



NEW TEAM LEADER

W O R K B O O K

Understand and assess your performance
against the unique challenges of
first-time leaders.

TALENTANDTEAMS.COM

ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

Congratulations; you are now a team leader!

This is what it's been about, right? You worked hard. You know your "stuff." You now have people that report to you. You can set the direction, goals, and expectations of the team. You watched your last team leader and thought... "I can do it better than they can."

If this is sounding familiar, you're not alone. Most new leaders think and feel this way. But the reality is, most leaders are not as ready as they think they are. (I've seen it first-hand.)

Whether you've been in your new role for six minutes, six weeks, or six months you are probably not as ready to lead and/or manage people as you thought you were.

This workbook will allow you to assess how well you're handling the some of the top challenges most new leaders face, provide you some reflection questions, and share some insights on how and what you can do better.

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Assess Where You Are

You can't understand what changes you want to make or where you want to go until you understand where you are right now.

The two following pages present you with a brief assessment so you can understand how you are handling the top 12 challenges most new leaders face as they lead for the first time, or lead a new team for the first time.

NEW LEADER ASSESSMENT

Read each of the following statements and determine how much you agree / disagree with the statement. The more honest you are with yourself, the more you'll get out of this workbook.



1. I understand which communication style works with each of my team members.

2. I spend the majority of my time ensuring others can complete their tasks; rather than doing the work myself.

3. I spend time setting clear expectations for myself.

4.a. I serve as a coach to my team.

4.b. (If applicable) I have had one-on-one conversations with each of my former peers to address our new working relationship dynamic.

5. I have a time management system for myself where I clearly delineate time for my own tasks and time to help others.

NEW LEADER ASSESSMENT

Read each of the following statements and determine how much you agree / disagree with the statement. The more honest you are with yourself, the more you'll get out of this workbook.



6. I have set clear expectations & goals with each of my team members.

☐

7. My team has a regularly scheduled time (daily or weekly) when we all come together to review tasks and priorities.

☐

8. I am very comfortable asking my team for help; particularly on topics or projects where I don't have much expertise.

☐

9. I know how to build trust among my team.

☐

10. I regularly show compassion toward my team.

☐

11. I provide a stabilizing force for my team.

☐

12. Everyday, I work to generate feelings of hope among my team.

☐

Reflect on Where You Are

Now that you've identified where you're already enjoying success and where you still have work to do, it's time to reflect and dig deeper.

The following pages provide you with brief coaching questions to get you to think about what's going right, consider why it's worked, and help you identify patterns of action that might help you further address some of the challenges you still face.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Now that you've taken the assessment...

- 1) Identify the 3-5 statements where you scored yourself the **HIGHEST**.
- 2) Take your time to read and complete the reflection activities for the challenges where you're already achieving success.
- 3) Consider how you might apply approaches that allowed you to met one particular challenge to address some of the other challenges that you rated lower on. For example:

You might have already figured out a great time management system (challenge #5). Upon reflection, you realize that in diligently structuring your time you are already beginning to work on increasing trust (challenge #9) because you deliver work when you say you will and/or you come to meetings on time (people trust and count on your attendance).

By building upon your successes, you can find paths to success in addressing other new challenges. This idea is at the heart of Strengths-based development.



CHALLENGE 1 - COMMUNICATION

Some team members like to chat; others want email. Some want the summary; others want every detail. Some want to understand relationships, others want just the facts and data.

These differences are probably not surprises.

In your new team leader role, you need to **invest time** to understand each person's preferences. You also need to discover, determine, and describe how the team agrees to communicate as a combined team.

CHALLENGE 1 - COMMUNICATION

Describe the team's communication dynamics. Which messages seem to be well-received; which ones aren't? Why / why not?

Do you personalize your communications to each team member? If so, how? If not, why not?

INSIGHTS

Research by Gallup indicates that people managers should have 5 different types of conversations with their team members: 1) role and relationship orientation, 2) the quick connect, 3) check-ins, 4) developmental coaching, and 5) progress reviews.

Learn more in the book, "It's The Manager" by Jim Clifton and Jim Harter.

coach
development
idea business
LEADERSHIP
Problem Vision
Plan Success
education
Solution



CHALLENGE 2 - CHANGING MINDSET

In your former role as a team member you were responsible for specific actions, goals, and deliverables. You were a "do-er."

Now that you're a team leader you need to recognize that your primary role is to get stuff done through other people. You need to shift your mindset from "doing it yourself" to "enabling others to get it done."

Your number one job is to develop others so they can be successful.

