

# Forward

Learning for your Future

Foundation Level (L1) - Participant Handbook  
Name:

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# Welcome to Forward!

We are excited to welcome you to Forward. Designed for young professionals, this program will equip you with a broad set of skills to boost your career and thrive in the future of work.

Forward is a McKinsey signature social responsibility initiative that aims to provide:

- **Practical content and skills** that you can **apply immediately** on the job
- A learning journey based on McKinsey's **cutting-edge content and delivered by expert facilitators**
- A **community of peers** across borders who you can learn from and share experiences and build lasting relationships

Forward consists of **3 levels of learning** designed in a way where so that you can own your journey. The more you engage and progress, the more learning and experiences you can unlock

Throughout the journey, you are expected to invest around **3-4 hours per week** to take in the complete learning and be able to embed it in your day to day life.

This handbook is designed to **serve as a canvas for you to capture ideas, reflections and insights** during and after the program. Put your name on the front cover and make it your own!

We hope you will embark on your journey energized and motivated, with personal learning intentions to help you achieve the results you desire.



# Content

## Journey overview

Foundation Level (L1) Planner

Adaptability & Resilience Digital Course

Problem Solving (Part 1) Digital Course

Communicating for Impact (Part 1)  
Digital Course

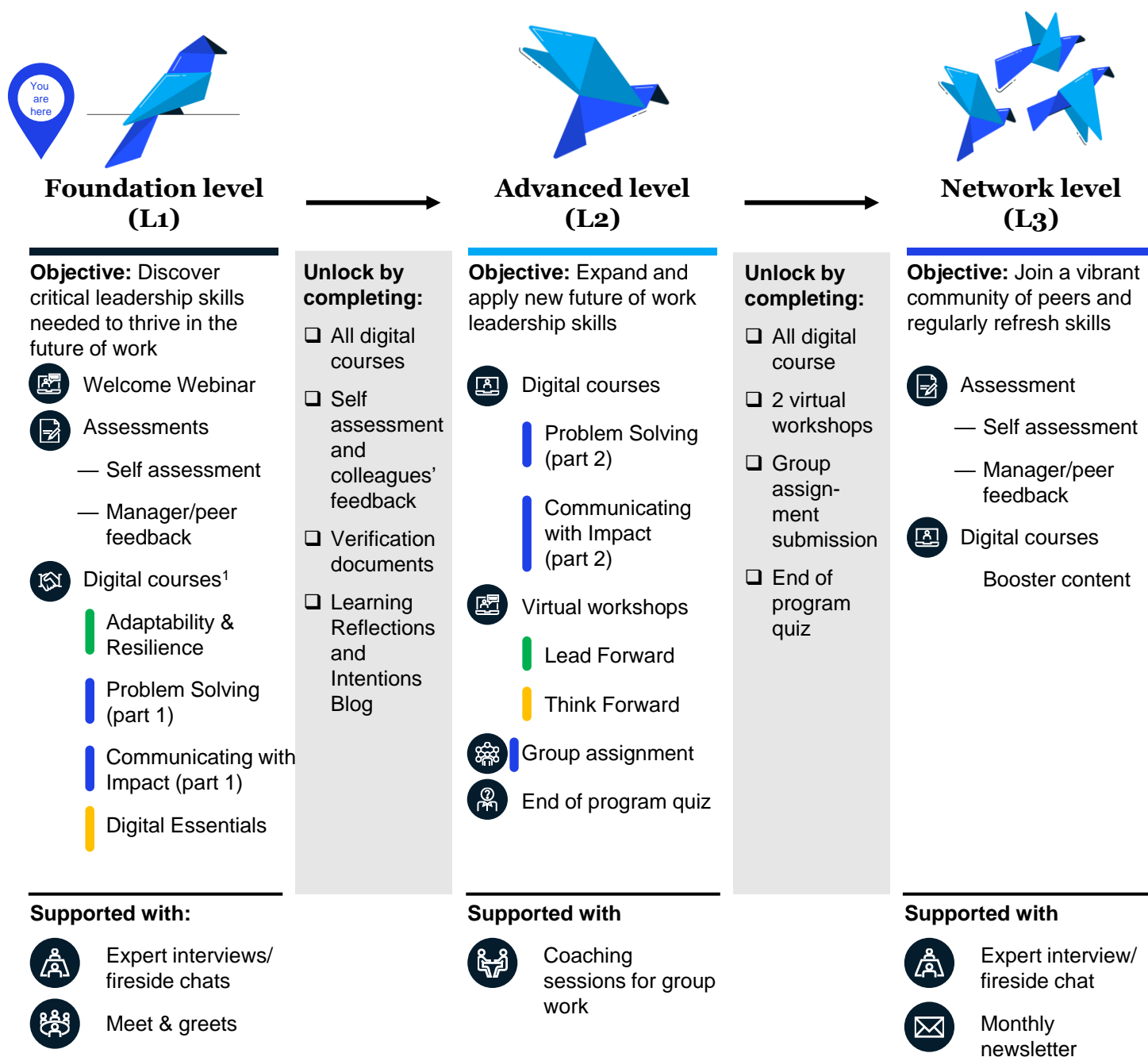
Digital Essentials Digital Course

Planner for Transition to Advanced Level  
(L2)



# Forward is designed over three levels.

## Complete transition criteria by the deadline to unlock higher levels of learning



## Content and activities in the Forward journey fall under 3 topics, mapped to the most critical Future of Work skills

### Lead Yourself & Others

Applying social and emotional skills to build adaptability and develop authentic relationships

