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COMPETENCIES OF A

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# Ministry Leader



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Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank.

**Proverbs 22:29 (NIV)**

He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

**2 Corinthians 3:6 (NIV)**

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## Introduction

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“Assessing Ministry Competencies” is for any ministry leader, from the best peak performers to those burned out and needing rest. Wherever you are on that continuum, this assessment will help you gain an accurate picture of your strengths and weaknesses and uncover blind spots you may have. Our ultimate aim is to help you become all God created you to be.

**Those of us in leadership roles yearn to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful in leading this ministry—now I’ll give you more to handle” (Luke 19:17, paraphrased).**

Great ministry leaders continually strive to improve their skills and abilities. They are driven to attain personal peak performance. This continual striving for self-improvement is a defining characteristic of many. However, not everyone in ministry is an over-achiever. Some are content. Maybe even complacent. As you take this assessment, reflect on where you might be currently in the continuum of under- and over-achievers. Wherever you are, this assessment will help you better understand your strengths and weaknesses and identify areas of improvement.

### Competency Models

In 2001, SOLID set about developing our own set of competencies, using existing models and adding knowledge gained from our own findings and experience. We conducted a comprehensive study of the most respected leadership and management competency models to see what they had in common.

Competency models are useful for gaining a big picture of the essential skills and abilities for effective organizational leadership. Further, they provide a framework from which to view and evaluate your overall performance.

Our ministry competency model is a set of fifty competencies taken from a synthesis of SOLID’s own research and that of The Center for Creative Leadership, Lominger, and a number of other great thought leaders.

## Beyond Competencies

While mastering competencies is important, there is something even more critical. We discovered that what is most important is having a relatively balanced skillset across all competencies. To measure this degree of balance, we needed to develop a categorization system that would enable us to evaluate the level of balance or imbalance. After a decade of research, we published our findings.

While researching these expert systems, we made a key discovery: that ALL competencies can be neatly and conveniently categorized into five useful groupings. This is what we call, “SOLID’s Categories of Competency.”

Before we get into ministry competencies, it will be useful to get a baseline assessment of where you are in mastery of these areas.

# Competencies of a Ministry Leader

## ASSESSMENT

Grade yourself using the following scale: **N = Never; HE = Hardly Ever; S = Seldom; U = Usually; AA = Almost Always; A = Always**

	N	HE	S	U	AA	A
<b>1. CARING AND CONSIDERATE:</b> Demonstrates authentic concern for the welfare and success of others; considers the needs of others; drives to create a culture and policies that manifest and perpetuate this type of environment.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5
<b>2. CREATING INNOVATION:</b> Thinking more outside the box; discovering more possibilities; exploring ways to innovate; challenging pre-existing paradigms; allowing themselves and others permission to explore; tapping into existing creativity or drawing it out from others; creating an environment that supports creativity and innovation.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5
<b>3. ADAPTING BEHAVIOR:</b> Developing competency in behavioral style management; increasing awareness of own behavioral style; learning methods of identifying others' behavioral styles; deepening understanding of key stakeholders; improving ability to adapt one's behavioral style to needs of situation and the styles of others.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5
<b>4. MANAGING THE BOARD:</b> Improving skills in managing board meetings; listening to board members and trusting God to speak through them; developing existing board members as well as raising up new leads according to 1 Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:5-7.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5
<b>5. CASTING VISION:</b> Developing a greater vision to better hold team and congregation together; learning to better communicate vision throughout organization; thinking bigger picture; communicating a more concrete vision; gaining buy-in for future state; setting core values of organization; developing philosophy of approach to target audience.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5
<b>6. COURAGEOUS:</b> Demonstrates courage in the face of adversity; takes calculated risks; enterprising.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5
<b>7. DRIVING ACTION:</b> Increasing drive toward action; generating more action; making things happen more quickly; driving the action of others; developing written goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, related to mission and on a timetable.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5
<b>8. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS:</b> Growing interpersonal relationship skills; improving relationships with one's board, peers and/or direct reports; becoming smoother and less abrasive, decreasing friction; becoming more approachable; determining ways to be more available to others; improving ability to put people at ease.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5
<b>9. MANAGING STAFF:</b> Growing team-building and team development skills; developing a more diversity-minded culture; more openly providing recognition; increasing use of rewards to support positive behaviors; raising visibility of outstanding achievements; better garnering resources for team.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5
<b>10. CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS:</b> Designing effective change management initiatives; creating cultural change initiatives; leading restructurings and other church-wide change initiatives; designing effective succession planning programs; better managing level and rate of change; learning best practices of organizational design and development.	○ 0	○ 1	○ 2	○ 3	○ 4	○ 5

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**11. DEPENDABLE AND RELIABLE:** Follows through with commitments; can be depended upon, especially under pressure and in adversity; constant. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**12. DRIVING RESULTS:** Increasing intensity toward driving results; developing strategies to better hit numbers; driving own performance; increasing standards for personal achievement. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**13. BUILDING TEAMS:** Gaining greater team consensus; improving team dynamics; better guiding stages of team growth; improving employee morale; driving better team collaboration; driving team cohesiveness; improving team communication; better diffusing team conflict; implementing and utilizing team assessments and surveys. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**14. MANAGING CHANGE:** Designing change management initiatives; learning best practices of re-engineering ministry processes; restructuring with growth; assessing the organization; learning best practices of organizational development. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**15. DEMONSTRATING COURAGE:** Increasing willingness to stand alone; improving leadership despite adversity; increasing confidence in leadership ability; increasing calculated risk-taking; dealing better with ambiguity; increasing ability to deal with paradoxes; engaging in appropriate disclosure. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**16. HIGH-INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL:** Actions match words and convictions; adheres to moral and ethical principles; respects and follows laws and regulations. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**17. FOCUSING ATTENTION:** Increasing ability to gain and maintain focus and attention; improving sequential thinking skills; decreasing tendency to become distracted; increasing self-discipline for remaining on task. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**18. COMMUNICATING INFORMATION:** Improving presentation skills; gaining assessment of communication style; improving presentation design and effectiveness; managing and level-setting expectations; more persuasively promoting ideas; weighing in more often; gaining agreement and buy-in. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**19. MANAGING SYSTEMS:** Learning best practices in systems management; identifying key systems that support and drive the church's mission; developing better skills at designing, documenting and improving systems; learning ways to assess systems effectiveness from a mission perspective. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**20. EMPLOYING DIPLOMACY:** Becoming more diplomatic; increasing sensitivity to organizational politics; engaging in more politically correct behavior; developing more strategic relationships with key influencers; identifying nuances in organizational politics and social dynamics; better navigating negative church politics. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**21. LOYAL AND TRUSTWORTHY:** A sense of duty and attachment to employees and the organization; engenders and deserving of trust; respects confidentiality. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**22. LEVERAGING INTELLIGENCE:** Increasing intellectual agility, pushing oneself to think quicker on the fly; decreasing need for processing time; increasing expectations of self to be more flexible; avoiding black-and-white, either/or thinking; drawing out brilliance from others. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**23. LEVERAGING NETWORKS:** Initiating and growing strategic relationships; affiliating with key influential leaders and building a high degree of trust; developing strategic alliances; growing and leveraging their network. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**24. MANAGING CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS:** Developing the skills to gather large amounts of money; casting a clear and compelling vision; gaining emotional buy-in from the congregation; learning to identify and develop key donors. 0 1 2 3 4 5

**25. EXERCISING SOUND JUDGEMENT:** Increasing speed of decision-making; improving ability to rapidly assimilate information, parse data and get at root issues; improving balance between being decisive and prudent; increasing respect for decision-making from direct reports, peers and those in authority 0 1 2 3 4 5

