



## **ASPIRE 301: GROWING IN LEADERSHIP**



# ASPIRE 301: GROWING IN LEADERSHIP

## DISCOVER. DECIDE. DEVELOP.

My name is

What do you hope to learn today?

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Aspire 301: Growing in Leadership is a 7.5-hour, in-person course designed to help Employees develop the essential Leadership skills to thrive as a People Leader at Southwest. Throughout this course, you will practice skills related to developing People, thinking strategically, setting a clear direction, and building great Teams. You will also interact with other aspiring Leaders and participate in a workshop focused on your career goals and development planning. Aspire 301: Growing in Leadership offers a unique opportunity to develop your Leadership potential and prepare for future opportunities!

## OBJECTIVES:

- Define what a Leader is and what makes a Leader successful at Southwest Airlines.
- Create an action plan to demonstrate the Leader competency behaviors in your current role.
- Identify potential Leader Mentors, stretch assignments, and additional learning opportunities to help you demonstrate Leadership at Southwest Airlines.

## OUR PURPOSE

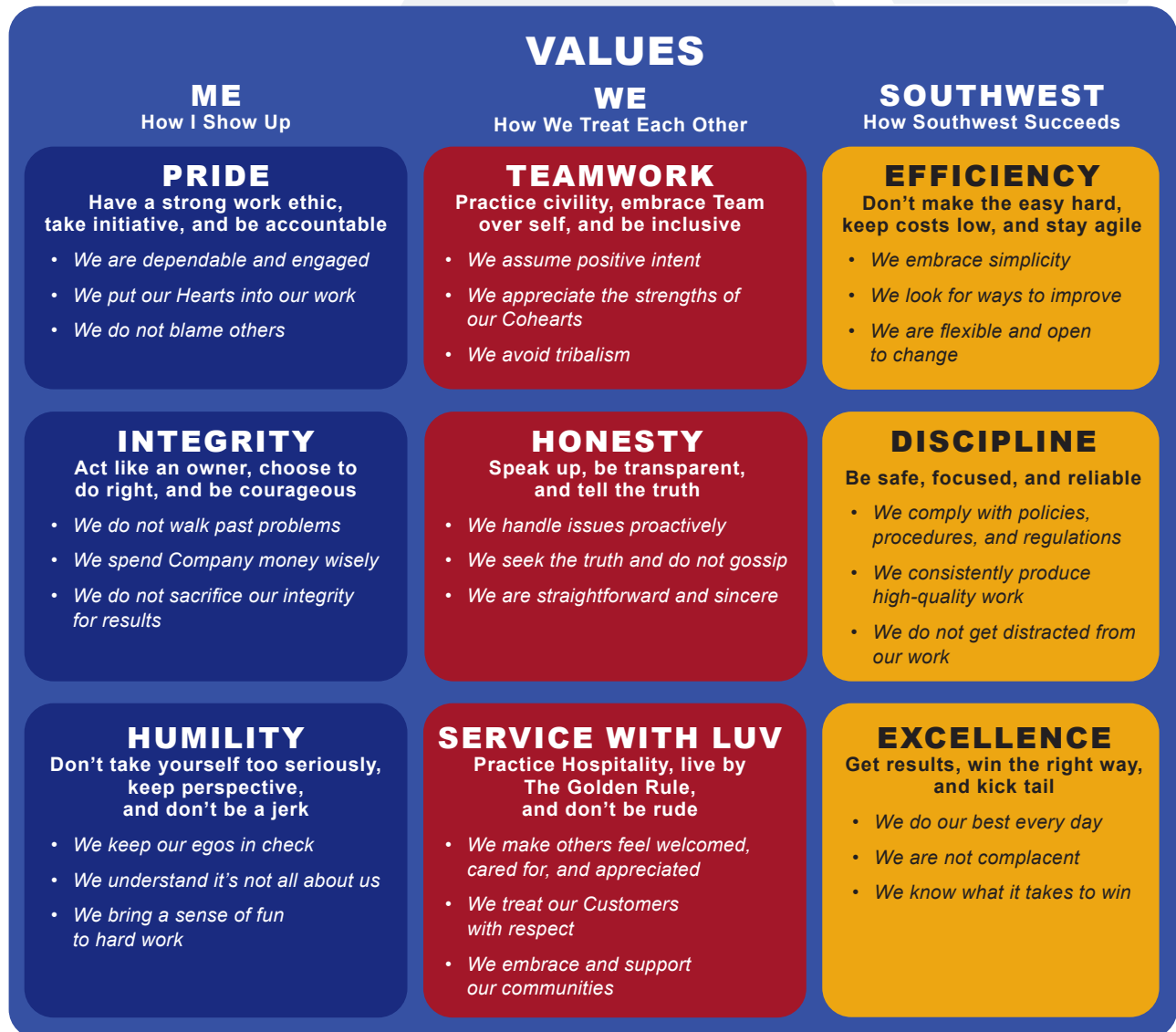
Connect People to what's important in their lives through friendly, reliable, and low-cost air travel.