### Conquer Business Challenges

Using structured thinking tools to solve complex challenges and communicating messages with impact

### Navigate the Digital World

Understanding and applying new ways of working and thinking in an increasingly digital world

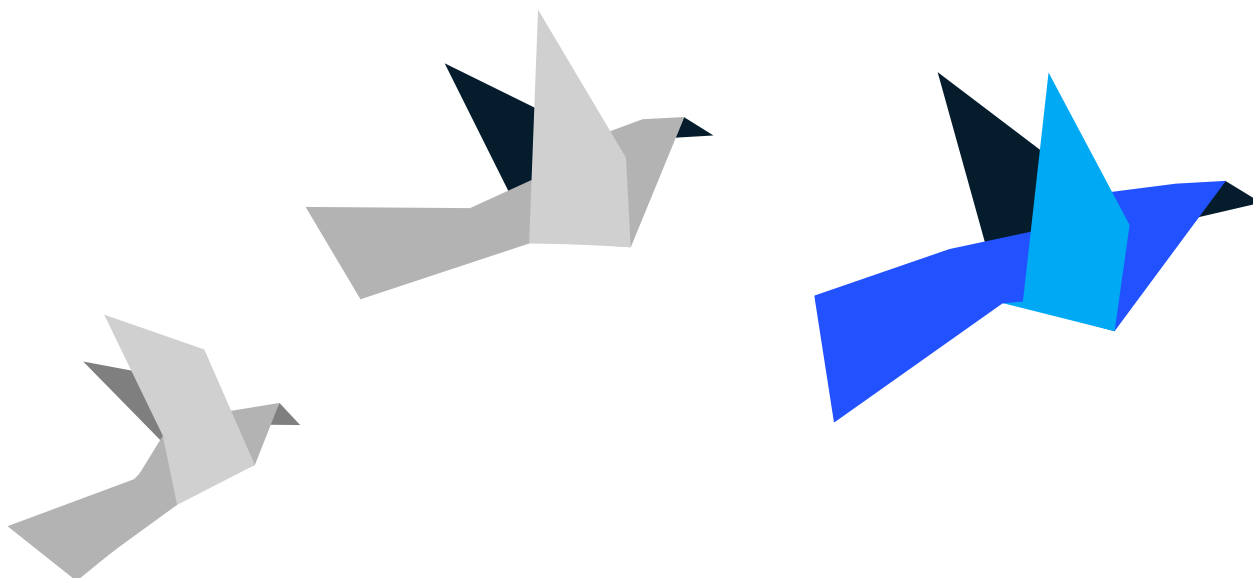
1. Digital courses do not need to be completed in the given order



# The content in store for you...

■ Focus of this handbook

Learning components	Details
<b>L1</b> <b>Adaptability &amp; Resilience (digital course)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize &amp; shift own mindset patterns about learning</li> <li>• Apply personalized learning tools &amp; strategies</li> <li>• Build resilience and emotional flexibility to persist in your learning journey</li> <li>• Apply techniques to best enable an effective team learning environment</li> </ul>
<b>Problem Solving Part 1 (digital course)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to McKinsey's problem solving approach</li> <li>• Focus on defining challenging problems, prioritizing issues</li> </ul>
<b>Communicating for Impact Part 1 (digital course)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to structuring arguments using pyramid principle</li> <li>• Tailoring arguments to address audience needs, crafting inspiring prose</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Essentials (digital course)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate what is "digital", why it matters and how it creates value</li> <li>• Build your digital "toolkit" through building foundational literacy</li> <li>• Create positive mindset around digital</li> </ul>
<b>L2</b> <b>Problem Solving Part 2 (digital course)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on synthesizing findings and developing actionable recommendations</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Forward (workshop)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand yourself and how to build inner agility and resilience</li> <li>• Apply valuable techniques to deepen relationships with others</li> </ul>
<b>Communicating for Impact Part 2 (digital course)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering messages with personal presence and style</li> </ul>
<b>Think Forward (workshop)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating inspiration to adopt new ways of working and thinking</li> <li>• Exploring and experiencing what is different with these new concepts in your professional life</li> </ul>



# Content

Journey overview

## **Foundation Level (L1) Planner**

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# Foundation Level (L1) Planner

■ Mandatory ■ Optional

Below are the list of activities that you will encounter during the Foundation Level. Use this checklist to mark your progress along the learning journey.

Please note: while all mandatory items must be completed before the deadline to move to the Advanced level, you are welcome to complete them in any order you like.

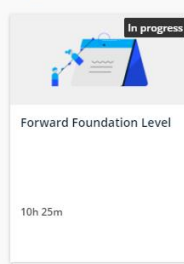
Agenda item	Description	Duration	Where
<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome webinar	Online webinar with program team and peers	1 hour	Zoom link through email
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction video	Introductory video on the journey	10 minutes	Link through email
<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability & Resilience Digital Course	5 fully digital self-paced digital lessons	2 hours	Platform
<input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving Digital Course (Part 1)	3 fully digital self-paced digital lessons	2-3 hours	Platform
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicating for Impact Digital Course (Part 1)	4 fully digital self-paced digital lessons	2-3 hours	Platform
<input type="checkbox"/> Skills assessment	Online behavioral assessment to baseline skills	15 minutes	Link through email
<input type="checkbox"/> Manager/peer feedback	Online behavioral assessment survey to get feedback on your skills from managers/peers	15 minutes	Link through email
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Essentials Digital Course	Fully digital self-paced course	2-3 hours	Platform
<input type="checkbox"/> Suggested reading	Additional content to reinforce topics	~40-45 minutes	Platform
<input type="checkbox"/> Meet & Greet	Optional virtual sessions to connect with peers	~40-45 minutes	Zoom link through email

