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**Individual Leadership Development Plan**

*Part 1: Self-Assessment*

**What is an Individual Leadership Development Plan?**

An Individual Leadership Development Plan (ILDP) helps you:

* Assess your leadership skills, interests, and values,
* Make a plan for achieving your personal and professional leadership goals,
* Communicate with your supervisors/mentors about your evolving plan and needs

There are many different ways to write an ILDP, but the central concept is consistent: the ILDP is a process through which you reflect, plan, and discuss in order to achieve personal and professional leadership goals. The responsibility is yours to develop and maintain your ILDP. Since you own it, you choose which parts to share with your mentors and supervisors. Here are the steps of the Individual Leadership Development Plan:

It includes step-by-step instructions, a self-assessment questionnaire, and forms for writing goals. You will want to revisit your ILDP at least annually – ideally, much more frequently - to update and refine it as your goals change or come into focus, and to record your progress and accomplishments.

**STEP 1: Conduct a Self-Assessment**

Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner ask simple questions about the fundamentals of leadership in their perennial best-seller, The Leadership Challenge. They assert that we follow people we believe are credible – competent, honest, forward-thinking, and inspirational. Most people are drawn toward someone they would willingly work for, enjoy working with, and want to work harder for.

What effect does credibility have in terms of behavior? Through their research, Kouzes and Posner found that when people perceive their immediate manager to have high credibility, they are more likely to:

* Feel pride in telling others they are part of the organization
* Have a strong sense of team spirit
* See how their own personal values are consistent with those of the organization
* Feel ownership in the outcomes of the organization

Having strong leadership credibility goes beyond just employee attitudes; customers and investors are also influenced by credibility. So how do leaders become the kind of leader that people want to follow? They demonstrate competency in six key disciplines of leadership: Discover Yourself, Appreciate Your Team, Affirm Shared Values, Develop Capacity, Serve a Purpose, Sustain Hope

# **Self-Assessment: Quantitative Section**

The six disciplines of credible leadership are described and listed below, along with specific competencies in each of those discipline. It’s time to take a baseline assessment of your competency with each of the items below. Remember that competency isn’t defined in terms of “good” or “bad” / “knowledgeable” or “ignorant”. It is about how you would be able to handle that item at this moment. Therefore, use the scale below to help guide you on where your current state is - - in steps 2 -5, you will develop a plan for building competency in each discipline

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| **NOVICE (NOV)** | **ADVANCED BEGINNER (ADV BEG)** | **COMPETENT (COMP)** | **PROFICIENT (PROF)** | **EXPERT (EXP)** |
| Unlikely to be successful unless highly supervised | Likely to be performed at acceptable level | Fit for purpose, although may lack refinement | Fully acceptable standard achieved regularly | Excellence achieved with relative ease |

The purpose of this tool is to help you identify areas of strength that you can leverage and areas you would like to develop further, so be honest in your self-assessment.

**Discover Yourself**

Your ability to earn and sustain personal credibility depends first and foremost on how well you know yourself. It depends on how well you know your values and beliefs, your skills and deficiencies, what success means to you, and the level of commitment you are willing to make. The better you know yourself, the better sense you can make of the often incomprehensible and conflicting messages you receive daily . . . to genuinely know the level of commitment you are willing to make you must discover and develop three aspects of yourself: your credo, your competencies, and your confidence.”

* Credo: The set of values and beliefs that serves as a guide to your decisions and actions
* Competencies: The knowledge, skills, and abilities that you use to transform your words into action
* Confidence: The will to make use of those skills

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|  | **NOV** | **ADV BEG** | **COMP** | **PROF** | **EXP** |
| Clarify Your Personal Credo |  |  |  |  |  |
| Let Your Values Be Your Guide |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evaluate Your Values |  |  |  |  |  |
| Acquire Competence |  |  |  |  |  |
| Believe You Can Do It |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sum It Up as Character |  |  |  |  |  |

**Appreciate Constituents**

The credibility-strengthening process begins with clarification of beliefs, but only by being constituent-oriented can you ultimately become trustworthy. A firm credibility foundation can be established only when you truly understand and appreciate – even embrace – the aims and aspirations of your constituents.

Organizations with adaptive, performance-enhancing cultures outperform nonadaptive, unhealthy ones precisely because of their emphasis on attending to all of their constituencies.

* Constituencies: The customers, stakeholders, employees

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|  | **NOV** | **ADV BEG** | **COMP** | **PROF** | **EXP** |
| Shift Focus from Self to Others Through Values |  |  |  |  |  |
| Learn About Others and How Diversity Enriches Performance |  |  |  |  |  |
| Begin Appreciation Listening |  |  |  |  |  |
| Promote Constructive Controversy |  |  |  |  |  |
| Engender Trust |  |  |  |  |  |

**Affirm Shared Values**

You never know when a crisis might arise in your community or organization, and when you will be called upon to exercise leadership. But when you are, it’s absolutely essential, especially in uncertain times, that you have … a set of shared values to guide you and the confidence that others will respond positively to them. It’s equally important that the other members of your organization or community share key values

Credibility is not just a function of clear *personal* values. That’s the starting place. But for leaders’ organizations to have high credibility, all members must align with *shared* values. Leaders build commitment to those values, and they get people to see themselves as part of a larger whole – as part of a community in which survival and success depend on a common understanding of purpose and principles

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|  | **NOV** | **ADV BEG** | **COMP** | **PROF** | **EXP** |
| Use Shared Values to Make a Difference |  |  |  |  |  |
| Find Common Ground |  |  |  |  |  |
| Create a Trusting Community |  |  |  |  |  |
| Advocate Cooperation and Reciprocation |  |  |  |  |  |
| Reinforce Shared Values Through Organizational Systems |  |  |  |  |  |
| Reconcile Value Dilemmas |  |  |  |  |  |

**Develop Capacity**

Credible leaders know that they have to continuously develop the capacity of their constituents to put shared values into practice. When individuals, teams, departments, and organizations grow more able to perform their jobs and keep their promises, not only are their reputations enhanced, the leader’s credibility also grows. As a leader, in order to grow your own asset base, you have to invest in others.

