

highs & lows of leadership skills in universities

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by giving people a voice

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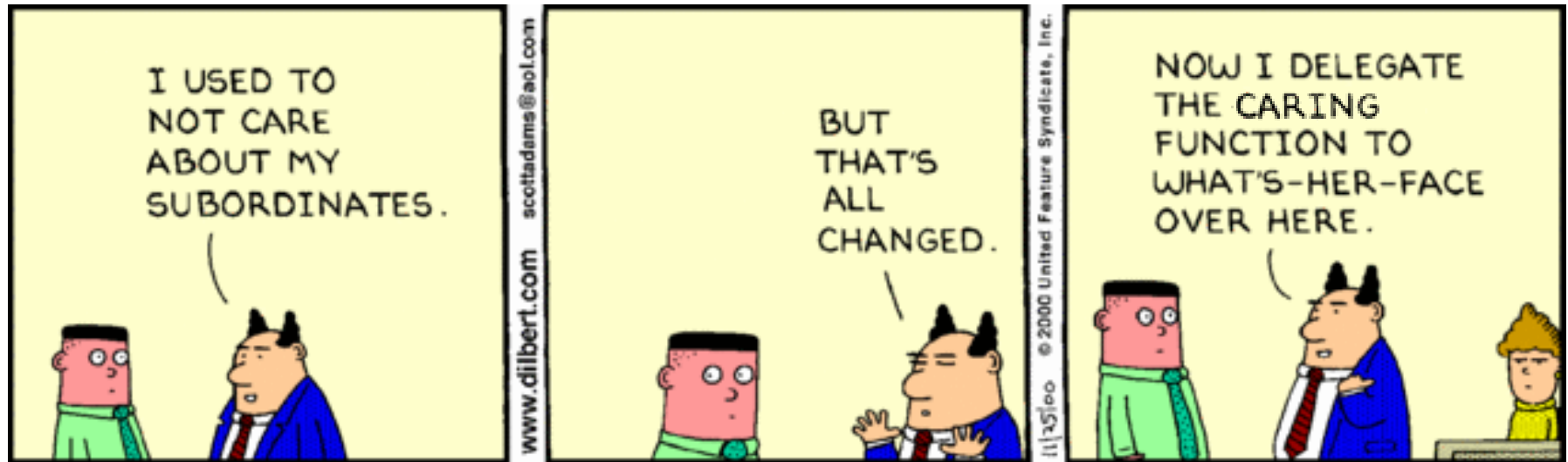
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: Join me and Voice Project's discussion group on LinkedIn

agenda

1. Lessons for leadership from Voice Project's engagement surveys
2. Lessons for leadership from our 360 surveys
3. Challenges in improving leadership skills
4. Actions



lessons from our engagement surveys

- Voice Project has now helped 37 Australian unis and 4 New Zealand unis with their engagement surveys
- We recently explored the key drivers of engagement, teaching quality and research output using data from 36 Australian & New Zealand universities that have completed engagement surveys with Voice Project since 2010
- Performance outcomes:
 - “Engagement” from employee surveys
 - “Teaching” from employee survey scores for teaching priority, quality, evaluation and support
 - “Research” = 2011 research output per FTE employees from DISR



drivers of engagement

Senior leaders (and the cultural tone they set in terms of ethics, mission, values and results focus) have a much stronger impact than supervisors on:

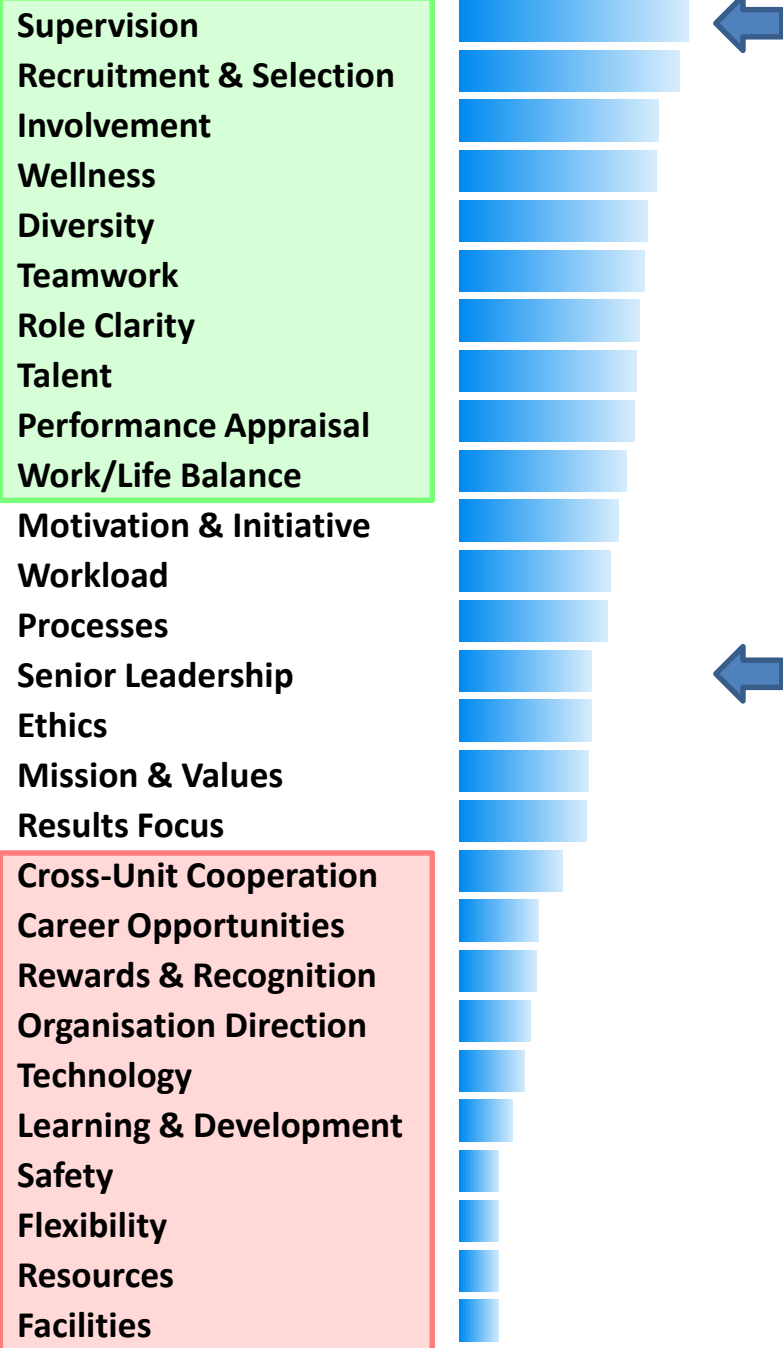
- Positive emotional engagement of staff with your university
- Discretionary effort and citizenship behaviour
- Desire to work at your university rather than another
- Positive industrial relations
- Effectiveness of university-wide change programs



drivers of teaching

Supervisors (and the workplace practices they put in place) have a much stronger impact than senior leaders on:

- Teaching quality
- Day-to-day effectiveness of work units
- Cohesion, cooperation and conflict within work units