## OUR VISION

To be the world's most loved, most efficient, and most profitable airline.



# DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS





## SOUTHWEST COMPETENCIES

### LEADER COMPETENCIES



#### DEVELOP PEOPLE

- Know and serve your People
- Encourage strengths, address weaknesses
- Build a deep and diverse bench



#### BUILD GREAT TEAMS

- Encourage vigorous debate and dialogue
- Cultivate an inclusive environment
- Develop collaborative relationships



#### THINK STRATEGICALLY

- See beyond today's activities
- Know our business and industry
- Make informed decisions



#### SET A CLEAR DIRECTION

- Cast a compelling vision
- Translate broad objectives into specific action plans
- Delegate authority

### CORE COMPETENCIES



#### BUILD & MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS

- Recognizes the feelings present in themselves and others, providing cues to guide behavior
- Builds trusting relationships and establishes credibility with others



#### IMPROVE CONTINUOUSLY

- Consistently reviews processes or operations to find cost-saving opportunities
- Applies an efficiency-oriented approach to evaluate the status quo and optimize, develop, or recommend enhancements



#### DEMONSTRATE ADAPTABILITY

- Recognizes new or changing environment and adjusts behavior to fit the situation
- Seeks new developmental experiences to make positive changes to personal or Team performance



#### SOLVE PROBLEMS

- Approaches problems logically, researches root causes, and assesses impact to develop the appropriate solution
- Draws from knowledge and experience, evaluating information from multiple sources to solve problems



#### COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

- Communicates in a manner that is designed to achieve desired outcomes while upholding SWA Culture
- Adjusts communications to match the style and level of understanding of the target audience



#### KNOW OUR BUSINESS & OPERATION

- Uses awareness of business context to direct own work
- Applies SWA's priorities to perform work effectively and support advancement of business goals



#### FOSTER BELONGING

- Welcomes and treats everyone in an open-minded and fair manner
- Lives up to the Southwest Way Values, thereby creating and maintaining a positive environment where everyone feels respected and appreciated



# WHY LEAD?

## TWO LEADERSHIP MOTIVES

### REWARD-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

The belief that being a Leader is the reward for hard work; therefore, the experience of being a Leader should be pleasant and enjoyable, allowing Leaders to choose what they work on while avoiding anything mundane, unpleasant, or uncomfortable.

Pat Lencioni, *The Motive*



### RESPONSIBILITY-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

The belief that being a Leader is a responsibility; therefore, the experience of leading should be difficult and challenging (though certainly not without elements of personal gratification).

Pat Lencioni, *The Motive*

Which of these Leadership motives most accurately describes your motivation for People Leadership? Explain.

Is it possible to have a completely pure Leadership motive? Explain.



## ACTION PLAN

Why do you aspire to be a People Leader at Southwest Airlines? What motivates you?  
What do you hope others will say about you when they reflect on your Leadership?

Who's a Leader in your network who inspires you? What makes their Leadership inspiring?

What was your biggest takeaway from this module? How can you apply it to your life?



## NOTES

## BIG IDEAS

- ◆ The wrong Leadership motive can be detrimental.
- ◆ Leadership is a responsibility to serve your People.

## WANT TO KEEP LEARNING?

- ◆ Check out the *SWATalk* series in the LMS or SumTotal Mobile App to learn how our Leaders demonstrate our Values. SWALife > LMS.
- ◆ Read *Lead with LUV* by Colleen Barrett and Ken Blanchard.





# DEVELOP PEOPLE

## MEET YOUR TEAM

### CONGRATULATIONS!

You've been promoted to Manager! Your former Leader, Olivia, accepted a position in a different department, allowing you to apply for her role. Olivia, who led the Team for the past five years, was respected and beloved by all, including you. She's the embodiment of the Southwest Way. While she leaves behind a significant legacy, she has full confidence in your ability to succeed in the new role.