<p><b>26. POSITIVE, with a CAN-DO ATTITUDE:</b> Believes he or she is God’s masterpiece, created to do good works; employs optimism with self and others; works hard and with high energy.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>27. MANAGING MEETINGS:</b> Improving skills in structuring staff meetings; designing off-sites; managing agendas; driving decisions and actions; setting up accountability systems to ensure follow-up.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>28. LISTENING TO OTHERS:</b> Refining active listening skills; improving ability to read between the lines; increasing time spent listening and decreasing time spent talking; becoming more of an empathetic listener; improving ability to reflect what the other person is saying; increasing the “I feel heard” experience with others; decreasing tendency to interrupt.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>29. MANAGING RESPONSIBILITIES:</b> Improving ability to delegate to others; giving clearer direction to others; empowering employees; increasing ability to “let go”; improving ability to know who is capable of what level of delegation and when; creating more of an empowered environment.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>30. INFLUENCING OTHERS:</b> Increasing level of influence; growing a larger constituency; developing follower base; being a good follower; becoming more persuasive; expanding power base; better championing creation and institutionalization of mission, vision and values; gaining greater organizational influence</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>31. RIGOROUSLY HONEST:</b> Tells the truth; does not lie.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>32. MANAGING TIME AND PRIORITIES:</b> Maximizing current time management systems; designing streamlined processes; gaining advanced skills in task prioritization; leveraging best practices of email, calendaring, task and contact management and personal and professional demand-balancing.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>33. MANAGING CONFLICT:</b> Increasing tolerance for conflict; improving attitude toward conflict; accepting a certain degree of conflict as necessary; increasing subtlety when pushing others’ boundaries; becoming better at resolving conflicts; learning advanced conflict resolution methodologies.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>34. MANAGING OPERATIONS:</b> Improving skills in program management; better managing projects, facilities, and technology; obtaining insight into best practices of reaching the unchurched and helping believers proceed through the natural phases of growth to become fully mature followers of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>35. INSPIRING OTHERS:</b> Creating motivational environments; creating excitement; sparking enthusiasm; establishing and maintaining an environment that breeds success; improving overall leadership presence; enhancing the leader’s communication skills; refining presentation skills.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>36. SELF-AWARE:</b> Has insight into blind spots; demonstrates introspection; seeks to continually improve insight into self.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>37. ORGANIZING SELF AND OTHERS:</b> Getting better organized; being better prepared for meetings; organizing the offices; designing personal organizational systems; structuring the calendars; developing better systems of task management.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>38. NEGOTIATING OUTCOMES:</b> Gaining insight into negotiating style; improving boundary-setting; exploring “win-win” methodology; designing winning strategies; over-preparing for key negotiating initiatives; uncovering hidden opportunities for gaining successions.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>39. MANAGING PERFORMANCE:</b> More directly addressing performance issues; increasing accountability; instituting systems and technology to automate performance management of people and processes; improving quality of one-on-ones; administering employee performance assessments; ensuring fairness of metrics to all employees.</p>	<p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 0 1 2 3 4 5</p>



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**40. LEADING STRATEGY:** Designing effective strategic planning off-sites; facilitating strategic planning; thinking more strategically; decreasing tactical orientation; inspiring a greater shared vision; developing a more strategic thought process; increasing activities around shaping vision and strategy.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**41. SERVANT LEADER:** Seeks to serve others; leads by example with a certain degree of humility and respect for others.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**42. RUNNING THE ORGANIZATION:** Enhancing ministry acumen; increasing general knowledge of ministry principles; gaining advanced training and coaching; developing plan for online education; designing strategy for overall improvement in understanding of the workings of ministry.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**43. PROJECTING PRESENCE:** Improving leadership presence; increasing comfort around upper management; improving posture; increasing direct eye contact; designing better wardrobe; improving diction; expanding vocabulary; improving meeting interface skills.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**44. MANAGING THE CALENDAR:** Having clear objectives and goals and allotting the time to accomplish them; learning to develop a one-year preaching calendar; planning for small-group growth cycles; scheduling big days; learning not to overestimate what can be done in a day and underestimate what can be done in a year.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**45. MENTORING LEADERS:** Gaining advanced skills in succession planning; learning “leader-as-coach” methodology; advising on selecting and managing those to mentor; better developing direct reports; enhancing others’ leadership skills; developing followers.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**46. TENACIOUS AND PERSISTENT:** Does not easily give up or give in to dissuasion; holds to a course of action even in the midst of adversity and challenge; persists in the face of obstacles and barriers unless position proves untenable.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**47. SOLVING PROBLEMS:** Increasing creativity in solving problems; developing additional solutions to complex problems; brainstorming; troubleshooting possible issues; increasing analysis of problems; weighing pros and cons; identifying solutions in a more calculated way.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**48. READING BODY LANGUAGE:** Increasing observation of others’ body language; improving ability to interpret unspoken messages; gaining ability to “read” the person’s face and body language; becoming more observant of subtle messages; increasing awareness of and sensitivity to other cultures’ forms of body language; increasing awareness of one’s own body language.

0 1 2 3 4 5

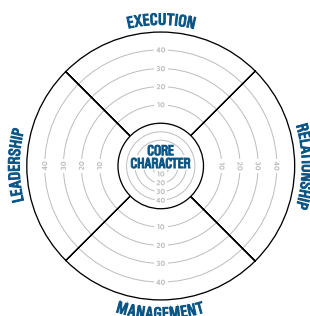
**49. MANAGING FINANCES:** Gaining expertise in donor development; developing best practices to ensure maximum integrity and donor confidence; learning creative ways to lower the cost of ministry while optimizing performance of the various ministries of the church.

0 1 2 3 4 5

**50. STUDYING LEADERSHIP:** Acquiring advanced leadership mentoring, training and coaching; developing reading lists; accessing peer groups; seeking out organizations to join; developing one’s own plan of leadership development; gaining accountability for improvement; learning coaching best practices; studying successful leaders throughout history; increasing drive for continuous self-improvement.

0 1 2 3 4 5

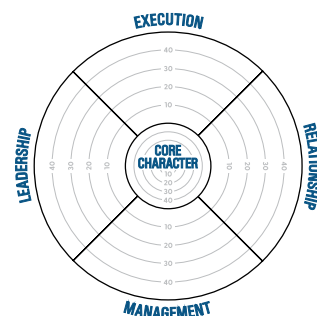
Current State



SOLID Categories of Executive Competency™



Desired State



# Competencies of a Ministry Leader

## ASSESSMENT ANSWER SHEET

Now that you have completed the Competencies of Ministry Leader Assessment, transfer your answers below.

### C. CORE CHARACTER

- \_\_\_ 1. Caring and Considerate
- \_\_\_ 6. Courageous
- \_\_\_ 11. Dependable and Reliable
- \_\_\_ 16. High-Integrity and Ethical
- \_\_\_ 21. Loyal and Trustworthy
- \_\_\_ 26. Positive, with a Can-Do Attitude
- \_\_\_ 31. Rigorously Honest
- \_\_\_ 36. Self-Aware
- \_\_\_ 41. Servant Leader
- \_\_\_ 46. Tenacious and Persistent

0 TOTAL

### E. EXECUTION

- \_\_\_ 2. Creating Innovation
- \_\_\_ 7. Driving Action
- \_\_\_ 12. Driving Results
- \_\_\_ 17. Focusing Attention
- \_\_\_ 22. Leveraging Intelligence
- \_\_\_ 27. Managing Meetings
- \_\_\_ 32. Managing Time and Priorities
- \_\_\_ 37. Organizing Self and Others
- \_\_\_ 42. Running the Ministry
- \_\_\_ 47. Solving Problems

0 TOTAL

### R. RELATIONSHIP

- \_\_\_ 3. Adapting Behavior
- \_\_\_ 8. Building Relationships
- \_\_\_ 13. Building Teams
- \_\_\_ 18. Communicating Information
- \_\_\_ 23. Leveraging Networks
- \_\_\_ 28. Listening to Others
- \_\_\_ 33. Managing Conflict
- \_\_\_ 38. Negotiating Outcomes
- \_\_\_ 43. Projecting Presence
- \_\_\_ 48. Reading Body Language

0 TOTAL

### M. MANAGEMENT

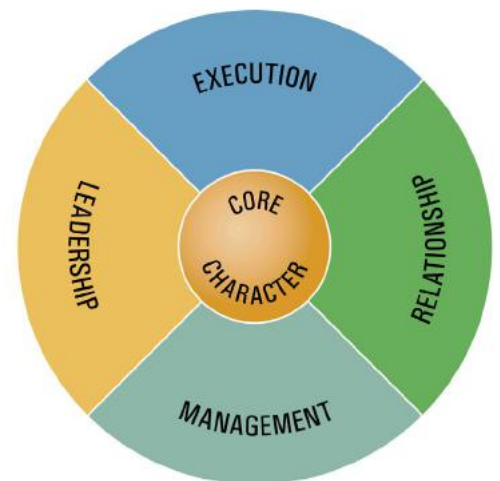
- \_\_\_ 4. Board Management
- \_\_\_ 9. Staff Management
- \_\_\_ 14. Change Management
- \_\_\_ 19. Systems Management
- \_\_\_ 24. Capital Campaign Management
- \_\_\_ 29. Project Management
- \_\_\_ 34. Operations Management
- \_\_\_ 39. Performance Management
- \_\_\_ 44. Calendar Management
- \_\_\_ 49. Financial Management

