



ZENGER|FOLKMAN

SAMPLE DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

INSPIRES AND MOTIVATES OTHERS TO HIGH PERFORMANCE

DEVELOPMENT GUIDE SAMPLE

12. Inspires and Motivates Others to High Performance

Behaviors Defining This Competency

- Has a personal style that helps to positively motivate others.
- Energizes employees to go the extra mile.
- Skillfully persuades others toward commitment to ideas or action.
- Effectively exercises power to influence key decisions for the benefit of the organization.
- Employs different motivational strategies to influence the behavior of others.
- Inspires others to support organizational priorities.

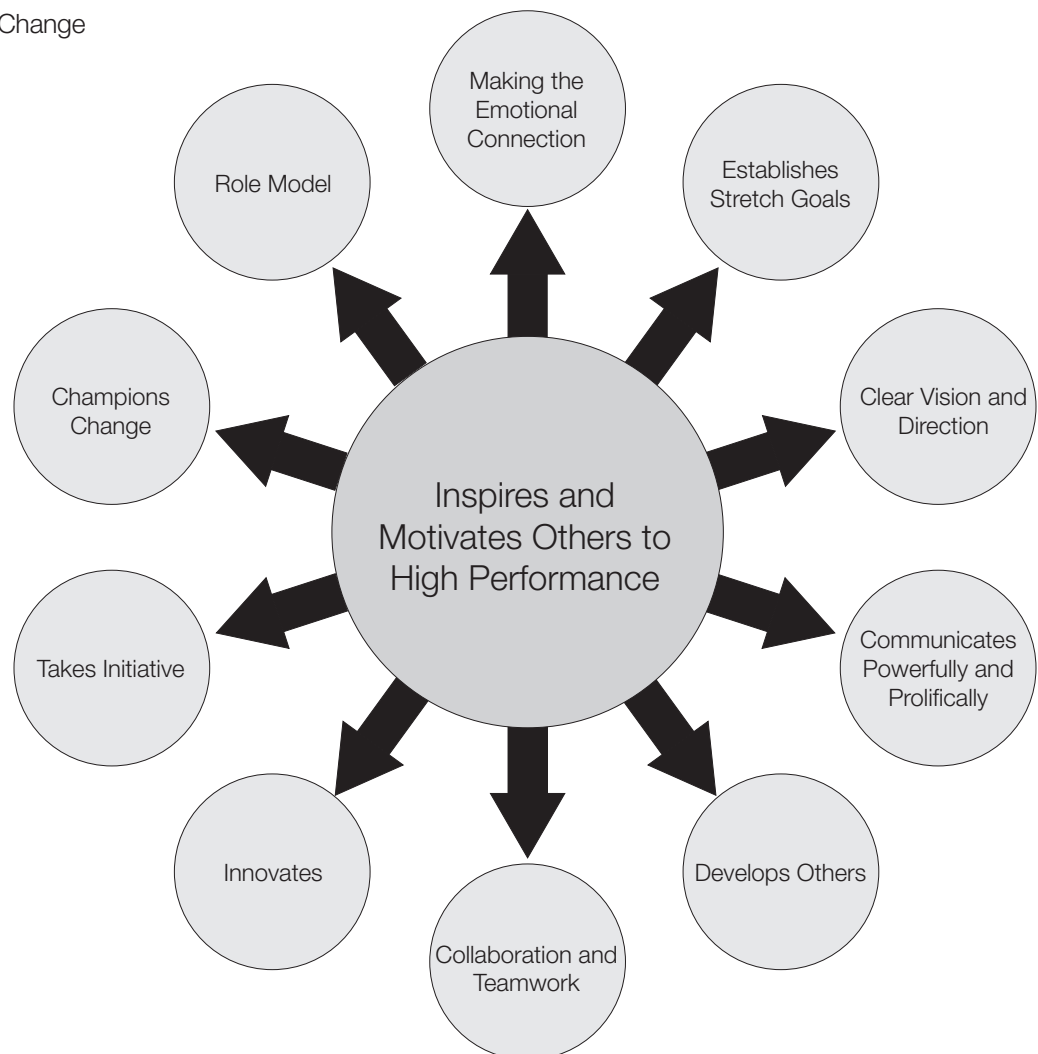
(Statistically, this Differentiating Competency is the number one Differentiating Competency. For additional insights on this, refer to *The Inspiring Leader*.)

