



# **THE SEVEN C'S**

**THE SEVEN QUALITIES  
LEADERS NEED FOR POST  
COVID SUCCESS**

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EngagementMultiplier®

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## THE LEADERSHIP PERCEPTION GAP



**50% of leaders say they are well-equipped to lead their organization in the future.**

The power of strong, effective leadership is an undeniable contributor to an organization's success. Employee confidence in their leaders is a crucial factor in determining whether or not leadership is effective. All too often, however, company executives and employees have differing perceptions of the leadership team's effectiveness. We call this "The Leadership Perception Gap" and bridging it is one of the surest ways a leadership team can improve the overall performance of the business.

### DEFINITION

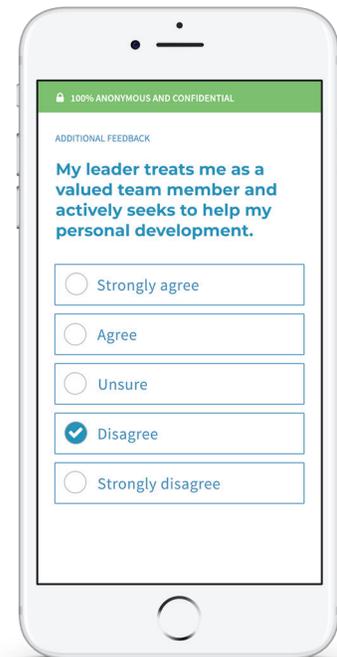
**The Leadership Perception Gap:** the difference between the perception executives have of the effectiveness of their organization's leaders, and the perception of their employees.

Why is this? There are multiple reasons.

When employees and company executives have differing perceptions of the company's leaders, strategic execution becomes infinitely more difficult. Executives who are unaware of struggling leaders several levels down are not aware of the jeopardy awaiting their thoughtful plans.

If employees have a poor perception of their leadership – whether that means their direct managers, department leaders, or the executive team – they are less likely to trust them, take their direction, or support their decisions. Additionally, a team in this state is probably also experiencing a degree of disengagement, meaning their enthusiasm is low and they lack the feelings of pride and ownership that are catalysts for the above-and-beyond efforts which power business success.

Enter what we call "the 7 C's."



# THE 7 C's - QUALITIES SUCCESSFUL LEADERS NEED

Leadership Perception Gaps arise for a reason, or more accurately, a combination of reasons. A leader may struggle with consistent behavior, or fail to communicate clearly with their team. They may lack the confidence in themselves and their team to “let go and let grow,” instead devolving into micromanagement that can wreck a team’s motivation.

The leader may operate with a mindset that work isn't personal, unwittingly communicating to their team that they don't have employees' interests and wellbeing at heart.

Accurate reflections of leaders or not, employees pick up on and often amplify their leaders' weaknesses. You've probably heard the phrase “Perception is reality,” and this is an example of that truism in action. The manager who unconsciously communicates to their team a lack of caring may indeed care very much about their people, for example, and may have no idea that their employees have an opposite impression.

The elements that contribute to a Leadership Perception Gap can be difficult to tease out - many of these forces are subtle, and the impressions that form these gaps and dim team performance build over time.

This is where the “7 C's” -- namely, the seven qualities leaders need to successfully lead through the sea of changes the Covid-19 crisis has brought -- come into play.

These seven qualities were identified by Stefan Wissenbach, Engagement Multiplier's founder and CEO, as being both crucial for future success as well as the elements that can impact a team's perception of their leaders. These seven qualities are:

- Courage
- Credibility
- Consistency
- Confidence
- Connection
- Caring
- Commitment

In the following pages, we'll break down each leadership element. We'll explore exceptional leadership behaviors for each, as well as their woefully dysfunctional opposites - and the impact both have upon employees.

## THE SEVEN C'S

COURAGE

CREDIBILITY

CONSISTENCY

CONFIDENCE

CONNECTION

CARING

COMMITMENT

The aim of this ebook is to help you recognize whether a Leadership Perception Gap exists within your organization, and if it does, actions you can take to resolve it. Included you will find:

- A reflection segment for each of the 7 C's, inviting you to consider some tough questions about that quality and its health within your team,
- A simple Leadership Self-Reflection Scorecard designed to help you (or someone you know) reflect upon their own tendencies and comfort with each leadership element,
- Access to our Leadership Perception Gap survey and accompanying success guide, designed to diagnose gaps within your organization, and clear actions you can take.

