Priority Learning

ProLead: Measuring Success in Leadership
Using a clear methodology to develop leaders

The age-old question goes something like this: are leaders born or are they made? We select, train, develop, nurture, and encourage leaders, and yet we are still in awe of some leaders who have the innate ability to inspire followers. These leaders have foresight, instinctively do the right thing, and stand tall when weaker managers collapse under the pressure of bad ideas. Over the years, researchers like Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, authors of *The Leadership Challenge*, have worked extensively to qualify and quantify leadership characteristics. However, even with all this good work, we are sometimes lured by the "smartest kid in the room" syndrome. We see skills, abilities, and knowledge as leadership traits and miss the true leadership qualities that inspire followers.

The **ProLead**™ system that follows is both a product and a process for leaders wishing to improve their performance, skills, and behaviors. It starts with a self-assessment, followed by feedback from their colleagues, and finally a plan to make changes. ProLead can inspire changes in building strengths and limiting unproductive or self-defeating behavior.

Measuring Characteristics
ProLead consists of eight leadership characteristics that are critical for success. Each characteristic has corresponding skills and behaviors. Skills are **observable actions** that demonstrate what leaders do. Behaviors are **intrinsic motivations or qualities** that describe how leaders use or implement their skills.

The ProLead Process
1. A facilitator works with the employee and the supervisor to describe the process and gain understanding of the meaning of the skills and behaviors.
2. The employee and the supervisor both assess the 40 skills and 40 behaviors of the employee, using a scale of 1 = low and 5 = high.
3. The employee and the supervisor meet with the facilitator to develop areas of success and future growth.
4. The employee and the supervisor create a plan based on small, attainable steps to achieve some successes.
5. Those steps are implemented and documented.
6. The two parties meet again and continue to build plans until success has been seen, measured, and reinforced.

ProLead 8-Category Leadership Process
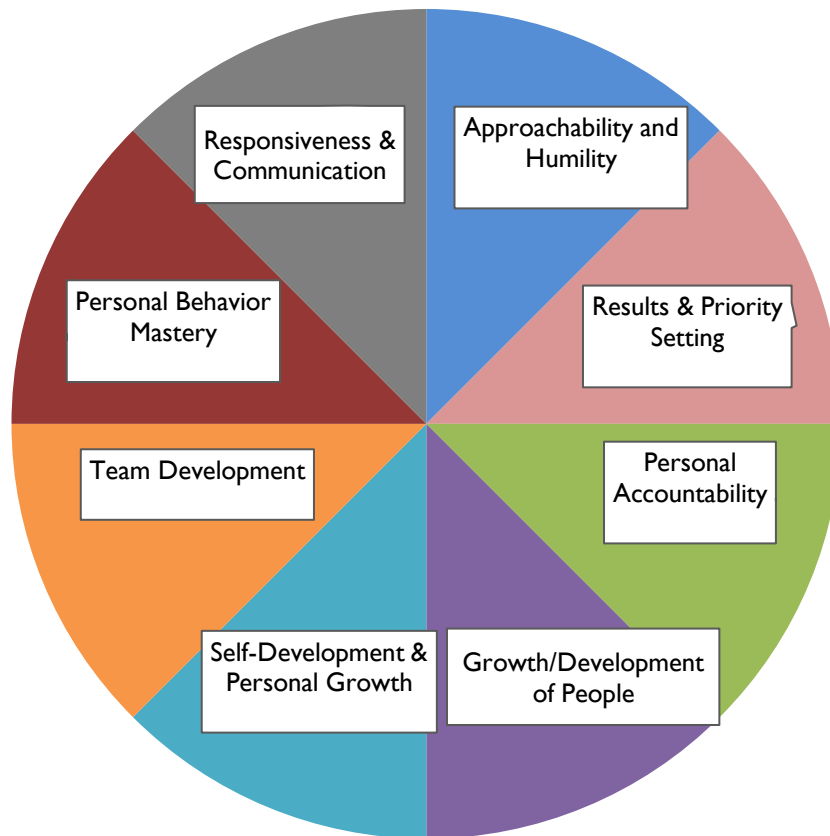
Element 1: Personal Behavior Mastery

Personal Behavior Mastery is taking a creative/entrepreneurial approach to running your business and displaying humility, energy, determination, and hunger for learning. Personal mastery is guided by principles of vision, purpose, creativity, truth, and self-awareness.

