MODULE #7: Individual Differences

Objectives
- Participants will identify generic leadership traits for personal leadership models.
- Participants will identify personal strength and opportunities for growth with leadership characteristics and skills.

Context

Research indicates that individual characteristics such as individual's level of cognitive ability, self-consciousness, energy/activity level, values, and tolerance for stress are correlated with the effectiveness of leadership.

Source: Atwater, L . E et al. (1999). A longitudinal study of the leadership development process: Individual differences predicting leader effectiveness. *Human Relations, 52*(12), 1543-1562

Handouts & Resources Needed:
- Handout 7.1A: Leadership Characteristics and Skills Survey
- Handout 7.1B: Scoring Sheet
- Handout 7.1C: Self-assessment for Leadership Traits
- Sheet of paper – one for each participant
- Pen/pencils
- Journals – one per student
- Handouts
- Flit chart paper

Activity #1: Identifying Personal Comfort with Leadership Traits (55 min)

Procedure:
- Icebreaker
- Ask students to assess their level of preference or comfort with leadership characteristics and skills.
- Provide and review Handout 7.1A: Leadership Characteristics and Skills Survey.
- Ask students to rate their comfort level with leadership characteristics and skills as instructed in the self-assessment survey. Once participants are finished, proceed to score the survey using the scoring sheet to interpret the results (Handout 7.1B). Ask students to identify personal preference or comfort with commonly identified leadership traits.
- Provide and review Handout 7.1C: Self-assessment for Leadership Traits Measured by Performance Dynamics.
- Ask students to read the descriptions for each commonly identified leadership trait and to rate their comfort level for each leadership trait.

- Ask participants to break into small groups of 4 or 5 and discuss the results within their groups.
- Debriefing

Leadership Characteristics and Skills Survey[1]

Introduction

This assessment is designed to provide you with feedback about your level of preference or comfort with leadership characteristics and skills.

If you have NOT performed a task before, estimate how difficult the task would be for you to learn to perform.

Circle the number on the scale that you believe comes closest to your skill or task level. Be honest about your choices as there are no right or wrong answers - it is only for your own self-assessment.

		Very Strong	Moderately Strong	Adequate	Moderately Weak	Very Weak
1.	I enjoy communicating with others.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	I am honest and fair.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	I make decisions with input from others.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	My actions are consistent.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	I give others the information they need to do their jobs.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	I keep focused through follow-up.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	I listen to feedback and ask questions.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	I show loyalty to the company and to the team members.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	I create an atmosphere of growth.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	I have wide visibility.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	I give praise and recognition.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	I criticize constructively and address problems.	5	4	3	2	1

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[1] [1] Adapted from:

Clark, D. R. (1998). Leadership Characteristics and Skills Survey. Available online Jan. 20, 2006 at: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/survlead.html

13.	I develop plans.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	I have a vision on where we are going and set long term goals.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	I set objectives and follow them through to completion.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	I display tolerance and flexibility.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	I can be assertive when needed.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	I am a Champion of change.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	I treat others with respect and dignity.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	I make myself available and accessible.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	I want to take charge.	5	4	3	2	1
22.	I accept ownership for team decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	I set guidelines for how others are to treat one another.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	I manage by "walking around" (the front line is the bottom line).	5	4	3	2	1
25.	I am close to the business and have a broad view of where we are going.	5	4	3	2	1
26.	I coach team members.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	I determine manpower requirements for my department and write job descriptions for them.	5	4	3	2	1
28.	I interview and select the most qualified candidate for an open job position.	5	4	3	2	1
29.	I provide new employees with on-the-job training.	5	4	3	2	1
30.	I determine resources, material, and supply requirements for my department.	5	4	3	2	1
31.	I developed a budget for my department.	5	4	3	2	1
32.	I can respond to an employee who is upset with me or someone else in the organization.	5	4	3	2	1

