



The HiPLAY Team Assessment Instrument

HiPLAY Team Assessment Profile for:

ABC Company - Senior Team

Confidential Assessment Report

INTRODUCTION

HiPLAY is an acronym that stands for **H**igh **P**erformance **L**earning-**A**ction-**Y**ield. The elements of the acronym define an approach to team effectiveness which summarizes much of the existing research and literature on high performance teams:

(HIGH)	A far above average, superior, or extraordinary
(PERFORMANCE)	display of sustained, creative, or breakthrough work on a task
(LEARNING)	while continuously improving and gaining in capability
(ACTION)	through effective conversations, team interaction and behavior
(YIELD)	which efficiently produce high quality outputs for team customers.

Clearly, this description of the qualities of a high performance team sets a very high standard of practice for most teams. Few teams have mastered all of the factors which go into creating these qualities. Most teams need to improve in some way.

This report presents your team profile (the Team), prepared with all the data received in time for processing concerning the Team. This report contains five parts.

- Part I, **The HiPLAY Model**, explains the model and defines its components.
- Part II, **the Interpretative Guide**, explains what to consider when reviewing the results.
- Part III, **Your Assessment of the Team**, presents a profile of the Team based on the scores you provided to the Team based on the HiPLAY assessment.
- Part IV, **Team Assessment Results**, presents a profile of the Team based on the combined scores of all respondents to the HiPLAY assessment.
- Part V, **Background Information on the HiPLAY**, provides additional information on the instrument.

PART I

THE HIPLAY MODEL

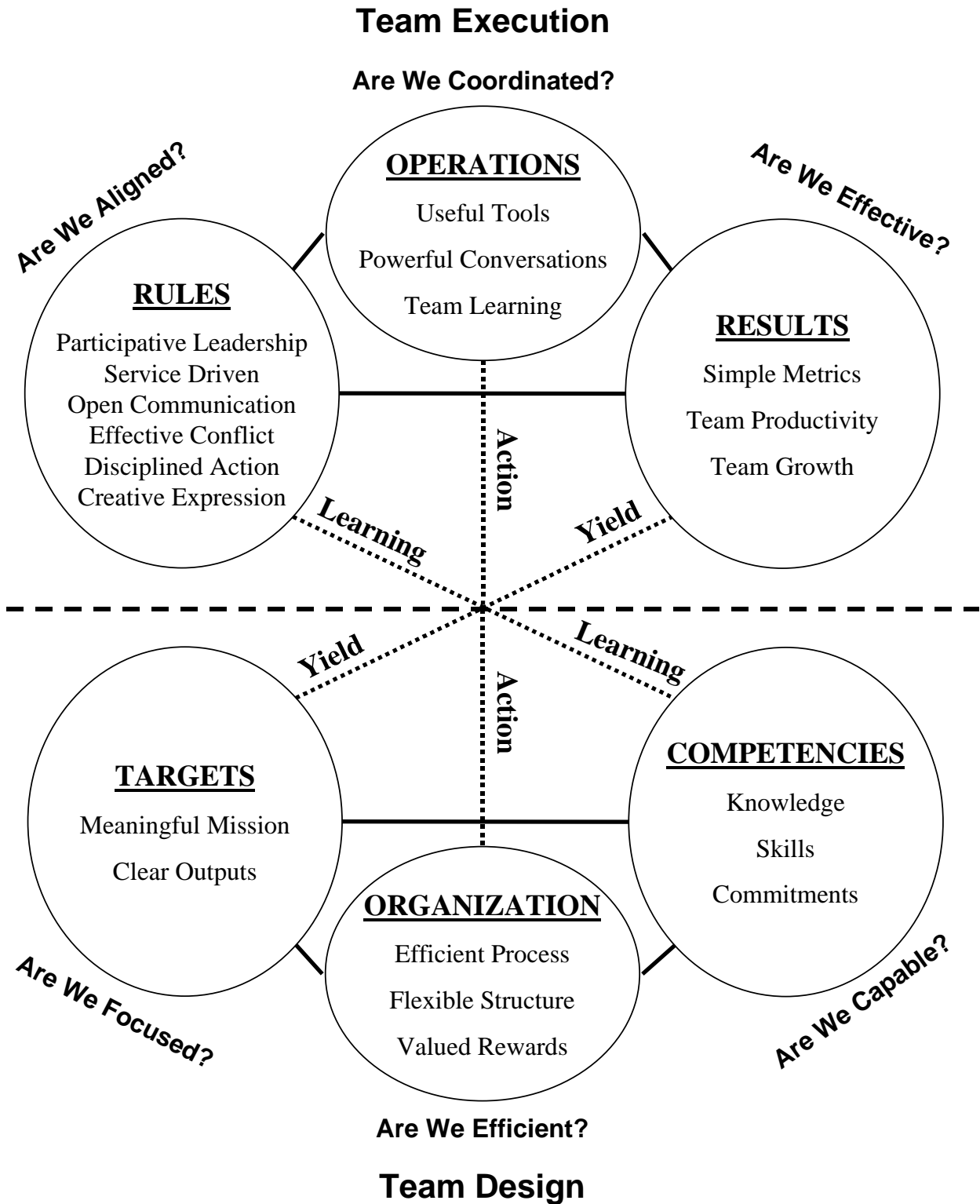
THE HIPLAY TEAM ASSESSMENT TOOL

The **HiPLAY** assessment tool can be part of a powerful “breakthrough” process for team learning and growth. It allows a team to generate clear and valid information about nearly every aspect of team functioning and provides some important standards for the team to consider in setting its own improvement agenda. In effect, the very act of using the **HiPLAY** requires the team to operate like a high performance team – whether it is or not – by providing an opportunity for significant movement on the road to high performance. Further movement is a function of how thoroughly the team reviews the results and uses them to chart a coherent plan of action for both team and individual development.

The **HiPLAY** assessment is designed to help your team set an improvement agenda based on the standards and practices demonstrated by high performing teams—using those key factors which are consistently found to be the critical drivers of team effectiveness.

The following pages contain the overall framework of the **HiPLAY** in a graphic format, as well as definitions of each of its components and scales.

THE HIPLAY FRAMEWORK



HIPLAY'S FACTORS

There are twenty *scales* on the **HiPLAY**, each scale being the sum of your answers to 4 different items on the 80-item instrument. The lowest possible score on any scale is 4 and the highest possible score is 20. More importantly, the twenty scales are subcategories of one of the six major *factors* of team effectiveness. The *factor score* is the simple sum of all of the scale scores from that effectiveness factor, divided by the number of scales, so that the score can be plotted on the same 4-20 scale.

The six major factors in the **HiPLAY** framework either relate to Team Design (Targets, Organization, and Competencies) or Team Execution (Rules, Operations, and Results). Each of the six factors enmeshed in this overall **HiPLAY** Framework are described below.

1. The first effectiveness factor (from Team Design) is **TARGETS**. This factor addresses the question of “Are we focused?” Highly effective teams are consistently found to be characterized by a clear sense of direction, a deep sense of shared purpose, a mission that demands interdependence, and a clear understanding of the work products which must be produced by the team in order to accomplish its purpose. Do your scores suggest that your team is focused or unfocused?
 - **Targets:** *The extent to which the team has developed focus around work outputs (products and services) and a challenging purpose that energizes members and requires them to work together – a combination of meaningful mission and clear outputs.*
2. The second effectiveness factor (from Team Design) is **ORGANIZATION**. This factor addresses the question of “Are we efficient?” Highly effective teams have developed a sensible and efficient approach to getting the work done. The team has developed a set of work and leadership roles that allow for an efficient division of labor. Also, the team is operating within a reward structure that reinforces and supports effective individual and team performance. Do your scores suggest that your team is organized or disorganized?
 - **Organization:** *The extent to which the team has developed a sensible and efficient approach to getting the work done – a combination of efficient process, flexible structure, and valued rewards.*

HiPLAY'S FACTORS (continued)

3. The third effectiveness factor (from Team Design) is **COMPETENCIES**. This factor addresses the question of “**Are we capable?**” Highly effective teams have gathered members who have the right knowledge, skills and commitments to get the work of the team done. When missing key competencies, the team seeks out coaching or expertise, or encourages team members to develop what’s needed. Do your scores suggest that your team is capable or incapable?
 - ***Competencies:** The extent to which the team has developed an appropriate distribution of capabilities needed to do the team’s work – a combination of knowledge, skills, and commitments.*

4. The fourth effectiveness factor (from Team Execution) is **RULES**. This factor addresses the question of “**Are we aligned?**” Highly effective teams have developed a set of “rules for engagement” which guide and control the expression of behavior in the team. Some team rules can be idiosyncratic to particular teams. However all teams need to align around some that govern (1) how to use power; (2) how to relate to one another; and, (3) how to take action around the work of the team. Do your scores suggest that your team is aligned or misaligned?
 - ***Rules:** The extent to which the team has developed a set of rules for engagement that effectively dictate and align how the team uses power, relates to one another, and takes action around its work – a combination of participative leadership, service driven, open communication, effective conflict, disciplined action, and creative expression.*

5. The fifth effectiveness factor (from Team Execution) is **OPERATIONS**. This factor addresses the question of “**Are we coordinated?**” Highly effective teams have developed consistent methods and practices to ensure that the work of the team, and the interfaces among team members, remain “in sync”, allowing the coherent coordination of action across the team. This is usually accomplished through the use of simple and common team tools, effective conversational patterns that drive action, and learning processes which allow continuous improvement. Do your scores suggest that your team is coordinated or uncoordinated?
 - ***Operations:** The extent to which the team has developed consistent methods and practices to foster coordination in the way it operates – a combination of useful tools, powerful conversations, and team learning.*

HiPLAY'S FACTORS (continued)

6. The sixth effectiveness factor (from Team Execution) is **RESULTS**. This factor addresses the question of “**Are we effective?**” Highly effective teams have developed a set of simple metrics to continually assess their efficiency and effectiveness as a team. These metrics are usually designed by the team, though some measures are derived from the larger organization. The measures typically focus on the quality of the work outputs produced by the team, the level of customer satisfaction, the quality of work processes, or the growth in individual or team competence. Do your scores suggest that your team is effective or ineffective?

- ***Results:** The extent to which the team has developed a set of metrics to measure efficiency and effectiveness – a balance between simple metrics, team productivity, and team growth.*

All of these factors interact with and influence each other. Changes in one factor will influence changes in all of the others. However, each Team Design factor is strongly related to one of the Team Execution factors. These pairings are noted in the center of the **HiPLAY** diagram. The Targets and Results factors are the pair that best defines the “Yield” of the team; the Organization and Operations factors are the pair that best defines the “Action” of the team; and the Competencies and Rules factors are the pair that best defines the “Learning” of the team.

The pages that follow demonstrate the scales that comprise each factor, as well as the individual items (as contained in the **HiPLAY**) that relate to each scale.

THE SCALES THAT COMPRISE EACH FACTOR



HIPLAY'S SCALES

TARGETS

Meaningful Mission The extent to which the team has a clear and challenging purpose that energizes members and requires them to work together.

Clear Outputs The extent to which the team is clear about the specific work outputs (products and services) that must be provided to team customers.

ORGANIZATION

Efficient Process The extent to which the team has a thoughtful, efficient, and continuously improving approach to work processes and operating procedures.

Flexible Structure The extent to which the team has a consistent yet flexible framework for organizing work, roles, relationships, and leadership.

Valued Rewards The extent to which the team is appropriately recognized and compensated for both individual and team performance.

COMPETENCIES

Knowledge The extent to which team members have the data, information, concepts, theories, or experience needed to execute the team's mission and work.

Skills The extent to which team members demonstrate in behavior the intellectual, interpersonal, physical, or emotional skills needed to do the team's work.

Commitments The extent to which team members are oriented to effective teamwork (i.e., being collaborative, sharing influence, valuing diversity, and getting results).

HiPLAY'S SCALES (continued)

RULES

Participative Leadership	The extent to which power and leadership is shared among team members so that team members are encouraged to take accountability for results.
Service Driven	The extent to which team members are oriented to supporting others on the team as well as to meeting the needs of team customers.
Open Communication	The extent to which team members speak directly, listen carefully, provide effective feedback, and develop open, honest, and trustful relationships.
Effective Conflict	The extent to which team members directly confront and resolve conflicts through sharing valid information and appreciating opposing views.
Disciplined Action	The extent to which team members use a thoughtful, systematic, logical, and group-centered process to solve problems and make decisions.
Creative Expression	The extent to which team members allow each other to innovate, experiment, take risks, explore hunches and intuitions, and have fun.

OPERATIONS

Useful Tools	The extent to which the team has effective and user-friendly tools for designing and doing the work, as well as for managing people and results.
Powerful Conversations	The extent to which the team demonstrates the conversational patterns that enable clear assessment, real inquiry, new possibilities, and committed action.
Team Learning	The extent to which the team can generate an understanding of its own dynamics and results, and can self-design and self-manage change.

HIPLAY'S SCALES (continued)

RESULTS

Simple Metrics	The extent to which the team has relatively simple ways to measure customer satisfaction, output quality, process quality, and team competency.
Team Productivity	The extent to which the team is both efficient and effective in producing high quality outputs and exceptional results.
Team Growth	The extent to which the team is growing in capability for high performance, and individuals are growing in their competence and commitment.

PART II

INTERPRETATIVE GUIDE

TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Most assessments find that teams are “stuck” around one factor or another, or one scale or another, in their day-to-day functioning. This sense of being “stuck” is manifested in the same patterns of behavior being demonstrated repeatedly without any improvement in results; recurring episodes of conflict around the same issues without resolution; or ongoing feelings of frustration, cynicism, resignation or powerlessness.

The **HiPLAY** assessment gives the team an opportunity to gain some distance from its patterns and to become more conscious of its mode of operating. This can allow for significant breakthroughs in team capability and performance. A breakthrough is nothing more than a “breaking up” of the current ineffective pattern and replacing it with something that is consciously designed to work better. The six necessary steps to follow in order to create and sustain breakthroughs in team performance are:

1. **Recognizing** the current pattern as it occurs in the team’s operation.
This is what the **HiPLAY** assessment data provides for the team.
2. **Understanding** and devaluing the negative consequences of the pattern.
The team discussion of the **HiPLAY** data usually brings this out clearly.
3. **Accepting responsibility** personally for one’s own role in the pattern.
This is the value of having team members work through a personal development plan with the **HiPLAY** data (see Part II of this section).
4. **Inventing** new possibilities for action that break up the pattern.
5. **Committing** to a specific direction or new set of actions.
This usually requires several follow-up meetings, or subgroups of the overall team, to fully accomplish.
6. **Stabilizing** the new pattern through conscious repetition and practice.
The **HiPLAY** points to those patterns that are used by high performance teams. They need to be implemented by the team in everyday meetings and become part of the fabric of how the team does its work. This can only be done through practice, review and follow-up.

NOTE: In addition to the six steps noted above, the team can, and should, develop its own metrics for gauging its progress and effectiveness.

To guide you in further understanding your **HiPLAY** results, the following pages represent a summary of how to interpret both the overall factor scores as well as the scale scores. This information is presented in a series of tables, which include suggested actions the team might take to improve relatively low scores (scores lower than 3).

