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## Appraising Work Group Performance: New Productivity Opportunities in Hospitality Management

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# Appraising Work Group Performance: New Productivity Opportunities in Hospitality Management

## **Abstract**

In - Appraising Work Group Performance: New Productivity Opportunities in Hospitality Management – a discussion by Mark R. Edwards, Associate Professor, College of Engineering, Arizona State University and Leslie Edwards Cummings, Assistant Professor, College of Hotel Administration University of Nevada, Las Vegas; the authors initially provide: “Employee group performance variation accounts for a significant portion of the degree of productivity in the hotel, motel, and food service sectors of the hospitality industry. The authors discuss TEAMSG, a microcomputer based approach to appraising and interpreting group performance. TEAMSG appraisal allows an organization to profile and to evaluate groups, facilitating the targeting of training and development decisions and interventions, as well as the more equitable distribution of organizational rewards.”

“The caliber of employee group performance is a major determinant in an organization's productivity and success within the hotel and food service industries,” Edwards and Cummings say. “Gaining accurate information about the quality of performance of such groups as organizational divisions, individual functional departments, or work groups can be as enlightening...” the authors further reveal. This perspective is especially important not only for strategic human resources planning purposes, but also for diagnosing development needs and for differentially distributing organizational rewards.”

The authors will have you know, employee requirements in an unpredictable environment, which is what the hospitality industry largely is, are difficult to quantify.

In an effort to measure elements of performance Edwards and Cummings look to TEAMSG, which is an acronym for Team Evaluation and Management System for Groups. They develop the concept.

In discussing background for employees, Edwards and Cummings point-out that employees - at the individual level - must often possess and exercise varied skills. In group circumstances employees often work at locations outside of, or move from corporate unit-to-unit, as in the case of a project team. Being able to transcend individual-to-group mentality is imperative.

“A solution which addresses the frustration and lack of motivation on the part of the employee is to coach, develop, appraise, and reward employees on the basis of group achievement,” say the authors.

“An appraisal, effectively developed and interpreted, has at least three functions,” Edwards and Cummings suggest, and go on to define them.

The authors do place a great emphasis on rewards and interventions to bolster the assertion set forth in their thesis statement. Edwards and Cummings warn that individual agendas can threaten, erode, and undermine group performance; there is no - I - in TEAM.

## **Keywords**

Mark R. Edwards, Leslie Edwards Cummings, Appraising Work Group Performance: New Productivity Opportunities in Hospitality Management, Leadership

# Appraising Work Group Performance: New Productivity Opportunities In Hospitality Management

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*Employee group performance variation accounts for a significant portion of the degree of productivity in the hotel, motel, and food service sectors of the hospitality industry. The authors discuss TEAMS-G, a microcomputer based approach to appraising and interpreting group performance. TEAMS-G appraisal allows an organization to profile and to evaluate groups, facilitating the targeting of training and development decisions and interventions, as well as the more equitable distribution of organizational rewards.*

The caliber of employee group performance is a major determinant in an organization's productivity and success within the hotel and food service industries. Gaining accurate information about the quality of performance of such groups as organizational divisions, individual functional departments, or work groups can be as enlightening as finally viewing in a mirror a true reflection of internal effort, a vision previously obscured. This perspective is especially important not only for strategic human resources planning purposes, but also for diagnosing development needs and for differentially distributing organizational rewards.

The hotel and food service industries are, by their nature, service-intensive in carrying out their objectives, be they to furnish "friendlier" resort accommodations or to deliver more pizza "faster and fresher." Even as the industry is dependent on large numbers of employees working in tandem, the industry is plagued with a lack of skilled workers. In many of the positions, the pay is low, the hours long, the work hard and, not surprisingly, morale is often low. The result is employee turnover rates among the highest across all industries.

Hotels, motels, and food service establishments share a dependence on employees who work toward organizational goals as a group. Very typically, the most desirable outcome is realized only through teamwork,

for example, when the housekeeping department keeps the front desk abreast of available rooms to rent, and when the food purchasing department cooperates and coordinates with the kitchen and the marketing department. Yet performance appraisal typically centers on the individual, often creating a disincentive to act in the best interest of the group.

