

Contribution Attribution Assessment

Employee descriptions manager accounts and contribution histories

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Original research toolkit | Not validated for employment decisions

1 Purpose and boundaries

This assessment gathers separate descriptions of how accomplishments are communicated, how evaluators identify individual actions, and whether records retain contribution histories. It operationalizes questions raised by the proposed Collective Attribution Paradox, Attribution Dilution Effect, and Contribution Signaling constructs. It supplies no validated scale, diagnostic threshold, fairness judgment, or employee type. Its first appropriate research use is content review and cognitive interviewing.

The assessment has four parts: a neutral employee description and eight pilot items; an independent manager account; a review of contribution history; and an action-level comparison. Related self-presentation and joint-attribution research [R19, R20, R21] informs the questions without validating these materials. A structured role history has a scholarly precedent [R22], but the templates below are original CVT research aids. Do not infer motive, leadership quality, promotion suitability, or compensation entitlement from communication style.

2 Administration and privacy

Use a consenting adult employee-episode pair as the basic record. An independent facilitator selects episodes using a declared rule, such as the most recent qualifying completed work episode. Selecting only disputed accomplishments cannot estimate prevalence. Record the rule, evidence window, role context, observation opportunities, and unavailable sources. The protocol supplies the study-specific consent and activation requirements. A local process review also needs authorized access, a clear purpose, and an independent correction route.

Assign a random episode code. Keep identities and linkage keys separately with an authorized custodian. Do not enter names, screenshots, company identifiers, customer information, private communications, or distinctive technical details in these reusable forms. Reference authorized evidence by a restricted source code and broad period. Keep internal records in their approved systems. No covert chat collection, monitoring, or retrospective scraping is part of this assessment.

Collect the manager account before showing the employee account. Managers must not receive employee survey responses or a participation list. If a linked procedure makes participation known, disclose that limit during consent and obtain independent approval of the revised workflow. Declining must have no employment consequence. Do not promise anonymity for linked episodes. Provide nonwritten alternatives and accessible formats. Review burden and retaliation risk throughout.

3 Part A employee description

Episode code: _____. Broad reference period: _____. Episode selection rule: _____.
Actual time in setting: _____. Available evaluation opportunity: yes ☐ no ☐ unknown ☐.

Neutral prompt: Describe one completed shared accomplishment. What outcome mattered, what actions produced it, and what remained uncertain? Use only a generalized account appropriate for authorized research. Do not name people or quote internal messages. Use the same prompt and space allowance for

every participant. Facilitators must not coach a more individual or collective style before collecting this first description.

Description: _____

Follow-up after the neutral description: Which actions, if any, did you personally perform? Which actions did others perform? What evidence could an authorized reviewer consult? Was there an opportunity to communicate this information to an evaluator? Which facts are unknown or disputed? Keep the prompted clarification separate from the initial description so the assessment does not mistake coached specificity for an initial style.

Personal actions and uncertainty: _____

Others' actions and joint dependencies: _____

Authorized source codes and access limits: _____

Eight supplementary pilot items

For the past three months in your current setting, select 1 Never, 2 Rarely, 3 Sometimes, 4 Often, or 5 Consistently. Additional options are NA Not applicable, NO No opportunity, DK Do not know, and blank Skipped. Shorter actual observation periods must be recorded. No response is a performance judgment. Skip any item.

CA1 When discussing a shared accomplishment, I acknowledged the team's contribution. Response:

CA2 When discussing a shared accomplishment, I described the team result without specifying my own actions. Response: _____

CS1 When discussing an accomplishment, I specified an action I had personally completed. Response:

CS2 I communicated a specific action I had completed to a person who evaluated my work. Response:

CH1 Records available to me identified who performed the originating work on an innovation I knew about. Response: _____

CH2 Later accounts of an innovation distinguished its originating work from subsequent improvements. Response: _____

TN1 People in my work setting encouraged presenting accomplishments as collective achievements. Response: _____

TN2 I felt able to ask for accurate acknowledgment of my own role in a shared accomplishment. Response:

Collective credit and specified personal actions can coexist. CA1 is not the opposite of CS1. The items do not establish stable traits or an effect. Use item distributions only, preserving valid denominators and each missing category. No means, sums, reverse scoring, types, cutoffs, percentiles, or employment decisions are authorized for this module.

4 Part B independent manager account

Complete before viewing the employee account. Manager role code: _____. Episode code: _____. Prior familiarity with episode: direct observation [] authorized record [] stakeholder account [] other authorized source [] none []. Record sources separately; this is not a rank of source quality.

M1 Describe the outcome and identify which actions you can attribute to individual contributors. Use participant codes. Mark joint or unknown actions explicitly. Response:

M2 What evidence did you encounter before your evaluation, and when relative to the decision? What did you receive without reading or could not access? Use authorized source codes. Response:

M3 Can you distinguish originating work, later improvements, maintenance, and coordination of adoption? State the basis and confidence in each factual claim, using plain language rather than a numerical certainty score. Response: _____

M4 How did the formal acknowledgment describe those actions? What route allows contributors to correct a factual omission privately? Unknown or unavailable is an acceptable answer. Response:

The facilitator records exposure separately from favorable judgment. An employee report that an update was sent cannot establish that this manager encountered it. A manager's recollection is fallible and does not override a corroborated record by authority alone. Record differences without assigning blame.