Linear Developmental Suggestions

- Make sure that goals are realistic, yet challenging.
- Reward “small victories” rather than waiting for one giant leap in improvement.
- Set goals with a reasonable chance of achievement but not so easy as to lack challenge.
- Have people develop their own specific plans for how they will accomplish their goals; then jointly review these plans and provide your input.
- Regularly ask people how they’re progressing in reaching their goals and ask what you can do to help them achieve or exceed their goals.
- Express confidence in the individual’s ability to reach goals.
- Follow up regularly on progress and reinforce all movement in the right direction.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm to your group by talking about why your goals are important and encouraging others to set challenging goals.
- Focus on why goals can be achieved rather than on why they cannot.
- Be fair to the people you work with when negotiating expectations with them.

Competency Companions

- A. Making the Emotional Connection
- B. Establishes Stretch Goals
- C. Clear Vision and Direction
- D. Communicates Powerfully and Prolifically
- E. Develops Others
- F. Collaboration and Teamwork
- G. Innovates
- H. Takes Initiative
- I. Champions Change
- J. Role Model



A. Making the Emotional Connection

Leaders who are effective at getting others to embrace positive emotions are much better at inspiring and motivating others. The ability of a leader to inspire direct reports comes down to the leader's willingness and ability to be both aware of and comfortably use emotion.

- Express sincere appreciation. Identify colleagues and especially direct reports who have done good work for which they have not been recognized or thanked by you. Go to them and express your heartfelt thanks. Let them know what that means not only to the organization but to you personally. Express appreciation to colleagues for the way they and their teams work with you. Be attentive to important life events such as a birth or a death in the family of your colleagues. Send personal, handwritten notes.
 - Value diversity. Value diversity of all kinds. Find ways to utilize the differences people have to the advantage of the organization. Support people who are different and help them understand that their differences are of great value to your group and to the organization.
 - Balance results with concern for others. Balance the need to get results with a concern for the needs of others. Let people know that they don't need to stay late to complete the project you asked for unless it is really necessary.
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B. Establishes Stretch Goals

One of the top companion behaviors associated with inspiring and motivating others is setting stretch goals. Often when people are asked how long it will take them to complete an assignment or project, they will choose a reasonable time frame. Leaders who are effective at setting stretch goals will shorten that time frame by 10 percent, 20 percent, or 50 percent. Usually the impact of setting a stretch goal is that people accomplish more. We know from our research that there is something intrinsically exciting and motivating to people when they accomplish a difficult objective. Although they themselves would generally not set a stretch target, when they achieve a stretch target it increases their self-esteem, job satisfaction, and intention to stay with the organization.

- Set stretch goals. Extraordinary leaders ask team members to raise their bars. When the U.S. President John Kennedy announced the goal to land a man safely on the moon within the decade, everyone recognized that as a stretch goal. The technology did not exist. It was unlike anything that the space agencies had done before. But the challenge was met. There is great power in a dramatic, challenging goal. It unites people and evokes a level of hard work and creativity that does not occur otherwise. Effective leaders learn the power that stretch goals have when properly introduced and supported.
 - Act quickly. One subset of stretch goals is the challenge to do something quickly that has typically taken a much longer time. Examples of this kind of stretch goal can be found in virtually any organization. Whether it means reducing the time to process a mortgage application from weeks to days, or the time to change the dies that stamp out metal parts from hours to minutes, speeding things up usually has great benefits. Personally take the initiative to act quickly when you see an opportunity. Getting others to act quickly on an opportunity will stress-test your communication and persuasion skills.
 - Follow through, then follow through again. Follow through on your assignments and ensure that others follow through with their commitments. Too often assignments are made but no one follows up and ensures completion.
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C. Clear Vision and Direction

Inspirational leaders are effective at establishing and communicating a clear vision. It is true that it is difficult to inspire people when they are not clear about where they are going, but visionary leaders do more than that. They paint such a compelling picture of the future that team members want to go there.

