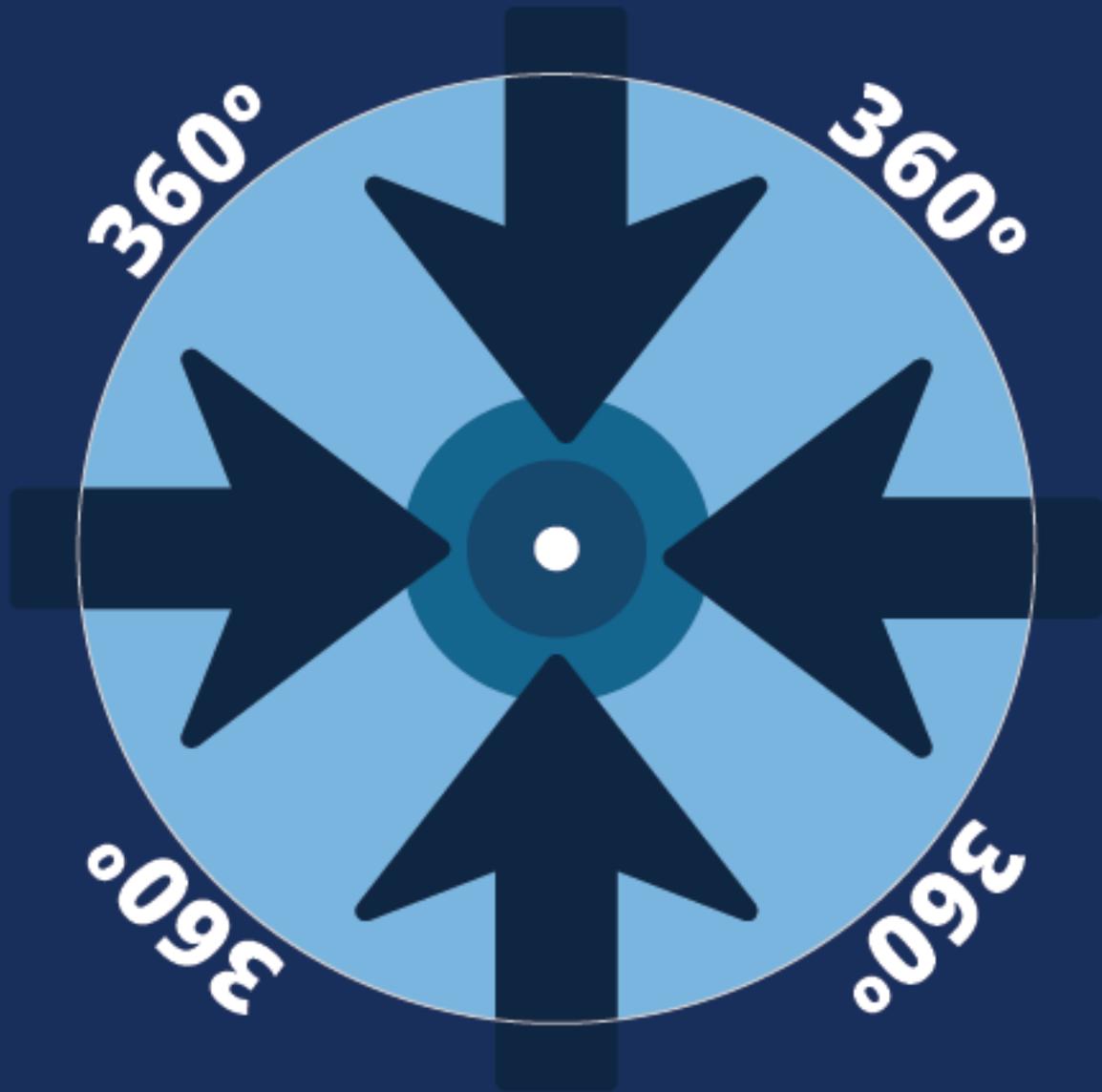


MY LEADERSHIP



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SELF-KNOWLEDGE FOR SELF-DEVELOPMENT

“ *The great use of life is to spend it on something that will outlast us. What example do they want to set for others? Mahatma Gandhi once said, ‘My life is my message.’ In that respect, going through life is like looking in a mirror. What you see on the outside has to resonate with what you see inside. Harmony between your inner world and external reality is essential.*

Manfred Kets de Vries (2009, p. xvi)¹, Professor at INSEAD Business School, and consultant.

