

SAMPLE



LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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About the card sort

- The cards describe competencies, behaviours and qualities of leadership and personal development.
- The sort should be completed in a conversation with a business mentor.
- The cards should be used to identify competencies to grow into super strengths or areas to work on.
- On the back of the cards are ideas for actions to support development planning.
- This process can create powerful conversations if you want to unlock your leadership potential, take a bold step with your career, change the balance of priorities in your life, or build a high performing team or organisation.

Categories include:

- vision and strategic thinking
- communication and influence
- people and relationship management
- personal attributes and self-leadership
- execution and results orientation
- innovation and change management.

Turn over to see the full list of competencies.

Vision and Strategic Thinking	Communication and Influence	People and Relationship Management	Personal Attributes and Self-Leadership	Execution and Results Orientation	Innovation and Change Management
Visionary Thinking	Active Listening	Empathy	Self-Awareness	Accountability	Change Leadership
Strategic Planning	Clarity of Communication	Conflict Resolution	Adaptability	Problem-Solving	Encouraging Experimentation
Innovation	Emotional Intelligence	Team Building	Resilience	Focus on Outcomes	Continuous Learning
Decision-Making	Inspiring and Motivating Others	Mentorship and Development	Integrity		Resourcefulness
	Negotiation and Persuasion	Cultural Competence	Time Management		
			Health		
			Mental Health		
			Work/Life Balance		

2

How to use the cards

1

SORT FOR STRENGTHS

Sort the cards into roughly three even piles with the following black cards forming the top of each set:

- high/strength
- middle/average
- low/work-on; and
- not applicable.

2

EXPLAIN/RECORD

Explain reasons for placement, focusing on strengths and areas to work on. Take a photo or fill in the worksheets to record placement to refer back to on review.

3

PRIORITISE

Once completed, pick up the cards sorted as areas to work on. You may also wish to select some strengths to include in your development plan that could become super strengths. Flip over the header cards and sort again for priorities for the next season or training block using the black cards (high, medium, low). Aim to narrow down to not more than two development priorities per category.

*Once you have identified your priorities, turn over the cards.
The back of the cards have development planning ideas.*

Please Turn Over

2

How to use the cards

CAREER MENTOR

1

INTRODUCTION

Explain the purpose of the process.

Explain the process (see website for more detail) and discuss confidentiality.

Check for comfort and questions.

2

GUIDE

Guide the process.

Question, clarify and summarise to help the athlete identify the critical priorities.

Listen with an open mind, avoid making judgements.

3

PLAN

Record placement of cards with notes. Select priorities emerging from the second sort and discuss development actions (see ideas on the back of cards).

TIP: You can complete a separate card sort for comparative discussion.

STRENGTH



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A STRENGTH,
IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

HIGH PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A HIGH PRIORITY

MIDDLE/AVERAGE



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS MIDDLE,
IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

MEDIUM PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A MEDIUM PRIORITY

WORK-ON



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS AN AREA TO WORK-ON,
IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

LOW PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A LOW PRIORITY

NOT APPLICABLE



THESE ARE EITHER NOT APPLICABLE OR TO BE SORTED AT A LATER DATE



VISION AND STRATEGIC THINKING

— SORT CARDS —



Visionary Thinking

- Defines and communicates a compelling vision that inspires and aligns the team.
- Anticipates future trends and prepares for challenges and opportunities.
- Connects daily actions to long-term goals to ensure progress toward the vision.
- Encourages innovative thinking to stay ahead of industry changes.
- Helps others see their role in the bigger picture to foster engagement and purpose.
- Maintains clarity and focus even when navigating uncertainty.

Developing Visionary Thinking

Encourage future-back thinking

Rather than only planning from the present forward, envision the future first and work backward to identify the steps needed to get there. Ask, “What must be true for this vision to become a reality?” and use this perspective to guide strategic decision-making.

Expand your perspective

Actively seek insights from diverse sources—industry trends, emerging technologies, customer feedback, and global innovations. Engage with thought leaders, attend visionary conferences, or read futurist literature to broaden your understanding of what’s possible.

Prototype and experiment

Bring aspects of your vision to life through small-scale experiments or pilot projects. Test ideas, gather feedback, and iterate to refine the vision. This builds confidence and credibility while allowing your team to see progress in action.

Communicate with clarity and passion

A compelling vision needs a powerful narrative. Use storytelling techniques, metaphors, and vivid language to make your vision memorable. Adapt your messaging to different audiences, ensuring that employees, stakeholders, and customers can connect with the future you’re painting.