- Clarify and reinforce team goals. Clarify and reinforce the link between the goal your team is trying to achieve and the broader business objectives of the organization. Invite team members to present their views of how your group contributes to the important strategic initiatives of the firm. Make sure that everyone understands the impact they can have on the overall success of the organization.
 - Bring the outside in. Help your team understand key information that is happening outside the organization with customers, competitors, and other organizations around the world. Think of information that you have picked up in the past two weeks that you have not passed on to your team. Make sure you convey that in the next team meeting. Help them to see trends and brainstorm how they will respond to an ever-changing external environment.
 - Encourage change. In order to achieve difficult goals sometimes a change in processes, procedures, or personnel is required. Help others understand why this change is necessary and how it will help the organization accomplish its mission.
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D. Communicates Powerfully and Prolifically

Leaders who are skillful at communicating powerfully are also more effective at inspiring and motivating. A key ingredient of inspiring and motivating others is effective communication. When team members are clear about goals, future events, changes, new ideas, and plans for the group, they are more energized. When people are kept in the dark, they become disengaged.

- Make presentations memorable via stories. Use stories, examples, illustrations, or parables to augment every major point you seek to make. The stories will be remembered when the abstractions are long forgotten.
 - Put yourself in the audience. Begin by asking yourself, “What would I want to know or learn more about if I were sitting in the audience?” and “What are their biggest concerns as it pertains to this matter?” Then be sure to speak to those issues.
 - Organize for clarity. Create a simple structure for every major communication that begins by describing the current situation; explains the current problem, issue, or complication; discusses the alternative courses of action; and then concludes by presenting your recommendation and the reasons for it.
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E. Develops Others

Leaders who find ways to increase the developmental opportunities for their team members are more inspirational. When team members think about the rewards they can receive from their jobs, after the pay and benefits, the next most tangible reward is the learning and development that comes from job assignments or training. Leaders who create positive developmental experiences for their team members generate an inspired and motivated team.

- Ensure every team member has a development plan. Work with each team member to create a personal plan of development. Periodically review the progress that each team member is making on his/her personal development plan.
 - Understand evolving career aspirations. Find ways to stay in touch with the career aspirations and concerns of the individuals on your team. Find opportunities to understand what is happening in their personal lives and the challenges and opportunities they face. Schedule regular coaching conversations about their career progress.
 - Support developmental activities. Provide opportunities for appropriate courses and programs that will develop important skills in your direct reports.
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F. Collaboration and Teamwork

Leaders who have positive, supportive teams and encourage cooperation across the organization are more inspirational. Most people have had the experience of coming to work lacking energy but then engaging with a group of people where there was a great deal of energy and excitement. The result is that they typically become more energized. Creating a team environment that encourages people to work harder and with greater intensity is a key element for an inspirational leader.

- Share your knowledge. Look for opportunities to share your knowledge and expertise with other groups. Groups are more likely to collaborate with people who they feel have good judgment in making decisions and who are willing to explain the reasons behind decisions.
 - Create networking opportunities. Initiate business lunches with peers. Invite others to present at your staff meetings. Develop and maintain effective working relationships with people outside your immediate work group. Initiate discussions with colleagues regarding ways your teams could work together more effectively. Having a positive relationship is critical in order for groups to collaborate.
 - Remove barriers. Be attentive to ways in which your team could take actions that would assist other groups. Ask your team members to identify ways to make working relationships more seamless inside the firm. Celebrate the successes of other departments.
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G. Innovates

Leaders who are skillful at innovation are also more effective at inspiring and motivating. Our research revealed that leaders who look for new, innovative ways to accomplish their work and are willing to take risks are more inspirational. Think about the difficulty of getting people inspired and motivated when you are not allowed to change or improve processes and are forbidden to do anything that might have some risk. Clearly, finding new approaches to work will often increase the level of employee motivation and inspiration.

