

Essential Core Competencies for the Modern-Day Leader

A White Paper by National Seminars Training





Essential Core Competencies for the Modern-Day Leader

There is a saying that some people are natural-born leaders. In fact, most leaders today work hard learning how, and developing their skills, to work with others in order to effectively motivate and inspire. Thousands of books and articles focus specifically on the skill sets required for competent leadership. This brief article provides an overview of 10 important competencies necessary for leading.

1. Communicate.

Creating an environment of performance and success requires the elements of sharing information and interaction. Most people working on a team are willing to do the work if they understand its purpose and receive feedback on the influencers and progress.

2. Develop followers and other leaders.

A leader succeeds when he or she develops a structure that supports the overall objective. It is impossible to function in all necessary roles within a team. No leader is strong in every skill aspect of the business, nor can he or she be everywhere at one time. Effective leaders understand the need to utilize the individual strengths that exist within a team. Positioning strengths throughout the team creates opportunities for all team members to act as followers or leaders, depending on the current focus and need.

3. Focus on key issues and goals.

Competent leaders understand the value of prioritizing. They teach their teams the benefit of focusing on important issues by role modeling attention to the strategic objectives and primary matters that relate to the main mission and goal. Leaders can be overexposed to unnecessary information that distracts from current priorities.

4. Cultivate strong relationships.

Dedication. Commitment. Trust. History. Camaraderie. These words describe the important bond between leaders and their followers. Competent leaders earn their positions to lead others when they work to develop relationships with people.

5. Be decisive

Sometimes the win comes from the ability to pick a direction and go. Too many times, a team will fail due to a failure to act. A leader's role is to evaluate options and direction, and then choose. A team's decision-making capabilities and skills will be determined based on the pace of the leader.

6. Be confident.

It is not the leader's responsibility to know it all or be perfect in his or her thinking and action. Competent leaders allow for a reasonable margin of error, help others learn from their mistakes, and are comfortable considering ideas that conflict with their own. Their confidence comes from understanding it is not their job to have all the answers, but to consider alternative options.

7. Be optimistic and encouraging.

Leadership requires the willingness to consistently have high expectations of self and others. It depends on the willingness to help people understand the objectives of their jobs, allow them to make their own commitments, and encourage them to reach in new directions.

8. Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior.

Integrity and ethics are the common competencies listed as most essential for management and leadership effectiveness. People want to be led by someone who tells the truth and whose actions parallel the organization's core beliefs and value system.

"Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy." — General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

9. Manage conflict with diplomacy and tact.

Facilitating cooperation and collaboration as the norm is a key responsibility in a leadership position. Leaders must maintain constant communication, commit to an open exchange of information, show respect, and demonstrate a willingness to give, even when they do not receive information and assistance.

10. Maintain personal and professional balance.

A leader's effectiveness increases when he or she understands the need for balancing priorities, perspective, and life activities. Leaders serve their team members when they recognize the purpose of working and how it supports and enhances overall self-fulfillment and satisfaction of the individual.

Although these core competencies are important contributions to a leader's overall success, each leader will have his or her own style of leadership. How each utilizes these competencies will set him or her apart as unique and will define that leader's impact on the people they lead.

Appendix A: The Complete Learning Center Model

While an effective training program will be anchored with a dynamic IDP system – it can't end there. The training director needs to take a big-picture view, recognize the other tools in the toolbox and analyze how to best apply each tool for optimal training program results. That's where the *Complete Learning Center* model comes in.

Whether it's declining revenues, increasing complexity, or changes in workforce demographics, organizations face unprecedented challenges in work-force development. Powerful new technology promises solutions, but how do you pick the right approach and, can you even afford it? On top of it all, attention from the executive suite is higher than ever.

It's easy to fall into "flavor of the month" thinking, either in terms of a specific challenge or solution. But in doing so you lose sight of the big picture and risk committing to a strategy that may be ineffective, narrowly focused, or inflexible, thereby costing your organization time, money, and the frustration of unmet expectations.

This also leaves you vulnerable. By focusing in a reactive manner on putting out the most pressing fire, you can't respond to the challenge that may be coming in from the side, nor plan with how to deal with ones that are coming in the future.

Consider this quote from CLO Jeffrey Vargas: "In this business you have to be both focused and flexible. There are no absolutes in the learning world; at any time funding profiles can change or mission priorities may be enhanced, so your success is based, in part, on your ability to adapt to change."⁶

This necessity of adapting to change is what drives the need for a new model for keeping your training program in proper balance so you anticipate changes, respond to them, and deliver the needed training results for your city. The *Complete Learning Center* model was developed in order to help you find and maintain that critical balance in your training strategy.

The model incorporates best practices of training program managers as observed by organizational research, industry journals, proprietary surveys and our 30 years of experience in working with clients across all industries.

By employing a new model towards training and development, the *Complete Learning Center*, you can position your organization to generate opportunity out of the current challenges you face and be well-positioned to respond to future shifts in demographics, technology, and municipal initiatives. Furthermore, the *Complete Learning Center* model can help you identify multiple areas for improvement and enhancement in your training program, allowing you to harvest low-hanging fruit while planting seeds for tomorrow.

The Complete Learning Center Model



For more information on the Complete Learning Center model – please visit nationalseminarstraining.com/completelearningcenter

⁶ T + D February 2012

About Us

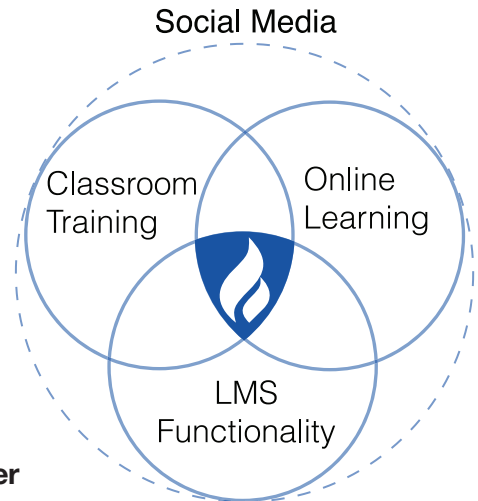
For 30 years, National Seminars has been one of the nation’s leading providers of employee training and development solutions to companies and organizations across North America. Our focus is on providing interactive, skill-building learning solutions for business, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to close knowledge gaps and address specific performance challenges – for performance improvement that lasts.

The experience and versatility of our staff enables us to help clients in a variety of industry sectors including:

- Corporate administration
- Manufacturing
- Federal, state and local government
- Insurance
- Construction
- Financial services and banking
- Higher education
- Health care
- Retail
- Not-for-profit

Our mission is to provide the results-producing training you need, when and where you need it, that is cost-effective to you and your organization. In the past year alone we’ve provided more than 6,000 seminars ... 300 webinars ... more than 2,500 on-site training days ... and more than 75,000 STAR12 passes.

Our offering of Classroom Training, Online Learning, LMS Functionality and Social Media solutions allows us to provide *Complete Learning Center* solutions for our partners. Including the following:



For more information on the Complete Learning Center model – please visit nationalseminarstraining.com/completelearningcenter

To speak to one our Training Consultants about how you can build a Complete Learning Center for your organization, please contact:

Paul Vrana
913-432-7755
pvrana@natsem.com

Aaron Claar
913-432-7755
aclaar@natsem.com