INTERPRETING THE OVERALL FACTOR SCORES

Factor	If High (>3.75)	If Low (<3)	Actions to Consider
<i>Targets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team is focused and purposeful • Commitment to the mission is high • Members are clear about the products and services that the team is supposed to create • The team has a clear sense of direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team is unfocused and lacks a sense of purpose • There is confusion about the mission • There is not enough agreement about what the team is supposed to create • The team lacks a clear sense of direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a session to redefine the mission of the team • Talk to team customers about what they want from the team • Review team goals and assess for challenge and realism • Discuss the major outputs of the team and define customer quality requirements
<i>Organization</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work processes of the team are efficient • The team agrees on an overall approach to doing the work • Work and leadership roles are well-defined and allow team to be flexible and adaptable • Rewards effectively reinforce teamwork behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work processes of the team are inefficient • The team is in conflict over how to do the work • Work and leadership roles are confused and ill-defined so that team lacks stability • Rewards are inconsistent or conflict with teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review work processes and re-design to eliminate inefficiencies • Discuss conflicting approaches to work and find common solution • Clarify roles of team members and identify roles needed • Clarify leadership needed in team • Revise reward systems to support individual and team performance
<i>Competencies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has an appropriate distribution of the knowledge, skills and commitments needed to do team's work • The team has access to expertise or coaching needed along these lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has a significant shortfall of needed know-ledge, skills or commitments to do the work • The team has little access to expertise or coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do a careful assessment of the knowledge, skills or commitments (KSC's) missing and needed • Create a plan of action to develop KSC's or acquire them through new members or coaches

INTERPRETING THE OVERALL FACTOR SCORES

Factor	If High (>3.75)	If Low (<3)	Actions to Consider
<i>Rules</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership is participative • Members seek to serve others • Communication is open and honest • Conflict is openly confronted and resolved • Team is disciplined in solving problems • Team displays high creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership is autocratic • Members are self-centered • Communication is defensive • Conflict is avoided or denied • Team is undisciplined in solving problems • Team squelches creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a session to discuss gaps between current and desired rules • Define practices to implement new team rules • Identify KSC's needed to support desired rules • Define how team will respond to members who break rules • Have observer rate rules in action
<i>Operations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has excellent tools for planning and doing work • Conversations within the team are very effective in producing committed action • The team is very skillful in learning new ways to operate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has few, or poor, tools for doing work • Conversations within the team are unfocused and unproductive • The team learns poorly, tending to repeat mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore alternative tools • Design new tools to fit the work • Practice conversations for committed action and get coaching • Practice skills of team dialogue and using advocacy and inquiry
<i>Results</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has a set of metrics that are continually in use • The team's measures of productivity are very high • The team is actively and measurably growing in capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has no clear way of measuring results • The team is unproductive, as much as it can be measured • The team is stagnant, rigid and not growing in capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a team scorecard of metrics for customer satisfaction, output quality, process quality and competency growth • Hold a session to diagnose causes and consequences of low growth and low productivity

PART III

YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE TEAM

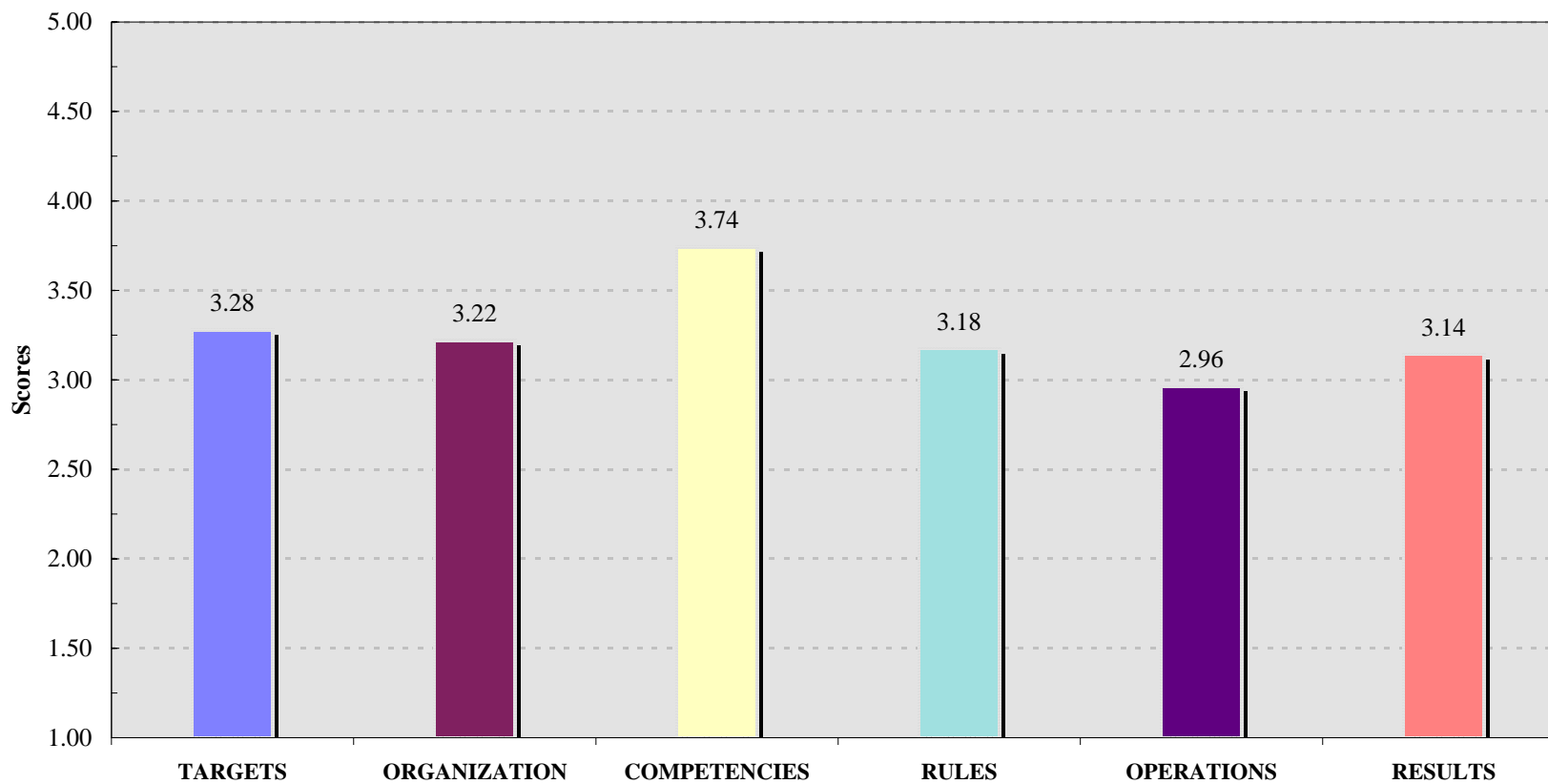
ABC Company - Senior Team Profile

Number of Participants = 7

Factors & Scales		Factors	HiPLAY Norm (n = 104)
TARGETS	3.28	TARGETS “Are we focused?”	3.47
Meaningful Mission	3.54		3.52
Clear Outputs	3.00		3.41
ORGANIZATION	3.22	ORGANIZATION “Are we efficient?”	3.30
Efficient Process	2.89		3.29
Flexible Structure	3.38		3.41
Valued Rewards	3.42		3.21
COMPETENCIES	3.74	COMPETENCIES “Are we capable?”	3.55
Knowledge	3.88		3.49
Skills	3.63		3.64
Commitments	3.71		3.51
RULES	3.18	RULES “Are we aligned?”	3.39
Participative Leadership	3.39		3.62
Service Driven	3.37		3.51
Open Communication	3.00		3.37
Effective Conflict	3.00		3.36
Disciplined Action	3.22		3.32
Creative Expression	3.04		3.18
OPERATIONS	2.96	OPERATIONS “Are we coordinated?”	3.34
Useful Tools	2.67		3.35
Powerful Conversations	3.36		3.45
Team Learning	2.84		3.21
RESULTS	3.14	RESULTS “Are we effective?”	3.39
Simple Metrics	2.65		3.16
Team Productivity	3.28		3.43
Team Growth	3.50		3.57