Skills and Behaviors Matrix: Personal Behavior Mastery

Manager	Self	Skill	Behavior	Self	Manager
		Demonstrates business knowledge	Demonstrates a "learning every day" attitude		
		Has a personal vision	Sets a high level of energy around the work		
		Shares ideas and encourages creativity	Experiments with ideas and creative processes		
		Challenges the status quo	Stretches 10% outside of the comfort zone		
		Seeks mentors for learning and development	Shares the learning with others		

Personal Behavior Mastery—SKILLS

Demonstrates business knowledge: People want their leaders to be highly knowledgeable of their industry and business practices; this helps to engender credibility and trust. The core concepts of business are take care of your internal and external customers, continuously develop your people, make good financial decisions, and have a viable product or service with growth potential. Despite these basic principles, leaders often stumble and fall as the result of either ignorance of good practice or not enough personal discipline to make it work. It takes discipline, patience, and perseverance to stay current, active, and engaged in business trends and cycles.

Has a personal vision: A key characteristic of a good leader is someone who is forward-thinking, someone with a compelling vision that others share. In business, it is important to have a clearly articulated vision with measures for success. For good leaders, this process starts within and with a personal vision. Leaders who have a strong personal vision and the discipline of self-reflection to continuously check and refine that vision can put those skills to use in the workplace to build a shared vision with others.

Shares ideas and encourages creativity: It is essential to create a system to collect and track your, and others,' ideas. This can be done formally or informally, what is important is capturing, honoring, and following-through on those ideas.

Challenges the status quo: There is an old saying, "If it isn't broken, then don't fix it." Some people respond to our ever-changing environments by perpetually "firefighting" without seeming to get ahead, while others simply resist change at every turn. Change is the only real constant in our lives, so leaders are tasked with finding out each day what is broken and fixing it, or metaphorically

"breaking" things in order to improve them. Some find the practice of breaking things to be annoying, scary, or just unnecessary but real growth comes through proactive change.

Seeks mentors for learning and development: We are not in this world alone, and we cannot solve our problems alone. Great leaders know when, how, and who to ask for help along the way. It is a sign of humility, builds trust, and creates strong relationships. We all need feedback about our performance, and we need trusted advisors to guide us. Great leaders seek the knowledge and counsel of others.

Personal Behavior Mastery—BEHAVIORS

Demonstrates a "learning every day" attitude: Learning is a fundamental need in all of us. Approach work and life with curiosity and show others the energy you have around learning. There is a perception that we are valued for what we know, but our greater value is in our curiosity, patience, energy, and willingness to learn. It is an attitude and behavior that will make you a better leader.

Sets a high level of energy around the work: Positive energy is contagious, and work is supposed to be fun, so share your enthusiasm with others. We usually serve good customers, make good products, and work with other good people. Get a little energy in your step, smile, talk about why things are important, and share your positive philosophy.

Experiments with ideas and creative processes: Despite the prevalence of the phrase, "No risk, no reward," we generally don't take enough risks. Take a chance by letting people stretch themselves, take a chance by building a relationship you thought was lost, or take a chance by trying an idea even though you are not fully convinced it will work. Being "right" every time can get in the way of the creative process. Try new things, let people experiment, and encourage your people to take risks.

Stretches 10% outside of the comfort zone: Anyone who trains for a physically demanding activity understands the idea of stretching yourself beyond your comfort zone each time you exercise. This push beyond comfort is what makes us stronger, increases our endurance, and gives the body new flexibility. The hidden benefit is what it does for our psychology; we feel better, gain confidence and optimism, and exude behavior that attracts people. We need to push beyond our comfort and overcome the fear that comes with the attempt. Be aware of times when you feel "too" comfortable, that is the sign to push a little harder.

Shares the learning with others: We frequently hear the phrase, "Knowledge is power," but this truism can be used as an excuse to hoard your knowledge in order to maintain power. Eventually, organizations rebel against the idea that someone can hold them hostage for what they know, and the people around you resent you for not sharing what you know. These days the internet, television, smart technology, and more can give you an answer to just about anything, so here is an opportunity to lead. When someone wants to learn something you know, give that knowledge freely and without an agenda. When you have the chance to educate others, facilitate a discussion, or share your knowledge, do it with humility and honor their desire to learn.

Element 2: Results & Priority Setting

Results & Priority Setting are about knowing what is expected, hitting those expectations, communicating expectations to others, and holding others accountable, all through routine checks. It is about determining what is most important and accomplishing results in a way that is aligned with the organization's needs.

Skills and Behaviors Matrix: Results & Priority Setting

Manager	Self	Skill	Behavior	Self	Manager
		Creates organized systems	Manages change effectively		
		Delegates appropriately	Inspires action from others		
		Sets priorities	Shares information and follows up		
		Aligns work with organizational goals	Communicates with other departments		
		Builds clear agendas and processes	Hits deadlines		

Results & Priority Setting—SKILLS

Creates organized systems: Effective leaders and managers can work within existing systems and make key systems elements their areas of responsibility. This ability at working with "what is" defines many leaders. This skill, coupled with the ability to handle and lead change, eases the minds of followers and makes for smoother, more predictable results.

