+ Resources

Career Development Check List

The following check list can be adapted according to your individual needs. It should be revisited periodically (at least once every six months) in order to check that you are on course to achieve your career development objectives.

1 How long do I want to be in my current job?

2 What results do I need to show by the time I move on?

- Key achievements

- New or enhanced experience

- New or enhanced skills

- Other

3 Where do I aim to be in five years' time?

4 What action do I need to take now in order to get there?

5 Where do I aim to be in ten years' time?

6 Is there any action I need to take now in order to ensure that my longer career objective is achievable?

Simple "To Do" List

Description of Task	Priority	Result Needed	Deadline

Presentation Check List

1 What's the purpose?

2 Who are the audience, for example:

- How many?
- Where from?
- How much experience?

3 What will the audience expect to get out of it?

4 What are my specific audience-based aims and objectives?

5 What's the setting like, for example:

- Type and size of room
- Seating arrangements
- Equipment

6 Method to be used (e.g. PowerPoint, Talk book; etc.).

7 Length of presentation (normally 20 minutes maximum).

8 Key points to be included in the content.

9 Anecdotes and examples to be used.

10 How will I begin the presentation and draw the audience in?

11 How will I end the presentation?
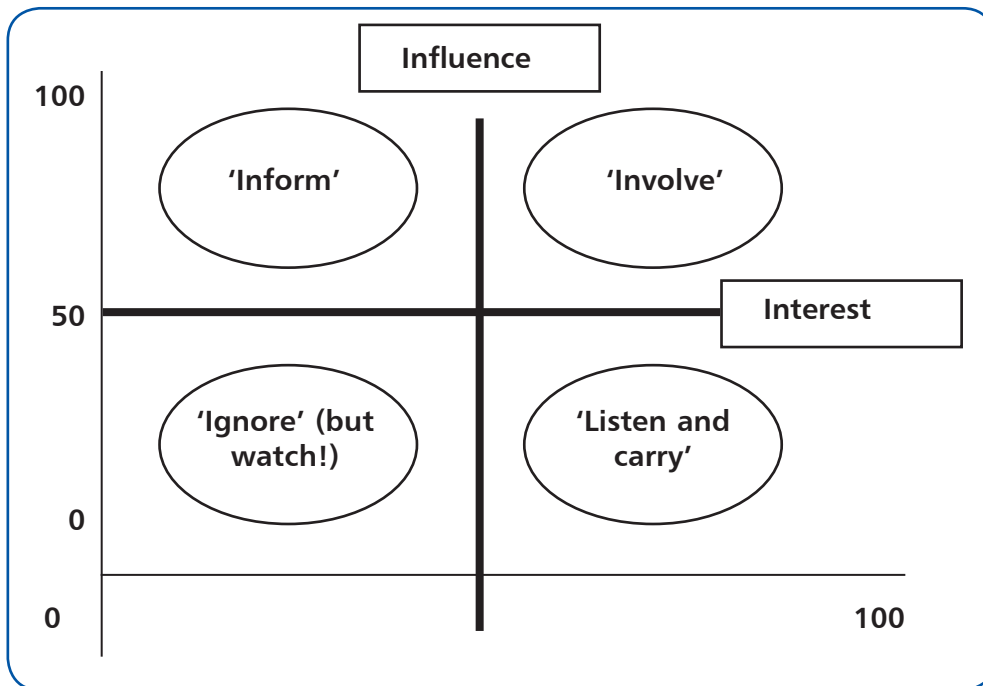
Stakeholder Analysis

A simple two-axis diagram can provide a useful structure for prioritizing attention to relevant stakeholders. In identifying stakeholders, remember to include both internal and external ones.

The axes show "influence" and "interest": respectively, how much that individual or organization can affect what happens, and how much they are affected by what happens. Each stakeholder should be given a position somewhere on the diagram. If the diagram is put onto a flip chart, whiteboard or large sheet of paper where it can be preserved and accessed, stakeholders' positions can be moved over time to mimic the dynamism of reality, and new stakeholders can be added as necessary.

