

Exploring New Frontiers in Multi-Rater Feedback

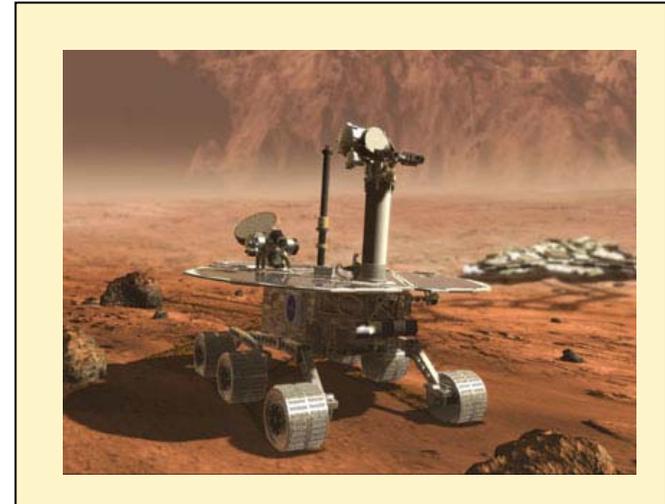
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OVERVIEW

- What is the Jet Propulsion Laboratory?
- Upward Feedback Program Goals
- Upward Feedback Process
- Attributes of the Program



What is the Jet Propulsion Laboratory?

- Managed for NASA by the California Institute of Technology
- Lead U.S. center for robotic exploration of the solar system
- Facts:
 - Approximately 5500 employees
 - Main site (177 acres) is 12 miles northeast of Los Angeles
 - Last launch: April 7, 2001 – 2001 Mars Odyssey – Kennedy Space Center



JPL Mission

Expand the frontiers of space by conducting challenging robotic space missions for NASA.



- *Explore our solar system.*
- *Expand our knowledge of the universe.*
- *Further our understanding of Earth from the perspective of space.*
- *Pave the way for human exploration.*

Apply our special capabilities to technical and scientific problems of national significance.

JPL Values

- **OPENNESS** •

*Openness of our people and our processes.
We use candid communication to ensure better results.*

- **INTEGRITY** •

Integrity of the individual and the institution. We value honesty and trust in the way we treat one another and in the way we meet our commitments.

- **QUALITY** •

Integrity of our products and our people. We carry out our mission with a commitment to excellence in both what we do and how we do it.

- **INNOVATION** •

*Innovation in our processes and products.
We value employee creativity in accomplishing tasks.*

How Does JPL work?

- Research and development organization
 - Inventive
 - Innovative
 - Highly educated
 - Value technology and science
 - “Nothing we can’t do” attitude
- Matrix organization
 - Line vs. Project Management



What was the Impetus for Starting an Upward Feedback Program?

- **1992** **TQM**
- **1993** **JPL Employee Survey**
 - *Interpersonal & leadership skills*
 - *Work-group needs*
- **1994** **Management Effectiveness Process Action Team**
 - *Improve manager effectiveness & interactions with employees*
- **1996-97** **Round 1 of Upward Feedback – Required**
- **1999** **Round 2 of Upward Feedback – Voluntary**
- **2000** **Round 3 of Upward Feedback – Voluntary**

