

Patent Granted for Ground-Breaking “[Leadership Versatility Index](#)” 360 Feedback Tool

Unique step reflects lack of leadership behaviors and “lopsidedness” assessments in other development tools

[Greensboro, NC – February 22, 2007] -- In a highly unusual development in the Human Resources field, leadership-consulting firm Kaplan DeVries Inc. has been awarded a patent for their 360 feedback tool, the [Leadership Versatility Index](#) (LVI).

The patent was awarded because no other leadership development tool uses pairs of opposite leadership behaviors (such as “*Takes Charge*” versus “*Empowers*”) and also assesses versatility and “lopsidedness” among the pairs. Through decade-long statistical research and first-hand use of the tool in executive development, the inventor-designers, Robert E. Kaplan, Ph.D. and Rob Kaiser, M.S., of Kaplan Devries Inc., determined that the instrument uniquely detects “lopsided” leadership.

Extreme lopsidedness is a major cause of career derailment and undermines talent management for many organizations. In fact, Kaiser and Kaplan's statistical research indicates that versatility—having a well-rounded repertoire—accounts for half of what separates the most highly regarded leaders from the least well-regarded leaders.

Kaplan and Kaiser’s 2006 book, [The Versatile Leader: Make The Most Of Your Strengths—Without Overdoing It](#) (Wiley/Pfeiffer) describes their concept and research in detail. They found that executives who avoid overusing their strengths, and who strengthen their weaker “muscles” so they can lead in a wide variety of situations, have higher employee morale and overall better business outcomes than those who rely on a single strength.

“There is a central human tendency to rely too heavily on our strengths,” says Dr. Kaplan. “In leaders, this often creates blind spots that lead to complete career derailment. The problem is expensive in both business and human terms.”

Kaplan says this problem has become more pronounced in the current leadership environment, in which “sensing” skills are critical to making fast adjustments. He points to the business world described in Thomas L. Friedman’s popular book, *The World is Flat*. “It’s a world that demands constant adjustment and does not tolerate leaders who are unable or unwilling to build up their weak muscles—or who overuse their strong muscles.”

On its website, Kaplan’s firm offers a free trial of the [Leadership Versatility Index](#), hosted online by assessment specialists [Performance Programs, Inc.](#) For more information, contact author [Bob Kaplan](#) at bkaplan@kaplandevries.com.

Kaplan and Kaiser both previously worked at the Center for Creative Leadership. Among their many co-authored publications, their article, “Developing Versatile Leaders,” in

MIT's *Sloan Management Review*, was judged by a panel of CEOs as one of the best articles published by the journal in 2003 – calling it “both innovative and practical.”

About Kaplan DeVries, Inc.

Kaplan Devries, Inc. provides intensive consulting to CEOs, “C-level” executives, general managers, and functional heads at the next level. Their consulting is designed to bootstrap these leaders to better performance and to assist their organizations with talent management. The firm also conducts original research. The firm’s principals publish extensively in academic and business journals and are available for speaking engagements. The firm was founded in 1992.

About Performance Programs, Inc.

Performance Programs is a firm of industrial psychologists and research professionals specializing in online surveys, tests and assessments for human resources. Performance Programs was founded in 1987.

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