## Welcome to McKinsey Academy



Get started on your learning journey

1 Item



Resources

### Learning Materials

Find all learning journey resources and supplemental content

[VIEW NOW](#)



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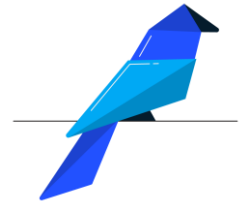
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# Adaptability & Resilience Digital Course



## *What to Expect*

2-3 hour «Adaptability & Resilience» digital course aims to increase the ability of individuals to learn so that they can better react, adjust and perform across all kinds of situations

### Learning objective

- Recognize & shift own mindset patterns about learning
- Apply personalized learning tools & strategies
- Build resilience and emotional flexibility to persist in your learning journey
- Apply techniques to best enable an effective team learning environment

### Adaptability and Resilience

Lesson 0	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Setting Learning intentions</b>	<b>Developing Mindsets</b>	<b>Building Learning habits</b>	<b>Developing Psychological Safety</b>
Welcome from leadership; why adaptability is important, what topics are included in course, link to this person's personal learning priorities	Set effective learning intentions in everyday life and for larger projects (e.g., this course) by (a) focusing on the learning, not performance and (b) linking learning goals to personal meaning	Identifying and reflecting on own mindset, how to use "APR" (awareness, pause, reframe) to shift mindsets(vs. acting from default mindset); 8 resilient mindsets (e.g., creative, beginner, growth)	How to unlearn unhelpful habits and build new ones (Duhigg model), exploration of habits of most adaptable learners (e.g., reflecting on learning, preparation/ planning, seeking feedback, sleep)	Specific actions to foster psych safety (from cutting edge research w/ Amy Edmonson + McKinsey)



# Adaptability & Resilience Digital Course

## *Key Concept: Setting Learning Intentions*

We live in a complex world with more stimuli than we can possibly process. Setting learning intentions helps us to cut through the noise and stay focused on what we've identified as personally important.

There are two specific, subtle ways in which we can frame our intentions – our direction forward – that support both our ability to learn and the likelihood that we'll enjoy the experience.



### **Focus on the journey**

---

Frame your desired outcome as a learning intention versus a performance goal.

Good learning intentions prioritize the experience itself, not just the outcome. Instead of focusing on a specific target, they focus on

- The process
- Discovering and exploring new ideas
- Our growth



### **Link to meaning**

---

Connect your learning to something that is personally meaningful to you.

Taking the time to make this connection will help you learn better and have more fun in the process. Questions you might ask yourself include

- When things get hard, what keeps me motivated?
- What makes me feel fulfilled and proud?



# Adaptability & Resilience Digital Course

Try it → *Setting meaningful intentions*

## Your learning intention

I want to <explore/practice/discover/understand/learn/develop/etc.> how to <insert a capability/skill/mindset/attribute>, because <insert something that's meaningful/important to you>.

→ Set a calendar reminder for 2-3 weeks from now and include your learning intention. When that alarm goes off, check in with yourself about your progress

→ Check in with your manager: Share some of your intentions and get feedback and/or ask them to share some upcoming stretch opportunities



→ Have a coffee chat with a colleague and tell them about your learning intentions and the meaning behind them. Share some ways you plan to act on the learning intentions (perhaps signing up for a course, taking on a new task, or connecting to experts) and see if they have any other suggestions

→ Forget work for just a second. What's something you've been wanting to do in your personal life? Go find an accountability partner or group

**What will you do?** Pick an idea from the list above, or think of a different action you want to try.

**How did it go?** Once you've taken that action, reflect on the experience.



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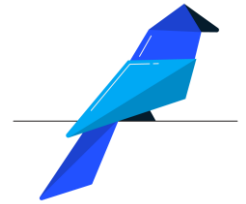
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# Problem Solving Digital Course (Part 1)

## What to Expect



3-4 hour «Problem Solving» digital course introduces McKinsey's approach to problem solving and aims to bring in a perspective to tackle problems that can be seen in the business environment

### Learning objective

- Develop a rigorous and structured approach to problem solving and improve your ability to define challenging problems

### Overview of course structure:

#### Part 1: Understanding approaches and defining the problem

##### Lesson 1

###### McKinsey's approach problem solving

Define problem solving as a decision making process and identifying situations in which you engage in problem solving on the job

Articulate the importance and relevance of problem-solving skills and describe how to categorize problems of different shapes and sizes

##### Lesson 2

###### A Structured Approach to Problem Solving

Understand five problem-solving approaches designed to address a wide range of problems facing organizations today

Recognize the hypothesis-led approach to problem solving, including its steps and associated tools and techniques

