Leadership Compass Activity  
(75 minutes)

This is a team building activity for an organizing coalition or action teams to use during their first or second meeting.

Teamwork begins with self-awareness and awareness of other people’s leadership styles. We can’t be good at everything so we need to bring together people with different styles and talents. This worksheet will help you and your team figure out how you can work collaboratively across leadership styles.

Purpose of activity:
- Identify different leadership styles among the group
- Assess whether the group has a good balance of leadership styles
- Discuss the implications of working across different styles

Part 1: Leadership styles (10 minutes)

The Leadership Compass is adapted from the Native American medicine wheel, which represents balance. Groups are more likely to be successful if there is a balance of leadership.

*This exercise was adapted from “Everyone Leads: Building Leadership from the Community Up,” p. 191-195, written by Paul Schmitz.*
A. Pass out the *Leadership Compass Activity Worksheet*. Ask each person to carefully read each statement. If they agree with the statement then they should check the box.

As a facilitator, if you think there are people in your group who might not have strong reading skills, read each statement out loud, giving time for people to check the box before moving on to the next statement.

1. I make space for everyone to be heard and to be engaged in the work  
2. I am a good listener and have strong facilitation skills  
3. I avoid conflicts  
4. I pay attention to the values of a group  
5. I focus on process instead of goals  
6. I am sensitive to people’s individual feelings  
7. I don’t like to take risks  
8. I have excellent planning and documentation skills  
9. I am very detail oriented  
10. I have a tendency to overanalyze  
11. I am sometimes insensitive to people’s passions  
12. I high standards for work products  
13. I sometimes have a hard time making decisions when faced with many options  
14. I like challenges  
15. I persevere through obstacles  
16. I sometimes overlook process  
17. I am decisive  
18. I am good at organizing and motivating people for action  
19. I am often argumentative  
20. I am often impatient  
21. I am good at seeing the big picture  
22. I sometimes lose sight of process and details  
23. I am innovative  
24. I like problems solving  
25. I have difficulty sustaining passion after initial enthusiasm dies down  
26. I am willing to experiment  
27. I struggle to follow through
B. When everyone has checked the appropriate boxes, pass out the *Leadership Compass Handout*. Read the following and have the participants note their results:

- If you checked the most boxes between 1 and 7 then you are a Nurturer. You are good at helping other people to do their best.
- If you checked the most boxes between 7 and 13 then you are a Teacher. You are good at analyzing information and situations.
- If you checked the most boxes between 13 and 20 then you are a Mobilizer. You are good at getting other people excited and committed to working on a project.
- If you checked the most boxes between 21 and 27 then you are a Visionary. You are good at thinking up new ideas and plans that help move the work forward.

C. Go around the room and ask each person to briefly share which style they have.

**Part 2: Small group activity** (20 minutes)

Ask people to break into four groups according to their leadership style and discuss:

- What are the assets or good things about your leadership style?
- How has your leadership style helped you make a decision or lead a group?

**Part 3: Large group discussion** (45 minutes)

After the small group sharing activity, come back together as a large group and discuss:

- What have you found most rewarding and challenging about working with the other leadership styles?
- What do you notice about the balance of leadership styles in your group?
- How might the balance of leadership styles in your group help you work well together?
- What can you do if a group is unbalanced? How will you adapt and find ways to be flexible?
- As a working group, what will you do to ensure that everyone’s leadership style is honored in a meaningful way?

At the end of the discussion, remind people to think about their leadership styles between now and the next meeting. Encourage them to reach out to other people on the team to continue the conversation that was started today.

For the next meeting, prepare name tags that include everyone’s name and their leadership style.
Leadership Compass Worksheet

Read the following statements. Put a check next to the statements that apply to you. When you are done, the facilitator will share the answer key with you to reveal your leadership style.

___ 1. I make space for everyone to be heard and to be engaged in the work
___ 2. I am a good listener and have strong facilitation skills
___ 3. I avoid conflicts
___ 4. I pay attention to the values of a group
___ 5. I focus on process instead of goals
___ 6. I am sensitive to people’s individual feelings
___ 7. I don’t like to take risks
___ 8. I have excellent planning and documentation skills
___ 9. I am very detail oriented
___ 10. I have a tendency to overanalyze
___ 11. I am sometimes insensitive to people’s passions
___ 12. I high standards for work products
___ 13. I sometimes have a hard time making decisions when faced with many options
___ 14. I like challenges
___ 15. I persevere through obstacles
___ 16. I sometimes overlook process
___ 17. I am decisive
___ 18. I am good at organizing and motivating people for action
___ 19. I am often argumentative
___ 20. I am often impatient
___ 21. I am good at seeing the big picture
___ 22. I sometimes lose sight of process and details
___ 23. I am innovative
___ 24. I like problems solving
___ 25. I have difficulty sustaining passion after initial enthusiasm dies down
___ 26. I am willing to experiment
___ 27. I struggle to follow through
Leadership Compass Handout

Leadership Compass

What’s your leadership style?

What’s the leadership style of other people on the team?

Which groups of traits best represents how you like to work?

Most people have elements of more than one style but there is one dominant style. No trait is better or worse than another trait, just a different style.

Nurturer (numbers 1-7)
- Makes space for everyone to be heard and engaged in the work
- Good listening and facilitation skills
- Avoids conflicts
- Observant of group values
- Focuses on process instead of goals
- Doesn’t like to take risks
- Sensitive to people’s individual feelings

Teacher (numbers 7-13)
- Excellent planning and documentation skills
- May be averse to risk
- Very detail oriented
- Tendency to overanalyze
- Maybe insensitive to people’s passions
- High standards for work product
- May have a hard time making decisions when faced with many options

Mobilizer (numbers 14-20)
- Likes challenges
- Perseveres through obstacles
- May overlook process
- Decisive
- Good at organizing and motivating people for action
- May be argumentative
- May be impatient

Visionary (numbers 21-27)
- Good at seeing the big picture
- May lose sight of process and details
- Innovative
- Likes problems solving
- Has difficulty sustaining passion after initial enthusiasm wanes away
- Willing to experiment
- Struggles to follow through