SKS
CONSULTING GROUP

Competency Model Interpretation and User Guide

The purpose of this user guide is to serve as a reference to understanding the SKS competency framework and an introduction to The SKS Competency Model itself. Included in this document is a brief introduction, a high-level view of The SKS Competency Model displayed as The SKS Foundations of Performance™, a description of each of the foundations, the details of the twelve proprietary SKS competencies, and development tips to help individuals enhance performance in each of the key areas.

Introduction

The SKS Competency Model was designed by our team of doctoral-level psychologists and human resources data analysts, and is based on thorough, comprehensive, qualitative, and quantitative analysis of thousands of leaders in a variety of business settings. Leveraging decades of data and expertise, the SKS Consulting Group built The SKS Competency Model on the following criteria:

- Standards for construct and content validity
- Attributes which can be measured reliably and accurately
- Characteristics that matter most for success in a work environment
- Appropriate uses for multiple applications – selection, development, and leadership performance individually and within teams
- User friendliness for both the talent management practitioner and the individual leader

If you would like additional information on how SKS Consulting Group can help you utilize our competency model to meet your talent management goals and objectives, please reach out - we are here to help.

THE SKS *Competency Model*

THE FOUNDATIONS OF PERFORMANCE™

“Success isn’t about how much money you make, it’s about the difference you make in people’s lives.”

MICHELLE OBAMA

Relationships

Maximizes Relationships • Cultivates Teamwork • Manages Impact

SKS competencies in the relationships foundation of performance are more interpersonal and prosocial in nature. Taken together, they are geared toward promoting cooperation among teammates, fostering productive relationships, and creating open communications. Furthermore, these outcomes are achieved with a sense of self and interpersonal awareness – care is taken not to overstep either work or personal boundaries.

MAXIMIZES RELATIONSHIPS

Actively builds productive relationships

A leader who maximizes relationships effectively:

Creates visibility proactively & confidently through connections

Communicates with others in an out-front, engaging way

Builds networks and leverages relationships

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Reaches out to others to network	Appears reserved in social situations
Takes initiative to start conversations	Is slow to insert themselves in conversations
Puts others at ease in social situations	Does not pick up on social cues
Picks up on social cues and nuances	Experiences much self-doubt
Appears confident in social situations	Prefers to work behind the scenes
Finds common ground with others	Is nervous in social situations
Demonstrates a desire for higher visibility	Avoids new audiences and networking
Proactively builds rapport and new relationships	Finds it difficult to make new connections

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Hi-jack conversations	Not fully leverage their relationships
Distract other from their work	Have weak or non-existent social presence
Manipulate others for their own gain	Isolate themselves rather than reaching out to others
Over-emphasize inclusion in significant decisions	Not build a network

CULTIVATES TEAMWORK

Supports and collaborates with others

A leader who cultivates teamwork effectively:

Promotes cooperation and working alongside colleagues

Builds solid one-on-one relationships

Seeks input from others before making decisions

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Highlights the positive aspects of situations	Is quick to judge others
Seeks input from others	Manages work independently of others
Asks questions to learn more about others	Misses opportunities to bring others together
Acknowledges the feelings and needs of others	Is skeptical of people and situations
Offers support to others	Shows little interest in the ideas of others
Collaborates with key stakeholders	Overlooks opportunities to consult with others
Listens to others and seeks to understand	Is less likely to ask questions of those around them

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Focus on teams over results	Ignore others
Be overly reliant on others	Not trust others
	Be overly cynical about others
	Dismiss the ideas of others
	Be unwilling to get involved or help others

MANAGES IMPACT

Draws on self and interpersonal awareness to navigate people and situations

A leader who manages impact effectively:

Works intentionally to align with expectations, norms, and standards

Manages self in light of social context

Models a sense of responsibility and integrity

Behavioral Anchors

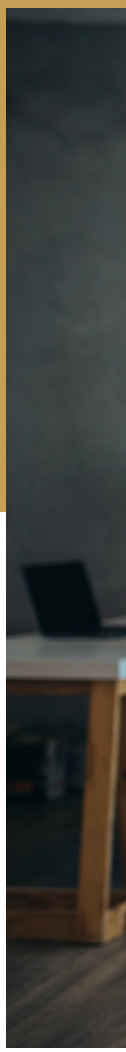
+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Is mindful of effect of personal actions	Focuses on own interests ahead of group goals
Picks up on ethical issues	Has difficulty working in settings with strict rules
Aligns with systems, processes, and norms	Takes unnecessary risks
Demonstrates commitment to obligations	Comes across as less reliable
Comes across as disciplined	Is less consistent in following through
Is perceived as pleasant and polite	Is skeptical of the intentions of others
Prioritizes based on external guidance and goals	Is reactive rather than poised