Delegates appropriately: Delegation is both science and art, and personal mastery of delegating not only increases a manager's effectiveness but heightens an employee's personal and organizational value. Good delegation creates increased learning, agility in the workplace, and flexibility for people. Leaders need to strategize effectively and create consistency in the delegation process.

Sets priorities: Leaders need to be expert at setting priorities long-term, daily, and sometimes hourly. Too often we hear, "I don't have time," and find out later that it is less about time management and more about proper communication around appropriate priorities. It is essential for leaders to be good at choosing tasks and spending time on the things that give them and their organizations the best chance of success.

Aligns work with organizational goals: Good leaders balance the everyday work tasks with the big picture vision of where the organization is going. They help their people determine priorities so that the important work aligned with the bigger goals is getting done. Leaders are able to align their department goals to those of the organization, and they look for synergy across departments. Leaders have a clear vision of how the work connects to the organizational goals and can motivate their teams around those goals.

Builds clear agendas and processes: You may think people know all that you know, but if you are attending meetings and hearing from sources they don't hear from, you will be mistaken. Let people

know what is going on all the time. One way to do this is to build clear agendas and processes with your team around meetings, communication, workflow, timelines, and expectations.

Results & Priority Setting—BEHAVIORS

Manages change effectively: Change is a way of life in every organization. Change is the only real constant in any business, either profit-based, nonprofit, or not-for-profit world. The leader's ability to eliminate resistance, overcome objections, and transition individuals and teams into a continuously changing environment is vital to personal success.

Inspires action from others: Inspiration comes from personal belief and displays of energy. People follow people who "believe" and when the leaders roll up their sleeves and demonstrate that belief system, it becomes contagious. We are finding that this behavior is no longer seen as optional anymore, it is what companies expect from their managers and leaders.

Shares information and follows up: What differentiates this from other communications categories is the element of "willfulness." The will to share is a characteristic of trustworthy, loyal colleagues. Often it is not enough to simply explain the basics, your people want you to go deeper. Sometimes we assume that the audience already knows everything we do, so we don't explain more. If you don't communicate enough, you will be seen as withholding or secretive.

Communicates with other departments: Leaders need to share ideas and information across the organization. When done properly and consistently, the leader's credibility and the department's visibility go up. Good leaders create solid systems for communications that can be applied routinely.

Hits deadlines: Meeting deadlines is the minimum standard of behavior expected from leaders. When deadline management skills are applied, and the leader is even routinely early in meeting deadlines, the whole department adopts a mindset of responsibility and timeliness.

Element 3: Self-Development & Personal Growth

Self-Development & Personal Growth are continuous learning cycles. Leaders must develop intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, and behaviorally. People change, times change, business changes, and every day we must learn new ways to be more effective.

Skills and Behaviors Matrix: Self-Development & Personal Growth

Manager	Self	Skill	Behavior	Self	Manager
		Builds an individual growth plan	Displays the courage to grow		
		Aligns goals with personal potential	Trusts oneself		
		Sets attainable, small goals	Tries new things		
		Is resourceful	Researches and asks for clarity and support		
		Documents successes and challenges	Finds success		

Self-Development & Personal Growth—SKILLS

Builds an individual growth plan: Building an individual growth plan is a systematic way to structure your development. There are three parts to an individual growth plan: 1) review your past progress, 2) define the current state of your development, and 3) determine a plan for the future that is built upon your goals and vision. If you want to have the most effective experience, involve your boss. S/he will, no doubt, have an opinion and you may be surprised at the added benefit of having a partner in your plan.

Aligns goals with personal potential: What is your potential? The question is more than rhetorical because the answer will determine what you do for your own growth and development. How do you find out about your potential? A conventional approach includes various indicators and diagnostics, but you also should identify things that look fun, challenging, interesting, and that you have the heart for. When you understand your potential, you will be able to set challenging goals that align with your values and vision.

Sets attainable, small goals: For some reason, we feel like we need to build Rome in a day, but any real change is built on making small steps toward that change. Things that are done in small, bite-sized chunks are easier to achieve, and even small successes should be celebrated. Consistent success with small goals builds confidence and momentum toward achieving great things.

Is resourceful: An important element of self-development is being able to find and use the best resources that are available. Staying current of industry trends, being a member of professional organizations, seeking new training and development opportunities, and finding and sticking with a good mentor or coach are all ways to be resourceful.

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Documents successes and challenges: Personal score-keeping is part of development and it is critically important that leaders recognize both successes and challenges. We tend to look at what doesn't work, which can discourage growth in an instant. Look for successes and build on them. Documentation of your plan and your steps helps you see where you have been and where you are going. Documentation also allows you to share your plan and progress with others and helps to gain their support.