0 TOTAL

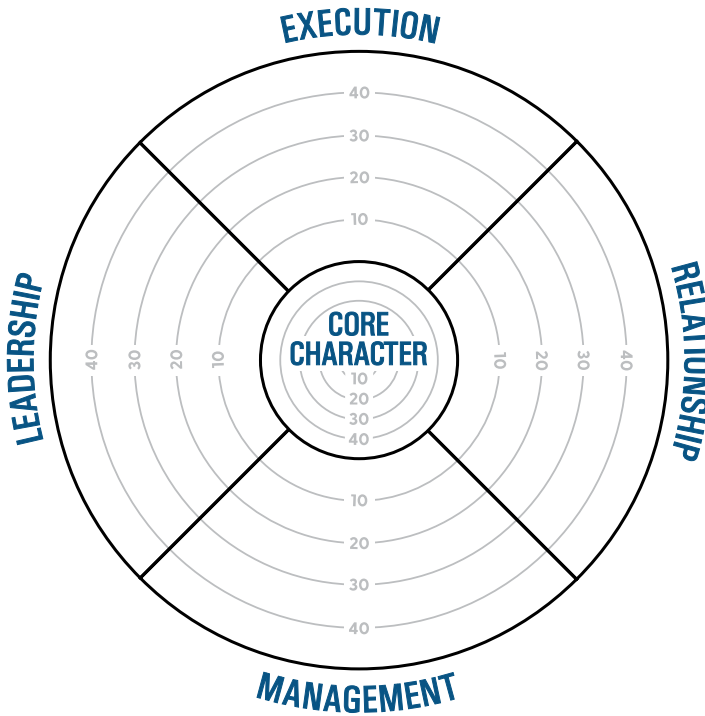
### L. LEADERSHIP

- \_\_\_ 5. Casting Vision
- \_\_\_ 10. Changing Organizations
- \_\_\_ 15. Demonstrating Courage
- \_\_\_ 20. Employing Diplomacy
- \_\_\_ 25. Exercising Sound Judgement
- \_\_\_ 30. Influencing Others
- \_\_\_ 35. Inspiring Others
- \_\_\_ 40. Leading Strategy
- \_\_\_ 45. Mentoring Leaders
- \_\_\_ 50. Studying Leadership

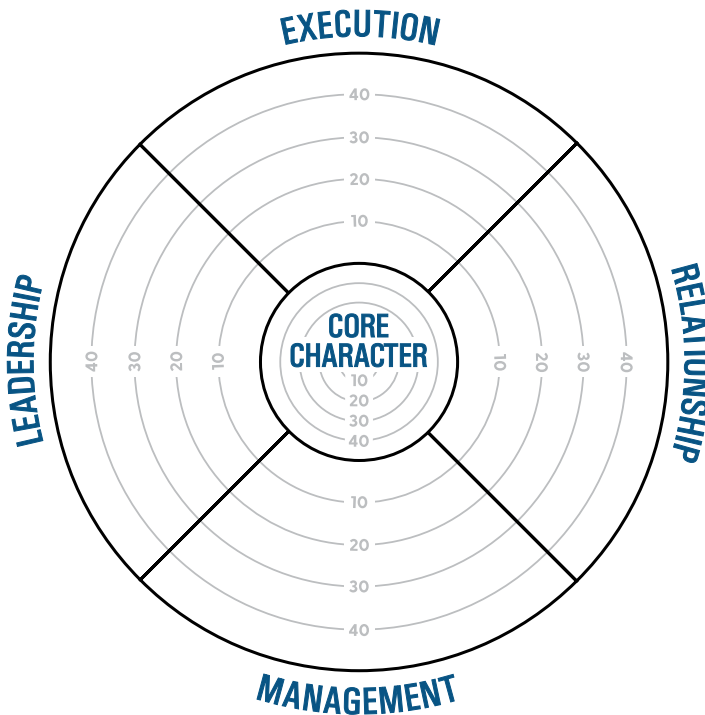
0 TOTAL



**Current State:** Shade in your scores to illustrate your current competency levels.



**Desired State:** Shade in your realistic goals for improved levels of ministry competency.



List actions to take to improve your levels of ministry competency.

**Core Character:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Execution:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Relationship:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Management:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Leadership:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Five Categories of Competency

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SOLID's five categories of competency are Core Character, Execution, Relationship, Management and Leadership. Ministry leaders who master all five categories consistently achieve excellence in their work.

As many top leaders of churches and Christian nonprofits used our system, we received feedback that made two key truths apparent. These findings were consistent across almost every one of our engagements. They are:

**1. Core Character is the single most important category of competency.** This should be no surprise. It was Jesus's disciple, Peter, who highlighted character as the most important quality to develop after coming to basic faith.

**“Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence”  
(2 Peter 1:5 NLT).**

Peter then made a powerful declaration linking character to effectiveness in ministry.

**“For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8 NIV).**

Often, when leaders have developed very strong core character, their character can compensate for shortcomings in other areas.

**2. Balance across the remaining four categories of competency—Execution, Leadership, Management, and Relationship—is the key to optimal performance.**

Character sets the stage for success, and when a ministry leader combines strong character with a balance of Execution, Leadership, Management, and Relationship, he propels his leadership effectiveness to new dimensions.

What we have seen is that the key isn't perfection of the competencies, but balance across the four categories of competency combined with character. Throughout our engagements, we observed this fascinating phenomenon. Despite having a high degree of mastery over most of the competencies, many leaders still failed to achieve a high degree of effectiveness. Some were being terminated while others were quitting their calling and abandoning their dream. However, moderately performing leaders often did better than the superstars, if they had balanced competencies in all four areas combined with a strong Core Character.

It is important to realize that both criteria are equally necessary for the leader to achieve and sustain high performance. A strong Core Character without a balanced set of competencies is a career derailer, as is a balanced set of competencies without a strong Core Character.

## Overused Strengths Become Weaknesses

Here's another eye-opening finding. Your strength could be your greatest weakness. Said another way, your strength may very well be causing you to underperform. Overusing or overplaying to strengths is a natural tendency that often creates a major weakness. And because it is strength being used, there is often a gaping blind spot hiding this weakness. During almost all coaching engagements, we identify at least one top strength that is being overused and creating problems for the leader. That is why following the simplistic advice of "Play to your strengths" is not always the best decision.

## Simple Adjustments for Transformational Results

Thad was a pastor leading the First Impressions ministry at one of Dallas's largest and fastest-growing churches. A gifted leader and strong on execution, he was known for getting things done. His attention to detail, coupled with his driving ambition, earned him high praise and helped him move to the top of his church's organizational ladder. However, despite Thad's former success as a leader, in his new role he began failing miserably. He wasn't well liked, and his team felt he was more like a drill instructor than a shepherd.

Thad was challenged to develop the Relationship category, especially the competencies of building relationships and listening to others. Thad had always said, "I'm task oriented. That's just the way I am. I get things done." But when Thad wasn't able to get things done, he was forced to develop a new competency. Today, Thad is one of the most relational people you will ever meet, AND he is one of the most successful pastors on his church's staff.

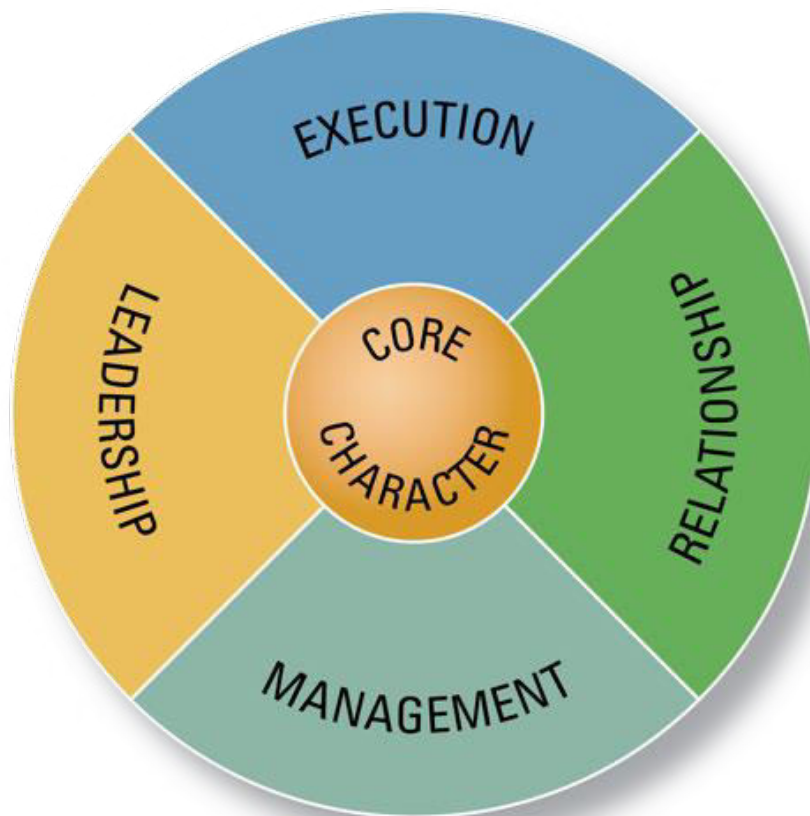
Bob was a lead pastor and a gifted visionary leader. His ability to see what should be and what could be fueled his leadership engine and had earned him recognition as a successful innovator in the churches he had served. Bob wasn't an early adapter of small group ministry over Sunday School; he was a pioneer. In the same way, Bob saw the need for new churches and became a church planter before church planting was the wave. However, despite all Bob's success leading the churches he had started, he believed he had more to give. Like living with a low-grade fever, he knew something was wrong. What kept Bob from realizing maximum effectiveness? Bob slowly began to believe he just didn't have the gift to lead and regularly thought about giving up the ministry.

