



Snapshot: Gaps - FAQs

An Overview

What is gap and what is its importance?

A gap is the space that divides people.

A gap is not an opinion, belief, or value, it's just the difference in what people are seeing.

There can be gaps in understanding, information, or communications for example. When a gap occurs in a relationship or on a team, there is separation.

With a perception gap, it's not about who's right or wrong, it's about what the team perceives. You won't know how they feel or what's happening in their lives, but you will know what they see.

The best leaders respond to gaps by not telling the team they are wrong but by trying to understand what they are seeing. Rather than asking for opinions, ask them to

share what they see. Seek to understand before trying to close the gap. You never know. It could be you who has the misperception.

What is a Snapshot Gap Assessment?

A Snapshot gap assessment is not a survey. This is a huge distinction.

A gap assessment is like taking your pulse or blood pressure. In a few minutes you have solid information to prepare a response.

The snapshot gap assessment helps leaders quickly identify gaps (or areas of opportunity) by showing how the team is seeing things differently with each other, as well as other teams, departments, and managers.

With a Snapshot gap assessment, the team responds with a Yes or a No to a short list of statements. (There are no questions.)

In less than five minutes you can see the contrasts (of differences)

among your team). You'll see what you (and your managers) see compared to what your employees are seeing. This contrast offers a tremendous opportunity to improve things without finding fault or blaming someone.

The Process

You may conduct a Snapshot Gap Assessment on the spot during a team or organization meeting, or while the team is working remotely. The assessment can be completed on any mobile device. There are 20 to 25 statements the participants respond with a Yes or a No.

One link is shared with the team, and in less than five minutes, results can be shared and discussed.

Resolution

Once a gap has been identified, closure takes place through conversations with team members.

The formation of special committees or project teams are not necessary for closing a gap. The process for closure is as simple as the tool. Have conversations, not meetings.

When a perception gap is identified, whether it is real or imagined, it must be addressed.

Leaders need facts and a plan of action to effectively resolve a gap. They also need **empathy** to fully understand why the team responded to the assessment the way they did. are seeing or perceiving the way they responded.

The Strategy

Snapshot gap assessments reveal team or organizational strengths and show areas of separation

But every so often a Snapshot gap assessment reveals gaps and low scores in all categories.

Receiving low scores and/or an abundance of gaps does not mean there is a big problem, but work will need to be done.

In the rare case of abundant gaps, deeper conversations with your team are needed to fully understand what it is they are seeing or not seeing.

Suggested Gap Closure Approaches

Practice using our 3-Step AAR method (Assess, Reflect, Respond) when working with your team to close gaps. (Instructions and content in Appendix)

Do not to corner people or confront them with questions like:
Why did you answer like this?
How could you possibly see things like that?
Are you sure you know what you saw?

Ask questions

Make a request ("Help me understand...") versus interrogating or asking probing questions

An effective leader models the discipline of assessing, reflecting, and responding.

The Seven Absolutes of Gaps

1. Gap are spaces that separates us...from things and people.
Especially people.

2. Every team, group, organization, and family have perception gaps (separation).
A gap is not a problem that requires fixing, it is a separation of understanding among members of a group, team, or organization. A gap is always an opportunity for conversation, discussion, and clarification to take place.

3. The existence (or discovery) of a gap does not mean it is real.
Real or not, it's up to the leader to understand and clarify the gap's origin and takes ownership of it.

4. The leader is responsible for ensuring all team, organizational, or family gaps are closed once they have been identified.

5. Leaders must not try to close a gap alone.

Resist the urge to fix things yourself. Gaps cannot be effectively closed in a vacuum. Leaders must ensure their entire team is included.

6. Simple conversations are the most effective way to close gaps.
Formality (meetings, committees, memos, etc.) impedes removal of separation. Preaching won't work. You can't convince someone their perceptions are wrong. A leader must hear and feel what is being conveyed first before a meaningful conversation can take place about the gap.

7. To effectively close a gap, everyone on the team must be heard.

Only the leader can ensure this happens. Time and attention must be devoted to this endeavor.

Gaps are not bad, but they can lead to damaged relationships.

Assess Reflect Respond

The ARR Method embraces three simple yet powerful steps.

Through practice and repetition, you will master these steps, and ultimately become capable of coaching and teaching them to other leaders.

Restraint is a commodity in short supply. Today's managers are ridiculed if they appear hesitant or resistant to make changes. As a leader, it is vital to have complete confidence in your decision-making ability.

But making quick, trust-your-gut decisions is not necessarily the sign of a brave leader, it's also a sign of an over-confident manager rushing to the next battle.

It's true that everyday decisions are rarely the life-or-death kind. But over the course of time, they can and will affect lives.

Embracing an assess, reflect, and respond approach to your decision-

making will give you the power to make wise, long-term decisions in shorter increments of time each time you make a decision.

Thoughtful, measured decisions may sound boring or ineffective but how often are you forced to respond in a matter of minutes?

Unless you require data or research performed, most big day to day decisions can be reached faster than you think.

We often tend to live on autopilot to get through our days.

Too many things to do, too many problems to solve, too many commitments and obligations. The list can be intimidating.

Saying 'no' helps, but that's not the answer.

Learning how to process new events and circumstances as they occur is a better way.

Instead of reacting to events automatically, take a moment to assess, reflect, and then respond to them. The pause buys enough time for you to consider more completely what is happening.

At first, you'll perform these steps consciously; in time they'll become routine. You'll find yourself following them without having to remember.

These are profoundly simple steps that you can start following right now.

Assess

Stop! Don't hit SEND. Consider what you are about to do. Are you 100% sure this is what you want and need to do?

It's easy, during stressful times, to be controlled by your emotions. It's just as easy in stressful times as well.

Many times: we are too tired, busy, preoccupied, disinterested, or disconnected to take five minutes to reflect... and then it's too late.

Below are three steps we all know but forget we do. They don't take much time to perform, but following them will save you time, and possibly regret or disappointment.

Reflect

Proper reflection includes answering the following questions:
Is this important to me? yes or no.
Why is this important to me?
Will I regret my actions tomorrow?

Would I be proud to share what I've done with my spouse, children, staff?

If you can live with your answers, then respond.

Respond

Wait! Before you respond, do you feel any fear, anger, frustration, retribution, or righteousness?

If you feel any of these, don't respond. Wait.

At first the steps will feel fake to you, an exaggeration, conversation, annoying, and then they will become habit.

ARR Questions:

Assess

What's really going on here?
Is it emotion, over-reaction,
pressure...?

Reflect

In the perfect world, how would you
respond? Is this a long-term or
short-term issue?

Respond

What do I expect or want to happen
because of my decision? What will
my steps/responses look like?
Are they firm yet gentle?