

# Competency Development Toolkit

Individual Contributor Benchmark



*Signature Profile*

## Benchmark Profile Description

The Individual Contributor role is a professional staff member who serves as a team leader but does not manage others. They prefer to stay within their discipline to increase the depth of their expertise in managing processes or projects rather than people. Key responsibilities include consistently producing anticipated results, taking initiative, developing competence, prioritizing tasks, and solving problems.

## Predictive Competencies

- Focuses on Measurable Outputs
- Champions Initiatives and Leads Change
- Demonstrates Learning Orientation
- Prioritizes Tasks
- Analyzes and Resolves Customer Problems
- Motivated by Attention to Detail

## Focuses on Measurable Outputs

Uses available time to produce tangible results; judges effectiveness by the quantity of what has been accomplished in a given time frame; derives personal satisfaction from accomplishing measurable outputs

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can too easily lose interest in results-oriented activities in favor of more satisfying opportunities offered in the arenas of personal relationships or influence and power</li> <li>▪ May judge effectiveness in task achievement using standards of quality, creativity, or efficiency rather than measure accomplishment by the sheer quantity or volume produced</li> <li>▪ Tends to be rather casual or informal about tracking progress in results achievement and is comfortable with variable output levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focuses on the quantitative measure of results produced, whether engaged in a repetitious, singular activity or frequently changing and diverse tasks</li> <li>▪ Gains personal satisfaction from producing tangible results</li> <li>▪ Judges effectiveness by how much is accomplished in a given time frame</li> <li>▪ Establishes concrete dimensions and steps that can become quantifiable measures of their progress</li> </ul>

### Mindset Tips:

- Hold yourself accountable to the same measurable objectives as everyone else.
- Determine your most comfortable approach to tasks and use that to produce the expected quantitative results.
- Decide what can best motivate you to reach goals and use those factors, instead of quantity, to determine how you go about your job.
- Although short-term, measurable results are important, try to distract yourself by focusing on the more personally meaningful rewards of your job, while still achieving quantitative objectives.
- Understand that although you may not be motivated to produce measurable results, you are still required to meet the same quantitative objectives as everyone else.
- Realize that how much you produce is just as important as what you produce – commit to striking a balance between the two.

### Success Tactics:

- Ask superiors what is expected of you and do what you can to reach those goals – with clear objectives in place you can achieve what is demanded without focusing on actual quantities.
- Find your personal motivators and try to correlate them with quantitative objectives in order to reach goals.
- Challenge yourself to reach a specific measurable goal each day – gradually raise that amount until you are on par with your colleagues.
- Announce your quantitative goals to your co-workers so that you are committed to reaching them.
- Reward yourself for reaching measurable objectives – for example, if you seek recognition from your peers, make your achievements known to those who can lend praise.
- Devise a system by which you can measure your daily output – you may be falling short of objectives simply because you do not pay attention to the quantity of the results you produce.
- Find what drives you to produce tangible results and remain focused on those motivators.
- If you thrive on competition or recognition, organize a friendly contest to see who can produce the most quantitative results within a specific time period.
- Train yourself to believe that producing short-term measurable outcomes is your top priority.

## Champions Initiatives and Leads Change

Demonstrates a willingness to take action on problems or opportunities without prompting; possesses the intrinsic desire and willingness to push toward achieving a desired goal or end-state without suggestion from others; prepares alternatives so the outcome is not jeopardized by unexpected barriers; exhibits the desire to blaze new trails as a means to an end

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uncomfortable developing a solution to a problem or trying a different approach without positive directives from a higher authority</li> <li>▪ Hesitates to push own ideas or drive new goals</li> <li>▪ May be too willing to leave well enough alone and conforms to established rules and principles</li> <li>▪ Uncomfortable pushing beyond easy or traditional responses to creative or original thinking</li> <li>▪ Tends to wait patiently for situations to settle over time or to correct themselves in a more natural fashion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Champions new initiatives and identifies opportunities or issues requiring change without prompting</li> <li>▪ When barriers to goal accomplishment are encountered, is willing to introduce and implement a solution throughout own sphere of influence</li> <li>▪ Willing to take the lead, even if others don't initially understand or approve</li> <li>▪ Focuses effort and resources on initiatives or solutions that will positively contribute to the desired result; does not simply try to 'build a better mousetrap'</li> <li>▪ Changes the present status in order to improve the position of the group or organization in meeting its objectives</li> <li>▪ Installs targeted, selective changes that provide real added value to the organization</li> <li>▪ More than simply overcoming a negative or preventing a loss, the solutions or changes initiated leave the job (task, project) with something gained</li> </ul>

### Mindset Tips:

- Remember that so long as you have a contingency plan, calculated risks can produce big gains.
- Remember that leaving problematic situations to rectify themselves often makes things worse.
- Commit to being proactive in the face of obstacles – confront and solve them.
- Just because a process has been established and accepted does not mean it's the best way to do things.
- Know that, as a leader, it is your place to examine current systems and find solutions.
- Keep in mind that necessity is the mother of invention – problems are opportunities to create new and better solutions.

### Success Tactics:

- Track your group's productivity on a regular basis – analyze where slowdowns occur so you can work to avoid them in the future.
- Keep an eye out for potential obstacles – knowing that problems can be prevented will fuel your desire to take action.
- Take the lead, even if others disapprove or do not understand.
- Challenge yourself to blaze new trails, but keep alternative plans in mind.
- Take the initiative by introducing and implementing solutions to obstacles, rather than waiting to be directed to do so.
- Actively develop new solutions and processes in an effort to champion your group's productivity.
- Attend a management course that emphasizes the use of original thinking in overcoming barriers.
- Attempt to think outside the box when addressing productivity issues.
- Be proactive in changing the status quo when it is inadequate in achieving goals.

## Demonstrates Learning Orientation

Seeks to stay abreast of new developments in core competencies and to learn enough about related fields to apply knowledge effectively in the business; enjoys learning and is intellectually curious; has a strong desire to continuously improve knowledge, skills, and abilities; sees learning and knowledge as the keys to building the skills and abilities essential to job and career success

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tends to rely on others' expertise in areas where there isn't a strong understanding of core principles</li> <li>▪ Applies existing knowledge to objectives and problems without taking the steps to expand and update understanding</li> <li>▪ Any interest in exploring new developments may be cursory and driven by business demands rather than by personal curiosity</li> <li>▪ May spend insufficient time tracking all key business information sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stays abreast of developments in the field in order to effectively apply knowledge</li> <li>▪ Reviews professional online publications and up-to-date information and developments in all fields related to core competencies</li> <li>▪ Routinely collects and reviews key data and information to track progress on all important functions</li> <li>▪ Incorporates professional expertise into projects and new initiatives</li> </ul>

### Mindset Tips:

- Commit to learning and understanding the key components and critical elements of your industry.
- Remember that without sufficient technical competence, you won't be able to keep pace with the market or your competitors.
- Understand that acquiring knowledge is important but you need to be able to put it to good use – develop the expertise to be able to do so.
- Remember that relying on past experience can cause you to potentially jeopardize objectives.
- Realize that by not doing your best to seek out new information, you and your group may not be working in the most efficient manner.
- Commit to understanding what you sell well enough to design a system that will solve your customers' issues.

### Success Tactics:

- Attend training courses to become more familiar with your company's products and services.
- Challenge yourself to expand your knowledge through seminars, newsletters, and trade journals.
- Resolve to monitor key factors that affect your industry – do not rely on past experience when planning new initiatives and projects.
- Ask colleagues for tools they have developed to monitor critical factors and successfully meet job challenges.
- Question and observe peers so that you can supplement your knowledge with ways in which to use it.
- Subscribe to relevant newsletters that condense news into more easily digestible blurbs – use those headlines as springboards for investigation.
- Meet with colleagues to discuss important developments so that you can gain different perspectives and the research won't be all on your shoulders.
- Challenge yourself to compose monthly reports on the latest developments within your industry – submit them to your superiors to ensure that you have gained sufficient understanding.

## Prioritizes Tasks

Prioritizes and utilizes time to maximize the greatest overall return on effort spent; probes for sufficient information to determine the significance and urgency of a specific task; analyzes workload demands in the light of key objectives, even if no formal guidelines are in place; uses logic versus emotion to determine priority levels; devotes the appropriate amount of time to any given task based upon its relative impact on the successful completion of key job objectives

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Priorities may be set with superficial information or a limited understanding of critical success factors</li> <li>▪ Sets priorities by what they find enjoyable or personally satisfying, and not by key job objectives</li> <li>▪ Gives priority to perceived emergencies in the tradition of 'the squeaky wheel gets the grease'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gathers necessary information to appropriately integrate new demands or requirements into their priorities</li> <li>▪ Prioritizes and assesses situations or tasks with the intent of committing time to the most critical or key objectives</li> <li>▪ Defers time urgent but less critical issues and will not prioritize on the basis of attention grabbing emergencies</li> </ul>

### Mindset Tips:

- Understand that urgent tasks are not necessarily critical tasks; very often time-sensitive issues have little bearing on organizational objectives.
- Look beyond personal experience and knowledge to plan priorities; seek input from various sources to determine how tasks will affect key objectives.
- When confronted with a new task, always ask how the result of said task will bring you and the organization closer to overall goals; prioritize accordingly.
- Research the importance of tasks before setting priorities; what is most urgent may not be the most critical.

### Success Tactics:

- Compose a list of questions that can be used to ascertain the urgency and significance of tasks; armed with this list of criteria, you will be better able to prioritize.
- Before prioritizing your schedule, reacquaint yourself with the company's objectives; if a task will not make a significant impact in meeting those goals, then it is not urgent.
- Familiarize yourself with the criteria by which your success is measured; refer to this information frequently when prioritizing duties.
- Take a course in time management in order to learn how to effectively prioritize important tasks.
- Before committing to a plan of attack, speak with a colleague who effectively manages time. Ask for this person's opinion regarding how these tasks fit with company objectives.
- Create a To Do list that is under constant review; continually assess tasks by how they fit with overall goals.
- Learn to identify when you do not have sufficient time to dedicate to all the items on your To Do list; use company objectives to assess which items require your immediate attention.

## Analyzes and Resolves Customer Problems

Objectively analyzes a problem situation and takes steps to provide a solution; identifies the root of the problem before pressing for a resolution; remains engaged until a solution is reached; tries to see all sides of the problem and thus understand others' assessment of the issue or response; takes personal responsibility for identifying a resolution

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can be biased and make judgmental or inappropriate assumptions without analyzing the situation objectively</li> <li>▪ May press toward resolution without identifying the root of the problem</li> <li>▪ Becomes wrapped up in own views and loses sight of how others may see the problem or response</li> <li>▪ Becomes frustrated with solving the same or similar problems over and over again</li> <li>▪ Tends to take complaints and problems personally and feel oppressed by them</li> <li>▪ Sees problem resolution as an inconvenience and a distraction</li> <li>▪ May oversimplify a problem and its solution and disengage efforts before identifying a satisfactory solution</li> <li>▪ Resists taking ownership of the solution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Objectively isolates and defines problem areas clearly</li> <li>▪ Determines the true nature of the problem rather than deal with its symptoms</li> <li>▪ Willing to 'think outside the box' to find a solution</li> <li>▪ Displays sensitivity and genuine interest in understanding others' perspectives and will not ignore their concerns</li> <li>▪ Regards any problem as a challenge to be met with eagerness and enthusiasm</li> <li>▪ Remains engaged until a problem has been resolved</li> <li>▪ Takes personal accountability for the result</li> </ul>

### Mindset Tips:

- Remain objective in the face of problems – do not take them personally, but view them as challenges to be overcome.
- Remain calm in the face of a serious issue or problem; staying objective will help you find a higher quality solution and will make your customer and/or team members more confident in the solution.
- Do not become frustrated by repetitive problems – every business is going to experience its share of recurring issues (i.e., a webmaster confronted with users who have forgotten their password), so learn to take complaints in stride.
- Commit to solving the problem at the root – a quick fix may be convenient for the time being, but will just allow the problem to resurface at a later time.
- Remember that solving problems is not a distraction from your duties, it is part of your job description.
- Learn that, although you may not be able to devise a solution, management and colleagues are always available for advice so there is no reason to leave a situation unresolved.

### Success Tactics:

- Gather as much information as possible before you suggest a remedy – be sure you fully understand the situation before you act.
- Work with a colleague who effectively solves problems – take note of the techniques this person uses to identify the problem and then work toward resolution.
- Find a coach or mentor who can work through customer complaints with you and advise you as to how you can improve your performance.
- Practice problem-solving by having a colleague role-play with you – ask them to pose difficult complaints so that you can gain confidence in identifying the root of the problem and then resolving it.
- Take the time to come to a high-quality solution – the first solution you come to might not always be the best one.
- If you must pass a problem on to someone with more expertise, devise a monitoring system so that you can be certain that the issue was effectively resolved and the customer is sufficiently satisfied.
- Follow up with all involved parties to ensure the solution is working to their satisfaction.

## Motivated by Attention to Detail

Committed to exactness and precision in task completion; identifies, pays attention to, and works to understand details; thorough and consistent in following up at the detail level; seeks to become expert in the disciplines related to the adopted career path to ensure quality and precision in one's work; takes pride in one's knowledge base and level of expertise

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attentive to relevant details for which they're held accountable but prefer to keep an overview and deal with planning and execution at a more conceptual level</li> <li>▪ More likely to develop themselves as generalists than specialists and tend to adopt a broadbrush approach to their tasks in terms of qualitative standards</li> <li>▪ Reliable and accurate in the tasks they complete when directed to do so</li> <li>▪ Selective in their attention to detail, disregarding or delegating what they do not consider crucial to accomplishing their goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focuses on quality and precision in their work because it is important to be accurate for its own sake</li> <li>▪ Takes pride in the depth of expertise they have acquired for their job</li> <li>▪ Remains consistent in their detail orientation and will not permit sloppy or careless effort regardless of how a task is ranked in importance</li> <li>▪ Will not sacrifice quality for the sake of being more efficient, productive, or creative</li> </ul>

### Mindset Tips:

- Seek consensus before dismissing certain details as irrelevant or delegating them to others.
- Find what motivates you and think about how producing accurate results can assist in achieving personal goals.
- Weigh the details of a project by the value they add to the final result – although an item may not be critical to task completion, it could improve the result dramatically.
- Retain ownership when delegating tasks; monitor those to whom he has delegated to ensure that seemingly minor details are not overlooked.
- Understand the role that accuracy plays in your path to success; having a good grasp if the big picture is necessary, but precision is also a key component to advancement.
- Understand that accuracy could bring you other, more personally satisfying rewards, such as recognition or the ability to influence others.
- View the consistent management of details as a means to success, instead of a distraction from other, more enjoyable, tasks.

### Success Tactics:

- Commit to objectively analyzing the facts before taking action so that important details are not ignored.
- Discuss with colleagues the importance of precision in completing the project; focus specifically on the possible negatives should accuracy not be maintained.
- Seek feedback from superiors to uncover which details of a project cannot be missed.
- Although one should not get bogged down in minutiae, strike a balance between disregarding or delegating details and focusing on those that are essential to organizational goals.





937.259.1200 | 800.254.5995

ChallyAssessment@chally.com | [www.chally.com](http://www.chally.com)