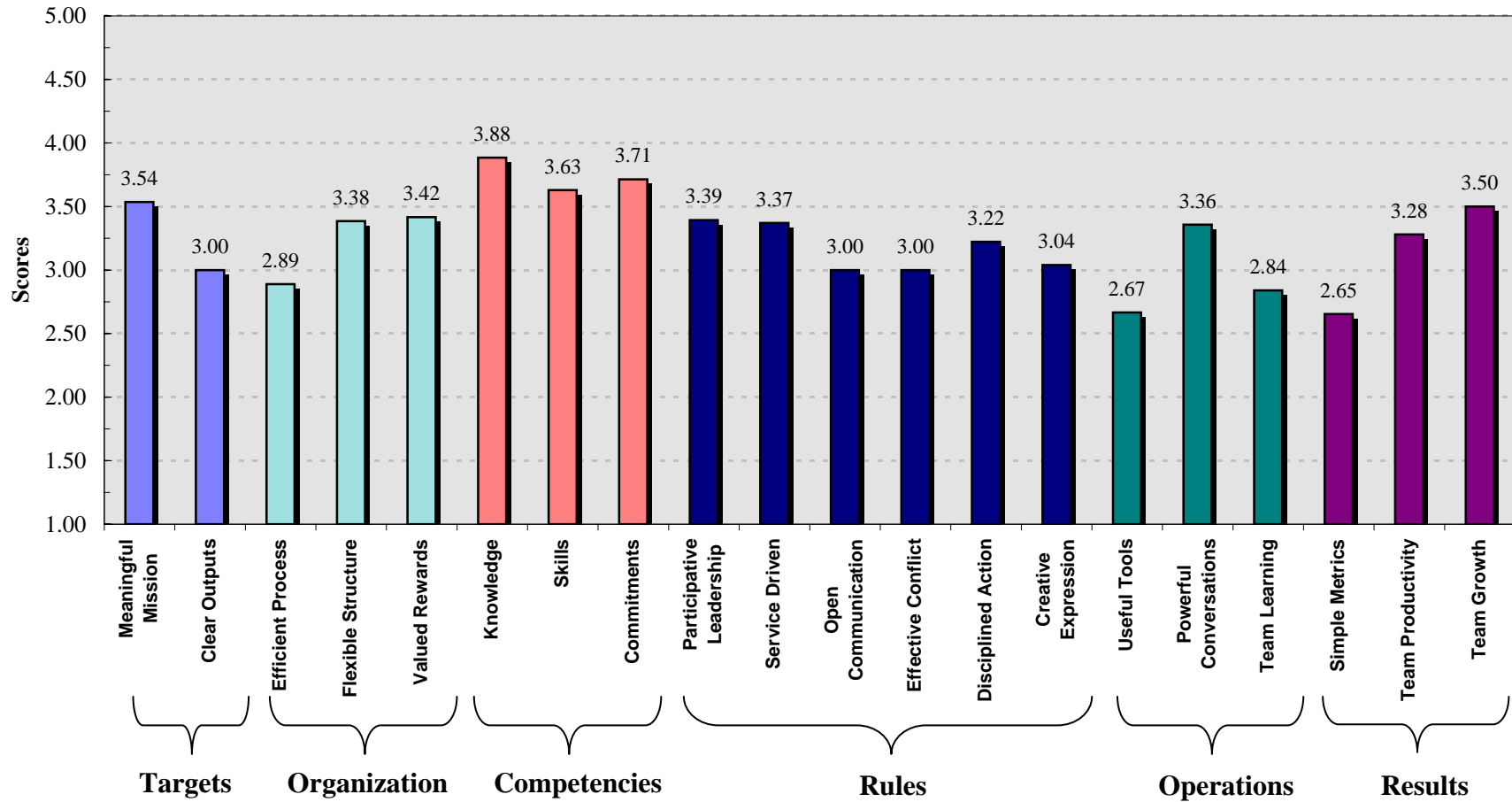
ABC Company - Senior Team Profile

Factors



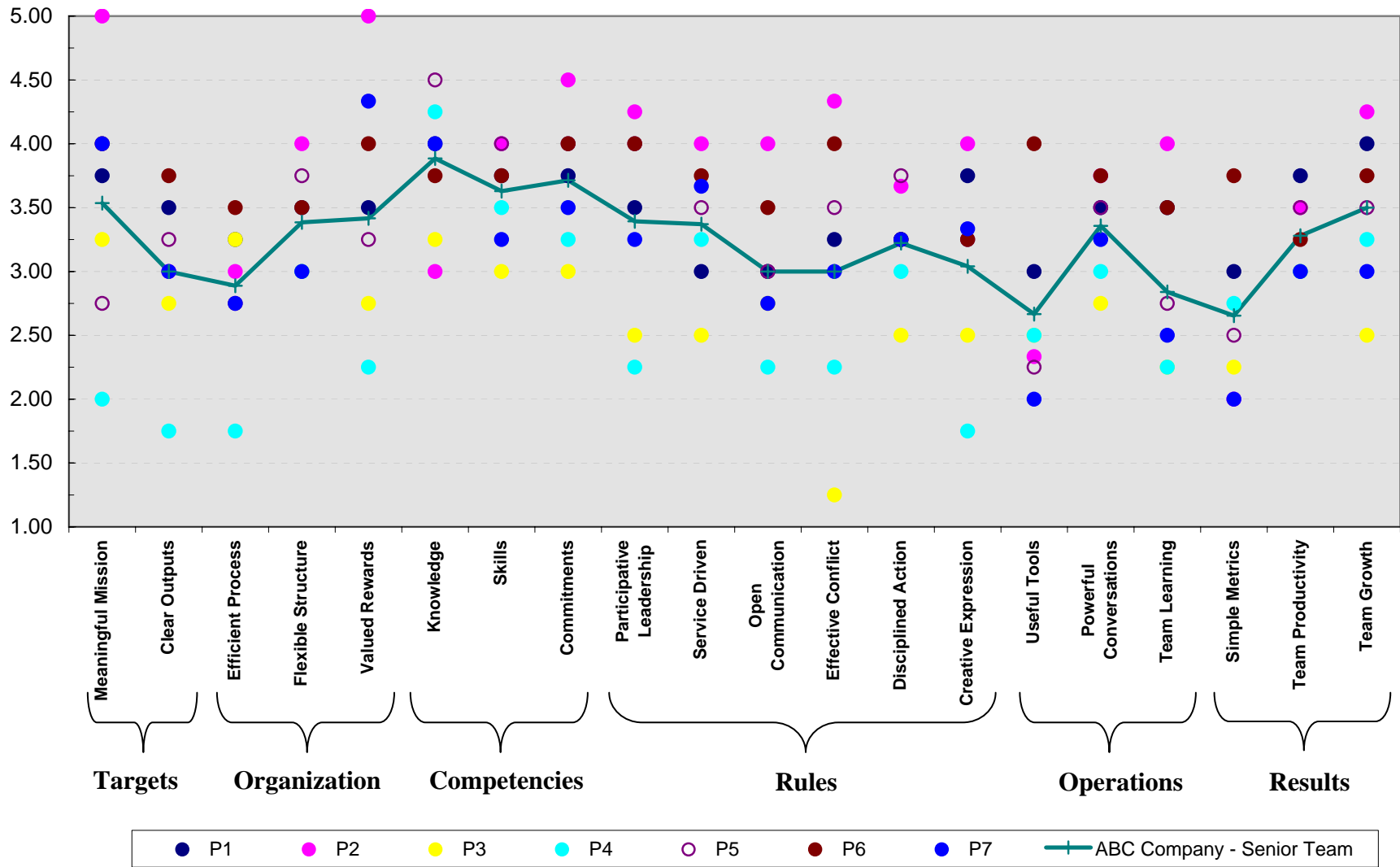
ABC Company - Senior Team Profile

Factors and Scales

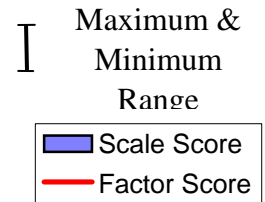


ABC Company - Senior Team Profile

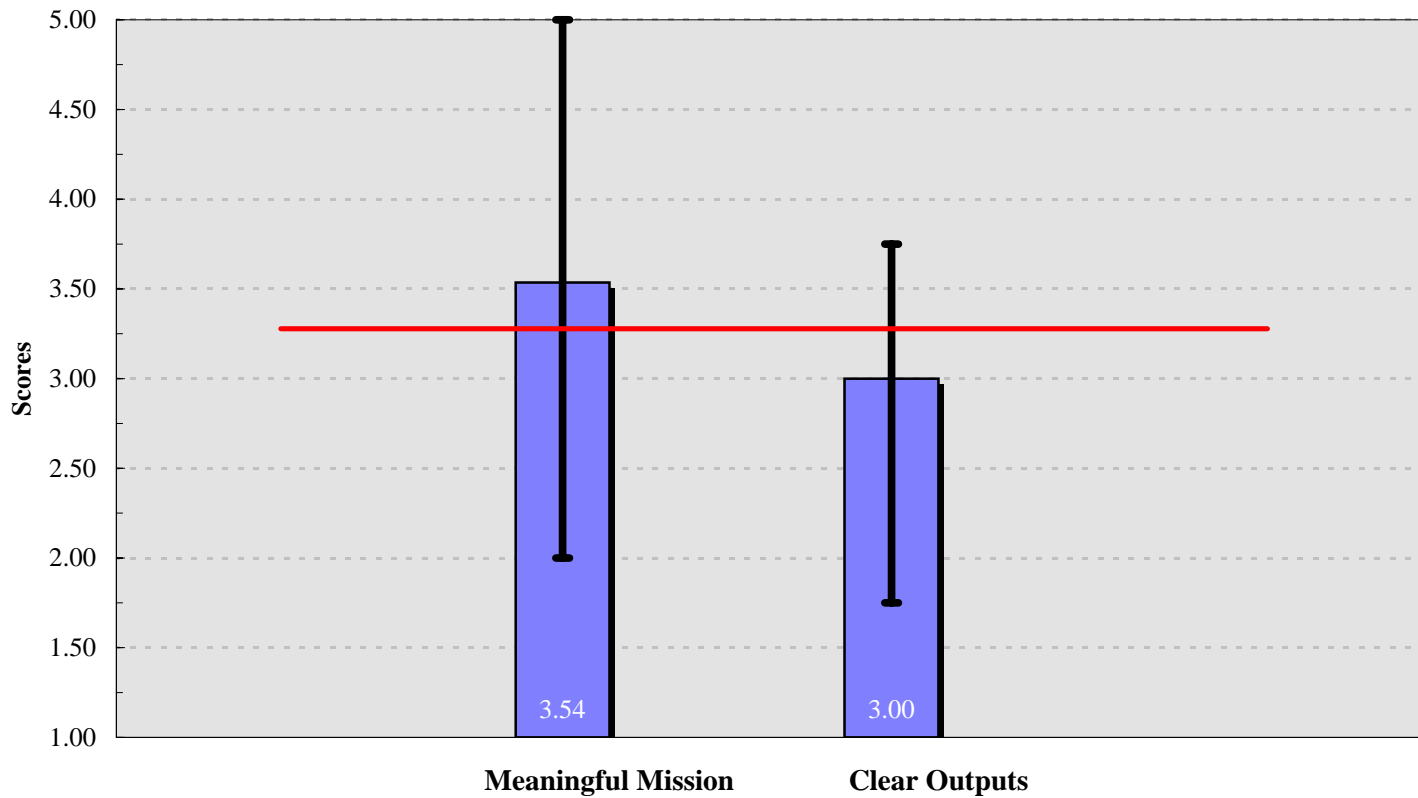
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES COMPARISON



ABC Company - Senior Team Profile



Targets Analysis



Targets: The extent to which the team has developed focus around work outputs (products and services) and a challenging purpose that energizes members and requires them to work together – a combination of meaningful mission and clear outputs.

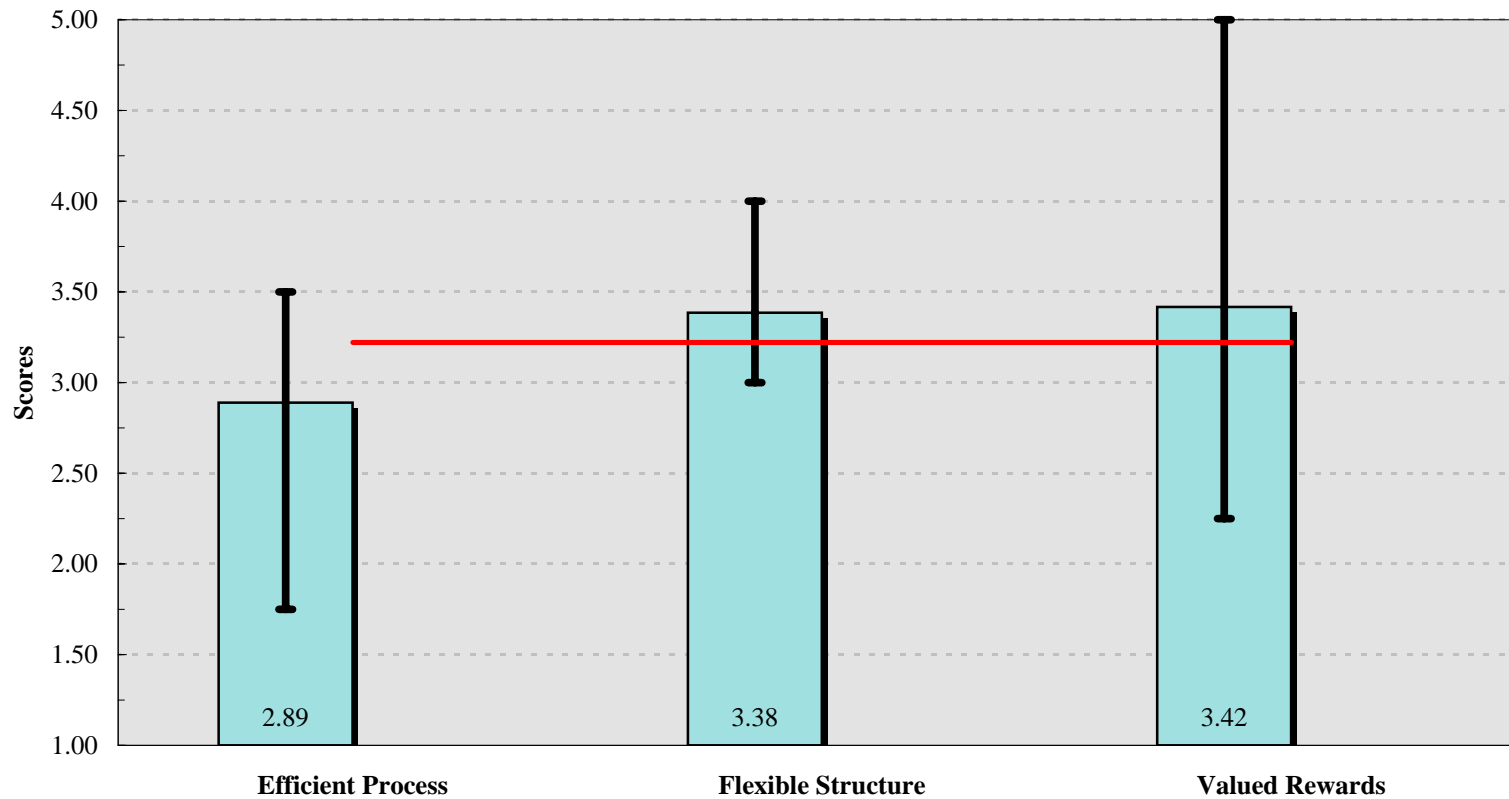
Meaningful Mission: The extent to which the team has a clear and challenging purpose that energizes members and requires them to work together.

Clear Outputs: The extent to which the team is clear about the specific work outputs (products and services) that must be provided to team customers.

I Maximum &
Minimum
Range

Organization Analysis

Scale Score
Factor Score



Organization: The extent to which the team has developed a sensible and efficient approach to getting the work done – a combination of efficient process, flexible structure, and valued rewards.

Efficient Process: The extent to which the team has a thoughtful, efficient, and continuously improving approach to work processes and operating procedures.

Flexible Structure: The extent to which the team has a consistent yet flexible framework for organizing work, roles, relationships, and leadership.

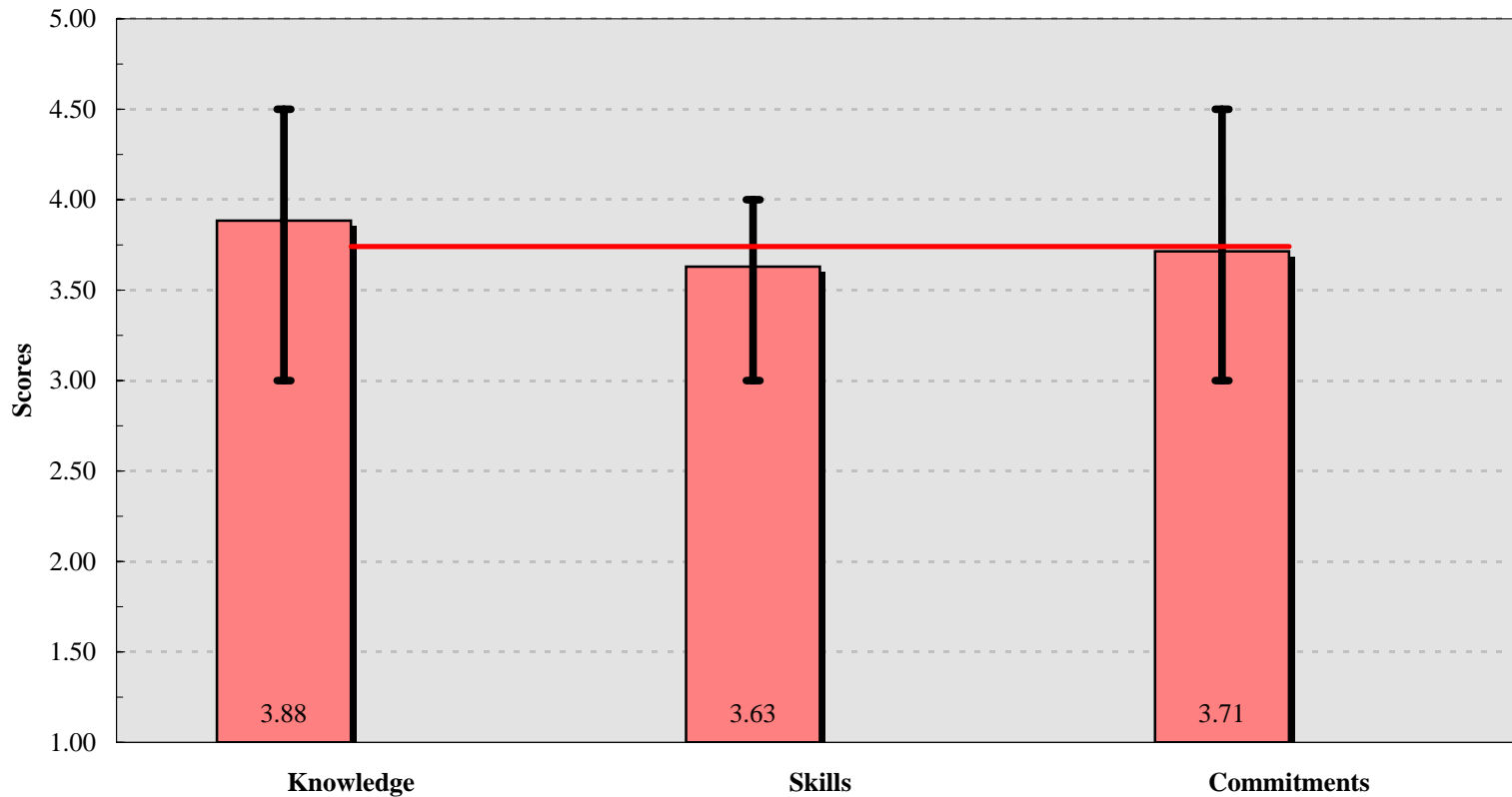
Valued Rewards: The extent to which the team is appropriately recognized and compensated for both individual and team performance.

ABC Company - Senior Team Profile

I Maximum &
Minimum
Range

Competencies Analysis

Scale Score
Factor Score



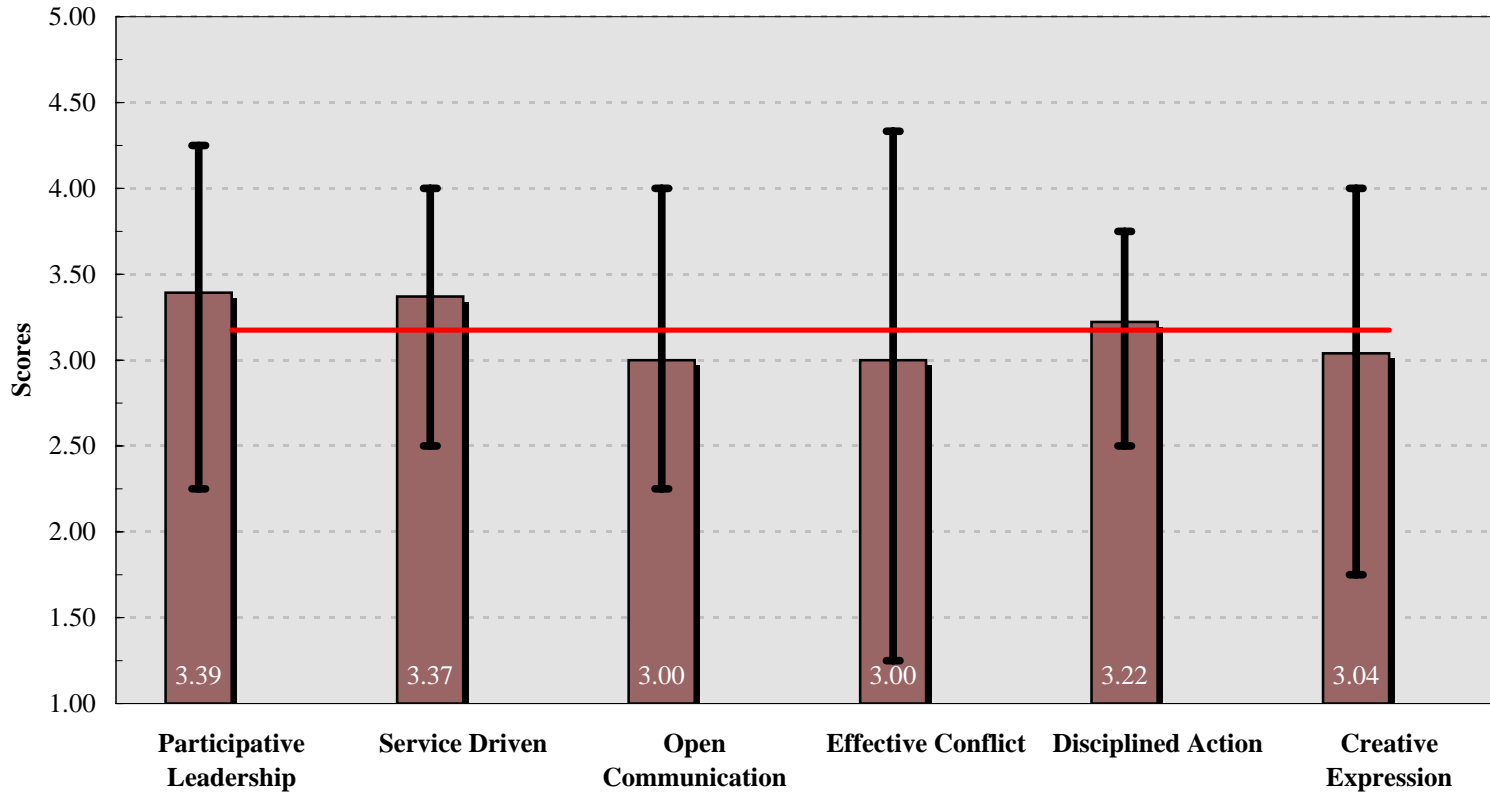
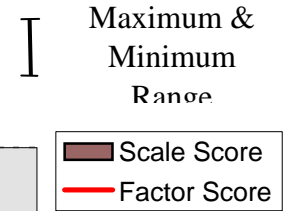
Competencies: The extent to which the team has developed an appropriate distribution of capabilities needed to do the team’s work – a combination of knowledge, skills, and commitments.

Knowledge: The extent to which team members have the data, information, concepts, theories, or experience needed to execute the team’s mission and work.