- Answer the “so that” question. Innovation works best when you can answer the “so that” questions. “We want to find an innovative way to solve a problem ‘so that’ we will do X more efficiently, which will in turn leverage and support our strategic objective.” Being clear about the strategy and mission of the organization helps people find innovative solutions to problems that really matter.
 - Ask challenging questions. Most innovative ideas challenge existing practices, processes, and approaches. Be willing to ask hard questions that challenge the status quo. Enlist the help of other team members in thinking about a fresh new way to accomplish something.
 - Create a change environment. Assume you were a newcomer to your group. What products, processes, and procedures would a newcomer see needing change? Identify the benefits that change will create. This will help fuel the need for innovation. Then be willing to become a champion for new projects or programs. Present them to others in a way that will encourage support and involvement.
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H. Takes Initiative

Leaders who find ways to take initiative and achieve results are more inspirational. The simple difference is that leaders who take initiative make things happen and leaders who do not take initiative wait for things to happen. Organizations create a number of excuses for people to not take initiative. Decisions get stalled, direction is not clear, or authority has not been given, but leaders who take initiative find a way to move forward.

- Accelerate your personal effort. Challenge yourself to push a little harder and try a little more, putting in additional time and adding extra effort into your work. What if your team were functioning at a much higher level? What would have to be different? What steps could you take to get it there? Choose one and create the plan for implementing it.
 - Go far beyond the expected. Merely doing a job well is not the same as taking initiative. Look for opportunities to go far beyond what is expected of you by seeing something that is falling through the crack between your team and another and fixing the problem. How could you far exceed the quality or quantity of what has been done in the past?
 - Start something new. Some managers think their job consists in merely keeping all the plates spinning. Leadership is the ability to identify a new plate that needs to get up and spinning. Jot down the things happening in your area that are solely because of you. What other new processes, new products, or new markets could be developed if you were to take the lead?
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I. Champions Change

Leaders who know how to create change are much more effective at inspiring and motivating others. Leaders who know how to get changes implemented are inspirational. It is difficult to think of how a leader can be inspirational without the ability to create change. Leaders who can't get the changes made create frustration and disappointment.

- Initiate change. One principle of physics states that a body at rest tends to stay at rest. Something has to happen to initiate change. That can be an external event such as a new competitor or new technology. Leadership is about encouraging everyone on your team to propose changes before an external force compels you to act. Ask your team for ideas about what needs changing and how that can best happen.
- Emphasize the benefits of reaching the destination. Change is difficult and often the choice is between doing something and doing nothing. Find ways to get personally energized and excited to take on challenging goals. Focus on what things will be like when the change is implemented. Look for the rewards associated with changing. Doing something is nearly always better than doing nothing.
- Link the change initiative to important strategic objectives. Have a perspective beyond the day-to-day work to take a longer-term, broader view of how change will leverage strategic objectives of the organization. When a change initiative cannot be directly linked to the strategy then the change effort is just a hobby and of little benefit to the organization.

J. Role Model

Leaders who are excellent role models are more inspirational. Simply put, they exemplify what the organization stands for and how it wants people to behave.

- Keep commitments. Keep track of commitments you make to others. Often people agree to do something with good intentions but forget their commitment.
 - Reward collaboration not competition. Make an effort to encourage and reward cooperation and collaboration rather than competition.
 - Ask for and act on feedback. Ask for feedback from others and act on that feedback. Leaders who are able to effectively receive feedback are perceived as role models for their team.
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