Self-Development & Personal Growth—BEHAVIORS

Displays the courage to grow: It takes courage to ask hard questions about oneself and to commit to a plan for change and growth. The formula for leadership success is part personal energy, discipline, and drive, along with the personal belief that you really can achieve your goals. Growth involves gaining feedback, doing research, plus soul-searching around your potential. The process begins with the energy to quantify the behaviors that will create success, and then enthusiastically building these behaviors into habits. The final element is to repeat the process, adding new behaviors all the time. As a leader you need to believe that you can; your example is the purest form of leadership.

Trusts oneself: Early in our careers, we are dependent upon others for direction, guidance, and even timing. As our careers grow, we continue to need mentoring and coaching from others, but it is important to set our own standards for success. It is likely that you will set those standards higher than others will. Every day you need to earn trust, it is your job as a leader to involve your others, learn their expectations, and gain their confidence in your abilities. You build trust with others, trust yourself a little more, and repeat the cycle. One day, you will find that others want you to trust them.

Tries new things: If you look at people who have attained success, you will find one common theme: they took a chance. For leaders, this is not an occasional occurrence but a routine, and with it comes occasional failure. Sometimes we define ourselves by the things we tried and came up short on. Leaders who attain real success always have "war stories" that turn out to be the events that made them stronger. The leader who rewards thoughtful trying is someone who gets maximum creativity, initiative, and potential from others and from themselves. *"Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore."* Andre Gide

Researches and asks for clarity and support: When embarking on a personal growth plan, it is important to find and use the best resources available. It is also important to build a network of support, so share your plans with your boss, your colleagues, your family. A strong social network that can support your plans can make your goals easier to achieve. Ask questions, ask if you are on the right track, and ask for help when you stumble. People will be eager to help.

Finds success: If you do a lot of things, a fair amount of those things will be imperfect, messed up, or completely wrong. In the long view of your career, it really doesn't matter. You will be judged by the body of your work, so getting it "just right" each time is less important than learning from each and every event. Good or bad, there is always something to be learned, so the next time ask: What did I learn that I can apply next time? Then be sure to share that learning with others. Sharing the learning demonstrates humility but also benefits the other person and cements the new behavior firmly in your mind.

Element 4: Personal Accountability

Successful leader holds oneself responsible for the results of the organization in a way that invites personal ownership. That accountability translates into making decisions that serve the best and greater interest of the organization and its people.

Skills and Behaviors Matrix: Personal Accountability

Manager	Self	Skill	Behavior	Self	Manager
		Makes thoughtful, grounded decisions	Takes personal ownership for mistakes		
		Sets expectations for self and team	Leads by example		
		Creates attainable goals aligned with organizational vision	Shares the vision consistently		
		Implements strategies for others' involvement	Is available when needed		
		Defines what accountability looks like	Shares and celebrates results		

Personal Accountability—SKILLS

Makes thoughtful, grounded decisions: Decisions can be made in three ways: directive, consultative, or collaborative. All three ways are effective if used at the appropriate time and with the right audience. Directive decision making is quick and ownership for the decision falls exclusively on the leader. Directive decision making should be a used when time is short, knowledge is limited, and when you absolutely need to act. When time, knowledge, and goals change, so should your decision-making style. You will create buy-in and ownership from others around decisions when you listen to their input and provide opportunities for their participation.

Sets expectations for self and team: Creating crystal-clear expectations are important for success and require a good process. Putting names to timelines, numeric expectations, and tasks to be done is part of good management. In addition to work tasks, it is crucial to set expectations around behaviors, teamwork, and personal development. These expectations play an equal role in task expectations in performance management conversations.

Creates attainable goals aligned with organizational vision: We live in a world of instant gratification and so we expect to get everything "now." A systematic, measured approach to achieving short and long-term goals aligned with organizational vision the work of good leaders. Sometimes the larger organizational vision can feel overwhelming until plans based on small, attainable steps are put in place. Incremental steps lead to sustainable success and helps people recognize everyday achievements in the context of the bigger picture.

Implements strategies for others' involvement: Strong leaders understand that action is accomplished through the involvement of others, that you can't do it all on your own. If you include

others in the plan, they will feel ownership and will complete strategies more often. Get people involved early and often and give them opportunities to implement their own ideas. This will build successful teams.

Defines what accountability looks like: Effective managers are good at identifying and hiring responsible people, and at creating the processes for responsible people to hit their goals every time. The details of setting up deadlines, assigning responsibility, and supporting people with good follow-up is critical. In addition to responsibility around work tasks, good leaders set expectations around behaviors, lead by example, and hold others accountable for their own behaviors.

Personal Accountability—BEHAVIORS

Takes personal ownership for mistakes: Leaders take all the blame when things go wrong, give away all the credit when things go right, and every day they "own" everything they touch. Leaders know that ownership means being honest and true to the successes as well as the failures. When people feel that their leader "has their backs" they are more likely to take risks and to learn from those experiences. Great leaders show humility, ask for help, and celebrate, rather than hide, their mistakes, knowing that mistakes are what lead to growth.