Their success is your success.

CHALLENGE 2 - CHANGING MINDSET

Reflect on what you've learned to let go of (and allowed others to do), and what you're still trying to do yourself. What's made it easy to let go, and what's causing you to still hold on?

INSIGHTS



CHALLENGE 3 - MANGING PRESSURE

Before, you had just your goals and the expectations set by your former leader.

Now, as a new leader you have the expectations of your leaders, requests from the team members you lead, and likely some goals you have for yourself. It can seem like a lot.

First, remember that your new leader / organization feel you deserve to be here... or they won't have picked you.

Next, start to consider which expectations are critical vs. "nice to have", and what expectations you set for yourself and your team about **taking time to decompress and recover.**

CHALLENGE 3 - MANAGING PRESSURE

Describe: A) what you've done to set your own expectations and B) what would you like to do better?

Describe what methods or activities you engage in to manage your stress and pressure of being a leader.

INSIGHTS



CHALLENGE 4 - BEING A LEADER-COACH

As you move from individual contributor to a leader, you also need to consider how you **can become a coach** to your team.

Research by Gallup found that people expect their leaders to coach them and help them develop. It is no longer enough just to be a boss.

If you've just been promoted with your team, you also need to be aware of and address the new working dynamic as you strive to lead and coach your former peers.

CHALLENGE 4 - BEING A LEADER-COACH

Think about what steps you've already taken, and what actions you still feel you need to take to move from doer/follower to coach/leader.

What's worked?

What hasn't worked?

INSIGHTS

Want to be a better leader and coach? Consider reading "The Coaching Habit" By Michael Bungie Stainer and "Strength-Based Leadership" by Tom Rath.

CHALLENGE 4 - BEING A LEADER-COACH

What conversations have you had with former peers to address your new working relationship? If you haven't, reflect on what your biggest opportunity might be, and on your biggest concern. Talk to your own leader about either or both.

What's worked?

What hasn't worked?

INSIGHTS

Want to be a better leader and coach? Consider reading "The Coaching Habit" By Michael Bungie Stainer and "Strength-Based Leadership" by Tom Rath.



CHALLENGE 5 - MANAGING TIME

As a new leader your time is no longer really your own. You owe it to your team members to be available to coach, guide, contribute to, and advocate for their projects in pursuit of team goals.

It's also important for you to have time to reflect and pursue your own goals. This balance can be tricky, but it's well-worth it to get it right.

Consider how you're currently structuring your time and then picture your ideal.

What changes can you make to move closer to your ideal?

CHALLENGE 5 - MANAGING TIME

What systems or approaches do you currently use to manage your time. What's the best change you've made? How can you improve upon that change?

INSIGHTS



CHALLENGE 6 - SETTING EXPECTATIONS

A team can only be successful if every member knows where the team is headed. The same goes for each individual. Each teammate needs to know what their contribution needs to be, and how it contributes to the greater team.

Clearly sharing team and individual goals ensures the entire team knows how everyone will contribute, enable better collaboration conversations, and allow for people to ask for help if they need it.

Keep in mind that setting appropriate expectations also provides team members an opportunity understand how much effort they do (or don't) need to expend. Setting "upper limits" is just as it's important as clarifying the minimums.

CHALLENGE 6 - SETTING EXPECTATIONS

How you are setting goals and expectations right now; for individuals and for the team? How are you sharing your team's goals and expectations with everyone?

INSIGHTS



CHALLENGE 7 - TEAM PRODUCTIVITY

One of your responsibilities as a new leader is to ensure everyone is working on the right things at the right time.

While the goal(s) is/are likely to remain the same, timelines, resource availability, or task prioritization is likely to change. Keeping your people "in the loop" is key to ensuring **their best contribution**.

It's also important to clearly understand each team member's innate talents (as identified by the CliftonStrengths® assessment) impacts their work habits and approaches.

CHALLENGE 7 - TEAM PRODUCTIVITY

How do you support each of your team members as they pursue individual and collective goals? How are you creating an environment that supports the unique needs of each team member, and the team?

INSIGHTS

Want to learn about your innate talents? [Contact me](#) for discounted pricing to take the [CliftonStrengths assessment](#).



CHALLENGE 8 - ASKING FOR HELP

Often new leaders feel they have to have "all the answers." This couldn't be further from the truth.

If you're leading even an average/good team, you have people that know the ins-and-outs of their job better than you ever will. **Lean on their expertise.** Ask questions. Get trained by your team.

