

Columbia University ePerformance System Competencies

Competency Definition, Behaviors and Content Group Recommendations

Competency	Definition	Behaviors	Content Group
Adaptability	Maintaining effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work responsibilities or environment (e.g., people, processes, structure, or culture); adjusting effectively to change by exploring the benefits, trying new approaches, and collaborating with others to make the change successful.	<p>Tries to understand changes— Actively seeks information (from coworkers, leaders, customers, competition, technologies, and regulations) to understand the rationale and implications for changes.</p> <p>Approaches change with a positive mind-set—Treats new situations as opportunities for learning or growth; actively seeks to identify and communicate the benefits of changes; collaborates with others to implement changes.</p> <p>Adjusts behavior—Quickly modifies daily behavior and tries new approaches to deal effectively with changes; does not persist with ineffective methods; leverages available resources to ease transition.</p>	Individual Contributor, Manager, Executive
Aligning Performance for Success	Focusing and managing individual performance by helping others set performance goals, and then tracking results and evaluating performance effectiveness.	<p>Sets performance goals—Sets specific, measurable, and realistic performance goals that align with broader work group and organizational priorities; identifies measures for evaluating goal achievement.</p> <p>Establishes approach—Identifies the behaviors, knowledge, and skills required to achieve goals; identifies critical areas for focus and evaluation.</p> <p>Involves others—Emphasizes shared responsibility for managing performance by helping direct reports set goals, establish an approach, identify learning opportunities, and track performance progress; engages others in finding ways to achieve difficult expectations and improve results.</p> <p>Creates a learning environment—Ensures that support is available to help the individual reach goals; builds others sense of task ownership and confidence by offering to help generate ideas, make decisions, obtain resources, and overcome barriers.</p> <p>Tracks performance—Implements a system to track performance against goals and the acquisition and use of appropriate behaviors, knowledge, and skills.</p> <p>Evaluates performance—Holds regular formal discussions with each direct report to discuss progress toward goals and review performance results; evaluates each goal, behavior, knowledge, and skill area by sharing relevant data and examples.</p> <p>Builds rapport—Maintains self-esteem when providing performance feedback by acknowledging contributions and improvements and by focusing on the facts, not personal characteristics.</p>	Manager
Building Partnerships	Developing and leveraging relationships within and across work groups to achieve results.	<p>Seeks opportunities to build relationships—Proactively builds effective working relationships with those who have the knowledge, experience, resources, or influence to advance work goals.</p> <p>Clarifies shared goals—Exchanges information about the situation/task to determine mutually beneficial goals and outcomes; identifies issues and concerns; summarizes to check understanding.</p> <p>Develops others' and own ideas—Contributes own ideas and expands on others' ideas.</p> <p>Facilitates agreement—Gains commitment from partners to support ideas or take action; uses sound rationale to explain value of actions; confirms agreements, next steps (who will do what by when), needed resources and support, and how to track progress.</p> <p>Supports partners—Offers valuable information, resources, and/or time to accomplish win-win outcomes; places higher priority on group goals than on own goals.</p> <p>Involves others—Asks others for their opinions and ideas to gain their support when clarifying the situation, developing solutions, exploring needed resources, and committing to action.</p> <p>Maintains and enhances self-esteem—Shows others that they are valued by acknowledging their specific contributions, successes, and skills.</p>	Manager, Executive

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Business Acumen	Using one's knowledge of economic, financial, market, and industry trends to understand and improve individual, work group, and/or organizational results; using one's understanding of major business functions, industry trends, and own organization's position to contribute to effective business strategies and/or tactics.	<p>Analyzes—Uses economic, financial, market, and industry information to identify trends, assess current business strategies and results, and/or evaluate specific business opportunities; identifies trends and anticipates their impact.</p> <p>Integrates—Integrates economic, financial, market, and industry data from multiple sources to identify critical issues; articulates the implications of trends for own department or team as well as the broader organization.</p> <p>Understands business functions—Understands the nature and interdependencies of organization functions and supporting processes (R&D, marketing, finance, operations, etc.).</p> <p>Understands the industry—Understands the industry in which the organization operates (trends, customers, competition, market share, etc.).</p> <p>Leverages own understanding—Uses understanding of business functions, the industry, and own organization's performance to maximize results, limit risk, and effectively contribute to own department, team, and/or broader organization results.</p>	Individual Contributor