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Take on too much work	Not follow through or do what is asked
Be hard to read	Be an impulsive decision maker
	Disregard their impact on others
	Not care what people think
	Dominate interactions and be disruptive

TIPS

to Enhance your *Relationship* Performance



Maximizes Relationships

- Consider your thoughts on the purpose of networking. What is the value of it? What stands in the way of building your network? Challenge yourself to develop interpersonal connections as part of your day-to-day responsibilities. Create a map of influences or relationships, then make a list of people to network with over the next 100 days.
- Practice dedicating time toward connecting with several people whom you do not know well. Include at least one coffee or lunch meeting on your calendar each week and put effort toward learning three non-work items about each person. To prepare, create your own list of 3-5 non-work topics you are comfortable sharing.
- Focus on how you experience large meetings. How do your reactions influence your ability to contribute to discussions? Gain comfort with visibility and participation by moving your attention toward others and simply asking questions.

Cultivates Teamwork

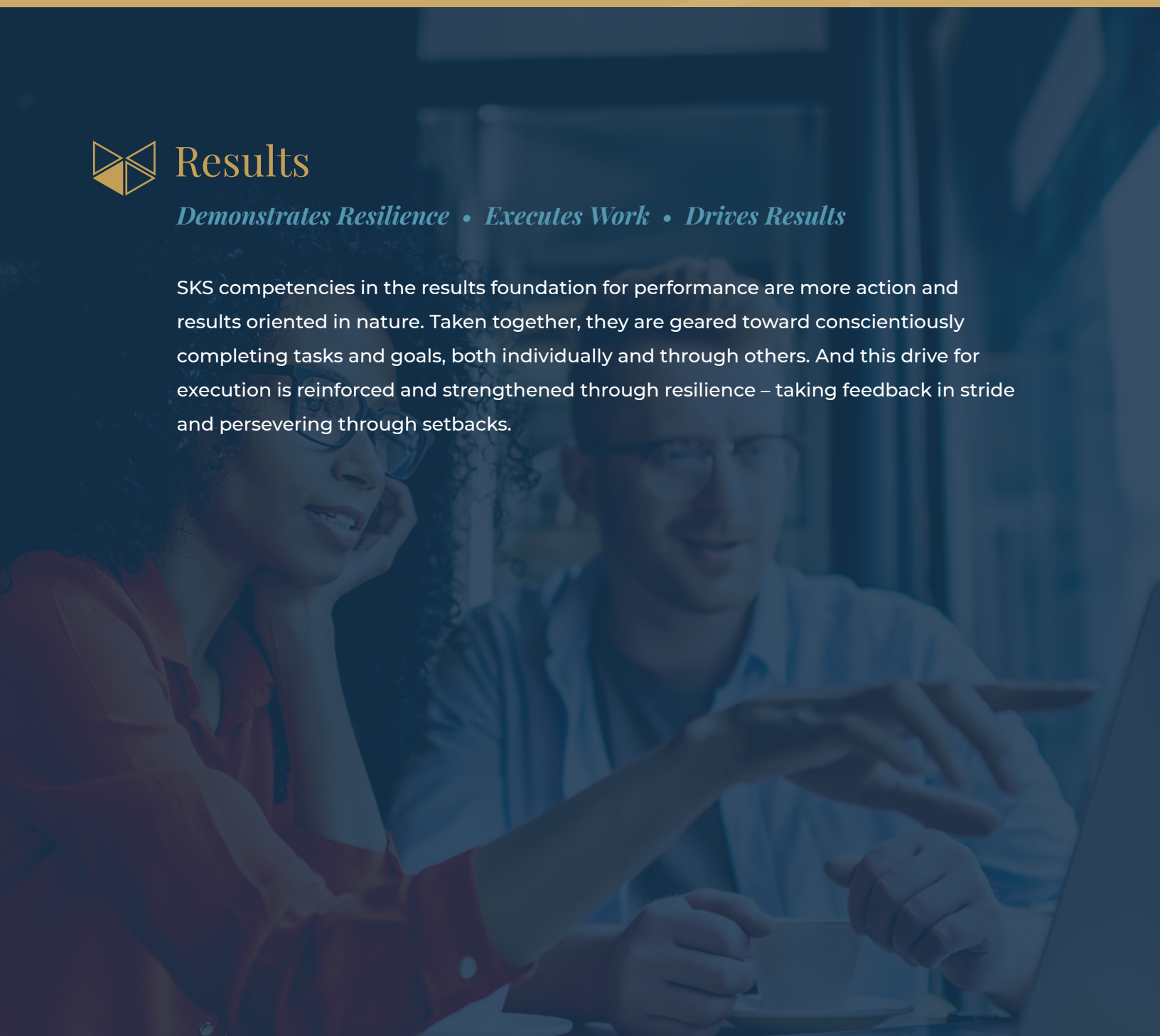
- Consider that strong teams are often made up of diverse viewpoints and personalities. Think about your team's personalities and thinking styles. Make a list of what your colleagues have to offer that you may be under-appreciating and identify how you can recognize them in the next month.
- Practice asking questions and inviting dialogue around a decision, even if you feel confident in your choice. Make a point of asking for input on at least one decision per week. Reflect on the added value and perspectives you are able to gain from thought partnership.
- Focus on how you feel about relying on others. How does that experience influence your willingness to initiate collaboration? Take opportunities to team up with others and ask for help, then examine your previous reactions and their validity.