##### Lesson 3

###### Define the Problem

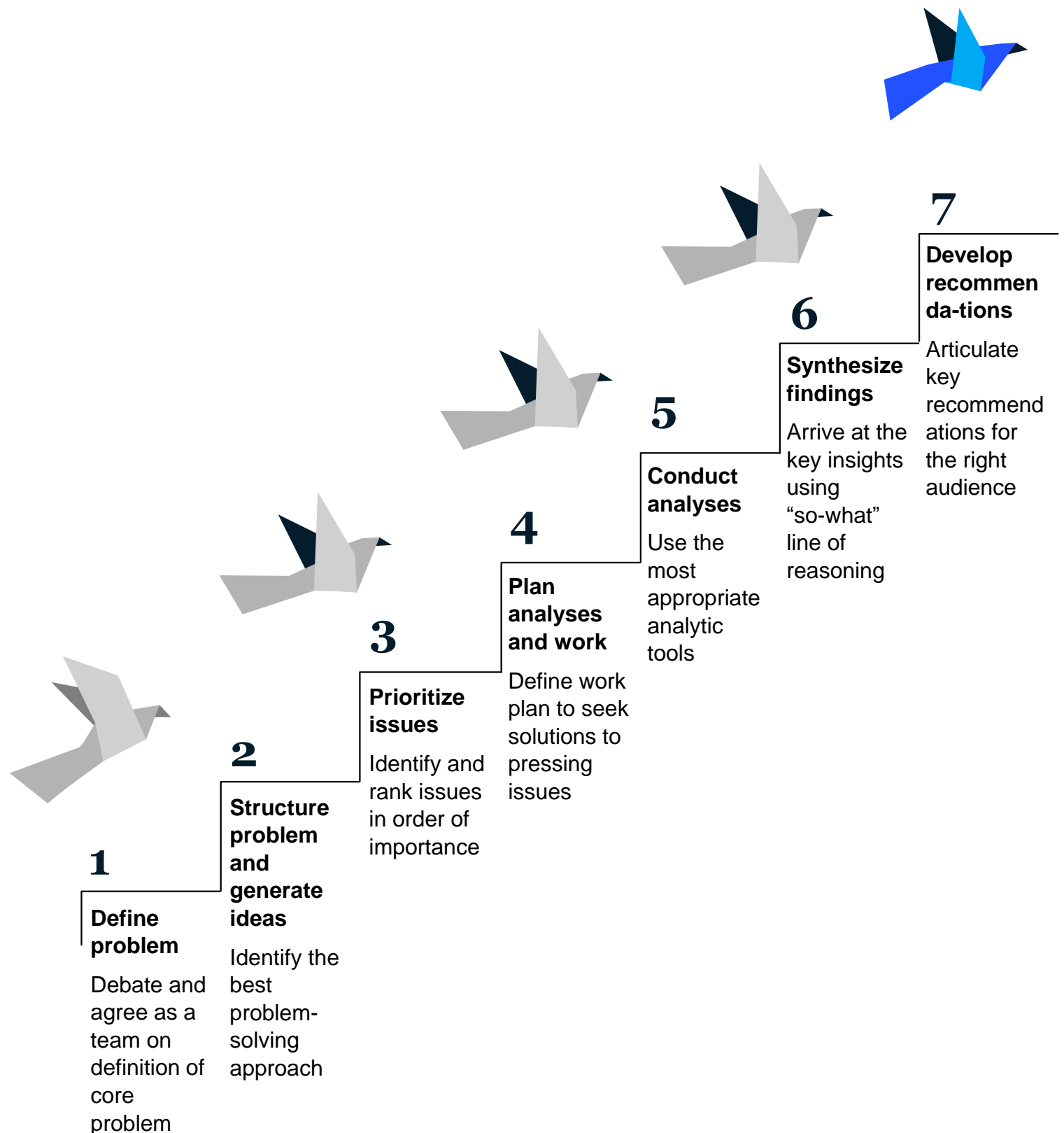
Recognize the unique challenges of problem definition and exploring how to improve outcomes by using mindsets and tools including the SMART framework and the Problem Statement Worksheet

Introduce debiasing techniques such as the key assumptions check and analysis of competing hypotheses



# Problem Solving Digital Course (Part 1)

*Key Concept: 7-step's of problem solving*



# Problem Solving Digital Course (Part 1)

## Try it ➔ *Developing a problem statement*

Read the mini-case below and develop a SMART problem statement

### **DevCo works under the European Commission to build partnerships for change in developing countries**

- The European Commission's directorate-general for International Development and Cooperation (DevCo) provides support and financing for developing countries to increase their capacity to protect and manage natural resources
- This includes working with governments, public and private sector, and civil society organisations to
  - Combat illegal logging;
  - Manage and secure protected areas that are home to endangered wildlife such as gorillas, rhinos and elephants;
  - Remedy and clean up polluted sites, and build local skills to develop a sustainable green economy, among many other areas
- Currently they are working towards reducing air pollution in Asian cities (especially in India). Periodically cities are evaluated on the level of polluted air. Upcoming list will be published in 2025 and it is important that the Asian cities works towards reducing air pollution to avoid being in the list of 100 most polluted cities.

**S**pecific, not general

**M**easurable

**A**ction-oriented

**R**elevant (to the key problem)

**T**ime-bound

**Problem statement:**



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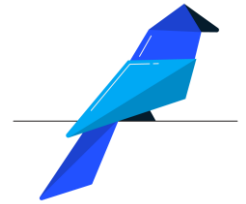
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(L2)





# Communicating for Impact Digital Course (Part 1)

## *What to Expect*



3-4 hour “Communicating for Impact” digital course focuses on how to synthesize and tailor communications, verbally and visually

### Learning objective

- Move teams, colleagues, clients, and leadership to action by carefully structuring arguments, tailoring those arguments to address audience needs

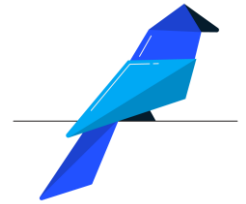
### Overview of program structure:

