THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO INTERACTION ESSENTIALS
HOW TO GET YOUR LEADERS “BACK TO BASICS” AND DEVELOP THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS THEY NEED MOST.
LEADERSHIP HAS NEVER BEEN MORE CHALLENGING.

BUT THE JOB OF BEING A LEADER HAS CHANGED LITTLE OVER TIME.
Despite increased complexity, greater demands, and the faster pace of business today, leadership is much the same today as it’s always been.

Leaders have to do two things: build relationships with subordinates, peers, and their manager; and get things done when they meet with those individuals one-to-one or in groups. That was true decades ago and it’s still true today.

Organizations have long sought to provide their leaders with the right development, but over time many have moved away from developing the basics—those essentials of interaction that enable leaders to interact effectively with others and drive positive outcomes by meeting the personal and practical needs of their direct reports, peers, and supervisors. These are the Interaction Essentials that leaders have to have first as they are the foundation on which more advanced leadership skills are built.

At DDI, we understand the Interaction Essentials and recognize their central role in making leaders successful. In this handy guide, we’ll introduce you to the Interaction Essentials and show how to assess for and develop them.

Are you ready to get back to basics and start developing your leaders’ Interaction Essentials? If so, turn the page . . .
WHAT ARE THE INTERACTION ESSENTIALS?
Interaction Essentials are necessary behaviors for all of the critical interactions that define a leadership role, including team meetings, coaching situations, and performance discussions.

We refer to them as the Interaction Essentials because they are the core behaviors that make leaders effective. Leaders have to learn to listen, empathize, involve, and support—all Interaction Essentials—before they can learn to coach, influence others, build partnerships, and gain commitment. Leaders also need to conduct and manage interactions to ensure that they achieve their intended outcomes.
Ample research by DDI and others has proved the importance of the Interaction Essentials to leader effectiveness. When leaders have developed them and use them every day on the job, team members boast gains in areas such as job satisfaction, self-esteem, positive work outcomes, and health and well-being.

Research has shown that leaders themselves realize numerous benefits, as well. Among the good things that happen when leaders use the Interaction Essentials (and the supporting research):

- Leaders who engage in supporting behaviors with others, such as showing consideration, concern, and acceptance, are seen as more highly effective. They promote open communication and positive work outcomes. (Approximately 536 studies, 769 articles, and 80 books have been written on the impact of self-esteem about work performance.)

- Research has shown that team members whose leaders demonstrate empathy in their interactions with them are less fatigued, depressed, and anxious. (More than 550 articles and 165 books have been written on using empathy in interpersonal interactions.)
Team members who are highly involved perceive that they have more identity and variety in their jobs.
(More than 900 articles and nearly 20 books have been written on high-involvement work environments.)

Leaders should disclose their thoughts and feelings in order to build trust. Trust is found to impact nearly all organizational behavior and outcomes, including overall organizational effectiveness, work group effectiveness, satisfaction with leadership and the organization, and innovation.
(Over 100,000 articles and studies and 4,780 books have been written on building trust in the workplace.)

When leaders provide support without removing responsibility, they build team members' sense of ownership of the task or assignment as well as the confidence that they can accomplish it.
(Approximately 7,000 articles and 1,500 books have been written on empowerment in the workforce.)

The Interaction Guidelines taught in DDI leadership development courses ensure that leaders can meet team members' practical needs by ensuring they have the information, coaching, and support they need to be successful.
/DDI research and experience has shown that the Interaction Guidelines are effective.)
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LEADERS DON’T USE THE INTERACTION ESSENTIALS?
While both leaders and their teams benefit when leaders use the Interaction Essentials, what happens when leaders don’t use them? Is there a real downside?

The same body of research that proves the importance of the Interaction Essentials indicates that not using the essentials can have significant negative consequences:

- When leaders don’t maintain and enhance self-esteem, they can promote anxiety and team members do not feel in control of their jobs. They also discourage open information flow, and fail to promote quality work and quality relationships with their teams.

- Leaders who fail to demonstrate empathy are seen as unsupportive, ineffective at coaching, and unable to remove obstacles to solve problems.

- When team members feel under-involved in decision-making and goal-setting they feel that they have less autonomy over their jobs, less influence over how work is done, and less of an impact on the quality of their work outputs.

- When leaders don’t share the appropriate amount of thoughts and feelings with team members, they can be viewed as dishonest.

- Leaders discourage team members from “thinking and doing” on their own and assuming control of their jobs and work outcomes.

- When leaders don’t meet the practical needs of those with whom they interact, the likelihood of miscommunication and unmet expectations increases significantly.
DO YOUR LEADERS HAVE THE ESSENTIALS?
How can you know if your leaders have the Interaction Essentials mastered? Or make sure you hire or promote those leaders for whom they are a strength? Two powerful DDI solutions help you—accurately—make the call.

**Manager Ready®**

*Manager Ready®* is an online assessment tool built around 30+ real-world behavioral situations like coaching an underperformer, resolving conflicts, or solving a business problem. Each of these situations is designed to elicit specific frontline leader behaviors. *Manager Ready®* provides information for making better business decisions about front-line leaders—including whether or not they are strong in the Interaction Essentials.

Highly-skilled assessors evaluate the quality of the response against specific behavioral anchors. Assessors provide in-depth insight, leading to a higher level of accuracy and better reliability of information.

**Leadership Mirror®**

One of the best ways to determine how your leaders measure up in the Interaction Essentials is to gather data from their stakeholders. *Leadership Mirror®,* DDI’s multisource, multilingual 360° feedback system is the perfect solution.

Web-based, flexible, and available in seven languages, *Leadership Mirror®* allows you to implement standard or customized surveys based on organizational needs. By providing a deeper understanding of strengths and growth areas, *Leadership Mirror®* provides the unique insights needed to create the right development goals and measure the progress of achieving those goals. It also reveals whether or not your leaders are using the Interaction Essentials effectively.
DEVELOPING THE INTERACTION ESSENTIALS
One of the great things about the Interaction Essentials is that they are developable. But what's the right approach?

The behaviors that comprise the Interaction Essentials are part of most leadership competencies, which means that a competency-based program promoting skill practice and application is the most effective way to target them.

DDI’s competency-based leadership and individual performer development programs offer courses that emphasize the Interaction Essentials.

THE INTERACTION ESSENTIALS ARE AT THE CORE OF DDI’S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.
**Interaction Management®: Exceptional Leaders**

*Interaction Management®: Exceptional Leaders* is a competency-based leadership development system that addresses contemporary challenges your managers, team leaders, and supervisors are facing.

It also develops the Interaction Essentials. That means that leaders develop the Interaction Essentials along with the critical competencies required for success.

In addition to a complete range of 26 course offerings, *Interaction Management®: Exceptional Leaders* includes diagnostics, management support, on-the-job learning, mobile support, and evaluation services.

**Interaction Management®: Exceptional Performers Series**

This competency-based series of eight courses for individual contributors and team members is designed to boost interpersonal skills that will enhance individual effectiveness, group effectiveness, and build customer loyalty.

As with the *Interaction Management®: Exceptional Leaders* system, the Interaction Essentials form the foundation of the series’ eight courses. That means your leaders develop the Interaction Essentials along with the critical competencies required for success.
LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INTERACTION ESSENTIALS
GET THE DETAILS ON DDI'S SOLUTIONS FOR ASSESSING AND DEVELOPING THE SKILLS LEADERS NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL. VISIT WWW.DDIWORLD.COM/LEADERSHRIPTODAY.