

Long Term Focus (LTF)

Long Term Focus combines reasoned and realistic judgment and commitment to key outcomes. It demands a blending of visionary thought and drive with pragmatism and perseverance, and has been described as “steering a steady course through uncharted or difficult waters”. Individuals with this competency have the ability to maintain the commitment of others, and rely upon self-confidence and insight to meet individual/situational/organizational challenges.

<i>This Means...</i>	<i>This Doesn't Mean...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remaining focused, clear decision-making and steering others in challenging organizational times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letting the 'tides' drive your decisions when things seem unclear without evaluating the impact that could have
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looking at 'both sides of the coin' before making a decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letting your personal biases get in the way and cloud your judgement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being practical and tenacious in your commitment to reach key outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being averse to adapting to changes required in the plan to reach outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being resilient and dealing productively with stress; helping others to do the same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letting the situation take control of your actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stabilizing upheaval amongst colleagues by sharing your own vision of the path required to reach the vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • backing down on your conviction to reach the end result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • painting a realistic picture for others of challenges or obstacles that may come up in reaching a desired goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pretending all is well and that you will reach the goal no matter what obstacles come up

**Developmental
Activities**

Level 1-2 Activities

Think before you react.

- Take a deep breath, count to three in your head and then re-evaluate the situation.
- Determine what additional information you might need to fully assess the situation.
- If you feel what you want to say or do something that may be inappropriate then don't do it, wait until you can revisit the situation with a clear head.

Remove yourself from emotionally charged situations.

- If it's a phone call, put the person on hold temporarily or tell them you'll call back; If in a meeting, excuse yourself.
- This will allow your emotions to subside before you act.
- Be aware of your own and other's emotions.

Reflection Tip:

- * Make a list of the issues that are causing concern.

Take a longer-term project or assignment that you have become involved in and invest time to look ahead for potential problems.

- Break down the project or assignment into all the critical tasks and key milestones.
- Analyze each task and identify any potential areas of risk. Try to determine any areas where something could potentially go wrong such as an untried technology or a shortage of experienced employees.
- Sort the potential problems into high and low risk and prepare possible alternatives if the potential problems you have identified should occur.
- Review your task break-down, risk analysis and alternatives with your leader.
- Implement an action plan to address those risks.

Reflection Tip:

- * Consider both the potential probability and potential impact of each risk.

Identify obstacles and analyze what is the root cause of each obstacle.

- Look ahead over the next three months at each of the projects you are working on or plan to work on. With which project do you anticipate encountering the obstacles?
- Identify what actions you can take to lessen or overcome the problem before you encounter it.

- Write out these actions in a plan, delegating responsibilities where appropriate, and targeted completion dates. Put the plan into action and keep a note of progress.
- Have contingency plans in place.

Reflection Tip:

* Are there any common obstacles across projects?

Identify a situation where there are several possible courses of action you can take to move ahead with your vision and initiatives.

- Write down the situation.
- List the criteria you will use to evaluate each option down the left side of the chart.
- Identify several possible options to the problem. Write these across the top of the chart.

Criteria	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Resource costs (e.g., time, people, capital)			
Profitability			
Political Risk			
Efficiency			

- Determine how well each option meets each criteria. Assign a weight for each option against each criteria using the scale below:
 - ⇒ 1 = Option does not meet criteria
 - ⇒ 2 = Option minimally meets criteria
 - ⇒ 3 = Option somewhat meets criteria
 - ⇒ 4 = Option fully meets criteria
 - ⇒ 5 = Option exceeds criteria

Criteria	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Resource costs (e.g., time, people, capital)	1	2	3
Profitability	3	4	4
Political Risk	4	5	2
Efficiency	3	2	1
TOTALS:			
Pros/Cons			

Selection			
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- Total the scores for each option at the bottom of the chart.
- Determine the pros and cons of each option on the chart.
- Select the option which best meets your most important criteria.

