

Leadership Competency Development Guide

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Business Acumen

DEMONSTRATING GOOD JUDGMENT AND BUSINESS SENSE AS WELL AS THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND BUSINESS OPERATIONS, MARKET TRENDS, THE COMPETITION, AND THE BOTTOM-LINE.

Did You Know? Aggregate data from SIGMA’s web traffic analysis indicates that Business Acumen is the second most clicked-upon skill in SIGMA’s [Leadership Competency Framework](#).

Development Activities

On the Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get to know your own organization. Speak with leaders at your company and ask them about your organization’s mission, vision, and values. What is the company’s strategic position? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What are its long-term goals? ▪ Research your organization’s industry and target market. Understand the drivers of your business and think about how the industry and market may change in the future. ▪ Get to know your industry’s competitive landscape. Who are your biggest competitors? What are their strategies? What are their strengths and weaknesses? ▪ Allocate 15 minutes every morning reading the business section from your favorite news outlet. Pay attention to overarching trends and big changes. ▪ Cultivate a strong ethical compass and demonstrate good judgment in decision-making. Consider the long-term consequences and ethical implications of your actions. ▪ Read memoirs, biographies, or autobiographies of successful businessmen and women, or novels that explore case studies in business (financial crises, scandals, success stories, etc.). ▪ Volunteer for projects, committees, or teams that are in different departments of your organization; observe and learn from their processes and priorities. ▪ Practice your analytical and problem-solving skills by reading case studies and thinking through the decision-making process, or simply by playing things like brain games.
Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet regularly with a coach to plan on-the-job development activities and receive feedback and support on your business acumen.
Self-directed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold informational interviews with managers in your organization to learn what works for them; ask how they develop their business acumen and put those skills into practice.
Group Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend an informational Lunch and Learn session. ▪ Educate your team (or request that your team be educated) on the organization’s industry, market, history, trends, and other basic business contexts. This will help everyone be more effective in their role. ▪ Educate your team (or request that your team be educated) on the organization’s history, mission, vision, and values. Ask leaders to share the company’s long-term and strategic goals. This will help everyone make more strategic decisions in their own role.

Resources

Leadership Series	SIGMA's Leadership Series provides additional information about the importance of each competency, as well as practical tips and tricks for development. Download the Leadership Series for Business Acumen here: Great Leaders Have Business Acumen .
Articles and Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is Business Savvy? (With Traits and Ways to Improve). ▪ 8 Traits of Business Savvy Leaders. ▪ 12 Business Skills You Need to Master.
Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ten Lessons for Success in Business. ▪ The Secret of How to Think Like an Entrepreneur. ▪ Business 101: Everything You Need to Know About Business And Startup Basics.
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Casual by Morning Brew ▪ Masters in Business by Bloomberg Opinion ▪ Scaling Up with Ed Cowan

SIGMA Can Help

Since 1967, SIGMA has helped thousands of organizations across North America develop their people potential and increase organizational effectiveness. Explore our assessments, coaching, and consulting services below, and contact us if you would like to speak about creating a custom plan for your organization.



[Leadership Skills Profile – Revised™ \(LSP-R\)](#)

Take our flagship leadership assessment to see how you score on “Business Acumen.”



[High-Potential Talent Development](#)

Use SIGMA's scientifically validated, industry-tested tools to give your talent development a strong start.



[Coaching with a SIGMA Consultant](#)

Participate in one-on-one coaching with SIGMA's expert consultants.

Speak with a Consultant



If you would like to speak with a consultant about what developing business acumen looks like for you, contact us today. We are happy to share what we've learned from client experience and talk about the specific needs of your organization and your team. Give us a call! We're always happy to chat.

[1.800.401.4480 ext. 233](tel:18004014480)

Email Glen