## COURAGE



**Courageous leaders embrace the good, the bad and the ugly.**

The impact of a courageous leader can be profound. A courageous leader inspires employees (and other leaders) with their vision of what's possible. Courageous leaders are also confident in their ability to take charge, drive growth, and deal with issues swiftly. As a result, the business and teams within them are more efficient and productive by avoiding unnecessary procrastination.

### The Courage Spectrum

DYSFUNCTIONAL	COMPROMISED	FUNCTIONAL	EXCEPTIONAL
Wholly ignores problems	Avoids confrontation	Steps up in a crisis	Seeks truth and owns accountability

### The Mindset of an Exceptionally Courageous Leader

Leaders with Exceptional courage are truth seekers, willing to meet challenges and difficult decisions head-on. The following statements all illustrate the courageous mindset.

- I believe that ignorance is never a strategy and seek to understand exactly what problems, challenges, and opportunities exist within my area of responsibility - however, unpalatable these issues may be from time to time.

- I'm willing to make difficult decisions that are aligned with the values and purpose of the organization and for the greater good of the wider team and business, even where they involve dealing with potentially difficult short term situations or circumstances.
- I wholly embrace the responsibilities and accountabilities that come with a leadership role.
- I feel and display confidence in a crisis and step up to accept challenges that sometimes come out of the blue.
- I accept that I don't have all the answers to all the problems the business faces and am therefore willing to enlist the help, wisdom, and guidance of others who are better suited to help make progress.
- The same way I would expect my team to be accountable for outcomes, I am willing to accept constructive feedback about issues or shortcomings.

## Behaviors of a Low-Courage Dysfunctional Leader

On the opposite end of the spectrum is a leader who lacks courage to the point of dysfunction.

- Ignorance is bliss. I don't lift the lid for fear of finding problems.
- I don't want to talk about problems because if I leave them in the dark, they'll go away.
- Let's not try to find things that aren't working because that creates work.
- I'd rather avoid a conversation than have a confrontation.
- I'd much rather lead without having people to manage.
- It's my way or the highway.
- I don't believe that it's appropriate that my subordinates give me feedback, I'm above that.

Courage (or the lack of it) can reveal itself within an organization in a variety of ways. A courageous organization is one that is always evolving and consciously moving the business forward in a positive direction. A high degree of managerial courage is usually accompanied by accountability for outcomes. The hallmarks of a company that's lacking courage are "bridge to nowhere" projects and initiatives that never seem to end, a tendency toward "paralysis by analysis" and a lack of desire for change.

*Does your organization have leaders who could strengthen their abilities within this dimension? Ask yourself the following questions, and notice whether your answers align more strongly with the Exceptional or Dysfunctional behaviors. Do any of your answers give you pause? (That pause may be a red flag.)*

### ASK YOURSELF

1. How would you describe leadership's (or your direct leader's) receptiveness to feedback?
2. What words would you use to describe the company's leaders?
3. How would you describe the company's ability to handle change?

# CREDIBILITY



## Credible leaders walk the talk.

Credibility and authenticity breed commitment and energy from employees. Productivity is higher, there's greater buy-in from employees, and the culture values self-starters. The reciprocal energy from employees makes the leader's job easier. In turn, they (and the business) become more productive, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy cycle.

### The Credibility Spectrum

DYSFUNCTIONAL	COMPROMISED	FUNCTIONAL	EXCEPTIONAL
Doesn't play by the rules	Takes credit for others' work	Lives company values and purpose	Walks the talk - always

### The Mindset of an Exceptionally Credible Leader

- I show up for meetings and team interactions in the same way I'd expect team members to do so.
- That which I request of others I display myself where appropriate.
- I believe in and consistently demonstrate the company's values and purpose.
- I enjoy being a leader.
- I find it energizing to help my team grow and develop as employees and individuals.

