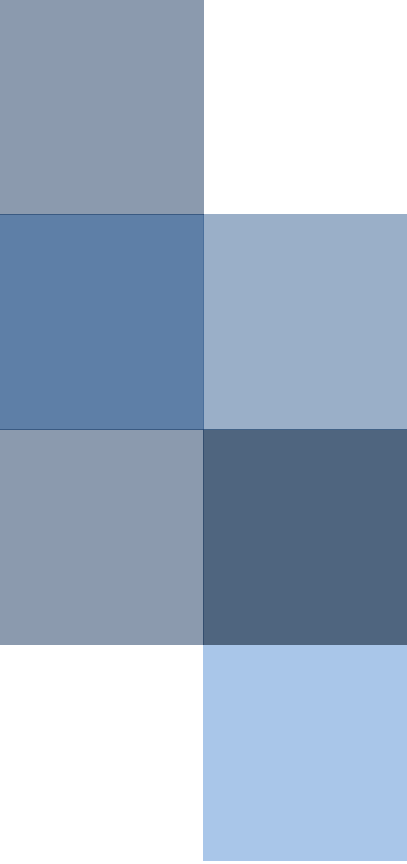


20 essential leadership skills for execution



In a recent survey conducted 73% of respondents said that the area where managers needed to improve most was aligning employee goals with those of the organisation. 72% said managers needed to improve their skills in discussing performance and in performance-related decision-making.

Researchers also found that senior leaders tend to think they communicate more effectively and act more consistently than their employees think they do. For example, 81% of surveyed managers told Hay researchers that their actions are consistent with their verbal communications, but only 53% of workers thought so.

Only about 20% of workers say their managers coach them regularly to help them improve their performance, and only about 40% say their manager plays an active role in their career development.

There are many factors which contribute to these gaps. Out of these factors, the most important one we found is the ability and the skill set of leaders to get things done (27 % leaders receive no training on essential management skills)

As a part of the Metis centre of execution excellence (MCeE) research, we were able to shortlist 20 key abilities / skills required for leaders to optimally execute strategies. For the purpose of research we focused on functional skills essential for strategy execution. The behavioural and technical skills required, we believe have directly correlation to the functional skills required to complete the job on hand.



Here are the 20 skills that are essential for leaders to be better executors of goals and strategies.

1. Customer focus

Metis definition: Keeping the customer in mind and in the centre of every decision you make and everything you do at work.

Abilities:

- a) **Customer Identification:** Identifying the persona of both internal and external customers.
- b) **Customer needs:** Objectively understanding the customer needs and outcomes.
- c) **Customer centricity:** Making decisions by keeping the customer needs and outcomes in mind.

Quote: “No matter how good your feedback is, you always start over with your next customer” – Shep Hyken

2. Alignment

Metis definition: Getting buy-ins across the team on the goals and strategies.

Abilities:

- a) **Goal Setting:** Involving team members in setting department and individual goals in line with organisations objectives.
- b) **Translating:** Involving team members in converting goals into specific objectives and doable tasks.
- c) **Cascading:** Cascading and aligning objectives across the team.

Quote: “True alignment changes the way team members view their actions; they embrace team decisions and organisational actions as if they were their own” – Anonymous



3. Collaboration

Metis definition: Collaborating with people within the team, different departments, levels of organization, and different offices, different areas of expertise and culture to achieve a common goal.

Ability:

- a) **Horizontal:** Inter-departmental collaboration to ensure smooth flow of information and achieve agility.
- b) **Vertical:** Collaboration along the supply chain to ensure business continuity and achieve competitive advantage,
- c) **Conflict handling:** Collaboration within the team to reduce risks to customers and promote good work environment.

Quote: "No matter how brilliant your mind or strategy, if you're playing a solo game, you'll always lose out to a team." - Reid Hoffman

4. Negotiation

Metis definition: Developing strong interpersonal relationships by creating a win-win for team members, vendors and customers.

Ability:

- a) **Evaluating alternatives:** Finding the best route to ensure speed of execution.
- b) **Negotiating with suppliers:** Finding the optimal cost, preventing the risk of to supplier's acquiring the dominant position.
- c) **Negotiating with customer:** Ensuring the customer gets the required services without burdening the firm with unrealistic expectation.

Quote: "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate" – John F. Kennedy



5. Continuous Improvement

Metis definition: Exceed expectation and add value to everything that you do.

Ability:

- a) **Innovation:** Building a culture of innovation in the organization.
- b) **Acknowledge:** Encourage innovation and out of the box ideas by acknowledging and rewarding.
- c) **Review:** Continuous reviewing of goals and targets.

Quote: “Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection – Mark Twain”

6. Risk Management

Metis definition: Commitment to mitigate operational risks

Ability:

- a) **Identify:** Ability to accurately foresee operational risk.
- b) **Manage:** Effective and timely management of risks.
- c) **Contingency Plan:** Develop appropriate contingency plan for possible risks to enable quick recovery and to avoid customer inconvenience.

Quote: “Risk comes from not knowing what you’re doing” - Warren Buffett

7. Motivation

Metis definition: Lead by example and motivating your team to execute

Ability:

- a) **Alignment:** Align individual needs with that of the organization and create an environment of working towards a common goal.
- b) **Willingness to Perform:** Create an effective environment to encourage productivity and promote knowledge sharing.
- c) **Encouraging creativity:** Encourage sharing of ideas and new innovative solutions.