Bob's life and ministry changed the day he discovered that his greatest strength had created his greatest weakness. Bob was a gifted visionary with a strong Core Character—that's partly why his limited success was so puzzling. Today Bob is pursuing balance among the four categories of competency and is experiencing more effectiveness and fulfillment than ever before.

The exciting news is that these stories are not the exceptions. They are the norm. Whatever your level of success, whether you feel like you are failing or just think you have more to give, you can hit the mark of leadership excellence by focusing on the five categories of competency.

## Beyond Balance

If you combine a strong Core Character with a balance of competencies across the four categories of Execution, Leadership, Management, and Relationship, you will propel your effectiveness to new dimensions. Let's spend the rest of our time gaining an understanding of and evaluating your strengths and weaknesses in each category, looking at ten corresponding competencies for each.



### C. CORE CHARACTER

1. Caring and Considerate
2. Courageous
3. Dependable and Reliable
4. High-Integrity and Ethical
5. Loyal and Trustworthy
6. Positive, with a Can-Do Attitude
7. Rigorously Honest
8. Self-Aware
9. Servant Leader
10. Tenacious and Persistent

### M. Management

1. Board Management
2. Staff Management
3. Change Management
4. Systems Management
5. Capital Campaign Management
6. Project Management
7. Operations Management
8. Performance Management
9. Calendar Management
10. Financial Management

### E. Execution

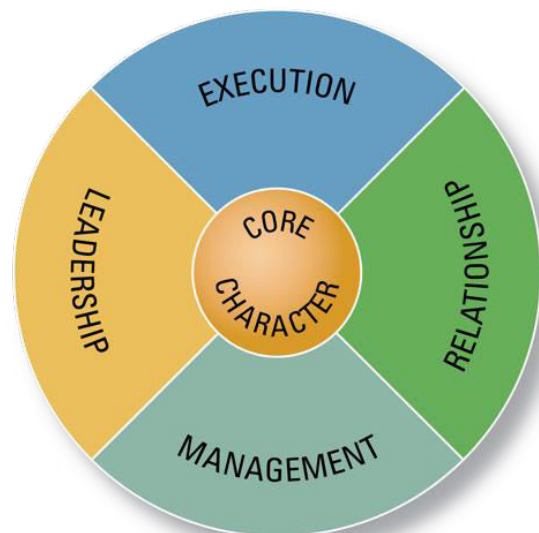
1. Creating Innovation
2. Driving Action
3. Driving Results
4. Focusing Attention
5. Leveraging Intelligence
6. Managing Meetings
7. Managing Time and Priorities
8. Organizing Self and Others
9. Running the Ministry
10. Solving Problems

### L. Leadership

1. Casting Vision
2. Changing Organizations
3. Demonstrating Courage
4. Employing Diplomacy
5. Exercising Sound Judgement
6. Influencing Others
7. Inspiring Others
8. Leading Strategy
9. Mentoring Leaders
10. Studying Leadership

### R. Relationship

1. Adapting Behavior
2. Building Relationships
3. Building Teams
4. Communicating Information
5. Leveraging Networks
6. Listening to Others
7. Managing Conflict
8. Negotiating Outcomes
9. Projecting Presence
10. Reading Body Language



## CATEGORY 1: Core Character

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The first competency we will start with is the most important, and is critical to your success as a ministry leader: Core Character. Without a strong Core Character, nothing else matters. It is no wonder that King Solomon, perhaps the wisest man who ever lived, told us this:

**“A good name is to be desired more than great wealth, favor is better than silver and gold” (Proverbs 22:1 NASB).**



A good analogy for the importance of character is a race car wheel and tire and the critical conditions that must exist for maximum performance.

Hub and axle are most important to the performance of the wheel. If the axle is bent, you will surely have trouble steering the vehicle and it will only get worse the faster you go. The hub of our model, Core Character, is the most critical success factor for a leader desiring forward momentum. As our next story shows, even a minor lapse in Core Character can spell disaster for a leader who is often held to a higher standard—and justly so.

Kevin was a CFO who was great at accomplishing things (Execution), getting along with others (Relationship), managing staff and projects (Management), and influencing others to go above and beyond the call of duty (Leadership). However, he often did not keep verbal commitments he made. Although Kevin was a stellar performer in every other way, the CEO fired him because he could not be trusted to keep his word.

Kevin’s weakness in Core Character was easily fixed in his next role by using what he learned from us in his onboarding coaching sessions. His new CEO was familiar with the benefits of providing onboarding coaching to a new executive, and during that engagement, Kevin discovered he had a bad habit of quickly agreeing to do something to make other people happy. He learned to become more assertive, speak his mind, and set boundaries. Kevin, like many top-performing senior leaders, is a quick study. Once he saw these issues, he was quickly able to make the changes needed to avert potential problems. He became a much more effective CFO after making these seemingly minor adjustments.



After much research and real-world beta testing with hundreds of top leaders, we now know this model is transformational for those who embrace these concepts:

- #1: Build, maintain, and continually improve your Core Character.**
- #2: Maintain a balanced set of competencies and avoid overuse of strengths.**
- #3: Discover blind spots and shore up your weakest category.**

Mark was a pastor of a mega-church. He was extremely successful by all measurements, but his 360-degree assessment revealed that he was burned out. He was not taking care of himself and was continually giving to others but not reserving any recharge time for himself. He was balanced in the four external categories of competency, but was suffering from a deflated Core Character. He needed a break. Unfortunately, he did not take us up on our offer for coaching, had an emotional breakdown a year later, and had to step down from the leadership role. Many senior pastors we coach struggle with over-performing for others and under-providing for themselves. While zeal for helping others is a strength, overused it is a critical weakness.

Respective Core Characters being equal, a moderately competent but balanced leader will generally outperform the superstar who has a major weakness in only one category. It bears repeating that a strength overused becomes a weakness. The overuse of one strength often leads to a flat spot in a leader's competency set.

By looking for balance between Execution, Relationship, Management, and Leadership, you will gain an effective framework from which to develop specific competencies appropriate for your organization.

**You must ensure that you have:**

- 1. Great Core Character.**
- 2. A balanced number of competencies from the other four categories.**

Off-the-shelf leadership competency programs generally fail to deliver the results needed. Still, many organizations spend a lot of time and energy trying to implement these programs. While the impact is usually suboptimal, it at least indicates the intention to define a set of competencies for employees.

We have found that an inordinate number of sizeable organizations lack a defined set of competencies. If your organization is one of them, the good news is that you can and should develop your own. If you have already purchased a competency system, it is never too late to customize it. You can start by taking SOLID's five categories of competency and assigning a

category to each competency from your model. Then, flesh out a custom set of competencies within each category that meets the specific needs of your organization.

If you want to use competencies from our model, choose two to five from each of the five categories. Select those that you believe will produce transformation in your leaders and the organizations they serve. Hint: Be strategic. Project three to five years into the future and decide what competencies the organization will most need at that time. Let that influence your decision.

Remember, though, that mastering competencies will not necessarily produce transformational change in your leaders or their performance. What will ensure success is this: keeping the focus on developing a strong axle (Core Character) and a balanced set of competencies in the areas of Execution, Relationship, Management and Leadership.

## Character Competencies – Top Ten List

What is character? Webster’s Dictionary defines it as “one of the attributes or features that make up and distinguish an individual.” Character is what a person truly is, at the core of his or her being. It differs from reputation or personality, which is more about what a person is known or supposed to be like.

Competencies in the category of Core Character deal with a wide variety of personal traits, core values, personal philosophy, mission, vision, and goals. The coaching topics that fall into this category are the inner drivers unique to each leader.

### **SOLID’s top ten CHARACTER attributes for highly effective leaders include:**

- 1. Caring and Considerate**
- 2. Courageous**
- 3. Dependable and Reliable**
- 4. High-Integrity and Ethical**
- 5. Loyal and Trustworthy**
- 6. Positive, with a Can-Do Attitude**
- 7. Rigorously Honest**
- 8. Self-Aware**
- 9. Servant Leader**
- 10. Tenacious and Persistent**

**C1. CARING AND CONSIDERATE:** Demonstrates authentic concern for the welfare and success of others; considers the needs of others; drives to create a culture and policies that manifest and perpetuate this type of environment.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “We gain and maintain team respect if we truly care about our team members. Arrogance and disinterest are sure ways to alienate people. Team members seldom have the desire to ‘give their all’ for a leader who couldn’t care less about them. Caring about team members goes hand in hand with actively engaging them and attentively listening to their ideas, concerns, etc. Getting to know the people in our teams provides us better insight into each team member’s perspective, which is beneficial on many levels. Consideration is a natural outcome of caring. If I care about someone, I will treat them with respect and consider their opinions and needs in planning and decision-making.”

