

# The Leader Behavior Checklist

## PURPOSE

The Leader Behavior Checklist is a self-improvement tool to help people in leadership positions recognize and improve critical behaviors that are known to be effective in setting direction and inspiring others in an organization.

## HOW THIS INSTRUMENT IS DIFFERENT

This instrument is designed to measure “leadership” behaviors as opposed to “management” behaviors. Examples of **MANAGEMENT** behaviors are the tasks involved in planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving. **LEADERSHIP** behaviors are characteristically different. As leadership expert John Kotter has said, “Leaders define what the future looks like, align people with that vision, and inspire them to make it happen despite the obstacles.” Managers ensure organizations run smoothly; leaders create change.

In most leadership positions, people must be effective as both a manager and a leader. The most effective people are those who can easily switch back and forth between these two roles. The purpose of this instrument is to help people focus and improve their performance in the leadership role required by their position.

## FACTORS MEASURED BY THE CHECKLIST

The factors assessed by this instrument are derived from a leadership model based on the following definition of leadership:

**Leadership is an interpersonal influence process of setting direction and inspiring others to achieve goals.**

The factors on this instrument all help define the kinds of behaviors involved in “setting direction” and in “inspiring others,” and is based on published research, the ideas of various authors in the leadership literature, and our own experience in observing and developing leaders in organizations across a variety of industries for the last fifteen years.

## INSTRUCTIONS

The following Leader Behavior Checklist will ask questions about behaviors you may or may not exhibit. You will rate yourself on a scale from 1-4, based on the degree to which you perform each behavior. The behaviors are divided into several categories so you can determine your strengths and weaknesses in the various different aspects of leadership. Once you complete the assessment, you can call or email Cornelius & Associates for interpretations of your score and for help identifying areas you may want to improve.

**NOTE.** *This instrument is designed to be generic enough to be applicable for all levels of leadership. Therefore, a senior executive, a department head, a supervisor, and even a team leader should be able to fill out this checklist. The word “organization,” as mentioned on several items, should thus be interpreted to refer to a company, division, department, or team, depending on your leadership role in the organization*

# THE LEADER BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

**Instructions:** Place a checkmark in the appropriate column.

4 – I have done this very well  
 3 – I have done this somewhat well  
 2 – I need some improvement  
 1 – I have not yet started to do this



A. COMMUNICATING PURPOSE AND DIRECTION				
1. I have developed a way of describing our overall purpose (mission) that is brief and easily understood by people.				
2. I have developed a vision of what we can become as an organization that is both brief and inspiring to people.				
3. I take every occasion I can to discuss our purpose (mission) and our direction (vision) and relate it to what we are presently doing.				
4. I can communicate a sense of urgency around what we do as an organization or what priorities we are focusing on now.				
5. I ensure that we develop a small set of annual priorities that will focus our energy and resources, rather than a large set that will diffuse our efforts.				
6. I work hard on how best to communicate our annual priorities in a clear and succinct way throughout the organization.				
7. Our communication is such that all people in the organization both understand and can cite our annual priorities, if asked.				
8. I take a stand, when needed, to ensure the organization stays focused and on course.				
B. COMMUNICATING AND BEHAVING ACCORDING TO VALUES				
1. I have thought carefully and have identified the principles that I stand for personally.				
2. I have written these principles on paper and tested them against people who know me well.				
3. I have worked hard to reduce these principles to a small set of ideas that can be easily communicated.				
4. I communicate these principles to others as often as I can.				
5. I behave consistently according to these principles.				
6. I make important decisions according to these principles.				
7. I take a stand when violations of these principles are at stake.				
8. I try to be the source and model of integrity and values in the organization.				
9. I keep the commitments I make as a model to the organization.				
10. If you were to ask a sample of people in the organization what I stand for, they would accurately give you the ideas I stand for.				

