



Leader Development Improvement Guide

What is the LDIG

The Leader Development Improvement Guide (LDIG) is organized around the Army's leader core competencies and helps leaders gain proficiency at those aspects of leadership. Those who have identified leadership skills as an area of growth should use this guide to develop leadership capabilities with a personalized approach.

The LDIG is useful for leaders, supervisors of leaders, and coaches. The LDIG provides Army leaders at all levels with ideas and activities for professional growth, development, and continuous learning that can be customized and incorporated into an IDP or used informally when a leader wants to improve in a particular area.

Depending on a leader's learning style and situation, traditional means of leadership development, including training courses and books, may not be the only solution. The LDIG can be used as a jumping off point to creating customized developmental activities aligned closely with the leader's career goals.

The guide can be used as a starting place for a leader to think about how to develop AND is a great way to expand and personalize a leader's ideas for development. Developmental goals can be defined through MSAF coaching sessions, discussions with supervisors, leader awareness of self-development, and other means. Once these goals are established and the leader's desired outcomes defined, a leader selects developmental activities. The LDIG is a comprehensive resource guide offering a variety of approaches, ideas, and actions leaders can customize to accomplish their goals.

Leaders use the LDIG to explore and select activities for their own development when:

- Completing an IDP. The LDIG serves as a helpful resource to write personalized, effective developmental activities.
- Selecting development activities tied to a specific leadership competency.
- Seeking creative ideas for self-development.
- Selecting developmental activities that are aligned with preferred learning styles.

Supervisors use the LDIG to support their direct reports planning development when:

- Discussing development planning with a direct report .
- Helping a direct report build on a strength and/or an area for development.
- A direct report takes on new work and/or has been recently promoted.

Coaches use the LDIG to support leaders planning development when:

- Conducting coaching sessions to discuss approaches to development .
- Brainstorming ideas for development by competency area and components.
- Sending to leaders prior to coaching. It helps the leader get ready for an IDP discussion .
- Preparing for a session. It gives examples of developmental activities the coach might ask the leader about considering.

In this Issue

- Introduction to the LDIG
- The value of the LDIG to coaches
- When to use the LDIG
- Using the LDIG to help leaders evaluate and expand on capabilities
- Using the LDIG to help leaders personalize and customize developmental activities
 - Practical Exercise
 - Case Study

The LDIG is located on the Virtual Improvement Center (VIC) at the following location:

https://msaf.army.mil/files/MSAF_LDIG_Sep_2012.pdf



LDIG - Personalizing Developmental Activities

The purpose of the LDIG is to help leaders personalize developmental activities. The LDIG demonstrates how to consider personalizing the Expanding Capabilities section of each component. After leaders determine what to improve upon, he/she and you can use the table below (LDIG, Page 11) to create a specific and effective plan to learn or practice that skill.

To assess how to personalize a suggested developmental activity, first consider what behaviors the leader needs to ask for support and feedback on. Next, help the leader identify what he/she wants to learn, and determine how to practice.

Feedback	Ask for concrete feedback...	From others about how you are doing with specific issues and areas of performance.
	Gain support...	From peers, colleagues, friends, or other people who can partner with you by giving you encouragement or recognizing your success.
	Consult...	With friends, superiors, peers, subordinates, coaches, mentors, or other professionals who can give advice on your strengths or areas of concern.
Study	Observe...	Other leaders, professionals, and similar organizations and note leadership behaviors, traits, attributes, and attitudes that are most/least effective.
	Make time to reflect on...	Personal or situational characteristics that relate to the strength or need. Consider alternative perspectives offered by others on an issue of interest.
	Read...	Books, articles, manuals, and professional publications.
	Investigate...	A topic through internet or library searches, inquiry, gathering or asking questions, and soliciting information and materials from others.
Practice	Practice...	A skill or behavior that needs improvement in a work situation or away from the unit.
	Participate in training...	Including Army schools, unit training programs, outside seminars, degree programs, and professional certifications.
	Teach...	A skill you are learning to someone else.
	Accept an on-the-job opportunity...	That stretches your abilities, such as giving presentations, teaching classes, volunteering for special duty assignments, assuming "acting" positions, job cross-training, and representing the boss at meetings.
	Explore off-the-job applications...	Such as joining or leading community groups, trying a new skill in a volunteer organization, or giving presentations to schools and civic organizations.

If/Then Model for Identifying Developmental Goals

The table to the right is presented in the LDIG on page 12. The purpose of the If/Then Model is to break developmental needs into categories so leaders can begin to translate developmental needs into organized and comprehensive developmental activities.

Coaches can use the If/Then model for:

- Guiding leaders to think about the type of activities they should do to address a need.
- Helping leaders develop comprehensive developmental activities

If....	Then...
I need more insight into how well I am demonstrating a competency or component and what I can do to improve...	I should seek Feedback . Feedback is an opportunity to gain information from others about how well you are doing. Feedback can include direct feedback from others, your own observations, analysis of response patterns, and acknowledgement of outcomes.
I need to gain or expand my understanding of theory, principles or knowledge of a leader competency or component...	I should Study . Study facilitates an intellectual understanding of what you are learning. Study can include attending training courses, reading books or articles, watching movies, observing others on the job, and analyzing various sources of information.
I need more experience or I need to enhance/build a current capability through increased opportunities to perform a leader competency or component...	I should Practice . Practice provides activities to convert your learning into action. Practice includes engaging in physical exercises, methods of team activities, "walk throughs", and drills.