5 Part C contribution history review

Select a work innovation or shared deliverable with an authorized evidence trail. Define the action and purpose of the account before inspecting credit. This review concerns acknowledgment of work, not legal ownership. Use the same fixed originating actions across stages and record later contributions separately. A valid recent-operations account may emphasize maintenance without misrepresenting origin.

For every check, use present, absent in an inspected relevant record, unclear, record unavailable, not applicable, or skipped. These are descriptive categories with no numeric weights. Absent requires an accessible record in which the prespecified action was relevant to the stated purpose. Unavailable is not absent.

R1 Is the originating action identifiable, with a source and broad time window? Status: _____. Source code and uncertainty: _____

R2 Do records distinguish later improvements from the originating action and identify their contributors? Status: _____. Source code and uncertainty: _____

R3 Can the history be followed from creation to initial adoption and wider routine use? Status: _____. Missing stages or access limits: _____

R4 In each later relevant account, is the same corroborated originating action acknowledged accurately? Complete one row per action per stage in the history CSV. Status: _____. Uncertainty: _____

R5 Is there a usable correction and version-history process that preserves earlier and later contributions without overwriting them? Status: _____. Evidence and limits:

History worksheet fields: episode code; action code; stage; broad period; action role; contributor code; corroboration code; account purpose; exposure evidence; acknowledgment status; later additions; access limits; correction status. Do not allocate percentages summing to 100. Do not assume the original creator must remain the main recipient of credit after others add value.

6 Part D comparison and descriptive reporting

Two trained reviewers independently code each initial description for a specified personal action, acknowledgment of others, and team-result framing. Allow multiple flags and an ambiguous category. Code meaning rather than counting I and we. Preserve pre-adjudication codes and discuss disagreements under a locked codebook. Interrater agreement with uncertainty is a validation input, not an automatic pass mark.

For each corroborated action, compare the employee clarification, manager account, and relevant record. Classify aligned, omitted from an inspected relevant account, inconsistent, joint, or unresolved. Mark unavailable sources separately. These statuses describe a particular claim, not an employee. A discrepancy can arise from timing, record purpose, incomplete access, memory, later contribution, or genuine omission. Test these alternatives before recommending a factual correction.

Report counts of reviewed episodes and actions, coverage by source and stage, denominators, missingness, coding uncertainty, and burden. A descriptive fraction such as 6 of 10 inspected originating-action records naming the originator is limited to that selected set. It is not a validated dilution rate, organizational fairness index, or prevalence estimate. Preserve repeated-action dependence for inference. Publish no employee-level profiles or ranks.

Suggested finding format: In the selected episodes, the reviewed sources differed on the following action. The available evidence supports this correction or leaves the matter unresolved. The sample and missing records limit inference. No conclusion about intent or reward consequences follows without separate evidence.

7 Pilot validation and safeguards

Test the prompt and items with participants from varied roles. Check whether the neutral prompt induces a preferred style, whether respondents distinguish collective credit from omitted roles, and whether the anchors fit real opportunities. Compare an initial description with later independently corroborated actions. Examine social desirability, language and accessibility, source disagreement, evaluator knowledge, and possible harms from labeling. The new items do not inherit validity from prior scales [R12, R13].

Before any confirmatory use, define the target population, coding rules, outcomes, sample and precision plan, independence of raters, missing-data rules, and discrimination or invariance checks justified by the intended comparison. Do not force the mixed modules into a factor model or internal-consistency scale. They collect different kinds of evidence. Stop or revise if coding collapses collective credit into low contribution, if manager exposure cannot be distinguished from credit, or if linkage creates coercion or identification risk.

The generalized episode in paper 3 is a reported illustration only. No actual names, screenshots, internal exchanges, employer details, or distinctive backgrounds are included here. External use of that episode requires company confidentiality clearance where required and appropriate participant permission, or removal. Anonymization does not itself confer approval. The assessment contains no completed employee responses or findings.

8 Reusable records and follow through

Companion CSVs include the eight-item bank, blank employee response template, manager account template, contribution-history template, and source comparison template. They are editable records without scoring formulas. Use a restricted copy for authorized research; release only disclosure-reviewed aggregates or synthetic examples. The manager template must never become an employee-monitoring form.

Process action: _____. Specific factual correction or unresolved question:

Responsible reviewer code: _____. Authorized evidence location: _____. Review date:

_____.

Employee correction route and response:

Burden or adverse experience and response:

Future review checks whether factual history became more complete and usable, while monitoring burden and unintended effects. It does not certify the new constructs or claim the procedure improves compensation, promotion, or leadership.

References

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