

There are a number of exercises that help leadership teams gain a greater understanding of themselves and what it will take to create excellence in an organization. This exercise, called the Pillar Grade Point Average, helps grade the organization's results objectively.

First, post the pillars of excellence (service, quality, finance, people, and growth) in the meeting room where everyone can easily see them. If the pillars are not used, then use whatever objective organizational goals are in place.

Next, go around the room and have each person provide a grade for each goal. It will lead to some discussion, for often people in the room will not agree. It is good for the top-ranking leader in the room to go last; if not, the group can be swayed by the grade this leader gives.

For example, leaders from one organization were asked, "How would you evaluate service, using patient satisfaction as the example?" They gave themselves a grade between a C and a D. We ended up agreeing on a C.

Next, we went around the room and talked about the quality pillar and then the finance pillar. In both cases, they gave themselves a B. Then we talked about the people pillar, specifically employee satisfaction and turnover, and they gave themselves a C. Finally, we talked about growth. This organization had done a great job attracting specialists in their large city, so they gave themselves an A.

To sum up, they gave themselves two Cs, which together equal 4 points, two Bs, which equal 6 points, and one A, which is 4 points. The total is 14. So we divided 14 by 5 and got a 2.8 grade point average.

This exercise allows a senior executive team to see themselves as they really are, not as they want to be introduced. More importantly, it leads to specific discussions on actions to move organizational performance and results forward.

Service	Quality	Finance	People	Growth
C	B	B	C	A
2	3	3	2	4

$$2 + 3 + 3 + 2 + 4 = 14 \text{ pts}$$

$$14\text{pts} / 5 = 2.8 \text{ GPA}$$