Empower others to be visionaries

Involve your team in shaping and refining the vision. Create opportunities for brainstorming, strategic discussions, and cross-functional collaboration. When people contribute to a vision, they take greater ownership in making it happen.

Foster emotional connection

Create a picture of what success will look like. Help your people link the vision to their personal goals and values. In team discussions, consistently frame the vision in a hopeful and inspiring way. Share stories or examples that make the vision feel meaningful on an individual level.



Strategic Planning

- Sets clear, measurable goals that align with the organisation's mission.
- Prioritizes tasks and resources to maximise efficiency and impact.
- Identifies potential risks and develops strategies to mitigate them.
- Uses data and insights to inform decision-making and adapt plans as needed.
- Balances short-term needs with long-term objectives.
- Involves key stakeholders to ensure alignment and buy-in.
- Aligns team efforts with the plan.
- Regularly reviews and adjusts strategies to stay adaptable to emerging situations.
- Ensures resource allocation supports the highest-impact activities.

Developing Strategic Planning

Market analysis

Conduct a thorough analysis of the market opportunities and research your customer needs.

Define key success metrics

Establish clear, measurable goals that align with your long-term vision. Use key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress and adjust your strategy as needed.

Prioritise high-impact initiatives

Identify the most critical projects that will drive your strategy forward. Focus resources on initiatives that create the greatest value rather than spreading efforts too thin.

Ensure cross-functional alignment

Communicate your strategy across departments to ensure everyone is working towards the same objectives. Encourage collaboration to break down silos and maximise efficiency.

Review and adapt regularly

Strategic plans should be dynamic, not static. Schedule regular check-ins to assess progress, address roadblocks, and adjust priorities in response to internal or external changes.

Leverage data-driven decision making

Use analytics and performance data to guide strategic choices. Encourage your team to rely on insights rather than assumptions when making key decisions.

Teach decision layers

Break down strategies into manageable components for your people. Focus on teaching the “why” behind each strategy, so they can make better decisions.



COMMUNICATION AND INFLUENCE

— SORT CARDS —



Active Listening

- Gives full attention to speakers without distractions or interruptions.
- Asks thoughtful questions to deepen understanding.
- Reads between the lines, paying attention to tone and body language.
- Reflects and paraphrases to ensure clarity and alignment.
- Encourages open dialogue by creating a safe space for communication.
- Demonstrates empathy by acknowledging different perspectives.

Developing Active Listening

Minimise distractions

When engaging in a conversation, eliminate distractions like phones, laptops, or side conversations. Fully focus on the speaker to ensure you're absorbing the message, both verbal and non-verbal.

Ask open-ended questions

Encourage deeper conversation by asking open-ended questions. This invites the speaker to elaborate, providing more context and insights that help you understand their point of view better.

Observe non-verbal cues

Pay attention to the speaker's body language, facial expressions, and tone. These non-verbal signals can offer important context and emotions that words alone may not convey.

Paraphrase and summarise

Reflect back what you've heard to ensure understanding. This not only confirms that you've grasped the speaker's message, but also gives them the opportunity to clarify anything that may be misunderstood.

Create an open and safe environment

Foster a space where team members feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. Make it clear that all perspectives are valued and

that feedback is encouraged without fear of judgment.

Acknowledge and validate emotions

Recognise the emotional aspect of what someone is saying, and show empathy. Saying things like "I can see why that would be frustrating" can create a deeper connection and encourage openness.

Listen with curiosity

Adopt a mindset of curiosity rather than assuming you know what the other person will say. Approach the conversation with an open mind, willing to learn something new from the speaker's perspective.



Clarity of Communication

- Delivers messages in a clear, concise, and structured manner.
- Adapts communication style based on the audience and situation.
- Ensures key messages are easily understood and actionable.
- Uses storytelling and real-life examples to enhance engagement.
- Actively seeks feedback to confirm understanding.
- Avoids jargon and unnecessary complexity in explanations.

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Developing Clarity of Communication

Plan and structure your message

Before communicating, take time to plan your message. Break it down into key points and ensure that each part is clear and necessary. Use a logical structure, such as problem-solution-benefit, to help your audience follow the message easily.

Know your audience

Adapt your communication style to fit the audience. Whether you're addressing a team, senior executives, or customers, tailor your language and tone to ensure your message resonates and is appropriately pitched.

Simplify and focus

Avoid overcomplicating your message with unnecessary details. Focus on the key points and remove any superfluous

information that could distract from the core message.

Use storytelling for engagement

Incorporate relevant stories, metaphors, or real-life examples to make your message more relatable and memorable. Storytelling helps break down complex ideas into digestible, compelling narratives that your audience can connect with.