Coaching	Engaging an individual in developing and committing to an action plan that targets specific behaviors, skills, or knowledge needed to ensure performance improvement or prepare for success in new responsibilities.	<p>Aligns expectations for the discussion—Opens the coaching session by describing the purpose and importance of the discussion; checks for understanding.</p> <p>Defines the performance challenge—Explains and clarifies the need for improvement or preparation required for a new opportunity; articulates the impact on the individual, team, and organization; shares specific examples and relevant data.</p> <p>Maintains motivation—Acknowledges the individual's value, progress, and contributions without minimizing the performance challenges; empathizes with individual concerns while emphasizing accountability for agreed-upon actions.</p> <p>Engages and involves—Asks questions to further clarify the issues and their causes; collaboratively develops a plan by seeking and building upon the other person's ideas; balances seeking and telling.</p> <p>Offers support—Provides assistance (directly or through others) by sharing suggestions for improvement, best practices, development resources, positive models, or opportunities for experimentation; expresses confidence in the person's desire and ability to perform effectively.</p> <p>Gains agreement—Emphasizes the anticipated positive impact of planned actions on the individual, team, and organization; confirms the individual's commitment and buy-in to addressing the performance challenges.</p> <p>Establishes action plan—Summarizes the specific actions the individual will take; assigns clear accountability, timeline, progress measures, and follow-up date; monitors progress and results; reinforces and redirects activities.</p>	Manager, Executive
Collaborating	Working cooperatively with others to help a team or work group achieve its goal.	<p>Contributes to goal accomplishment—Makes suggestions, volunteers assistance, offers resources, or removes obstacles to help the group achieve its goals.</p> <p>Asks for help and encourages involvement—Leverages others' skills and gains their support by asking for their ideas, opinions, and participation when solving problems, making decisions, and carrying out plans.</p> <p>Informs others on team—Shares important or relevant information and rationale with others; summarizes to check understanding.</p> <p>Models commitment—Adheres to the work group's expectations and guidelines; fulfills team or work group responsibilities; demonstrates personal commitment to group goals.</p>	Individual Contributor

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Communication	Conveying information and ideas clearly and concisely to individuals or groups in an engaging manner that helps them understand and retain the message; listening actively to others.	<p>Organizes the communication—Explains the reason for the communication and its importance (including impact on the individual, team, and organization); stresses major points clearly and succinctly; follows a logical sequence.</p> <p>Maintains attention—Keeps others engaged through use of analogies, illustrations, humor, vivid words, body language, and voice inflection.</p> <p>Adjusts to the listener—Frames message to align with others' experience, background, and expectations; uses terms, examples, and analogies that are meaningful to others; translates technical terms when communicating with those who don't have a technical background.</p> <p>Ensures understanding—Checks others' understanding of information communicated; presents message in multiple ways to enhance comprehension.</p> <p>Listens actively—Seeks others' input and attends to their communication; asks clarifying questions and summarizes what others have communicated to check own understanding; correctly interprets messages and responds appropriately.</p> <p>Conveys a professional presence—Creates a positive impression that commands attention and respect through appropriate body language, demeanor, and attire; demonstrates self-confidence; uses correct grammar.</p>	Individual Contributor, Manager, Executive
Continuous Improvement	Originating action to improve existing conditions and processes; identifying improvement opportunities, generating ideas, and implementing solutions.	<p>Identifies opportunities—Reviews processes to determine any gaps between current outputs and expected requirements.</p> <p>Determines causes—Identifies conditions that contribute to gaps or key variances; explores relationships between conditions and outcomes; distinguishes causes from symptoms and identifies primary causes.</p> <p>Targets improvement ideas—Generates ideas for solutions; analyzes the potential effect or impact of each solution; selects appropriate solutions.</p> <p>Implements improvements—Tests solutions; gathers feedback on effectiveness; reviews impact on baseline measures; modifies solutions as appropriate to ensure effectiveness.</p>	Individual Contributor
