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The term “leadership” in some contexts refers to a level or position, e.g. “the senior leadership team.” In some, it refers to a level of domain competency, e.g. “she is the leading performer on the team.” In others, leadership refers to characteristics of influence that drive positive results. It is this latter context that most impacts overall organizational performance. It is this set of characteristics that when applied moves people to action. They are available for anyone to learn and use – regardless of level or domain. Yet they are often misunderstood and inconsistently applied.

In defense of misunderstanding, characteristics that drive positive influence and performance vary from organization to organization. There is not one universal standard. An organization that relies on frequent product innovations would value the leadership competency of creating a climate of creativity more than an organization that relies on being a low cost provider which would more value the leadership competency of operating an efficient organization.

Not only do leadership characteristics vary, most are intangible. Characteristics of influence by definition are indirect. Performance improvements are often the ripple effect of someone else’s influence. If you do or say something that motivates your employees to take more responsibility for the quality of their work, the resulting improvement in work quality is *theirs*. Traits of influence that result in higher employee engagement, a stronger work ethic, and a deeper sense of ownership for results are extremely valuable, but not easily measured.

So how do you measure leadership? Some would rightly suggest than an organization’s culture, attitude, values and energy level give insight to the quality of leadership. However, cultures, attitudes, values and energy are means to an end, not ends in themselves. The same can be said for leadership. Leadership is not the objective but the means to an objective. The objective is top business performance. Therefore, if you want to most accurately assess the quality of your organization’s collective leadership competency, the best measure is business performance over which the organization has control.

Following are twenty-two high-impact business performance metrics on which strong leadership depends and on which organizational leadership competency can be objectively assessed.



Organizational Leadership Assessment

Put your organization to the *Alpine Link Leadership Test*:

- ___ **Sales:** % of qualified sales/business opportunities unengaged or lost
- ___ **Customers:** % of customers dissatisfied
- ___ **Expenses:** % of costs and expenses not directly adding value to the organization or its mission
- ___ **Communication:** % of communications lacking clarity, accuracy, relevancy and timeliness
- ___ **Meetings:** % of time spent in meetings that waste time and resource
- ___ **Employee Strengths:** % of employee's strengths not leveraged
- ___ **Teamwork:** % of employee's energy focused on the "me" at the expense of "we" (or the % of team cooperation and synergy not leveraged)
- ___ **Best Practices:** % of repeatable best practices and good ideas not being leveraged or shared between applicable employees
- ___ **Partners:** % of partners and 3rd parties whose talents and capabilities are materially underutilized
- ___ **Value Add:** % of employee's time not directly contributing value to the organization
- ___ **Employee Productivity:** % of employee's time adding value, but not optimally
- ___ **Employee Morale:** % of employees with low morale, low engagement, attitudes of entitlement and sub-optimal work ethic
- ___ **Employee Turnover:** % of undesired turnover (or % of the cost of recruiting/training allocated to back-filling employees)
- ___ **Employee Promotion:** % of managers brought in from outside versus those from internal promotions
- ___ **Talent:** % of personnel employed not considered "A" players
- ___ **Quality:** % of costs due to preventable mistakes, quality control issues, scrap and other failures to meet specified standards
- ___ **Processes and Systems:** % of processes, systems and incentives considered below the optimal levels needed to support the needs of the organization
- ___ **Values:** % of company issues and costs related to employee conflict, lawsuits, fraud, ethics violations, audits and dishonesty that could have been avoided had organizational values been followed
- ___ **Project Management:** % of projects completed behind schedule, over budget or not to required specifications
- ___ **Doing vs Leading:** % of managers not actively training, teaching, coaching, empowering, guiding, and leading their employees and instead operating as individual contributors
- ___ **Employee Development:** % of employees not regularly participating in training and not being actively coached by their managers
- ___ **Decision Making Quality:** % of decisions which were made poorly (or not made at all) and resulted in sub-optimum products, strategies, personnel moves, operational execution, etc.

Decide what percentages are acceptable for your organization. By rough measure, any percentage over 15% should raise concern. Any measures over 30% should raise serious concern!