



Zest – Leadership for a future generation of leaders

Asset: Competence Framework Overview

- **Leading the business**

Commercial Awareness

A leader must be able to understand the business impact of their plans and actions. This knowledge not simply about lowest cost options but extends further into the ability to assess partnerships for mutual value, seek opportunities to further the business outside of the normal routes and understand the time to cease effort on a project/partnership that is no longer adding value. This awareness spans countries and the ability to operate on an international stage in different currencies and with different legislation covering business operations.

Networking

A leader must be able to build networks before they are needed. This competence requires confidence and cannot be delegated to anyone else. They should actively identify the group of people they wish to meet before devising a sound strategy to achieve their global network. The ability to network is more than just exchanging business cards and relies on meaningful contacts through a variety of sources. A deep understanding of how to approach people and communicate in a way which initiates and encourages mutual contact is the hallmark of a good leader.

Strategic Thinking

Leaders must be able to think beyond the confines of their business and look to the external environment to understand what is happening and how this could affect their business. They need to be able to assimilate complex information to formulate ideas, opportunities and identify threats to their business. This assessment needs to be a dynamic assessment that a leader can conduct rapidly while considering a range of actions. They should be adept at looking at a wide range of options and not be constrained by previous thinking. When they have assessed a situation and prepared their plans, they must then be able to present a complex issue in a simple way that ensures clarity amongst stakeholders. Their success will be their ability to make the VUCA world understandable and generate opportunities for their business.

Collaboration

To be successful, leaders need to collaborate across their business. There is no room for self-isolation. Collaboration involves including people within projects to help share information, generate new ideas and provide a source of positive challenge to improve the overall outcome. Leaders should collaborate freely and without hesitation. This collaboration generates interest and support from around the business and helps build meaningful alliances with other departments. This can extend outside of the business to suppliers, customers, partners and other stakeholders who may be able to help deliver a project.

- **Leading yourself**

Adaptability

Adaptability supports many of the competencies in this framework as without it, all the work to scan the environment for threats and opportunities will be made worthless. This competence enables leaders to move easily between projects and switch focus. Adaptability not just about the leader making changes as an individual but about the need to understand that need for the business to adapt to survive and thrive. This may require some internal change but they recognise the value of not being stuck in one approach and readily move to capitalise on changes around them. Leaders are role models for adapting to the requirements of the business and the situation they are in. They act responsibly and lead their team by their actions. They exude confidence and set the vision for the need to adapt. Leaders challenge the norm and provide encouragement to adapt to colleagues in different departments.

Resilience

Resilience is a competence that is required in both the leaders and across the business to cope with the rapidly changing and uncertain environment. Resilience enables leaders to lead their teams positively during turbulent times and at the same time, protect their own wellbeing. Resilient leaders not only have a resilient mindset but also habits to help them build and mitigate difficult circumstances. Resilient leaders tackle adversity head-on and grow people around them to respond to issues they face. These leaders are easily identified as the 'go to' people in times of crisis as they have the presence of mind to look objectively at issues and provide the role model behaviours that others require to get through the situation.

Bravery

Bravery is required by leaders at all levels. Regardless of the size or importance of decision to be taken, leaders need to be brave and step out of the shadows to lead their team. Leading with bravery provides a role model to other employees and will inspire them to be brave in their work. Leaders will need to make changes and decisions on strategy, people or processes that shifts the business to a new focus. This could include severing ties with long-standing suppliers or entering a new market. Bravery does not come from poorly thought-out plans but from carefully considered options which mitigate risk. Once the options are clear, a brave leader can be clear on their way forward.

Trust

Leaders generate trust within the business through their actions. This competence is about being trusted and trusting others to do their job. It is a component of a good culture and must exist for a business to flourish. Leaders can establish trust by small actions and then build on this. This competence is closely aligned to empowerment and will be relied upon to achieve many outcomes for the business.

- **Leading others**

Developing People

Leaders should seek to develop others and in turn, create new leaders. This interest in development should be key for the leader and they should help people understand that they are responsible for their own development. A leader's role in this is to help people identify their own development needs and then support them in securing the resources to achieve this development. Successful leaders will help their people develop by acting as a role model for development and constantly seeking to learn. Great leaders are comfortable not knowing all the answers but own the responsibility to develop into better professionals.

Empowerment

Leaders should seek to empower their team to deliver results as this fosters confidence within other leaders. Empowerment is a sign of trust and moves a leader to a more strategic position. Empowerment is also a sign of maturity of a business which enables a business to move quickly as decision making is accelerated. Leaders who have successfully achieved a fully empowered team are free to explore new strategic initiatives which makes them stand-out from their peers. Other leaders will look to empowering leaders as a source of inspiration.

Communication

Leaders should communicate freely with the team and seek to instil a transparent attitude within the business. Withholding information is the exception reserved only for highly sensitive matters. Leaders are available to discuss topics with all employees and create a sense of approachability. When asked questions, they are comfortable with difficult messages and seek to reassure people where necessary. Leaders will employ many tactics of communication and not rely on one channel. Not only will they communicate widely but they will also seek to ensure their message has been received and interpreted properly. They are comfortable communicating to all audiences – internal and external.

Empathy

Leaders show empathy when they genuinely try to understand what others are experiencing and feeling. Leaders who show true empathy listen intently and notice non-verbal cues. Empathetic leaders easily build relationships with other people around the business and in the customer base. These leaders are also better at keeping employees engaged and delivering excellent customer experience. Empathetic leaders move easily between different situations (including cultures and countries) and with a diversity of people. They are successful in any of these situations as they listen, build relationships and understand the situation of other people.



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