Skills: The extent to which team members demonstrate in behavior the intellectual, interpersonal, physical, or emotional skills needed to do the team’s work.

Commitments: The extent to which team members are oriented to effective teamwork (i.e., being collaborative, sharing influence, valuing diversity, and getting results).

Rules Analysis



Rules: The extent to which the team has developed a set of rules for engagement that effectively dictate and align how the team uses power, relates to one another, and takes action around its work – a combination of participative leadership, service driven, open communication, effective conflict, disciplined action, and creative expression.

Participative Leadership: The extent to which power and leadership is shared among team members so that team members are encouraged to take accountability for results.

Service Driven: The extent to which team members are oriented to supporting others on the team as well as to meeting the needs of team customers.

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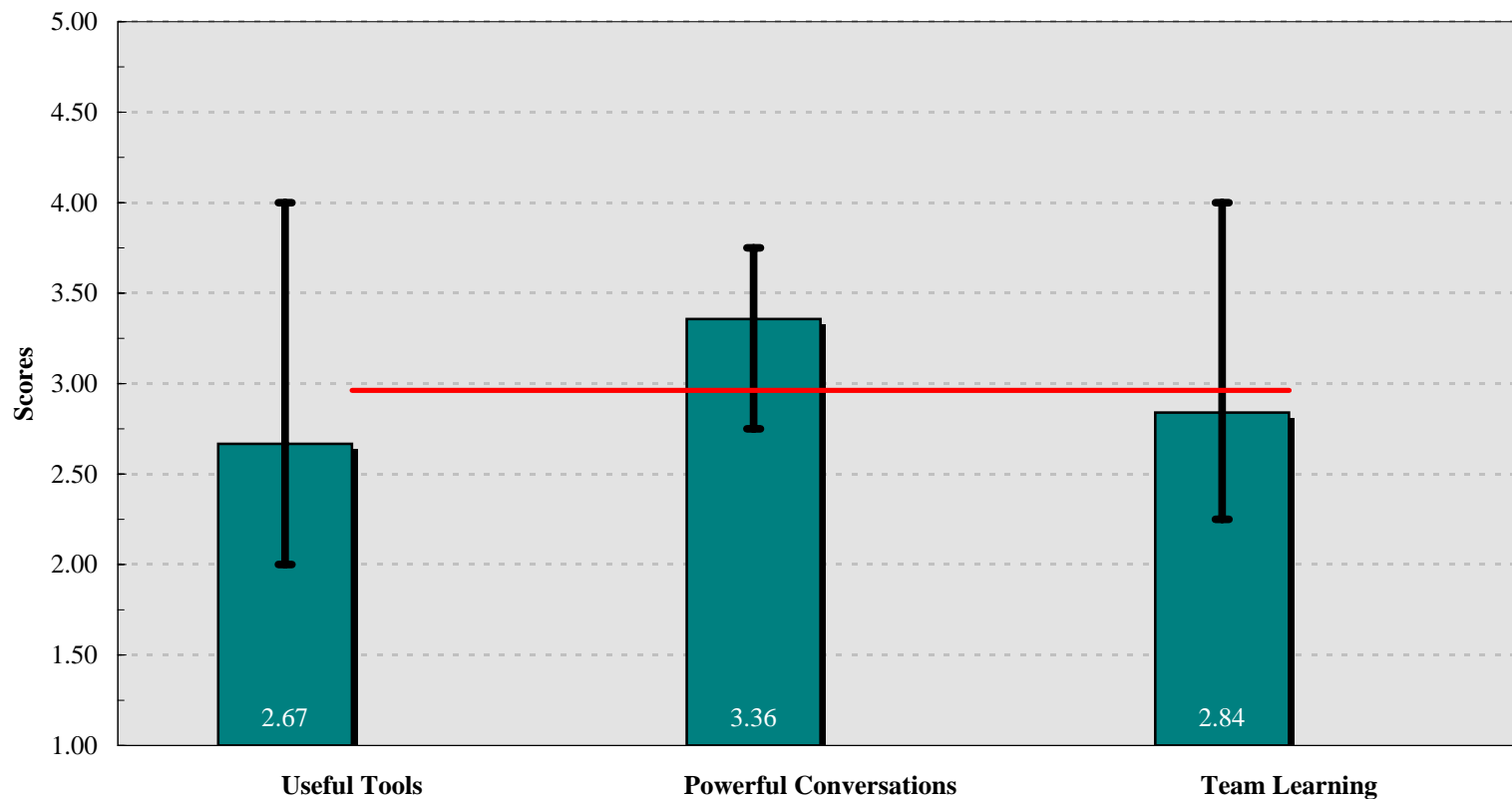
Disciplined Action: The extent to which team members use a thoughtful, systematic, logical, and group-centered process to solve problems and make decisions.

Creative Expression: The extent to which team members allow each other to innovate, experiment, take risks, explore hunches and intuitions, and have fun.

I Maximum &
Minimum
Range

█ Scale Score
— Factor Score

Operations Analysis



Operations: The extent to which the team has developed consistent methods and practices to foster coordination in the way it operates – a combination of useful tools, powerful conversations, and team learning.

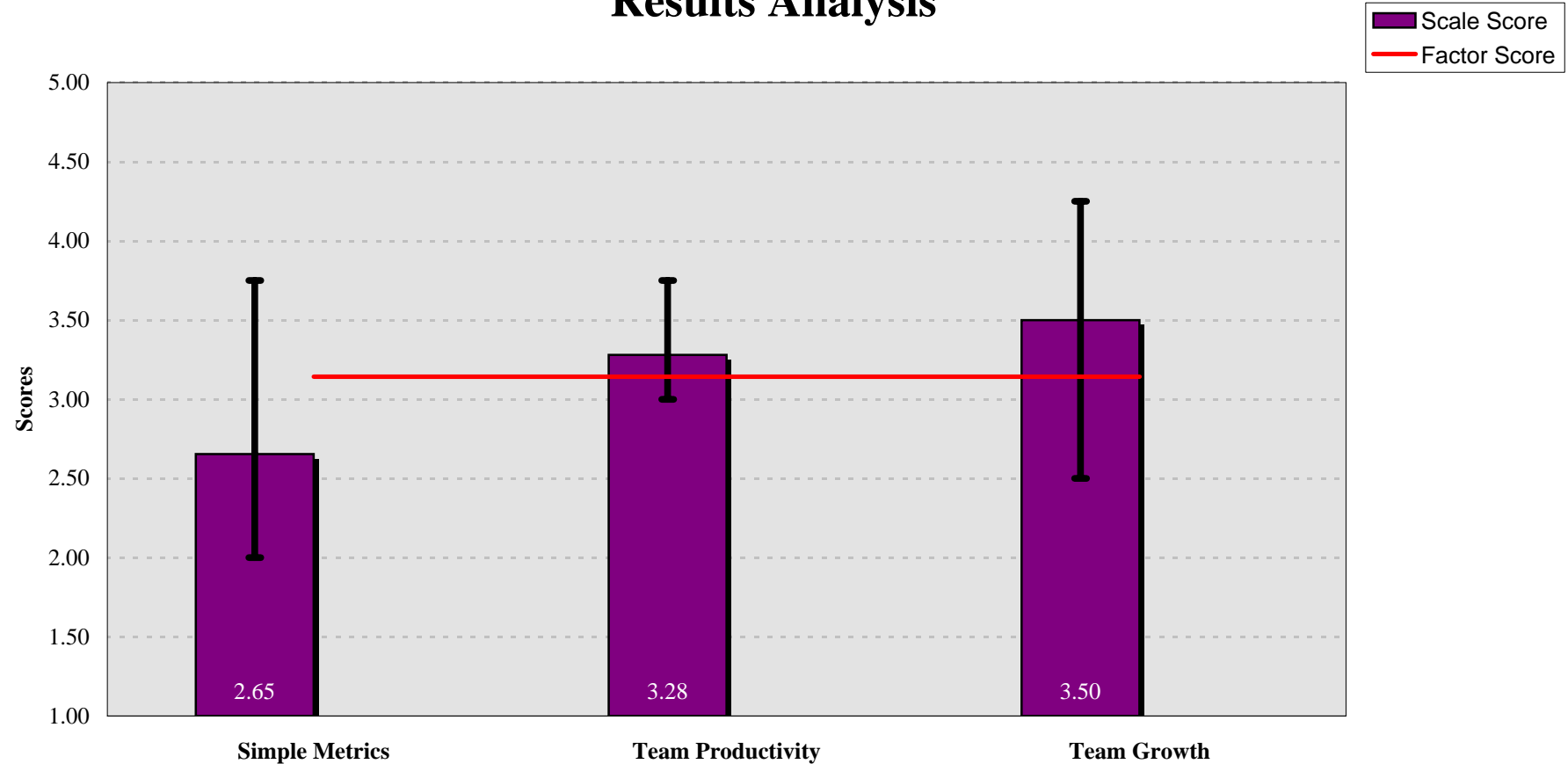
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Powerful Conversations: The extent to which the team demonstrates the conversational patterns that enable clear assessment, real inquiry, new possibilities, and committed action.

Team Learning: The extent to which the team can generate an understanding of its own dynamics and results, and can self-design and self-manage change.

I Maximum & Minimum Range

Results Analysis



Results: The extent to which the team has developed a set of metrics to measure efficiency and effectiveness – a balance between simple metrics, team productivity, and team growth.

Simple Metrics: The extent to which the team has relatively simple ways to measure customer satisfaction, output quality, process quality, and team competency.

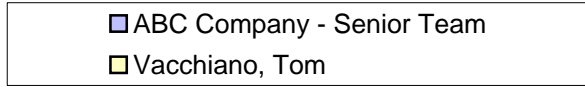
Team Productivity: The extent to which the team is both efficient and effective in producing high quality outputs and exceptional results.

Team Growth: The extent to which the team is growing in capability for high performance, and individuals are growing in their competence and commitment.

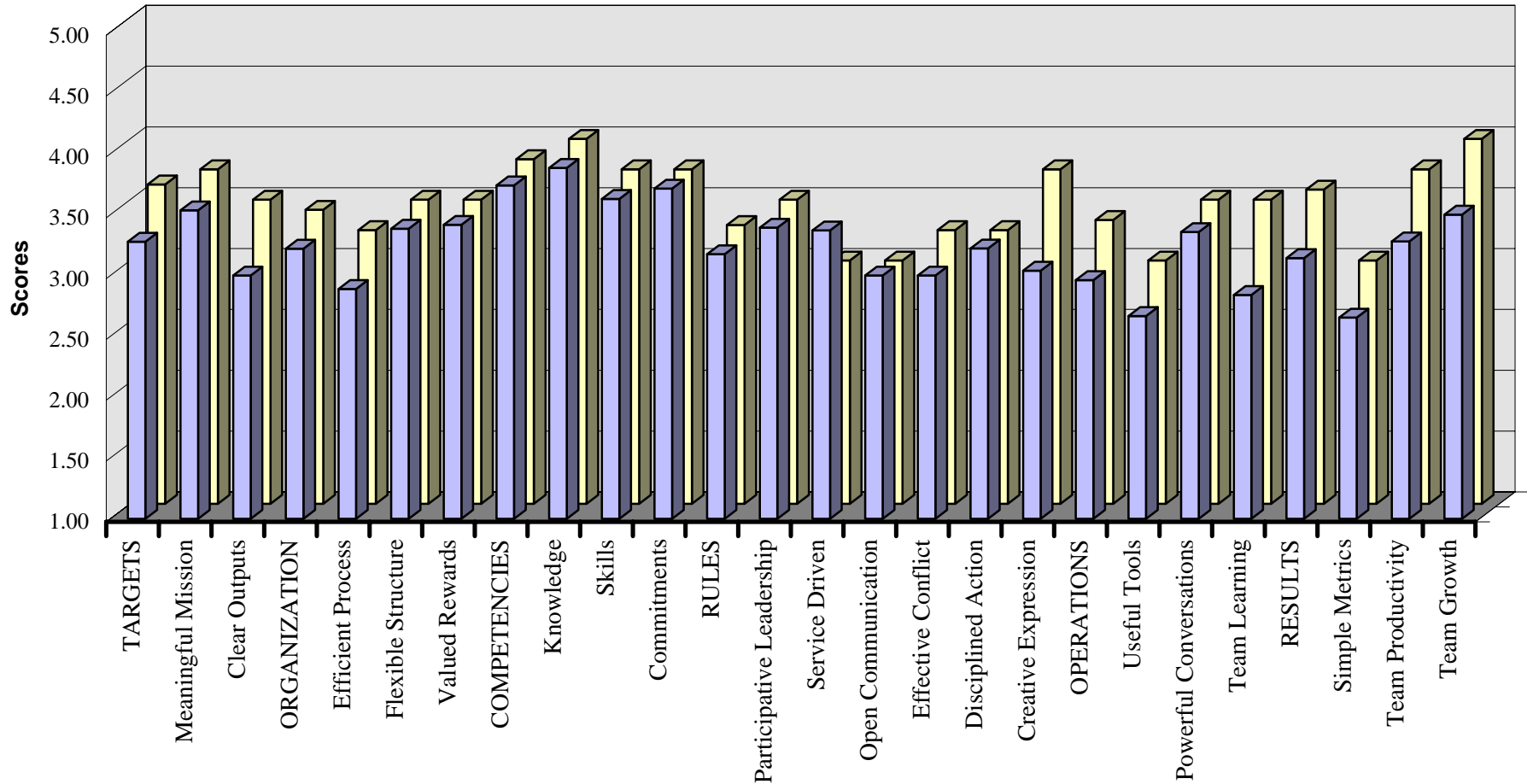
PART IV

TEAM ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Individual Profile for Vacchiano, Tom



