

Leadership Compass Activity

This activity draws largely from the Native American traditions. The Medicine Wheel is an ancient symbol that expresses the concept of the four winds or the four directions. The Medicine Wheel also teaches about the four aspects of our nature: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Each of these must be equally developed in a healthy, well-balanced individual through the development and use of volition (the will). A balanced Leader will incorporate the strengths of each of the four directions to create a holistic approach to being in relationship with people.

Copy the text from each of the Leadership Compass cards onto a page of flipchart paper. Post one flipchart page in each of four corners of the room. Hand out Leadership Compass cards to each participant. Ask them to reflect on the three points below:

- Review each of the four profiles. Identify the one with which you most closely identify.
- Stand under the direction for that profile. East (eagle) North (buffalo), South (mouse), or West (bear).
- Consider which direction is your second tendency. Third? Last?

Once the participants have clustered around the profile that most closely resembles them, ask each group to consider the following questions:

1. What about your first inclination drew you to that sign?
2. How do you react under pressure?
3. What kind of feedback have you received from others about yourself?
4. What seems most comfortable about that sign?
5. How does this tendency work for or against you when working with others in organizations or the community?
6. What do you think the implications are for you and your leadership practice?
7. What light bulbs go on for you about your experience?

After each group has considered the questions, ask them to share what they learned about themselves as a group.

Then ask each group to look at the back of the card. Consider how best to work with those in other groups.

- Does this make sense to you?
- Is this helpful in trying to deal with others who are different from yourself?

Ask each group if they think this reflects how they like to work.

Ask for general comments from the participants as to how they will make this information work for them.

Leadership Compass Activity



North

Gifts:

- Goal/task focused
- Moves toward action
- Thinks in terms of bottom line
- Enjoys challenge of difficult situations
- Perseveres, not stopped by obstacles
- Enjoys assuming leadership role
- Value word: action

In Excess:

- Decision making not well thought out
- Can grow impatient
- Can be impulsive, disregard practicalities
- Can step on toes, hurt other's feelings
- May have difficulty delegating.

Just do it!



East

Gifts:

- Visionary
- Big picture thinker
- Idea oriented, creative and innovative
- Insight into mission & purpose
- Very optimistic, positive attitude
- Enjoys exploration and experimentation
- Appreciates a lot of information
- Value words: option, possibility

In Excess:

- Often loses focus
- Can have poor follow-through
- Lacks attention to detail
- Is not bound by time, may miss deadlines
- Tends to be enthusiastic early on, but may get bored over the long haul.

If you can dream it, you can do it!



West

Gifts:

- Critical thinker, explores all sides
- Decision making based on data & logic
- Viewed as practical and thorough
- Introspective and self-analytical
- Skilled at finding 'fatal flaws'
- Detail, planning focus
- Value word: quality

In Excess:

- Can become locked into a position
- Can be indecisive, slow to take action
- Gets mired in details (analysis paralysis)
- Can seem withdrawn, distant
- May seem to resist change.

Quality is job 1!



South

Gifts:

- People oriented
- Value-driven
- Interaction and relationship are primary
- Team player, builds on ideas of others
- Good listener, very supportive
- Decision-making based on intuition
- Value words: right and fair

In Excess:

- May have trouble saying no
- Can be taken advantage of easily
- Often internalizes anger, assumes blame
- Is focused on present, not the big picture
- May have difficulty dealing with conflict.

Reach out and touch someone!

Leadership Compass Activity



North

How to work with a North

- Present your case clearly, concisely and with confidence
- Share how they will be involved
- Talk about the 'challenge' of the task
- Provide plenty of autonomy
- Stick with established timelines
- Give positive public recognition



East

How to work with an East

- Show interest and enthusiasm for ideas
- Listen and be patient during idea generation
- Avoid critical judgment of ideas
- Allow and support divergent thinking
- Provide variety of tasks
- Provide support and supervision check-ins on details and project follow through



West

How to work with a West

- Allow time for decision making
- Provide all significant data
- Don't be put off by critical statements
- Use logic-based arguments
- Appeal to tradition and procedure.



South

How to work with a South

- Remember to pay attention to relationship issues
- Justify decisions around values and ethics
- Allow expression of feeling, intuition in logical argument
- Be aware that this person may have trouble saying 'no' to you
- Provide positive reassurances
- Let the person know that you like them.