Introduction		Part 1: Developing communications	
Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4
<b>Introduction</b> Articulate why a thoughtful approach to communications can strengthen your ability to have impact  Describe how you can use the EPIC framework to help increase the effectiveness of your interactions	<b>Connect with your audience</b> Recognize the role empathy plays in your communications  Identify the value of cultivating trust-based relationships and describe behaviours that build those relationships	<b>Orient towards an objective</b> Define the purpose of an interaction to include your needs and your audience's  Differentiate how specific communications will impact an audience and select the most effective type of communication for a given scenario	<b>Structure an argument</b> Use the Pyramid Principle to organize and structure your communication in a clear and compelling way  Distinguish synthesis from summary and generate insights from a synthesis of facts

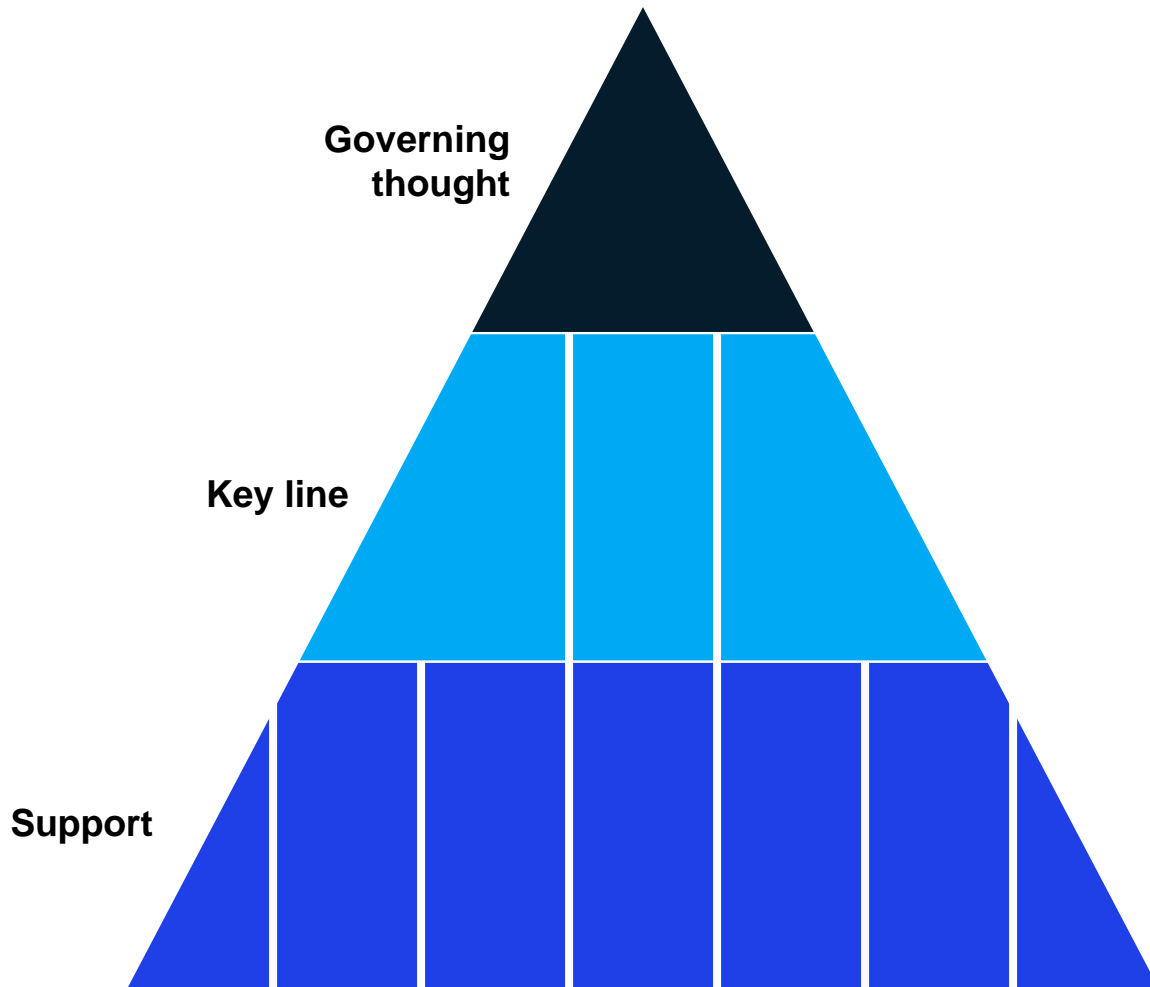


# Communicating for Impact Digital Course (Part 1)

*Key Concept: The pyramid principle*



The pyramid structure allows the target to understand the general message of the kit and to have context information about the details

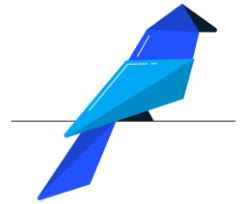


## Characteristics of good pyramids

- Relevant governing thought
- Question-answer dialogue from top to bottom
- One message (complete idea) stated in complete sentence per box
- Logical equivalence of horizontal ideas
- Logical order of supporting points