**C2. COURAGEOUS:** Demonstrates courage in the face of adversity; takes calculated risks; enterprising.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “Standing up for principles, convictions and things that are important to or for the team earns and reinforces respect. I want my leader to stand up for me, for the team, the company, and for what is right. I believe that my team expects that of me.”

**C3. DEPENDABLE AND RELIABLE:** Follows through with commitments; can be depended upon, especially under pressure and in adversity; constant.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “This is part of leading by example. The team will not respect me and will not feel obligated to be dependable and reliable if I do not model these behaviors. If I say I am going to do something, I must do it.”

**C4. HIGH-INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL:** Actions match words and convictions; adheres to moral and ethical principles; respects and follows laws and regulations.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “This is another example of leadership by example. A team will not trust an unethical leader. If they see me treating people or situations unethically, they will not trust me, and may perceive it as implied permission to behave unethically themselves.”

**C5. LOYAL AND TRUSTWORTHY:** A sense of duty and attachment to employees and the organization; engenders and deserving of trust; respects confidentiality.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “Loyalty and trustworthiness are modeled through example. I must be loyal to the company, my manager, and to my team to reinforce these behaviors in the team. Building and maintaining trust is a high priority. Trust makes working in a group significantly more efficient and effective. Trust if broken is often very difficult to regain. When working in an environment with low or no trust, significant efficiency is lost.”

**C6. POSITIVE, with a CAN-DO ATTITUDE:** Believes he or she is God’s masterpiece, created to do good works; employs optimism with self and others; works hard and with high energy.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “As leaders we set the attitude for our teams. Our positivity (or negativity) sets the tone for our team and our projects. It is essential that we believe, like Paul,

“ ‘For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength’ ” (Philippians 4:13 NLT).

**C7. RIGOROUSLY HONEST:** Tells the truth; does not lie.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “Honest feedback with and from my team is critical to good decisions, successful projects, and personal/professional development.”

Also, honesty is required to achieve the above “Trustworthy” characteristic.

**C8. SELF-AWARE:** Has insight into blind spots; demonstrates introspection; seeks to continually improve insight into self.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “Leaders should be aware of their blind spots. You don’t have to be a perfect executive, but you do have to know your strengths and weaknesses, and manage to them.”

**C9. SERVANT LEADER:** Seeks to serve others; leads by example with a certain degree of humility and respect for others.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “Working alongside the team builds camaraderie and gives the leader the real picture of what the team is doing and what is required to accomplish a task or project. I personally have always respected managers with servant-leader style. I felt I learned a great deal from them, and that they clearly understood the work I performed. When I work alongside the team to knock out large projects or take on tasks to free them up to focus on priority work, I am actively demonstrating that I care about what they are doing and the workloads they are experiencing.”

**C10. TENACIOUS AND PERSISTENT:** Does not easily give up or give in to dissuasion; holds to a course of action even in the midst of adversity and challenge; persists in the face of obstacles and barriers unless position proves untenable.

Here is what a client said about this attribute: “A leader must not give up easily. Large accomplishments and projects will inherently encounter obstacles that must be worked through. Leaders require commitment to persevere through obstacles. We must be able to swiftly reevaluate the situation when obstacles crop up, adjust, and keep the team moving forward. Persistence and tenacity should be tempered with ability to evaluate and recognize when it is prudent to change course. We should be mindful there is a distinction between tenacity and obstinacy.”

## CATEGORY 2: Execution

Consistent, high-performance execution is required of all leaders; it establishes and maintains their credibility. Excellence in this area is the minimum criterion for holding a key leadership role. Such leaders need to be experts at driving results. Therefore, many have joined the leadership ranks because of their ability to produce, not necessarily because they have significant competencies in the relationship, management and/or leadership quadrants. Any gap between expectations and performance in the execution quadrant is clearly noticeable. When blind spots are removed, there is often a decidedly positive change. This increased performance is usually quite visible, which can have far-reaching, beneficial effects throughout the church or organization and beyond. Once the leader concentrates on development in a previously unidentified area, dramatic progress is often achieved. This is because most leaders are effective at making things happen (Execution). This is true from the micro-level (self) to the macro-level (organization).



Once identified, accepted as a challenge and prioritized, results are rarely far behind. There is a dynamic interplay among the categories of competency. For example, talented leaders who have tremendous Execution skills (most do, or they would not have made it to this level of responsibility) have had conflicts with other members on the management team; this is normal and natural. Frequently, the drive to achieve or overachieve causes relationship challenges. While some of these issues are innocuous and easily fixed, others need intentional focus for successful resolution. It is normal to have tension between these two driving forces: the passionate drive to have maximum execution (Category Two: Execution) and the constant attention to growing positive, productive relationships (Category Three: Relationship). It is also normal to have tension among any combination of the four quadrants of leadership competency.

When leaders are able to expose their blind spots in Execution, there tends to be significant improvement in performance. As strengths are clearly identified and the overachieving leader accepts the presence of significant competencies, those strengths tend to be used more—producing greater results. Likewise, when challenges are clearly identified and validated, there is normally a very positive impact on Execution.

Following are a couple quotes that further expound on the meaning of the word “execution”:

“Leaders owe it to the organization and to their fellow workers not to tolerate non-performing individuals in important jobs.” (Peter Drucker)

“History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats.” (B.C. Forbes)

Execution for the senior leader requires expertise in all five categories of competency. A leader must have integrity and exemplify qualities of being a fair leader (Core Character); results must be obtained no matter what (Execution); employees must work together as a team (Relationship); people must be directed effectively (Management); and the team must be inspired to have a vision as to where they are headed (Leadership). “Consider this statistic: more than 64 percent of C-level leaders from 250 mid-sized to large companies in the United States and the European Union have said that being able to execute, to react quickly to changing business opportunities and technologies, is critical for their success. Yet nearly 80 percent of them said that it is nearly impossible to achieve” (Ralph Welborn and Vince Kasten, 2006). These are the intense challenges facing senior leaders today. Therefore, it is critical that every leader maintains a balanced set of competencies in all five categories.

“History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed.”

## Execution Competencies – Top Ten List

**SOLID’s top ten EXECUTION attributes for highly effective leaders include:**

- 1. Creating Innovation**
- 2. Driving Action**
- 3. Driving Results**
- 4. Focusing Attention**
- 5. Leveraging Intelligence**
- 6. Managing Meetings**
- 7. Managing Time and Priorities**
- 8. Organizing Self and Others**
- 9. Running the Ministry**
- 10. Solving Problems**

**E1. CREATING INNOVATION:** Thinking more outside the box; discovering more possibilities; exploring ways to innovate; challenging pre-existing paradigms; allowing themselves and others permission to explore; tapping into existing creativity or drawing it out from others; creating an environment that supports creativity and innovation.

**E2. DRIVING ACTION:** Increasing drive toward action; generating more action; making things happen more quickly; driving the action of others; developing written goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, related to mission and on a timetable.

**E3. DRIVING RESULTS:** Increasing intensity toward driving results; developing strategies to better hit numbers; driving personal performance; increasing standards for personal achievement.

**E4. FOCUSING ATTENTION:** Increasing ability to gain and maintain focus and attention; improving sequential thinking skills; decreasing tendency to become distracted; increasing self-discipline for remaining on task.

**E5. LEVERAGING INTELLIGENCE:** Increasing intellectual agility, pushing oneself to think quicker on the fly; decreasing need for processing time; increasing expectations of self to be more flexible; avoiding black-and-white, either/or thinking; drawing out brilliance from others.

**E6. MANAGING MEETINGS:** Improving skills in structuring staff meetings; designing off-sites; managing agendas; driving decisions and actions; setting up accountability systems to ensure follow-up.

**E7. MANAGING TIME AND PRIORITIES:** Maximizing current time management systems; designing streamlined processes; gaining advanced skills in task prioritization; leveraging best practices of email, calendaring, task and contact management and personal and professional demand-balancing.

**E8. ORGANIZING SELF AND OTHERS:** Getting better organized; being better prepared for meetings; organizing the offices; designing personal organizational systems; structuring the calendars; developing better systems of task management.

**E9. RUNNING THE ORGANIZATION:** Enhancing ministry acumen; increasing general knowledge of ministry principles; gaining advanced training and coaching; developing plan for online education; designing strategy for overall improvement in understanding of the workings of ministry; gaining mentors to improve leadership acumen; making use of outside consultants.

**E10. SOLVING PROBLEMS:** Increasing creativity in solving problems; developing additional solutions to complex problems; brainstorming; troubleshooting possible issues; increasing analysis of problems; weighing pros and cons; identifying solutions in a more calculated way.

## CATEGORY 3: Relationship

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The Relationship category pertains to competencies involving the formation, growth and maintenance of effective relationships. This quality is so vital to the success of your mission as a spiritual leader that the apostle Paul said, “Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3 NLT).

