

YOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Based on Kouzes & Posner – The Leadership Challenge

IDENTIFY YOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Complete the Leadership Practices Inventory self-assessment tool on pages 2 and 3. Be completely honest with yourself when you answer, and consider how those you lead would respond. When you have completed the self-assessment, look at the results:

- What Strengths are revealed? Are there any patterns that emerge?

- What areas of development are apparent? Are there any patterns that emerge?

FOCUS YOUR DEVELOPMENTAL EFFORTS

If you want to be a better leader, you must work on all of the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. We recommend that you begin with the areas in which you need the most improvement – because it's often easiest to begin making improvements in areas that you don't engage in frequently.

To improve your weaker areas, make use of your strengths. For example, let's say that you have a low score on the item, "I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like," and one of your highest scores is on the item "I actively listen to diverse points of view." You could use your strength – active listening – to discover other's hopes, dreams, aspirations, favorite stories, and metaphors. By integrating their hopes and metaphors into your expression of a vision of the future, you can make it more compelling to others.

- Where would you most like to focus your efforts in improving your use of the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership?

- Which practice is your highest development priority, and which is the lowest? Order the practices in terms of your developmental priorities, with one (1) being your highest priority area and five (5) being your lowest:

___ Model the Way ___ Inspire a Shared Vision ___ Challenge the Process
___ Enable Others to Act ___ Encourage the Heart

- Looking at the self-assessment results in your top two areas of developmental priority, circle the three to five behaviors that represent your most immediate priorities, and write them here:

Leadership Practices Inventory

Circle the number that best represents the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Strongly Disagree
1 _____

Somewhat Agree
3 _____

Strongly Agree
5 _____

Model the Way

Agreement

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I set a personal example of what I expect of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people's performance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I am clear about my philosophy of leadership. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Inspire a Shared Vision

Agreement

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I paint the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Challenge the Process

Agreement

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. I ask “What can we learn?” when things don’t go as expected. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Enable Others to Act

Agreement

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I actively listen to diverse points of view. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I treat others with dignity and respect. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I support the decisions that people make on their own. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Encourage the Heart

Agreement

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I praise people for a job well done. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I find ways to celebrate accomplishments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

IMAGINE YOUR IDEAL FUTURE SELF

Given the practices and behaviors on which you want to focus your developmental efforts, imagine that you're executing them significantly more effectively than you are currently. Describe your ideal image of yourself with respect to these practices and behaviors. Write a positive statement that describes the situation and the way you are behaving in your imagined future. For instance, let's say that you selected as one of your developmental areas, "I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like." Imagine yourself one year from now doing just that. You might write:

"Whenever I talk about our department's direction, people will comment on how positive and enthusiastic I am about our future. I will become more personally peaceful by not letting the little things I can't control detract me from the work; I will be realistic about facts but confident about possibilities, etc. etc. "

Use the space below and the back of this page if needed to write descriptions of your ideal image of yourself for two of the developmental areas you've identified:

OVERCOME BARRIERS AND CONCERNS

Before you can develop the best possible plan for improving as a leader, you not only need to understand your developmental needs, but you need to know what might be inhibiting you from fully engaging in that behavior. Before you choose the actions you'd like to improve, it's essential to be honest with yourself about what's getting in the way of doing them right now. Maybe you aren't doing something right because you didn't realize it was important ... maybe you don't have the skills or haven't been trained to do it. Maybe you're resisting because you like being in charge and you don't want to give up control.

What gets in the way right now of achieving your ideal image? Check any of the following that might be creating barriers for you:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of training and development opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited access to good role models | <input type="checkbox"/> Absence of a supportive manager or climate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being seen as weak | <input type="checkbox"/> Few opportunities to take on challenging assignments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of losing control of my team | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear that if I rock the boat it will be seen as a threat to the hierarchy |

- Other barriers you see:

- What thoughts do you have about how you might overcome these barriers?

- How can you leverage and build on your strengths to overcome the barriers to make yourself an even better leader?

PLAN NEXT STEPS

To achieve your ideal image of yourself as a leader, you need to take actions that will help you learn to lead. Research and experience indicate that there are three fundamental ways we learn to lead effectively:

1. ***We learn from experience.*** There's no substitute for learning by doing. Whether its facilitating your team's meetings or leading a special project, the more chances you have to serve in leadership roles, the more likely it is that you'll develop the skills to lead – and the more likely that you'll learn the important leadership lessons that come only from the failures and successes of live action. What experiences do you need in order to develop your leadership potential?

2. ***We learn by example.*** Other people are excellent sources of guidance: parents, teachers, coaches, co-workers, mentors, managers, and friends. Think about the people who've given you advice and support, filled you with curiosity, believed you had promise and inspired you to do your best, offered feedback about your behavior and its impact, and taught you the ropes. Who can serve as a positive role model to assist you in achieving your ideal leadership image?

3. ***We learn in formal educational settings.*** Training and other classroom opportunities can improve your chances of success. Studies show that the best leaders are the best learners – they don't pass up the chance to take a course when that's the best way to learn a skill. What formal training do you need in order to improve your skills as an effective leader?

COMPLETE YOUR PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP PLANS

Complete your Personal Leadership Plan and your Organizational Leadership Plan, and review it daily so that you follow through on your commitments to yourself and to those you lead.

MAKE A PUBLIC COMMITMENT

From the myriad of developmental possibilities you've generated, select the critical few with which you want to start. These are not going to be the only things you do to become a better leader; these are just the actions you're going to take immediately and over the next few weeks. Learning to lead effectively is a lifelong pursuit, and all we are asking for right now is a commitment to continuing your learning from this experience.

On the next page is a "Commitment Memo" on which you will record your initial commitments so that you can "go public" with them.

- First, pick a partner from the class – this is the person to whom you'll write the Commitment Memo and with whom you'll follow up once a week for the next three weeks.
- Once you've made an agreement with one person to be one another's partner, take a few minutes to write down your near-term action development commitments – ones that you'll take over the next three weeks.
- When you both have finished recording your commitments, get together and communicate what you're each going to do. Ask questions for clarification to make you understand one another's commitments.
- Make an agreement to get together in person, and schedule meeting times.
- After this session, make a copy of your Commitment Memo and send it to your partner so she or he has a copy to review prior to your meeting.

COMMITMENT MEMO

TO:

Today's Date:

FROM:

RE: **MY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTION COMMITMENTS**

To continue improving my capabilities as a leader, I commit to take the following actions over the next twenty-one days:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

To get the process started, tomorrow morning I will take this first step:

Sign your name: _____

Phone Number:

e-mail address: