

## Leadership Levels

Some of our clients find it helpful to set numbered levels for leadership growth. This helps everyone to track how they are cultivating key leadership behaviors, and nicely complements the use of Individual Development Plans.

A good starting point is William Oncken's 5 Levels of Freedom. We prefer to call them Leadership Levels, as this makes more sense to the employee. Some companies, like Google, have many levels (ten in their case). See what makes sense to you, and is easy to define, track, and help people stretch and grow into. When coupled with needle movers we see employees understand how to increase their Leadership Level with specific programs, training, participation in Leadership Lunches (see the SmartTribes Playbook resource for this process).

Here's a little more clarity on levels 5-9, which we've created on top of Oncken's first 4 levels. Note that Level 6 on up includes the qualities of the prior level.

Level 5 = Planning, Accountability, Quality, Communication is consistently at very good (4) or excellent (5), based on poor, fair, adequate, very good, excellent. You don't have to remind this person of their deliverables and to do great work—they've internalized this.

Here's a sample scale for each Planning, Accountability, Quality, Communication. See what you think and edit as you see fit:

### Planning:

- 1 = poor: doesn't see/plan for anything beyond the immediate, it looks like they're either in the wrong role (too big for them), are at the wrong Leadership Level, or there is a major disconnect with them—change/help needs to be provided post haste
- 2 = fair: plans inconsistently, will need to improve and learn that others count on their planning, or will slide downward in Leadership Level (and likely role) soon
- 3 = adequate: needs to work on consistent planning and factoring in dependencies/contingencies of others without reminders, time to raise the bar on planning now
- 4 = very good: "owns it" by planning and see the future and how to prepare for it most of the time, a true asset, worth investing in and cultivating to the next level

- 5 = excellent: ready to promote or expand their responsibilities! This person embodies leadership and should be first in line for a raise and/or promotion, as well as they may be ready for Leadership Level 6.

#### Accountability:

- 1 = poor: doesn't deliver at a level that is useful, it looks like they're either in the wrong role (too big for them), are at the wrong Leadership Level, or there is a major disconnect with them—change/help needs to be provided post haste
- 2 = fair: delivers inconsistently, will need to improve or will slide downward in Leadership Level (and likely role) soon
- 3 = adequate: needs to work on consistency without reminders and raising the bar on keeping their commitments and being seen as reliable
- 4 = very good: "owns it" most of the time, a true asset, worth investing in and cultivating to the next level
- 5 = excellent: ready to promote or expand their responsibilities! This person embodies leadership and should be first in line for a raise and/or promotion, as well as they may be ready for Leadership Level 6.

#### Quality:

- 1 = poor: doesn't deliver work that is useful/has met the pre-approved specification, it looks like they're either in the wrong role (too big for them), are at the wrong Leadership Level, or there is a major disconnect with them—change/help needs to be provided post haste
- 2 = fair: delivers inconsistent quality, requiring others to either fix their work or remind them of the spec they had agreed to deliver to, will need to improve or will slide downward in Leadership Level (and likely role) soon
- 3 = adequate: needs to work on consistently meeting the spec without reminders and raising the bar on delivering quality work
- 4 = very good: "owns it" by meeting the spec most of the time, a true asset, worth investing in and cultivating to the next level
- 5 = excellent: ready to promote or expand their responsibilities! This person embodies leadership and should be first in line for a raise and/or promotion, as well as they may be ready for Leadership Level 6.

#### Communication:

- 1 = poor: doesn't honor the Communication Expectations\*, it looks like they're either in the wrong role (too big for them), are at the wrong Leadership Level, or there is a major disconnect with them—change/help needs to be provided post haste
- 2 = fair: inconsistently honors your Communication Expectations\*, so everyone is left wondering if the person will come through, or has the chase them down, will need to improve or will slide downward in Leadership Level (and likely role) soon
- 3 = adequate: needs to work on consistently honoring the Communication Expectations\* without reminders and raising the bar on demonstrating that they understand communication is essential for us all to function
- 4 = very good: “owns it” by honoring Communication Expectations\* most of the time, a true asset, worth investing in and cultivating to the next level
- 5 = excellent: ready to promote or expand their responsibilities! This person embodies leadership and should be first in line for a raise and/or promotion, as well as they may be ready for Leadership Level 6.

[Communication Expectations could be email coding in the subject line, such as:

- URGENT – must be done now, make sure to red flag this email and text/call as well!
- HI – must be done today by close of business
- DUE [date and time here] – must be done by date/time specified
- MED – complete within 3 days (or whatever your Communication Expectation for MED is)
- LO – complete within a week
- LO x \_\_\_ - complete within the number of weeks specified (Lo x 3 = 3 weeks)
- INFO – the message is info only, read when you like
- Example: HI – Need sales numbers for Western region NOW!]

So, if for example a person has a 4 in Planning, a 3 in Accountability, a 4 in Quality and a 3 in Communication, we average out their score to be 3.5 (14 divided by 4). You'll want to focus helping them to boost their Accountability and Communication scores to get them to a consistent average of a 4 to be at this Leadership Level.

Level 6 = This leader effectively and consistently leads and cultivate others. This means the leader is intentionally and demonstrably growing others into greater levels of leadership.

Level 7 = This leader's influence is much higher than that of Level 6, which is what enables them to lead others inside as well as outside of the company (where they have less "same as" since outsiders won't necessarily be tribe members).

Level 8 = This leader understands and practices more sophisticated degrees of strategy. They apply Porter's Five Forces, for example, as opposed to a basic SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) approach.

Level 9 = This leader demonstrates a high and consistent level of self-awareness. They call out where they need to grow, use themselves as an example to mentor others, and are fearless in their commitment to personal and professional development.

Would Leadership Levels make sense at your company? Doubtlessly. They provide us with a framework for ownership, accountability, drive, intrinsic motivation. How many levels would you like? How will you define each and help people increase their level? Your SmartTribes Institute coach will be happy to help.

### Leadership Levels

**Level 9:** Create Optimal Teams - Yielding Consistently Remarkable Results Both Internally + Externally

**Level 8:** Strategize, Manage, Guide Change At Organization, Team, Individual Levels

**Level 7:** Powerfully + Consistently Influence, Enroll, Engage, Align Internally + Externally

**Level 6:** Powerfully + Consistently Lead Others Internally

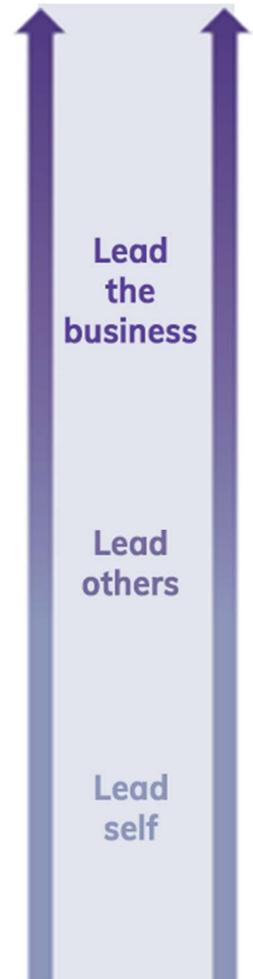
**Level 5:** Planning, Accountability, Quality is consistently at very good or excellent. You don't have to remind this person of deliverables and to do great work - they've internalized this.

**Level 4:** Act + Report Immediately

**Level 3:** Recommend, Then Act

**Level 2:** Ask What To Do

**Level 1:** Wait To Be Told



First Four Levels Source: Oncken, William, Managing Management Time: Who's Got The Monkey (Prentice Hall, 1984)

Copyright 2019 SmartTribes© Institute, LLC - [www.SmartTribesInstitute.com](http://www.SmartTribesInstitute.com) - 415-320-6580