Many hospitality employees respond to demands that are unpredictable and complex in their involvement of other work groups. Further, because hotel and food service organizations often are very dispersed, individual work groups within units may be located far from the company headquarters. At the unit level, an individual employee may be expected to possess and use a wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities. In a small establishment, the night manager may also be the night auditor, front desk clerk, and fill in as "concierge." A restaurant manager may at any time be expected to change hats and to work in purchasing, food production, personnel and supervision roles, marketing and public relations, alcoholic beverage control, service management, or problem-solving with the new point of sale computer or with the health inspector. Traditional appraisal methods fall short in measuring such a blend of roles, in particular when organizational achievement hinges on the integration of the roles of each individual with the roles of others.

Still another difference in the hotel and food service industry is the productivity measure itself. Traditional methods of gauging productivity may not be meaningful. The output per hour of labor or per dollar of payroll in a factory, for example, should correspond to the number staffed. But in the coffee shop, seven persons may be needed just to man the stations, whether or not a patron enters or money is collected. How should productivity be measured?

Other types of groups work both outside and inside the unit, but in roles that are visibly based on cooperation among members. In building the 100,000 hotel properties now located around the world, project teams are often assigned. They may be responsible for site selection, construction, initial sales, or other projects, long or short term. Work groups also are assigned to operate self-contained, often remote facilities such as prisons, training camps, mountain retreats, and other isolated facilities and attractions.

Accurately evaluating the performance of such work units or groups is a challenge with rewards well worth pursuing. Geographical dispersion, diversity of job responsibilities within the work unit, non-linear output to staffing ratios, the implied reliance on a group effort, and the dynamism of the hospitality environment render traditional performance measurement systems ineffective and inappropriate. There is a need for a more effective method for appraising work group performance.

### **Why Evaluate Group Performance?**

The Society for the Advancement of Food Service Research identified employee issues as an especially urgent priority area in which solutions are needed.<sup>1</sup> A solution which addresses the frustration and lack of motivation on the part of the employee is to coach, develop, appraise,

and reward employees on the basis of group achievement. This same approach responds to the next level of need identified, that of management ineffectiveness. A proper appraisal tool can itself combat both the employee issues such as lack of motivation and the management ineffectiveness in areas such as lack of communication. An appraisal, effectively developed and interpreted, has at least three functions:

- To provide goal oriented feedback to the participants.
- To provide data to management for decisions on future training efforts.
- To serve as the basis for modification of the various inputs into any training process.<sup>2</sup>

Many organizations have sub-optimized organizational performance measures by assuming a summation of individual performance would approximate group performance. While it is well known in sports that extraordinary individual performance (the superstar) may be dysfunctional and hinder team performance, most organizations simply continue to measure (often poorly) and to develop and reward the individual performance.<sup>3</sup> Employees are not motivated to maximize group performance and, in fact, may sometimes compromise the group for personal glory or gain because rewards are distributed on this basis.

If work team performance represents a key to effective organizational performance, a measure of group performance can indicate where rewards (and interventions) are most appropriate. Diagnosing strong and weak departments, work teams, or functional areas (such as property sales or the front office) can target organizational development actions and any indicated needs for leadership change.

Few organizations have adopted procedures for evaluating work group effectiveness until recently. Prior to the availability of computer program tools, tracking, cross-tracking, and comparing data for more than one person at a time was, for practical purposes, impossible. Today, several microcomputer programs are available to provide a systematic procedure to track group performance data and to analyze and aid interpretation of it for multiple raters and ratees.

Experience and practical research have shown multiple raters to be both more accurate and more valid than single-supervisory raters.<sup>4</sup> Yet, recent surveys indicate that most organizations currently use the traditional "immediate supervisor" approach and evaluate individual performance.<sup>5</sup> This article describes a carefully-tested set of techniques for implementing a multiple rater evaluation process in order to take advantage of the improved validity and usefulness of performance information for employee groups. The set of techniques described here is termed "TEAMS-G," an acronym for "Team Evaluation and Management System for Groups." The Team Evaluation (TE) and Management System (MS), or TEAMS, is a merit appraisal process which has been used to enhance the quality of decision information about the most important productivity resource for hospitality firms: people.<sup>6</sup>

Organizations that use TE (Team Evaluation) to improve the quality

of MS (Management System) supervisory judgments soon realize the procedure can also be used to upgrade information about group performance. Using the information from TE, decision-makers find that they are better-equipped by knowing appropriate information about the status quo and the potential of the human resources they are expected to direct for an optimal performance.