Quote: “Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity” – George S Patton



8. Mentoring

Metis definition: Effectively transfer knowledge, be compassionate and achieve team's potential

Ability:

- a) **Leadership development:** Nurture and develop leadership skills in potential candidates
- b) **Knowledge transfer:** Inspiring people through knowledge transfer
- c) **Succession planning:** Ensuring continuity and knowledge custody

Quote: “Mentoring is a two way street. The Mentor gets wiser while mentoring and the mentee gains knowledge through his/her mentor” – Marisol Gonzalez

9. Delegation

Metis definition: Assign work, trust and allow space to perform

Ability:

- a) **Responsibility:** Assigning accurate responsibility to increase efficiency.
- b) **Clear Accountability:** Defining accountability for results and actions.
- c) **Strength Maximization:** Allocating responsibilities based on individual strengths.

Quote: “I trust the people who are working with me. I delegate” – Mario Draghi

10. Discipline

Metis definition: Be clear, strong-minded and live the process

Ability:

- a) **Adherence:** Living the values of the organization to achieve unison.
- b) **Systematic:** Consistently execute complex tasks in systematic manner.
- c) **Efficient Management:** Ability to effectively manage resources to maximize potential.

Quote: “Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment”- Jim Rohn



11. Recruitment

Metis definition: Identifying and deploying the right fit

Ability:

- a) **Designing the job profile:** Ability to identify activities, specific tasks and responsibilities of a position
- b) **Analysing behavioural requirement:** The human skills required for a particular the job and the environment.
- c) **Interviewing skills:** Ability to assess and hire the right fit.

Quote: “Do not hire a man who does work for money, but him who does it for the love of it” – Henry David Thoreau

12. Planning and Organizing

Metis definition: Ability to prioritise and work on both urgent and important tasks

Ability:

- a) **Development:** Ability to conceive, prioritise and develop plans.
- b) **Implementation:** Effective and systematic execution of the plans.
- c) **Focus:** Keeping both short term as well as long term outcomes in mind.

Quote: “You see, being organised is NOT about being perfect; it’s about customising your whole world to work FOR you.” – Anonymous

13. Communication

Metis definition: Careful listening, prompt & clear top down communication

Ability:

- d) **Receiving from the top:** Being a part of the strategic discussion meetings, active listening and receiving clear inputs from top leadership
- e) **Articulating:** Communicating complex ideas through simpler understandable language and methods.
- a) **Communicating to foot soldiers:** Ensure that the message from top reaches the last person in the link.

Quote: “The art of effective listening is essential to clear communication, and clear communication is necessary to management success” – James Cash Penny



14. Change management

Metis definition: Open to change, being agile and implement change

Ability:

- a) **Impact Assessment:** Appropriately judge the scope, effort and impact of the proposed change across your team.
- b) **Communicate Change:** Effective and timely communication of change by aligning all team members.
- c) **Effective Implementation:** Guide the change through effective implementation on the ground.

Quote: “One reason people resist change is because they focus on what they have to give up. Instead of what they have to gain” – Rick Godwin

15. Performance Enablement

Metis definition: Enabling and ensuring individual and team success

Ability:

- a) **Metrics:** Define metrics which can inspire and accurately measure performance.
- b) **Measurement:** Rather than a post review, conducting continuous evaluation and feedback.
- c) **Employee Engagement:** Provide complete clarity and growth opportunities to motivate and attain full potential

Quote: “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader” – John Quincy Adams

16. Agility

Metis definition: Willingness to change

Ability:

- a) **Timeliness:** Ability to stick to deadlines without compromising service levels
- b) **Customer Orientation:** Ability to understand and exceed expectations
- c) **Customizability:** Conforming to changing customer’s requirement

Quote: “Success today requires the agility and drive to constantly rethink, reinvigorate, react and reinvent” – Bill gates



17. Attention to detail

Metis definition: Quality of work

Ability:

- a) **Contribution:** Ability to collate different points of view and take appropriately steps for thoroughness & accuracy.
- b) **Prioritize:** Planning and relative order based on the importance of tasks.
- c) **Big Picture:** Ability to focus on details while not losing track of the big picture.

Quote: “A man's accomplishments in life are the cumulative effect of his attention to detail.” – John Foster Dulles

18. Handling Tasks

Metis definition: Prioritising and multitasking

Ability:

- a) **Setting precedence:** Forming and understanding a logical sequence of the tasks.
- b) **Prioritizing tasks:** Understand the complexity and intricacy of the processes and the criticality of task at hand.
- c) **Calling for completion:** Resource utilisation to important tasks

Quote: “The key is not to prioritise what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.” – Stephan Covey

19. Managing Initiatives

Metis definition: Seeing new initiatives yield desired results

Ability

- a) **Resource allocation:** Ability to accurately forecast the resource requirement and allocate accordingly.
- b) **Selection:** Effective judging and going after initiatives which can add value to the organization
- c) **Link to Value Proposition:** Aligning the initiative to the company’s value proposition.

Quote: “Initiative is doing the right thing without being told.” – Victor Hugo



20. Bottlenecks

Metis description: Ensuring smooth flow to deliver on time

Ability:

- a) **Identifying:** Ability to completely understands the processes and systems
- b) **Optimizing:** Resource allocation and optimal approach to bottleneck.
- c) **Redundancy:** Avoiding resource wastage due to repeat activities

Quote: *“The bottleneck is never code or creativity; it’s the lack of clarity.”* – Scott Berkun

Metis has developed an **online assessment tool** to assess leaders on these 20 essential execution skills. The assessment tool is based on situational judgement inventories and direct questioning techniques. This tool can be customised to your specific requirement and can be used for incumbent leaders and while recruiting new leaders. Do write in to us on rajesh@metisindia.com or enquiry@metisindia.com for more details or call us on 9535566588.