Developing leadership skills and competences requires that a leader knows him/herself. It also requires making efforts in the pursuit of personal and professional improvement. If a leader doesn't know him/herself, how can him/her know that s/he needs to improve? Self-knowledge may derive from several sources, such as self-reflection, listening others' opinions, observing accurately the surrounding reality, and the 360 degree tools.

Considering that leaders perform their activities through establishing relationships with many people within and outside the organization, and that their professional roles are intertwined with aspects of their personal/family life, 360 degree tools are particularly effective in developing self-knowledge. These tools allow the leader to compare his/her self-image with their image as portrayed by others (e.g., supervisors, peers, direct reports, and people outside the organization, such as family members and friends) to whom s/he relates. Manfred Kets de Vries, professor at INSEAD, and consultant, was very clear about the relevance of 360 degree tools²:

“ *In my experience, the journey to stardom begins inwardly. Self-awareness is one of the most important factors in building self-esteem and confidence. Self-awareness helps us understand what drives us, what turns us off, what makes us happy, and what we are passionate about. It helps us clarify what we need to do to improve as a person (...). Unfortunately, the road to self-awareness is not always easy. As Leo Tolstoy once wrote, “everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.” Frequently, defensive processes take over when embarking on inner journeys. (...). An ideal method to get this process on its way is the use of 360-degree feedback (...). It can also be (...) extremely beneficial to include feedback from an executive's private life (friends, family members — including grown-up children). Feedback from this group will be particularly powerful.*

¹ Kets de Vries, M. F. R. (2009). *Sex, money, happiness, and death: The quest for authenticity*. Palgrave Macmillan.

² Kets de Vries, M. F. R. (2012). Star performers: Paradoxes wrapped up in enigmas. *Organizational Dynamics*, 41, 173-182.

MY LEADERSHIP – 360°

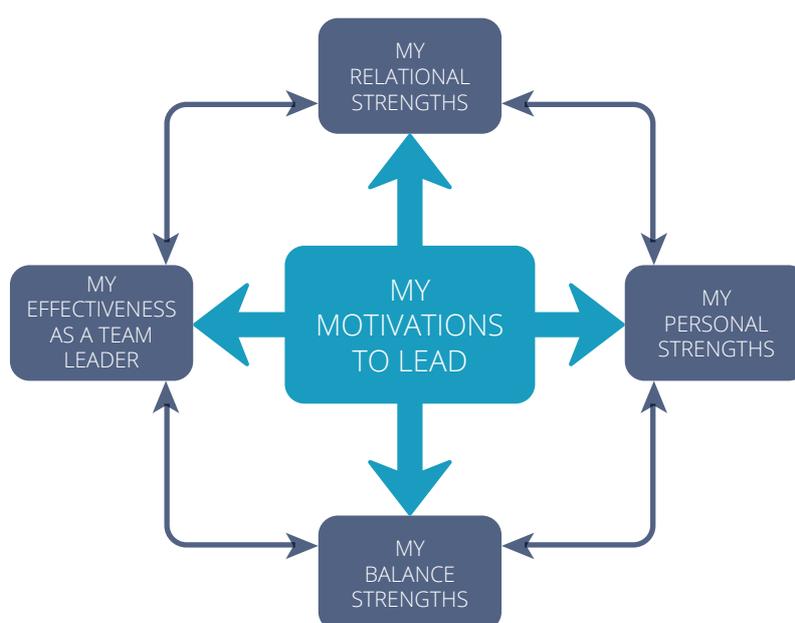
Performing leadership functions requires motivation to lead. However, being motivated is not enough to be an effective leader. It is also necessary to have and develop personal strengths (e.g., perseverance), to develop fruitful relationships with several stakeholders (including, although not only, subordinates or followers), to lead oneself, and to motivate the team.

“My Leadership – 360°” is a 360 degree tool focused on those five areas. Developed by LEAD.Lab, the tool is supported in research about effective leadership. “My Leadership-360°”, which must not be used for performance appraisal, answers five important questions (Figure 1):

- **“Which are my motivations to lead?”**
- **“Which are my personal strengths?”**
- **“Which are my relational strengths?”**
- **“Which are my balance strengths?”**
- **“How effective am I as team leader?”**

These questions are answered through comparing the leader’s self-image with his/her image as portrayed by his/her observers. Through this comparison, the leader may identify strengths and domains in which s/he may improve regarding his/her relationships with others and his/her impact (actual or potential) on the team.