Leads by example: We hold leaders in high regard and follow their example more than you realize. We watch and listen to our leaders more closely than we do with other colleagues. Their moods impact our moods. Great leaders understand this role and accept that responsibility. As a leader, your language, approach, beliefs, and behavior are under the microscope all the time. Strong leaders are consistently good role models.

Shares the vision consistently: Sometimes we are so busy with our daily tasks that we lose sight of the larger goals and vision of the organization. Good leaders balance the small tasks with the big picture. They can be inspirational when people feel stressed by the day-to-day work, and they can help plan the details when the vision feels fuzzy or unreachable. By consistently communicating the vision, leaders keep their teams on task and motivated.

Is available when needed: If people are unwilling to approach you, you will have no followers. When people feel you are unapproachable, they will be reluctant to come to you with ideas and concerns, and you will not be able to create a collaborative work environment. Being available is more than just an "open door policy." It means that you are present and that you listen. That you guide more than direct, and that you take the blame when things go wrong. Good leaders know when to jump in and do the work, and they know when to back off and let their people shine.

Shares and celebrates results: People do things right most of the time, and they enjoy hearing about their successes. Unfortunately, too many managers catch the mistake first and acknowledge the success second. The leader who shares and celebrates success knows that positive reinforcement helps to motivate people. Good leaders spend most of their time thanking people, acknowledging others, and presenting successes.

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Element 5: Growth & Development of People

While personal growth is the responsibility of the individual, leaders who guide and coach others make the growth process work. Possessing the ability and willingness to help people develop is one of the unique and precious gifts of real leaders. This leadership approach builds morale, increases effectiveness, and stretches people in ways that benefit both the individual and the organization.

Skills and Behaviors Matrix: Growth & Development of People

Manager	Self	Skill	Behavior	Self	Manager
		Recognizes talent and potential in others	Believes that others can achieve		
		Assists others in building their individual growth plans	Inspires others to grow		
		Acts as a mentor or coach for others	Follows up with consistent feedback		
		Helps others set attainable, small goals	Encourages people to try new things		
		Documents successes and challenges	Celebrates the success of others		

Growth & Development of People—SKILLS

Recognizes talent and potential in others: This element is a skill that can be taught, learned, and refined. Spotting talent and potential requires an open mind, some vision, the nugget of a plan, and the willingness to invest in others. Good leaders see the potential in others and align that potential to new job responsibilities and learning opportunities that encourage growth. They also follow up and track progress, help when others stumble, and celebrate when they succeed.

Assists others in building their individual growth plans: Building individual growth plans is a systematic way to structure development with the individual. There are three parts to a growth plan: 1) review the past progress, 2) define the current state of the person's development, and 3) determine a plan for the future that is built upon a goal that benefits the individual. Helping others build their plans can increase clarity and accountability.

Acts as a mentor or coach for others: Most people like step-by-step plans, and a good leader will help people see where to begin, to know what to expect next, and to proceed on their own. Leaders also act as coaches, asking provocative questions that help people understand their goals and motivations. As coaches, leaders also providing encouragement and support, advice, and guidance, and help people stay on track when the path becomes difficult.

Helps others set attainable, small goals: Early enthusiasm for change can lead people to set their sights high, but without a realistic plan, those goals can quickly seem unachievable. Good leaders help people to define small, step-by-step actions that will lead, over time, to achieving those bigger goals.

Documents successes and challenges: This is the "keeping score" part of development and it is critically important that leaders balance successes and challenges. We tend to look at what doesn't work, which can discourage growth in an instant. Look for successes and build on them. Documentation helps you make a case for the person's continued growth and your continued investment in them.

Growth & Development of People—BEHAVIORS

Believes that others can achieve: People are constantly amazing. They live their lives in extraordinary ways and do amazing things. Everyday people that we interact with raise children with disabilities, care for returning soldiers, volunteer in soup kitchens, give time money and parts of their very souls to causes and values that would shock and humble you. The capacity to achieve is hard wired into each of us whether we are 15 or 80. Most people simply need something to believe in to stretch in impressive ways. As a leader you need to believe that they can. Leaders must also have patience with others to learn and catch up, to grow each day, to learn from the mistakes they make.

Inspires others to grow: Leadership has many functions, but at the top of the list should be the ability to inspire others to do great things. Leaders who cannot do this are eventually going to be relegated to management roles. You notice potential, plant the seed that they can become extraordinary, listen to their concerns, and become their advocate as they complete the work. If you let people set their own standards for success, they will set them higher than you might. While people need to earn trust every day, it is the leader's job to trust the motives, values, and ideals of people until proven wrong. This is not easy because you will always be in some danger of having that trust violated.