# Communicating for Impact

## Digital Course (Part 1)



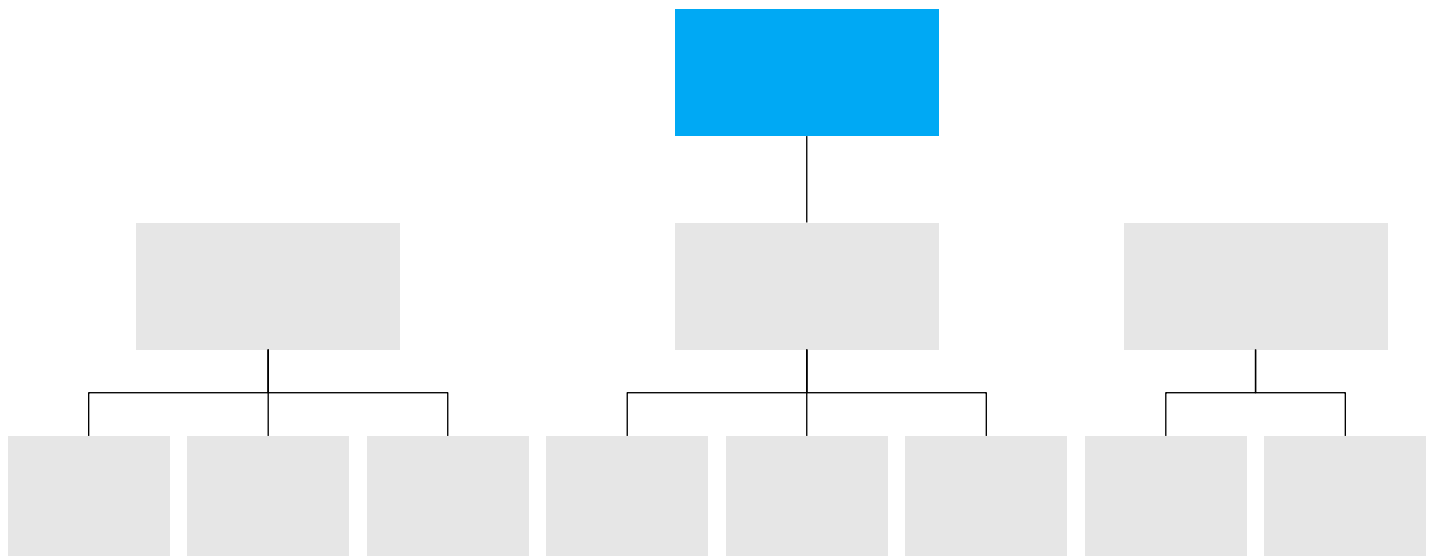
Try it ➔ *Using deduction technique*

- Read the governing thought and attributes of information provided below
- Construct a pyramid with three levels on your flipchart
  - Group and organize the information
  - Assemble the information in three groups of 'Action/Reason'
  - Name each 'Action/Reason' group

**Governing thought is “We should go on holiday in Langkawi ”**

Attributes of Langkawi that make it an attractive tourist destination:

- 1 Availability of multiple flights
- 2 Plenty of recreational options including water sports, jungle trekking and golf
- 3 Budget airlines fly to Langkawi
- 4 We have never held an offsite there
- 5 Hotels are reasonably priced
- 6 Only 1 hour by flight from Kuala Lumpur making for an easy getaway
- 7 Langkawi offers many budget-friendly restaurants
- 8 Beautiful, untouched beaches that provide an inspiring environment



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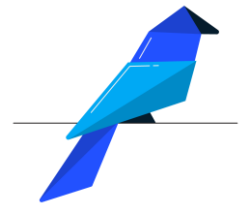
**Digital Essentials Digital Course**

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(L2)





# Digital Essentials Digital Course



## *What to Expect*

Digital Essentials is an engaging learning journey that de-mystifies “digital” and builds a foundational “digital toolkit” for learners to become more digitally literate and more effectively contribute to their organization’s digital transformation

### Learning objective

- Articulate what is “digital”, why it matters and how it creates value
- Build your digital “toolkit” through building foundational literacy
- Create positive mindset around digital

### Overview of program structure

Introduction		Building the digital toolkit	
Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4
<b>Why is everyone so excited about digital?</b> Articulate "what is digital" and why it matters Create curiosity for potential around digital tools and ways of working	<b>How do organizations go digital?</b> Articulate how digital creates value for society, organizations and self	<b>Design Thinking</b> Become familiar with design thinking principles	<b>Agile</b> Get to know agile ways of working and solving problems
Building the digital toolkit (cntd...)		Sustaining	
Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Lesson 7	
<b>Technology</b> Learn how digital tools can help in daily tasks, collaboration, and innovation	<b>Data</b> Understand how to unlock the power of data and analytics	<b>My Digital Toolkit</b> Create sense of ownership for own learning mindset	

# Digital Essentials Digital Course



*Try it → Analyze your data footprint*

Complete this section after taking the Data course

## 1 Select an online platform that you frequently use and download all the data collected on you

For Facebook:

- Click an arrow in the top right > Settings & Privacy > Settings > Your Facebook Information > Download Your Information > Click Create File to confirm the download request

For Apple:

- Log into your Apple ID > Data & Privacy > Manage your Data and Privacy > Get a copy of your data

For Google:

- Log into your Google Account > Data & personalization > Things you can create and do > Google Dashboard > Download your data

## 2 Analyze your data and consider the following questions:

- How many pages of text did you receive?
- What was the most surprising information?
- What was the most terrifying?
- Which information would be useful for your company to know and how could you leverage it?