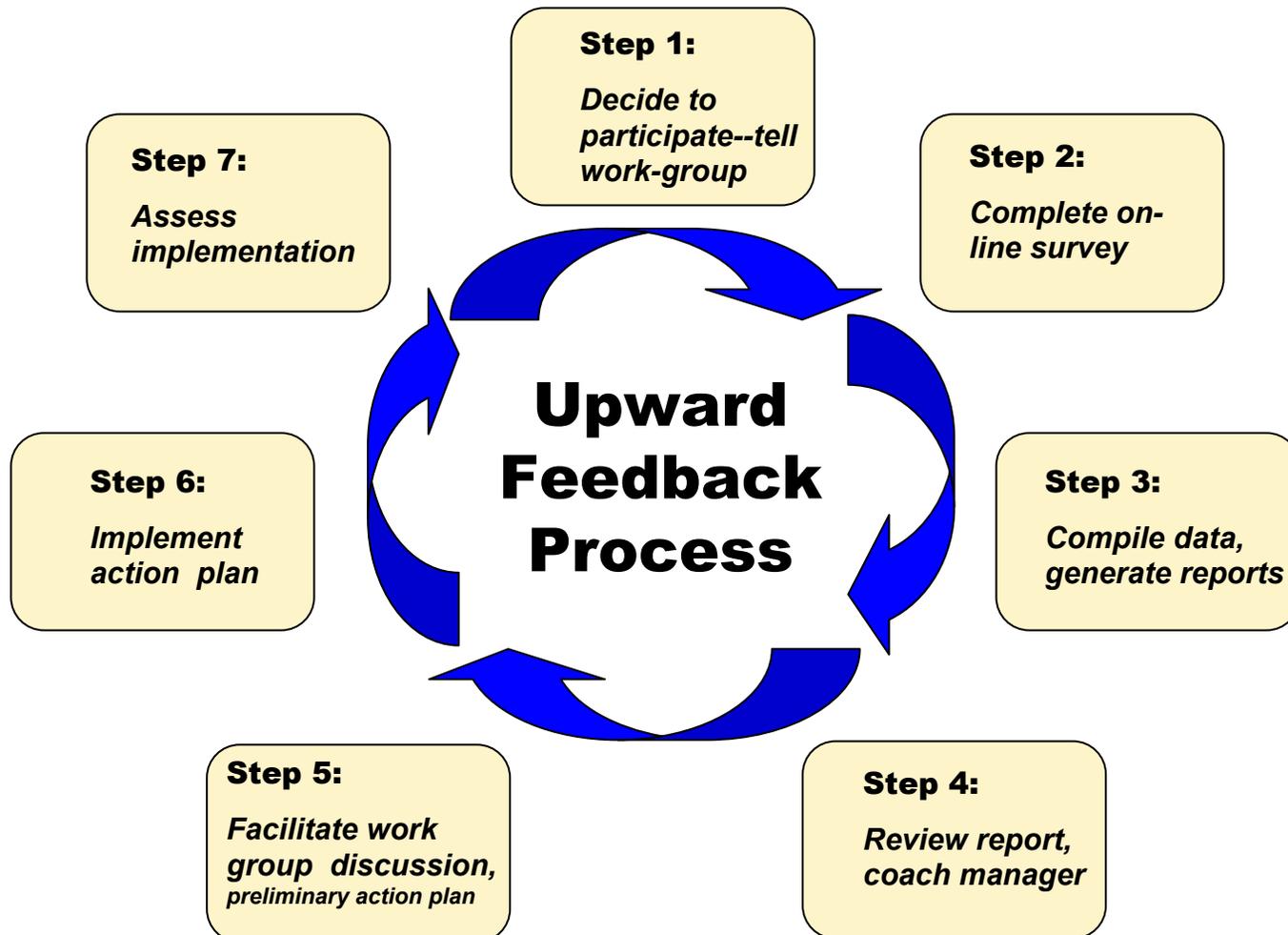


Upward Feedback Program Goals



1. Initiate candid and constructive, two-way dialogue leading to balanced feedback for the manager regarding her/his management style
2. Develop, implement, and assess action plans to enhance manager and work-group communications and increase productivity
3. Create an environment for ongoing open dialogue between manager and work-group

Upward Feedback Process



Round 3 Survey Format

- Questions are grouped into 10 dimensions
 - 44 quantitative questions
 - 10 comment sections (one per dimension) to capture qualitative data
- Administered via Internet
 - Paper copies available as needed

The Ten Dimensions:

- Basic Communication
- Direction and Feedback
- Empowerment
- Investment in People
- Resource Management
- Teaming
- Performance Focus
- Leadership
- Upward Feedback Past Performance
- Employee Change Goals

Attributes of the Current Program

The Upward Feedback Program:



- Is voluntary
- Maintains anonymity and confidentiality
- Is a developmental tool
- Provides balanced feedback
- Promotes accountability for both manager and employees

Upward Feedback is *Voluntary*

- Eligible managers volunteer to participate in program



Eligibility requirements

- Must manage a minimum number of 5 employees
- Must have been in his/her management position for at least 6 months or more

Upward Feedback is *Anonymous & Confidential*

- Survey data is collected by an external consultant
- Work-groups with less than 4 respondents, or less than 75% participation in survey, are excluded
- All individual identifiers and names are deleted prior to JPL access to database (database goes to Upward Feedback team only)
- Feedback meeting contains component of open forum feedback without the manager's presence
- Only manager, work-group, facilitator & external consultant have access to survey results

Upward Feedback is *Developmental*



- **Emphasis on identification of strengths and improvement opportunities for the sole purpose of manager development, NOT evaluation**
- **Strengthens the relationships between the manager and the work-group**
 - Realization that sometimes work-group behaviors have to change in order for manager's behaviors to change
- **Action plans are created with work-group**
 - Allows managers to adjust their behavior to goals set out in plan

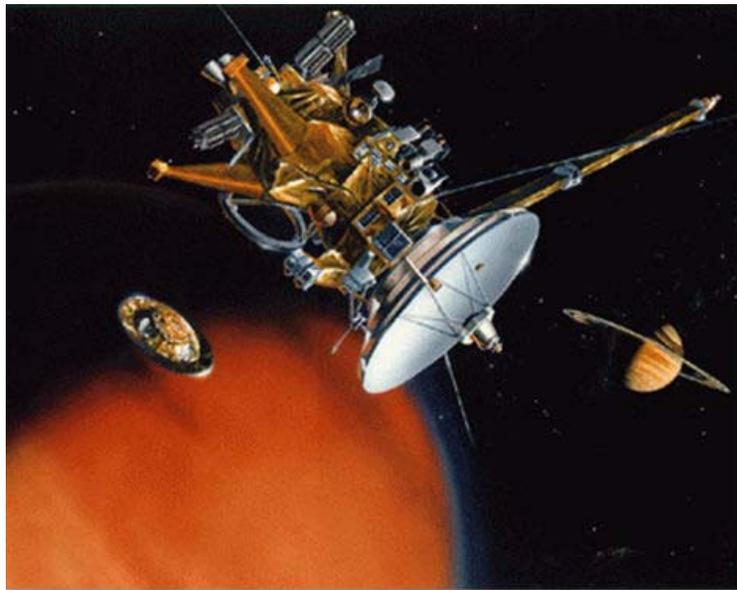
Upward Feedback is *Balanced Feedback*



Positive reinforcement of the leader's strengths as well as an awareness of their improvement opportunities

