each step? What resources will you need? Draft an action plan and discuss it with someone who can give you feedback and encouragement.
- Another option is for you to identify a person with whom you would like to have a better working relationship. Ask the professional who administered the FIRO Business assessment to you to request that your colleague take the assessment as well. Then you and your colleague can discuss your reports and what each of you needs from the other to be more effective.

Now review the two sections of this report that describe how you negotiate and handle conflict and how you make decisions and set priorities.

- Identify which of these leadership skills you *most* need or want to develop.
- In the section that is most important to you now, look over the developmental stretches and choose a few strategies that are crucial to you in your current work.
- Make a plan for working through each of the developmental stretches you have identified. List the steps you will take to learn new behaviors, set target dates by which you will complete each step, and list the people who may be able to offer ideas, support, or opportunities to use the new behaviors.

