



# THIRTEEN STAGES OF LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

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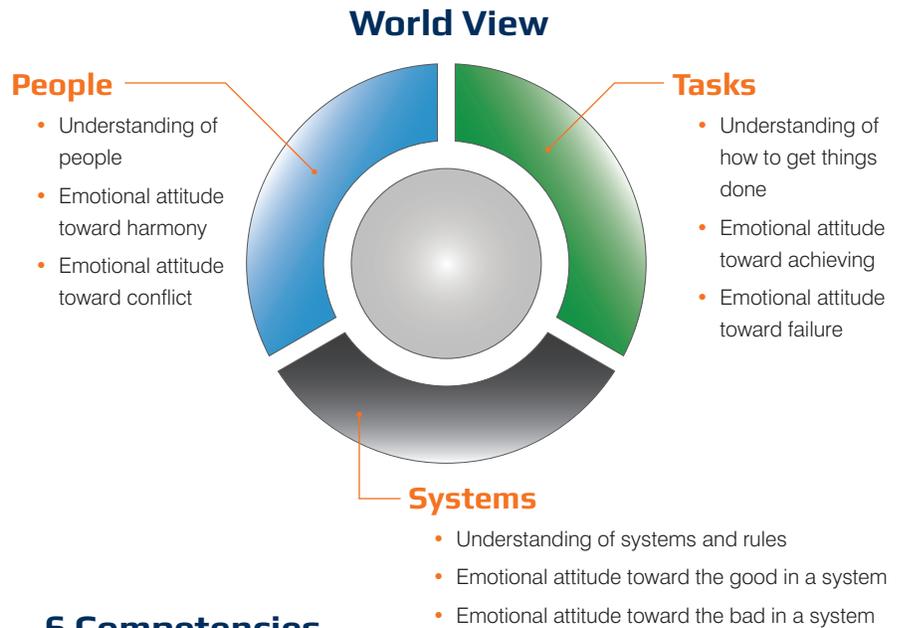


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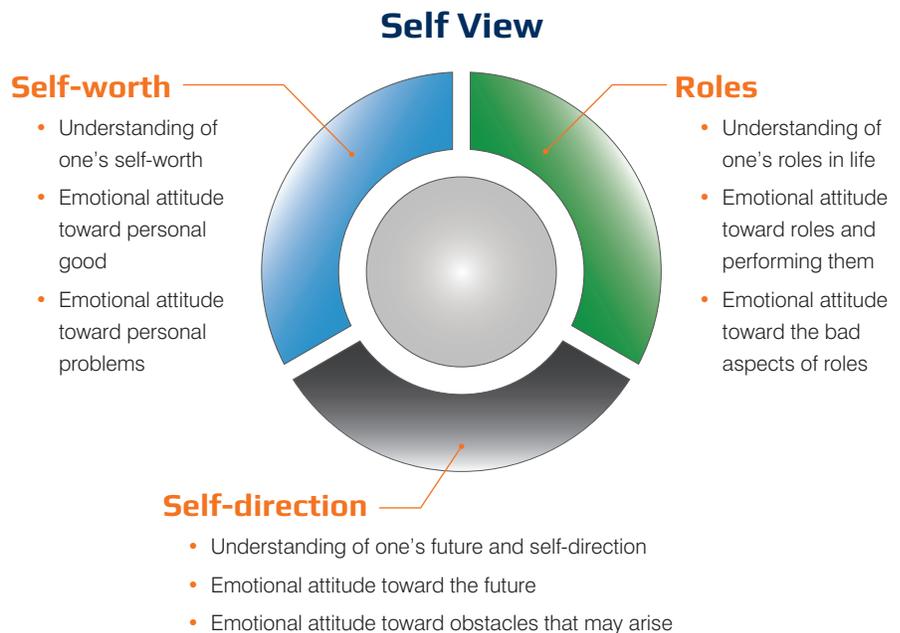
# Thirteen Stages of Leadership Excellence

Through axiology we can establish a progression of leadership excellence from the most basic function of leadership (planning, stage 1) to the most profound and full definition of leadership (balanced, stage 13). This does not mean that one style is superior for every role in every situation. To take an extreme example, a military leader under fire would not benefit from holding a meeting and getting everyone's input about taking cover. But, in our "normal" world of leading people in organizations, building meaningful relationships and listening to others—the more tools the better, and this is what the thirteenth level "Balanced" Leadership style is all about.

These thirteen stages are based on the work of my late friend and mentor Dr. David Mefford, in his dissertation, *Phenomenology of Man as a Valuing Subject*. This is a logic deduction of thirteen forms of value or meaning using the three dimensions of scientific axiology. Those three dimensions are illustrated (to the right) in both the *World View* and *Self View* of the STM competency profiles with which you are familiar. Dr. Mefford's work and the STM profile is based on the work of Dr. Robert S. Hartman, founder of the science of Axiology.



## 6 Competencies 12 Emotional Intelligence Factors



## **1. [S > E > I] PLANNING (MAPPING OUT, DEFINING MISSION AND MATCHING TEAM TALENT WITH MISSION TASKS):**

This first stage is the absolute starting point and foundation for all other business management values, with highest emphasis on the systemic dimension. The business plan contains the operational design or map that can be followed to achieve all value objectives, including policies and procedures for all aspects of the operation, as well as job definitions, cost analyses and financial projections. The overall mission and vision should be outlined, and economic feasibility studies of the plan and its defined goals should be run.

