

PAID SUBSCRIBER RESOURCE

# Low-Friction Leadership

## A Self-Evaluation Guide

This guide covers five operational areas where friction is most commonly generated. For each question, rate yourself honestly using the scale below. The value is not in the score - it is in the pattern.

**RATING SCALE**

1 - This is a consistent gap for me    2 - I do this sometimes but not reliably    3 - I do this more often than not    4 - This is a genuine strength

### COMMUNICATION

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| I communicate at the level of detail my team needs - not more, not less.                               | 1   2   3   4 |
| After my meetings and messages, my team knows what was decided and what is expected of them.           | 1   2   3   4 |
| When I am uncertain or do not have an answer, I say so explicitly rather than letting ambiguity stand. | 1   2   3   4 |

### CONSISTENCY OF STANDARD

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| My threshold for acceptable work is the same regardless of how pressured I am.                                  | 1   2   3   4 |
| What I say I value and what I actually reward are the same thing.   | 1   2   3   4 |
| When my view or standard changes, I explain why - I do not just operate differently and expect others to adapt. | 1   2   3   4 |

**EMOTIONAL STEADINESS**

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Under pressure, my team can predict how I will respond.   | 1 2 3 4 |
| I do not require my team to manage my emotional state before they can bring me a problem.                   | 1 2 3 4 |
| My response to a setback is proportionate to its actual significance, not to how I happen to feel that day. | 1 2 3 4 |

**MOMENTUM**

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| I make decisions at the level they belong to - I do not over-involve myself or abdicate on decisions that are mine. | 1 2 3 4 |
| I close loops. Things raised with me get a response or a clear next step.   | 1 2 3 4 |
| I can deprioritise something without making the person who raised it feel dismissed.                                | 1 2 3 4 |

**RELATIONAL GROUNDEDNESS**

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| The way I interact one-to-one is recognisably the same person in a group setting.          | 1 2 3 4 |
| People bring me problems before they become crises.  | 1 2 3 4 |
| I do not manage impressions - I am consistent whether or not I think I am being evaluated. | 1 2 3 4 |

## Reading your results

Look at where you scored 1 or 2. These are not character flaws - they are operating patterns, and operating patterns can change. The more useful question is not "why do I do this" but "what does my team have to do to work around this."

Any area where your scores vary significantly between questions is worth examining. A 4 on "I make decisions at the right level" alongside a 1 on "I close loops" is not a contradiction - it is diagnostic information.

The hardest scores to give honestly are in Consistency of Standard. Most leaders rate themselves higher on this than their teams would. That is not a criticism - it reflects the fact that leaders rarely receive accurate feedback on this area, because the people around them adapt rather than name it.

## The calibration step

This self-evaluation is most useful when it is not done alone.

A companion Observer Guide is available alongside this issue. It contains the same fifteen questions reframed for someone who works closely with you - a chief of staff, a trusted direct report, or a peer who sees you operate under pressure. Their ratings, placed alongside yours, produce the calibration data that matters: not your score, and not theirs, but the gap between them.

Where you rate yourself higher than your observer does, you have a blind spot - a behaviour you believe you are demonstrating that is not landing in the way you intend. Where you rate yourself lower, you may be discounting something that is genuinely working. Both are useful. Both point to something specific in how your operating system is functioning.

The gap is not a verdict. It is the starting point for a precise conversation about what to address and in what order.

### A NOTE ON HONESTY

The Observer Guide only produces useful data if the person completing it feels genuinely secure enough to be honest. A softened rating protects the relationship in the short term and produces nothing of value. If you are asking someone to complete this for you, name that condition explicitly when you share it with them.

### NOTE

Self-evaluation identifies the gap. It does not close it. Operating patterns are persistent precisely because they are self-reinforcing - the leader who under-communicates rarely gets clear feedback that they are doing it, because their team has adapted around it. Changing a pattern requires external input, structured practice, and enough repetition for the new behaviour to become the default. A map tells you where you are. It does not move you.

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