Figure 1. The five areas included in “My leadership – 360°”



³Authors: Arménio Rego, Camilo Valverde, Eduardo Oliveira, Eva Oliveira, Filipa Sobral and Rui Lourenço-Gil, from LEAD.Lab (with the participation of Miguel Pina e Cunha, NOVA School of Business and Economics). The secure platform in which the tool runs was developed by Questools.

CONFIDENTIAL INDIVIDUAL REPORT

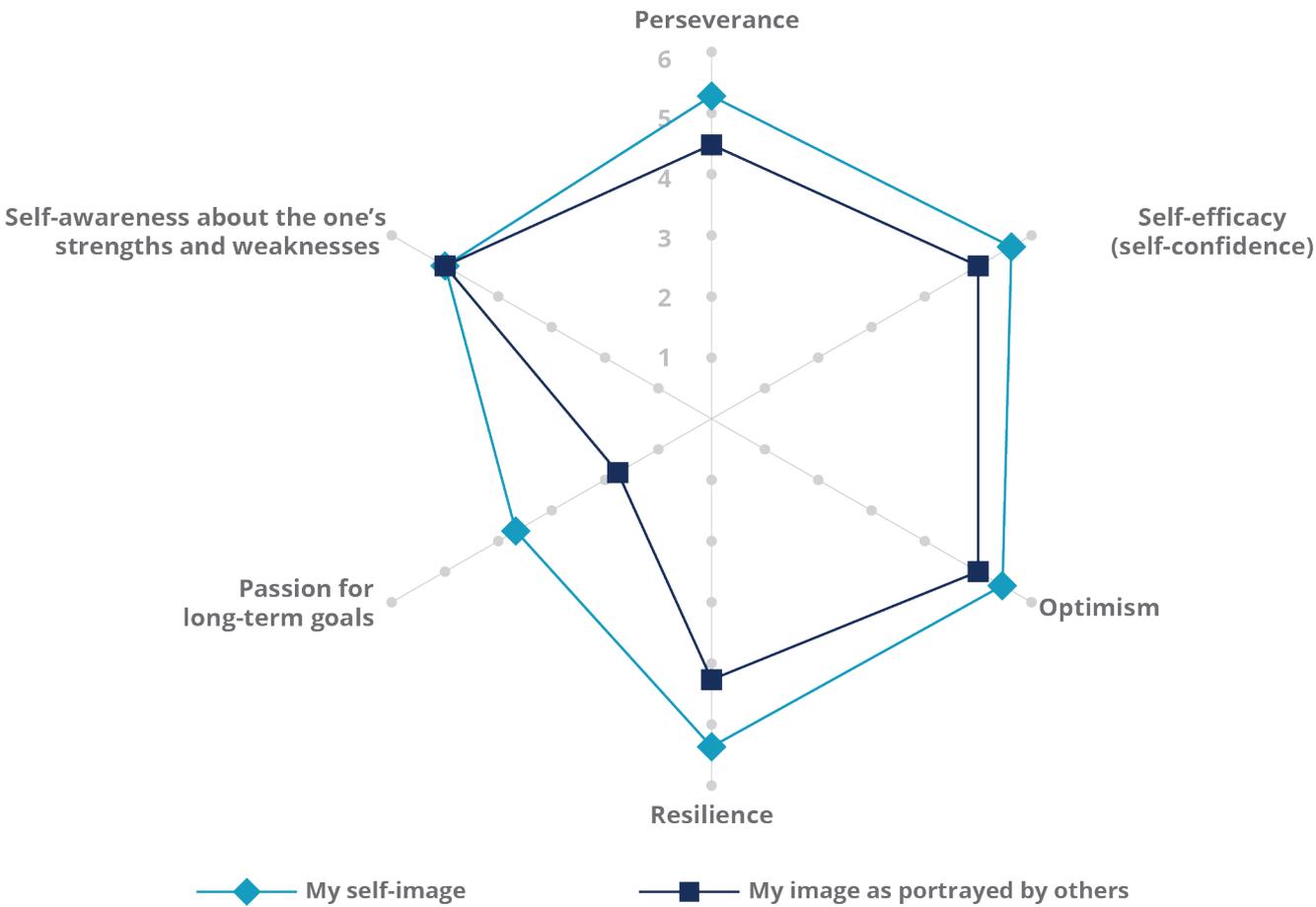
The leader and his/her observers participate in an online survey, which runs on a secure platform. After collecting the data, a customized report is generated. Both this report and the data are confidential. LEAD.Lab delivers the report to the assessed leader only. Several procedures are adopted to secure the observers' answers confidentiality. Ideally, the report is used to (in dialogue with the coach, the consultant, or even the raters who participate in the diagnostic) support the (potential or current) leader development.