Ask for feedback and confirmation

Check for understanding by encouraging questions and actively seeking feedback. This ensures that your audience has received the message as intended and provides an opportunity to clarify any uncertainties.

Be mindful of body language

Non-verbal communication is equally important. Maintain eye contact, use open body language, and pay attention to your tone of voice. These elements reinforce your message and help convey sincerity and clarity.

Avoid jargon and overly technical terms

Be mindful of using industry-specific jargon or complex terminology that may confuse the listener. Instead, aim to use simple, straightforward language that is accessible to everyone, regardless of their expertise.



PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

SORT CARDS



Empathy

- Actively seeks to understand the needs and concerns of others.
- Adapts leadership style to accommodate different perspectives.
- Demonstrates patience and compassion in interactions.
- Encourages inclusivity and psychological safety in the workplace.
- Fosters a culture of mutual respect and understanding.
- Uses empathy to navigate difficult conversations and conflicts.

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Developing Empathy

Actively listen to understand needs and concerns

Take the time to listen without interruption. Show genuine interest in understanding the thoughts, feelings, and concerns of others. Ask open-ended questions to encourage them to share more, demonstrating that you value their input.

Adapt leadership style

Recognise that different people respond to leadership in unique ways. Adjust your communication and approach based on the individual's needs, whether they require more guidance, autonomy, or emotional support.

Show patience and compassion

Be patient and understanding when people express their challenges or frustrations.

Show compassion by offering support, understanding their emotions, and providing encouragement when needed.

Promote inclusivity and psychological safety

Create an environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions. Make sure that people feel valued, respected, and safe to express themselves without fear of judgment or negative consequences.

Foster a culture of mutual respect

Encourage an environment where all team members respect each other's perspectives and experiences. Lead by example, showing appreciation for diverse viewpoints and making sure that all voices are heard and acknowledged.

Use empathy in difficult conversations

When addressing sensitive topics or conflicts, use empathy to maintain a constructive and respectful dialogue. Acknowledge emotions and concerns before moving toward solutions, and remain calm and composed to ensure a balanced discussion.

Seek feedback and reflect

Regularly ask for feedback from your team about how your actions are impacting them. Be open to constructive criticism and reflect on how you can better address the needs of others, improving your empathy and leadership effectiveness.



Conflict Resolution

- Addresses conflicts early before they escalate.
- Maintains a calm and neutral stance while mediating disputes.
- Focuses on finding solutions rather than placing blame.
- Encourages open dialogue to ensure all voices are heard.
- Builds consensus and helps team members move forward positively.
- Uses conflict as an opportunity for growth and team strengthening.

Tips for Conflict Resolution

Address conflicts early

Don't let conflicts fester or escalate. Be proactive in identifying early signs of disagreement, and intervene promptly to facilitate a constructive conversation before the issue grows larger.

Stay calm and neutral

In conflict situations, maintain composure and neutrality. Avoid taking sides or getting emotionally involved. Your ability to remain objective helps to de-escalate tension and ensures a fair process for all parties involved.

Focus on solutions, not blame

Shift the focus from who's at fault to how the team can resolve the issue. Encourage

problem-solving by brainstorming potential solutions together, and foster a mindset of collaboration rather than finger-pointing.

Encourage open dialogue

Create a space where all parties feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives. Ensure that each person has the chance to speak without interruption and that their viewpoint is acknowledged.

Build consensus and move forward

After discussing the issue, work towards finding common ground. Help the team build a consensus on the best course of action and ensure that everyone is on board with the resolution. This strengthens team unity and promotes collective accountability.

Use conflict as an opportunity for growth

Reframe conflicts as learning opportunities. Encourage the team to reflect on what caused the disagreement and how it can be avoided or managed better in the future. Use these moments to strengthen relationships and improve team dynamics.

Provide support after the resolution

After resolving the conflict, offer support to the individuals involved. Check in with them later to ensure that the resolution is holding and that any lingering concerns are addressed, reinforcing a sense of care and leadership.



PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND SELF-LEADERSHIP

— SORT CARDS —



Self-Awareness

- Understands personal strengths and areas for improvement.
- Reflects on past experiences to grow and develop.
- Seeks feedback and takes it as an opportunity for learning.
- Manages ego and remains open to new perspectives.
- Recognises personal impact on others and adjusts accordingly.
- Strives for continuous personal and professional growth.