The diagram can be set up in the following way, with the vertical axis representing a scale from no influence at all to exceptional or overriding influence, and the horizontal axis from no interest at all to exceptionally strong interest:

The amount of influence and/or interest that each stakeholder has may change over time.

Risk Register

Every project carries some element of risk. It's important to identify the risks:

1 Assess each one for probability and impact.

2 Consider possible countermeasures or contingency action.

It's important that these are proportionate to the risk.

A risk register, reviewed and updated at regular intervals, is a useful way to record, assess and track risks:

Risk	Probability	Impact	Owner	Countermeasures	Status

Explanations
Risk: Brief description (or ID) of each risk (or obstacle) identified.

Probability: Rank: VH (very high), H (high), M (medium), L (low), VL (very low).

Impact: Rank: VH (very high), H (high), M (medium), L (low), VL (very low).

Owner: Name of the individual responsible for monitoring the risk and taking any necessary countermeasures.

Countermeasures: Description of countermeasures or contingency action identified.

Status: The current state of play.

Risk Profile

A risk profile can provide an overall picture of risks and help to highlight those in respect of which countermeasures are most necessary.

For example, if five risks have been identified these could be numbered (1 to 5) and entered in the following table, with assessments for probability entered vertically and for impact horizontally:

Probability						
	Very high					
	High					
	Medium					
	Low					
	Very Low					
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

Impact

Gantt Chart

	January	February	March	April	May
Activity A					
Activity B					
Activity C					
Activity D					
Activity E					

Appraisal Interview Check List

The following check list can be used to prepare for an interview appraising individual performance:

1 What evidence is there of performance during the past year? Identify tasks that have been accomplished:

- Exceptionally well

  and/or

- Unsatisfactorily

Be specific and factual.

2 What factors can you identify that have affected performance (for good or bad)? Divide these into internal factors (i.e. within your own organization) and external factors.

3 Identify new tasks and objectives for the forthcoming year, and put these in order of priority. Aim to reach agreement with the interviewee on a list of SMART objectives.

4 Is there any training or other support that could help the interviewee to further improve performance in the job?

5 Is there anything you might suggest that would help the interviewee's longer-term career development?

Negotiation Check List

Purpose of negotiation

Ideal outcome

Fall-back position

Bottom line

Key facts and figures

Killer arguments

Key individuals

Supportive:

Hostile:

Uncertain:

Option Appraisal Check List

1 Identify options.

2 List the pros and cons of each option.

3 Establish criteria:

- cost

- practicability

- effectiveness

- acceptability to stakeholders and staff

- speed of implementation

4 Rank each criterion according to its importance (say, on a scale of 1 to 5).

5 Consider each option in turn and go through each criterion, awarding points (say, from 0 to 10) according to the extent to which it satisfies that criterion.

6 Multiply the points awarded by the weighting given to each criterion.

7 Put the results into a table or onto a spreadsheet for ease of comparison.

8 You can now see which option best meets your criteria.

If there is very little to choose between your top options, don't be constrained by the arithmetic. Be guided by your experience and instinct.

EFQM Excellence Model

The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model, used beyond the boundaries of Europe, is an assessment tool that allows an organization to be compared against best practice. It can be thought of as a large check list to help an organization identify its strengths and weaknesses in a systematic way.

The model has nine criteria: some (enablers) relating to how an organization does things, and others (results) to what the organization achieves in quantified terms:

Enablers

1 Leadership

2 Policy and Strategy

3 People

4 Partnerships and Resources

5 Processes

Results

6 Customer Results

7 People Results

8 Society Results

9 Key Performance Results

The EFQM Excellence Model can be applied either to an organization as a whole or to individual units within an organization. It is most commonly used as a self-assessment tool, but some organizations have commissioned independent assessments based on the model.

