

Leading Now, Leading for the Future[®]
Defining the Competencies required of Successful Leaders

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Are you showing up as a leader for your practice? Is there leadership depth within your practice organization? What is the value proposition of leadership competencies for your practice? What is the profile of a successful leader? As your practice continues to flourish, you should be thinking about what leadership skills and behaviors can contribute to superior performance from all employees and positively impact a practice's bottom line. Defining the leadership competencies that are distinctive to your practice will help you to create and sustain a competitive advantage.

As a leader, you want your staff to be aligned with and own the practice's mission and values, but how do you accomplish this? Leaders continuously ask questions to probe and stimulate a better, innovative solution – a never ending inspiration to seek improvement, create buy-in at every level and celebrate the value proposition of employee contributions. The behavior is not solely found in one person. Each one of us has an internal leadership voice that can create depth throughout the organization by coaching others to actively participate both responsibly and accountably, by engaging people to make decisions and by collaborating and leveraging the talents of others throughout the practice.

The following highlights essential competencies that a successful leader needs to have and develop within the practice to drive business results now and going forward:

- Knowledge: business skills and navigating the organization - beyond business acumen, it is understanding how the practice works, what are the important business issues and drivers, how to link the people, process and programs to make the practice successful. This competency includes literacy in the language of business, a broad comprehension of financials and how do the people issues effect the business operations.
- Strategic thinking and critical analysis – embodies keeping a higher view and long term perspective when thinking about where the practice is going, not just about the daily work. Willingness to challenge the status quo, not have a preconceived notion about the answer and provide an insightful recommendation with a fresh perspective to reach a better outcome. The ability to seek information, synthesize diverse data, focus on critical issues and actionable opportunities to resolve potential problems or learn new ways of solving problems.
- Leading and managing change – leverages the positive and mitigates negative impacts of directing change initiatives. This competency balances the dichotomy of orchestrating the shift in business process, priorities, roles and expectations while managing

employees' comfort level about the change and demonstrating to them that they want to make the change.

- Effective communications – being articulate, receptive and candid in order to communicate at all levels in a way that will be heard: clearly, concisely and honestly. It underscores several other competencies including credibility, persuasiveness/influencing others and leading change.
- Credibility and Accountability – having the knowledge and experience to support one's authority and personally commits to owning and achieving agreed upon goals. Stays focused during time of ambiguity/adversity and seeks the information necessary to set the direction, make decisions and move forward.
- Performance & Results driven – metrics and measurement are important but what makes the difference is the use of these tools to reward excellence and maintain an expectation throughout the practice of achieving desired results – raise the 'bar' and help drive performance.
- Ethical behavior and Integrity – widely trusted throughout one's decisions and actions and is seen as direct and truthful. Appropriately safeguards customer and practice data. Knows to escalate issues or when events occur that impact the practice, as appropriate, up the ladder. Upholds the values, integrity and ethics of the practice at all times.
- Persuasiveness & Influencing others – uses interpersonal skills without power or authority to convince others to share one's perspective of thinking and trust while keeping other's goals in mind. Listens with the intention of learning how to think like the other person. Responds in a consultative manner that gets results through others and seeks to help others excel.
- Flexibility and Adaptability – willingness to adapt to current situations and projected changes in the practice environment by being flexible with work arrangements, how business is conducted and one's role in the practice.
- Developing Teams and Collaboration – provides feedback on how behaviors and attitudes impact relationships and the results of other team members. Puts the team and practice interests above individual self-interest in actions and decisions by supporting others in their success and sharing relevant information. Can adapt to being the leader or member of a cross-functional team.
- Innovative Solutions – nurtures ideas and breaks down obstacles to encourage more collective "a ha!" moments resulting in practical and executable solutions. Suggests the impossible, takes some risks and wrong turns to foster greater creativity.

These competencies outlined above are the knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes that are required not only of successful practice leaders but of the all practice employees in getting things done, enhancing one's professional reputation and contributing to the practice's overall growth.