C. SHOWING ENTHUSIASM FOR PEOPLE				
1. I take the time occasionally to express publicly the pride I have for the people of the organization.				
2. I influence people through my ideas and my behavior, rather than through the use of my position power.				
3. I show trust in the people who work in the organization.				
4. I show enthusiasm for individual and group accomplishment.				
5. I fight for resources for the people in my organization (team, department, division, etc.).				
6. I vary my leadership style to match the abilities, needs, and level of maturity of the person with whom I'm dealing.				
D. INSTILLING IN PEOPLE THE BELIEF THEY ARE POWERFUL				
1. I have learned to step aside and let others do their jobs.				
2. I work hard to make people feel needed, important, and powerful.				
3. I develop the skill levels of people so they can accomplish their objectives.				
4. I arrange conditions so that people can experience success.				
5. I set clear boundaries, and then allow people the discretion to act within those boundaries.				
6. I ensure that I have the right people in the right jobs to match their abilities and maximize success.				
7. I put in place the necessary support structures (training, staffing, procedures, equipment, etc.) so that people experience success.				
E. BEING CONSISTENT IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY				
1. I encourage people to persevere during difficult times.				
2. I hold to a course of action, even in the face of adversity.				
3. I take difficult stands (unpopular) when they must be taken.				
F. PLANNING AND LEADING CHANGE				
1. I provide the organization with a vision for the change that they can rally around.				
2. I successfully communicate the "what," "why," "who," "how," "when," and "how long" of a change initiative.				
3. I put together the right coalition of internal change agents.				
4. I involve people at all levels of the organization in implementing a change initiative.				
5. I ensure expectations and roles are set for those involved in change.				
6. I communicate often about the change, before, during and after.				
7. I can establish a sense of urgency for the need for change.				
8. I always ensure there is a support infrastructure (training, release time, budget, etc.) for a change initiative to be successful.				

G. RELEASING POTENTIAL AND ENERGY				
1. I ensure that all jobs have intrinsic motivation potential by installing feedback, skill variety, autonomy, job identity, and a sense of importance in the jobs we do.				
2. I demonstrate listening by seeking input and following through on discussions.				
3. I help people believe in themselves by arranging conditions so they can experience success.				
4. I ensure that people in the organization have intrinsically motivating goals that create a sense of challenge and ownership.				
5. I provide appropriate direction and support to ensure high performance work teams thrive and produce dramatic business results for us.				
6. I support communication across departments at all levels of the organization.				
7. I work to tear down silos in the organization and to provide an environment in which people work together for the good of all.				
H. CREATING A FLEXIBLE AND “READY-FOR-CHANGE” CULTURE				
1. I am personally open to change and lifelong learning.				
2. I work so people understand the business and the strategic context of their tasks and the decisions they make.				
3. I help people see the link between their individual performance and the company’s operational and financial success.				
4. I help people see the link between their individual performance and customer satisfaction.				
5. I encourage change to “emerge” at any level of the organization.				
6. I give people the authority to make the changes they need to be successful.				
7. I encourage a culture of “straight talk” and constructive disagreement that allows diverse and opposing opinions to be expressed, even to the leader.				
8. I work hard to constantly increase the business literacy levels in the organization.				
I. DEVELOPING LEADERS IN THE ORGANIZATION				
1. I play an active role in teaching others in the organization.				
2. I devote time to coach others to develop and improve performance.				
3. I provide opportunities and support for developing leaders.				
4. I am good at diagnosing organization and individual performance issues and coming up with corrective action plans.				

## SCORING THE LEADER BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

**Step 1.** Calculate the total number of points for each of the nine factors measured on this instrument. Enter each score, called the “raw” score, in the space provided in the table below.

LEADERSHIP FACTOR	RAW SCORE
A. Communicating Purpose and Direction	
B. Communicating and Behaving According to Values	
C. Showing Enthusiasm for People	
D. Instilling in People the Belief they are Powerful	
E. Being Consistent in the Face of Adversity	
F. Planning and Leading Change	
G. Releasing Potential and Energy	
H. Creating a Flexible and “Ready-for-Change” Culture	
I. Developing Leaders in the Organization	

**Step 2.** Determine a “Converted Score” for each Factor by looking up the raw score range in the columns of the Table below. Table entries are raw score ranges for each Factor.

