

# Simplification Tool

## Leadership Complexity Quiz



### Simplification Process:

- 1 – Awareness
- 2 – Identification
- 3 – Prioritization
- 4 – Execution
- 5 – Habit Formation

© 2005–2016, Future Think LLC. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies. futurethink clients may make one attributed copy or slide of each figure contained herein. Additional reproduction is strictly prohibited. Information is based on best available resources. Opinions reflect judgment at the time and are subject to change. To purchase reprints of this document, please email [innovate@futurethink.com](mailto:innovate@futurethink.com).



## Simplification Tool

### Leadership Complexity Quiz

## WHY THIS TOOL?

Simplification starts on a personal level, and every leader’s behavior and attitude has a definitive effect on the organization. For a simplifying program to be successful, leadership must be accountable for simplification in their daily decisions, communications, and managerial duties. This tool is designed to reveal whether an individual’s leadership behaviors are contributing to complexity or simplification. After taking stock of their own habits, leaders are prompted to modify or eliminate areas of complexity in their work life.

## HOW IT WORKS

### SUGGESTED AUDIENCE:

- Relevant for senior leaders

### SET-UP:

- Complete the quiz individually and be brutally honest when answering each statement

### RECOMMENDED TIMING:

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Step 1. Complete quiz:                                | 10 mins.           |
| Step 2. Tally TRUE answers + assess complexity level: | 5 mins.            |
| Step 3. Identify simplification opportunities:        | 15-20 mins.        |
|   | <b>30-35 mins.</b> |

### SUGGESTED MATERIALS:



Worksheets  
(emailed to each participant)



## Simplification Tool

### Leadership Complexity Quiz

#### STEP 1: COMPLETE QUIZ

| RESPOND CANDIDLY TO THE FOLLOWING 15 STATEMENTS TO DETERMINE WHERE YOUR BEHAVIORS STAND ON THE COMPLEXITY SCALE | TRUE OR FALSE?      |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. I often send emails that are longer than 1 paragraph and/or require significant time to read.                |                     |
| 2. Emails that I send usually include more than 3 cc's or bcc's.  |                     |
| 3. I expect email replies from staff within 24 hours or by the next business day.                               |                     |
| 4. I often use business jargon and buzzwords in my written and spoken communication.                            |                     |
| 5. I require my team members to involve me in the decisions they make.  |                     |
| 6. My decisions are always a group effort.  |                     |
| 7. I've assigned a project without a clear objective or clear project lead in the past 6 months.                |                     |
| 8. I expect employees to follow formal process steps without exception.   |                     |
| 9. I (or my team) consistently add on to project/product/development work, and I/we rarely eliminate things.    |                     |
| 10. I must sign-off on all expenses, communications, or contracts within my group.                              |                     |
| 11. I hold multiple, recurring meetings with my team each week.   |                     |
| 12. I have held meetings without agendas.   |                     |
| 13. My presentations are known for being lengthy and containing in-depth information.                           |                     |
| 14. I don't often provide feedback on reports/presentations that I assign.                                      |                     |
| 15. I require each of my direct reports to create multiple, recurring reports.                                  |                     |
| <b>STEP 2: TALLY NUMBER OF TRUE ANSWERS →</b>   | <b>TRUE ANSWERS</b> |

Turn the page to reveal your complexity level →



# Simplification Tool

## Leadership Complexity Quiz

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>WHAT'S MY COMPLEXITY LEVEL?</b></p>                   | <p><b>0 TRUE answers = SUCCESSFUL SIMPLIFIER.</b> Leaders like you become legends. Your level of trust and risk tolerance is high, which is evidenced by the number of smart decisions being made by your direct reports. Meetings, reports, and presentations are concise and useful under your leadership. You're open-minded about simplification tools and techniques, and you encourage all levels of employees to question processes without purpose. You walk the simplified talk, and reward your people for doing the same.</p> <p><b>1-3 TRUE answers = SIMPLIFIER WITH SIGNS OF COMPLEXITY.</b> You display many excellent habits, but a few trouble spots show evidence of complexity. If your teams are constantly asking your permission instead of doing valuable work, this may indicate your unwillingness to grant autonomy to others. It's also possible that your fear of change has prevented a re-examination of what productivity actually looks like in an organization. Address your trouble areas in Step 3.</p> <p><b>4-6 TRUE answers = COMPLEXIFIER-IN-TRAINING.</b> You value traditional processes over simpler and more convenient options, and have a strong conviction about how things should be done. But your tight grip on the reins is a source of frustration to your colleagues and direct reports. You're associated with long meetings, endless reports and analyses, and unfocused work streams. See Step 3 for how to halt this trend.</p> <p><b>7+ TRUE answers = CLASSIC COMPLEXIFIER.</b> Rather than solving problems, your default mode is to further complicate things. Inadvertently, you've trained your employees to inflate, not narrow, the scope of projects, and to view meetings as a stand-in for valuable work. You sometimes struggle to communicate, relying on intricate charts and novel-length emails rather than simple, straightforward messaging. The root causes of your complexity may be fear, the need for control, or a combination of both, but the cure lies in a humble, open-minded approach to simplification. See Step 3 pronto.</p> |
| <p><b>STEP 3: IDENTIFY SIMPLIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> | <p>Among my TRUE answers, which habits or behaviors do I have the power to change?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Which factors (risk aversion, fear, control, lack of focus/time, etc.) are at the source of my complexity?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Which complexifying habits could I stop doing right now?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>Which ones can I place on hiatus as an experiment in simplification?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>   |