### Behaviors of a Low-Credibility Dysfunctional Leader

Leaders with low credibility are those who believe there are two sets of rules - one for them, and one for everyone else. Living in the proverbial "Ivory Tower," these leaders separate themselves from the rest of the company and are likely to prefer the company of yes-men. Their mindset is one of privilege.

- I get special privileges as a leader so I don't have to play by the same rules as everyone else.
- I make the rules, I don't follow them.
- It's more important that people do as I say, not do as I do.
- I've earned the right to have an easy life.
- I don't mind taking credit I haven't earned. Leadership means I can delegate more work than I do myself - especially the things I don't like doing.

A leader's credibility with their team plays a crucial role in their leadership effectiveness. High-credibility leaders are trusted and engender confidence in their employees. When credibility is missing, employees question the leader's decisions and abilities at every turn, slowing progress and hampering performance.

*Does your organization have leaders who could strengthen their abilities within this dimension? Ask yourself the following questions, and notice whether your answers align more strongly with the Exceptional or Dysfunctional behaviors. Do any of your answers give you pause? (That pause may be a red flag.)*

### ASK YOURSELF

1. How consistent are the standards of behavior and adherence to company values across the organization?
2. Does the organization give a pass to some individuals, accepting less than desirable behavior?
3. Has each leader developed a bench of strong performers who may someday be considered as successors?

## CONSISTENCY



**Consistent leaders are aligned with the company's purpose and strategy.**

Consistency creates trust and better communication – which is when teams are at their strongest and most resilient - and therefore so is the business. Consistent, open, two-way 90-day reviews provide milestone-based accountabilities and success upon which employees can be measured and leaders can provide structured feedback to engender consistently improved business results.

### The Consistency Spectrum

DYSFUNCTIONAL	COMPROMISED	FUNCTIONAL	EXCEPTIONAL
Focuses on what they think makes them look best	Prefers a “shoot from the hip” approach	Has a plan and shares it	Provides direction that's aligned with goals

## The Mindset of an Exceptionally Consistent Leader

- The direction I provide my team is clearly aligned with the company's broader goals and purpose.
- I have a plan, as well as an approach for tracking and measuring progress, that I share with my team.
- I ensure my communications amplify and support the company's message.
- I'm aware of and frequently reference the company strategy and goals - and our progress against both - in my communications to my team.

## Behaviors of a Low-Consistency Dysfunctional Leader

- I focus on achieving the goals I think are most important, regardless of the broader strategy.
- I prefer to be spontaneous and 'shoot from the hip' when coaching my employees or providing feedback.
- I focus my team on the activities that make me look best.
- I march to the beat of my own drummer.
- I don't keep track of strategic initiatives outside my lane.

Leaders who behave consistently are able to lead by example - they model the key behaviors of alignment, strategic planning, and intentionality. Inconsistent leaders can be baffling to employees or worse, often leading by exception and creating instability.

*Does your organization have leaders who could strengthen their abilities within this dimension? Ask yourself the following questions, and notice whether your answers align more strongly with the Exceptional or Dysfunctional behaviors. Do any of your answers give you pause? (That pause may be a red flag.)*

### ASK YOURSELF

1. Do leaders live the company values every day and develop plans for their team that are clearly aligned with company goals and objectives?
2. Are they very focused on the objectives in their department and aren't aware of what's going on in other departments?
3. Are leaders very spontaneous and change their mind on the spot, reacting to market conditions or other exogenous factors?

# CONFIDENCE



**Confident leaders believe outcomes win over inputs.**

The employee/leadership relationship is built on trust - and this inspires employees to rise to the challenge. Leaders' time is spent less on micromanaging and the day-to-day, and more on leading, providing clarity and direction, coaching, and developing their teams and the business. As a result, employees' capabilities grow and the business becomes far more self-managing.

## The Confidence Spectrum

DYSFUNCTIONAL	COMPROMISED	FUNCTIONAL	EXCEPTIONAL
Relies upon micromanagement	Doesn't trust or effectively utilize experts	Practices accountability-based leadership	Trusts team to get the job done

## The Mindset of an Exceptionally Confident Leader

I have and display confidence and trust in my team to get the job done without the need for micromanaging.

I consistently practice accountability-based leadership with team members, focusing on outcomes rather than inputs.