Alternatives in evaluating the performance of groups include:

- Supervisory Subjective Perceptions.
- Team Evaluation + Supervisory Ratings.
- Team Evaluation + Group Performance + Supervisory Ratings.

Single supervisory ratings are deficient because they reflect the supervisor's subjective perceptions and have been shown to represent more the perception of the supervisor than the ratee's performance.<sup>7</sup> Research has consistently shown lateral associates (peers) to be more reliable and valid in judgments of performance and promotability than supervisors.<sup>8</sup> Because it includes lateral associates, the Team Evaluation lends fairness and consensus while the management system performance judgment lends accuracy and relevance to the performance evaluation process. Yet, even the TEAMS performance model fails to capture the essence of group performance. TEAMS-G incorporates a measure of Group Performance, (G), which identified group strengths and weaknesses. The TEAMS-G information enhances rather than replaces other available performance information.

The Team Evaluation portion of TEAMS-G uses a computer program that uses artificial intelligence or an expert system to support the evaluation process. Called the Intelligent Consensus, (TEAMS-IC), this computer program has seven unique features which provide significant advantages over traditional appraisal methods:

- Ratings are scored with an Intelligent Consensus (Expert System) computer program which:
  1. Normalizes all raters to statistically adjust for different levels of evaluation rigor.
  2. Discounts outliers which are rating judgments that deviate significantly above or below the Team Evaluation Consensus.
  3. Identifies the rating "footprint" of raters who may have used an unfair rating strategy or may possibly have colluded.<sup>9</sup>
  4. Acts as an "expert system" by computing and reporting a series of statistical and procedural safeguards regarding the reliability of each consensus score and other information on the reliability of the results.
- Criteria are participatively developed by survey of all participants. Hence, the criteria have content validity and truly represent the job-related dimensions that are most responsible for effective performance in the organization.

- Criteria are defined and illustrative/observable behaviors are developed by participants to ensure common understanding of criteria.
- Perceptions from four or more credible raters who are chosen by the group members (ratees) are combined to arrive at a Team Evaluation Consensus. The use of multiple raters achieves objectivity by minimizing the effects of individual biases or inadequate information. These multiple perspectives are more likely to provide a total performance picture than a single rating by a supervisor or the senior member of a performance group.
- All rating judgments are confidential. Whereas, supervisor-only ratings are public (known to the subordinate), individual TE ratings are private. Each rater's judgments are confidential, while the consensus is known to the group. Therefore, raters can be more objective in their ratings than they were likely to be with traditional "public" ratings. Confidentiality also overcomes many of the disincentives to identifying truly mediocre or unsatisfactory performance.
- Groups in different locations or divisions can be ranked and compared using TE. Every rater does not need to rate every group. Some raters are chosen by many groups to be raters while others are chosen by only a few.
- TE provides information about the rater's behavior as well as the ratee's. Each rater receives rater feedback about rating decisiveness and rating judgments that were more than 20 percent different from the consensus. This information aids in identifying and modifying systematic biases or rating error and for rater training needs analysis.<sup>10</sup>

The use of TE shifts the burden of evaluation from a single person to a highly credible and highly reliable evaluation team chosen by the members of the evaluated group. The external evaluators are the group's "customers" on an internal basis, which means they, like the firm they serve, are being evaluated by their "customers."

