

Are you a leader?



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most of us have been exposed to in our work lives and in the union. As part of this, we provide the students with a

“Being an effective NALC leader is much more than knowing the contract and being able to stand up to management. It’s also about having a vision of the future and thinking strategically. It’s about developing relationships and motivating people.”

self-assessment and ask them to rate themselves in various competencies we have established at the Leadership Academy as essential characteristics of a good leader, whether it is in a local branch or national office. (See the next column for the list.) These are also applicable to leadership roles we may hold outside of the union, such as in our community and faith organizations, in service groups and in our families.

If you are currently a leader in your branch, or are considering running for office, I challenge you to take the assessment and see where you stand. When you are finished, list two or three areas that provide “improvement opportunities” and set some goals you want to meet and some actions you will need to take to achieve them. For example, if you determine that you could improve your ability to “speak clearly and succinctly in a variety of communications settings,” then you might set a goal to become a

better public speaker and take the action of joining a local Toastmaster group within the next month or taking a class at the local community college during the next quarter. Don’t put this off. Working on yourself is one of the most important things you can do to become a better leader. A year from now, you may wish you had started today.

1. I readily take initiative.
2. I understand others and am able to get their cooperation in non-authority relationships.
3. I identify what activities are required to achieve desired results.
4. I raise new possibilities.
5. I demonstrate willingness to take calculated risks to achieve goals.
6. I ensure that short-term activities support long-term organizational goals.
7. I stay abreast of external trends or major developments that may influence the future of the union.
8. I know my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and limits.
9. I seek feedback.
10. I can be trusted to do the right thing.
11. I am honest and forthright.
12. I have credibility.
13. I develop networks and build alliances.
14. I can maneuver through political situations effectively to get things done.
15. I am effective in using influence to achieve a goal.
16. I work well in groups.
17. I demonstrate empathy toward others.
18. I distill ideas into focused messages that inspire support or action from others.
19. I am well organized.
20. I am a quick learner.
21. I continually strive to increase my knowledge and learn new skills.
22. I speak clearly and succinctly in a variety of communications settings.
23. I write clearly.
24. I listen attentively to people.
25. I am able to outline the tasks needed to accomplish the goal.
26. I am effective when it comes to solving problems.
27. I am knowledgeable in regard to the contract.
28. I understand the grievance process.
29. I represent the union’s interests effectively.
30. I can advance the union’s interests through a negotiated process.