Balanced Scorecard

The balanced scorecard is a performance measurement, management and reporting framework that enables managers to look at the business from four key perspectives:

- The customer perspective – how do our customers see us?

- The internal business perspective – which processes and competencies do we need to excel at?

- Innovation and learning perspective – how can we continue to improve and excel?

- Financial perspective – how do we look to our financial stakeholders?

Within these four perspectives the organization decides on a series of objectives that are considered to be critical to success. Progress towards these objectives is then tackled through specific measures and targets, with specific initiatives being taken to deliver the improvements necessary to achieve the targets.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis identifies Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. It is a simple and versatile tool that can be used for organizations, parts of organizations, or individuals.

Strengths and weaknesses refer to the present state. Opportunities and threats refer to the future.

Here are some examples of questions that might be asked when conducting a SWOT analysis:

Strengths

- What is done well?

- What are your advantages?

- What unique features or characteristics are in your favor?

- Consider such questions (a) from your own perspective and (b) from that of others.

- Be realistic but modest.

Weaknesses

- What is done badly?

- What are your disadvantages?

- What could be improved?

- What should be avoided?

Again, consider (a) from your own perspective and (b) from an external perspective – others may spot weaknesses that you do not.

Be realistic and face up to any unpleasant truths.

Opportunities

- What are the trends?

- Where might future opportunities arise?

Consider, for example, likely changes in:

- Government policies

- Economic developments

- Market trends

- Technology

- Social or demographic patterns

Threats (include risks and obstacles)
What obstacles are there?

- How might these change in the future?

- How are others likely to react?

- Assess risks for probability and impact.

Consider: prevention, reduction, contingency action or acceptance.

Don't
forget

Remember: action to
control risk must be
proportionate to the risk.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	**Threats**

Interview Assessment Sheet

A simple method of assessment is to prepare, for each candidate, a sheet of paper with three columns, listing each of your selected criteria. Remember that you may want to give more weight to some criteria than to others.

Name of candidate:

Criterion	Evidence/comments/observations/ relevant factors	Assessment (NS/S/EWS)*

NS = Not satisfied

S = Satisfied

EWS = Exceptionally well satisfied

Further Reading

Agile Project Management in easy steps *by John Carroll & David Morris*

Business Coaching in easy steps *by Jon Poole*

Developing your Career in Management *by Jeremy G. Thorn*

Effective Business Writing in easy steps *by Tony Rossiter*

Effective Communications in easy steps *by Nick Vandome & John J. C. McVey*

Effective Negotiations in easy steps *by Tony Rossiter*

Effective Project Management in easy steps *by John Carroll*

Effective Time Management in easy steps *by John Carroll*

Embracing Change – Essential Steps to Make Your Future Today *by Tony Buzan*

Giving Great Presentations in easy steps *by Drew Provan*

How to be a Civil Servant *by Martin Stanley*

Leadership in easy steps *by Jon Poole*

Leading Change *by John P. Kotter*

Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail *by R. Meredith Belbin*

Public Speaking in easy steps *by Drew Provan*

Team Roles at Work *by R. Meredith Belbin*

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People *by Stephen R. Covey*

The 80/20 Principle: The Secret of Achieving More with Less *by Richard Koch (Nicholas Brealey Publishing)*

The Effective Executive: The Definitive Guide to Getting the Right Things Done *by Peter F. Drucker*

Web Design in easy steps *by Sean McManus*

Your Secret Self: Understand Yourself and Others Using the Myers-Briggs Personality Type *by Barbara C. Cox*

Working with Emotional Intelligence *by Daniel Goleman*

For further information from the author, visit:
www.tonyrossiter.co.uk

Excerpt from Leadership in easy steps...

Being True to Yourself

In Chapter 1 we stressed the importance of being yourself rather than merely trying to mirror others' leadership styles. This sounds easy to do, but does make the assumption you fully understand and appreciate who you are in the first instance.