Factors & Scales

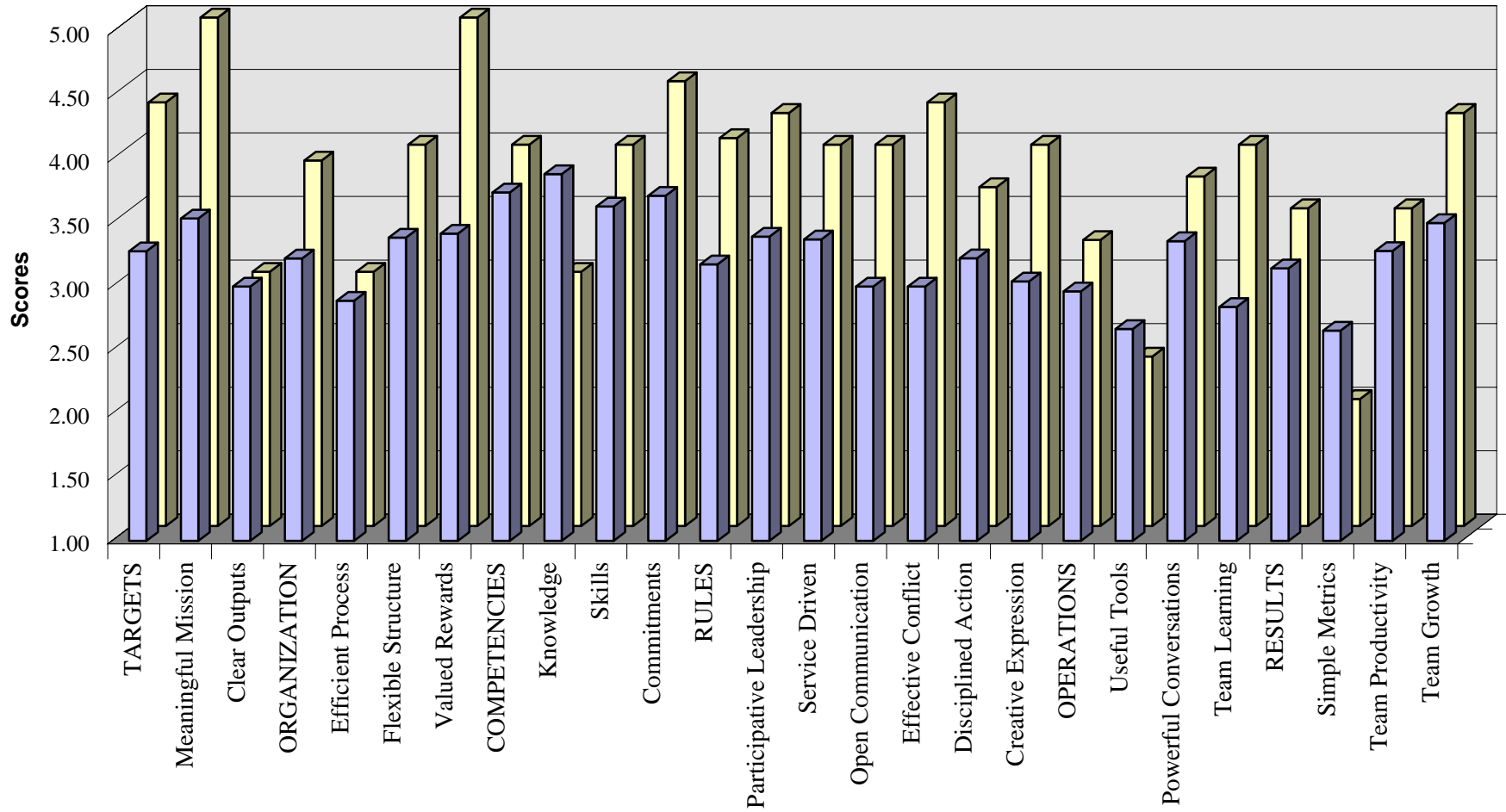


Note: A "zero" point indicates that no score was provided in that area

Individual Profile for Lyall, Lynn

ABC Company - Senior Team
 Lyall, Lynn

Factors & Scales



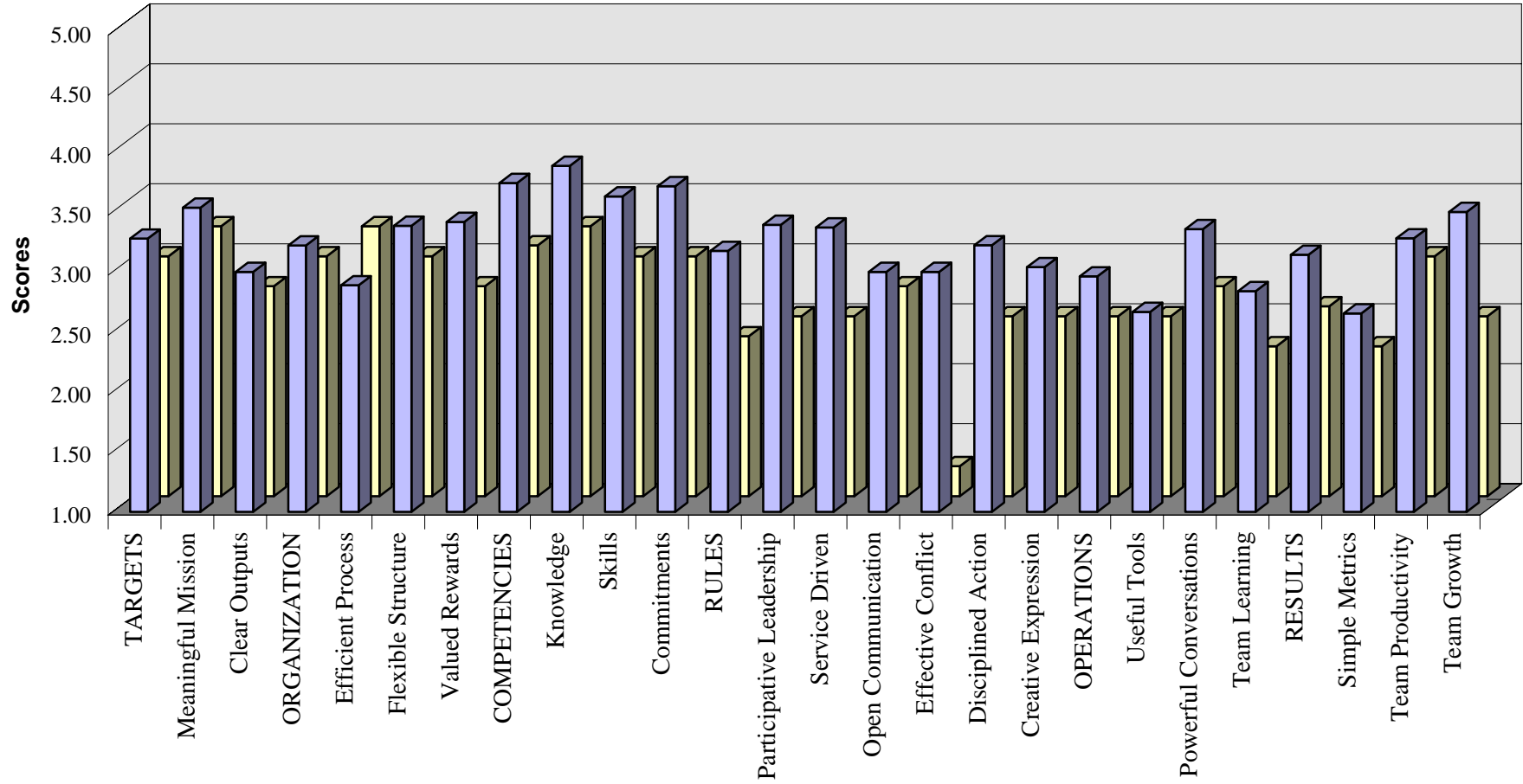
Note: A "zero" point indicates that no score was provided in that area

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Individual Profile for Lamy, Francis

■ ABC Company - Senior Team ■ Lamy, Francis

Factors & Scales

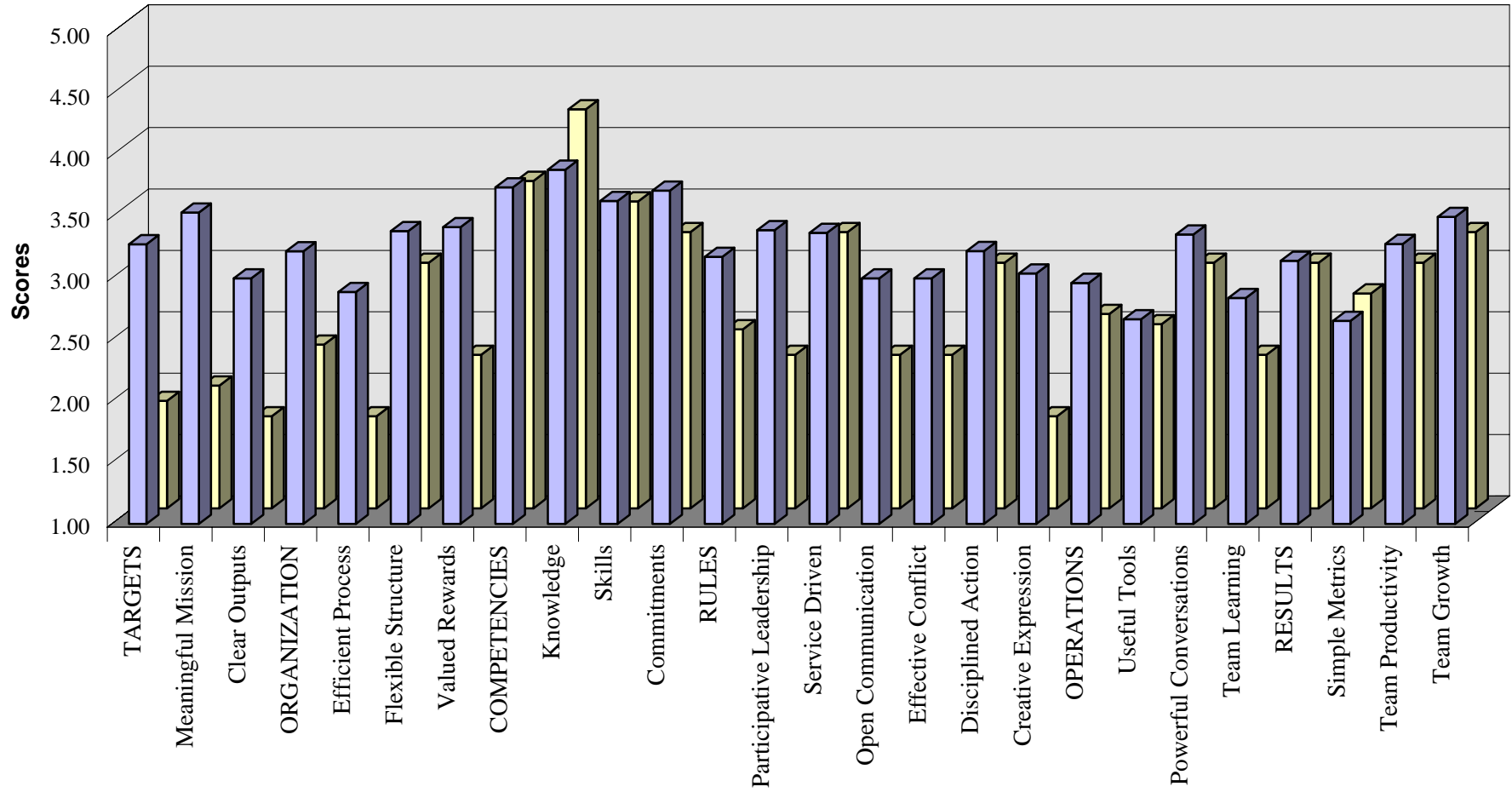


Note: A "zero" point indicates that no score was provided in that area

Individual Profile for Ireland, John

ABC Company - Senior Team Ireland, John

Factors & Scales



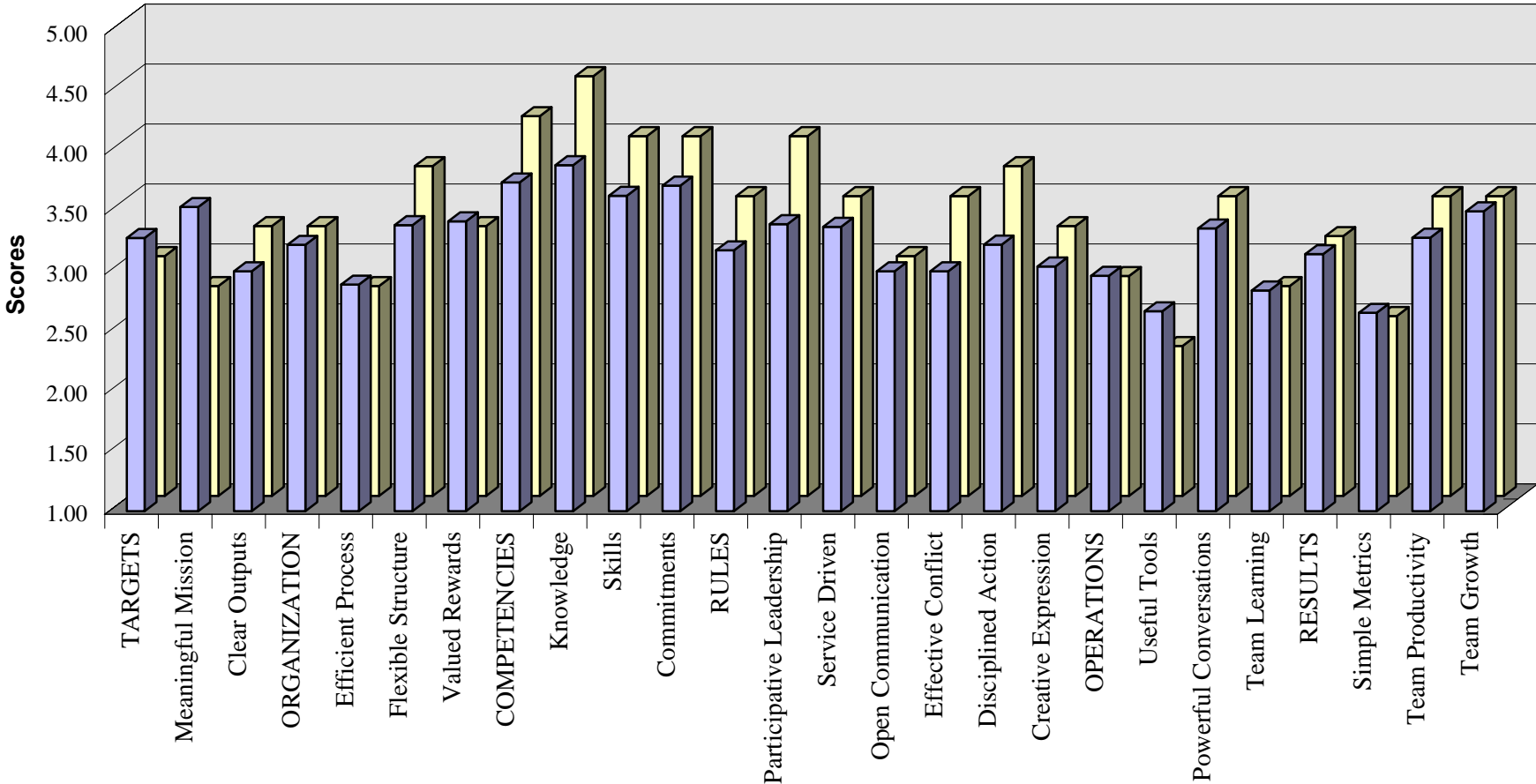
Note: A "zero" point indicates that no score was provided in that area