LEADERSHIP FACTOR	CONVERTED SCORE = 1	CONVERTED SCORE = 2	CONVERTED SCORE = 3	CONVERTED SCORE = 4
<b>A</b>	(8 – 12)	(13 – 20)	(21-28)	(29 or higher)
<b>B</b>	(10 – 15)	(16 – 25)	(26 – 35)	(36 or higher)
<b>C</b>	(6 – 9)	(10 – 15)	(16 – 21)	(22 or higher)
<b>D</b>	(7 – 11)	(12 – 18)	(19 – 24)	(25 or higher)
<b>E</b>	(3 – 4)	(6 – 8)	(9 – 11)	(12 or higher)
<b>F</b>	(8 – 12)	(13 – 20)	(21 – 28)	(29 or higher)
<b>G</b>	(7 – 11)	(12 – 18)	(19 – 24)	(25 or higher)
<b>H</b>	(8 – 12)	(13 – 20)	(21 – 28)	(29 or higher)
<b>I</b>	(4 – 6)	(7 – 10)	(11 – 14)	(15 or higher)

**Step 3.** Enter the Converted Score for each Factor in the Table below.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I

## YOUR LEADER BEHAVIOR PROFILE

The Leader Behavior Profile is a graphical representation of your scores on the Leader Behavior Checklist. To draw your profile, plot the “Converted Score” for each Factor by circling the appropriate number below. To complete your “picture,” draw lines to connect the circles.

<b>A. Communicating Purpose and Direction</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>B. Communicating and Behaving According to Values</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>C. Showing Enthusiasm for People</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>D. Instilling in People the Belief They are Powerful</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>E. Being Consistent in the Face of Adversity</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>F. Planning and Leading Change</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>G. Releasing Potential and Energy</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>H. Creating a Flexible and “Ready-for-Change” Culture</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. Developing Leaders in the Organization</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

# INTERPRETING AND USING SCORES FROM THE LEADER BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance in both interpreting scores from the Leader Behavior Checklist and using the scores from this instrument to set self improvement goals.

## BACKGROUND

The Leader Behavior Checklist is a self-improvement tool to help people in leadership positions recognize and improve critical behaviors that are known to be effective in setting direction and inspiring others in an organization.

The factors assessed by this instrument are derived from a leadership model based on the following definition of leadership:

**Leadership is an interpersonal influence process of setting direction and inspiring others to achieve goals.**

All factors on this instrument help define the kinds of behaviors involved in “setting direction” and in “inspiring others.” The factors are based on published research, the ideas of various authors in the leadership literature, and our own experience in observing and developing leaders in organizations across a variety of industries for the last fifteen years.

A fundamental philosophy in the development of this tool was to design a measure of “leadership” behaviors as opposed to “management” behaviors. Examples of *management* behaviors are the tasks involved in planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving. *Leadership* behaviors are characteristically different. As Warren Bennis has said, “leaders define what the future looks like, align people with that vision, and inspire them to make it happen despite the obstacles.”

In most leadership positions in organizations, people must be effective as both a manager and a leader. The most effective people are those who can easily switch back and forth from these two roles, i.e., they are effective both as a manager and as a leader. The purpose of this instrument is to help people focus and improve their performance in their role as a leader.

## PART ONE: HOW TO INTERPRET SCORES

The items on this checklist are clustered under the following nine categories of leadership behaviors:

- A. Communicating Purpose and Direction
- B. Communicating and Behaving According to Values
- C. Showing Enthusiasm for People
- D. Instilling in People the Belief They are Powerful
- E. Being Consistent in the Face of Adversity
- F. Planning and Leading Change
- G. Releasing Potential and Energy
- H. Creating a Flexible and “Ready-for-Change” Culture
- I. Developing Leaders in the Organization

Scores on each factor range from Level Four (the highest) through Level One (the lowest). In terms of leadership effectiveness, factor scores of 3 and 4 indicate areas of strength, whereas scores of 1 and 2 indicate opportunities for improvement. In general, the more scores of 3 and 4 that an individual has, the more likely it is that they are engaged in behaviors that are known to be characteristic of effective leaders.

Brief interpretative notes on each factor are given below:

- A. Communicating Purpose and Direction.** This factor measures the extent to which a leader is engaging in the behaviors that are needed to ensure that the organization has a clear understanding of its purpose (mission) and direction (vision). Further, this factor assesses if the leader has done those things that are needed to ensure that the organization stays focused on the items with the highest priority. Scores of 3 or 4 indicate that the leader has introspected about these issues and has spent time figuring out the best way to communicate these important concepts of purpose and direction throughout the organization.
- B. Communicating and Behaving According to Values.** There is considerable evidence that people admire and are inspired by leaders that behave consistently according to values, and in particular, the value of integrity. This factor on the checklist measures the extent to which a leader is doing those things that will ensure that others in the organization unambiguously understand the principles for which the leader stands. Scores of 3 or 4 indicate the leader has communicated and acted according to values, and that people in the organization understand those values.
- C. Showing Enthusiasm for People.** Many effective leaders have an ability to show support and enthusiasm for people in the organization. This factor on the checklist captures those behaviors that best characterize this trait. Leaders with scores of 3 or 4 on this factor are more likely to show trust in people, show enthusiasm for people, fight for resources people need to be successful, and use expert power and reference power to influence people rather than position power, reward power, or coercive power.