You will now lead a Team of three Individual Contributors who were formally your Peers. You are inheriting the Team at a time in which work is busier than ever. Take a moment to get to know your Direct Reports.

### PRIYA

Priya just celebrated her 10-year SWA-iversary! She's worked in this department her entire career. She is the ideal Team player who never misses an opportunity to help support others' work. She also applied for the Manager position; however, she was not selected for the role. Since the announcement, you've noticed that she hasn't been her normal self.

### JASON

Jason started his Southwest journey in 1992 as a Ramp Agent in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Since then, he has served a variety of roles across the Company and joined your Team six months ago. While he is still learning the ins and outs of his current role, he has extensive knowledge of the Company. He has a strong work ethic and Fun-LUVing attitude and is seen as a tremendous connector at Southwest Airlines.

### KAITLIN

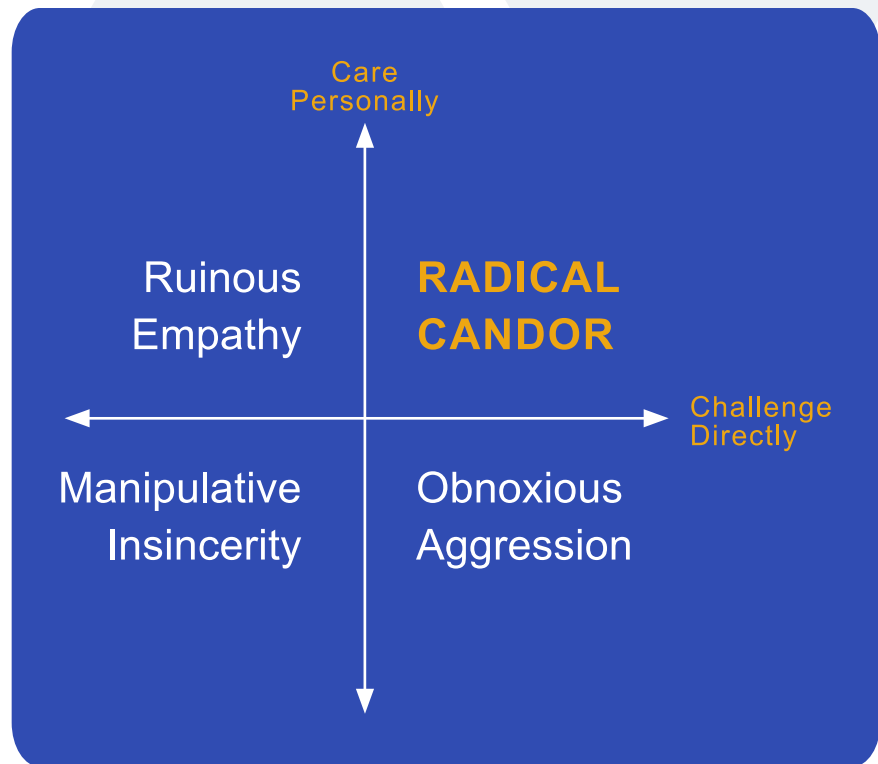
Kaitlin joined the Team a year and a half ago. Before that, she served in a large consulting firm while completing her M.B.A. She has a knack for analyzing information and making data-informed suggestions. Work-life balance is a high priority for her, especially since leaving her former role. She is eager to learn the Culture of Southwest and find other places to contribute outside of her job responsibilities.

Take a moment  
to get to know  
your Direct  
Reports.



## JIGSAW ACTIVITY

- Define your assigned quadrant.
- Provide an example.
- Explain why Leaders may choose to lead this way.



- Radical Candor:** Is being willing to care personally and challenge directly. These behaviors breed trust and lead to meaningful change in one's life.
- Obnoxious Aggression:** Also called brutal honesty or front stabbing, is what happens when you challenge someone directly but don't show you care about them personally. It's praise that doesn't feel sincere or criticism and feedback that isn't delivered kindly.
- Manipulative Insincerity:** Praise that is insincere, flattery to a person's face, and harsh criticism behind their back. It's the kind of backstabbing, political, passive-aggressive behavior that might be fun to tell stories about but makes for a toxic workplace, ruining relationships and ruining work.
- Ruinous Empathy:** Is what happens when you want to spare someone's short-term feelings, so you don't tell them something they need to know. It's praise that isn't specific enough to help the person understand what was good or criticism that is sugar-coated and unclear. Or simply silence.



