EXECUTIVE EXCELLENCE

Practical Tools to Transform Your Leadership

ABSTRACT

Unlock your leadership potential with "Executive Excellence: 12 Exercises to Elevate Your Leadership," a practical workbook designed for executives seeking to overcome challenges and excel in today's dynamic business environment. Crafted by Dr. Hugo Velazco, a business psychologist and ICF-certified coach, this workbook offers 12 research-backed exercises to enhance self-awareness, decision-making, communication, and team leadership. Each exercise provides actionable insights to transform your leadership approach.

Created by Dr. Hugo Velazco
12 Exercises to Elevate Your Leadership

Introduction

Welcome to "Executive Excellence: 12 Exercises to Elevate Your Leadership," a workbook designed to help you enhance your leadership skills through practical, research-backed exercises. As an executive, you face unique challenges that require strategic thinking, strong interpersonal skills, self-awareness, and resilience. This workbook provides tools to reflect on your current practices, identify areas for growth, and take actionable steps toward becoming a more effective leader.

About Dr. Hugo Velazco

Dr. Hugo Velazco is a business psychologist with a PhD in Business Psychology and over 5 years of experience as an ICF-certified coach. With 15 years of industry experience, including 10 years in human resources, Dr. Velazco brings deep expertise in leadership development, organizational behavior, and executive coaching. As the owner of Coaching360x, he is dedicated to helping executives achieve their full potential.

How to Use This Workbook

Each of the 12 exercises focuses on a key aspect of leadership. Work through them sequentially or choose those most relevant to your needs. After completing the exercises, you'll gain insights into your strengths and areas for improvement, equipping you with strategies to enhance your leadership effectiveness. For personalized support, schedule your $20 leadership strategy call at https://calendly.com/coaching360x/connectioncall.

Table of Contents

Exercise 1: Enhancing Self-Awareness with the Johari Window

Self-awareness is foundational to effective leadership. The Johari Window helps you understand what you and others know about you, revealing blind spots and hidden strengths.

Instructions:

1. See four quadrants: Open, Blind, Hidden, Unknown.

Open	Blind
Hidden	Unknown

2. In the Open quadrant, list traits both you and others know (e.g., organized).

3. In the Blind quadrant, note feedback you've received that surprised you.

4. In the Hidden quadrant, list traits you know but haven't shared.

5. In the Unknown quadrant, consider traits neither you nor others recognize.

6. Reflect on how to expand the Open quadrant on next page.

7. **Reflection Questions:**

- What surprised you about your Blind spots?

- How can you seek feedback to reduce Blind areas?

- What Hidden traits could you share to build trust?

How Coaching Can Help:

An executive coach can provide objective feedback to uncover Blind and Unknown areas, enhancing your leadership effectiveness.

Reference: Luft, J., & Ingham, H. (1955). The Johari window, a graphic model of interpersonal awareness. *Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development*.

Exercise 2: Improving Communication through Active Listening

Active listening involves fully concentrating on and understanding what others say, strengthening team relationships.

Instructions:

1. Recall a recent conversation where you could have listened better.

2. Identify distractions or barriers to active listening.

3. In your next conversation, practice active listening: make eye contact, nod, paraphrase, and ask questions.

4. Note how active listening improves the interaction. Reflect on the next page.

Reflection Questions:

- What are common barriers to your active listening?

- How does active listening affect team relationships?

- What steps can you take to listen better?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching provides techniques and feedback to enhance communication skills.

Reference: Rogers, C. R., & Farson, R. E. (1957). *Active Listening*. Industrial Relations Center, University of Chicago.

Exercise 3: Effective Decision-Making with the DECIDE Model

Structured decision-making improves outcomes. The DECIDE model guides you through a clear process.

Instructions:

1. Identify a current or recent decision you need to make. Then go to the next page.

2. Apply the DECIDE steps:

o Define the problem.

o Establish criteria (e.g., cost, impact).

o Consider alternatives.

o Identify the best option.

o Develop and implement a plan.

o Evaluate and monitor the outcome.

3. Write your thoughts for each step.

o Define the problem.

o Establish criteria (e.g., cost, impact).

o Consider alternatives.

o Identify the best option.

o Develop and implement a plan.

o Evaluate and monitor the outcome.

Reflection Questions:

- How does a structured approach improve your decisions?

- What challenges do you face in this process?

- How can you apply this model regularly?

How Coaching Can Help:

A coach offers an external perspective to navigate complex decisions.

Reference: Guo, K. L. (2008). DECIDE: A decision-making model for more effective decision making by health care managers. *The Health Care Manager*, 27(2), 118-127.

Exercise 4: Prioritizing with the Eisenhower Matrix

The Eisenhower Matrix helps prioritize tasks by urgency and importance, boosting productivity.

Instructions:

1. List all current tasks and projects.

2. Categorize each into:

    o   Urgent and Important: Do now.

    o   Important, Not Urgent: Schedule.

    o   Urgent, Not Important: Delegate.

    o   Neither: Eliminate.

3. Reflect on how this improves your focus on the next page.

Reflection Questions:

- Which quadrant do you spend most time in?

- How can you delegate or eliminate tasks?

- How can you prevent important tasks from becoming urgent?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching develops time management strategies for high-impact work.

Reference: Covey, S. R. (1989). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Free Press.