Manages Impact

- Consider how others view your communication and behavior in groups and one-on-one. Conduct an assessment of your leadership impact by soliciting feedback from trusted colleagues. Work to identify and understand both your strengths and your blind spots.
- Practice pausing to consider how others might react to your input before you share it. Review your meetings at the beginning of each day and think about your audience. Develop strategies for how you can adapt your messaging to make your communication more impactful.
- Focus on how you react when others make requests of you. Begin tracking instances that elicit emotional or instinctive reactions. Record the situations and explore your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. What could you do differently to be more intentional and productive?

“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”

COLIN POWELL



Results

Demonstrates Resilience • Executes Work • Drives Results

SKS competencies in the results foundation for performance are more action and results oriented in nature. Taken together, they are geared toward conscientiously completing tasks and goals, both individually and through others. And this drive for execution is reinforced and strengthened through resilience – taking feedback in stride and persevering through setbacks.

DEMONSTRATES RESILIENCE

Maintains perseverance in the face of challenges

A leader who demonstrates resilience effectively:

Retains a steadfast approach to setbacks and obstacles

Has a calm, even-keeled, and relaxed demeanor

Takes feedback and constructive criticism in stride

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Acts consistently across situations	Reacts poorly to feedback
Focuses on what is in their control	Needs additional time to recover from criticism
Comes across as relaxed in the face of challenges	Is overly considerate of their audience
Calmly receives criticism	Expresses groundless concern before important events
Handles mistakes or setbacks with poise	Has difficulty relaxing or letting go of issues
Is determined in the face of obstacles	Overly adapts their style based on their audience
Remains focused and productive under pressure	Finds it difficult to maintain momentum

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Be dismissive or defensive to feedback from others	Overpersonalize negative feedback
Not learn from mistakes	Lose focus when faced with setbacks
Come across as uninvested or aloof	Be easily deterred
Be stubborn and difficult to influence or dissuade	

EXECUTES WORK

Persistent in working through tasks and following through on obligations

A leader who executes work effectively:

Manages and organizes own work	Maintains appropriate attention to detail and deadlines	Follows through energetically on commitments

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Completes tasks on time	Leaves some tasks unfinished
Enjoys keeping busy	Is less organized in managing tasks
Has a strong capacity for work	Seems uncomfortable with high demands
Is attentive to details	Can miss deadlines
Has an organized approach	Procrastinates or delays unnecessarily with tasks
Is quick to execute and close items out	Prefers a complacent versus zealous pace to work
Works hard and persists to get the job done	Pursues own desires rather than obligations
Is focused on achieving their goals and objectives	Lacks a sense of urgency
Stays on top of matters and ensures results	

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Get caught up in the details	Not follow through
Be overly perfectionistic, particular, or picky	Be unreliable or irresponsible
Become too rigid with deadlines and structure	Allow things to slip through the cracks
Confuse action for progress	Ignore commitments and obligations
	Fail to deliver results

DRIVES RESULTS

Sets and tracks ambitious goals

A leader who drives results effectively:

Maintains drive and focus on winning with measurable, objective results

Negotiates and works through others toward long-term goals

Pushes for commitment and accountability with tasks

Behavioral Anchors

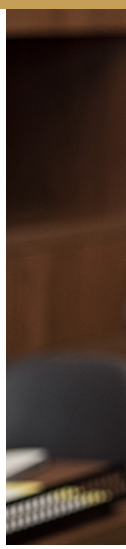
+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Focuses on accomplishing goals	Focuses on people over results
Pursues objective measures of success	Puts less emphasis on tracking goals
Shows consideration for long-term goals	Subjective in consideration of success
Pushes and influences others to achieve one's own goals	Focuses on more immediate tasks versus overall objectives
Sets ambitious rather than readily achievable goals	Shows less interest in career advancement
Holds self and others accountable for results	Meets but rarely exceeds expectations
Motivates others to perform at a high level	Does the minimum rather than stretching self

