



The Meaningful Leader®

Self Awareness

Self-awareness means the ability to recognize one's personality tendencies and typical behaviors, as well as one's assumptions, biases, and emotions. We use the Big Five Model of personality, the preferred personality taxonomy used by most personality researchers.

Building Trust

Meaningful leaders build a culture of trust and enhance their own trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is the quality of someone who can be trusted. The leader's trustworthiness impacts the followers' feelings of meaningfulness and safety at work. Four components may influence perceptions of Trustworthiness: Benevolence, Authenticity, Reliability, and Fairness.

Breaking Silos

This competency involves leaders' ability to build bridges among their reports and encourage a collaborative and open environment.

Information Seeking

Effective leaders encourage a culture of openness and transparency. They create channels and processes to improve the flow of information within and between all teams under their responsibility.

Leading for Fit

Managers who Lead for Fit assign to their reports responsibilities that match their abilities. They also help their reports uncover unique strengths and devise "alternative success routes" or strategies when accomplishing less natural tasks.

Maximizing Performance

Maximizing Performance means supporting employees' development and helping establish an advancement plan and process. This competency includes coaching; providing timely, balanced and clear feedback; and establishing an optimum balance between challenge and support.

Facilitating Growth

Facilitating growth means supporting and encouraging the career development of one's reports. At best, the leader supports the employee's development plan and helps uncover additional growth and learning opportunities. At worst, the leader discourages or even blocks the employee's progress.

Promoting Safety

Leaders who champion safety encourage their reports to express their real selves at work. They avoid placing unnecessary restrictions on employee self-expression and treat all employees respectfully. Safety at work, however, does not depend only on the leader's behaviors. Employees must feel that their peers accept them for who they are. Thus, promoting safety also means championing a culture of inclusiveness and holding employees accountable for respectful and inclusive behaviors.

Recognizing the Work

Recognizing the work means acknowledging your reports' contributions to your team and the organization as a whole.

Additional Competencies

Additional competencies may be added to the program depending on the organization's needs and goals. We particularly recommend the following:

Service Excellence

Strong leaders inspire a culture of service excellence, both inside and outside the organization. Excellent service goes beyond meeting customer expectations. Instead, excellent service surprises the customer with extraordinary support and a true concern for the customer's needs.

Adaptive Leadership

In times of change, the leader is unlikely to have all the answers. Thus, adaptive leaders mobilize their followers to come up with innovative solutions. They also support the followers facing change-related losses and inspire them to thrive in a changing environment. Finally, adaptive leaders go beyond providing a "vision." Instead, they help followers gain a strong sense of purpose and meaning.

Dr. Cris Wildermuth

Dr. Cristina Wildermuth is Linked:HR's Community Chair. An experienced OD consultant and facilitator, Dr. Cris Wildermuth is an Associate Professor at Drake University, where she leads the Master of Science in Leadership Development and teaches courses in global leadership, change leadership, ethics, instructional design, and human resource development.

Dr. Wildermuth is fluent in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and has facilitated leadership, team development, and intercultural relations programs in the United States, Latin America, and Europe.

Passionate about teaching, Dr. Wildermuth brings to her graduate classes the excitement and entrepreneurial spirit of "real world" OD consulting: Her students work on their own organizational change cases, develop practical instructional design and research projects for real clients, and engage in lively leadership and ethics simulations.



Dr. Wildermuth is the author of "Diversity Training," published by the national American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), has had articles published by various peer reviewed journals, and frequently speaks at national and international conferences. She has a strong expertise on the topics of employee engagement, the five factors of personality, and building leadership capacity. Her next projects include research on toxic leadership and "the moment of disengagement" and writing a book on The Meaningful Leader®

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