Nature vs. nurture

Much is written on the subject of personality and, in particular, the 'nature vs. nurture' debate. That is, are you the person you are because of 'nature' – i.e. the genetic coding that you were born with – or due to 'nurture' – i.e. the way you were brought up and the experiences that you have encountered and learnt from throughout the various stages in your life?

The answer is, you are who you are due to a complex combination of both nature and nurture, and you should be proud of the resultant personality you have become. This is one of the main reasons why, in terms of becoming a leader, you should try to be yourself rather than trying to be someone else.

Look back to your childhood

Because your personality has gradually developed based on a combination of genetics and the experiences in your life, you'll probably be able to recall important moments in your life – especially from your childhood – where some of your early thinking, values and motivations started to take shape.

Think back to your childhood now, and try to recall the types of games and activities that gave you the greatest satisfaction. Now, try to relate these to work and the activities you enjoy the most.

You may notice that there are similarities in some of your favorite activities and the work you enjoy. We'll explore this some more later in this chapter.

Hot tip

Looking back at some of the games you played as a child can help you understand why you enjoy doing the things you do in your work life today.
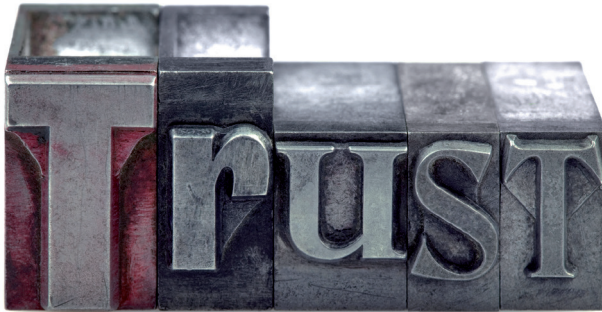
...cont'd

Be genuine

One of the critical elements of being an excellent leader is trust. You need to be able to have trust in those who work for you and with you. Most essentially, others must have trust in you – it cannot be a one way thing.

Trust is a fragile thing that can only be built over time but with the possibility of being lost in an instant following, perhaps, just one careless comment or act. The people who interact with you have learnt who you are and will be acutely aware of any changes in your behaviors and actions.

If you aren't genuine – attempting to be someone who you are not – they will be quick to see through your facade or act and will be immediately on guard.

Tell them what you're doing

If you have an open enough relationship with those who you work with, you should be able to make them aware that you are working on aspects of your leadership. Ask them for help by:

- Giving you feedback on any positive changes they notice.

- Letting you know if any of the changes don't appear genuine.

- Letting you know of changes they would like to see happen.

- Hopefully supporting you and encouraging you – after all, these changes should ultimately benefit them!

Beware

You cannot expect others to trust you if you are not prepared to demonstrate a level of trust for them – it works two ways.

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Behind Excellent Leaders

Behind every excellent leader... well, behind every one of us, in fact, is a highly complex and constantly changing mix of personality elements that make up 'you'. These include aspects such as:

- Your personality traits or predispositions.

- Your personal values and beliefs.

- Your behavioral strengths and weaknesses.

- Your prime motivators or drivers.

- Your knowledge and skills sets.

- Your experience and capabilities.

All of the above elements play an important role in helping to define the person you are and also your resulting leadership style.

Understanding yourself

Over the next few pages we will explore each of these elements in turn and the interrelationships between them. We will also help you understand their potential impact on your role as a leader and, most importantly, help you determine your own strengths and possible weaknesses relating to each element.

Only when you start to explore and understand these underlying elements of personality that drive the things you do, can you then be true to yourself and become a natural and genuine leader.

Exercises

From time to time, we will suggest exercises to help you discover more about yourself. You don't need to work through all of these. Feel free to dip in to those you think may help. In addition, in Chapter 10, you'll find references to a number of online resources where you can access more in-depth information and analyses relating to various aspects of your personality.

Don't forget

It may help your understanding to attempt some of the exercises within this book. Some may need you to reflect over a number of days or even weeks in order to fully understand yourself.