- D. Instilling in People the Belief They Are Powerful.** Research has shown that one main effect that extraordinary leaders have on people is to make them feel as if they can accomplish anything. This checklist factor measures the extent to which the leader engages in the behaviors that will help people feel important and powerful. Leaders with scores of 3 or 4 are more likely to spend time on arranging conditions so that people experience success. This includes putting the right people in the right jobs, putting in place the support they need to be successful, and then giving people the discretion to act.
- E. Being Consistent in the Face of Adversity.** This factor was included based on research showing that people tend to admire and follow leaders who hold to a course of action, even in the face of adversity. Thus, leaders with scores of 3 or 4 on this factor tend to persevere during difficult times and take stands on issues, even when their decision might not be the easiest or most popular course of action.
- F. Planning and Leading Change.** The checklist items on this factor assess the extent to which a leader carries out the behaviors needed to produce change in organizations. Most leadership authorities understand that leading change is a quintessential leadership role. Leaders who score 3 or 4 on this factor tend to effectively communicate a vision and reason for change, as well as a sense of urgency for the change. They also act to involve key stakeholders, ensure that expectations and roles are defined, and that the support structure is in place for change to be successful.
- G. Releasing Potential and Energy.** This factor assesses the extent to which the leader carries out the actions needed to “release” the full potential and energy of the organization. These behaviors include tearing down internal “silos” in the organizations, improving communication across the organization, and ensuring that people have interesting and challenging things to do. Leaders with score of 3 or 4 have the ability to create “intrinsic” motivation in an organization, which includes providing autonomy for people in their jobs, encouraging the use of the variety of talents that group have, and helping people feel a sense of “ownership” in the organization.
- H. Creating a Flexible and “Ready-for-Change” Culture.** This factor measures a different aspect of the leader’s role in leading change than measured by Factor F. The emphasis on this checklist factor is on leader behaviors that are needed to create a business literate organization that is better able to understand and react quickly to any change. Leaders who score 3 or 4 on this factor are those who are able to install the cultural elements that are needed to allow change to “emerge” from anywhere in the organization.
- I. Developing Leaders in the Organization.** This factor measures the extent to which the leader understands that a critical leader role is to teach, coach and develop the talent within the organization. Leaders who score 3 or 4 on this factor put an emphasis on developing others and spend time teaching and coaching their staff and peers.

## PART TWO: USING THE LEADER BEHAVIOR PROFILE FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT

### PROFILE INTERPRETATION

Look first at the factors with the highest scores. These are the leadership strengths that you have, particularly those that have a score of 4. Next, look at the factors with the lowest scores. These are the areas where you could make improvements. As effective you are as a leader, these are the areas that, if you can develop them, will help make you even more successful.

### IMPROVEMENT GOALS

In the space below, list the two or three leadership factors in which you would like to further develop as a leader. These should be your three lowest scores from the profile.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### ACTION STEPS

To help you identify more specific behaviors you can work on, return to the individual items under each Factor on the Checklist that you want to develop. Use the lower scores on these items to help you develop specific action steps you can carry out.

For example, if under the Releasing Potential and Energy Factor, you scored low on #6- "I demonstrate listening by seeking input and following through on discussions." Then, an action item might be: "I will work over the next 3 months to seek input from my staff and follow-up on action items that result from meetings with my staff."

List below one or more specific actions you can take to make improvements in the leadership areas specified in your improvement goals above. Be sure to include a timeframe in which you intend to work on the items so you can monitor your improvements.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### FINAL ADVICE

It is helpful to ask someone in your organization to brainstorm with you other action steps you can take. In addition, we recommend that you ask this person to help hold you accountable for carrying out these steps. We recommend that you fill out this instrument again in three months to check on your progress.