**The Confidence Matrix**

Why do you get tongue tied in meetings even when you really know your stuff? Perhaps you’re working super-hard and getting things done but you still can’t accept positive feedback.

The Confidence Matrix is a simple but insightful tool to help you fully understand the specific elements of your what’s holding you back from fulfilling your real potential. In short where is it a practical skills gap and where is it a mindset issue? Here’s how it works. The Confidence Matrix will help you:

* Highlight your personal style of push-through or hold-back
* Pinpoint the specific areas you need to work on.
* See at a glance where you may be over or underestimating yourself
* Build specific activities to develop both confidence and skill together
* Help you to speak up in meetings by highlighting the unconscious gaps and providing actions to eliminate these
* Make the unconscious habitual patterns conscious so you can do something about them

**The Confidence Matrix: How to use it**

**There are 2 parts to the questionnaire. You need to complete both parts. Read each question then circle the answer that most reflects you. When you’ve done this, go to the scoring section.**

**PART 1**

1. **I’m prepared to step outside my comfort zone**
2. Always – I love a challenge!
3. Often – I like a stretch but I know my limits.
4. Sometimes – it depends how far and what’s at stake.
5. Not very often – I dislike the feeling I get when I’m stretching myself.
6. Don’t know.
7. **I accept praise for my work**
8. Easily. Bring it on!
9. Yes ,but it has to be sincere.
10. It feels uncomfortable to accept praise but I acknowledge it quickly then move on.
11. It’s hard to take praise because I always see where things are less than perfect.
12. Don’t know.
13. **I speak up for my opinions and ideas in meetings**
14. Always. I’m determined to make a positive contribution.
15. Mostly - I occasionally wobble under certain circumstances.
16. Sometimes but if I feel judged I start to close down.
17. Rarely. I get intimidated by louder or more senior people.
18. Don’t know.
19. **I’m able to ask my seniors for more time /resources/ money/ responsibility**
20. Easily. If you don’t ask, you don’t get.
21. Mostly. I feel uncomfortable but I ask anyway.
22. Sometimes. It depends.
23. Rarely. It’s hard because I don’t want to be pushy or arrogant.
24. Don’t know.
25. **I worry about what others think**
26. Never. Take me or leave me.
27. Occasionally with very senior people.
28. Sometimes. I like to be liked and for people to think I do good work.
29. Often. I hate people thinking I’m inadequate.
30. Don’t know.

**PART 2**

1. **When it comes to achieving my goals**
2. I always deliver on targets / KPIs.
3. I mostly get there but sometimes if they are unrealistic goals, I miss them.
4. Sometimes but I’ve still got a lot to learn about my area.
5. I need a lot of support from others to achieve my goals at the moment.
6. Don’t know.
7. **I have all the necessary knowledge and skills to perform well in my role**
8. Absolutely!
9. Mostly but still working on a few areas.
10. About 50% there.
11. I’m unclear on quite a lot and have big gaps.
12. Don’t know.
13. **I’m a likely candidate for promotion or further responsibility within the next year**
14. Yes, I’m a star player.
15. Probably but it depends.
16. Possible but unlikely.
17. No chance.
18. Don’t know.
19. **Feedback from my manager in my last review was:**
20. Outstanding. They were very happy with me.
21. Good on the whole. I seem to be on the right track.
22. OK but I could have done a lot better in places.
23. Poor. I really fell down in a lot of places.
24. Don’t know.
25. **My attitude to learning new things**
26. I’m hungry for it. Bring it on!
27. I like learning but wish I had more time to do it.
28. Depends what it is and how hard / useful it is.
29. I’m fine with where I am thanks.
30. Don’t know.

**Scoring: For each letter, score the following:**

1. 4
2. 3
3. 2
4. 1
5. 1

**Now enter the scores into the grid and total each part.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Part 1** | **Score** | **Part 2** | **Score** |
| Q1 |  | Q1 |  |
| Q2 |  | Q2 |  |
| Q3 |  | Q3 |  |
| Q4 |  | Q4 |  |
| Q5 |  | Q5 |  |
| **Total** |  | **Total** |  |

Divide your score for each part by 2 e.g. a total score of 12 ÷ 2 = 6

**Part 1 score out of 10 is your confidence level.**

My Score.

