

Interpersonal and Leadership Skills Development Guide

Skill Overview

Interpersonal and leadership skills are essential for project managers to effectively guide teams, influence stakeholders, and navigate organizational dynamics. This guide provides a structured approach to developing these critical competencies across three developmental stages.

Competency Framework

| Skill Area | Define Stage | Develop Stage | Scale Stage |
|--|--|--|--|
| Communication & Stakeholder Engagement | Basic communication principles, simple stakeholder mapping | Strategic communication planning, stakeholder influence strategies | Executive communication, complex stakeholder ecosystem management |
| Collaboration & Teamwork | Team participation, basic facilitation | Team building, conflict resolution | High-performance team culture creation, cross-organizational collaboration |
| Leadership & Motivation | Self-leadership, individual motivation | Team leadership, group motivation techniques | Inspirational leadership, organizational culture influence |
| Conflict Resolution | Recognizing conflict, basic resolution techniques | Mediating team conflicts, negotiation tactics | Resolving complex organizational conflicts, transforming conflict into opportunity |
| Networking & Relationship Building | Professional relationship basics, internal networking | Strategic relationship cultivation, external network development | Organizational alliance building, industry leadership positioning |

Development Activities by Stage

Define Stage (Foundation Building)

Knowledge Development

- Study fundamental communication models and styles
- Learn basic stakeholder analysis techniques
- Understand different conflict types and resolution approaches
- Complete foundational leadership training
- Study team dynamics and development stages

Skill Application

- Create a stakeholder map for a project
- Develop a communication plan with specific messages for each stakeholder
- Facilitate a project meeting or brainstorming session
- Give constructive feedback to team members
- Present project updates to management

Practice Scenarios

1. **Scenario: Difficult Team Member**

- A team member consistently misses deadlines and provides low-quality work
- **Practice Exercise:** Develop a feedback script, create an improvement plan, document the conversation

2. **Scenario: Communication Breakdown**

- A stakeholder claims they weren't informed about an important project change
- **Practice Exercise:** Develop a communication recovery plan, create a stakeholder engagement strategy

3. **Scenario: Team Demotivation**

- Your team is showing signs of burnout and decreased enthusiasm
- **Practice Exercise:** Design team recognition approach, develop motivational strategies, create work-life balance proposals

Progression Indicators

- Effectively communicates project information to different audiences
- Creates basic stakeholder management plans
- Successfully facilitates project meetings
- Provides clear and constructive feedback
- Demonstrates awareness of team dynamics

2 Develop Stage (Capability Enhancement)

Knowledge Development

- Study advanced negotiation techniques
- Learn strategic stakeholder management approaches
- Develop deeper understanding of team leadership models
- Study emotional intelligence in professional contexts
- Learn coaching and mentoring techniques

Skill Application

- Lead difficult negotiations with stakeholders or vendors
- Develop comprehensive stakeholder influence strategies
- Implement team-building activities that address specific challenges
- Coach team members to improve performance
- Manage and resolve team conflicts

Practice Scenarios

1. Scenario: Cross-Departmental Friction

- Your project requires cooperation between departments with historical tensions
- **Practice Exercise:** Develop collaboration strategy, create conflict resolution framework, build cross-team relationship plan

2. Scenario: Reluctant Executive Sponsor

- Your project sponsor isn't providing needed support or making timely decisions
- **Practice Exercise:** Create executive engagement strategy, develop escalation framework, build influence plan

3. Scenario: Team Cultural Differences

- Your team includes members from multiple countries with different work styles
- **Practice Exercise:** Develop cultural awareness plan, create communication guidelines, design inclusive team practices

Progression Indicators

- Successfully navigates complex stakeholder environments
- Effectively builds and leads high-performing teams
- Resolves team conflicts constructively
- Influences across organizational boundaries
- Adapts leadership style to different situations and individuals
- Coaches team members to improve performance

3 Scale Stage (Mastery Development)

Knowledge Development

- Study organizational change management methodologies
- Learn advanced influence and executive communication techniques
- Develop understanding of organizational culture development

- Study strategic relationship building across organizations
- Learn transformational leadership approaches

Skill Application

- Lead organizational change initiatives
- Influence executive decision-making on strategic projects
- Build coalitions across multiple organizational departments
- Develop leadership capacity in project managers you supervise
- Create governance structures for multi-team collaboration

Practice Scenarios

1. **Scenario: Major Organizational Change**

- Your program requires significant changes to organizational structure and processes
- **Practice Exercise:** Develop change management strategy, create stakeholder coalition building plan, design resistance management approach

2. **Scenario: Executive Team Conflict**

- Executives have conflicting priorities affecting your program
- **Practice Exercise:** Create executive alignment strategy, develop negotiation framework, build consensus-reaching approach

3. **Scenario: Multi-Organizational Initiative**

- Your program involves multiple partner organizations with different cultures and priorities
- **Practice Exercise:** Design alliance governance structure, create cross-organizational communication framework, develop shared vision statement

Progression Indicators

- Successfully leads complex organizational change
- Effectively influences at executive level
- Builds and maintains strategic relationships across organizations
- Creates leadership development plans for project managers
- Establishes governance frameworks for complex initiatives
- Transforms organizational conflict into opportunities

Assessment Questions by Development Stage

Define Stage Assessment

1. **Basic Communication**

- "How do you tailor your communication approach for different stakeholders?"
- "Describe how you would create a communication plan for a small project."
- "How do you ensure your message is understood correctly by different audiences?"