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**Planner for Transition to Advanced  
Level (L2)**

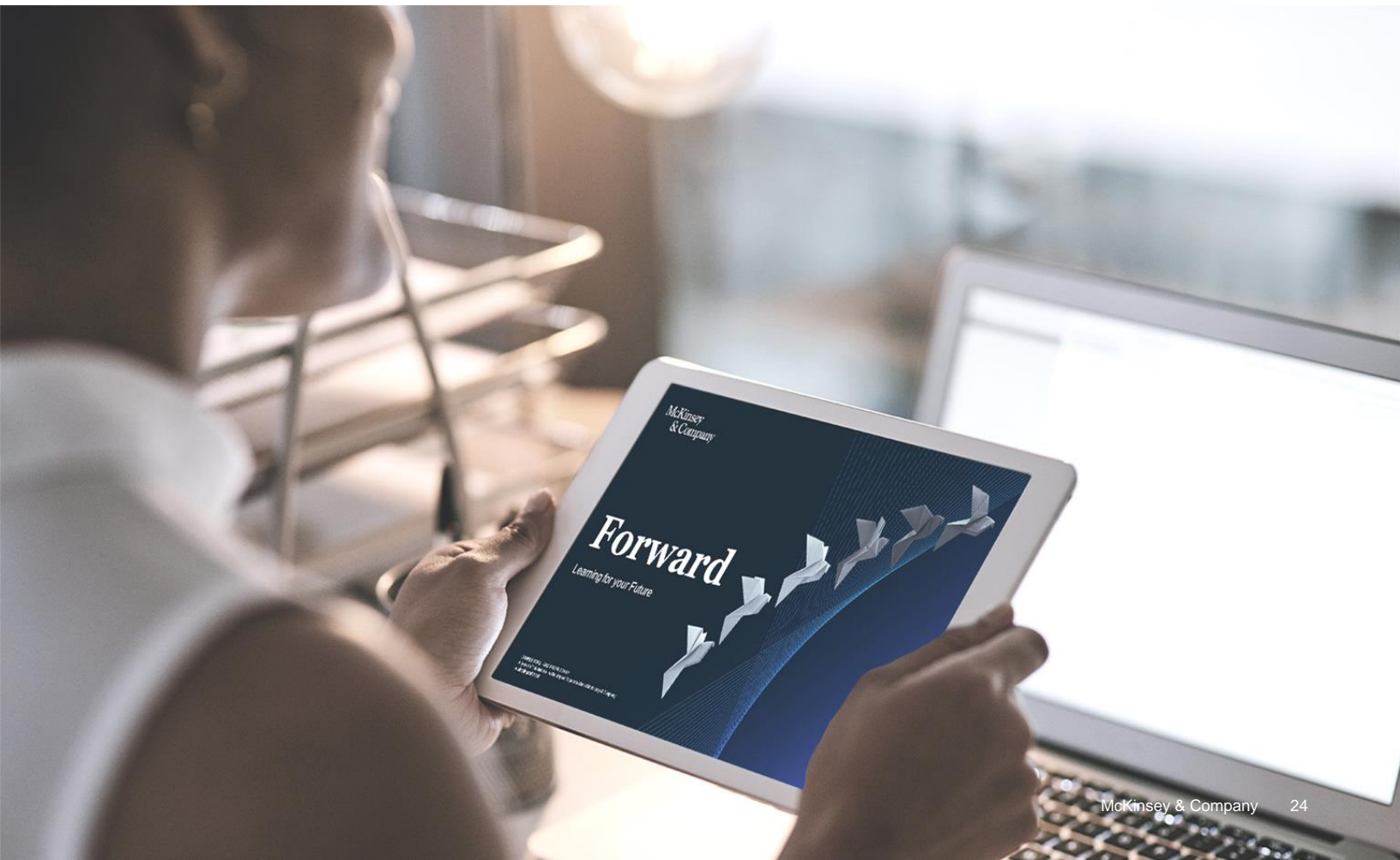


# Planner for Advanced Level (L2) Transition

**To unlock the Advanced Level (L2), make sure you complete all the items below by the deadline communicated to you through email**

- ☐ A. Complete all the courses<sup>1</sup> along with course and Foundation Level (L1) feedback surveys
- ☐ B. Complete self-assessment and ensure you have feedback from 1 or more nominated colleague(s)
- ☐ C. Submit your verification documents:
  - Proof of graduation ([here](#))
  - Proof of employment status ([here](#))
- ☐ D. Submit Learning Reflections and Intentions Blog ([here](#))

1. Tip: Make sure you have blue check marks next to all learning journey elements to ensure you have 100% completion





# B: Self-assessment and peer feedback

## Description

- Forward self-assessment is designed around 3 key leadership behaviors **Lead Yourself & Others, Conquer Business Challenges and Navigate the Digital World**. It aims to provide a perspective on your current capabilities in these dimensions and create a baseline for the end of program assessment to see your progress along the journey
- Completing this self-assessment and receiving at least 1 feedback from another person is one of the **mandatory requirement to qualify for the Advanced Level (L2)** of the Forward program
- If/when you transition to the Advanced Level (L2) of the Forward program, you will receive your own personalized report showing how you and the person(s) you nominated assessed your skills

## Format/ Duration

- As a first step to complete the skills assessment, you will have received an email from [sdg@mckinsey.com](mailto:sdg@mckinsey.com) asking you to nominate 1-3 people who you work with on a frequent basis and who have a good understanding of your behaviors in a professional environment.
- Please reach out to them in advance to confirm they are willing to provide you with feedback and receive communication from the Forward program. We kindly request that you do not provide the names and email addresses of these individuals in advance of obtaining their confirmation.
- You and the persons(s) you have nominated will receive an email and be asked to answer 12 questions; you can see a sample of questions here.

