



7 MUST-HAVE SKILLS FOR EMERGING LEADERS

Stepping into leadership can feel overwhelming—where do you even start? The truth is, great leaders aren't born; they're built. And the best way to grow is by mastering the essential skills that set strong leaders apart.

This 7-skill checklist is your shortcut to developing core leadership abilities. Backed by research and real-world experience, this guide will help you lead with confidence—without the guesswork.

Skill 1: Coaching Techniques

Coaching skills are fundamental to leading your team toward growth and engagement. To improve your coaching skills, focus on asking powerful questions when you meet with team members.

Example: A team member who recently received a promotion confides that they feel overwhelmed with their new responsibilities. Initiate a coaching conversation by asking open-ended questions like, "What would your ideal transition look like?" or "What is the gift in this challenge?"



Skill 2: Conflict Management

What would happen if your perspective shifted from 'conflict is bad' to 'conflict is an opportunity for change?' To improve your conflict management skills, practice approaching conflict with neutrality, curiosity, and empathy.

Example: Two team members disagree on how to approach a project. Find common ground by getting curious. What is the 'why' behind each person's perspective? What shared goals do they both want to achieve? What are potential solutions that honor these shared goals?



Skill 3: Emotional Intelligence

Leaders must build and maintain healthy relationships to support team alignment and harmony. To improve your emotional intelligence, start by exploring self-awareness. Leadership isn't only about guiding others—you must also lead yourself. Set goals for your self-development and stick to them.

Example: A high-performing team member has been consistently late to key meetings. Practice self-awareness by recognizing your initial frustration and checking with the team member when your emotions are regulated. Through curiosity, empathy, and active listening, you learn that the team member has had challenges finding childcare. In this situation, self-management protected the worker from additional stress and allowed them to express their difficulties openly.

Skill 4: Authentic Leadership

Who are you as a leader? Leading authentically benefits you, your team, and your entire organization. To lead more authentically, identify your personal values and how they manifest in your daily leadership approach. This exercise will help you identify areas of misalignment and create an improvement plan.

Example: You admire and try to replicate your mentor's leadership style. However, you've noticed that you leave meetings and conversations feeling exhausted. After reflecting on your values, you realize that you'll feel better and likely build more trust with your team if you respond to situations from your own point of view.



Skill 5: Adaptive Leadership

As a leader, each day presents new and potentially challenging situations for you to address. Growing your range of leadership styles enables you to adapt your leadership approach based on the circumstances. To improve your situational leadership skills, learn about various leadership styles and determine your dominant style. From here, you can practice identifying moments where an alternative leadership style may be more effective.

Example: Servant leadership is your dominant leadership style, but you struggle to balance empowering your team with meeting organizational goals. To manage this challenge, consider removing your servant leadership hat and trying on the transformational leadership hat to motivate your team toward milestones and collective goals. .

Skill 6: Human-Centric Change Management

When you think of “change management,” what comes to mind? While planning and gaining buy-in may be at the top of your mind, let’s shift the focus to your team. How can you best support them through significant organizational shifts? To improve your human-centric change management skills, learn about the natural human responses to change and the popular models that help teams navigate these dynamics.

Example: Your company was recently acquired, and your team members are concerned about the transition. You know that this change can create a sense of uncertainty and lack of control. To mitigate these feelings, you reiterate your commitment to transparency and involving the team in the process—and follow through on those promises.



Skill 7: Giving & Receiving Feedback

How you deliver and receive feedback matters. Impactful feedback supports your team’s collective growth, trust, and performance. To improve your feedback skills, practice delivering constructive, intentional, and development-focused feedback.

Example: One team member shares that they get nervous during performance reviews because they aren’t used to receiving feedback. In this situation, you can add time for feedback exchange in every 1:1 meeting. Practicing feedback delivery more frequently creates a team culture that embraces improvement and prepares people for more feedback-heavy meetings, like performance reviews.



READY TO GET STARTED?

Leadership isn't about figuring everything out on your own—it's about continuous growth. Now that you know the **7 essential leadership skills**, it's time to **put them into action**.

With the ICAgile **Leadership Essentials Skills Collection**, you'll gain the practical tools and knowledge you need to lead with confidence. These **bite-sized, high-impact courses** are designed for busy professionals like you—each one takes just **2-4 hours** to complete, so you can start applying what you learn right away.

LEARN THE SKILLS THAT WILL SET YOU APART AS A LEADER.

[CLICK HERE TO EXPLORE THE LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS COURSES](#)