drivers of research

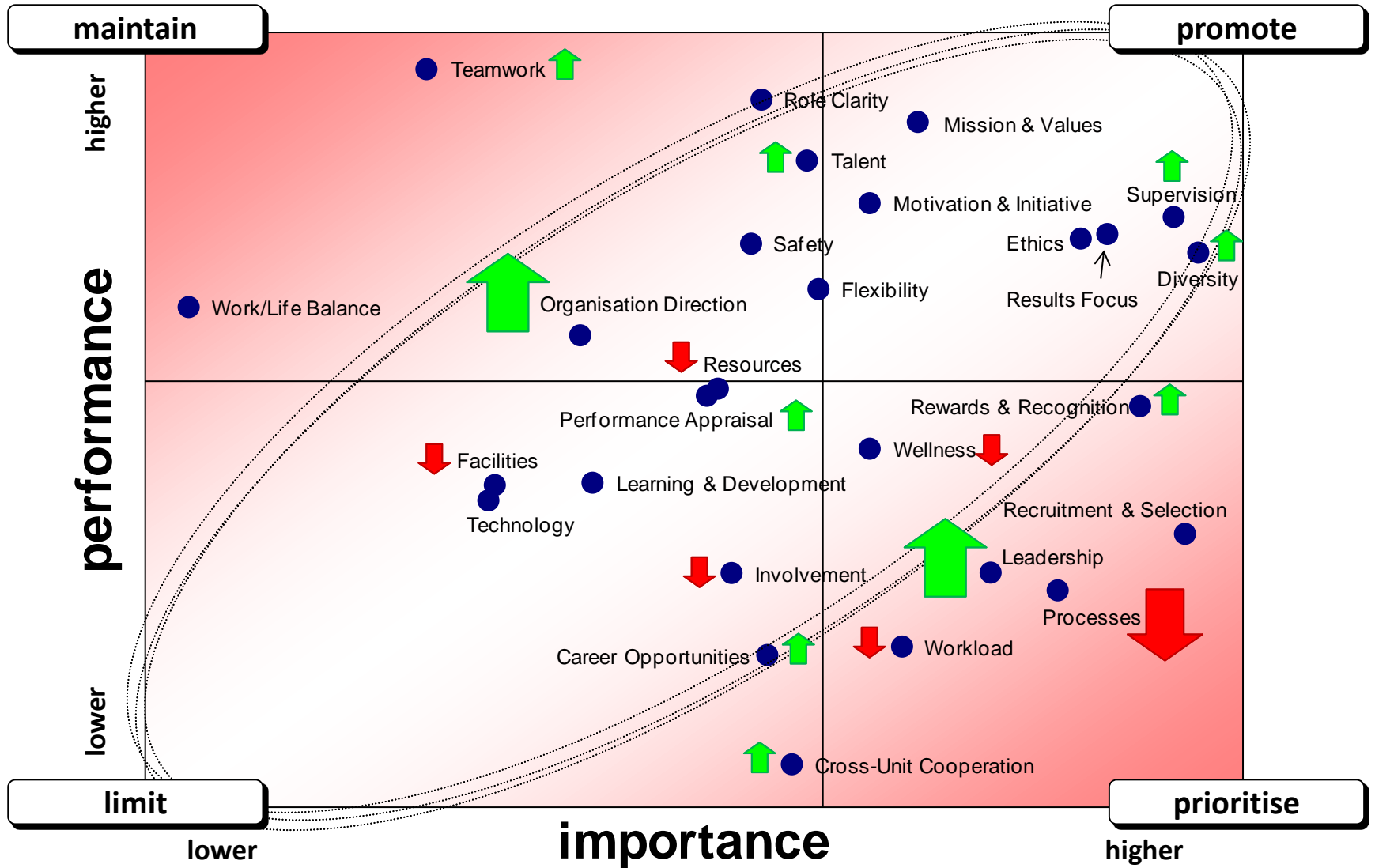
Neither senior leaders nor supervisors have a major direct impact upon research output.

To maximise research leaders should:

- Set up the right incentives and recognition
- Provide the right resources and support
- Reduce the barriers such as workload and inefficient processes
- Get out of the way!