		5	4	3	2	1
33.	I have counseled employees who have personal problems (family, health, financial).	5	4	3	2	1
34.	I react to situations in which the quality of an employee's work goes into a decline.	5	4	3	2	1
35.	I deal with employees who have performance issues, such as suspected of substance abuse or chronically late.	5	4	3	2	1
36.	I reward employees for good performances.	5	4	3	2	1
37.	I conduct formal employee performance appraisals.	5	4	3	2	1
38.	I can make a presentation to a group of peers and/or seniors.	5	4	3	2	1
39.	I write reports to be distributed to a group of peers and/or seniors.	5	4	3	2	1
40.	I have a deep-rooted understanding of the functions of my organization.	5	4	3	2	1
41.	I am curious.	5	4	3	2	1
42.	I know how to sell.	5	4	3	2	1
43.	I am a good learner.	5	4	3	2	1
44.	I know how to influence people and get support.	5	4	3	2	1
45.	I admit my mistakes and take responsibility for my actions.	5	4	3	2	1
46.	I like to talk to people and I am a great listener.	5	4	3	2	1
47.	I am a good delegator.	5	4	3	2	1
48.	I can separate the important issues from inconsequential ones.	5	4	3	2	1
49.	I have integrity and can be trusted.	5	4	3	2	1
50.	I am political only when needed.	5	4	3	2	1
	TOTAL					

Total score for all 5 columns: _____ Final Score

Handout 7.1B

Scoring Sheet

Total each of the five columns and then add the five columns together for your final score. The maximum score is 250 while the minimum score is 50.

As mentioned earlier, there are no right or wrong answers. This means there are no right or wrong scores. This survey is designed to show you the areas you need to improve in. You lowest scoring answers are the areas you need to improve. See your supervisor or training department for resources to help you to become more proficient in your weak areas.

Use the table below for a general guideline of where you stand.

- 175 and above - You are well on your way to becoming a leader.
- 125 to 174 - You are getting close.
- 124 and below - Don't Give up! Many before you have continued with their studies to become some of the finest leaders around.

Self-assessment for Leadership Traits Measured by Performance Dynamics

Directions: Read the descriptions for each commonly identified leadership traits at work place. Rate your comfort level for each commonly identified leadership traits with a scale of 5, with 1 indicating being not comfort with the leadership trait at all and 5 indicating being very comfort with the leadership trait.

	Very Comfort				Not Comfort At All
Primary Leadership Characteristics					
1. Management Knowledge Do the candidates understand management and leadership principles? Are they people-oriented in their leadership style? Are they "old school" and autocratic or participative and progressive? Are they "all business" and task-driven or current in their leadership style? Do they understand what it takes to lead a team?	5	4	3	2	1
2. Energy Level Are the candidates high-energy, fast-track, highly motivated, and able to move quickly with high productivity, or are they laid-back, unmotivated, slow, systematic, and likely to achieve low productivity? What is the pace they will set for themselves and others? Are they self-initiating or do they need constant external motivation? Are they self-motivated or do I have to push them? Can they keep up with the pace of our culture and job expectations?	5	4	3	2	1
3. Dominance Will candidates make it happen or wait for it to happen? Are they proactive or reactive? Will they take charge, assume responsibility, like to control, and influence people, situations, and circumstances, or are they laid-back, reactive, and uncomfortable being in charge or influencing and asserting themselves? Do they lack assertiveness? Are they followers or leaders? Do they have strong egos or are they more humble? Will they proactively step out or sit on the sideline? Will they drive things or watch things be driven by others? Will they get involved in initiatives and situations or will they play it safe and					