LDIG - Practical Exercise

Below is a form from the LDIG that leaders can use to create refined development activities. In order to coach leaders on using the LDIG, coaches must have a level of familiarity with it. The leader will not be excited to use the LDIG if it seems that his/her coach doesn't know about it. This exercise is designed to give coaches an opportunity to put themselves in the role of the leader so that coaches have an understanding of the leader's experience and the types of questions that a leader will be confronting when they use the LDIG.

1. Use the LDIG to create a refined developmental activity for yourself based on a larger developmental goal that you have.
2. As you move through the questions that the leaders will use to develop their goals, consider some additional questions that you can use to help leaders refine their goals.

Key Questions to Fine Tuning Development Activities

Suggested Development Activity:	
Questions I Could Consider...	My Answer...
Developmental Activity: What do I want to do? (Select desired activity)	
Desired Outcome: If I accomplish the developmental activity I selected, what would success look like? What do I hope to achieve?	
Method: What resources will I need? What support do I need from others? Who do I want to support me?	
Time Available: When will I do this?	
Limits: What factors will affect or hinder successful implementation of this activity?	
Controls: What can be done to minimize or control the factors that would hinder implementation of this activity?	

Learn More: Resources on Army MSAF

Want to Know More About the Leader Development Guide?

You can view the guide here:
https://msaf.army.mil/files/MSAF_LDIG_Sep_2012.pdf

Want to know more about the Individual Development Plan process that Army leaders use in conjunction with the LDIG to structure self-development?

You can view the IDP Guide here:
[https://msaf.army.mil/files/IDP%20Guide.Final\(2\).pdf](https://msaf.army.mil/files/IDP%20Guide.Final(2).pdf)

Want to know more about the Virtual Improvement Center?

The Virtual Improvement Center (VIC) is available as a resource for leader development on the MSAF website. The VIC offers numerous developmental activities including readings, exercises, and simulations organized by the Core Leader Competencies to make it easy to search by developmental need. You can view the VIC here:
<https://msaf.army.mil/My360/VIC/Default.aspx>



LDIG - Case Study

Case Study (related coaching tips can be seen on the right)

LTC Brown and MAJ Perry are holding a coaching session. During the session, MAJ Perry states that an important and timely development goal based on his MSAF feedback is “Give well organized command briefings where I appear confident and my voice projects clearly.” MAJ Perry told LTC Brown he looked at the LDIG section on Communicates before the session, got some ideas, and thinks the best way to improve command briefings is to read “A Briefing for Leaders” by Dilenschneider, one of the resources listed in the LDIG.

LTC Brown then asks, “If you are successful in achieving this goal, how will you know?”. MAJ Perry thinks for a moment and replies, “I guess maybe my audience will know if I am effective.” Then LTC Brown asks, “How do you learn best?”. MAJ Perry says, “Well, when I wanted to write better, more organized memos, I learned a lot by practicing.” Then LTC Brown suggests they look at the LDIG page 58, where they find suggestions for Employs Engaging Communication Techniques. He guides the MAJ to the “Practice” section on development activities and says, “You said you learn well through practice. Take a look at the developmental activities under Practice. What types of practice might help you to achieve your goal?” The MAJ replies, “I think that a successful command briefing is my goal, so maybe practicing that.”

LTC Brown shifts the conversation and suggests both he and MAJ Perry look again at the LDIG on page 58. LTC Brown asks, “You said your audience could help assess your success, how might getting feedback from them help you to improve at delivering a command briefing?” MAJ Perry says, “Oh I get it, if I get feedback from the audience, their input would help me know how effective I am. But should I ask everyone? I really don’t have time to do that.” LTC Brown asks the follow up, “How might getting feedback from one or two people you trust be helpful?” MAJ Perry replies, “I know I can count on LTC Cary and Ms. Thompson for feedback.”

Next LTC Brown asks, “What specific feedback will you ask for?” MAJ Perry responds, “I’ll ask three things: how well organized was I, how strong and clear was my voice and did I look confident.” LTC Brown replies, “What specifically does confidence look like?” MAJ Perry says, “When I stand tall, look at my audience, and don’t say “um” and pause too much. That’s what confidence looks like.” LTC Brown says, “Great! That definition should help your feedback providers tell you about your confidence. Will you add the development activity and the three feedback areas to your IDP?” MAJ Perry says “Yes.”

Reading Between the Lines

- The LDIG if/then model suggests:
If a leader needs...

_____ he/she should _____
Insight —————> seek feedback
Knowledge —————> study
Experience —————> practice

The MAJ has done some homework and demonstrated effort, however, he has chosen to read a book when what he needs most is experience.

- The coach guides the MAJ by asking questions to get him to realize that perhaps practicing would be the most effective developmental activity.
- The MAJ has realized the value of practicing in order to perform better. Now he can put into practice the learning material he had already planned on studying. The coach follows up to get the MAJ to consider how he will measure his success with feedback. The coach has shaped the MAJ’s original goals, so now it contains a blended solution incorporating study, practice, and feedback. Coaches can use their abilities to help leaders build more comprehensive developmental goals.
- The LDIG helps leaders to move from a general goal to a specific, developmental activity. The coach helped the MAJ to be specific about the developmental activity and how it will be measured. Lastly, the coach gets the MAJ to document the developmental activity in an IDP.

Participation in Army MSAF is required by AR 350-1, Appendix K for all Army leaders and units. Leaders who participate in MSAF benefit from new insights into their strengths and capabilities, and their weaknesses. Use of resources associated with the MSAF program, such as coaching and the Virtual Improvement Center (described on page 2), allow leaders to build upon strengths and improve areas of need.



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