## FEEDBACK FOR JASON

Last week, you asked Jason to be prepared to give an update on the project plan in this morning's project sync. Unfortunately, Jason came to the meeting unprepared with no new updates since last week's meeting. He then asked to extend the project timeline. If the project timeline gets extended, your Team will deliver the project to your Customer three days later than you anticipated. You plan to follow up with Jason this afternoon.

## BEST MODEL

Use the BEST Model to plan how you will provide effective feedback to Jason.

<b>B</b>	<b>Behavior or action.</b> Focus on measurable, observable, and repeatable actions.	
<b>E</b>	<b>Express the impact of the behavior.</b> Be specific. Focus on one or two impacts.	
<b>S</b>	<b>Solicit input.</b> Invite dialogue.	
<b>T</b>	<b>Talk next steps.</b> Determine specific action items.	



*"We are a very nurturing organization, but with high expectations, you can't be too nice to give the feedback that someone really needs to pivot or do something differently."*

**Linda Rutherford, *Leading with Heart***



## ACTION PLAN

What was your biggest takeaway from this module?

What opportunities do you have to apply what you learned inside or outside of your role?

Competency & Target Level	Target Behavior	
<b>Develop People Foundational</b>	Know and Serve Your People	Delivers clear, balanced, and constructive feedback in a timely manner.
		Provides direction, when needed, without micromanaging; allows Employees to learn from mistakes.
	Encourage Strengths, Address Weaknesses	Uncovers Employee skills, gaps, strengths, interests, and aspirations.
		Helps Employees identify actions that enable them to demonstrate and strengthen new learning.
	Build a Deep & Diverse Bench	Identifies and provides appropriate developmental experiences for individuals with growth potential.
		Prepares Employees to meet the future talent needs of the Team.

Which of the behaviors do you do best?

Which of these behaviors do you want to grow in most?

Who in your network demonstrates these behaviors that you could learn from?



## NOTES

## BIG IDEAS

- ◆ The Leaders must be willing to care personally and challenge directly.
- ◆ Use the BEST Model to provide ongoing feedback to your People.
- ◆ Utilize our Talent & Performance Management resources to appreciate, coach, and evaluate your People.

## WANT TO KEEP LEARNING?

- ◆ Earn a certificate in the *Skills Builder: Leadership* course in the LMS or SumTotal Mobile App.
- ◆ Read the *Radical Candor* book summary in the LMS or SumTotal Mobile App.



Performance at  
Southwest





# THINK STRATEGICALLY

## WHAT ABOUT YOU?

What are the goals and priorities of your Team or department?

Think about your Team: What opportunities do you see for improvement? What indicates a need for improvement? (e.g., negative Customer feedback, reduced productivity, repeated mistakes, project delays, organizational gridlock).

## IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

Identify an opportunity within your Team or department to improve your business or become more efficient. Answer each question below to organize your thoughts. Be prepared to share your proposal with another Learner.

## THE PROBLEM I'D LIKE TO SOLVE

Name one problem you would like to solve that aligns with Team or department priorities.

## IDEAS

Brainstorm as many ideas as you can to address this problem. When you are finished, circle your best idea.



### Problem Statement

Describe the problem being solved and why it needs to be solved now.

### Description

Describe the main goals of the idea and what the idea aims to achieve.

### Challenges

What are the expected constraints or challenges in implementing the idea?  
How would you address them?

### Benefits / Outcomes

What are the tangible and intangible benefits?

### Impacted Metrics

What specific metrics will this improve/change?

### Key Stakeholders

Who will be involved in implementing the idea?

### Target Audience

Who will this idea primarily impact?



## THINK STRATEGICALLY PRACTICES



### THINK LIKE A SCIENTIST:

When you start forming an opinion, resist the temptation to preach, prosecute, or politic. Treat your emerging idea as a hypothesis and test it with data.



### INVITE OTHERS TO QUESTION YOUR THINKING:

Identify People who will be willing to challenge your thinking. Let others know that you value their pushback.



### THINK WIN-WIN:

Form a sense partnership with your Stakeholders by brainstorming solutions that are mutually beneficial.



### USE THE 5 WHYS METHOD:

Ask “why” repeatedly to drill down to the root cause of a problem.



### USE GENERATIVE AI:

You can use generative AI tools like Copilot to get feedback on your ideas.