Follows up with consistent feedback: The biggest mistake leaders make when developing their people is to not follow through on the process. After doing the work of identifying potential, asking questions around goals and motivations, and developing a detailed plan, it is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day work and not follow up. Consistent check-ins with specific feedback about progress is essential for people to grow and achieve their goals. Leaders who stick with their people through the process builds accountability and sets people on the path to success. People will work toward their goals if they know, and see, that their leader is actively engaged and supporting them.

Encourages people to try new things: Fear of failure leads to fear of trying, and fear of trying leads to sleepwalking safely through life. The old saying goes, "no risk, no reward," which is absolutely true. If you look at the people who have attained success, you will always find one common theme: they took a chance. People will be more willing to take risks if they trust their leaders and do not fear judgement or punishment in the wake of a mistake or failure.

Celebrates the success of others: We like to ask, "what went wrong" when we should ask, "what did we learn?" We have become accustomed to punishing mistakes, when instead we should honor the risktaker and learn something that will make life easier in the future. Leadership is defined as giving the credit when things go well, and good leaders are always first to celebrate others' success. People don't need big incentives to succeed; they need awareness and thoughtful recognition from their leaders.

Element 6: Team Development

Harnessing the power of individuals to a unified cause is critical to competitive strength, flexibility, and success in business. Leaders who nurture the team and place the team first create value within the organization. It is important for leaders to understand team dynamics and to be skilled in building and managing teams.

Skills and Behaviors Matrix: Team Development

Manager	Self	Skill	Behavior	Self	Manager
		Understands team dynamics and behaviors	Puts the team first, before self		
		Creates team member roles, expectations, & accountability	Shares leadership roles in the team		
		Challenges the team appropriately	Inspires teamwork by creating a safe environment		
		Assesses the team frequently	Celebrates teamwork behaviors		
		Shares team successes and failures openly	Gives team members a voice in the organization		

Team Development—SKILLS

Understands team dynamics and behaviors: Understanding how teams develop over time and guiding that development patiently is a key element of leadership. Each team forms itself around a common goal, then learns ways to maximize their potential and measure success. All teams have conflict and fights for control. Teams begin to have success when roles are established, and members learn to use each other's skills in supportive ways.

Creates team member roles, expectations, and accountabilities: There is an old saying, "We are only as strong as our weakest link." Leaders establish roles, expectations, and accountabilities and review them frequently. Everyone needs a role in the team, and those roles should be routinely examined and changed. As a leader, it is important to develop and cultivate deeper roles and build stronger accountabilities for the members.

Challenges the team appropriately: Team roles, expectations, and accountabilities should be set at an appropriate challenge level. Harnessing individual strength and creating collaborative environments are built on pushing people and teams outside of their comfort zone. Pushing too hard can cause burnout but posing no challenge at all can result in complacency. When the team sees the collaborative success, they will work harder together. At some point, your team will achieve success, and your bosses will start to notice that it is *you* who is leading this successful team. This is the time to leverage the success and become proactive in anticipating future challenges.

Assesses the team frequently: When was the last time you took the team's temperature? It is important to check in with the team often. A quick survey that asks for feedback about vision, roles, relationships, trust, contribution, communications, etc. can be used routinely to benchmark your

progress. Teams like the process and quickly learn to use the survey to provide leadership with needed feedback.

Shares team successes and failures openly: We learn from both successes and failures, and the more open we are, the better we become. Turn everything into a learning experience. This requires leaders to have a clear sense of communication balance. We are successful more often than we fail, so make sure you are discussing the successes and what can be learned just like you would a team failure. Success should be celebrated and leveraged to utilize all the team members' strengths.

Team Development—BEHAVIORS

Puts the team first, before self: We are taught to advocate for ourselves first, so this one doesn't come easily for some people. When you speak to people, refer to the greater good, the process of compromise, and letting the best ideas win. Look for common ground with the other members of the team and talk things out instead of becoming impatient and proclaiming a mandated solution. This element requires leadership; for example, the leader must put the team first. It is also important to set expectations and to hold the team members, and especially yourself, accountable to those expectations. This gets easier for most leaders as time goes by and one-on-one work with team members is a good approach.

Shares leadership roles in the team: Once the team has experienced some success, it is important to allow other team members to take stronger leadership roles. Strong, flexible team leadership allows the team to rise to any occasion and shows nimbleness and resilience. Let others lead meetings, educate the group, present ideas, and deliver those ideas to leadership elsewhere in the organization. Have the members take an active role in delivering learning elements and creating accountabilities for what is learned. Team members should be experts in human behavior, communications, negotiations, conflict, and much more. It is important to involve the team in determining what it needs.

Inspires teamwork by creating a safe environment: Inspiration is a big piece of the team leader's job. We need to talk about it, live it, practice it, get better, and model teamwork with our own leadership colleagues. Remember that others are watching and want very much to follow your lead. Get excited about a new project, show energy, and listen enthusiastically, and others will do the same. Great leaders also create a safe environment where each team member feels heard, valued, and respected. Team members will be more likely to take risks if they know their leader supports them and will not punish them for mistakes.

