7 Critical Competencies For Effective, Productive Leaders
PLAYBOOK
For over a decade, the **CPI 260 assessment** has been helping organizations assess, select, and develop leaders based on collaborative research from the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). We know that different kinds of organizations and vertical markets require specific qualities of leadership. However, there are universal competencies that are essential for leading people effectively, regardless of the kind of work you may perform or the kind of people you are managing. Seven of these competencies are described in this leadership playbook.

The CPI 260 scale descriptions that follow represent the qualities and behaviors that tend to have the most impact on the execution and practice of leadership across organizations. As you learn more about the scales in the playbook, think about where your scores may fall, and the implications for you as a leader and your direct reports.
Empathy (Em)

Empathy is one of the most critical competencies in the execution of leadership. The CPI 260 Empathy scale reveals individuals’ ability to get inside other people’s experiences and try to imagine what they are thinking and feeling.

- Individuals who score **high** on the Empathy scale tend to understand that getting buy-in requires getting others to believe in their message. When they engage in behaviors that demonstrate empathy, other people are more likely to respond positively and feel connected to their actions and beliefs.

- Individuals who score **low** on Empathy may feel disconnected from others and often feel misunderstood by them. At the same time, they may have difficulty understanding other people and showing compassion or concern for their situation.
The Dominance and Empathy scales go hand in hand—the more dominance individuals demonstrate, the greater they need to temper it with empathy.

- Individuals who score **high** on the Dominance scale are driven to lead and influence other people. They enjoy directing and persuading others. However, too high a score on this scale may indicate a “my-way-or-the-highway” type of leader who nobody wants to follow.

- Individuals who score **low** on Dominance tend to lack confidence in being in charge of decisions and feel uneasy telling others what to do. They likely feel more comfortable following than leading.
Most people agree that the key to increasing one’s level of Emotional Intelligence, or EQ, is developing self-awareness. Without self-awareness, for better or worse, it is difficult to improve one’s leadership behaviors and their impact on others.

- Individuals who score **high** (but not too high) on the Self-acceptance scale tend to be comfortable with themselves—“warts and all”—and be confident in what they bring to the table. Self-acceptance scores that are too high could reveal individuals who think too highly of themselves or present other ego-related problems, are probably not great collaborators, or think their ideas are better than other people’s.

- Individuals who score **low** on Self-acceptance tend not to have a very high opinion of themselves, often take things too personally, and are too self-critical. They find it hard to compete with others and don’t believe much in themselves.
Agility and flexibility have been part of the leadership conversation for some time, including the difference between too much and not enough flexibility.

- Individuals who score **high** on the Flexibility scale often are hungry for change and sometimes create it. They like each day to bring something different and may become complacent when faced with too much routine. They like to try new things—even if they fail. They tend to be comfortable with ambiguity and can tolerate it when things don’t go their way.

- When individuals score **very high** on Flexibility (especially if they also score high on the Creative scale), they may bounce from task to task and have to flex to stick with difficult challenges or problems that arise. Flexibility and project management go hand in hand.

- Individuals who score **low** on Flexibility tend to love routine and want to know at all times what the plan will be. They feel less comfortable going with the flow and dealing with unknowns.
Effective leaders tend to be curious about the world—how and why things work—and to constantly in pursuit of making something even better. The CPI 260 Insightfulness scale indicates one’s level of natural curiosity about what makes people “tick” and why people do the things they do.

- Individuals who score **high** on the Insightfulness scale tend to be curious about others and understand that what motivates them is complicated. In the pursuit of learning why people respond or do things the way they do, they are more likely to examine their behaviors and notice differences between them.

- Individuals who score **low** on Insightfulness may understand less how to maneuver and influence others than individuals who score higher on this scale, and they may fail to do what is essential to gain buy-in or visibility. When dealing with others, having political savvy is important.
Rule-Favoring vs. Rule-Questioning

This aspect of the CPI 260 assessment reveals much about people’s approach to rules, indicating how closely they prefer to follow rules or how much they tend to disregard or break them.

• Individuals who score decidedly **toward the Rule-favoring pole** may have a difficult time thinking for themselves and may tend to follow the status quo or what other people do. They are not risk takers and operate more “by the book” than most others.

• Individuals who score **in the middle** tend to realize how to “play the game”—when to comply and when to push back against organizational ideas—but also, when appropriate, to challenge authority and push back. Having the courage to question the way things are can help inspire others to follow.

• Individuals who score **toward the Rule-questioning pole** may be more innovative and tend to challenge the existing methods for the purpose of improving them. They are the change agents that move people who are stuck and take appropriate risks. However, a score decidedly toward the Rule-questioning pole may sometimes indicate an issue with authority that could possibly be troublesome for the organization if taken too far.
Accomplishing work on one’s own has both its benefits and its challenges. Those people who do so with ease may tend to be more entrepreneurial and able to make decisions in the absence of consensus.

- Individuals who score high on the Independence scale tend not to wait for others to get what they need—they find it for themselves. They are resourceful and willing to go it alone. When they score too high, however, it may indicate that they need to work on being more collaborative—too much independence can lead to working in a silo, and isolation can cause them to miss opportunities and the chance to share information.

- Individuals who score low on Independence tend to lack tenacity and often quit when they run into too much trouble. They prefer taking direction from others and have a harder time taking initiative on their own to get things done.
These are just a few of the many useful scales on the CPI 260 assessment.

The assessment is filled with rich information that can help guide leaders leverage their strengths and personal style, as well as develop those areas in which they need to become more effective. Take some time to reflect on where your scores could lie on these important scales, and what they reveal about you as a manager or leader. You can use the insights you gain about yourself or the people with whom you work to enhance or increase the impact you can have on others and your organization.

Where do you fall on these 7 scales? Learn more about the CPI 260 assessment at www.cpp.com/CPI.
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While we’re best known for the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®* (MBTI®) assessment, CPP is much more than just a company that sells products. We’re also a group of people committed to improving the performance of individuals and organizations around the world.

We promise to help guide you through whatever organizational opportunities and challenges you face—from team building, leadership and coaching, and conflict management to career development, selection, and retention.

Our story began more than 50 years ago with the pairing of two psychology professors—one from Stanford and one from U.C. Berkeley—with a common goal: to use research-based psychological assessments to give people the insight and guidance they need to develop in both their personal and professional lives. Their partnership resulted in the creation of CPP, Inc., the company formerly known as Consulting Psychologists Press.

Today, CPP is a world leader in personality, career, and organizational development assessments. We are grateful to our loyal customers for making this possible.
Maybe you have big-picture questions about how to transform your performance in leadership and coaching, team building, or conflict management. Or maybe you would appreciate bouncing ideas about career exploration, selection, or retention off of someone who understands your needs. Call us today. After all, our only job is to help you be a better training and development professional—and, in turn, help your employees flourish.

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