Exercise 5: Resolving Conflict with the Thomas-Kilmann Model

The Thomas-Kilmann model identifies five conflict styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating.

Instructions:

1. Recall a recent workplace conflict.

2. Identify which style you used.

3. Consider which style might have been more effective.

4. Plan how to use a different style in a future conflict. Reflect on the next page.

Reflection Questions:

- What is your default conflict style?

- When is each style most appropriate?

- How can you balance assertiveness and cooperation?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching helps you navigate conflicts effectively, improving team dynamics.

Reference: Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R. H. (1974). *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*. Xicom.

Exercise 6: Building Teams with Belbin's Team Roles

Belbin's Team Roles identify nine roles (e.g., Plant, Coordinator) that contribute to team success.

Instructions:

1. List your team members and their strengths.

2. Match each to a Belbin role (search "Belbin Team Roles" for descriptions).

3. Identify missing roles and how they impact performance.

4. Plan to address gaps (e.g., training, hiring).

Reflection Questions:

- Which roles are strong in your team?

- How do missing roles affect outcomes?

- How can you leverage team strengths?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching enhances team-building strategies for better collaboration.

Reference: Belbin, R. M. (1981). *Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail.* Butterworth-Heinemann.

Exercise 7: Managing Change with Kotter's 8-Step Model

Kotter's model guides successful change: create urgency, form a coalition, create a vision, communicate, empower, create wins, build on change, anchor it.

Instructions:

1. Identify a current change initiative.

2. Apply Kotter's steps to assess progress.

3. Note one action to strengthen the change process.

Reflection Questions:

- Which steps are you executing well?

- What barriers hinder change?

- How can you sustain momentum?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching supports navigating complex change initiatives.

Reference: Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading Change*. Harvard Business School Press.

Exercise 8: Building Resilience for Stress Management

Resilience helps leaders manage stress. Mindfulness techniques can enhance resilience.

Instructions:

1. Start by choosing a mindfulness exercise below:

    1) Focusing on your breath and noticing thoughts without judgment (5 minutes).
    2) Experience your environment with all of your senses — touch, sound, sight, smell and taste.
    3) Intentionally bring an open, accepting, and discerning attention to everything you do.
    4) Find a quiet place 10 to 20 feet long and walk slowly. Maintain awareness of sensations.

2. Reflect on a recent stressful situation.

3. Identify one mindfulness strategy to use next time. Reflect more on the next page.

Reflection Questions:

- How does stress impact your leadership?

- What mindfulness techniques work for you?

- How can resilience improve your performance?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching builds resilience strategies for sustained performance.

Reference: Southwick, S. M., & Charney, D. S. (2012). *Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life's Greatest Challenges*. Cambridge University Press.

Exercise 9: Giving and Receiving Feedback with the SBI Model

The SBI model (Situation, Behavior, Impact) structures effective feedback.

Instructions:

1. Recall a situation needing feedback.

2. Write feedback using SBI: describe the Situation, Behavior, and Impact.

   Situation:

   Behavior:

   Impact:

3. Plan to deliver it and seek feedback in return. Reflect on the next page.

Reflection Questions:

- How does structured feedback improve clarity?

- What challenges do you face giving feedback?

- How can you encourage feedback from others?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching refines feedback skills for better performance.

Reference: Center for Creative Leadership. (2011). *Feedback That Works: How to Build and Deliver Your Message*.

Exercise 10: Achieving Work-Life Balance with the Wheel of Life

The Wheel of Life assesses balance across life areas (e.g., career, health, relationships).

Instructions:

1. Draw a circle, divide it into 8 segments (e.g., career, family, health).

2. Rate satisfaction (1-10) for each.

3. Identify one area to improve and plan one action. Reflect on the next page.

Reflection Questions:

- Which areas are out of balance?

- How does imbalance affect your leadership?

- What steps can restore balance?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching supports strategies for sustainable balance.

Reference: Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(3), 472-491.

Exercise 11: Boosting Motivation with Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness for motivation.

Instructions:

1. Assess by thinking about how your role meets these needs (1-10).

2. Identify one way to enhance one need (e.g., seek more autonomy).

3. Plan to implement it below. Then reflect on the next page.

Reflection Questions:

- Which need is least met?

- How does motivation impact your leadership?

- What changes can boost engagement?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching enhances motivation through tailored strategies.

Reference: Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. Plenum.

Exercise 12: Adapting Leadership Styles with Situational Leadership

Situational Leadership adapts styles (directing, coaching, supporting, delegating) to team members' needs.

Instructions:

1. List two team members and their development levels (e.g., low skill, high motivation).

2. Choose the appropriate leadership style for each.

3. Plan how to apply it below. Then reflect on the next page.

Reflection Questions:

- How does adapting your style improve outcomes?

- What challenges arise in shifting styles?

- How can you assess team needs accurately?

How Coaching Can Help:

Coaching refines leadership adaptability for team success.

Reference: Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1969). Life cycle theory of leadership. *Training & Development Journal*, 23(5), 26-34.

YOU FINISHED!

Congratulations on completing these exercises! You've taken important steps to elevate your leadership. To deepen your growth, schedule a $20 leadership strategy call with Dr. Hugo Velazco at https://calendly.com/coaching360x/connectioncall to explore personalized coaching for individuals or teams.

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References:

Ashforth, B. E., et al. (2000). All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(3), 472-491.

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