THE BAUER LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY MODEL

The Bauer Leadership Competency Model was developed by the Bauer Leadership Center at Washington University in St. Louis to summarize key competencies associated with effective leadership. The model is used to guide leadership development, assessment, and coaching at the Bauer Center.

The Bauer Leadership Competency Model is grounded in two “guiding principles” that specify HOW one should operate in all that one does as a leader: values-based and data-driven. These two guiding principles are grounded in the core values and identity of the Olin Business School and Washington University. In making the case for the creation of a new business school at Washington University in 1917, W.F. Gephardt, who would later become the business school's first dean, was guided by a fundamental commitment to both data and values:

“The properly trained business man [woman] will act as a restraining influence on the excesses of [those] business men [women] who in their zeal to secure private profits have needlessly sacrificed public interests. He [she] will set an example of good private business that is also good public business.”

“The vision of the business man [woman] must be both far and wide. He [she] must not only see the numerous and seemingly conflicting facts, but he [she] must be able to analyze them.”

The model further builds on a long stream of research on effective leadership, which recognizes that effective leaders are skilled at performing two “key leadership behaviors”—driving results and leading people. First, they drive results by defining group and individual goals and expectations, coordinating resources and support, and holding members accountable for quality performance. Second, they lead people by motivating, inspiring, developing, and coordinating the contributions of individuals and groups toward a common goal.

In other words, the Bauer Leadership Competency Model seeks to specify the competencies that enable leaders to effectively (i) drive results and (ii) lead people in ways that (iii) honor personal and organizational values and (iv) are grounded in data and evidence.

In identifying specific competencies within each of these four areas, we drew on research and industry best practice in leadership development. The model specifies 12 “domain competencies,” three competencies in each of the four key areas. The domain competencies

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1 The Bauer Leadership Competency Model was developed by Professor Stuart Bunderson, George and Carol Bauer Professor of Organizational Ethics and Governance and Director of the Bauer Leadership Center.
2 W.F. Gephardt papers (1915-1917).
associated with values-based, data-driven leadership in the Bauer Leadership Competency Model are summarized in the following diagram:

The Bauer Leadership Competency Model then breaks down each of these domain competencies into “facet competencies” that specify the specific behaviors that contribute to success in each competency area. Those facet competencies are outlined below.

1. Values-Based Leadership Competencies

While financial performance is an indispensable objective for any leader, organizations are also expected to achieve non-financial ends that are important to organization members and to operate in a way that engenders the respect and support of all stakeholders. Values-based leaders embrace this role by working to clarify values and social purposes, making sure values and purposes are honored in decisions and operations, and attending to the welfare of internal and external stakeholders. Values-based leaders are also clear about and true to their own values and higher purposes as a leader.

In terms of specific competencies, the values-based leader:

1. Shows integrity to personal values
   a. Has a clear statement of personal values and higher purpose
   b. Lives personal values and higher purpose as a leader

2. Champions shared values and purpose
   a. Clarifies shared values and purpose
   b. Reinforces shared values and purpose through norms, practices and rewards
   c. Insists on values-based decision-making
3. Honors societal responsibilities  
   a. Considers stakeholder impacts and avoids harming stakeholders  
   b. Works to advance a social purpose beyond profit maximization

II. Data-Driven Leadership Competencies

Whereas clarity around values is critical in helping leaders to articulate things as they should be, a commitment to data is essential so that leaders clearly understand things as they are, and how they might (and could) change. Data-driven leaders recognize the critical importance of data for decision making and performance improvement and work to create a mindset, a skillset and a set of processes to encourage and support data-driven decision-making.

In terms of specific competencies, the data-driven leader:

1. Measures key activities and outcomes  
   a. Captures relevant activity and outcome data  
   b. Establishes activity and outcome metrics to support decision-making

2. Leverages data for business insights  
   a. Summarizes historical data to understand patterns  
   b. Analyzes data to make predictions and forecasts  
   c. Leverages data to prescribe optimal decisions and outcomes

3. Builds a data culture  
   a. Builds data analytics capability  
   b. Insists on data-driven solutions  
   c. Knows the limits of data in business decisions

4. Driving Results Competencies

After decades of research on the behaviors of effective leaders, leadership scholars concluded that effective leaders do two things very well: 1) they are good at driving results and 2) they are skilled at leading people. Leaders who are good at driving results develop and communicate a clear strategy and direction and make sure that all team members are aligned behind that direction. Results-driven leaders also prepare for the future by investing in innovation and encouraging continuous improvement.

In terms of specific competencies, the results-driven leader:

1. Sets strategy and direction  
   a. Understands business/market opportunities and threats  
   b. Clarifies organizational capabilities and character  
   c. Defines and communicates a clear strategy and direction

2. Ensures alignment and accountability  
   a. Translates strategic objectives to individual and team goals
b. Holds individuals and teams accountable for results  
c. Provides support and resources to enable high performance

3. Drives innovation and continuous learning  
   a. Promotes continuous learning  
   b. Encourages creativity, innovation and appropriate risk-taking  
   c. Encourages exploration of new ideas and technologies

4. Leading People Competencies

At the end of the day, leadership is about people. Standout, transformative leaders are those who not only know how to articulate values, consult data and drive results but who also know how to move, inspire, motivate, engage and elevate human beings in all their promise and imperfection. Skilled people leaders know how to turn potential into performance, conflict into collaboration, and a set of individuals into a synergistic team.

In terms of specific competencies, the skilled people leader:

1. Influences others  
   a. Motivates and inspires  
   b. Influences and persuades  
   c. Navigates politics and power dynamics

2. Develops others  
   a. Coaches and mentors  
   b. Recruits top talent  
   c. Values and leverages differences

3. Builds collaborative relationships  
   a. Builds win-win relationships  
   b. Manages conflict  
   c. Leads effective teams

The Bauer Leadership Competency Assessment

In order for an individual to make progress in their development as a values-based, data-driven leader, they must first understand where they are in each competency. Leadership development begins with self-awareness. The Bauer Leadership Competency Assessment (BLCA) encourages self-awareness of one’s values-based, data-driven leadership competencies through 360-degree feedback. The BLCA solicits and summarizes ratings on each of the above competencies from the target individual (i.e., self-ratings) as well as from the individual’s boss, peers and direct reports. A follow-up administration of the BLCA provides data on an individual’s progress over time. Results are then reviewed with expert coaches who can help in the interpretation of results and in developing actionable development goals.