Celebrates teamwork behaviors: This is an easy one for most leaders; rewarding team behavior will honor the individual and will encourage others to be equally good. People love attention, and this is the right kind. Find the extraordinarily silent contributor, the angel's advocate, the supporter, the workhorse; find what each member brings to the team and celebrate that. Also, look for the times of real collaboration and celebrate the whole team.

Give team members a voice in the organization: Great leaders give the credit for success to the people doing the work. They find the opportunities to put their teams into the spotlight. Look for ways to give your team members more visibility in the organization, ask them to attend meetings, make presentations, and work with other departments. The more the team members are known throughout the organization, the greater impact the team will have as a whole.

Element 7: Approachability & Humility

Approachability is about openness, availability, and making yourself accessible to others. Humility is the quality or condition of being humble; having a modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance, rank, etc. Approachability requires leaders to be transparent and patient with others, regardless of personality. Wanting this open communication without an agenda, and the willingness to meet others on their terms, brings humility to the situation and generally makes the difference between success and failure.

Skills and Behaviors Matrix: Approachability & Humility

Manager	Self	Skill	Behavior	Self	Manager
		Creates an atmosphere of approachability	Is available and open		
		Encourages questions and ideas from others	Listens to understand and asks questions		
		Handles challenges appropriately	Demonstrates steady and consistent behaviors, even under stress		
		Knows the personalities of the team	Manages biases and favoritism		
		Lets others know that you want to hear from them	Expresses positivity and empathy		

Approachability & Humility—SKILLS

Creates an atmosphere of approachability: Let people know that you want their ideas, input, and thoughts, and when they give them to you, thank them and honor the risk they took. You don't have to use their ideas, but they deserve to hear what you plan to do. Keep doors open as often as possible. Be available and stay on schedule so people know when you will be present and let people know that there are no secrets.

Encourages questions and ideas from others: The way to encourage questions and ideas is to ask lots of questions and ask people for their ideas, then to follow through effectively. Be kind and patient and stay engaged when people come to you. Consider your physical space as well. Your desk is a barrier if you sit behind it and the audience is kept on the other side; you don't want your office to be perceived as the place where people go to be sanctioned.

Handles challenges appropriately: Good leaders have high emotional intelligence. This means they are aware of their emotions and manage them appropriately. Leaders are also aware of others' emotions and can build strong relationships. Work is full of challenges, successes, setbacks, and stress. People look to their leaders for how to handle the ups and downs of the workplace. They trust their leaders when they see honesty, fairness, and decisive action.

Knows the personalities of the team: There is an abundance of resources available to most leaders focused on personality. Instruments like DiSC and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator are online and available to almost anyone who wants to learn. Understand and share your personality profile and learn about other personalities and ask lots of questions. Please note that these tools are general

tools of preference and are not an exact science, if you appear to know too much about someone's personality it may scare them away.

Lets others know that you want to hear from them: As the boss, you may think that your people know that you want to hear from them. This is something that needs to be communicated over and over, and not just in words. Smile when someone approaches. Thank people who come and share an idea with you and follow up with them later to let them know how important it is. Talk to others and use examples of people who have shared ideas and input as champions.

Approachability & Humility—BEHAVIORS

Is available and open: Here are some do's and one don't:
1. Do wander around and be relaxed. Smile and say good morning.
2. Do stay positive and talk about the possibilities instead of the limitations. Find something right instead of finding things wrong all the time.
3. Do support your team, your boss, and your organization.
4. Do tell people what you want and expect from them and from yourself.
5. Always take the blame, give away the credit, and own everything all the time.
6. Do listen and be interested. This one is easy if you simply remove the clutter from your brain and concentrate on one person at a time.
7. Do be grateful to those who preceded you, those who believe in you today, and those who gave you the opportunity to lead. Leading is a gift.
8. Do remember that you work for "them."

Don't be the person whose schedule is so full that they are never around.

Listens to understand and asks questions: Leaders share knowledge, resources, people, and learning, but more importantly, leaders listen to others. Good leaders know they cannot do the work and achieve the goals on their own. They sincerely want and need the ideas of others. Leaders know how to listen thoughtfully, how to ask good questions, and how to engage with others. Being willing to learn from others is a hallmark of humility.

Demonstrates steady and consistent behaviors, even under stress: An inconsistent leader creates stress within the team. People look to the leader for emotional and behavioral cues of how to respond in any situation. Good leaders share their emotions, but in a non-threatening way. They stay calm and cool under pressure, and they are consistent in their overall outlook and temperament. This requires self-awareness and discipline but creates a safe environment for teams to thrive.

