

ASSERTIVENESS

competency



Difficulty



Easy
Stroll

Tough
Climb

Assertiveness

Effective performers readily offer opinions and take action even when their position may be unpopular. They are willing to challenge others appropriately when required. They are self-confident – they trust their own judgment and are not overly dependent upon the approval of others.

Level	Performance Indicators and Behavioral Examples
4 Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Models the executive self-assurance needed to project a positive organizational image in external forums.• Communicates a clear, confident and solid vision and purpose for the direction of the organization.• Listens to others, gathers information, but then can decisively follow own judgment.• Shows an appropriate conviction in the accuracy of own strategies and business decisions.• Exudes utmost confidence in own vision and strategies; believes completely in personal ability to achieve goals.
3 Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has confidence and conviction based on experience and expertise.• Confidently champions opinions and programs.• Is comfortable when challenged in executive forums.• Isn't afraid to take an unpopular stand or to appropriately question group consensus.• Readily takes appropriate measured risks.
2 Applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates the confidence to direct others; readily assumes team leadership responsibility.• Maintains own convictions in actions and decisions.• Is willing to take an unpopular stand or question group consensus when necessary.• Maintains own convictions in actions and decisions, yet indicates willingness to alter behavior based on valid suggestions of others.• When necessary, can express forceful opinions without alienating others.• Encourages team members to appropriately express their opinions and ideas.• Helps build confidence among team members.
1 Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is a self-assured self starter; can take appropriate action without being overly dependent on the approval of others.• Is willing to express opinions or assert ideas when required. Is willing to assert self to get own ideas heard.• Has self-assurance in areas of core responsibility.• Approaches new tasks with confidence.• Accepts other opinions when appropriate.
0 Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fails to listen; interrupts.• Spends time planning rebuttal rather than listening to message.• Sends the impression that the speaker is not welcome, the message not wanted. No eye contact. No verbal or nonverbal affirmations.• Does not control environment to ensure open dialogue and prevent distractions (e.g., doesn't forward phone calls, leaves office door open, sets up a distant, too formal, seating arrangement, etc.).

Significance

Your ability to assert your point of view effectively is key to your ultimate success. At the root of Assertiveness is confidence—a fundamental trait that impacts all facets of your life. In organizational contexts, it is a disservice if you cannot confidently represent your expertise and your opinion.

Best Ways To Develop

Continuous development to enhance strengths and remedy any liabilities is essential to maintaining self-esteem. Expertise, integrity and communications, three components of personal power, create confidence, which allows you to be assertive. Build your confidence through these power sources.

Improving Your Capacity

Inventory your assets. You do have a lot to contribute, and knowing what that is can be a first step.

Be aware of the importance of nonverbal communication when you express yourself. Up to 70 percent of what you communicate is nonverbal. Passive, weak body language can undermine what you are trying to say.

Read: *When I Say No I Feel Guilty, Volumes I and II (for managers and executives)* by Manuel J. Smith.

Attend: Many workshops are readily available on the topic. Most people find them very helpful.

Start Today

Monitor your conversations for the next 24 hours. Note how many times you used “hedging” phrases: perhaps, possibly, if you don’t mind, etc. Avoid them in the future.

Pick a topic about which you are knowledgeable and passionate. Find an opportunity today to express yourself.

Consider times where you were assertive. What conditions enabled that behavior? How can you recreate those conditions?

Tips

- Know the difference between being right and being righteous.
- Watch for blind spots.
- Balance objectivity with sensitivity.
- Be willing to confront but remember to preserve the relationship.

Remember, the key to improving competency is not just learning about the skill but choosing a takeaway and developing an action plan to put new behaviors into practice until it becomes a natural response.

Development Action Planning Form

Step 1: Choose a competency area to develop.

Target Competency: _____

Step 2: Describe a positive outcome in the target area of competence; include your vision of a preferred future state.

Goal Statement: _____

Vision Statement: _____

Step 3: List the benefits of achieving your desired end state.

Benefits: _____

Step 4: Brainstorm the actions you might take to achieve your goal. For each, anticipate obstacles and options for overcoming them.

Action Steps	Obstacles	Options
1.		
2.		
3.		

Step 5: Finalize your action steps based on your brainstorming in Step 4. Now, list each action you must take to achieve your goal, including time frames and resources you will need.

Action Steps	Time Frames	Resources
1.		
2.		
3.		

Lipscomb's CORE Competency Development Program helps improve the competency areas that are critical to achieving your life and career goals. Through course materials, suggested practice opportunities and personalized coaching, competency-based education focuses on developing a new set of skills you can apply to daily life. Visit [Lipscomb Online](#) for more information on our Certificate, Undergraduate, and Graduate degree programs.