Developing Self-Awareness

Understand personal strengths and areas for improvement

Take the time to assess your strengths and weaknesses through self-reflection, feedback, and assessment tools. Recognise how your strengths can contribute to the team's success and how areas for improvement can be developed over time with focus and effort.

Reflect on past experiences to grow and develop

Regularly review your past decisions, actions, and leadership experiences. Reflect on what went well, what didn't, and how you can apply these lessons to future situations.

Seek feedback and use it for learning

Actively request feedback from colleagues, team members, and mentors, viewing it as

an opportunity for growth. Use both positive and constructive feedback to inform your personal development plan and make adjustments where necessary, showing that you value input from others.

Manage ego and stay open to new perspectives

Stay grounded and avoid letting your ego cloud your decision-making. Be open to new ideas, especially those that challenge your current thinking. Encourage others to offer alternative viewpoints, and embrace the opportunity to learn from them without defensiveness.

Recognise personal impact on others and adjust accordingly

Be mindful of how your words, actions, and emotions affect others. Pay attention

to team dynamics and adjust your approach when necessary to ensure that your leadership style fosters positive relationships and outcomes. Understand the ripple effect of your behaviour and the importance of setting a positive example.

Strive for continuous personal and professional growth

Make personal and professional development a priority. Seek new challenges, learn new skills, and engage in training that will enhance your leadership capabilities.

Cultivate emotional regulation

Develop the ability to recognise your emotions and manage them effectively.



Adaptability

- Remains flexible and open to change.
- Embraces challenges as opportunities for growth.
- Adjusts strategies quickly in response to new information.
- Stays positive and solutions-focused during transitions.
- Encourages a mindset of innovation and resilience in the team.
- Leads by example in handling uncertainty with confidence.

Developing Adaptability

Remain flexible and open to change

Be willing to adjust your approach when necessary. Recognise that change is inevitable and embrace it as an opportunity. Stay open to new methods, technologies, and ways of thinking that can benefit the team and organisation.

Embrace challenges as opportunities

Instead of shying away from challenges, view them as chances to learn and develop. Encourage your team to do the same by framing difficulties as valuable learning experiences and growth opportunities, which can foster a culture of resilience.

Adjust strategies quickly in response to new information

Be proactive in adjusting plans and strategies when new information emerges. Make decisions quickly and confidently, even when there's uncertainty. Encourage your team to remain flexible and adapt to changing circumstances, so they're better equipped to pivot when needed.

Stay positive and solutions-focused during transitions

During times of transition or change, maintain a positive and solutions-oriented mindset. Focus on what can be done to navigate the challenges at hand, rather than getting bogged down by what can't be changed. This will help keep the team

motivated and productive during uncertain times.

Lead by example

As a leader, your response to uncertainty and change sets the tone for the team. Model calmness and confidence during transitions. Your ability to stay composed in the face of challenges will inspire others to remain focused and adaptable, even in high-pressure situations.

Create a safe environment

Create an environment where it's safe to fail and where feedback is constructive. This helps build adaptability by reinforcing that change and experimentation are part of growth and innovation.



EXECUTION AND RESULTS ORIENTATION

— SORT CARDS —



Accountability

- Takes full ownership of responsibilities and outcomes.
- Holds self and team members accountable for commitments.
- Accepts mistakes and focuses on finding solutions.
- Sets clear expectations to ensure follow-through.
- Leads with integrity and transparency in actions.
- Encourages a culture of responsibility and high performance.

Developing Accountability

Take ownership of responsibilities

Embrace full responsibility for both successes and challenges. Recognise that your actions and decisions impact the team and organisation, and lead by example in taking accountability for outcomes.

Hold yourself and others accountable

Set clear commitments and expectations for yourself and your team. Ensure everyone follows through on their responsibilities, and address any gaps in performance promptly, fostering a culture of accountability.

Accept mistakes and focus on solutions

Acknowledge mistakes openly and use them as opportunities for growth. Rather than placing blame, focus on finding solutions

and adjusting course to prevent similar issues in the future.

Set clear expectations for follow-through

Be explicit about what is expected from yourself and your team. Clearly communicate deadlines, roles, and goals to ensure everyone is aligned and accountable for their tasks.

Lead with integrity and transparency

Maintain honesty and openness in your actions and decisions. Be transparent about challenges, progress, and decisions, demonstrating your commitment to integrity in leadership.

Encourage a culture of responsibility

Create an environment where accountability is valued by actively encouraging team members to take ownership of their work. Recognise and reward those who demonstrate high performance and reliability.

Provide regular feedback and support

Ensure you give constructive feedback on progress and challenges. Regularly check in with your team to offer guidance and support, helping them stay focused and accountable for their responsibilities.