Cultivating Networks and Partnerships	Initiating and maintaining strategic relationships with stakeholders and potential partners inside and outside the organization (e.g., customers, peers, cross-functional partners, external vendors, alliance partners) who are willing and able to provide the information, ideas, expertise, and/or influence needed to advance understanding of business issues and achieve business goals.	<p>Identifies partnership opportunities—Creates a networking plan; scans the internal and external environment to identify the relationships that should be initiated or improved to achieve business goals.</p> <p>Reaches out—Initiates collaborative relationships with targeted stakeholders and potential business partners; involves business partners to help make decisions and complete tasks.</p> <p>Expands mind-set—Offers a broad organizational perspective that goes beyond the goals of one's immediate business unit or work role; questions assumptions about existing relationships; demonstrates flexibility when forming and adjusting partnerships to achieve broader goals; shows willingness to work across current boundaries.</p> <p>Strengthens partnerships—Offers support, information, and resources to network partners; follows up on relationships to keep them active.</p>	Executive
Customer Focus	Ensuring that the internal or external customer's perspective is a driving force behind strategic priorities, business decisions, organizational processes, and individual activities; crafting and implementing service practices that meet customers' and own organization's needs; promoting and operationalizing customer service as a value.	<p>Seeks to understand customers—Actively gathers and leverages information to understand current and emerging customer business priorities, problems, expectations, and needs; seeks customer feedback and suggestions for improving products and services.</p> <p>Identifies customer service issues—Identifies barriers that impact customer service and retention.</p> <p>Drives customer-focused practices—Uses understanding of customer needs to institute processes, procedures, partnerships, performance expectations, and training that will improve customer satisfaction and prevent service issues from occurring.</p> <p>Assures customer satisfaction—Sets priorities and makes decisions that consider customer impact; measures customer satisfaction and retention to ensure that customer solutions, practices, and procedures are carried out and achieve their objectives.</p>	Individual Contributor, Manager, Executive

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Decision Making	Identifying and understanding problems and opportunities by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative information; choosing the best course of action by establishing clear decision criteria, generating and evaluating alternatives, and making timely decisions; taking action that is consistent with available facts and constraints and optimizes probable consequences.	<p>Identifies problems and opportunities—Recognizes problems and opportunities and determines whether action is needed.</p> <p>Gathers information—Recognizes the need for and collects information to better understand problems and opportunities.</p> <p>Interprets information—Integrates information from a variety of sources to detect trends, associations, and cause-effect relationships.</p> <p>Generates alternatives—Creates relevant options for addressing problems and opportunities that will achieve desired outcomes.</p> <p>Evaluates alternatives and risks—Assesses options against clear decision criteria while considering implications and consequences.</p> <p>Chooses an effective option—Selects the most viable option from a set of alternatives.</p> <p>Commits to action—Implements decisions or initiates action with appropriate urgency.</p> <p>Considers others' perspectives—Involves others throughout the decision-making process to obtain better information, generate alternatives, and ensure buy-in to the resulting decisions; builds consensus when appropriate.</p>	Individual Contributor, Manager
Delegation and Empowerment	Identifying and leveraging opportunities to accelerate results and build capability by assigning tasks and decision-making responsibilities to individuals or teams with clear boundaries, expectations, support, and follow-up.	<p>Identifies opportunities to share responsibility—Actively seeks and allocates appropriate decision-making authority or task responsibility to appropriate individuals based on their abilities, availability, motivation, and development needs; considers potential positive and negative impact, business unit priorities, organizational values, and the opportunity to enhance others' knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Clarifies performance expectations—Clearly communicates the importance and parameters of the delegated task/responsibility, including task scope, limits of decision-making authority, performance standards, time constraints, and expected outputs and their impact (on the individual and team); identifies others' issues and concerns; summarizes to ensure shared expectations.