

Leadership Competency Model

Chart 1 - Leadership Competency Model or The Pyramid of Leadership

The introduction to leadership competencies provides the foundation for establishing an approach to achieving core competencies for management staff. Program directors at both the senior and middle management level will find this resource useful. This chart is one example of how these groups of competencies for leaders might be laid out in a typical organization: core, leadership, and professional.

This sample listing is broken into three main groups, Core or Essential Competencies, Leadership Competencies, and Professional Competencies. These three groups of competencies can be thought of as the Pyramid of Leadership, which collectively form the basic requirements for becoming a leader.

Core or Essential Competencies

These are the personal skills required at all levels of leadership. Essential Competencies provide the foundation that a person needs to become a leader. Without a strong foundation, the sides of the pyramid will soon fall and crumble as the base gives away.

Communications

- Expresses oneself effectively in both individual and group settings.
- Communicate plans and activities in a manner that supports strategies for employee involvement.
- Actively listens to others.
- Expresses written ideals clearly, using good grammatical form.
- Comprehends written material with little or no help

Teamwork

- Uses appropriate interpersonal style to steer team members towards the goal.
- Allocates decision making and other responsibilities to the appropriate individuals.
- Organizes resources to accomplish tasks with maximum efficiency.
- Influences events to achieve goals beyond what is called for

Creative Problem Solving

- Identifies and collects information relevant to the problem.
- Uses brainstorming techniques to create a variety of choices.
- Selects the best course of action by identifying all the alternatives and then makes a logical decision

Interpersonal Skills

- Treats others with respect, trust, and dignity.
- Works well with others by being considerate of the needs and feelings of each individual.
- Promotes a productive culture by valuing individuals and their contributions

Manage Client Relationships

- Works effectively with both internal and external customers.
- Gathers and analyzes customer feedback to assist in decision making.

Self-Direction

- Establishes goals, deliverables, timelines, and budgets with little or no motivation from superiors (self-motivation rather than passive acceptance).
- Assembles and leads teams to achieve established goals within deadlines.

Build appropriate relationships

- Networks with peers and associates to build a support base.
- Builds constructive and supportive relationships

Professionalism

- Sets the example.
- Stays current in terms of professional development.
- Contributes to and promotes the development of the profession through active participation

Financial

- Does not waste resources.
- Looks for methods to improve processes that have a positive impact on the bottom line

Leadership (special) Competencies

These are the skills needed to drive the organization onto the cutting edge of new technologies. Leadership Competencies form the basic structure that separates leaders from bosses. These skills create the walls and interiors of the pyramid. Without them, a leader is just a hollow windbag, or as Scott Adams of Dilbert fame best characterizes it, "a pointy-head boss."

Leadership Abilities

- Displays attributes that make people glad to follow.
- Provides a feeling of trust.
- Rallies the troops and builds morale when the going gets tough

Visioning Process

- Applies effort to increase productiveness in areas needing the most improvement.
- Creates and set goals (visions).
- Senses the environment by using personal sway to influence subordinates and peers.
- Gain commitment by influencing team to set objectives and buy in on the process.
- Reinforces change by embracing it (prevents relapse into prior state).

Create and Lead Teams

- Develops high-performance teams by establishing a spirit of cooperation and cohesion for achieving goals.
- Quickly takes teams out of the storming and norming phases and into the performing phase

Assess Situations Quickly and Accurately

- Takes charge when the situation demands it.
- Makes the right things happen on time

Foster Conflict Resolutions (win-win)

- Effectively handles disagreements and conflicts.
- Settles disputes by focusing on solving the problems, without offending egos.
- Provides support and expertise to other leaders with respect to managing people.

Project Management

- Tracks critical steps in projects to ensure they are completed on time.
- Identifies and reacts to the outside forces that might influence or alter the organization's goals.
- Establishes a course-of-action to accomplish a specific goal.
- Identifies, evaluates and implements measurement systems for current and future projects

Implement Employee Involvement Strategies

- Develops ownership by bringing employees in on the decision making and planning process.
- Provides the means to enable employee success, while maintaining the well-being of the organization.
- Develops processes to engage employees in achieving the objectives of the organization.
- Empower employees by giving them the authority to get things accomplished in the most efficient and timely manner

Coach and Train Peers and Subordinates

- Recognizes that learning happens at every opportunity (treats mistakes as a learning event).
- Develops future leaders by being involved in the company mentoring program.
- Provides performance feedback, coaching, and career development to teams and individuals to maximize their probability of success.
- Ensure leadership at every level by coaching employees to ensure the right things happen.
- Ensures performance feedback is an integral part of the day-to-day activities

Professional or Individual Competencies

These are the skills and knowledge needed to direct the systems and processes that a leader controls. Professional Competencies form the mortar that binds the pyramid together. Without some knowledge of the technical skills that they direct, the pyramid soon begins to fall apart and the organization begins to operate in damage control mode.

Each organization requires a different set of professional competencies for each leadership position. Although leaders do not need to be the Subject Matter Experts (SME) for the tasks that they direct, they must have a basic understanding of the systems and processes that they control. Again, each position requires a different set of skills and knowledge

Business Acumen

- Reacts positively to key developments in area of expertise that may affect our business.
- Leads process improvement programs in all major systems falling under area of control

Technical Competency

- Completes tasks according to established standards.
- Understands and adheres to rules, regulations and code of ethics.



From the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC)

Copyright 1999 by Donald Clark
Created August 1, 1999

Updated September 5, 1999