Problem-Solving

- Identifies root causes rather than just treating symptoms.
- Uses critical thinking to evaluate possible solutions.
- Involves the right people in the problem-solving process.
- Takes a structured approach to finding solutions.
- Remains calm and objective under pressure.
- Balances speed and thoroughness when solving challenges.

Developing Problem-Solving

Identify root causes, not just symptoms

Look beyond the immediate issue and dig deeper to identify the underlying causes. By understanding the root cause, you can implement more effective and lasting solutions rather than just addressing surface-level symptoms.

Use critical thinking to evaluate solutions

Apply logic and reason to assess various solutions. Weigh the pros and cons of each option, considering both short-term and long-term impacts before making a decision.

Involve the right people in the process

Ensure you engage the right team members or stakeholders with relevant expertise. Collaborative problem-solving brings diverse

perspectives and often leads to more creative and effective solutions.

Take a structured approach

Adopt a systematic method when solving problems, such as defining the issue, brainstorming possible solutions, testing options, and implementing the most viable one. A clear framework helps keep you organised and focused.

Remain calm and objective under pressure

When faced with challenges, maintain composure and make decisions based on facts, not emotions. Stay focused on the objective and avoid making reactive decisions in moments of stress.

Balance speed and thoroughness

While quick action may be necessary in some situations, ensure that the solution is well thought through. Weigh the urgency of the problem against the importance of taking the time to get the best possible solution.

Learn from each problem

After resolving an issue, reflect on what worked well and what could be improved. This reflection will help you refine your problem-solving approach for future challenges, turning each experience into an opportunity for growth.



INNOVATION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

— SORT CARDS —



Change Leadership

- Guides teams through transitions by providing clear direction and purpose.
- Demonstrates empathy and actively listens to team members' concerns during periods of change.
- Ensures that the vision for change is communicated consistently and motivates the team towards shared goals.
- Supports individuals and teams in adjusting to new ways of working with patience and understanding.
- Encourages resilience and adapts strategies to navigate challenges during transitions.
- Leads by example, demonstrating flexibility and openness during times of change.

Tips for Change Leadership

Communicate the vision clearly

Ensure your team understands the purpose and benefits of the change. Regularly update them on progress and any adjustments to the plan to maintain engagement and confidence.

Involve the team in the process

Involve key team members in decision-making to give them ownership and reduce resistance to change. Encourage feedback and suggestions to make the transition smoother.

Lead by example

Demonstrate adaptability and resilience in your own work. Show your team that you are committed to the change and willing to lead them through it.

Provide support during transitions

Offer training, resources, and emotional support to your team to help them adjust. Recognize that change can be challenging, and be patient as people adapt.

Foster open communication

Create a space where team members can express concerns and share ideas freely. Ensure they feel heard and supported during the transition.

Celebrate small wins

Acknowledge and celebrate progress, no matter how small. Recognizing milestones will help maintain morale and keep momentum going.

Address resistance constructively

When faced with resistance, approach it with empathy. Listen to concerns, address fears, and work collaboratively to find solutions that benefit everyone.



Encouraging Experimentation

- Creates a safe environment where team members feel empowered to take calculated risks.
- Encourages innovation by rewarding creative ideas and approaches.
- Supports failure as a learning opportunity, focusing on lessons rather than blame.
- Provides resources and tools that foster experimentation and new ideas.
- Helps teams overcome fear of failure by promoting a growth mindset.
- Celebrates successes and incremental progress from new approaches.

Tips for Encouraging Experimentation

Encourage risk-taking with purpose

Foster an environment where calculated risks are encouraged, and team members feel safe to experiment. Make it clear that innovation is valued, even if failure occurs.

Create a safe space for failure

Promote a mindset that treats failure as a learning opportunity, not something to be feared. Use setbacks as a tool for growth and improvement.

Celebrate innovation

Acknowledge and reward creative ideas and innovative solutions, no matter how big or small. This reinforces the importance of experimentation in achieving success.

Provide resources for experimentation

Ensure the team has the tools, time, and support to test new ideas. Allocate resources to innovation-focused initiatives that drive future success.

Offer constructive feedback

Provide actionable feedback on new initiatives. Encourage continuous improvement by guiding the team in refining their ideas and approaches.

Lead by example in experimentation

Take calculated risks yourself to demonstrate confidence in the value of experimentation. Share your own successes and failures to foster a culture of openness.

Encourage cross-team collaboration

Foster collaboration between different teams to share ideas and perspectives, leading to more diverse and innovative solutions.