----- Confidential Report -----

Individual Profile for Poirier, Franck

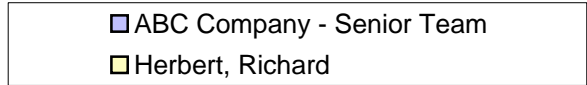


Factors & Scales

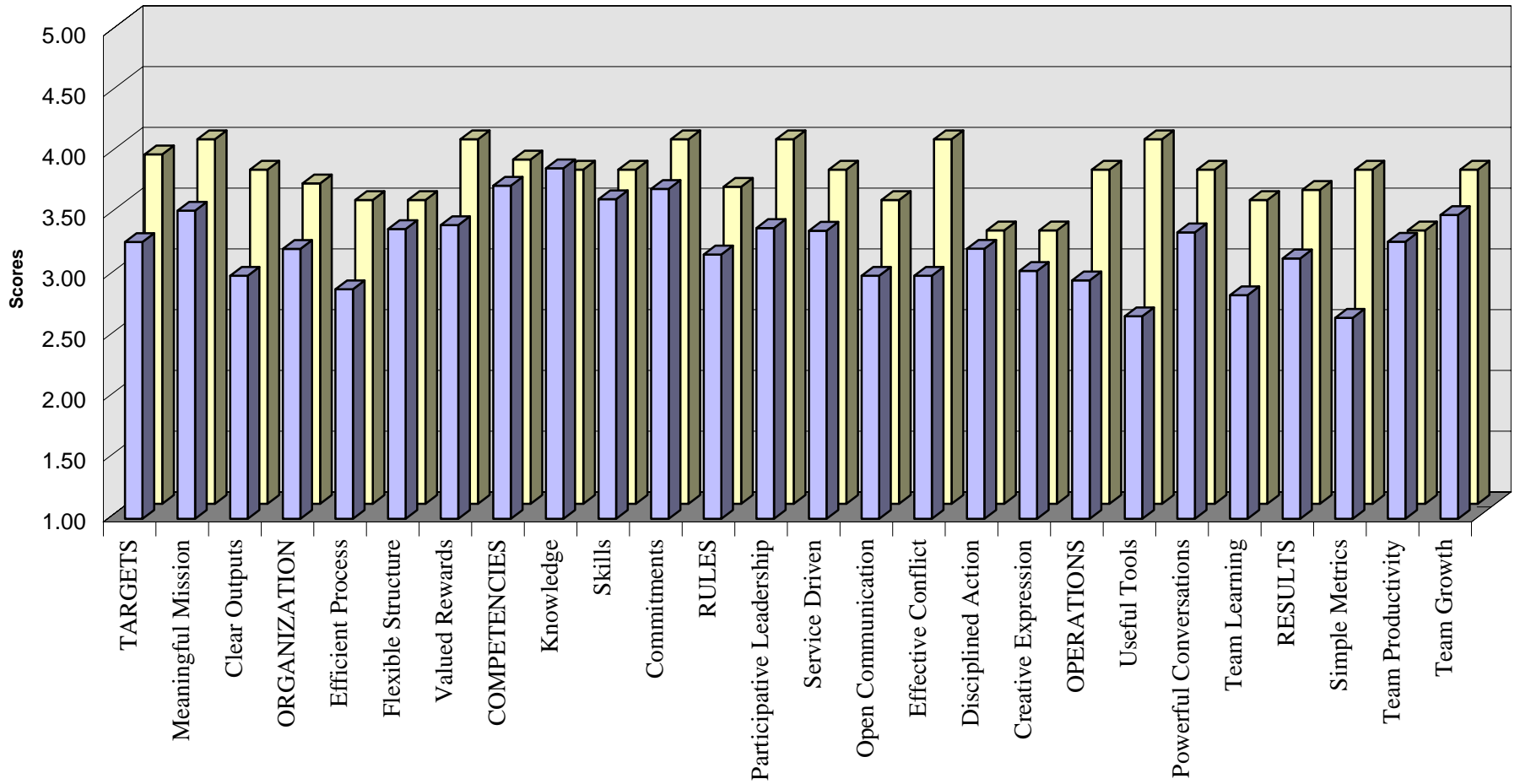


Note: A "zero" point indicates that no score was provided in that area

Individual Profile for Herbert, Richard

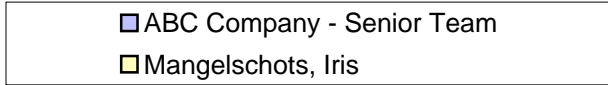


Factors & Scales

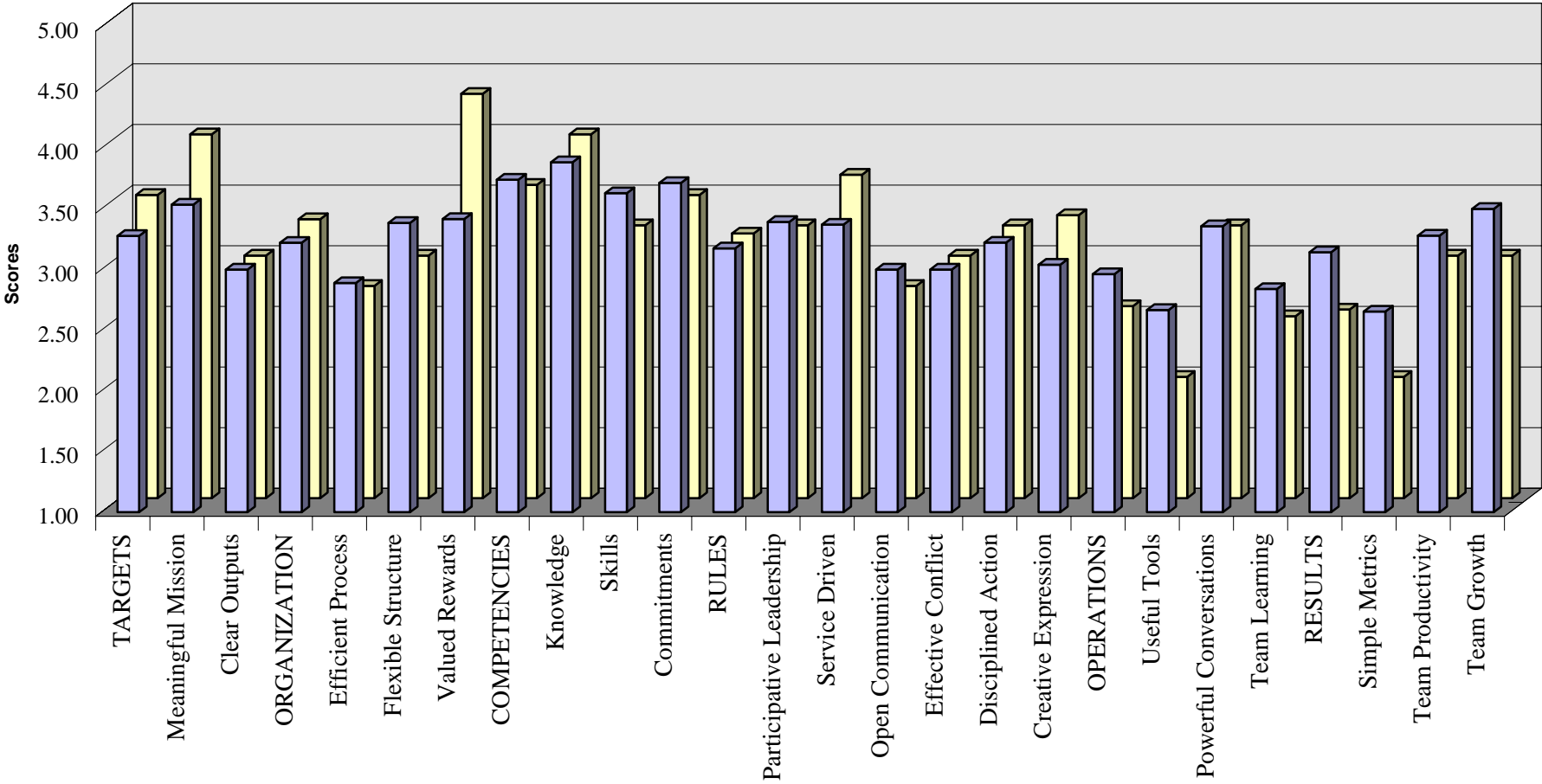


Note: A "zero" point indicates that no score was provided in that area

Individual Profile for Mangelschots, Iris



Factors & Scales

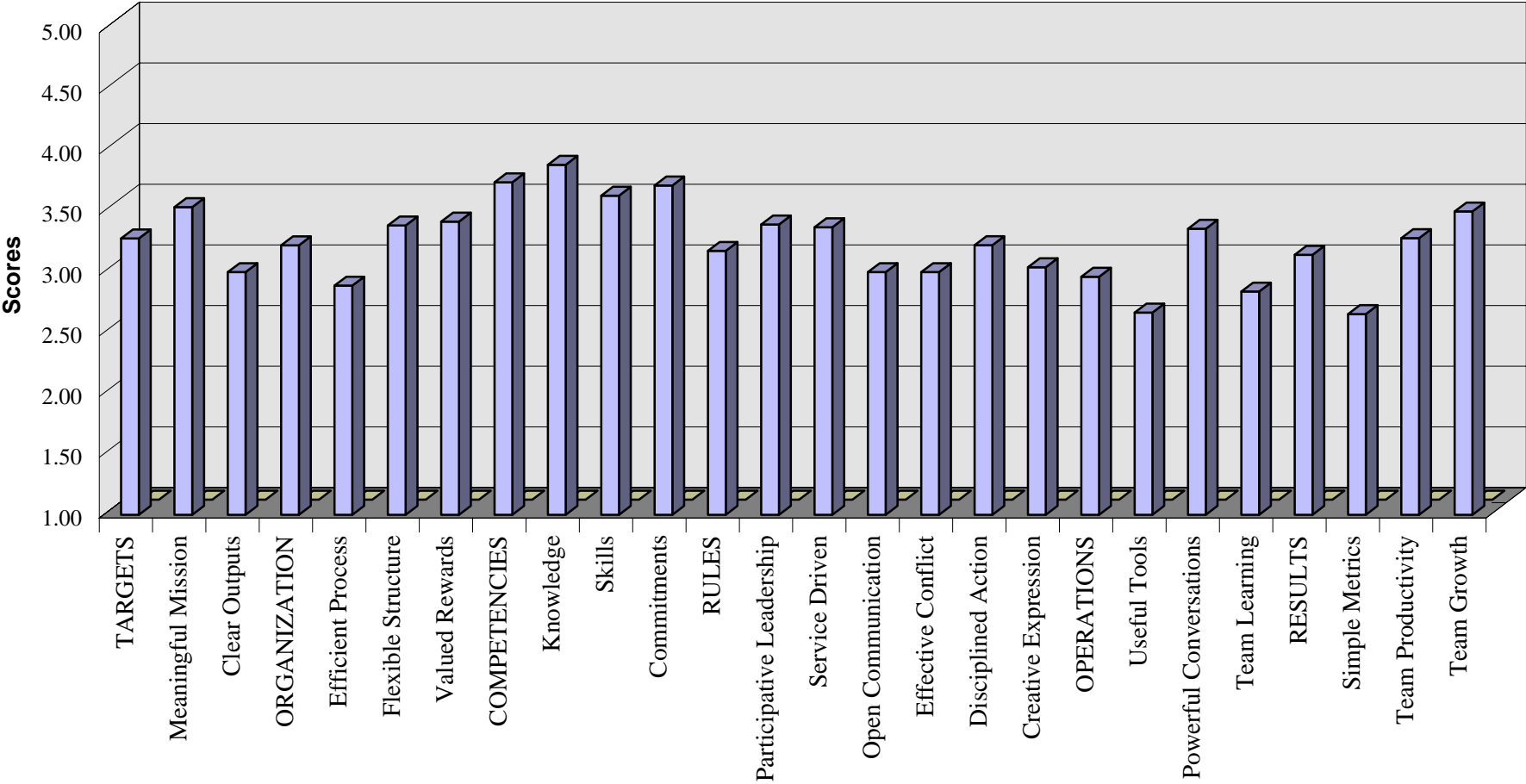


Note: A "zero" point indicates that no score was provided in that area

Individual Profile for

■ ABC Company - Senior Team □

Factors & Scales

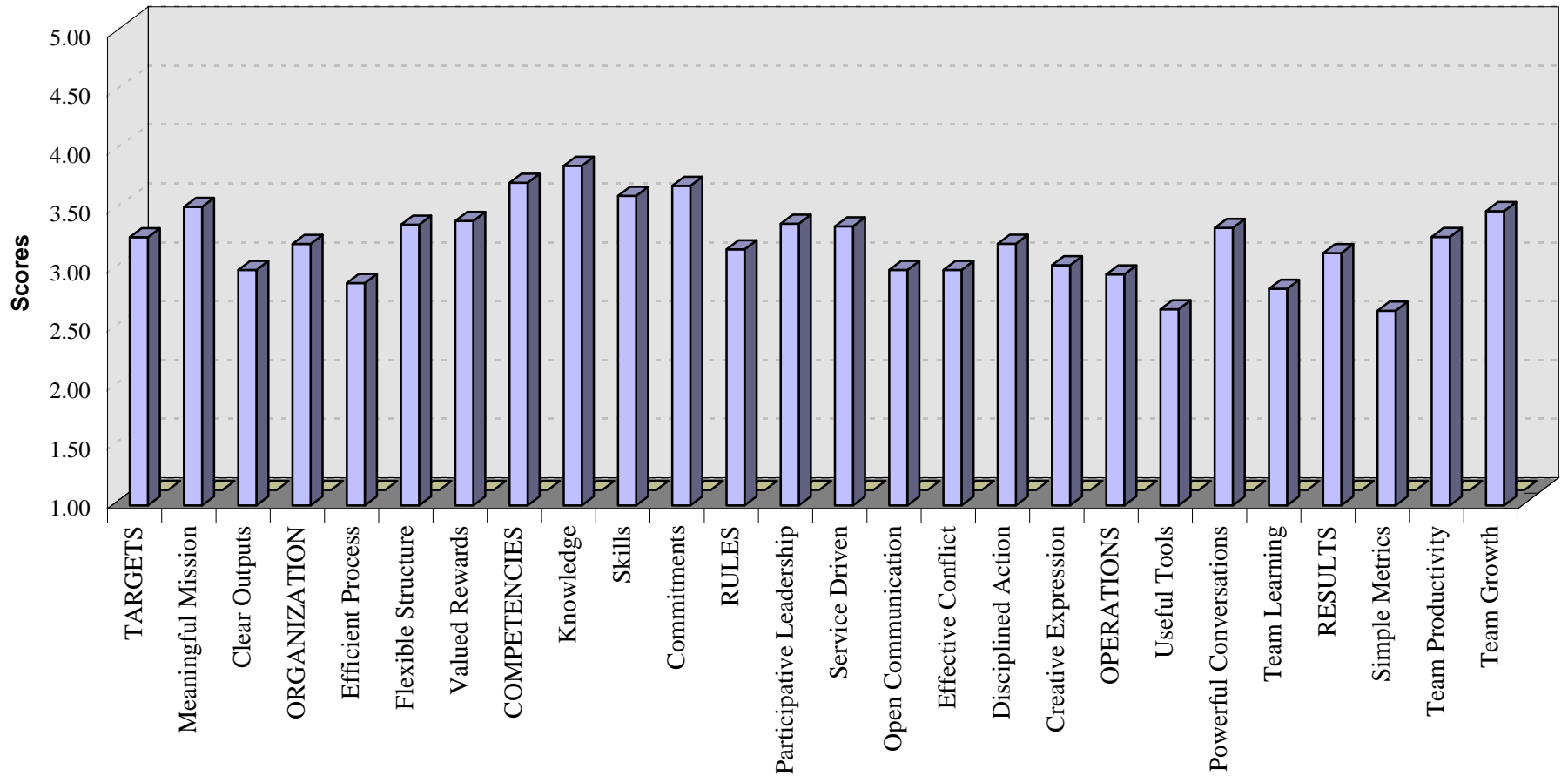


Note: A "zero" point indicates that no score was provided in that area

Individual Profile for

■ ABC Company - Senior Team □

Factors & Scales

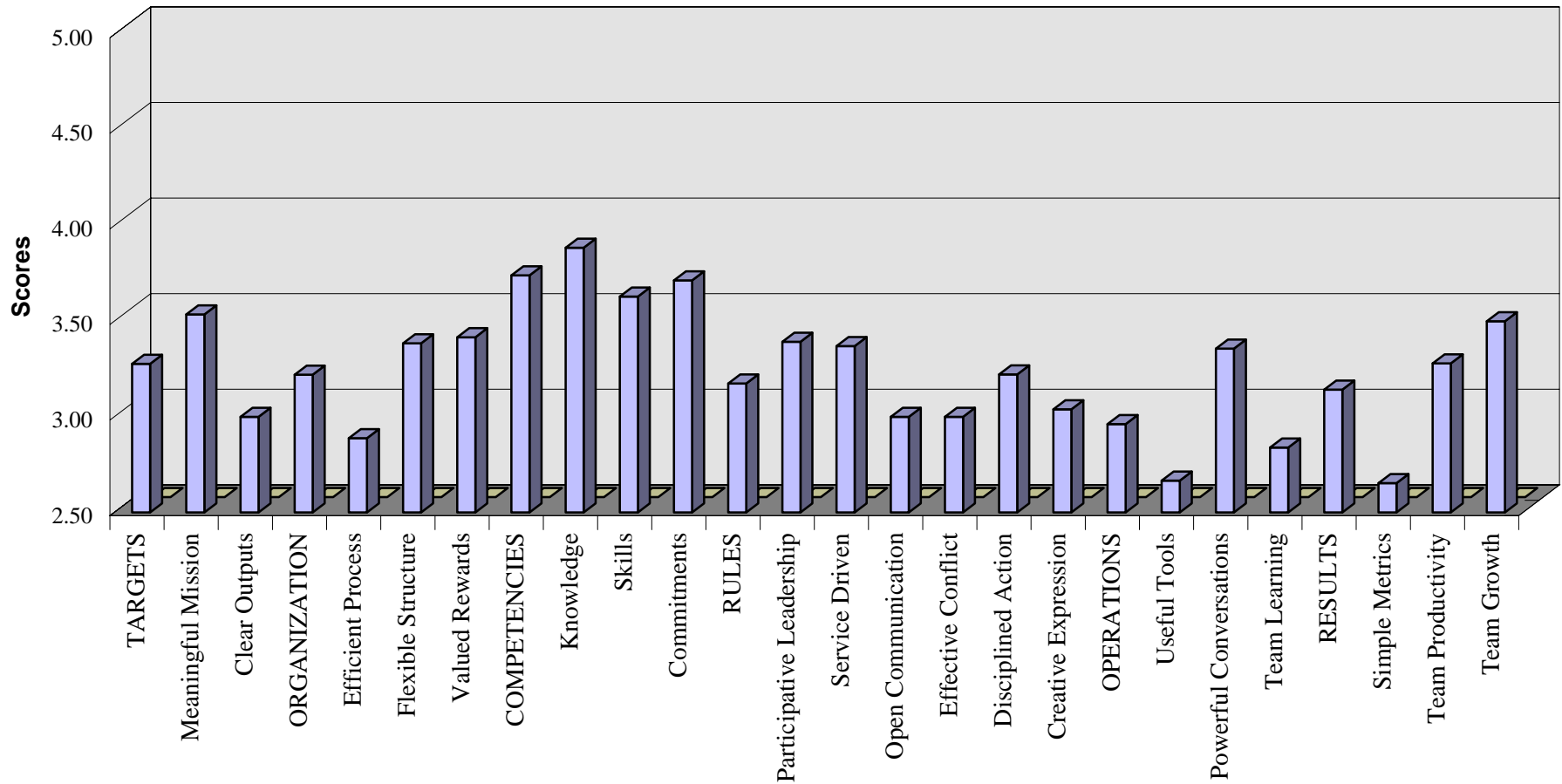


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Individual Profile for

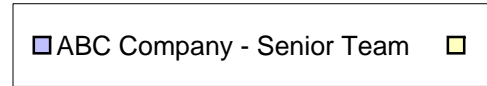


Factors & Scales

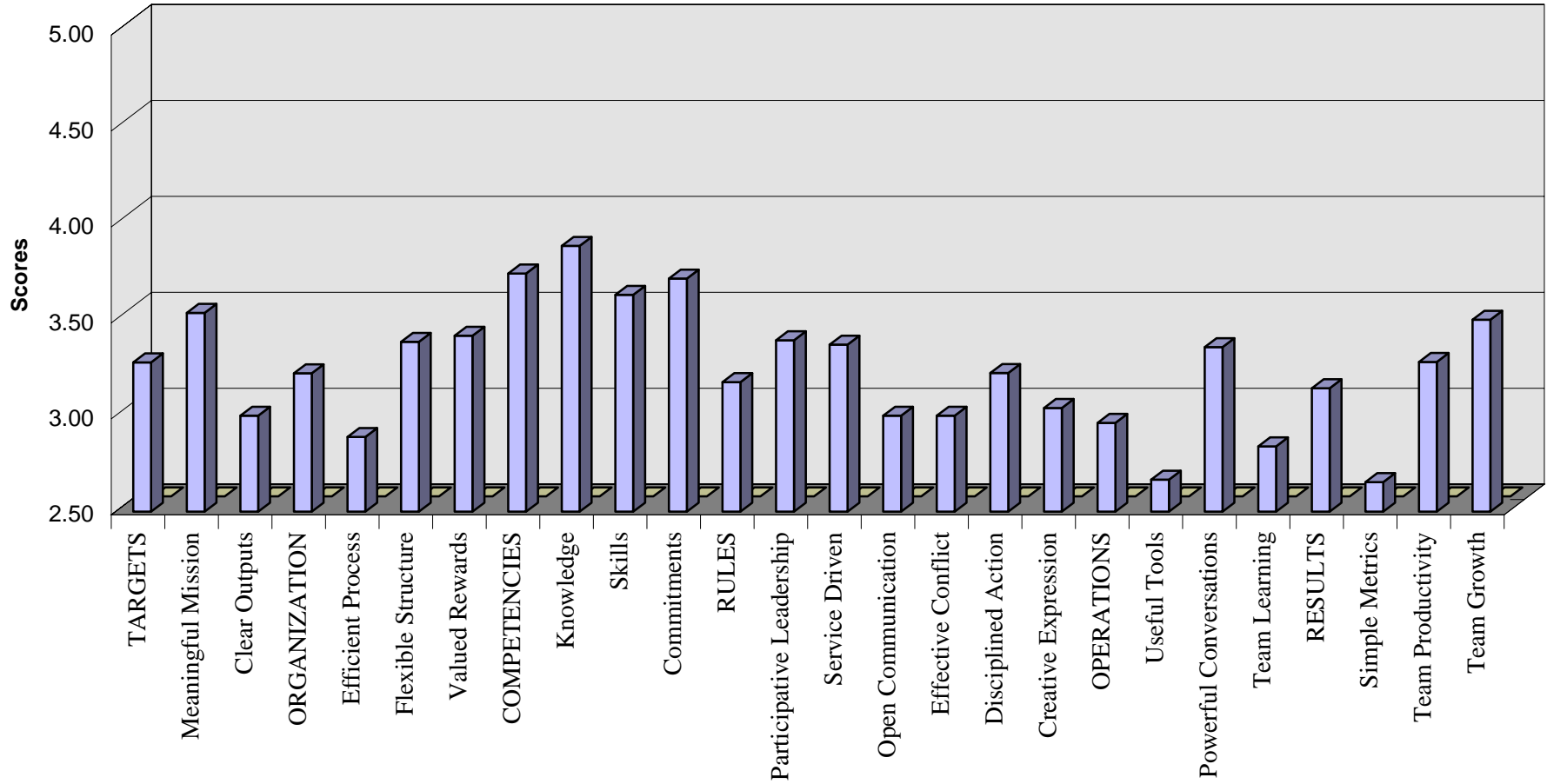


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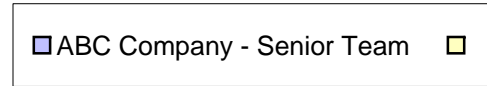