The report includes three main parts. The first one explains the meaning of each characteristic assessed and possible consequences for the leader having or not having such a characteristic. The second part depicts graphical representations of the leader's profiles – the one as portrayed by him/herself and those resulting from the observers' answers (see example on Figure 2). The third part includes free comments and recommendations from the observers addressed to the observed leader.

GOALS AND APPLICATIONS

"My Leadership – 360°" may be used to meet development needs of a particular (current or potential) leader. It may also be very helpful in developmental processes that include several leaders from an organization or organizational unit/department. The tool may be very helpful for someone who is starting, or is going to start, a leadership position for the first time. It may also support promotion and succession processes. In all applications, both the data and the individual report are confidential. Ideally, the exercise must be followed by one or several coaching sessions, which are confidential and focused on the leader's development journey. The goal of "My leadership – 360°" is serving the personal and professional development of the (current or potential) leader.

Figure 2. Example of an output included in the individual report, about personal strengths



	My self-image	My image as portrayed by others	Difference
PERSONAL STRENGTHS	4,1	5,0	↓
Perseverance	4,5	5,3	↓
Self-efficacy (self-confidence)	5,0	5,7	↓
Optimism	5,0	5,5	●
Resilience	4,3	5,4	↓
Passion for long-term goals	1,8	3,7	↓
Self-awareness about the one's strengths and weaknesses	5,0	5,1	●

↑ Overestimated self-image ↓ Underestimated self-image ● No relevant difference

A STARTING POINT

“ *No leader is perfect. The best ones don't try to be – they concentrate on honing their strengths and find others who can make up for their limitations.*

Ancona, Malone, Olikowski, & Senge (2007, p. 92)⁴

“ *It is perfectly normal to be stronger in some areas than in others.*

Kets de Vries Institute⁵

“My leadership – 360°” is a starting point, not an achieved goal. The exercise does not aim to create “perfect leaders” – a challenge whose implementation is, in fact, impossible. “My leadership” is more effective as a self-knowledge and development tool if it is complemented with self-reflection and observation exercises, and followed by individual coaching or other forms of self-knowledge and development. When applied at different moments, “My leadership” allows the leader to realize how his/her development and improvement efforts are reflected in how others see him/her.

⁴ Ancona, D., Malone, T.W., Olikowski, W.J., & Senge, P.M. (2007). In praise of the incomplete leader. *Harvard Business Review*, February, 92-100.

⁵ Kets de Vries Institute, 360° *Feedback in Executive Leadership Development*, p. 2.

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS IN "MY LEADERSHIP - 360"

"Undoubtedly, an extremely enriching perspective. The application of this tool leads to assertive results and is highly motivating at various levels of personal development!"

"The 360° tool and the coaching sessions are very important to realize what our strengths and weaknesses are, so that we can improve our performance as leaders."

"The report is extremely clear and a great starting point for evolution."

"An excellent exercise, which allows immediate self-reflection and to project some positive and evolutionary changes for the future!"

"It has allowed me to have a more grounded perspective about my performance both as a leader and as a professional".

"For me this experience was really a surprise and a personal learning experience. The feedback received has suggested future leadership behaviors that are fundamental to reach an even better performance in my personal and professional life. THANK YOU"

"It was very gratifying to know and to understand myself better. [I had the opportunity] to identify key points in which I need to work harder to improve my ability as a good leader! "

"It was a very interesting exercise, in line with several improvement opportunities that I have had in my professional and personal life. The information will be fundamental to improve my relationships with peers and direct reports".



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