I provide trusted team members with a broad structure and framework but freedom within it to operate.

I focus on hiring candidates with the right unique abilities for the role and after providing them with appropriate training and support, allow the team members to do their best work without regular interference.

## Behaviors of a Low-Confidence Dysfunctional Leader

If I'm not on people 24/7 I won't get the best work from them.

Doesn't allow the experts on the team to practice their expertise

If I know how everything is being done every single step of the way, I know it will be right.

If I allow team members flexibility, chaos will ensue.

Leaders who are confident in their teams - and communicate that fact - create an environment that encourages individuals to take initiative, test their strengths, and achieve to their full ability. The polar opposite - an insecure leader - is continually grasping at straws, micromanaging their team, and stifling motivation.

*Does your organization have leaders who could strengthen their abilities within this dimension? Ask yourself the following questions, and notice whether your answers align more strongly with the Exceptional or Dysfunctional behaviors. Do any of your answers give you pause? (That pause may be a red flag.)*

### ASK YOURSELF

1. Does the company reward successful business outcomes? Or does the company prefer to measure employee activity, such as hours worked, cases closed, or calls answered?
2. How much autonomy do leaders give employees?
3. Do your leaders spend enough time operating strategically or are they continually involved in day-to-day tactics?

## CONNECTION



**Connected leaders have a one purpose, one team mindset.**

Leaders are a key conduit and driving force for greater connection, creating improved communication, achievement, and ownership of goals at an employee and business level through an aligned team effort. In turn, leaders have their greatest impact on the lives of employees and the success of the business, making their own role more rewarding.

### The Connection Spectrum

DYSFUNCTIONAL	COMPROMISED	FUNCTIONAL	EXCEPTIONAL
Is always out of the loop.	Struggles with peoples' names	Knows employees aspirations and goals	Has complete clarity about what's going on

## The Mindset of an Exceptionally Connected Leader

I have complete clarity about what's going on in both my department and with my individual direct reports. I am 'in touch' and felt to be in touch with what's going on by employees.

I am able to communicate with my team members in a way that provides them with the information that matters to them, motivates them, and makes them feel connected to, and invested in, the organization.

I have an understanding of employees' pressures and aspirations/objectives and am able to connect those with the broader goals and objectives of the organization.

I have frequent engaging communications/meetings with my team members.

I encourage interaction/collaboration between different roles and departments.

I communicate the "big picture" to employees and ensure everyone understands how their role contributes.

I translate the company's goals into goals for my area of responsibility and individual team members' goals.

I work with direct reports to create alignment between their personal goals and the goals of the business.

I conduct two-way open review meetings with each member of my team, every 90 days.

## Behaviors of a Low-Connection Dysfunctional Leader

I struggle to remember my team members' names.

I'm not interested in employees' personal lives, they come here to work.

One meeting per month is more than enough.

Because I know what my department's objectives are, the team doesn't need to know.

The team doesn't need to know about the big stuff, they just need to worry about the small things they're doing.

I think purpose and values are just business mumbo-jumbo that get in the way of getting on with it and give people excuses.

Everyone that works for me should be very grateful they get a paycheck every month, what more could they want?

Connection is a broad concept but can be simply described as how well a leader knows their team and the broader organization. A well-connected leader is intrinsically interested in their people, their department, their peers, and the business. A leader with poor connection, on the other hand, will be continually out of the loop and losing opportunities to allow their team to play to their strengths and add value to the business.

*Does your organization have leaders who could strengthen their abilities within this dimension? Ask yourself the following questions, and notice whether your answers align more strongly with the Exceptional or Dysfunctional behaviors. Do any of your answers give you pause? (That pause may be a red flag.)*

### ASK YOURSELF

1. Do the company's leaders have their fingers on the pulse of their departments?
2. Can they discuss the specifics of their team's initiatives?
3. Do the company's teams generate expected results or are there frequent "surprises"?
4. Does the company communicate the company goals and objectives broadly to the team?
5. Can your employees tell you how their roles contribute to the company goals?