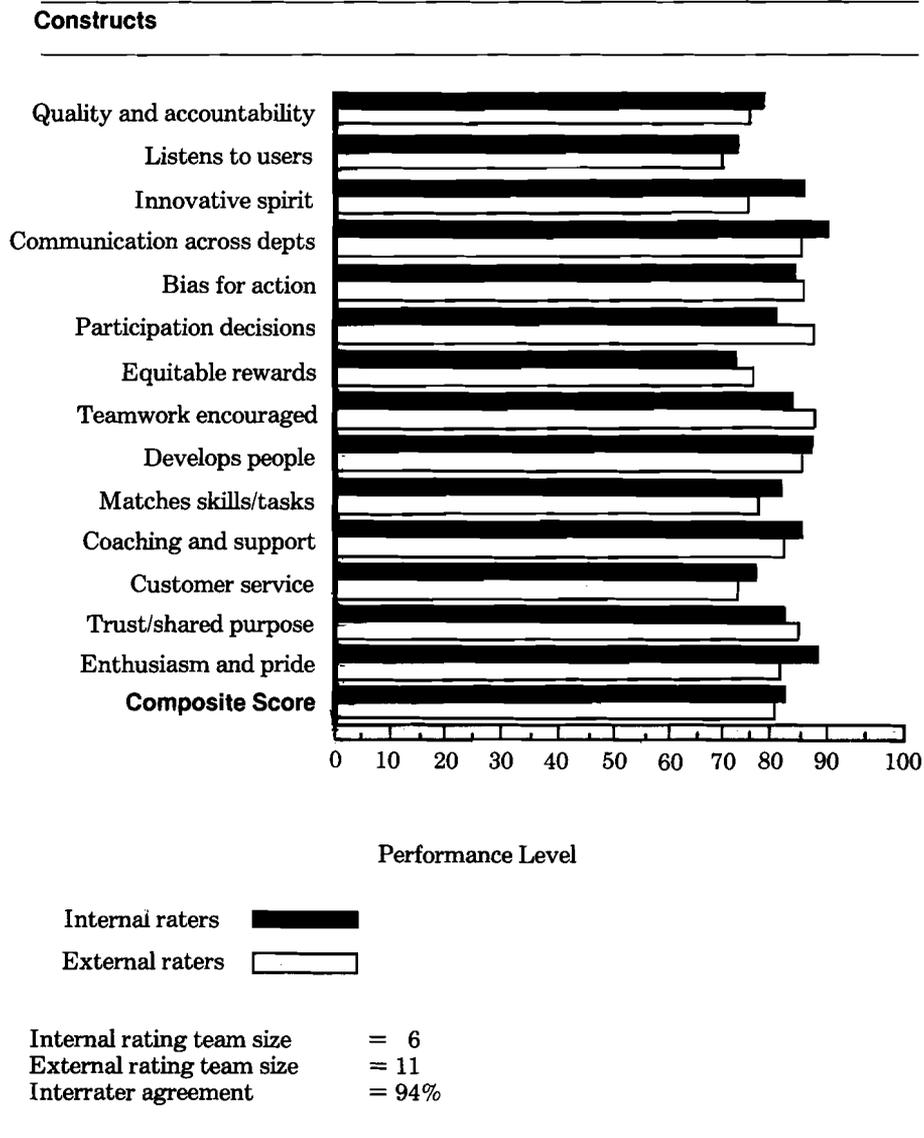
#### **TEAMS-G Project Provides Comparison**

Application of the TEAMS-G technology captures performance information about groups. Team Evaluation and Management System, TEAMS, represents a procedure for systematically capturing multiple rater input in order to enhance supervisory decisions about individual performers.<sup>11</sup> The TEAMS-G design includes short yet comprehensive rating surveys from which results are displayed for each rated group for both internal and external-to-the-group raters.

The TEAMS-G process provides a rich information base that can be used for team building, group objective setting, diagnosing training needs, assessing management style and distributing organizational rewards such as merit monies which must be divided among high performance groups. Contrasting the internal raters' performance profile

with the external raters' profile in the format shown in Figure 1 identifies, in a highly reliable manner, the differences in organizational perception about the performance of the group's functional mission. The results provide a diagnostic measure on which to base training or other intervention decisions. Strategic planners and organizational development specialists may then examine what interventions might improve performance.