gap analysis for composite performance



lessons from our 360 surveys

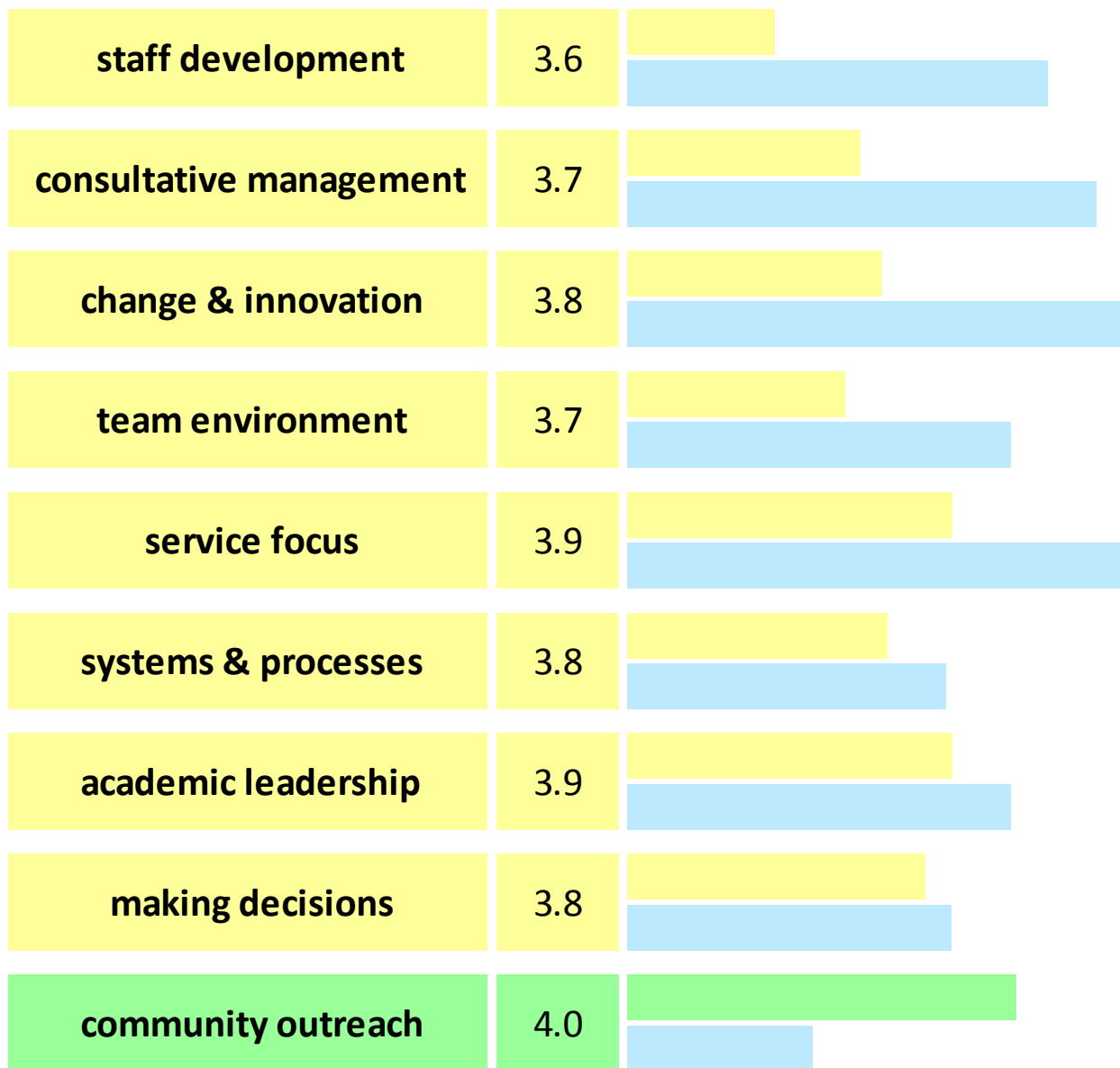
- Voice Project now has two 360 surveys used in universities
 1. Voice Leadership 360
 - Developed and delivered by Voice Project since 2007
 - Benchmarks from over 800 leaders across a wide range of industries
 2. Quality Leadership Profile
 - Developed at QUT in 2000 specifically targeting universities and schools
 - Delivered by Voice Project since 2013
 - Benchmarks from over 1600 university leaders (academics and professionals)
- For the current presentation we used QLP data from the last 5 years to explore highs, lows and gaps in university leadership skills



QLP categories scored in descending order

community outreach	4.0	
service focus	3.9	
academic leadership	3.9	
making decisions	3.8	
systems & processes	3.8	
change & innovation	3.8	
consultative management	3.7	
team environment	3.7	
staff development	3.6	

