Turnaround Leadership Competencies

A Presentation by the West Comprehensive Center (WCC)
Outline

What is a competency?
Why are competencies important?
What are the competencies of turnaround leaders?
What are the critical actions of turnaround leaders?
Can you/how can you use competencies?
Purpose

1. Develop understanding of competencies
2. Apply understanding of competencies
What is a competency?

“…a pattern of thinking, feeling, acting or speaking that causes a person to be successful in a job or role.”

- Includes habits of behavior and motivation.
- May include patterns of action.

Source:
School Turnaround Leaders: Competencies for Success Public Impact, 2008
Why are competencies important?

Based on the work of David McClelland, cognitive psychologist from Harvard and later from the Hay group…

Studied highly successful leaders in analogous complex leadership roles.

Discovered that:

- Habits of behavior and underlying motivations (competencies) differentiate workers’ performance outcomes;
- Underlying competencies enable successful performance in a given job or role;
- Outstanding performance in complex jobs is driven more by underlying competencies than by readily observed skills and knowledge.
What are the competencies of turnaround leaders?

Public Impact identifies 4 clusters of turnaround competencies.

Driving for Results
- Achievement
- Initiative & Persistence
- Monitoring & Directiveness
- Planning Ahead

Influencing for Results
- Impact & Influence
- Team Leadership
- Developing Others

Problem Solving
- Analytical Thinking
- Conceptual Thinking

Showing Confidence to Lead
What are the most critical competencies?

Public Impact has found that some competencies are more critical than others.

Achievement:
The drive and actions to set challenging goals and reach a high standard of performance despite barriers.

Impact & Influence:
Acting with the purpose of affecting the perceptions, thinking, and actions of others.
Why are these more critical than others?

Because...

They usually require people to have and use high levels of many other competencies.

When used to select new leaders, they should increase the odds of choosing successful turnaround leaders.

Without these two, a candidate is not likely to be a successful turnaround leader.
What are critical actions for turnaround leaders?

Identify and focus on a few early wins with big payoffs.

Challenge organizational norms or rules that inhibit success.

Act quickly in a fast cycle: time is the enemy when the status quo is failure.

In combination, critical competencies and critical actions lead to success.
**Man on Fire**

**Critical Actions:**
What critical actions did Creasy (Denzel Washington) take to ensure Pita’s (Dakota Fanning’s) success?

**Critical Competencies:**
What critical competencies did Creasy demonstrate?
Man on Fire: The gunshot holds no fear and training
1. What critical actions were taken?

2. What critical competencies were demonstrated?
How can/should competencies be used?

Using Competencies to Improve School Turnaround Principal Success
Public Impact, 2011

Hiring effective turnaround leaders:

* Traditional interview techniques rarely uncover competencies that predict future performance
* Behaviorally oriented interviews about work successes and failures are more valid and successful
* Behavior Even Interview (BEI) – specialized interview technique that asks candidates to describe what they have done to achieve success
How can/should competencies be used?

Using Competencies to Improve School Turnaround Principal Success

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Evaluating turnaround leaders:

• Measurable results
• Professional skills
• Competencies critical for achieving results
How can/should competencies be used?

Using Competencies to Improve School Turnaround Principal Success

Public Impact, 2011

Developing turnaround leaders:

- Leaders can improve competencies with the right training;
- When competency gaps are large and early progress is poor, consider replacing, not developing the leader;
- Waiting to develop essential leader competencies on the job = failure.
Competencies aren't just for principals

Successful school turnaround requires district turnaround

District leaders must also demonstrate turnaround leader competencies
Turnaround Leadership in Practice

A case study of the Ogden School District, Utah, prepared by the WCC.

What competencies did the Superintendent demonstrate before going to UVA?

What does that tell you about some competencies?

Which competencies did he focus on after he attended UVA?

What does that tell you about other competencies?

What competencies did the principal demonstrate?

Could the principal have been successful without the superintendent? Visa versa?
Resources


Thank you for your time and attention!

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact...

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