**Figure 1**  
**TEAMS-G**  
**Group Performance Profile**  
**Comparing Internal and External Raters**



The comparative evaluation between or among groups can identify which groups are presently best serving their functional mission. One firm chose to use the Peters and Waterman "7S Model" for their comparative evaluation of groups.<sup>12</sup> The simple Likert rating form illustrated in Figure 2 was analyzed using the TEAMS Intelligent Consensus computerized scoring program. A typical consensus profile is shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 2**  
**TEAMS-G**  
**Group Evaluation Form Using the "7S Excellence Model"**

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<i>Group: Operations</i>	<i>Date: 5/15/85</i>
<i>Rater: Douglas Ruby</i>	<i>Title: V.P. Marketing</i>

N - No opportunity to observe

1 - Needs Improvement

2 - Meeting minimum acceptable standards

3 - Meets acceptable standards

4 - Often exceeds acceptable standards

5 - Regularly exceeds acceptable standards

6 - Truly superior - top 20%

7 - Outstanding - top 10%

N 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Structure

N 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strategy

N 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Skills

N 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Staff

N 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Style

N 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Systems

N 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Shared Values

**Note:** One of these TEAMS-G evaluation forms is completed by Mr. Ruby for each of the groups he evaluates.

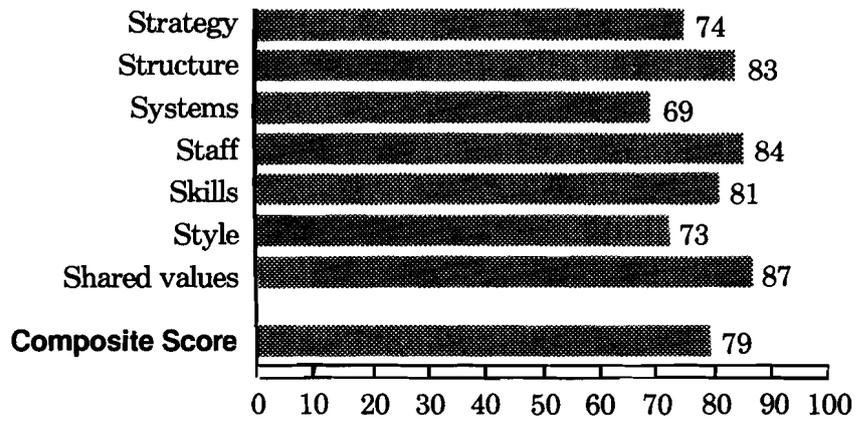
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**Figure 3**  
**TEAMS-G**  
**Administrative Group Performance Profile**  
**“7S Model”**

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**Constructs**

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**Performance Level**

External rating team size = 14  
 Interrater agreement = 94%

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The composite score of the seven “S’s” was used to compare group performance. The TEAMS-IC program generates a ranking of groups by criteria (each of the seven “S’s” in this case) and a ranking of groups on the composite score.<sup>13</sup>

The primary activities and time-line involved in a TEAMS-G project are shown in Figure 4. A normal project spans a 14-week schedule yet requires a project manager only about one-fourth time during the project period.

**Figure 4**  
**TEAMS-G**  
**Activity Diagram**

Approximate Week Number	Core Activity	Explanation
1	Identify performance groups	Divisions, departments functional groups, geographic areas
3	Develop organizational effectiveness constructs	Survey to establish factors; may use "7S Model"
4	Select raters	5+ within each group; 10+ external to each group
4	Develop survey instruments	Use simple rating scales
6	Train raters	Explain purpose and rating procedure
6	Evaluate group performance	Internal and external raters rate groups that selected them as raters on relevant evaluation dimensions
8	Analyze ratings and generate results	Internal and external rater profiles are produced for each group
10	Analyze rater accuracy and safeguards	Examine rater consistency and consensus reliabilities
12	Evaluate results	Innovative team building/ problem solving sessions
14	Critically evaluate TEAMS-G process	Survey participants for TEAMS-G enhancements

Performance groups may be segmented in any fashion that makes sense to the organization. Group segmentation may be based on function, location, division, department, work group, or activity. A minimum number of six members sets a practical floor for group size. There is no ceiling on group size for effective evaluation. Accordingly, it is possible to use the entire work unit such as a restaurant as the evaluation group.

As a first step in the criteria selection process, participants may be surveyed to develop a set of approximately 50 microorganizational effectiveness constructs applicable to the group being evaluated. Alternatively, Figure 5 displays a sample set of 50 knowledge, skills and abilities developed as a composite that management may choose as a starting point.