### INCREASE IDEAFLOW:

Ideaflow is ideas/time. Encourage your Team to come up with more ideas in a given time to spark creativity and arrive at better ideas.

Who in your network could you invite to question your thinking?

When could you set aside intentional time to brainstorm ideas to improve our business?



## ACTION PLAN

What was your biggest takeaway from this module?

What opportunities do you have to apply what you learned inside or outside of your role?

Competency & Target Level	Target Behavior	
Think Strategically Foundational	See Beyond Today's Activities	Anticipates changing circumstances, unexpected constraints, or challenges.
		Recognizes when a process or procedure calls for a different approach; leads Team in making transitions to new processes, when applicable
	Know Our Business & Industry	Demonstrates an understanding of the strategy, business, and competitive positioning of Southwest (e.g., business risks, key metrics).
		Stays abreast of current industry developments in functional areas.
	Make Informed Decisions	Applies business awareness in decision-making and looks for ways to do more with less.
		Makes time-sensitive decisions to move work forward; takes responsible risks to achieve goals.

Which of the behaviors do you do best?

Which of these behaviors do you want to grow in most?

Who in your network demonstrates these behaviors that you could learn from?





## NOTES



*“The worst problem you’ll ever have is the problem you won’t acknowledge and address.”*

**Herb Kelleher, *Leading with Heart***

## BIG IDEAS

- ◆ Know the business to make informed decisions.
- ◆ Increase Ideaflow.
- ◆ Be thorough in your analysis.

## WANT TO KEEP LEARNING?

- ◆ Earn a certificate in the *Skillsbuilder: Problem-Solving* course in the LMS or SumTotal Mobile App.
- ◆ Listen to Adam Grant’s *Think Again* audiobook summary in the LMS or SumTotal Mobile App.
- ◆ Watch *The 5 Whys – Lean Problem Solving* video in the LMS or SumTotal Mobile App.



# BUILD GREAT TEAMS

## MORNING HUDDLE

It's Monday morning and you are hosting a daily morning huddle with your Team. Your goal today is to get a consensus from the Team on the proposed project timeline from last Friday's meeting. You start by saying, "Good morning, everyone! I hope you all had a great weekend. Today we are going to start by revisiting our conversation from last Friday. We proposed completing our project by the end of next month. We need to decide whether or not to move forward with that plan. What thoughts do you all have?"

Kaitlin jumps in immediately and says, "I see no reason why we couldn't complete the project by the end of next month. We have been able to meet our deadlines in the past. We should have no problem meeting this one, too!"

"Umm, well, I could be wrong, but I think some of us may not feel as confident. Jessie's Team asked us to add another feature to the project last week, and well..." Jason replies timidly.

"Here we go again," Priya whispers under her breath.

Jason continues, "I just think it's going to take more time than we originally expected. Maybe if we..."

Kaitlin interrupts sharply, "I think you may be underestimating our capacity. If we don't move forward with the proposed timeline, we will be seen as unreliable in the eyes of our Customers. This is our time to press forward and focus on efficiency!"

The room is quiet for a few moments. Then, Jason responds reluctantly, "I guess you are right. We should move forward with the plan."

"So, we are all in agreement, right?" Kaitlin asks.

Priya nods her head.

"Yep," Jason answers, staring at the floor.

**"Here we go again."**



## MAKE IT SAFE

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY:

A belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes and that the Team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking

Amy Edmondson, Harvard professor and author



## MAKE IT SAFE PRACTICES




- ◆ **Acknowledge People's ideas.**
- ◆ **Invite everyone to speak.**
- ◆ **Ask for different viewpoints.**
- ◆ **Give time to think.**
- ◆ **Set ground rules.**

## SET GROUND RULES

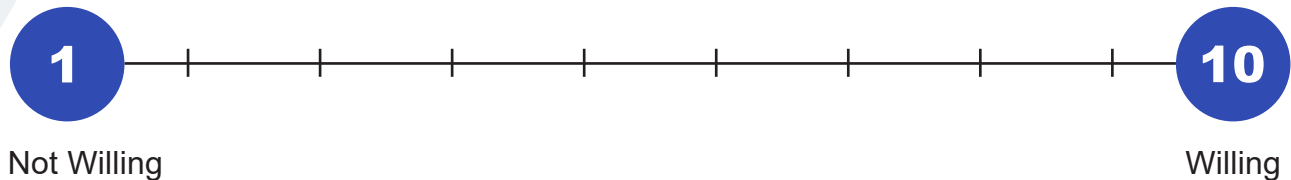
Create a list of ground rules for Team meetings. Come up with at least three expectations.



## PROMOTE DEBATE & DIALOGUE PRACTICES

-  **Share the facts:** Facts are observable, verifiable, and measurable. They are not open to interpretation.
-  **Seek mutual purpose:** Create safety by seeking a mutual purpose, even if your strategies differ.
-  **Distinguish between relationship conflict and task conflict:** Relationship conflict is rooted in personal, emotional differences. Task conflict arises from differences in ideas, opinions, or approaches to a specific task. Encourage task conflict.

On a scale of 1-10,  
how willing are you to promote vigorous debate and dialogue on your Team?



What strategies could you use to make it safe for debate and dialogue on your Team?



*“You can’t have Team trust if you don’t have vulnerability in the Team, if People don’t feel like they can be themselves. And there won’t be Team vulnerability if the Leader doesn’t start. If I don’t go first and be transparent, the Team will never get there. And if I’m not there, the Team will never build trust.”*

**Bob Jordan, *Leading with Heart***

## TEAM GRID GLOSSARY

### TALENT

A natural recurring pattern of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied. When we invest in our Talents, they become Strengths.

### STRENGTH

The ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance in a specific task.

### WEAKNESSES

Anything that gets in the way of success.

### EXECUTING

People with dominant Executing themes make things happen.

### INFLUENCING

People with dominant Influencing themes take charge, speak up, and make sure others are heard.

### RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

People with dominant Relationship Building themes build strong relationships that hold a Team together and make it greater than the sum of its parts.

### STRATEGIC THINKING

People with dominant Strategic Thinking themes absorb and analyze information that informs better decisions.

### 4 E's

Discover other's talents by considering what they do with **ease**, what they do with **excellence**, what they **enjoy** doing, and what work **energizes** them.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

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## ACTION PLAN

What was your biggest takeaway from this module?

What opportunities do you have to apply what you learned inside or outside of your role?

Competency & Target Level	Target Behavior	
<b>Build Great Teams</b> Foundational	Encourage Vigorous Debate and Dialogue	Acknowledges differences of opinion and considers alternative perspectives.
		Recognizes and accepts healthy debate.
	Cultivate an Inclusive Environment	Treats all Employees with respect regardless of their level, personality, culture, or background; sets expectation for the Team to do the same.
		Creates an environment of learning about, valuing, encouraging, and supporting differences.
	Develop Collaborative Relationships	Builds network by participating in Team/department activities and establishing strong relationships.
		Uses understanding of Employees' skills, abilities, and ways of working to improve results.

Which of the behaviors do you do best?

Which of these behaviors do you want to grow in most?

Who in your network demonstrates these behaviors that you could learn from?



## NOTES

## BIG IDEAS

- Leaders make it safe for debate and dialogue.
- Use CliftonStrengths® to foster collaboration.

## WANT TO KEEP LEARNING?

- Visit *Gallup CliftonStrengths®* on SWALife.
- Earn a certificate in the *Skills Builder: Teamwork* course in the LMS or SumTotal Mobile App.
- Learn about *Crucial Conversations & Crucial Accountability* in the LMS or SumTotal Mobile App.



Gallup  
CliftonStrengths®







# SET A CLEAR DIRECTION

## TEAM EVENT

You arrive at work and check your email inbox. Omar, your Leader, just sent you the following message:

*Hello,*

*Good morning! I just received the Company-wide survey results for our Teams.*

*Unfortunately, our Engagement and Wellbeing Scores were concerning.*

*See the results below:*

- **68% Engagement Score for the department:** -3 points from the last survey and 9 points below the Company-wide score. Our Engagement Score measures how Employees think, feel, act, and connect with the Company, their work, and their Team.
- **62% Wellbeing Score for the department:** -4 points from the last survey and 15 points below the Company-wide score. Our Wellbeing Score measures the different aspects of Employees' overall wellbeing and helps identify improvement opportunities.

*As I looked at the open comments, I saw that our Employees want more opportunities to connect with the Culture and their Cohearts. I need your Team's help to address the results. I would like for you and your Team to plan and host an event to promote the wellbeing of our Teams. There's been so much going on lately. I have no doubt our Teams would benefit from an opportunity to come together.*

*Let me know if you have any questions or if I can support you in any way!*

*Also, feel free to recruit other Employees to help your Team execute the event.*

*Thank you for your willingness to take on this task!*

*Sincerely,*

*Omar*

You tell Omar that you and your Team are up for the task!