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Not attend to interpersonal dynamics	Not connect day-to-day work to broader goals
Not celebrate successes	Be unable to influence others
Overemphasize results and numbers	Lack drive and motivation
	Not account for objective measures of success

TIPS

to Enhance your *Results* Performance



Demonstrates Resilience

- Consider reframing your perspective and challenging your thinking around failure and mistakes. Make a list of recent successes as well as setbacks. How do you think about failure, and how does that compare to how you think about your successes? What are other ways you could think about failure? What is in your control during setbacks? How do your successes and setbacks define you?
- Practice ways to take care of yourself and manage stress. For example, take short breaks and step away from work throughout the day. Try engaging in stress-relieving practices, including exercise, deep breathing, or mindfulness. Spend your time outside of work engaging in activities you enjoy. Ask for support from others.
- Focus on your experience of receiving critical feedback or encountering setbacks. What was your reaction? Find ways to view feedback and setbacks as learning opportunities by taking a curious and inquisitive approach. Challenge yourself to listen objectively to the feedback, make any needed changes, and continue developing yourself.

Executes Work

- Consider your approach to tasks. Do you over-plan or wait to start moving forward until you have all the information? Does perfectionism or procrastination get in your way? Conversely, does your bias for action lead to activity rather than productivity?
- Practice breaking down large, overwhelming projects into smaller, more manageable tasks. Prioritize and set deadlines for the smaller tasks. Look ahead and block off time on your calendar to work on the tasks. Consider what time of the day you work best and try to schedule time during those periods to tackle more challenging projects.
- Focus on what causes you to hesitate. When are you feeling unmotivated or lacking energy? Take a break by stepping away from work for a short period of time or by working on tasks that require less mental effort. Then commit to completing a task you have been putting off.

Drives Results

- Consider how you set goals and track progress. How do you communicate targets to your team? How do you identify what motivates your team? How do you hold yourself and others accountable? Start using physical or virtual bulletin boards to communicate goals and monitor progress.
- Practice setting well-defined, measurable short-term and long-term goals. Get input from your team regarding the metrics they believe best measure progress and eventual success. Use data to continually track progress towards goals. Communicate your goals and progress with your team members.
- Focus on how you react to ambitious or bold goals. How do you feel – excited, energized, uncomfortable? How do those reactions influence your motivation? If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or reticent, adjust your thinking to focus on what you can learn and how you will grow from the experience (especially if you make a mistake!).

“So often in life things that you regard as an impediment turn out to be great good fortune.”

RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Insights

Thinks Strategically • Navigates Ambiguity • Solves Problems

SKS competencies in the insights foundation for performance are focused more on critical and strategic thinking. Taken together, they are geared toward connecting the dots between issues and utilizing resources or trying new approaches in the face of uncertainty. Additionally, the extent of success in these areas is largely powered by critical thinking, which enables good decision making in the absence of clear guidance and structure.

THINKS STRATEGICALLY

Thinks deeply and broadly to identify opportunities

A leader who thinks strategically effectively:

Makes connections between issues

Considers limitations, challenges, and possibilities

Imagines new solutions to traditional problems

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Evaluates potential limitations and challenges	Builds on existing ideas
Generates new ideas	Misses potential limitations and challenges
Enjoys discussing possibilities	Is too practical in their approach
Discusses more theoretical or abstract concepts	Views issues as isolated events
Connects the dots and sees the bigger picture	Overlooks the importance of external forces
Considers alternative ideas or strategies	Relies on consistency rather than new opportunities
Encourages creativity and new thinking	

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Fail to translate ideas into practical solutions	Be unable to generate unique ideas
Constantly nitpick existing processes	Be unable to think outside the box
Be overly conceptual	Not consider potential limitations and challenges
Implement unrealistic solutions for the business	Fail to consider new markets or opportunities
Overwhelm people with too many ideas	

NAVIGATES AMBIGUITY

Determines solutions and finds a way forward when faced with new and unfamiliar situations

A leader who navigates ambiguity effectively:

Remains resourceful and self-sufficient in absence of clear guidance or structure

Stays nimble and agile in the face of change and uncertainty

Maintains openness to alternative perspectives and ways of thinking

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Makes progress despite uncertainty	Operates best with predictability and structure
Adjusts based on new information	Struggles to change their approach
Sets independent goals outside of expectations	Delays moving forward without all information
Tries new approaches	Is hesitant to explore new options
Utilizes resources before seeking guidance	Follows a standard routine
Is self-directive in finding ways to succeed	Is unproductive in new situations