**Figure 5**  
**Fifty Key TEAMS Constructs:**  
**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA's)**

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1. **Empathy** – sensing others' needs.
2. **Teamwork** – working well with others.
3. **Written Communication Skills** – ability to communicate clearly in writing.
4. **Oral Communication Skills** – ability to speak and be understood.
5. **Creativity** – thinking of new ideas or applying existing material in novel ways.
6. **Innovation** – using new ideas and taking risks.
7. **Associate Development** – developing others in a positive manner to meet personal and organizational goals.
8. **Enthusiasm** – interest in what is taking place and being planned.
9. **Positive Outlook** – giving a “personal best” and remaining cheerful or even-tempered during work efforts.
10. **Listening Skills** – assimilating and responding to others' spoken words.
11. **Accessibility** – availability to others on the job.
12. **Human Relations Skills** – handling a variety of people problems through solutions that maximize interpersonal effectiveness.
13. **Leadership** – organizing and directing others to meet organizational goals.
14. **Job Knowledge** – understanding of the job held.
15. **Planning** – preparing to meet short-term and long-term challenges.
16. **Use of Power** – capacity to make personal or position power work effectively in accomplishing job.
17. **Trust** – generating feelings of mutual confidence.
18. **Cross-Gender Relations** – respectfully treating members of the opposite sex as work colleagues.
19. **Customer Service** – building and maintaining customer relations (internal and external).
20. **Accountability** – delivering on time, as requested.
21. **Neatness** – conducting job-related matters within a framework of order.
22. **Integrity** – being truthful and avoiding petty jealousies.
23. **Ability to Learn** – applied learning capacity.
24. **Flexibility** – adaptability to necessarily changing circumstances.
25. **Response to New Ideas** – addressing challenges and changes to the status quo.
26. **Fairness** – treating others equitably.
27. **Involvement** – unselfish participation with others.
28. **Entrepreneurship** – capacity to develop and implement strategies for achieving economic growth.
29. **Courtesy** – considering and respecting others.
30. **Professional Skills** – ability to apply knowledge to solution of problems in area of professional expertise.
31. **Productivity** – quality and quantity of work completed compared to others.

32. **Organization** – forming a structured work life and completing well-organized work projects.
33. **Problem Solving** – creating useful solutions to practical problems in business situations.
34. **Decision Skills** – making timely, appropriate decisions about business situations.
35. **Encouragement** – positively supporting the efforts of others.
36. **Crediting** – giving others credit for their contributions.
37. **Initiative** – actively influencing events and originating a task or project to meet organizational directives.
38. **Judgment** – reaching responsible conclusions and acting appropriately on them.
39. **Accuracy** – completing tasks without errors and catching others' mistakes before they do damage.
40. **Quality of Work** – overall effectiveness of the work being performed, compared to others.
41. **Time Management** – using time effectively to accomplish objectives.
42. **Delegation** – effective dispersion to others of activities within the delegator's area of responsibility.
43. **Stress Tolerance** – minimizing the impacts of job stresses.
44. **Environmental Enhancement** – contributing positively to a constructive and humane work environment.
45. **Bias for Action** – going forward without undue delay.
46. **Foresight** – anticipating and preparing for long-term success.
47. **Keeping It Simple** – ability to cut through complexity and simplify.
48. **Diplomacy** – resolving conflict without endangering project success.
49. **Change Agency** – skillfully initiating change.
50. **Shared Values** – manifesting positive organizational values, held by a majority of work associates.

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The micro-constructs should next be reduced to a smaller set, such as to 20. (This may be done by management alone or by a combination management-employee committee or survey.) Once a set of 20 micro-constructs has been selected, participants are asked by survey to assign 100 points distributed across the various constructs. Management may use this survey to gauge the perceived significance of each micro-construct and its relationship to macro-dimensions of effectiveness, such as the "7S" dimensions (structure, strategy, skills, staff, style, systems, and shared values). The micro-constructs also may be separated into the seven dimensional categories associated with the "7S Model" adapted from Peters and Waterman's book *In Search of Excellence*.

Essential to the rater selection process for every group is the development of two teams of raters from within the total organization—one set internal to the group (in the operations department, for example) and the other external to the group but within the same organization. The internal rater team of 5 to 10 evaluators from the performance group may be chosen by the lead (or senior) person in that group. Each internal rater then chooses two external (to the group) raters who have contact with

the group's functions (purchasing, for example).