**Part 2 score out of 10 is your skill level**

My Score

**Now plot your place on the matrix using the 2 scores**

A picture containing diagram

Description automatically generated

**HIGH FLYER**

**(Higher confidence, higher skill)**

Congratulations. You may not always think so, but you have a great balance of skill and self-belief and if you can get yourself noticed you should do well. Your immediate team / manager will see you at your best a lot of the time and the next step is to consciously start advocating for your advancement. This will mean asking for mentoring and sponsorship from seniors who may be outside your normal sphere of influence. Get your own manager involved by having career development discussions and talk to HR about potential opportunities. Make sure people know you’re interested in career advancement. Ask for additional responsibility or more stretching projects and promote your own ideas for continuous improvement projects. Make connections across the business in other departments wherever possible and develop your own ‘brand’.

**RISK TAKER**

**(Higher confidence, lower skill)**

You’re not afraid to step up and jump in. You love having a go at new things and are probably quite creative in the way you do things. Winging it holds no fears for you and actually you find it worse if you overprepare. You tend to make relationships easily with people and are OK with more senior people once you have broken the ice. You’re ambitious and want to go far but you lose focus easily. Your confidence is good on the whole but you need to spend time focusing on the details a bit more in order to build a reputation for both style and substance. Start setting clear learning and development goals with your manager for the on-the-job skills gaps that you may have and ask for clear measures and benchmarks so you can track the actual progress you are making. You’re less likely to worry about asking senior managers for support so keep playing to your strengths and make sure people know about your ambitions.

**SELF LIMITING THINKER**

**(Lower confidence Higher skill)**

You’re great at your job but you don’t see it at the moment. It’s likely you are hard on yourself and may be a perfectionist. Your inner critic’s voice is loudly in your ear all the time and you are probably an overthinker under pressure. The first thing to work on is gathering data from trusted sources around your actual rather than your perceived performance. Look back at previous feedback from performance reviews and also wherever you can find end user feedback around the difference your work has made to the bottom line. How have you made things better? Think of all this feedback as fact not flattery because without solid self-knowledge of your strengths and development needs you will struggle to speak up in meetings or advocate for yourself to seniors in the business. Learning to internalise your strengths is a life skill that will enable you to thrive going forwards so stay objective in your assessments and make a decision to turn down the volume on your inner critic as it’s not the truth you’re hearing.

**FEARFUL LEARNER**

**(Lower confidence, Lower skill)**

This place can be the start of a brilliant journey because yes, there’s a lot to learn but by putting some shape to your career development pathway and measures of progress in place early on, you’ll reap the benefits. Ask your manager to help you create a plan for development of skills over the next 12 months. The 2 most useful things for you to develop now is 1. A stretch mentality so that you don’t stay in your comfort zone but start taking some risks with putting yourself out there in meetings or projects. Small stretches at first like simply supporting another colleagues idea or saying “no” to requests that will distract you or take your time unnecessarily. Couple this with adopting a growth mindset. This means that every time you don’t succeed when you stretch, you ask yourself “what did I learn for next time”? Read Carol Dweck’s work on Mindset and be kind to yourself as you grow. It doesn’t happen overnight.

If you scored a lot of “Don’t know” this may be because you lack focus on how to get the feedback you need so don’t be afraid to ask others for their input. You’re not alone!

**IF YOU’RE AROUND THE MIDDLE**

**(a 5 plus a 5)**

You’re doing just fine but it’s likely that you lurch around from place to place and have good days and bad days. That’s absolutely fine – the main thing is resilience and determination. Don’t let failures disrupt you or your inner critic’s voice get too loud and above all make a plan. Decide where you want to be in 6 months then work back from there to put the steps in place. Keep pushing your own boundaries and learning.

**ACTION PLANNER**

**MY SKILLS GOALS**

**What are the key actions that you can take that will move you towards upskilling yourself for your future career?**

**MY CONFIEDNCE GOALS**

**What are the key actions you can take that will stretch you to build confidence and a mindset of growth and learning?**