category gaps in descending order



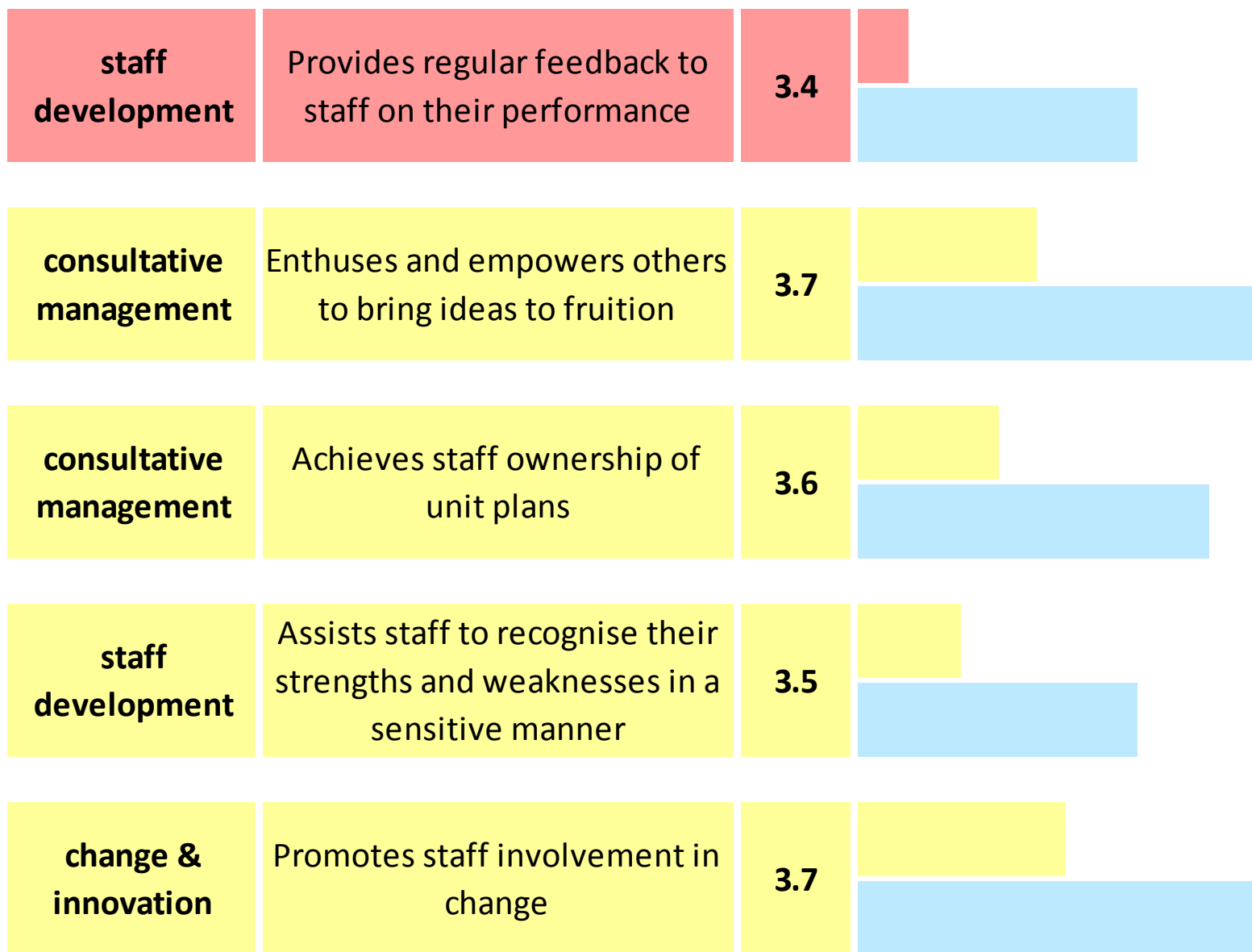
top 5 questions

service focus	Models a high service ethic	4.2	
community outreach	Represents the organisation effectively to the wider community	4.1	
academic leadership	Supports and rewards excellence in research	4.1	
community outreach	Actively promotes the organisation's achievements, activities and interests	3.8	
community outreach	Promotes the work of the unit in public forums	3.8	

bottom 5 questions

team environment	Manages conflict within teams successfully	3.4	
staff development	Provides regular feedback to staff on their performance	3.4	
staff development	Provides guidance to staff on their career and personal development	3.5	
staff development	Assists staff to recognise their strengths and weaknesses in a sensitive manner	3.5	
consultative management	Achieves staff ownership of unit plans	3.6	

top 5 question gaps



lessons

- Senior leadership is the root cause of success or failure in all universities
- Supervision is the strongest driver for work unit activities requiring a high level of cooperation such as course delivery
- University leaders typically show solid skills in community outreach and encouraging a strong focus on service, research and teaching
- There continue to be major gaps in people skills for many leaders, including:
 - Staff development
 - Consulting and involving staff in decisions
 - Helping staff emotionally connect with plans and change programs



challenges

- People skills are a weak determinant of research output . . . and research output continues to be a primary selection criterion for university leaders
- Under-recognition of the cost of poor people skills:
 - 5% engagement = 10% of payroll
 - Turnover costs 150% of salary
 - High cost of stress claims
 - High cost in time and reputation from poor industrial relations
 - Loss of IP
- Leaders with poor people skills won't value high people skills, so if it doesn't start from the top expect slow progress



actions

1. Assess for people skills when selecting or promoting VCs, executives, academic leaders and professional leaders
2. Include people metrics in your performance appraisal system for leaders
 1. Engagement and 360 scores
 2. Turnover and absenteeism
 3. Stress claims and grievances
3. Set clear high expectations, and have the courage to quickly remove leaders who aren't achieving or clearly improving on both task and people metrics
4. Implement leadership development programs and coaching but only when the above steps have been nailed

