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# How Do We Use Assessments for Good?

[SAFe's Measure and Grow](#) is a set of assessment tools (and recommendations) to help organizational leadership evaluate their progress towards business agility and determine their next improvement steps. (In reality there are a number of assessments out there, but this note is written primarily from the perspective of this tool) Properly used, these are effective tools. Like most tools, there is also a potential negative use of assessments, anti-patterns if you like. This discussion characterizes the use of assessment for both good and evil.

In general, the use of assessments for “good” is similar in nature to the use of metrics for good. The focus is on improving the conversation and the culture of the organization, especially regarding improving psychological safety and relentless improvement. Good uses of assessments include:

- Helping people, teams, and leadership understand where they can focus their attention in order to improve
- Helping peers have conversations around specific areas of improvement
- Encouraging people, teams, and leadership to self-coach improvement
- Providing coaches with a checklist of areas to consider, a reminder

Using assessments for “evil” tends to have the opposite effect in that the use is more coercive and judgmental. Evil uses of assessments include:

- Using assessments to compare or rate people, teams, or organizations
- Using assessment results without conversations with the people that are being assessed
- Using assessments to set a target (end state) or maturity level rather than focus on relentless improvement
- Using assessments to coerce people, teams, or organizations to a standard set of practices
- Using an assessment to judge how people, teams, or organizations are doing

[FAQ](#), [SAFe](#), [Assessment](#)

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