</p> <p>Provides support without removing task ownership—Suggests resources and provides assistance or coaching as needed; offers timely, specific feedback to reinforce effective performance and redirect less effective performance; expresses confidence in the individual.</p> <p>Involves others in agreements—Generates commitment by asking for the other person's ideas when agreeing on performance expectations, resources and support needed, how results will be measured, and follow-up actions.</p> <p>Stays informed—Establishes procedures to remain aware of issues, follow up on action items, and track results (e.g., quality, quantity, cost, or timeliness) in areas of shared responsibility.</p>	Manager, Executive
Driving for Results	Setting high goals for personal and group accomplishment; using measurement methods to monitor progress toward goals; tenaciously working to meet or exceed goals while deriving satisfaction from that achievement and continuous improvement.	<p>Targets opportunities—Systematically evaluates business opportunities, targeting those with the greatest potential for producing positive business results.</p> <p>Establishes stretch goals—Establishes challenging goals for self and others that are designed to achieve exceptional business results.</p> <p>Achieves goals—Works tenaciously to overcome obstacles and to meet or exceed goals; derives satisfaction from achieving "stretch" goals.</p> <p>Stays focused—Remains self-disciplined; measures progress and evaluates results; reprioritizes as appropriate; prevents irrelevant issues or distractions from interfering with timely completion of important tasks.</p>	Individual Contributor, Manager

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Emotional Intelligence Essentials	Establishing and sustaining trusting relationships by accurately perceiving and interpreting own and others' emotions and behavior; leveraging insights to effectively manage own responses so that one's behavior matches one's values and delivers intended results.	<p>Builds self-awareness—Demonstrates an understanding of own emotional triggers, strengths, and development needs as well as the impact of own behavior on others.</p> <p>Maintains self-control—Modifies behavior based on self-awareness to improve impact and build relationships.</p> <p>Maintains or enhances self-esteem (to build social bonds)—Helps others feel respected and appreciated by sincerely and specifically acknowledging their ideas, contributions, and achievements; offers positive feedback; focuses on facts and intentions to maintain another's self-esteem when things don't go well.</p> <p>Listens and responds with empathy—Demonstrates an understanding of the other person's situation by acknowledging both the facts and the feelings (positive or negative) he or she is expressing.</p> <p>Asks for help and encourages involvement (to enhance collaboration)—Asks for others' opinions and ideas to gain their commitment and encourage responsibility; unleashes ideas through questioning.</p> <p>Shares thoughts, feelings, and rationale (to build trust)—Appropriately and honestly discloses feelings and insights to build trust; ensures own ideas supplement, not replace, others' ideas; shares the "why" behind decisions, ideas, or changes.</p> <p>Provides support without removing responsibility (to build ownership)—Offers help while building the other person's sense of task ownership; resists taking over; boosts confidence that the other person can successfully complete the task.</p> <p>Facilitates discussions—Conducts productive and efficient discussions by clarifying the situation, discussing and developing ideas, and agreeing on next steps</p>	Executive
Facilitating Change	Encouraging others to implement better approaches to address problems and opportunities; leading the implementation and acceptance of change within the workplace.	<p>Communicates what is changing and why—Explains the business need for change and the anticipated benefits; emphasizes the impact of change on performance expectations and individual, team, and organizational results.</p> <p>Addresses resistance—Asks questions to uncover others' opinions and feelings about change; responds with empathy to those who experience loss or fear as a result of change by acknowledging both the situation and the emotions they express.</p> <p>Involves others to develop a sound approach—Seeks and uses others' ideas when implementing changes to increase collaboration, leverage their expertise, and ensure commitment to a successful implementation.</p> <p>Provides implementation support—Clarifies direction, specifies next incremental steps, and offers resources while holding others responsible for implementing change; confirms how to track progress and measure impact of the change.</p> <p>Rewards change—Recognizes and rewards associates who make contributions and take specific actions that support change; communicates confidence in others' ability to make successful changes.</p>	Individual Contributor, Manager, Executive