Factors & Scales

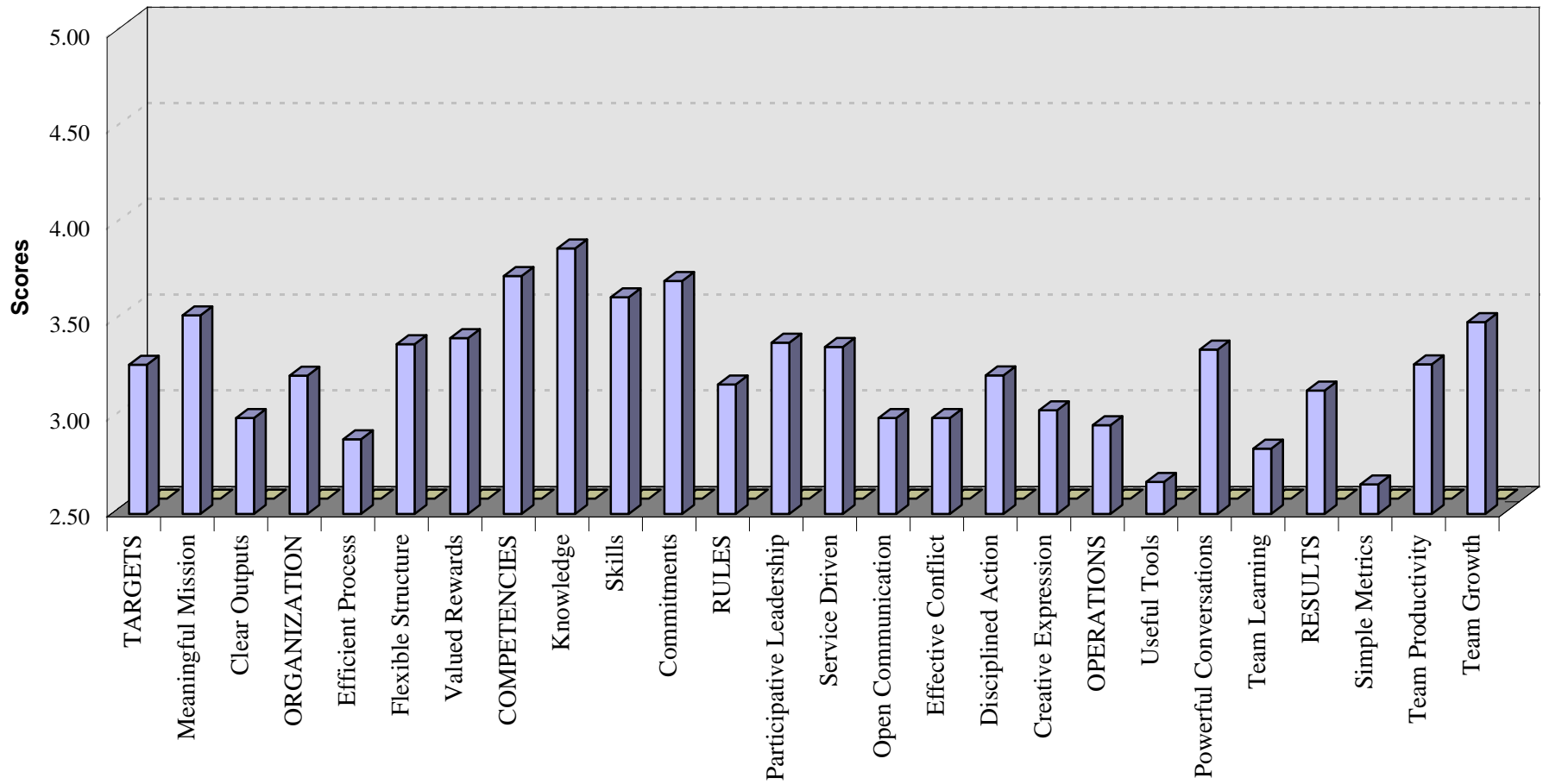


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Individual Profile for



Factors & Scales

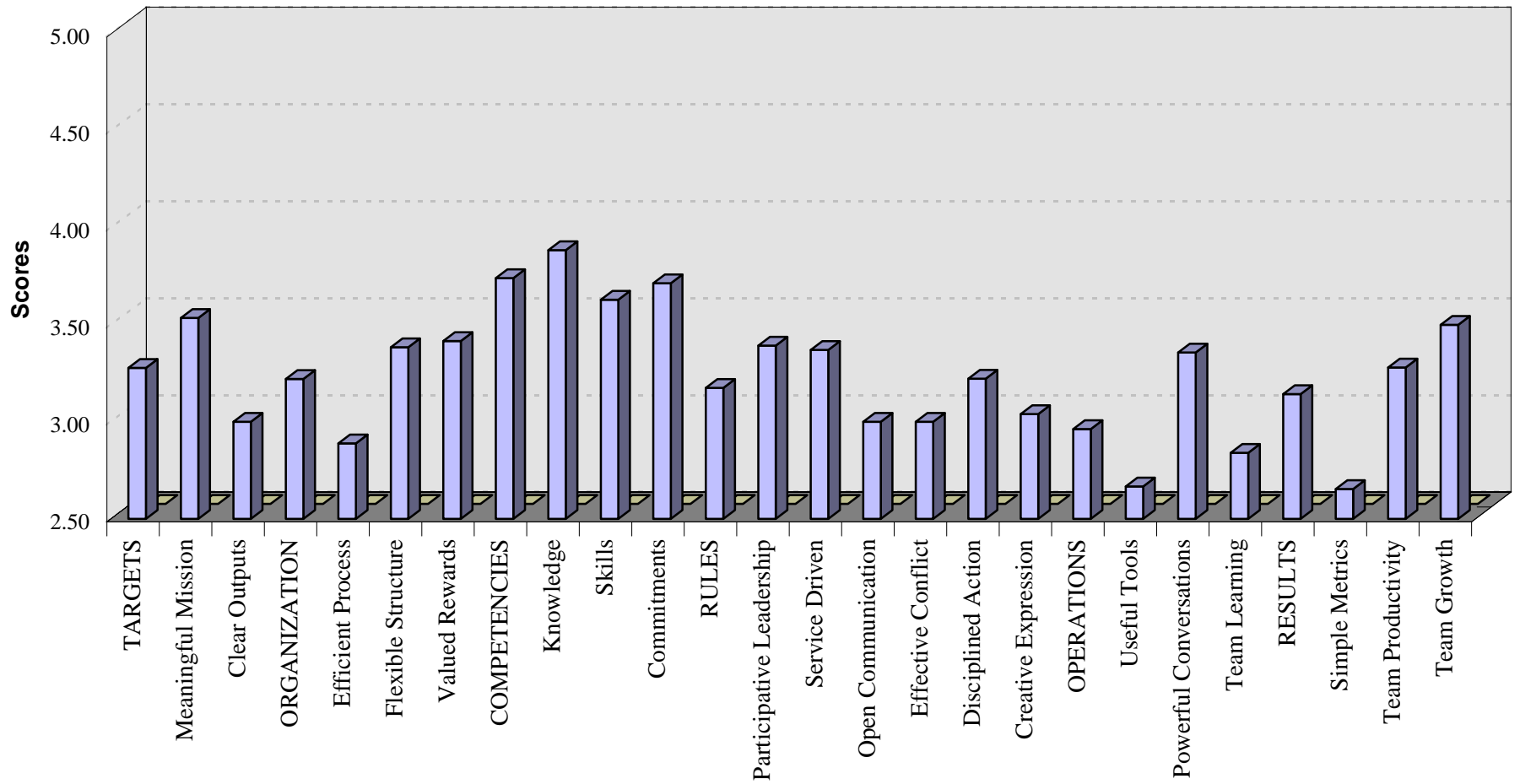


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Individual Profile for

■ ABC Company - Senior Team □

Factors & Scales

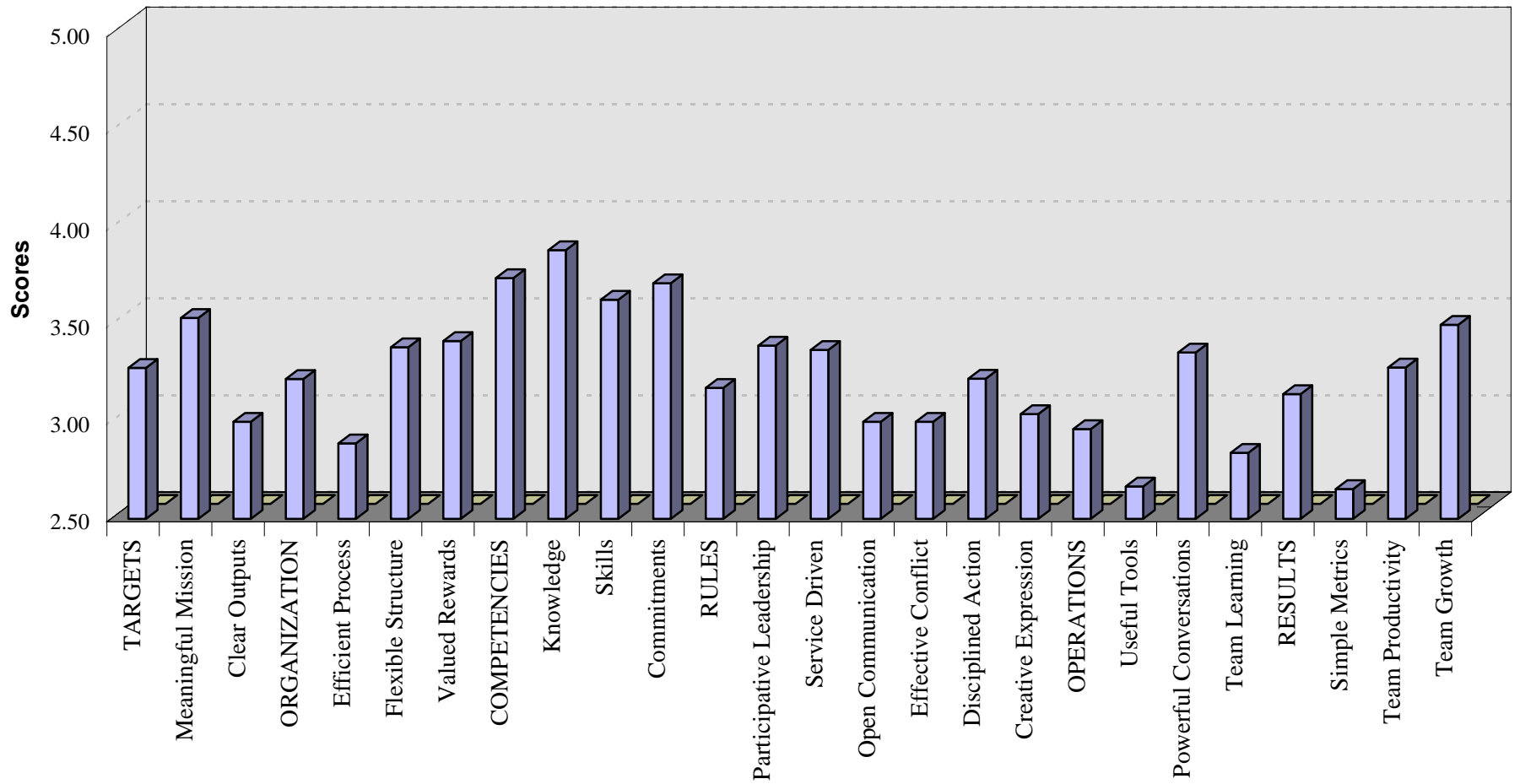


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Individual Profile for

■ ABC Company - Senior Team □

Factors & Scales

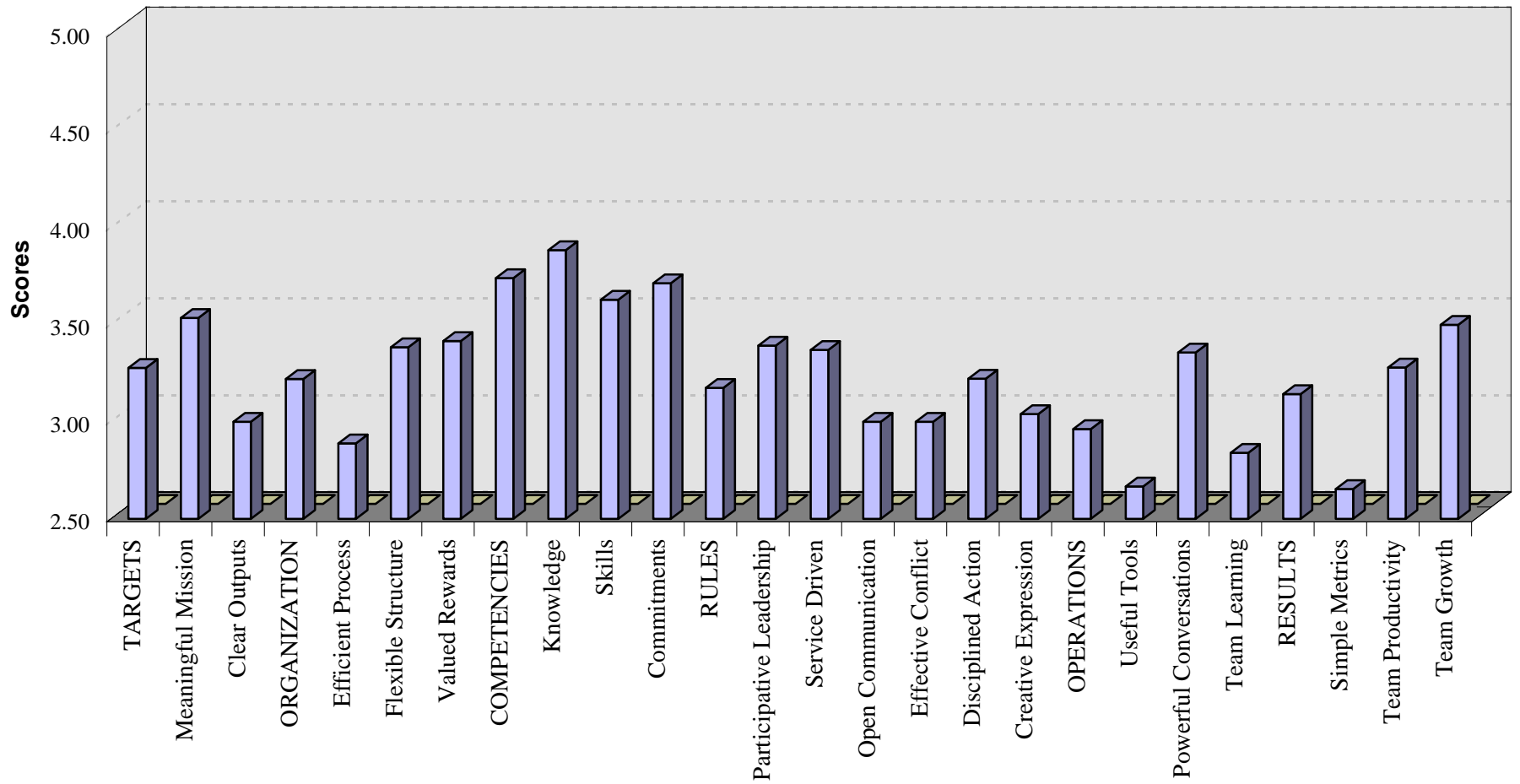


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Individual Profile for

■ ABC Company - Senior Team □

Factors & Scales



Note: A "zero" point indicates that no score was provided in that area

Team Sample

What actions could you and your teammates take to improve the performance and effectiveness of the team?

- More information on issues affecting the other team members in the accomplishment of their goals and the critical issues encounter on a daily basis.
- I believe that there already is excellent communication and trust among the members of the team. We need fewer restrictions and more resources.
- Undertake to understand fully where the strengths lie in each of the team members and be willing to change established business models to gain cohesiveness and efficiencies.

Team Sample

Are there any other comments you would like to share, such as things that make this team work well?

- This team seems to enjoy each other's company. This makes a real and positive impact on the work environment and the productivity of the team.
- Strong leadership and a sense of direction for the organization.
- Have a clear and focused list of key actions to make that year. Prioritize and support one another on their key initiatives.

PART V

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON
THE HIPLAY**

THE ORIGINS OF THE HIPLAY ASSESSMENT TOOL

The “play” imagery suggested by the **HiPLAY** acronym was intentionally selected based upon the observation that the work of effective teams (and effective individuals, for that matter) actually looks more like an adult version of inspired play. Think about it. When your children are engaged in play, or you are engaged in effective work, you are energized, totally committed to producing some result you care about, actively engaged with those around you, completely absorbed in what you are doing, and actively learning a great deal that can be applied to future situations. (Also think about all the things you actually learned during your own play as a child. Psychologists tell us that the child’s play “space” is the crucible for human mental development, social development, moral/spiritual development and creativity. Should it be any less true for us as adults?)

In short, effective team work is “High Play.” When people are asked what it feels like to be part of a high performing team, they inevitably talk about several common themes:

- **A special commitment** to the team, the mission, and each other that goes beyond the norm—a feeling of almost “like a family”
- **A unique identity** with the team— a feeling of being “different” and “special”
- **An unusual alignment** within the team in terms of shared values, shared purpose or shared experience—an almost “instinctive” feeling of “unity or oneness”
- **A shared accountability** for what gets produced by the team, so that roles are fluid, and people are “willing to do whatever it takes” to succeed
- **Extraordinary expression** and communication within the team, a sense of “openness” and “freedom” that allows members to “take real risks”
- **A profound trust** in each other that emerges from experience together—a feeling of “partnership,” “interdependence,” and “deep relationship”
- **Unreasonable action** taken by the team that no one else can, or will—a feeling of “invulnerability,” “unbelievable power,” and “taking on the impossible”
- **Breakthrough results** produced by the team “push the envelope” and “break new ground”—a feeling that “you are part of something that is truly new”
- **A deep satisfaction and fulfillment** pervades the team—a feeling of “effortless hard work,” “acknowledgment,” “celebration” and “profound joy”

The **HiPLAY** framework is an attempt to label and measure those factors which research and practice suggest are the key drivers of team effectiveness. The model itself is derived from several sources. First, in the last few years there have been **numerous books** published on the topic of teamwork. Many are based on the combined experiences of the author’s practice, such as Zenger et. al.’s “Leading Teams” or Huszyczko’s “Tools for Team Excellence”; some describe a model of teamwork based upon several case studies of teams, such as Jon Katzenbach and Doug Smith’s “The Wisdom of Teams”; and a very few attempt to conduct rigorous research with detailed measurement or observation, such as Anne Donnellon’s “Team Talk” or Richard Hackman’s “Groups That Work and Those That

Don't." These, and many other tracts, were reviewed for the factors that these authors have concluded are causally related to team effectiveness.

Second, the instrument contains items derived directly from the many years of **small group research** that has been done in academic social psychology. For example, academic researchers discovered years ago that effective problem-solving teams tend to differentiate two major roles that are key to success—the formal task leader and the socio-emotional process leader. That finding is included under the “Flexible Structure” scale of the **HiPLAY** assessment. Others discovered that the “norms” that emerge in teams as the result of interaction on a task exert a significant impact on the formation of team relationships, on what gets talked about in team meetings (and what doesn't), and ultimately on how productive the team is over time. Still others found that the way in which power and leadership are manifested in teams can have a significant impact on results. Many of these conclusions from academic research are embodied in the “Rules” and “Organization” factors of the **HiPLAY** assessment.

One particularly crucial source of academic research that has affected the design of **HiPLAY** is the work of Bales, Williamson and Cohen (1979) resulting in **SYMLOG** (A System for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups). Based upon nearly forty years of observational research at Harvard, **SYMLOG** is both a theory and a set of tools for measuring the “field of forces” in a team which arise from the behavior and conversational content of teams at work. **SYMLOG** may be the only tool available that can actually measure “fields” as Kurt Lewin talked about them over 50 years ago. Bales and his colleagues found (through thousands of factor analyses of behavioral observations, value statements, and non-verbal expressions) that the adjectives used to describe these “social fields” can be arrayed along three highly robust factors: (1) the orientation towards the use of power and impact; (2) the orientation towards expression of affect in relationship and conflict; and (3) the orientation towards authority, control and freedom around the task. The language of these three factors—which, for simplicity, can be called the factors of Power, Relationship and Action—lies at the heart of the “Rules” framework, and contributes to a definition of the “Commitments” scale of the “Competencies” factor. The findings from over one million users of **SYMLOG** regarding the behaviors and values of highly effective team leaders and teams are also factored into many of the items throughout the **HiPLAY** instrument.