2. Stakeholder Management

- "Describe your process for identifying and analyzing project stakeholders."
- "How would you engage a skeptical stakeholder in your project?"
- "Explain your approach to managing stakeholder expectations."

3. Team Participation

- "How do you contribute to creating a positive team environment?"
- "Describe a situation where you helped resolve a team issue."
- "What techniques do you use to build rapport with new team members?"

4. Basic Conflict Resolution

- "How do you approach a disagreement with a colleague?"
- "Describe your process for addressing a conflict between team members."
- "What do you consider when determining whether to escalate a conflict?"

5. Professional Relationships

- "How do you build professional relationships within your organization?"
- "Describe your approach to networking in professional settings."
- "How do you maintain relationships with stakeholders after a project ends?"

Develop Stage Assessment

1. Strategic Communication

- "Describe your approach to communicating complex project challenges to executives."
- "How do you develop a communication strategy for a large, cross-functional project?"
- "Explain how you've used communication to overcome project resistance."

2. Advanced Stakeholder Management

- "How do you manage stakeholders with competing priorities?"
- "Describe your approach to influencing stakeholders without formal authority."
- "Explain how you've successfully managed difficult stakeholders in the past."

3. Team Leadership

- "How do you build high-performing teams across organizational boundaries?"
- "Describe your approach to motivating team members during challenging project phases."
- "Explain how you develop leadership skills in your team members."

4. Negotiation & Mediation

- "Describe your approach to negotiating for resources with competing departments."
- "How do you mediate conflicts between high-level stakeholders?"
- "Explain a situation where your negotiation skills helped overcome a project obstacle."

5. Strategic Relationship Building

- "How do you develop relationships with executive stakeholders?"
- "Describe your approach to building alliances across departments."
- "Explain how you've leveraged your professional network to benefit a project."

Scale Stage Assessment

1. Executive Communication

- "Describe your approach to gaining executive buy-in for transformational initiatives."
- "How do you communicate program vision in ways that inspire organization-wide support?"
- "Explain how you've successfully communicated bad news to executives and boards."

2. Complex Stakeholder Ecosystems

- "How do you manage stakeholders across multiple organizations and cultures?"
- "Describe your approach to building consensus among diverse stakeholder groups with conflicting interests."
- "Explain how you've aligned stakeholders around a controversial strategic initiative."

3. Organizational Leadership

- "How have you influenced organizational culture through your program leadership?"
- "Describe your approach to developing the next generation of project leaders."
- "Explain how you lead through significant organizational change or uncertainty."

4. Transformational Conflict Management

- "Describe your approach to turning organizational conflict into opportunity for innovation."
- "How do you resolve conflicts between competing organizational priorities?"
- "Explain how you've established frameworks for productive conflict resolution."

5. Strategic Alliance Building

- "How do you establish and govern cross-organizational strategic alliances?"
- "Describe your approach to building industry influence and thought leadership."
- "Explain how you've created ecosystems of partnerships to drive strategic objectives."

Development Resources

Define Stage Resources

Recommended Reading

- "Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High" by Kerry Patterson
- "The New One Minute Manager" by Ken Blanchard
- "Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In" by Roger Fisher

Training Opportunities

- Basic presentation skills workshop
- Introduction to emotional intelligence
- Foundational leadership training
- Effective meeting facilitation

Practice Exercises

- Lead a team meeting and gather feedback on facilitation skills
- Create a stakeholder map and communication plan for a current project
- Practice delivering constructive feedback using the situation-behavior-impact model
- Role-play difficult conversations with mentor feedback

Develop Stage Resources

Recommended Reading

- "Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most" by Douglas Stone
- "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion" by Robert Cialdini
- "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team" by Patrick Lencioni

Training Opportunities

- Advanced negotiation skills training
- Coaching and mentoring certification
- Conflict resolution and mediation workshop
- Strategic influence and stakeholder management

Practice Exercises

- Facilitate a problem-solving session for a cross-functional team
- Develop and implement a stakeholder influence strategy for a challenging stakeholder
- Mediate a conflict between team members or departments
- Create and deliver executive-level project presentations

Scale Stage Resources

Recommended Reading

- "Leading Change" by John Kotter
- "Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence" by Daniel Goleman
- "Transformational Leadership: How Leaders Change Teams, Companies, and Organizations" by Michael A. Roberto

Training Opportunities

- Executive presence and communication training
- Organizational change management certification
- Leadership coaching certification
- Strategic alliance and partnership management

Practice Exercises

- Develop a change management strategy for an organizational transformation
- Create a leadership development program for project managers
- Establish a governance framework for cross-organizational collaboration
- Build and present a strategic business case to executive leadership