Guiding Team Success	Using appropriate methods and a flexible interpersonal style to build, motivate, and guide a cohesive team to complete team goals.	<p>Develops direction—Ensures that the purpose and importance of the team are clarified (e.g., team has a clear charter or mission statement); guides the team in setting specific and measurable short- and long-term goals.</p> <p>Develops structure—Helps to clarify roles and responsibilities of team members; ensures that necessary steering, review, and support functions are in place.</p> <p>Supports the team—Builds others' sense of task ownership and self-confidence by helping them generate ideas, make decisions, obtain resources, and overcome barriers; supports team decisions to upper management; celebrates team success.</p> <p>Facilitates agreement—Ensures that interactions have value by confirming agreements and specifying next steps, needed resources and support, and how to track progress.</p> <p>Involves others—Leverages others' skills and gains their support by asking for their ideas, opinions, and participation when solving problems, making decisions, and carrying out plans.</p> <p>Informs team—Shares important and relevant information with the team; reviews team results regularly and offers positive and developmental feedback.</p>	Manager, Executive

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Initiating Action	Taking prompt action to accomplish work goals; taking action to achieve results beyond what is required; being proactive.	<p>Responds quickly—Takes immediate action when confronted with a problem or when made aware of a situation.</p> <p>Takes independent action—Implements new ideas or potential solutions without prompting; does not wait for others to take action or to request action.</p> <p>Goes above and beyond—Takes action that goes beyond job requirements in order to achieve results.</p>	Individual Contributor, Manager
Innovation	Creating novel solutions with measurable value for existing and potential customers (internal or external); experimenting with new ways to solve work problems and seize opportunities that result in unique and differentiated solutions.	<p>Seeks to understand existing perspectives—Asks provocative questions to understand current practices and the customer’s experience before moving to problem solving; seeks to understand and experience the full array of stakeholders’ (e.g., internal partners, suppliers, customers) behavior, needs, concerns, and desires to unlock new opportunities for innovation.</p> <p>Challenges current thinking—Explores alternative ways to view and solve problems and achieve results; leverages innovation tools, creative processes, and diverse cross-functional experts to generate ideas; combines ideas in unique ways; makes times to incubate ideas; thoughtfully evaluates alternatives, and then selects the best ideas for experimentation.</p> <p>Experiments to learn—Tries unique ways of doing things and tests promising ideas; takes advantage of opportunities to try out new solutions without close supervision; takes risks in the interest of finding a better way; learns from mistakes to refine ideas.</p> <p>Takes action on ideas—Communicates potential benefits of new ideas to stakeholders; identifies resources and support needed; commits to an action plan to implement new ideas.</p>	Individual Contributor
Planning and Organizing	Establishing an action plan for self and others to complete work efficiently and on time by setting priorities, establishing timelines, and leveraging resources.	<p>Prioritizes—Identifies more critical and less critical activities and assignments; adjusts priorities when appropriate.</p> <p>Determines tasks and resources—Determines project/assignment requirements by breaking them down into tasks and identifying types of equipment, materials, and people needed.</p> <p>Schedules—Allocates appropriate amounts of time for completing own and others' work; avoids scheduling conflicts; develops timelines and milestones.</p> <p>Leverages resources—Takes advantage of available resources (individuals, processes, departments, and tools) to complete work efficiently; coordinates with internal and external partners.</p> <p>Stays focused—Uses time effectively and prevents irrelevant issues or distractions from interfering with work completion.</p> <p>Stays informed—Establishes procedures to remain aware of issues, follow up on action items, and track results (e.g., quality, quantity, cost, or timeliness).</p>	Individual Contributor
Quality Orientation	Accomplishing tasks by considering all areas involved, no matter how detailed; showing concern for all aspects of the job; accurately checking processes and tasks; being watchful over a period of time.	<p>Follows procedures—Accurately and carefully follows established procedures for completing work tasks.</p> <p>Ensures high-quality output—Vigilantly watches over job processes, tasks, and work products to ensure freedom from errors, omissions, or defects.</p> <p>Takes action—Initiates action to correct quality problems or notifies others of quality issues as appropriate.</p>	Individual Contributor