Those who excel in this category continually strengthen relationships throughout the church, possess strong interpersonal relationship skills, and optimize and leverage relationships with superiors, peers and subordinates. Excellence in this area is essential for any leader’s long-term success. It often determines the leader’s ability to grow to the next level. Why? Because the higher the level of leader responsibility, the lower the tolerance for anything less than sophisticated interpersonal dynamics.

Clues of problems are subtler at the senior leadership level, and the consequences of even one broken relationship are more dramatic and can be career altering. People join teams, but resign from bosses. Without strong relationship skills, leaders have difficulty retaining top talent. One of the primary marks of a top leader is the ability to attract and retain HCP (High Capacity People), form high-performance teams and create a positive environment of success. Without strong relationship skills, it is highly improbable that this will occur consistently. Therefore, leaders without strong competencies in the Relationship category generally fail to achieve their dreams, and their churches fail to reach their redemptive potential.

Chemistry and fit are two of the most sought-after qualities when boards move to hire senior pastors and other top-level leaders. It is often assumed that a candidate for a high-level role has the necessary pedigree, background, training and experience to do the job. All things being equal, the greatest concern is whether this person will be able to get along with other leaders and work well as part of a team. The artificial manufacturing of chemistry can derail a church’s best attempts at screening for the right fit. There is a science to the creation of chemistry and behavioral scientists and career coaches provide many tools to help those interviewing for roles to excel at building “instant rapport.” Those who have this skill are said to be “good interviewers,” and it is well known that sometimes the best candidate is overlooked in favor of someone who has great interview skills. Tremendous weight is put on chemistry, and those who are both qualified and capable of creating positive chemistry with others are far more likely to be successful than those who aren’t.





Despite mastery in areas of Execution, Management and Leadership, even the most talented leaders end up failing as a result of weakness in the Relationship category. From the very first day in a new role, a leader must begin building relationships with key constituents. Throughout one's tenure in that role, relationship "bridge-building" is a key activity that cannot be ignored. Others' impressions must be considered, and a decent working relationship must be established with all key constituents. A high degree of competence in Relationship is no guarantee of success in a senior leadership role. Why? Because a strength overused becomes a weakness. Some leaders are adept at managing relationships, but are so relationship-oriented that they overemphasize the gaining and maintaining of positive relationships. The typical result is difficulty in making tough personnel decisions and leading performance management initiatives, ending in unnecessary terminations. Balance in this area is needed.

"Really big people are, above everything else, courteous, considerate and generous."

Thomas Watson, Sr. writes, "Really big people are, above everything else, courteous, considerate and generous. Not just to some people in some circumstances but to everyone all the time."

Great leaders are relational. They have a way of demonstrating they feel what we feel and care for what we care about. It was on 9/11 that the residents of NYC needed a leader who felt what they were feeling and cared for what mattered to them. The Twin Towers had collapsed.

Thousands were dead. Marcus Buckingham, in his book on leadership, "The One Thing You Need to Know," wrote that New Yorkers found what they needed, improbably, in the person of Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

"Improbably" was said because at the time, Mayor Giuliani was more known for his combativeness than his empathy. Despite his successes as a crime fighter in the months that preceded the terror attack, he seemed to have fallen out of sync with the majority of his constituents. He had become distracted by his short-lived run for the Senate, by his public and contentious divorce, and by his fight with prostate cancer. Buckingham writes, "We were no longer sure he was looking out for us, understanding us. Our loyalty was slipping away." It is said that during 9/11 the mayor won back their loyalty to such an extent that given the chance they would have voted him into a third term. "He was the world's mayor, Time Magazine's Person of the Year, Sir Rudy after his knighthood by Queen Elizabeth."

What won Mr. Giuliani such favor with all the people? "Looking back, we can trace the turning point in our affections to the mayor's spontaneous answer to one question during a press conference he held late in the afternoon of the eleventh." He was asked what the final body count would be. Of all the answers he could have given, the mayor "sighed, looked down, looked up, and replied: 'I don't know what the final number will be, but it will be more than we can bear.'" Buckingham, a New Yorker, said, "With those eight words—'it will be more than we can bear'—he won us." The mayor demonstrated that he felt what others felt and cared for what mattered to them. He was, indeed, relational.

The majority of successful and respected senior leaders have a way of showing genuine interest in and demonstrating respect for the other person, no matter where the person works in the organization. John Maxwell once said, “You can’t make a person feel like a million bucks if you secretly feel they are a nobody.”

Making a good first impression is a learned skill that can start a relationship on the right footing. Many successful leaders have this ability, giving them a distinct advantage over the competition. Here again, balance is required. Those who are overly focused on impression management have as many issues as those who, for whatever reason, refrain from managing the perceptions of others. Likewise, there needs to be appropriate sensitivity and expertise in diplomacy, political positioning and other related areas that deal with the importance of maintaining a positive public image. As Robert Rockwell writes, “The relationship is strengthened and leveraged for the purpose of realizing mutual and measurable value. The leader builds a complex web of relationships to help advance the vision and mission of the church.”

## Relationship Competencies – Top Ten List

**SOLID’s top ten RELATIONSHIP attributes for highly effective leaders include:**

- 1. Adapting Behavior**
- 2. Building Relationships**
- 3. Building Teams**
- 4. Communicating Information**
- 5. Leveraging Networks**
- 6. Listening to Others**
- 7. Managing Conflict**
- 8. Negotiating Outcomes**
- 9. Projecting Presence**
- 10. Reading Body Language**

**R1. ADAPTING BEHAVIOR:** Developing competency in behavioral style management; increasing awareness of own behavioral style; learning methods of identifying others’ behavioral styles; deepening understanding of key stakeholders; improving ability to adapt one’s behavioral style to needs of situation and the styles of others; becoming versed in the behavioral sciences; increasing awareness of key behavioral motivators and drivers; developing competency in interpreting DiSC and MBTI behavioral assessment results.

**R2. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS:** Growing interpersonal relationship skills; improving relationships with one's board, peers and/or direct reports; becoming smoother and less abrasive, decreasing friction; becoming more approachable; determining ways to be more available to others; improving ability to put people at ease; gaining insight into why others find one difficult to approach; sending positive messages that encourage others to engage; better understanding one's own body language and unconscious signals that create distance between oneself and others.

**R3. BUILDING TEAMS:** Gaining greater team consensus; improving team dynamics; better guiding stages of team growth; improving employee morale; driving better team collaboration; driving team cohesiveness; improving team communication; better diffusing team conflict; implementing and utilizing team assessments and surveys.

**R4. COMMUNICATING INFORMATION:** Improving presentation skills; gaining assessment of communication style; improving presentation design and effectiveness; managing and level-setting expectations; more persuasively promoting ideas; learning to speak more tentatively (not timidly); weighing in more; gaining agreement and buy-in.

**R5. LEVERAGING NETWORKS:** Initiating and growing strategic relationships; affiliating with key influential leaders and building a high degree of trust; developing strategic alliances; growing and leveraging their network.

**R6. LISTENING TO OTHERS:** Refining active listening skills; improving ability to read between the lines; increasing time spent listening and decreasing time spent talking; becoming more of an empathetic listener; improving ability to reflect what the other person is saying; increasing the "I feel heard" experience with others; decreasing tendency to interrupt.

**R7. MANAGING CONFLICT:** Increasing tolerance for conflict; improving attitude toward conflict; accepting a certain degree of conflict as necessary; increasing subtlety when pushing others' boundaries; becoming better at resolving conflicts; learning advanced conflict resolution methodologies; developing skills for managing interventions and three-way conflict resolution sessions; containing difficult-to-manage leaders; improving composure during heated debate; preparing for difficult conversations; decreasing need to be "right"; better maintaining composure; developing techniques to avoid reactive behavior in general.

**R8. NEGOTIATING OUTCOMES:** Gaining insight into negotiating style; improving boundary-setting; exploring "win-win" methodology; designing winning strategies; over-preparing for key negotiating initiatives; uncovering hidden opportunities for gaining successions; monitoring tension in progress and developing ways of relieving it; asserting oneself more; negotiating trade-offs; making more rational arguments; simplifying arguments to make key points.

**R9. PROJECTING PRESENCE:** Improving leadership presence; increasing comfort around upper management; improving posture; increasing direct eye contact; designing better wardrobe; improving diction; expanding vocabulary; improving meeting interface skills; developing appropriate handshake; becoming more aware of facial expressions; improving personal grooming; increasing patience; improving demeanor; becoming more opaque with body language; decreasing emotional reactivity; increasing emotional IQ; increasing awareness of different behavioral styles.

**R10. READING BODY LANGUAGE:** Increasing observation of others' body language; improving ability to interpret unspoken messages; gaining ability to "read" the person's face and body language; becoming more observant of subtle messages; increasing awareness of and sensitivity to other cultures' forms of body language; increasing awareness of one's own body language and the unconscious messages one habitually sends.