## CARING



**Caring leaders believe that when everybody grows, everyone wins.**

A caring leader creates positive and healthy workplace cultures, in turn increasing employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention, and reducing office politics and disengagement. By creating an environment that encourages cooperation and helping others, caring leaders develop their people, continually raising the bar on their teams' skills.

### The Caring Spectrum

DYSFUNCTIONAL	COMPROMISED	FUNCTIONAL	EXCEPTIONAL
Will humiliate an employee in public	Reactive and punitive environment	Prioritizes growth and cooperation	Regards people as the most valuable asset

### The Mindset of an Exceptionally Caring Leader

I'm sensitive and efficient when dealing with business issues that require the business to part company with an employee or make changes that may have adverse consequences on team members. In this situation I'm thoughtful, compassionate but clear and decisive, never forgetting the human side of the business.

I see people as people, not a commodity.

I view my team as a form of family - just like a traditional family, with lots of personalities, strengths, weaknesses, but have each other's backs.

I provide mentorship to enable my reports to grow and be the best they can be.

Employees' personal wellbeing is very important.

I take an active role and encourage employees to achieve their goals and aspirations.

## Behaviors of a Low-Care Dysfunctional Leader

It's often he who shouts loudest moves fastest, and I don't mind raising my voice at the first opportunity.

If a team member messes up, it is often best to call them out in public and humiliate them as it stops them from doing it again.

The great thing about employing people is that there are lots of them, and if I have to get rid of one person, it's easy to replace them with another.

I'm here to get a job done, not pay attention to my employees' private lives.

Caring leaders understand that concern with employees' wellbeing is top-of-mind for their team. They focus on creating a strong and supportive environment that values the individual. The hallmark of a leader who doesn't care about their people is a punitive environment that doesn't foster growth and treats employees as cogs in a wheel.

*Does your organization have leaders who could strengthen their abilities within this dimension? Ask yourself the following questions, and notice whether your answers align more strongly with the Exceptional or Dysfunctional behaviors. Do any of your answers give you pause? (That pause may be a red flag.)*

### ASK YOURSELF

1. When making decisions that will impact employees, do your leaders prioritize the human side of the equation?
2. Do your leaders maintain relationships with their former employees, including them as valued members of their professional networks?
3. Does the company appreciate team members' personal interests, and celebrate team members' individual milestones, such as birthdays and work anniversaries?
4. How would you describe the company's general attitude toward employees?

# COMMITMENT



**Committed leaders are focused on the future.**

Committed leaders inspire loyalty and confidence from employees, who themselves become more personally invested in the company's success. Dogged determination means that no opportunity or issue is too big to manage. Experiences (good and bad) are consistently used as an opportunity to learn and grow both their own capabilities on those of their teams.

## The Commitment Spectrum

DYSFUNCTIONAL	COMPROMISED	FUNCTIONAL	EXCEPTIONAL
Plans and works from day to day, with no real plan	Clearly using the job as a stepping stone	Strong focus on the future	Invested personally in the team and business

## The Mindset of an Exceptionally Committed Leader

I'm fully invested in the business, department, and team.

I'm future-focused - making progress, improvements, making things faster, cheaper, bigger, better for the department and team members.

I inspire my team because they know that I'm clearly committed to the future of the business.

My team knows that I will go above and beyond in order to help the business and the individuals within it thrive.

## Behaviors of a Low-Commitment Dysfunctional Leader

I'm only going to be in this role short term as I'm sure there's a better leadership role with another company somewhere soon.

I think the best way to run my department is to not raise my head above the parapet, and not draw attention to myself.

I much prefer to work week-to-week rather than thinking long term, which I think is foolish.

I'm only here because I can't be bothered or don't think I'd get another job that pays as much somewhere else.

A leader's commitment to the organization and its future encourages employees to take a longer view, visualizing - and investing - their own futures, and providing the basis for trusting relationships. A leader that is clearly using a role as a stepping stone will be unable to gain traction with their team.

*Does your organization have leaders who could strengthen their abilities within this dimension? Ask yourself the following questions, and notice whether your answers align more strongly with the Exceptional or Dysfunctional behaviors. Do any of your answers give you pause? (That pause may be a red flag.)*

#### ASK YOURSELF

1. Does your company's compensation structure ensure leaders are truly invested in the company's future?
2. Do leaders actively participate in future planning?
3. Does the leadership team have a long term plan that guides investment and other decisions?
4. Does the company make long-term investments, or are quick wins and faster payoffs emphasized?