## Sample questions

Behavioral dimension	Question	(1)	(3)	(5)
<b>Conquer Business Challenges</b>	When faced with a complex business problem, I tend to...	Require a lot of guidance for solving it, given it is not a familiar problem	Define it well and break it into parts to be able to solve it	Confidently break it down, analyze the root causes and develop alternatives
<b>Navigate the Digital World</b>	When it comes to analyzing data sets to derive insights, I tend to...	Not use or use very basic data analysis in my work	Often explore how I can better utilize different sources of data in my work	Identify opportunities to use advanced analytics for generating insights and making informed decisions in my work and my organization
<b>Lead Yourself &amp; Others</b>	With regards to helping other people grow, I tend to...	Often focus on my own performance and spend less time or energy to help others improve their performance	Notice when others need help and approach them to explain how I would typically do things	Both offer and seek feedback and coaching from others to grow together

# C: Verification documents



## Possible Graduation Verification Documents

- Graduation Certificate
- University transcript
- Signed letter from university administration on university letterhead paper confirming your completion of the degree program

## Possible Employment Verification Documents

If you are employed with a SME or a non-profit NGO, you could submit:

- A confirmation letter from your employer on company letterhead confirming your employment
- A letter of employment/appointment
- An extract of an official communication from your company to you
- A copy of your staff ID
- Proof that you have an active business email etc.

If you are self-employed (e.g. business owner or freelancer) you could submit:

- A confirmatory letter from a client or investor
- A business or freelancer registration document showing your name
- A copy of your staff ID, etc.

Please ensure documents do not reveal any financial or other information considered personal, and remember to save your files with your name.



# D: Learning Reflections and Intentions

## Blog instructions

As part of the criteria to qualify for Advanced Level (L2) of the program, kindly prepare and submit a link to a **short (~1 minute), self-recorded video** or a **brief blog post (~no more than 300 words)** sharing your most relevant learning from Level 1 of the program and your learning intention going forward (instructions on the right):



### Question 1:

What is the most relevant learning from Foundation Level (L1) of the program for you? This could be a concept, an example, or an idea that stuck with you and impacted your mindset and behaviour.

For example, learning about “top-down” communication and structuring your e-mails/communications with a governing thought followed by supporting arguments, or it could be how you learned about identifying unusual, new and valuable sources of data that apply to your business,



### Question 2:

Set a meaningful learning intention you'd like to focus on in the next month or two. Remember to frame your desired outcome as a learning intention versus a performance goal. Good learning intentions prioritize the experience itself, not just the outcome. Instead of focusing on a specific target, they focus on the process, discovering and exploring new ideas and personal growth.

For example, this could be giving constructive feedback to your colleagues or following McKinsey's 7-step approach to solve complex problems

You can find the submissions details on the next page





# D: Learning Reflections and Intentions

## Blog submission

If you choose to shoot a **1-min video**:

- 1 You can use any device to shoot your video
- 2 We suggest you to write down your thoughts before shooting your video
- 3 Once you start shooting, tell your first and last name and answer the 2 questions (in the order you choose)
- 4 Try to limit the video to *1-min*
- 5 Save your video by specifying your cohort and name: Forward\_Name Last Name\_L1

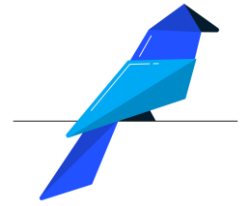
If you choose to write a **short blog**:

- 1 Limit your responses to *300 words* for each question
- 2 Save your document by specifying your name:  
Forward\_Name Last Name\_L1  
(files without names will not be considered which will affect your progression to the Advanced Level)

Use this [link](#) to submit your assignment



# D: A quick guide to self-shooting video messages and testimonials using your smartphone



- Choose a bright and quiet room, ideally with daylight from a window.
- Light facing you - no window behind you!
- Use tripod or stable object
- Smartphone in landscape format!
- Stay eye level with camera, arm length away
- Center head in upper part of screen
- Look directly at camera - pinhole, not screen!
- Speak naturally - don't read the text from your notes
- 2 secs pause before and after speaking while maintaining eye contact with the camera
- Form short and clear sentences
- Show positive energy

**Place phone an arm's length away from your body**

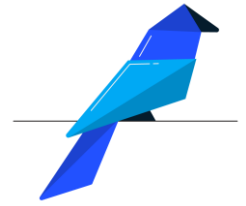


**Leave only a little head room**

**Center yourself horizontally**



# D: Sample Setup



## Location and lighting

Record in a bright and quiet room. Ensure that the main source of light is facing you or is coming slightly from the side.

Recording yourself with your back to a window will result in a silhouette. Make sure your background is simple and appropriate. Close the door, silence all devices, and switch off air-conditioning – this could create background noise.



## Video settings

Make sure that the video settings for your camera are set to 4K at 30 fps.

1920x1080p at 30 fps minimum. Auto HDR on.



## Orientation

Position the phone horizontally to ensure that your video is in landscape format.



## Positioning and stability

Ideally, use a small tripod to keep your phone at eye level or slightly below.

Alternatively, find a stable surface, e.g., a stack of books where you can lean your phone upright against the top book (screen towards you). If there is someone to help, the front camera can be used for recording (better quality), and the person recording can adjust the framing on the screen. If no tripod is available, the person recording should use both hands to hold the phone, keeping elbows close to their body for stability.



## Framing

Try to keep your phone at eye level, and, for best results, include your whole head and shoulders in the frame.

Avoid shooting from a low angle, because this is very unflattering. The rule of thumb is an arm's length away (50 to 60cm).



## Posture

Have positive energy. You should try to make a friendly, dynamic, and likable impression. Ensure that you maintain an upright posture while recording – slouching and leaning back are accentuated in videos.

Eye contact is important. For messages and testimonials, you are addressing an audience, so you should look directly at the camera. Don't read the text from your notes – speak freely!

For a longer message, recording in several snippets is not a problem, but pause for 2 seconds before stopping.

**Hope to see  
you in the  
Advanced  
Level (L2) !**