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Be unable to create structure in the face of uncertainty	Be unable to set their own direction
Not align with organizational objectives	Come across as overly rigid
	Oversimplify complex issues
	Be paralyzed by a lack of structure or direction

SOLVES PROBLEMS

Thinks through problems and leverages relevant information to draw conclusions

A leader who solves problems effectively:

Solves complex problems through the effective analysis of data

Synthesizes information quickly and recognizes underlying principles

Examines data, information, and own assumptions objectively

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Identifies patterns and trends in information	Oversimplifies complex issues
Acknowledges the complexity of situations	Overgeneralizes past experiences
Demonstrates an ability to learn quickly on the job	Allows feelings and assumptions to override logic
Draws accurate conclusions from information	Draws inaccurate conclusions from information
Makes sense of complex situations	Is overwhelmed by complex or ambiguous situations
Thinks critically rather than making assumptions	Relies on opinions rather than facts or figures

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Be more cynical or analytical than trusting	Be challenged to learn new concepts
	Draw incorrect conclusions
	Require more time and instruction for tasks
	Be unable to make timely decisions
	Fail to leverage their judgment effectively

TIPS

to Enhance your *Insights* Performance

Thinks Strategically

- Consider how your work affects different parts of your organization. Invest time to learn about what is happening in other functions or groups within the organization. Look for trends in the business environment that are forcing your organization to change. How do all the pieces fit together? What are your most critical contributions?
- Practice brainstorming new ideas to improve your work. Reflect on how those new ideas will benefit your organization and what challenges may impede them. Share your ideas with a trusted colleague. Identify and pursue one activity to start this year that will make a difference next year.
- Focus on how you react to large organizational issues. What is your understanding of what is happening and how does it affect you? If you have limited understanding, leverage your resources to learn more and determine how your own work will be affected.

Navigates Ambiguity

- Consider how you perceive change and uncertainty. Try to frame them as a unique opportunity to excel and leave your mark. Think about what is within your control and focus your thoughts and efforts on that. Experiment with making decisions or taking actions based on the 80/20 rule.
- Practice letting go of things that you cannot control. Focus on what you can control in the present versus the past or future. What can you do if your concerns are realized? Create contingency plans to prepare for unwanted outcomes, but do not expend too much energy on things you have no control over.
- Focus on what causes your hesitations and discomforts. Have you reasonably considered all the possible outcomes of your decisions? If so, try to avoid analysis paralysis – have confidence in your decision-making process and recognize that most decisions are iterative and can be revised if needed.

Solves Problems

- Consider your pace when thinking through a problem. How much time do you need to make decisions? Are you taking all the time you need to understand the problem completely? Set aside enough time to reflect before making an important decision. Schedule recurring time on your calendar to identify and tackle larger issues.
- Practice recognizing problems that are not in your wheelhouse. Surround yourself with experts and defer to them when necessary. Learn about how organizations identify signals and trends in their business environment. Volunteer for a task force or work group in which you can learn as well as contribute to identifying solutions.
- Focus on how you respond to difficult problems. Feelings of frustration are normal, but do not let them derail your thought process. If a problem is causing too much frustration, try breaking it into more manageable pieces and solving them one at a time.

“Whatever you do, throw yourself into it. Throw your head, heart, and hands into it.”

INDRA NOOYI

Leadership

Pursues Change • Displays Courage • Directs Others

SKS competencies in the leadership foundation of performance are more delegative and change-oriented in nature. Taken together, they are geared toward discovering new processes, advocating for those processes when they make sense, and confidently making tough decisions when necessary. Moreover, the decision making takes place in a leadership context, in the form of readily and proactively directing others.

PURSUES CHANGE

Models willingness to take risks and do things differently

A leader who pursues change effectively:

Demonstrates willingness to go against consensus and convention

Works to drive efficiency and process improvements

Seeks out changes and new methods

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Goes against consensus when appropriate	Follows along with group consensus
Is impatient with bureaucracy	Prefers well-established methods and best practices
Combines tasks into simple workflows	Stays in their comfort zone
Suggests new approaches	Gets frustrated with a lack of predictability
Shows a continuous improvement mindset	Conforms with standard processes
Challenges the status quo	Is reluctant to try new or different methods
Questions established ways of doing things	Relies on established processes and procedures

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Be easily bored or distractible	Blindly follow rules and authority
Make changes for the sake of change	Be stubborn and unwilling to change
Step out of bounds	
Not show respect for tradition or past success	

DISPLAYS COURAGE

Communicates thoughts and feelings in an authentic, genuine, and expressive manner

A leader who displays courage effectively:

Speaks up to share opinions and perspectives

Expresses emotions and ideas with transparency

Tackles difficult or challenging subjects or topics

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Shares excitement about work with others	Is hesitant to share their own opinions
Acknowledges what is going well	Reacts insufficiently to unexpected challenges
Speaks up when they feel strongly	Has difficulty sharing true feelings
Is unafraid to have tough conversations	Is hesitant to address conflict
Can stand their ground against contrary arguments	Procrastinates on delivering feedback
Disagrees and addresses conflict when needed	Is reluctant to address issues
Challenges the thinking of others	Shies away from accountability

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Be overly direct when communicating with others	Not hold others accountable
Be overly self-promoting	Not stand up for themselves
Hi-jack conversations	Not inspire their team
Take a less diplomatic approach to office politics	Avoid conflict

DIRECTS OTHERS

Makes decisions and provides direction to others

A leader who directs others effectively:

Takes charge to direct and drive the work of others

Makes independent decisions confidently

Initiates action readily and easily

Behavioral Anchors

+ THOSE WHO SCORE HIGHER LIKELY:	– THOSE WHO SCORE LOWER LIKELY:
Shows comfort with leading others	Is less comfortable leading others
Explains the context of a decision or plan	Steps aside to let others take charge
Reaches decisions quickly	Needs reassurance and validation
Readily acts based on conclusions	Is overly cautious when making decisions
Is self-sufficient in pursuing goals	Provides insufficient clarity or guidance to others
Assigns and delegates work to others	Passively accepts rather than assumes leadership
Takes the initiative to provide direction to others	Does not delegate work to others

Risk Spectrum

+ THOSE WHO OVERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:	– THOSE WHO UNDERUSE THESE SKILLS MAY:
Be overbearing and overly controlling	Be unable to take charge
Seem overly confident in their decisions and abilities	Lack an ability to push an agenda forward
	Be unable to make efficient decisions
	Hesitate to lead others
	Not establish their own leadership agenda
	Direct others without needed clarity or guidance

TIPS

to Enhance your *Leadership* Performance

Pursues Change

- Consider your perception of change and work to reframe it! Read about leaders who have transformed their organizations or communities. Focus on opportunities rather than the obstacles that accompany change. Reflect on the question "How might change improve your productivity, engagement, and overall satisfaction?"
- Practice advocating for new approaches that you strongly believe in. Identify a project or initiative that you could champion within your organization. Create a compelling story that showcases the why or purpose behind the change. Build a communication plan that includes the Who, What, How, and When around the change.
- Focus on an experience that requires you to leave your comfort zone. Take time for self-reflection and determine what might be hindering you from leaving your comfort zone. What reactions get elicited when you consider trying new things or taking risks? What might you do differently to better accept, embrace, and lead change?

Displays Courage

- Consider a leader in your organization or a public figure that often displays courage. What do you notice about their approach? How does it compare to your own? Reflect on your personal history and identify how that may be impacting your courage.
- Practice offering your perspective. Identify a project or initiative that is currently happening in your organization. What point of view could you share, that might be different from others? Identify where you can take a stand, practice upholding your position, and communicate your opinion at least once during relevant meetings.
- Focus on and prepare for different responses that may occur when sharing your views. Before entering meetings or situations that are more high stakes, take time to practice or role-play with a trusted colleague. What reactions might get elicited in you? How might others respond?

Directs Others

- Consider situations in the past where you have made decisions quickly and confidently when the need arose. How did colleagues and team members respond? Learn about situational leadership and think about how you lead and direct others in different situations.
- Practice skills that help you gain comfort in setting expectations and communicating direction. Take on a project or initiative that needs to be turned around. Identify clear roles and responsibilities for each member of the project team and communicate your expectations clearly. Once complete, ask the team for feedback that can help you continue to improve.
- Focus on your passion for leadership – what do you enjoy about it? What aspect energizes you the most? What successes have you had in the past? How might you use that experience to build your confidence and prepare for the next leadership opportunity that comes your way?

RELATIONSHIPS

Maximizes Relationships

- Consider your thoughts on the purpose of networking. What is the value of it? What stands in the way of building your network? Challenge yourself to develop interpersonal connections as part of your day-to-day responsibilities. Create a map of influences or relationships, then make a list of people to network with over the next 100 days.
- Practice dedicating time toward connecting with several people whom you do not know well. Include at least one coffee or lunch meeting on your calendar each week and put effort toward learning three non-work items about each person. To prepare, create your own list of 3-5 non-work topics you are comfortable sharing.
- Focus on how you experience large meetings. How do your reactions influence your ability to contribute to discussions? Gain comfort with visibility and participation by moving your attention toward others and simply asking questions.