A third major origin of the **HiPLAY** assessment is the work that has been done, primarily by practitioners, on the design and use of “**competency models.**” Robert White was probably the first to use the term competency in his treatise on competence motivation in 1959, but it was David McClelland who gave the term its current popularity as a result of his claim in 1973 that many psychological measurements simply were not useful in predicting effectiveness in work settings. He saw a competency as an underlying pattern of thinking, emotion, motives, values, or self-concept that drives behavior, differentiating highly successful people in particular work from the rest. While McClelland and his followers applied the concept only to individuals, there are those who are now attempting to apply the concept to team, or even organizational competency. The **HiPLAY** framework assumes that competency is a description of an individual characteristic or behavior that contributes to team success—not a description of the team as a whole.

The **HiPLAY** framework are the notions developed by McLagan and Williamson in the Accelerated Competency System methodology. They have suggested that work is best described in terms of outputs, in that this forces the user to think of the product of their efforts and the person or group who receives it—a perfect fit with the world of teams. They have also suggested that it is useful to think of competencies as a triumvirate of KSCs: (1) Knowledge (what you know), which you gain from education; (2) Skills (how you apply what you know), which you gain from practice; and (3) Commitments (what you are driven to do), which you gain from countless experiences with many social situations. The “Competencies” factor of the **HiPLAY** focuses on a fairly generic set of KSCs that many practitioners have found helpful to use in selecting people for team membership. It is not a comprehensive model of effective team membership, but rather a diagnostic guide to help team members think critically about what they need to know, be able to do, or be committed to in order to accomplish the purpose and work of the team. The language of outputs can be found to permeate the **HiPLAY** factors of “Targets” and “Organization”, in that a major element of team design is figuring out what outputs to produce, and how best to produce them. The language of outputs and competencies also shapes the metrics found in the “Results” factor.

A fourth origin of the **HiPLAY** assessment lies in the theory and research of what might be called the “**conversational school**” of practice. This tradition has been most notably developed by Chris Argyris and popularized by Peter Senge. Argyris’ research on the dialogues of teams has produced brilliant insights into the patterns of open and defensive communication; the nature of individual, team and organizational learning; the nature of advocacy and inquiry; and the quality of thinking, inference-making and problem-solving that occurs among people in interaction. His descriptions of effective consulting conversations -- Model II practices for open, “double loop” learning, and the inconsistencies of “espoused theories” and “theories in use” --have been important determinants of the “Operations” factor and many of the items found in the “Rules” factor of **HiPLAY**. The gist of this work is particularly prominent in the design of the “Team Learning” scale.

A less well known, but highly influential, body of practice in the conversational school is that of the linguist and practitioner Fernando Flores and his many colleagues. His work has focused on the elements of language and conversation that enable “committed action” and that allow people to effectively coordinate their actions and outputs. He has distinguished various conversational forms such as “conversations for action,” “conversations for possibility,” and “conversations for breakdown”. Each of these conversations contain critical elements of “committed speaking and listening” which allow the conversation to move forward and produce the results for which they are designed. Williamson has elaborated upon this work in terms of a model called the “Tower of Power,” which describes the movement of a team from “breakdown” (being stuck in a problem) to a “breakthrough” (inventing and successfully enacting new possibilities). The Tower describes four “levels” of conversation: (1) effective expression and assessment (the “What’s Wrong” conversation); (2) effective learning and inquiry (the “What’s So” conversation); (3) inspired design of possibilities (the “What’s Possible” conversation); and (4) the coordination of concrete action through requests and promises (the “Let’s Go” conversation). This work is a fundamental

driver of the “Operations” factor, and the model itself is embedded in the “Powerful Conversations” factor.

Fifth and finally, the **HiPLAY** framework owes its overall shape and tone to the system theorists such as Parsons, Bales and Shils; Zander and Cartwright; Forrester; and the **systems thinking practice** spawned by Senge’s book on the “Fifth Discipline.” Teams really are a system embedded in a larger system. As such, the larger system has a profound impact on the effectiveness of teams.

This is touched upon in many parts of **HiPLAY**, such as on the scale of “Valued Rewards.” Most teams don’t control their reward systems. Problems here almost certainly require organizational or policy level interventions. The “Targets” and “Results” factors are highly influenced by the larger system, and can reflect how well the team is integrated into the overall business. Many of the “Rules” that teams develop are based upon the surrounding organizational culture, which is often hierarchical, adversarial, and control-oriented. These can be quite an obstacle to effective team performance, as many organizations have discovered. The “Rules” of high performance teams often are at odds with this larger culture, and have placed many high performing teams in jeopardy with the powers that be. The point is that **HiPLAY** is based in the recognition that your assessment must take into consideration the important impact of the surrounding context.

The other point is that each of the six factors of the **HiPLAY** framework are clearly dependent on all of the others. This interdependence is characteristic of any system, and also the plague of practitioners who want to help teams form, develop and improve. Too many practitioners rely on one or another methodology that focuses the team on one dimension, but without fundamental consideration of the impact on the others. For example, how many readers have participated in “team-building” sessions which focused entirely on team “climate” (Rules), or entirely on interpersonal communication skills (Competencies or Powerful Conversations), and failed to deal with issues around structure, or rewards, or the basic mission of the group itself? Or how many team interventions are actually trainings in individual skills? The team, per se, doesn’t practice the learning in the context of the tangible outputs and metrics that will drive day-to-day interactions. The bottom line is that the **HiPLAY** assessment should help your team (or teams) gain a better appreciation of the system that a team really is, and the necessity to explore all of the factors of team effectiveness in order to develop a truly useful plan for team development.