While you are excited to plan and host the event, you know that your Team is already in a particularly busy season. You plan on telling your Team at tomorrow's daily morning huddle that they will also be responsible for planning and hosting the upcoming Team event.

**"I need your Team's help to address the results."**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### MAKE IT COMPELLING

- Share the **WHY**.
- Communicate the **WIIFM** (What's in it for me?) to the individuals on your Team.



**WHY**



**WIIFM**

Consider your Team Members. What would you say to address the why and the WIIFM? Be specific.



*"A Leader is someone who hires excellent People, sets a compelling vision for them, sets aggressive but achievable targets, motivates them to succeed, and gets out of the way so they can execute."*

**Ryan Green, Leading with Heart**



## DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITY

- USE SMART GOALS:  
**Specific**, Motivating, Attainable, Relevant, **Trackable**.
- CHOOSE THE RIGHT PERSON TO DELEGATE TO:  
Who has the capacity? Who has the relevant skills?  
Who needs to develop these skills? What about their Strengths?



What are the tasks that must be completed to plan and host the event? Brainstorm at least two tasks and ensure that they are specific and trackable.

Based on the information you have about your Team, who do you think would be best suited for these tasks?

How did you decide who to assign these tasks to? Be specific.

## YOUR TASK

It's time to share the message in your morning huddle that your Team will be hosting and planning a Team event. Set a clear direction for your Direct Reports by creating buy-in and providing actionable steps for your Team. Ensure that you have addressed who does what and when, then plan to follow up.



## ACTION PLAN

What was your biggest takeaway from this module?

What opportunities do you have to apply what you learned inside or outside of your role?

Competency & Target Level	Target Behavior	
<b>Set a Clear Direction</b> Foundational	Cast a Compelling Vision	Inspires and energizes Team, making it clear how each individual plays a role in achieving the Southwest Vision.
		Gains buy-in and ensures Team commitment to the vision.
	Translate Broad Objectives into Specific Action Plans	Translates Company objectives into day-to-day activities and behaviors.
		Holds Team accountable for achieving goals and KPIs in alignment with department action plans.
	Delegate Authority	Communicates to Employees what is expected of them and holds them accountable.
		Balances providing guidance and assistance without undermining the individual's ownership of the task.

Which of the behaviors do you do best?

Which of these behaviors do you want to grow in most?

Who in your network demonstrates these behaviors that you could learn from?



## NOTES

## BIG IDEAS

- Make a vision compelling by addressing the why and WIIFM.
- Use SMART goals.
- Choose the right person to delegate to.

## WANT TO KEEP LEARNING?

- Earn a certificate in the *Skills Builder: Speaking* course in the LMS or SumTotal Mobile App.
- Visit *Change Leadership* on SWALife to learn how to set a clear direction through change.



Change  
Leadership





# YOUR ASPIRE JOURNEY

On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel about the prospect of becoming a People Leader in your career? Explain.

**1** |-----| **10**  
I'm Nervous... I'm Excited!

What are your two biggest takeaways from today?

**1** \_\_\_\_\_  
**2** \_\_\_\_\_

Look at your action plans. What's one action will you prioritize after today's class?

I am curious to learn more about...

I will share what I've learned today with...



## RECOMMENDED READING

- ◆ *Lead With LUV*, Ken Blanchard and Colleen Barrett
- ◆ *The Motive*, Pat Lencioni
- ◆ *Hidden Potential*, Adam Grant
- ◆ *Radical Candor*, Kim Scott
- ◆ *Thanks for the Feedback*, Sheila Heen and Douglas Stone
- ◆ *The Boldly Inclusive Leader*, Minette Norman
- ◆ *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Pat Lencioni
- ◆ *Crucial Conversations: Tools For Talking When Stakes Are High*, Joseph Grenny
- ◆ *The One Minute Manager*, Ken Blanchard
- ◆ *Think Again*, Adam Grant
- ◆ *Ideaflow*, Jeremy Utley



To learn more about career development opportunities at Southwest Airlines, visit *Career Mobility* on SWALife.



Scan the QR Code to find out how to access our Learning Library from your phone! Look for the guides to install the SumTotal app.

