

## Exercise VI: Assumptions About People at Work

### Instructions

The purpose of this exercise is to help you better understand the assumptions you make about people and their work behaviors. On the following questionnaire, you will find 10 sets of statements. Assign a rank from 0 to 10 to each item in each pair (0 indicates that you completely disagree with the statement, and 10 indicates that you completely agree with the statement.) Answer each question as honestly as you can. There are *no correct answers*, so don't give a response to a question that will sound good to others or that you think is the way you are supposed to answer.

### Questions

It's only human nature for people to do as little work as they can get away with. \_\_\_\_\_ (a)

When people avoid work, it's usually because their work has been deprived of its meaning. \_\_\_\_\_ (b)

If employees have access to any information they want, they tend to have better attitudes and behave more responsibly. \_\_\_\_\_ (c)

If employees have access to more information than they need to do their immediate tasks, they will usually misuse it. \_\_\_\_\_ (d)

3. One problem in asking for the ideas of employees is that their perspective is too limited for their suggestions to be of much practical value. \_\_\_\_\_ (e)

Asking employees for their ideas broadens their perspective and results in the development of useful suggestions. \_\_\_\_\_ (f)

4. If people don't use much imagination and ingenuity on the job, it's probably because relatively few people have much of either. \_\_\_\_\_ (g)

Most people are imaginative and creative but may not show it because of limitations imposed by supervision and the job. \_\_\_\_\_ (h)

5. People tend to raise their standards if they are accountable for their own behavior and for correcting their own mistakes. \_\_\_\_\_ (i)

People tend to lower their standards if they are not punished for their misbehavior and mistakes. \_\_\_\_\_ (j)

6. It's better to give people both good and bad news because most employees want the whole story, no matter how painful. \_\_\_\_\_ (k)

It's better to withhold unfavorable news about business because most employees really want to hear only the good news. \_\_\_\_\_ (l)

7. Because supervisors are entitled to more respect than those below them in the organization, it weakens their prestige to admit that a subordinate was right and they were wrong. \_\_\_\_\_ (m)

Because people at all levels are entitled to equal respect, a supervisor's prestige is increased when s/he supports this principle by admitting that a subordinate was right and s/he was wrong. \_\_\_\_\_ (n)

8. If you give people enough money, they are less likely to be concerned with such intangibles as responsibility and recognition. \_\_\_\_\_ (o)

If you give people interesting and challenging work, they are less likely to complain about such things as pay and supplemental benefits. \_\_\_\_\_ (p)

9. If people are allowed to set their own goals and standards of performance, they tend to set them higher than the boss would. \_\_\_\_\_ (q)

If people are allowed to set their own goals and standards of performance, they tend to set them lower than the boss would. \_\_\_\_\_ (r)

10. The more knowledge and freedom a person has regarding his job, the more controls are needed to keep him/her in line. \_\_\_\_\_ (s)

The more knowledge and freedom a person has regarding his/her job, the fewer controls are needed to ensure satisfactory job performance. \_\_\_\_\_ (t)

### After Completing the Questionnaire

When you have completed all of the questions, you may score the questionnaire in the following manner. Add together the scores of items: (a), (d), (e), (g), (j), (l), (m), (o), (r), and (s). The sum of these scores will provide you with your "Theory X" score. Then add together the remaining scores: (b), (c), (f), (h), (i), (k), (n), (p), (q), and (t). The sum of these scores will give you your "Theory Y" score.

In a group, discuss the relative strength of each of your scores. Is there a significant difference in the two scores? What might this mean? How do you believe your assumptions might affect your actions as a manager? Do your past experiences support the self-profile that has emerged from your discussion? Discuss with other members of your group how your scores may be related to the concepts of "espoused theory" and "theory-in-use."