Cultivates Teamwork

- Consider that strong teams are often made up of diverse viewpoints and personalities. Think about your team's personalities and thinking styles. Make a list of what your colleagues have to offer that you may be under-appreciating and how you can recognize them in the next month.
- Practice asking questions and inviting dialogue around a decision, even if you feel confident in your choice. Make a point of asking for input on at least one decision per week. Reflect on the added value and perspectives you are able to gain from thought partnership.
- Focus on how you feel about relying on others. How does that experience influence your willingness to initiate collaboration? Take opportunities to team up with others and ask for help, then examine your previous reactions and their validity.

Manages Impact

- Consider how others view your communication and behavior in groups and one-on-one. Conduct an assessment of your leadership impact by soliciting feedback from trusted colleagues. Work to identify and understand both your strengths and your blind spots.
- Practice pausing to consider how others might react to your input before you share it. Review your meetings at the beginning of each day and think about your audience. Develop strategies for how you can adapt your messaging to make your communication more impactful.
- Focus on to how you react when others make requests of you. Begin tracking instances that elicit emotional or instinctive reactions. Record the situations and explore your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. What could you do differently to be more intentional and productive?

RESULTS

Demonstrates Resilience

- Consider reframing your perspective and challenging your thinking around failure and mistakes. Make a list of recent successes as well as setbacks. How do you think about failure, and how does that compare to how you think about your successes? What are other ways you could think about failure? What is in your control during setbacks? How do your successes and setbacks define you?
- Practice ways to take care of yourself and manage stress. For example, take short breaks and step away from work throughout the day. Try engaging in stress-relieving practices, including exercise, deep breathing, or mindfulness. Spend your time outside of work engaging in activities you enjoy. Ask for support from others.
- Focus on your experience of receiving critical feedback or encountering setbacks. What was your reaction? Find ways to view feedback and setbacks as learning opportunities by taking a curious and inquisitive approach. Challenge yourself to listen objectively to the feedback, make any needed changes, and continue developing yourself.

Executes Work

- Consider your approach to tasks. Do you over-plan or wait to start moving forward until you have all the information? Does perfectionism or procrastination get in your way? Conversely, does your bias for action lead to activity rather than productivity?
- Practice breaking down large, overwhelming projects into smaller, more manageable tasks. Prioritize and set deadlines for the smaller tasks. Look ahead and block off time on your calendar to work on the tasks. Consider what time of the day you work best and try to schedule time during those periods to tackle more challenging projects.
- Focus on what causes you to hesitate. When are you feeling unmotivated or lacking energy? Take a break by stepping away from work for a short period of time or by working on tasks that require less mental effort. Then commit to completing a task you have been putting off.

Drives Results

- Consider how you set goals and track progress. How do you communicate targets to your team? How do you identify what motivates your team? How do you hold yourself and others accountable? Start using physical or virtual bulletin boards to communicate goals and monitor progress.
- Practice setting well-defined, measurable short-term and long-term goals. Get input from your team regarding the metrics they believe best measure progress and eventual success. Use data to continually track progress towards goals. Communicate your goals and progress with your team members.
- Focus on how you react to ambitious or bold goals. How do you feel – excited, energized, uncomfortable? How do those reactions influence your motivation? If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or reticent, adjust your thinking to focus on what you can learn and how you will grow from the experience (especially if you make a mistake!).

INSIGHTS

Thinks Strategically

- Consider how your work affects different parts of your organization. Invest time to learn about what is happening in other functions or groups within the organization. Look for trends in the business environment that are forcing your organization to change. How do all the pieces fit together? What are your most critical contributions?

- Practice brainstorming new ideas to improve your work. Reflect on how those new ideas will benefit your organization and what challenges may impede them. Share your ideas with a trusted colleague. Identify and pursue one activity to start this year that will make a difference next year.

- Focus on how you react to large organizational issues. What is your understanding of what is happening and how does it affect you? If you have limited understanding, leverage your resources to learn more and determine how your own work will be affected.

Navigates Ambiguity

- Consider how you perceive change and uncertainty. Try to frame them as a unique opportunity to excel and leave your mark. Think about what is within your control and focus your thoughts and efforts on that. Experiment with making decisions or taking actions based on the 80/20 rule.

- Practice letting go of things that you cannot control. Focus on what you can control in the present versus the past or future. What can you do if your concerns are realized? Create contingency plans to prepare for unwanted outcomes, but do not expend too much energy on things you have no control over.

- Focus on what causes your hesitations and discomforts. Have you reasonably considered all the possible outcomes of your decisions? If so, try to avoid analysis paralysis – have confidence in your decision-making process and recognize that most decisions are iterative and can be revised if needed.