## APPLICATION - SCORECARD & SURVEY

According to a study by Gartner last year titled "Reshaping Leadership for the Future," half of leaders surveyed don't believe they're well equipped to lead their organization into the future. Similarly, only half of employees surveyed for the same study said that their leaders effectively create a vision for the future of their team.

How would your organization's leaders stack up? Following are some tools - all available to you free of charge - that can help you answer that question.

### The first step: Self-assessment

Leaders should take a moment to reflect on these seven dimensions, and ask themselves the following questions:

- How would you score yourself on these dimensions?
- How would you score leaders across the firm?
- How would your leaders score themselves?
- How would your employees score their leaders?

That last question is vitally important, as to how employees perceive their leaders across these seven dimensions plays a vital role in a leader's effectiveness.

To aid you in this self-reflection (or to help you start the conversation with your team) we've created a simple scorecard one can use to assess strengths across the 7 C's.

# LEADERSHIP SELF-REFLECTION SCORECARD

**How to use this scorecard:** Reflecting on each dimension, think about how comfortable and effective you are for each. Then score yourself, using a range of one to 12 points, with 12 representing excellence, and one indicating dysfunction. Select two or three elements to focus on improving over the next 90 days. How does your score change?

7 C's	1-3 DYSFUNCTIONAL	4-6 COMPROMISED	7-9 FUNCTIONAL	10-12 EXCEPTIONAL	YOUR SCORE
<b>COURAGE</b> Embraces the good, bad & ugly	Wholly ignores problems	Avoids confrontation	Steps up in a crisis	Seeks truth and owns accountability	__/12
<b>CREDIBILITY</b> Walks the talk	Doesn't play by the rules	Takes credit for others' work	Lives company values and purpose	Walks the talk - always	__/12
<b>CONSISTENT</b> Aligned with purpose & strategy	Focuses on what they think makes them look best	Prefers a "shoot from the hip" approach	Has a plan and shares it	Provides direction that's aligned with goals	__/12
<b>CONFIDENCE</b> Values outcomes not inputs	Relies upon micro-management	Doesn't trust or effectively utilize experts	Practices accountability-based leadership	Trusts team to get the job done	__/12
<b>CONNECTION</b> One purpose, one team	Is always out of the loop	Struggles with peoples' names	Knows employees aspirations and goals	Has complete clarity about what's going on	__/12
<b>CARING</b> Everyone grows, everyone wins	Will humiliate an employee in public	Reactive and punitive environment	Prioritizes growth and cooperation	Regards people as the most valuable asset	__/12
<b>COMMITTED</b> Focused on the future	Plans and works from day to day, with no real plan	Clearly using the job as a stepping stone	Strong focus on the future	Invested personally in the team and business	__/12

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TOTAL SCORE NOW: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SCORE NEXT: \_\_\_\_\_

## Taking the next step: Assessing your organization's leaders

Readers of this ebook are invited to use our Leadership Perception Gap survey - combined with our flagship Benchmark Assessment - to gain a clear view of team effectiveness and perceptions. The survey is free of charge and the data is yours to download and keep, and one of our expert team will walk you through the result and answer your questions. You'll also receive the Leadership Perception Gap Success Guide, which will help you interpret and respond to your survey results, and provide ideas for actions you can take to resolve Leadership Perception Gaps within your organization.

**ACCESS YOUR FREE SURVEY**

<https://signup.engagemultiplier.com/leadership/>

### A final word from our founder:



**STEFAN WISSENBACH**  
CEO & FOUNDER  
EngagementMultiplier

Readers of this ebook are invited to use our Leadership Perception Gap survey - combined with our flagship Benchmark Assessment - to gain a clear view of team effectiveness and perceptions. The survey is free of charge and the data is yours to download and keep, and one of our expert team will walk you through the result and answer your questions. You'll also receive the Leadership Perception Gap Success Guide, which will help you interpret and respond to your survey results, and provide ideas for actions you can take to resolve Leadership Perception Gaps within your organization.