## CATEGORY 4: Management

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The Management category pertains to any aspect of managing people, places or things. Those who excel in this quadrant are adept at increasing the performance of their direct reports and continually improving the performance of organizational systems, programs, and procedures, and possess an ever-deepening set of operational and general management skills and abilities. People management competencies include performance management, compensation, human resources, employee relations, coaching and mentoring, delegation, and succession planning. Competencies involving places or things include site, program and project management. Business management encompasses such areas as operations, profit and loss, resources, and systems.

Advanced competencies in this quadrant include mergers and acquisitions, reorganizations, and reductions in force.



Most leaders have significant gaps in their management skillsets for three primary reasons. First, there are more than 100 management competencies; no one can excel at them all. Second, even the most talented, seasoned leaders have blind spots: unknown areas of weakness that are the most common causes of failure. Third, deficiencies in management competencies carry much less weight when determining promotions into the leader level.

Strong execution, relationship and leadership competencies are seen erroneously as compensating for weak management skills and abilities. Hence, glaring deficiencies can remain unaddressed for years, even decades. Gaps in management competencies are easy to identify in others, but most difficult to see in oneself. Objective insight, by definition, needs to come from an external source. Leaders who rely on self-assessment experience a high degree of self-deception. Leaders who systematically solicit constructive feedback have a huge advantage in attaining peak performance. To improve Execution, strong management competencies are necessary. Peter Drucker writes, “The productivity of work is not the responsibility of the worker, but of the manager.” If we truly adopted Drucker’s standard, we would have far fewer terminations of individual contributors and many more at the leader and junior leader levels. Conversely, excellent management skills do not qualify one for a leadership role. Many great managers never make it to the broad level of authority and responsibility given to a senior leader. Another Drucker quote serves to make the point: “Management is doing things right, leadership is doing the right things.”

## Management Competencies – Top Ten List

**SOLID's top ten MANAGEMENT attributes for highly effective leaders include:**

- 1. Board Management**
- 2. Staff Management**
- 3. Change Management**
- 4. Systems Management**
- 5. Capital Campaign Management**
- 6. Project Management**
- 7. Operations Management**
- 8. Performance Management**
- 9. Calendar Management**
- 10. Financial Management**

**M1. MANAGING THE BOARD:** Improving skills in managing board meetings; listening to board members and trusting God to speak through them; developing existing board members as well as raising up new leads according to 1 Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:5-7; recognizing members and making the congregation aware of their involvement and function; courageously addressing member weaknesses and failures and, when necessary, removing members.

**M2. MANAGING STAFF:** Growing team-building and team development skills; developing a more diversity-minded culture; more openly providing recognition; increasing use of rewards to support positive behaviors; raising visibility of outstanding achievements; better garnering resources for team; developing systems to ensure optimal availability of people, materials and any other resources required for peak performance.

**M3. MANAGING CHANGE:** Designing change management initiatives; learning best practices of re-engineering ministry processes; restructuring with growth; assessing the organization; learning best practices of organizational development.

**M4. MANAGING SYSTEMS:** Learning best practices in systems management; identifying key systems that support and drive the church's mission; developing better skills at designing, documenting and improving systems; learning ways to assess systems effectiveness from a mission perspective.

**M5. MANAGING CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS:** Developing the skills to gather large amounts of money; casting a clear and compelling vision; gaining emotional buy-in from the congregation; learning to identify and develop key donors.

**M6. MANAGING RESPONSIBILITIES:** Improving ability to delegate to others; giving clearer direction to others; empowering employees; increasing ability to “let go”; improving ability to know who is capable of what level of delegation and when; creating more of an empowered environment.

**M7. MANAGING OPERATIONS:** Improving skills in program management; better managing projects, facilities, and technology; obtaining insight into best practices of reaching the unchurched and helping believers proceed through the natural phases of growth to become fully mature followers of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

**M8. MANAGING PERFORMANCE:** More directly addressing performance issues; increasing accountability; instituting systems and technology to automate performance management of people and processes; improving quality of one-on-ones; administering employee performance assessments; ensuring fairness of metrics to all employees; designing performance management systems; better driving employee training; budgeting for training; designing more effective development plans; taking advantage of outside coaching.

**M9. MANAGING THE CALENDAR:** Having clear objectives and goals and allotting the time to accomplish them; learning to develop a one-year preaching calendar; planning for small-group growth cycles; scheduling big days; learning not to overestimate what can be done in a day and underestimate what can be done in a year.

**M10. MANAGING FINANCES:** Gaining expertise in donor development; developing best practices to ensure maximum integrity and donor confidence; learning creative ways to lower the cost of ministry while optimizing performance of the various ministries of the church.

“The productivity of work is not the responsibility of the worker, but of the manager.”

## CATEGORY 5: Leadership

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The Leadership category comprises some of the most complex and subtle competencies. Those who excel in this quadrant are always expanding their significant influence throughout the organization, sourcing opportunities to stretch their leadership skills to the next level and working to refine the leadership skills and capabilities of their staff and volunteers. Leadership and management are two separate sets of competencies. Management is controlling employees' day-to-day adherence to organization mandates to ensure that objectives are attained. Leadership involves the use of personal influence to further propel the organization to achieve success. Those great at management of people do not necessarily make the best leaders. Conversely, great leaders do not necessarily make great managers.



Mr. J. C. Penney gave us the clearest definition of a leader when he said, “My definition of [a leader]’s job is brief and to the point. It is simply this: Getting things done through other people.”

A leader, by definition, is a change agent. Leaders have the ability to look beyond the status quo, determine the change needed and introduce it in such a way that the organization successfully grows to the next level of effectiveness. “Leadership . . . is the ability to step outside the culture to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive” (Schein, 1992).

Effective leaders are competent in gaining and maintaining followers. They communicate at an expert level, inspiring others to go in a certain direction while setting clear expectations of high-level roles and responsibilities. Leaders ensure that all employees understand the mission, vision, values, strategy and overall direction of the company, along with their own area of responsibility. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18 KJV). (Modern translations replace the word “perish” with the word “scatter.”) They over-communicate, gain buy-in to key initiatives and obtain strong commitment to achieving the organization’s mission.

Developing and communicating the organization’s vision, philosophy and values is an essential competency of effective leaders, who also model the right values by example, thereby gaining credibility and respect from others. “Leadership is about articulating visions, embodying values and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished” (Richards & Engle, 1986).



Leadership is both a spiritual gift (Romans 12:8) and a developed quality; therefore, nature and nurture play a role in developing excellent leadership competencies. Though helpful, it is not essential to have the “gift” of leadership. Some people just volunteer, or “aspire” (1 Timothy 3:1), to lead. Leadership competencies can be cultivated and developed.

Factors positively associated with the development of leaders include having at least one parent who is a leader; being the eldest child; taking opportunities to lead peers or siblings; having influential childhood role models (e.g., family members, coaches, mentors); holding leadership roles in high school, college, or graduate school, or early in a career; and taking leadership training programs and undergoing leadership coaching.

“Leadership . . . is the ability to step outside the culture to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive.”

It is useful for leaders to take regular behavioral assessments and to review their self-assessment report with others who know them well. A spouse is a good place to start. This review may serve to further validate the report, as well as to remove blind spots that the leader may have. People tend to prefer their own styles, with a strong propensity to view the world through the filter of their behavioral styles, thus projecting those preferences onto others. This tendency limits the ability to understand co-workers and others to the fullest extent possible. It is easy to see how this can lead to frustration with others’ behavior, which leads in turn to difficulty in developing high-performance teams.

Through the process of understanding their own leadership styles and being able to identify and understand those of others, effective leaders become more accepting of others’ styles, and others become more accepting of theirs. Each leadership style is valuable in the workplace. People with the same narrow behavioral style will approach a problem in the same way, usually with suboptimal results. A leadership team that encompasses a diversity of styles provides a diversity of thought, which leads to peak team performance. Leaders who understand their own behavioral styles are much better able to identify others’ styles.

As leaders grow in their understanding of and ability to control their own styles, they may become more willing and able to adapt their styles to meet the needs of others and of the organization. Demonstrated adaptability is a powerful quality, resulting in increased influence over others. In order to reach full effectiveness, leaders need maximum adaptability. An inaccurate understanding of their own behavioral tendencies will weaken the ability of leaders to effectively adapt their styles to the needs of others. Effective leaders are able to develop or improve positive relationships in much less time than would normally be needed. Most effective leaders are unconsciously or consciously adept at identifying and adapting their leadership styles to the behavioral styles of the people with whom they work.