Manages biases and favoritism: We all have favorites and biases, and others see them long before we do. In order to see these things for ourselves, we need good feedback from peers, superiors, and subordinates. Study and understand your biases and work hard to minimize their impacts. Finally, avoid others' biases expressed to you and be very careful how you express your opinions to others. Remember, you may be wrong, and your biases really can hurt others.

Expresses positivity and empathy: Part of creating a safe environment for your team is to show empathy. When we can understand how another person feels, even if it is different from how we may feel, and when we can truly see things from another's point of view, we open new ways to communicate. Also, people respond to positivity. They want their leaders to be inspiring, hopeful, and optimistic, and they are motivated by positive awareness of and responses to their work.

Element 8: Responsiveness & Communications

Getting back to people quickly, using various methods to convey information based on the end user's needs, and the willingness to be transparent are hallmarks of superior leaders. Leaders should be tireless in the pursuit of open, complete, and consistent communications.

Skills and Behaviors Matrix: Responsiveness & Communications

Manager	Self	Skills	Behaviors	Self	Manager
		Demonstrates open and direct communication	Demonstrates transparency and willingness to share		
		Is timely in responding and in following up	Is open to the needs of others		
		Uses appropriate written and verbal language	Proofs written communication and email		
		Is aware of one's own communication style and impact	Knows what to say and when to say it		
		Knows the communication styles of others	Uses the right communication methods for the context		

Responsiveness & Communications—SKILLS

Demonstrates open and direct communication: People need to know what is going on around them. Anxiety builds when people feel like things are happening behind their backs. Good leaders know the right information to give at the right time to keep people informed. Being open, honest, clear, and direct are essential skills for leaders. People are more willing to trust their leaders when they feel they are getting true statements in a timely manner.

Is timely in responding and in following up: Do you get back to folks quickly with appropriate responses when you have the information? Do people cite you as someone they can always count on to respond? Do you take pride in your response time and keep up with correspondence? Do you do what you say you will when you say you will do it? Do you take the extra step of making sure others know they are a priority?

Uses appropriate written and verbal language: Do you speak and write in a professional manner? Can you construct sentences and choose words that resonate with an audience? Do you get good feedback on the quality of the words you use and the complete nature of your written communications? Email and texting have created new shortcuts in our language, making the ability to write well more essential than ever. Using clear and direct language with good grammar, avoiding slang and jargon, and checking for understanding is a requirement of leaders today.

Is aware of one's own communication style and impact: Is your communication style consistently polite, thoughtful, appropriate, and timely? Can you write an effective email and are you a good judge of what should go out by e-mail and what should be a phone call or face-to-face interaction? Do you know when to provide information and the appropriate level of detail? Are you good asking

others to communicate clearly with you? Conflicts with others often center around different communication styles. Good leaders know their own tendencies, understand what others need, and can adjust their style to meet those needs.

Knows the communication style of others: The key to good communication is understanding the styles and needs of others. In order to be heard, we should consider how we communicate and if that is effective. An awareness of different communication styles and the ability to shift one's own preferences to meet the needs of others can go a long way in easing tension and getting the message across effectively.

Responsiveness & Communications—BEHAVIORS

Demonstrates transparency and willingness to share: Are you willing to share all the information necessary to be successful? Do people need to tug and pull on you to get the information they want? Do you strive to make sure that you are providing all the information that can be given? Are you working consistently to provide the background and research, and to anticipate the needs of all involved? Do people trust you and your information? Do they trust you to tell then what they need to know at the right time? Do you communicate with people on an equal basis, without bias or concern for their positions and authority?

Is open to the needs of others: Do you act and respond sincerely to the needs of others in the communications process? Are your listening skills complete and so people come to you because you are open to their needs?

Proofs written communications and email: Take the time, often just a moment or two, to proofread your written communications, even text and email. We spend a lot of time correcting mistakes and misunderstandings when they can be easily avoided. Tone is hard to read in an email, so read your words over to check for meaning. If it is an important communication, ask someone to read it and provide feedback. Bad grammar and poor writing skills can undermine your professionalism, so take the time to check your work.

Knows what to say and when to say it: More people have perished due to lack of restraint than have ever flourished because they stood their ground. The ability to read others, to know the appropriate moment to stand up and bring a difficult issue forward is critical in successful careers. It is hard for leaders to know when to follow and let a better idea win. If hearing your own voice and ideas are more important than listening to another person's views, trouble cannot be far away.

Uses the right communication methods for the context: Do you adjust your style of communications to meet the needs of the individuals you communicate? Do you seek out what others need for communications and ask for their feedback regarding the quality and quantity of the information provided? Good leaders know when to communicate via text, email, phone call, or face-to-face. The communication method should be determined by the type of information being delivered. Basic information can be sent via email, but topics of goals, vision, and performance should be communicated face-to-face. We often fall back on our communication preferences, or avoid the tough conversations, but this skill of matching communication method to the context is a hallmark of a good leader.