watch?					
4. Decision Making Will candidates make quick, proactive decisions or will they procrastinate, avoid decisions? Are they impulsive in decision-making style or do they over-analyze and over-think situations, with an inability make decisions? Will you have to make decisions for them or manage their decision-making process? Do they rely on consensus or can they make independent decisions? Will they frustrate their boss by sitting on decisions?	5	4	3	2	1
5. Social Skills Are they outgoing, friendly, interactive, easy to know and talk with, or are they quiet, introverted, distant, hard to get to know, and not very people-oriented? Do they like interacting with people and is relationship-building important to them, or are they more technically-oriented and more comfortable working with things versus people? Are they likely to engage in outgoing, active relationship-building? Are they dynamic and personable? Will they proactively relate to others? Can they build and maintain strong relationships with coworkers, subordinates, peers, upper management, and customers?	5	4	3	2	1
6. Stability Are they stable, steady, consistent, even-keeled, and predictable in their moods, demeanor, and style of interaction? Are they comfortable with their current set of life circumstances, feeling pretty well-balanced, or are they carrying a high degree of internal stress and anxiety, being somewhat moody, unpredictable, volatile at times, inconsistent in style and demeanor? Are they too emotionally comfortable, liking the "comfort zone"? Are they complacent, too stable, laid-back, and lacking a sense of urgency? Will they have an emotional, overreacting response to situations, or will they have a calculated, measured, calm assessment and reaction to a situation? Can they handle stress and pressure? Will they be consistent in their leadership style or be "loose cannons"?	5	4	3	2	1
7. Goodwill Do they want to treat people well and fairly? Do they have empathy, compassion, care, and concern for people? Do they focus on building close, strong affiliations and commitment in their relationships, or are they unsympathetic, self-centered, too results-driven, and not sensitive to the needs of others? Do they understand the value of building positive, constructive relationships, or is that not part of their thought process, being	5	4	3	2	1

too focused on tasks and the bottom line?					
8. Expertise Are the candidates confident or do they lack self-confidence? What is their level of self-esteem? Are they overconfident, cocky, arrogant, and too self-assured? Do they make a weak presentation and have a behavior pattern that is timid and unassertive, where they won't step out and influence with a strong presentation or with strong convictions? Are they constantly self-evaluating, doubting and second-guessing themselves, or will they take action with confidence? Will others follow their lead because they exude confidence? Will they lead others with confidence?	5	4	3	2	1
9. Compromise Are the candidates open-minded and flexible in their mind set, thinking, and opinions? Are they interested in the ideas and input of others, or are they inflexible, stubborn, strongly opinionated, know-it-alls, cynical, and difficult to influence? Are they myopic in their own thought process and agenda, or will they yield to the ideas of others? Do they give and take, letting other people win at times, building buy-in and commitment, or is it "their way or the highway?" Can they fall into alignment when there is no agreement? Will they want to argue all the time? Will every conversation be a debate? Will I ever know if they really buy in or are just pretending to do so, pursuing their own way or agenda anyway?	5	4	3	2	1
10. Mental Maturity Are the candidates bright, quick problem solvers, quick learners, intellectually astute, and able to process complex information quickly, or are they slow learners, needing more time to problem solve, and not too intellectually quick? What is their capacity to think quickly on their feet?	5	4	3	2	1
Secondary Leadership Characteristics					
11. Delegation Do they understand delegation? Are they too "hands-off," or too "hands-on"? Do they lack follow-up and coaching ability? Will they be too wrapped up in their own work, drawn to details versus actively coaching, leading, and structuring the work flow, efficiency, and productivity of others? Will they micro-manage or give people too long a rope? Will they delegate effectively?	5	4	3	2	1

	5	4	3	2	1
12. Reflectiveness Do the candidates have an abstract, strategic, creative, analytical mind and thought process? Will they think with vision, see dimensional solutions, and understand systems and processes at a very abstract and deep level? Are they "change agents," creative and full of new ideas, or do they lack creativity, look at things one-dimensionally, with a black-and-white thought process? Do they expend much mental energy assessing and understanding situations and circumstances, or are they more likely to over-react, conclude too quickly, and take action when they should step back, process information, and consider the "big picture"? Do they think with blinders on?	5	4	3	2	1
13. Communication Do the candidates communicate effectively? Will they share information openly and honestly, or will they play it close to the vest, keeping information to themselves? Do they have active, well-developed listening skills, or are they poor listeners? Do they tend to keep people in the loop, well informed, feeling like they are part of what's going on, or do they withhold valuable information, causing people to wonder, jump to conclusions, and create unnecessary stress and anxiety? Do they try to lead and influence with a proactive, open, sharing, and team-oriented style of communication? Do they over-communicate and talk too much, without focus?	5	4	3	2	1
14. Authority Are the candidates organized, able to bring structure, focus, and direction to their workflow and the workflow of others? Do they manage themselves and their activities with purpose and organization, or are they unorganized, innately scattered and unstructured, not overly systematic and inconsistent? Will you have to manage their lack of organizational skills? On a leadership level, will they use formal, positional power and authority when necessary to influence the performance, efficiency, and productivity of others? Will they willingly direct others and impose expectations, or will they not use positional power when necessary, being too soft and easy?	5	4	3	2	1