## **2. [S > I > E] ORGANIZING (GATHERING RESOURCES FOR COMPLETING MISSION):**

This stage maintains primary emphasis on the systemic dimension to show that all values are chosen according to the necessary priorities of the plan. Secondary emphasis is placed on the interpersonal (intrinsic) dimension, representing recruiting and staffing.

## **3. [E > S > I] MAINTAINING (REINFORCING STATUS QUO):**

The value emphasis in this stage shifts to external or extrinsic values, with a practical focus on maintaining adequate production or service to keep the organization in business. The management function of this stage focuses on valuing products and services from the customer's perspective until a sufficient client base is built to sustain business operations.

## **4. [E > I > S] COUNSELING (COACHING TEAM MEMBERS):**

The primary value emphasis is the extrinsic (selling and production) with a secondary focus on the intrinsic people dimension. The major management function here is coaching and counseling personnel with respect to performance. Managers should maintain an open-door policy, encouraging two-way input/feedback, to enable employees to correct mistakes and better meet or exceed performance standards.

## **5. [I > S > E] DIPLOMACY (KEEPING MESSAGE POSITIVE AND INVITING):**

Primary emphasis is on the intrinsic values of interpersonal relations, with the goal of avoiding conflict and achieving harmony among work teams and customer relations, while continuing to make a profit (S). Leadership or management activities include resolving complaints or problems in an atmosphere of honesty, trust and respect, building personal rapport, and raising receptivity with all personnel and customers.

## **6. [I > E > S] LISTENING (GUIDING TEAM MEMBERS WITH CARE):**

This stage solidifies personal rapport—empathetic and intrinsic concern for personnel and customers. Primary activities in this stage are asking open-ended questions and checking for understanding and agreement on all sides. Customer needs and employee attitudes should be consistently evaluated to develop long-term loyalty as well as optimal levels of morale and teamwork. Sensitive listening sets the stage for efficient controls in stage seven, which orders and stabilizes the values established in the previous six stages.

## **7. [S > (E = I)] CONTROL (COMMAND AND AUTHORITY):**

The goal of this stage is to establish objective standards for both people and production values and to enforce them. The primary management function is to measure and refine actual employee performance through a performance appraisal review to summarize the overall quality of operational performance, with a balanced concern for people and production, as well as mutually agreeable goals for improvement.

## **8. [E > (I = S)] PROCESSING WORK (GUIDING TEAM TOWARD SPECIFIC GOAL ACHIEVEMENT):**

This value distribution emphasizes the extrinsic value dimension: defining work goals operationally and meeting them in practical time and space, and doing what must be done when it should be done. Leaders guide the work process toward specified goals and follow up to completion. They also act as role models to ensure all segments of the work process interface smoothly to produce high quality results.

## **9. [(E = S) > I] EFFICIENCY (GUIDING TEAM-TASK COHESION):**

The objective of this stage is to keep the projections of the business plan and its cost thresholds (S) in harmony with the actual costs of maintaining quantity and quality output. Leadership functions include team-task cohesion to eliminate wasted time, energy and finances with a focus on operational cost efficiency.

## **10. [I > (E = S) COMMUNICATING (CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING WITH REGULAR MEETINGS):**

This value shift is characterized by two-way “communicating” toward better teamwork and cooperation. Competent and productive leaders focus on individual people values in communicating with co-workers and customers: sharing, explaining necessary changes, checking for understanding, and seeking agreement and commitment from all people in the organization for the highest level of collaboration.

## **11. [(I = S) > E] DELEGATION (ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY WITH FOLLOW-UP):**

This stage is characterized by equal emphasis on developing interpersonal value (I) according to the systemic needs (S) of the organization. Primary activities include giving specific directives to personnel concerning what, how, and when to do work tasks, and consistent follow-up to improve personal accountability. A good leader guides the functional abilities of their people in such a way that helps them grow in the direction that best fits their talent and potential.

## **12. [(I = E) > S] DEVELOPING PEOPLE (PREPARING TEAM MEMBERS TO LEAD—WITH VALUE CIRCLES):**

This stage focuses on the unity of people values (I) and production values (E). The objective is to guide people toward realizing a high degree of personal satisfaction and achievement from their work and includes an open forum to seek creative input from all employees to facilitate workflow, and to give all personnel opportunity to develop their leadership skills in regular value circle meetings. Emphasizing the intrinsic worth of each individual, for their own sake, leads to the final “integrated” stage.

## **13. [I = E = S] BALANCED INTEGRATION (RESPONSIVE, DYNAMIC AND ACCOUNTABLE):**

Excellence in leadership is achieved in which the values of all dimensions are balanced and fully engaged: people, processes, systems and profits, with justice and integrity to ensure steady growth of the cohesive whole. The leader in this stage is responsive, dynamic and accountable—to all and for all. This stage indicates openness for positive change in all dimensions. When all previous stages have been covered, the leadership of an organization has reached a point of stability—in a context of dynamic disequilibrium which must be continually adjusted and fine-tuned.



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