You should also feel comfortable pursuing additional knowledge training and/or leadership coaching if you still feel you need to up your game in specific areas.

CHALLENGE 8 - ASKING FOR HELP

Describe how comfortable you are asking for help. Consider what areas or subjects do you (still) need help with? Who can you go to? If you aren't asking for help, what's stopping you?

INSIGHTS



CHALLENGE 9 - DEVELOP TRUST

Surprisingly, great leaders (and great teams) spend little time talking about trust; **they simply "do trust."**

As you take on your new leadership role, however, it's worth spending a moment to consider what actions you take to build others' trust in you and how you show your trust in others.

As you beginning your reflection on this topic, consider how you show vulnerability, how you deliver or show up on time, and how you share the truth, even if the news might not be rosy.

CHALLENGE 9 - DEVELOP TRUST

Describe what actions you take that: A) demonstrates your trust of others, and B) allow others to develop their ability to trust you.

INSIGHTS

National research by Gallup found that when employees trust their organization's leadership the chances of them being actively engaged at work is better than 1 in 2. Conversely, when they don't trust, the chances they are engaged is just 1 in 12. (Rath, T. and Conchie, B.; Strengths Based Leadership. Gallup Press. New York, NY. 2008. pg. 83)



CHALLENGE 10 - SHOW COMPASSION

Being kind and understanding toward others goes a long way toward enhancing individual and team performance. When people know and feel you care for them as people - and not just employees - they are likely to do more as a way of thanking you.

Some leaders feel that showing compassion can make them look soft or weak. Surprisingly, great leaders who show compassion are actually given high marks for genuineness.

Just remember, that as you look to show compassion for others, you need to set the example; **have and show compassion for yourself.**

CHALLENGE 10 -SHOW COMPASSION

Describe how you demonstrate to others a sense of self-compassion?

What do you do to show compassion towards others? Also consider, what does compassion look/feel like for each of your team members?

INSIGHTS



CHALLENGE 11 - PROVIDE STABILITY

The workplace can be a chaotic environment. Good leaders manage the chaos. **Great leaders** create islands of stability and predictability.

Your team members will be less stressed, more confident, and perform better when they know what to expect -- just like athletes know how to best perform when they know the rules and equipment of their game

As you build a stable environment for your employees take work be sure to: A) ensure that their basic needs are met -- both inside & outside the workplace, and B) be transparent.

When people know what their environment looks and feels like they can know what they can count on.

CHALLENGE 11 - PROVIDE STABILITY

How are you learning about and providing for your team members' most basic needs?

How do you demonstrate transparency with your team? How could you be more transparent with your team?

INSIGHTS



CHALLENGE 12 - GENERATE HOPE

Leading a team can often seem daunting as you react to all the needs and wants of your team.

Great leaders, however, **focus more on being proactive and not reactive.** When leaders set a direction & take action, team members get inspired and feel as though things will get better.

People, by nature, want to know where they are headed next, and that what they are working towards will expand horizons for themselves and those around them.

CHALLENGE 12 - GENERATE HOPE

What are you doing to set your team's direction for the future?

Are you more reactive or proactive? What would you like to initiate today (or this week) that would generate hope for your team?

INSIGHTS

ACTION STEPS

Review the reflection pages you filled out. Identify and then capture below the 3-5 action items you feel would best serve you and/or your team. Print this page and hang it where you'll see it everyday.

1

2

3

4

5



TEAM AND LEADER COACHING

Hopefully the self-reflection offered in this workbook was helpful in understanding how you lead your team. But this doesn't have to be the end.

Great leaders succeed when they can understand, apply, and align their their unique talents - their natural ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving - alongside those of their team members.

I help team leaders (and their teams) build new behavioral habits that allow them to develop their talents as they set and achieve ambitious goals.

If you'd like to understand how to better address your leadership and team challenges via your talents, let's connect to discuss what coaching for you and your team can look like.



I WANT
COACHING

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TALENT & TEAMS CONSULTING

STRENGTHS-BASED COACHING BY CHAD T. AHERN

The world needs a new generation of leaders who focus on understanding, developing, and aligning peoples' strengths; rather than fixating on weaknesses.

It's this vision that drives me to help leaders like you.

Hi, I'm Chad Ahern.

As a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach and a licensed US Youth Soccer Coach, I bring a blend of professional and sports coaching to help my mission-driven clients achieve success through building new habits, aligning team talents to shared goals, and enhancing employee engagement.

My Top 5 CliftonStrengths®:
Learner | Deliberative | Responsibility |
Harmony | Analytical

LET'S TALK