Solves Problems

- Consider your pace when thinking through a problem. How much time do you need to make decisions? Are you taking all the time you need to understand the problem completely? Set aside enough time to reflect before making an important decision. Schedule recurring time on your calendar to identify and tackle larger issues.

- Practice recognizing problems that are not in your wheelhouse. Surround yourself with experts and defer to them when necessary. Learn about how organizations identify signals and trends in their business environment. Volunteer for a task force or work group in which you can learn as well as contribute to identifying solutions.

- Focus on how you respond to difficult problems. Feelings of frustration are normal, but do not let them derail your thought process. If a problem is causing too much frustration, try breaking it into more manageable pieces and solving them one at a time.

LEADERSHIP

Pursues Change

- Consider your perception of change and work to reframe it! Read about leaders who have transformed their organizations or communities. Focus on opportunities rather than the obstacles that accompany change. Reflect on the question "How might change improve your productivity, engagement, and overall satisfaction?"

- Practice advocating for new approaches that you strongly believe in. Identify a project or initiative that you could champion within your organization. Create a compelling story that showcases the why or purpose behind the change. Build a communication plan that includes the Who, What, How, and When around the change.

- Focus on an experience that requires you to leave your comfort zone. Take time for self-reflection and determine what might be hindering you from leaving your comfort zone. What reactions get elicited when you consider trying new things or taking risks? What might you do differently to better accept, embrace, and lead change?

Displays Courage

- Consider a leader in your organization or a public figure that often displays courage. What do you notice about their approach? How does it compare to your own? Reflect on your personal history and identify how that may be impacting your courage.

- Practice offering your perspective. Identify a project or initiative that is currently happening in your organization. What point of view could you share, that might be different from others? Identify where you can take a stand, practice upholding your position, and communicate your opinion at least once during relevant meetings.

- Focus on and prepare for different responses that may occur when sharing your views. Before entering meetings or situations that are more high stakes, take time to practice or role-play with a trusted colleague. What reactions might get elicited in you? How might others respond?

Directs Others

- Consider situations in the past where you have made decisions quickly and confidently when the need arose. How did colleagues and team members respond? Learn about situational leadership and think about how you lead and direct others in different situations.

- Practice skills that help you gain comfort in setting expectations and communicating direction. Take on a project or initiative that needs to be turned around. Identify clear roles and responsibilities for each member of the project team and communicate your expectations clearly. Once complete, ask the team for feedback that can help you continue to improve.

- Focus on your passion for leadership – what do you enjoy about it? What aspect energizes you the most? What successes have you had in the past? How might you use that experience to build your confidence and prepare for the next leadership opportunity that comes your way?

The Experts

David Donnay, Ph.D.
PARTNER AT SKS CONSULTING GROUP

Dr. Donnay develops leaders and transforms organizations. He is known for his business acumen and strategic thinking as well as his knowledge of psychology. As a leader and consultant, he has over two decades of experience applying psychology to business challenges. Widely considered an expert in assessment for selection and development, he also offers expertise in coaching and succession planning.

Heather Mortensen, Ph.D.
PARTNER AT SKS CONSULTING GROUP

For more than a decade, Dr. Mortensen has improved the quality of organizational decision-making in the critical areas of selection and development. She has an exceptional talent for providing empirically driven yet practical solutions that select, develop, and engage leaders and talent at all levels.

Marie Anderson, Psy.D.
PARTNER AT SKS CONSULTING GROUP

Dr. Anderson has a passion for applying psychological principles and assessment data to enhance decision making and maximize performance. She is specifically focused in the areas of selection and development of key talent. Dr. Anderson's approach is system oriented and solution driven. The results are high performing individuals and teams that drive results for the business.

Nate Whittier Psy.D.
PARTNER AT SKS CONSULTING GROUP

Since joining SKS in 2006, Dr. Whittier has partnered with a variety of organizations to enhance the quality of decision-making in the critical areas of selection and development of key talent. He has considerable experience working across diverse industries such as manufacturing, retail, finance, health care, and information technology.

SKS Consulting Group has partnered with client organizations for more than 40 years to increase success when it comes to hiring the best talent and developing the leaders who can capitalize on the opportunities ahead. Our more than 100 ongoing clients range from local enterprises to multinational corporations. Utmost importance is placed on supporting the organization's culture and employer brand – SKS clients benefit from our experience, technical expertise, and high touch.

THE SKS COMPETENCY MODEL

Competency Model
Interpretation and User Guide

sksconsulting.group
5200 Willson Rd, Edina, MN 55424

SKS CONSULTING GROUP