	5	4	3	2	1
15. Reward Are the candidates motivated by positive feedback and recognition? Will they use positive feedback to motivate others? Do they rely on consistent stroking and pats on the back for motivation? Are they high-maintenance? Will they not use reward and positive feedback as a motivational tool for others? Will they take others for granted and not acknowledge their contributions, causing others to feel taken for granted? Are they self-motivated, self-validating, and able to work productively and independently, without positive feedback?	5	4	3	2	1
16. Discipline Are they self-disciplined and have a strong work ethic? Do they set high expectations for themselves and others? Are they self-driven? Do they bring a strong commitment and internal desire to excel? When necessary, will they use discipline and negative reinforcement in their leadership style to motivate and drive others? Will they go the extra mile and stretch the expectations and capabilities of others, or do they lack self-discipline and have low or average expectations and a loose work ethic? Are they too "soft" in their leadership style? Are they uncomfortable in pushing others and imposing high expectations on others?	5	4	3	2	1
17. Competing Are they innately competitive, with a never-wavering desire to excel, succeed, and win? Are they intense, aggressive, and able to motivate others with an optimistic, enthusiastic, infectious attitude and style? Are they self-driven toward success? Do they have the intensity to drive the business and the performance of others, or are they passive and followers versus drivers? Do they lack intensity and aggressiveness? Do they only compete inwardly or are they indirect competitors, political by nature? Do they lack that edge to drive the business?	5	4	3	2	1
18. Collaboration Are they team players and builders, or are they independent, individualistic, or individual "superstars"? Do they understand the value of working with others, collecting and exchanging ideas and information? In conflict, will they try to work through the circumstances in a collaborative process? Do they understand teamwork, or are they better suited for an individual contributor's role? Can they bring others together and tap the synergy of the group?	5	4	3	2	1

	5	4	3	2	1
19. Avoidance Will candidates avoid dealing with conflict, look the other way, and sweep uncomfortable situations under the rug? Will they not engage or say what's on their mind, letting situations build and carrying around stress and tension, or will they deal with situations directly, timely, and move situations forward constructively? Will they be too direct, abrupt, and abrasive when they engage, or will they use tact and diplomacy? Will they jump headfirst into conflict, or will they sit on the fence and only selectively engage? Will they deal with people, performance, and productivity issues, or hope that they will resolve themselves?	5	4	3	2	1
20. Accommodation Are the candidates over-accommodating, too soft and easy? Will they struggle in holding others accountable? Are they likely to go with the flow and be taken advantage of, spending too much time meeting the needs of others because of their desire to please them? Will they withhold their opinions and not say what's on their mind, or can they be non-accommodating, push back, stand firm, and say what's on their mind? Can they lead others and hold them accountable? Can they be tough and tenacious negotiators, or will they give in too easily? Do they have good customer service skills? Are they too tenacious, argumentative, and unwilling to yield to the needs of others, having a need to be "RIGHT" and have their own way? Are they so entrenched in their own convictions that others may not even try to influence them?	5	4	3	2	1

Identification of Personal Strength and Growth Opportunities

Directions: Use results of the assessments for leadership traits and skills to determine what skills and abilities you can continue to improve (Strengths) and what skills and abilities you need to develop (Opportunities for growth).

What are your strengths?

What are your opportunities for growth?

Source: ASPIRA of Connecticut