### **Process Provides for Participation**

TEAMS-G provides a mechanism for important participative management at a minimum time cost. The typical total participant time required, including criteria development, choosing raters, and actual rating, is approximately one hour.

The rating results are compiled by the computer into profiles indicating group performance on the various dimensions as perceived by the internal rating team and by the external raters. The TEAMS-G process captures information so valuable that most participants, whether internal or external raters, eagerly become involved. External raters receive a secondary payoff through the rater feedback report prepared for each rater as shown in Figure 6. By indicating the number and direction of the individual rater's substantial variations from the Team Evaluation Consensus for each appraisal criterion, the rater feedback report pinpoints an individual's evaluation strengths and weaknesses.<sup>14</sup>

In the example, rater Douglas Ruby tended to overrate two groups, Accounting and Convention Services, and underrate two groups, Housekeeping and Quality Control. He also demonstrated lack of knowledge regarding criterion number 6, Systems, since so many inconsistent decisions were made on this criterion. Many participants find the rater feedback as interesting as the organizational effectiveness diagnosis and evaluation.

If the rater selection process results in more than 12 members on an external evaluation team, the team may be split in half and the results from each split-half compared as a reliability check on the group evaluation process. Experience indicates such dual evaluation teams result in substantially the same group performance rating 9 times out of 10—which reinforces the reliability of the TEAMS-G process.

The hospitality industry is uniquely structured into interdependent employee groups to provide services in a dynamic market. The quality and worth of the performance of employee groups can account for a large portion of the variation in effective hospitality operations. The traditional appraisal, performed more or less subjectively by a single supervisor, rarely rewards justly or for the appropriate reasons: contribution to the achievement and productivity in a group effort. This contributes both to the hospitality industry's often flagging morale and dizzying turnover, and to the development of individual fiefdoms rather than to true, cooperating work groups.

Profiling employees and groups using a consensus of judgments from management (supervisory) and peers strengthens the validity, fairness, and usefulness of appraisal data. A proven, microcomputer-based method for such an appraisal is described here: "Team Evaluation and Management System for Groups." Because it provides an employee-driven mechanism for identifying relative strengths and weaknesses of work groups, TEAMS-G appraisal allows an organization to compare the performance of work groups relative to other groups. Identification of group performance using the TEAMS-G approach facilitates the targeting of

**Figure 6  
TEAMS-G  
Rater Feedback Report**

**Summary Data For Rater Mr. Douglas Ruby**

Ratees	Compared with the Team Evaluation Consensus (TEC), Your Rating Was:							
	Criteria-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Market Research		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Accounting		H	H	*	*	*	H	H
Quality Control		L	L	L	L	*	L	L
Human Resources		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Housekeeping		L	*	*	*	*	L	L
Operations		*	*	-	*	-	-	-
Convention Services		*	H	H	*	*	H	*
Food Services		*	*	*	*	*	L	*
Records		-	*	*	*	*	*	*
Risk Management		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Customer Service		*	*	*	*	*	L	*
<b>Number of Judgments</b>		10	11	10	11	10	10	10
<b>Outliers above 20%</b>		3	3	2	1	0	6	2
<b>Percent Outliers</b>		30	27	20	9	0	60	20

**Criteria**

1. Structure
2. Strategy
3. Skills
4. Staff
5. Style
6. Systems
7. Shared Value

**Scoring**

A "\*" means that all your ratings (for that ratee or benchmark on that criterion) were "ON" -i.e., within an acceptable range of consistency with the TEC result. Each of your ratings that was *significantly inconsistent* with the TEC has been scored as a "H" (above the TEC) or "L" (below the TEC). A "-" indicates the criterion was not rated.

**Note:** This rater was particularly lenient (compared to the TEC) for Accounting and Convention Services and harsh for Housekeeping and Quality Control. He may have been confused about the meaning of criterion number 6, "Systems," because 6 out of the 10 judgments on that criterion were outlier judgments. Outlier judgments were defined as 20 percent different from the TEC.

training and development interventions and a more equitable distribution of organizational rewards. Armed with human resource and performance information, strategic planning is supported for piloting the way to survival and growth in the competitive and changing hospitality environment.

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