

# RICK'S TIPS

***Rick's Tips* explores the competencies necessary for successful leadership and provides activities to assist with the development and mastery of these skills.**

## THE EXECUTIVE GROUP

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# DRIVE AND INDEPENDENCE

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way."  
– John C. Maxwell

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## DRIVE

**Being highly motivated, ambitious, energetic and taking initiative**

Most leaders have an inner motor that won't allow them to give up until they find the answers they seek. This infectious trait causes a leader to push priorities throughout the organization.

The upside of having a high degree of drive and independence is that there is little "drag" on the organization with respect to emotional issues. The leader with drive and independence allows employees to do their jobs without micromanagement and close supervision creating in others a high desire to meet expectations and fulfill obligations.

Individuals with drive and independence are said to have high EQ which means they have the ability to be self-directed and self-controlled in their thinking and actions and are free of emotional dependency. They also possess integrity; taking responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, and actions. That doesn't mean they don't seek help when needed, but it is not for the purpose of satisfying their own emotional needs. They are not co-dependent. They have relationships that are courteous and show respect for self and others.

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## INDEPENDENCE

**The ability to influence people and events through decision-making and action**

Leaders must often stand on their own with strength of conviction and exercise independence. They learn independence by practicing decision-making, assuming responsibility, sharing ideas and discussion.

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## PEOPLE WITH DRIVE AND INDEPENDENCE...

### Take the lead

- Find a subject in which they feel confident, but others may not agree
- Assert their point of view and are prepared to handle the criticism

### Make a tough stand

- Are prepared to take a stand by practicing a mental interrogation of their point
- Clearly state their point in a few sentences and why they feel that way

### Sell their stand

- Present outcomes, targets and goals

### Keep their cool

- Manage their emotional reactions
- Ask a question to buy time, pause or ask for more information

### Are philosophical about being wrong

- Understand that mistakes will be made and don't allow that to get in the way of reaching goals
- When things do go wrong, don't dwell on it but rather learn from it and move forward

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## WHEN INDEPENDENCE OVERRIDES LEADERSHIP

The downside of having too much drive and independence is that it can cause a leader to stick with a plan that isn't working or has outdated assumptions.

It can also cause a leader to override the ideas and desires of others which is difficult in larger organizations where a collaborative team effort is needed to achieve its goals. When this trait overpowers other leadership competencies, it guarantees that the leader will make all the decisions and others will stop making decisions and wait to be directed.

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## ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

If drive and independence have overcome the effectiveness of leadership competencies, consider these actions:

### Practice Listening

- Select a period of time (two weeks, a month...) to practice listening more than you speak
- Designate someone else to lead meetings while you observe

### Ask Questions

- Good listeners ask a lot of questions to gain understanding
- Ask one more question than you do now and add to that until people signal that they know you are listening

### Stop Directing

- Learn to facilitate and not influence the outcome as you say you are prone to do
- Listen for others to be significant contributors and write down any insights you discover
- Encourage participation and collaboration

### Don't Interrupt

- Don't suggest words when someone hesitates or pauses
- Don't finish others' sentences and don't wave off further input
- If time is the issue, suggest a summary at an appropriate moment

### Listen First, Solve Second

- Stay away from giving answers, solutions, conclusions and statements
- Doing these things early in a situation indicates that your mind is already made up

### Delegate

- Allow others to be more involved in things you normally do yourself
- Allow others to make more decisions by delegating authority
- Give others responsibility and hold them accountable for the results

### Take a Back Seat

- Let others direct meetings and lead the discussions
- Facilitate from the sidelines so others will step up and learn to lead
- Move to coach others after the fact to help them create their own self-awareness

## WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF DRIVE AND INDEPENDENCE?

Drive and independence are characteristics of successful leaders. To determine your level, rate the following statements on a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being least like you and 5 being most like you.

	SCORE 1 - 5
YOU HAVE A SUSTAINED NEED TO SUCCEED	
YOU ARE WILLING TO STEP UP TO CHALLENGES	
YOU SET HIGH STANDARDS FOR YOURSELF	
YOU ARE DRIVEN TO ACHIEVE RESULTS	
YOU CONVEY A SENSE OF URGENCY	
YOU HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE FOR ADDING VALUE	
YOU ARE WILLING TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED	
YOU KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG AND SAY SO	
YOU STEP FORWARD TO ADDRESS DIFFICULT ISSUES	
YOU STAND FIRM WHEN NECESSARY	
YOU DON'T HOLD BACK ANYTHING THAT NEEDS TO BE SAID	
YOU ARE NOT AFRAID TO TAKE NEGATIVE ACTION WHERE APPROPRIATE	
YOU ARE SELF-DIRECTED/SELF-CONTROLLED IN HOW YOU THINK AND ACT	
YOU ARE FREE OF EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY ON OTHERS	
YOU LIKE TAKING RISKS	
YOU ARE WILLING TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET THE JOB DONE	
YOU ARE SELF-DISCIPLINED	
YOU HAVE A VARIETY OF BUSINESS SKILLS	
YOU ARE GOOD AT MULTI-TASKING	
YOU HANDLE PRESSURE WELL	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

**100 – 81:** You have a great deal of drive and independence and really get things done. BE CAREFUL that these traits do not overpower the other competencies necessary for effective leadership; including the ability to show compassion for others and consideration for their ideas

**80 – 61:** You have enough drive and independence to be successful. These traits combined with other leadership competencies, should serve you well in a leadership position.

**60 – 41:** You possess minimal drive and independence and with a well-developed plan to enhance these characteristics, should be able to overcome barriers and achieve leadership success.

**40 – 21:** These traits do not come naturally for you. If you have leadership aspirations, you will have to develop these skills through a conscientious and deliberate effort.

**20 & below:** Your lack of drive and independence will inhibit your ability to be successful in a leadership position.