Five essential components go into developing capacity so that everyone can act in a free and responsible way:

* Competence: The knowledge and skill to do what we say we are going to do
* Choice: The latitude to make decisions based on what we believe should be done
* Confidence: The belief that we can do it
* Climate: The culture that encourages risk-taking and experimentation, accepting mistakes as a chance to learn
* Communication: Information about what is going on, in order to keep up to date

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|  | **NOV** | **ADV BEG** | **COMP** | **PROF** | **EXP** |
| Build Competence: Educate, Educate, Educate |  |  |  |  |  |
| Offer Choices, Foster Ownership |  |  |  |  |  |
| Foster Confidence |  |  |  |  |  |
| Create a Climate for Learning |  |  |  |  |  |
| Share Information, Give Feedback |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ensure That Everyone Becomes Responsible |  |  |  |  |  |

**Serve a Purpose**

Credible leaders serve a purpose and they serve the people who have made it possible for them to lead. They put the guiding principles of the organization above all else and then strive to live by those principles … in serving a purpose, you strengthen credibility by demonstrating that you are not in it for yourself but instead have the interests of the institution, department, or team and its constituents at heart.

The truth is that you either lead by example or you don’t lead at all. Credible leaders walk the talk. They don’t ask others to do something that they wouldn’t do themselves. Credible leaders hold themselves accountable to the same set of standards as they hold others.

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|  | **NOV** | **ADV BEG** | **COMP** | **PROF** | **EXP** |
| Go First |  |  |  |  |  |
| Stay in Touch |  |  |  |  |  |
| Make Meaning, Daily |  |  |  |  |  |
| Become a Storyteller |  |  |  |  |  |
| Regain Credibility Lost |  |  |  |  |  |

**Sustain Hope**

When leaders uplift spirits and restore people’s belief in the future, they strengthen their own credibility. Constituents want leaders who demonstrate an enthusiastic and genuine belief in the capacity of others, who strengthen people’s will, who supply the means to achieve, and who express optimism for the future. Constituents want leaders who remain passionate despite obstacles and setbacks. In uncertain times, leaders with a positive, confident, can-do approach are desperately needed in business and in life.

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|  | **NOV** | **ADV BEG** | **COMP** | **PROF** | **EXP** |
| Take Charge |  |  |  |  |  |
| Balance Hope and Work |  |  |  |  |  |
| Arouse Positive Thoughts and Images |  |  |  |  |  |
| Unleash Your Passion |  |  |  |  |  |
| Give Love and Support |  |  |  |  |  |

**Self-Assessment: Qualitative**

As part of the self-assessment process, ask yourself some questions related to your current and future leadership responsibilities and requirements. Doing so will lead you to actions or goals to incorporate into your plan. Your aim is to develop skills that will lead to your success in your current position and prepare you for future leadership opportunities.

**What are your current leadership responsibilities and requirements?**

1. Where would you like to see yourself in the next 2 years?
2. Kouzes and Posner suggest that “building and sustaining credibility ultimately means being a perpetual learner”? What would you like to learn in order to help yourself build credibility and become a better leader? What steps could you take to make this happen?
3. Are there specific leadership development activities you would like to accomplish or work toward during the next year? Two years? (Examples: join a professional organization, attend a training, become better educated in a specific area, take on a new task, participate on a task force or committee, volunteer…) What support might you need?

Notes:

**What are your leadership aspirations?**

1. What type of leader would you like to be? Which of the credible leadership disciplines resonate most for you as a leader?
2. What competencies are required in order for you to be/become that leader?
3. How well do your values match the competencies required for being that leader?
4. What are your short-term goals related to leadership development? (Examples: learn about facilitating constructive conflict, exploring diverse perspectives within my field, find out where leaders in my field are demonstrating outstanding leadership, learn where people who share my values are working, volunteering, advancing leadership.)
5. How will you develop contacts--a network--related to your leadership development goals?

**Interpreting the Quantitative Section of the Self-Assessment**

Take a moment to consider your responses from the Quantitative Section. Note competencies where you feel most competent (rated PROF or EXP) and least competent (rated NOV or ADV BEG). In each discipline box, note any specific competencies to which you feel committed to developing; these will be used in goal-setting later in the ILDP.

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|  | **NOV** | **ADV BEG** | **COMP** | **PROF** | **EXP** | **High or Low Priority?** | **Energizing or Draining?** |
| **Discover Yourself** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Appreciate the Team** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Affirm Shared Values** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Develop Capacity**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Serve a Purpose** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Sustain Hope** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Interpreting the Qualitative Section of the Self-Assessment**

Take a moment to consider your responses from the Qualitative Section. Which of your responses line up with the disciplines or specific competencies, particularly in areas you are energized by and/or have marked as high priority?

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| **Discover Yourself** |  |
| **Appreciate the Team** |  |
| **Affirm Shared Values** |  |
| **Develop Capacity**  |  |
| **Serve a Purpose** |  |
| **Sustain Hope** |  |