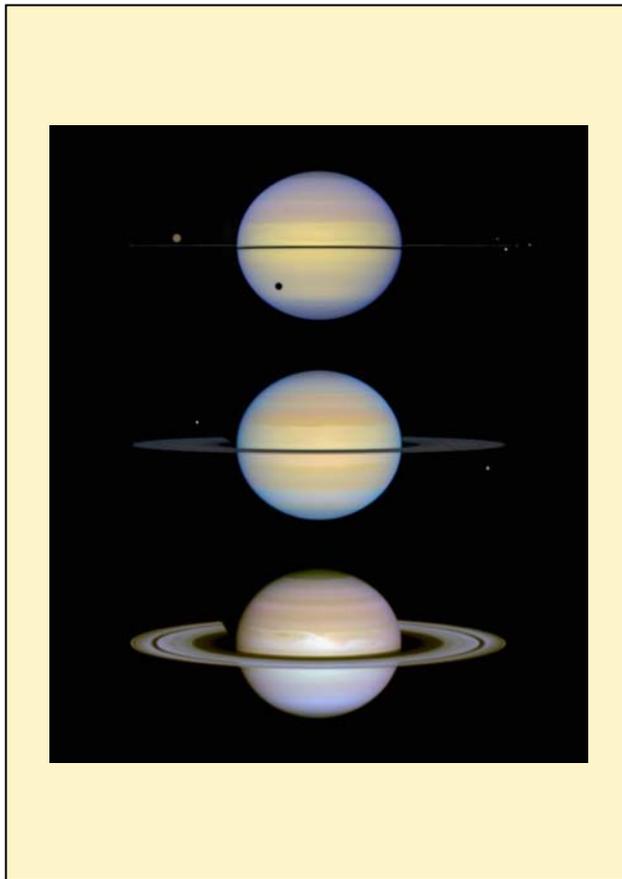
- Both the initial feedback session between the manager and the facilitator and the session with the work-group, are designed to acknowledge strengths before investigating improvement opportunities

Upward Feedback *Promotes Accountability*



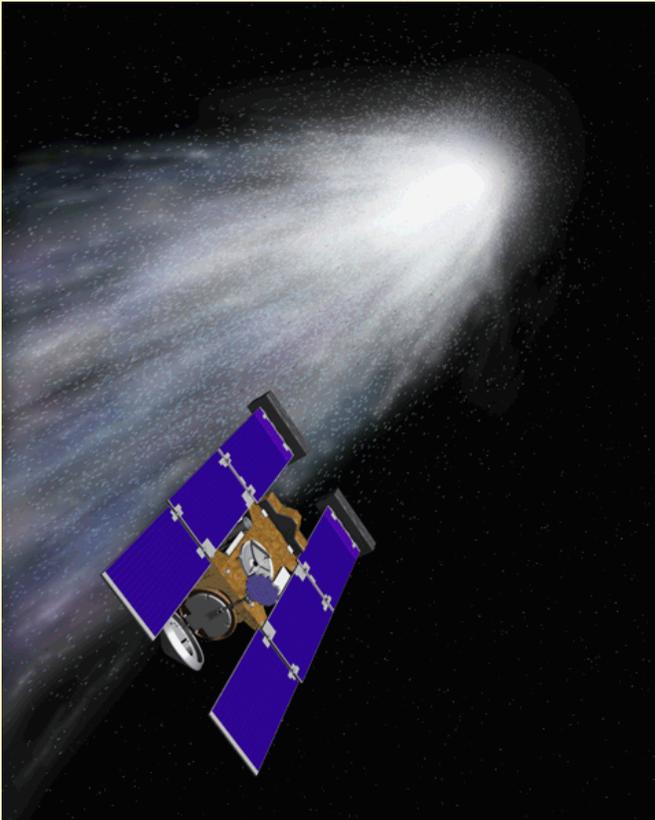
- Manager and work-group co-create action plan
- Action plan is the only document shared with the manager's manager
- 90 day facilitated check-in measures manager's progress on action plan

Future Frontiers to Explore



- Require participation for first time managers who have been in current position for one year
- Voluntary participation for seasoned managers
- Pilot 360 degree feedback program for Program and Project Managers
- Revisit original survey and explore need to redesign

Summary



Upward Feedback is a relatively new program at JPL. The process is constantly evolving and continuously improving to strategically meet the needs of the institution, managers, and employees.