## Leadership Competencies – Top Ten List

**SOLID's top ten LEADERSHIP attributes for highly effective leaders include:**

- 1. Casting Vision**
- 2. Changing Organizations**
- 3. Demonstrating Courage**
- 4. Employing Diplomacy**
- 5. Exercising Sound Judgement**
- 6. Influencing Others**
- 7. Inspiring Others**
- 8. Leading Strategy**
- 9. Mentoring Leaders**
- 10. Studying Leadership**

**L1. CASTING VISION:** Developing a greater vision to better hold team and congregation together; learning to better communicate vision throughout organization; thinking bigger picture; communicating a more concrete vision; gaining buy-in for future state; setting core values of organization; developing philosophy of approach to target audience.

**L2. CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS:** Designing effective change management initiatives; creating cultural change initiatives; leading restructurings and other church-wide change initiatives; designing effective succession planning programs; better managing level and rate of change; learning best practices of organizational design and development.

**L3. DEMONSTRATING COURAGE:** Increasing willingness to stand alone; improving leadership despite adversity; increasing confidence in leadership ability; increasing calculated risk-taking; dealing better with ambiguity; increasing ability to deal with paradoxes; engaging in appropriate disclosure; demonstrating comfort with senior pastor / board of directors interface; challenging status quo.

**L4. EMPLOYING DIPLOMACY:** Becoming more diplomatic; increasing sensitivity to organizational politics; engaging in more politically correct behavior; developing more strategic relationships with key influencers; identifying nuances in organizational politics and social dynamics; better navigating negative church politics; increasing sensitivity to delicate situations; better managing expectations.

**L5. EXERCISING SOUND JUDGEMENT:** Increasing speed of decision-making; improving ability to rapidly assimilate information, parse data and get at root issues; improving balance between being decisive and prudent; increasing respect for decision-making from direct reports, peers and those in authority; increasing accuracy in most decisions.

**L6. INFLUENCING OTHERS:** Increasing level of influence; growing a larger constituency; developing follower base; being a good follower; becoming more persuasive; expanding power base; better championing creation and institutionalization of mission, vision and values; gaining greater organizational influence; building better consensus; recruiting top talent; retaining HCP.

**L7. INSPIRING OTHERS:** Creating motivational environments; creating excitement; sparking enthusiasm; establishing and maintaining an environment that breeds success; improving overall leadership presence; enhancing the leader's communication skills; refining presentation skills.

**L8. LEADING STRATEGY:** Designing effective strategic planning off-sites; facilitating strategic planning; thinking more strategically; decreasing tactical orientation; inspiring a greater shared vision; developing a more strategic thought process; increasing activities around shaping vision and strategy; leading more strategic planning initiatives; increasing focus on long-term strategic business objectives; better anticipating future obstacles and opportunities and preparing the organization for change.

**L9. MENTORING LEADERS:** Gaining advanced skills in succession planning; learning "leader-as-coach" methodology; advising on selecting and managing those to mentor; better developing direct reports; enhancing others' leadership skills; developing followers.

**L10. STUDYING LEADERSHIP:** Acquiring advanced leadership mentoring, training and coaching; developing reading lists; accessing peer groups; seeking out organizations to join; developing one's own plan of leadership development; gaining accountability for improvement; learning coaching best practices; studying successful leaders throughout history; increasing drive for continuous self-improvement.

“Leadership is about articulating visions, embodying values and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished.”

## Conclusion

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### Strong Axles & Round Wheels

How well did you do? Here's the good news. Your score isn't what is important. What you do with what you learned is the game-changer. Remember, you are not looking for perfection, but for progress and balance. Locate your weakest category, identify 2–3 competencies in that category, and rather than be discouraged, do what great leaders do: courageously trust God to give you the grace to make dramatic improvements and write out an “I can and I will” statement for each. It will look something like this: “I can and I will (insert your growth goal) by the grace of God and for the glory of God.”

#### **A couple of examples for Core Character competencies:**

- **Rigorously Honest:** “I can and I will become rigorously honest about my own shortcomings and mistakes by the grace of God and for the glory of God.”
- **Positive, with a Can-Do Attitude:** “I can and I will lead this church to health and solid growth by the grace of God and for the glory of God.”

It is also helpful to think of a quote from scripture that supports and encourages this competency and memorize it along with the statement of faith.

Put your statements in a place where you can review them often throughout the day. In a month, review and re-rate this competency in your life, record your new numbers and give yourself a new total. Watch your total score increase, but more importantly, watch your effectiveness as a leader increase.

### A Final Reminder

The quest for the perfect senior leader is in vain. Not only is it elusive and futile, it is unnecessary. The best organizational leaders often look differently than we imagined when we wrote the job description. What is that special something that the best seem to have, that people are drawn to and inspired by? We think it is this winning combination of strong Core Character and a balanced set of competencies, equally strong in all four areas: Execution, Relationship, Management and Leadership.

When hiring, probe for weaknesses in the candidate's character. Only hire well-rounded performers who exhibit strong Core Character. With your existing folks, encourage the entire leadership team to take a critical look at themselves and their blind spots and work on their weakest category of competency. The culture that will form from this type of approach is one that will outperform expectations, both individually and collectively. It is a SOLID team—pun intended.

## About SOLIDpastors

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### **SOLID Vision**

SOLIDpastors is widely known as a valued partner to the local church, helping transform their leaders and the ministries they run through effective coaching, consulting and certification services.

### **SOLID Purpose**

SOLIDpastors is a nonprofit Christian ministry that serves senior pastors, executive pastors, and executive directors of Christian ministries and their staff by providing coaching, consulting, and expert systems that enable these organizational leaders to improve their performance, increase their effectiveness, and transform the organizations they serve.

### **SOLID Mission**

SOLIDpastors' mission is to serve the Church by making all services easily accessible to heads of any Christian ministry while mobilizing, training, and certifying semi-retired executives and pastors to provide these coaching and consulting services. We aspire to provide the best methodology for developing in-place vocational Christian ministers and training semi-retired pastors and executives to become effective pastor coaches. Because of this work, we see dramatic improvements in personal and organizational performance in those receiving our services, and greater meaning and purpose in the lives of those delivering the work, furthering Jesus Christ's great commission and great commandment.

## About the Author

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#### **Executive Coaching**

Career Advancement/Planning

Performance Improvement

High Potential Programs

Leadership Development

Relationship Improvement

Team Coaching

#### **CEO / Board Advising**

Board Management

Executive Team Performance

Organization Design

Organization Development

Recruitment

Succession Planning

Strategic Planning

#### **Industry Expertise**

Christian Non-Profits

Financial Services

Healthcare/Wellness

Information Services

Manufacturing

Oil & Gas

Private Equity

Professional Services

Technology

Venture Capital

#### **Areas of Focus**

1:1 Executive Coaching

Non-Profit Leader Coaching

Daniel Mueller provides coaching for leaders at every level. A pioneer of the executive leadership coaching industry, he is passionately dedicated to helping executives become more effective in every aspect of their personal and professional lives.

Since 1996, Daniel has coached more than 1,200 CEOs, senior executives, and emerging leaders, most of whom have had transformational results. Thanks to hundreds of participating clients in the mid-80s and early 90s, Daniel developed a proprietary coaching methodology that has been validated over the past two decades and used worldwide by numbers of other professional leadership coaches.

During the late 80s, Daniel had a meteoric rise to the top of the newly emerging executive leadership coaching profession. The more outwardly successful he became, the greater the internal pain of feeling like an imposter, and the need to numb this pain with alcohol. On February 16, 1996, Daniel had a huge moral and spiritual failure that led him into recovery from alcoholism on March 4, 1996. Humbled and broken, he began working to achieve personal transformation from the inside out. This story of success, failure, and redemption has led to his favorite saying: "I coach from a place of weakness, not strength." Vulnerability and transparency have become the hallmarks of SOLID's coaching methodology. Feel free to ask for more information on this inspiring story.

From 1990 to 1996, Daniel served as President and CEO of Solid Foundation International Inc., an organizational design and development consultancy. There, he conducted numerous organizational, departmental, and team assessments. He also led many team-building and organizational improvement initiatives. Daniel designed and administered hundreds of qualitative, interview-based 360° assessments for one-on-one coaching clients and created individualized leadership development plans. During this time, he authored curriculum for corporate universities, including "Training Skills for Leaders" (on how leaders learn) and "Service BUILDS Sales" (on how leaders sell), and more than one dozen rapid-read white papers on critical success factors for leaders.

From 1986 to 1990, Daniel was President and CEO of MAI, a regional management consultancy. This role gave him advanced education and experience in organizational design and development. MAI was acquired in 1990 by Organizational Leadership and Development, Inc. After this sale, Daniel left to create the SOLID suite of companies. Prior to this, from 1982 to 1986, Daniel was President and CEO of Wellness Consulting, Inc., a management training and development firm specializing in the healthcare industry. During this time, he gained expertise in the behavioral sciences, learned curriculum design, and developed the first part of his executive coaching methodology. Daniel began his career in 1975 as a personal trainer and fitness coach.

Daniel is gratefully married to Patty, the woman of his dreams, and has three awesome daughters.