Reflection Tip:

- * You may wish to assign a weighting to your criteria and determine a weighted score for each option.

Assess the costs and benefits of a plan.

- Identify a difficult business situation you are going to have to confront over the next few days or weeks and list the choices of action you have.
- List the most likely significant consequences for each choice (use the table shown in the example at the end of this exercise).
- Rate the importance of each consequence. Use a five-point scale:
⇒ 1 (not very important) to 5 (very important).
- Label each consequence as a cost (-) or as a benefit (+).
- Make a rough estimate as to the likelihood of each consequence. Use 0% (certain the consequence won't happen) to 100% (certain the consequence will happen).
- Multiply the importance rating by the likelihood value for each consequence and sum the total (see the example following).

Example: Should we introduce a new program to our already busy schedule?

Consequence	Importance	Likelihood	Total
Improve Service	+4	100	400
Positive response by customers	+3	50	150
Increased stress level	-5	100	-500
TOTAL			+50

In this example, the analysis indicates the benefits outweigh the costs for this particular choice of action.

- Repeat the above analysis for each choice of action you have identified.
- Select the option with the highest totals once you have completed the totals for each option.

- Review your analysis with your leader and ask for his or her input. Add any other consequences you both identify and repeat your analysis.
- Ensure nothing important is missing and commit to your course of action.

Reflection Tip:

- * Keep a written record of the decisions you make based on this technique, and the outcomes of these decisions.

Level 3 Activities

Capitalize on opportunities to move forward with your vision and initiatives.

- Identify any specific issues or challenges that continuously resurface and impede progress in the unit.
- Think about how you could leverage the frustration and lack of success in addressing the issue or challenge to promote making changes.
- Plan to advocate your change views at the next available opportunity.

Reflection Tip:

- * Adapt your message such that you address the particular concerns of those you need to influence.

Enlist the support you need for a new idea, to “stay the course”.

- Identify the people whose support you need and communicate the vision/situation.
- Anticipate what each of these people thinks about your vision/initiative before you present your ideas.
- Think about what level of involvement these people will expect in developing, implementing or supporting your ideas.
- Develop a strategy to build the support you need from each key person.

Reflection Tip:

- * Think outside the box to identify change agents at all levels.

Instill into others your passion for an initiative and encourage others to develop commitment.

- Identify opportunities with your branch/Organization to emphasize how the current work effort is related to the initiative.

- Involve direct reports and other stakeholders from the beginning (i.e., solicit input and insight, communicate the vision, involve them in the development of the plan).
- When setting goals with your direct reports, ensure that they are referencing the initiative as one of the goals which their specific efforts will deliver.
- Congratulate people on their efforts and achievements throughout the initiative and hold “small victory celebrations” as each milestone is met.
- Talk to your employees and ask what they are doing to support the initiative.

Reflection Tip:

- * Identify people who will give you candid feedback on how well the initiative is supported at the grass roots level, and ask them what you might do differently.

Strengthen your confidence in taking a clear stand on difficult or unpopular issues.

- Talk with a colleague who has made a good decision that was initially unpopular.
- Ask him or her how they dealt with other people’s opposition and how he or she presented arguments in favour of the decision. Incorporate some of the strategies in presenting your own arguments.
- Make a practice of acknowledging that your stand on an issue may be unpopular with others. Be sure to explain why your point of view should be considered.

Develop a win-win strategy for resolving conflict and minimizing stress.

- Identify a difficult situation where you have a significant disagreement with another person.
- Categorize your typical negotiating style into one of the categories below (be honest with yourself).
 - ⇒ Win-Lose -- where you typically see yourself as winning and the other party losing in the process
 - ⇒ Lose-Lose -- where you typically see both yourself and the other party losing
 - ⇒ Lose-Win -- where you typically see yourself losing or giving in during the process
 - ⇒ Win-Win -- where both you and the other party being satisfied with the outcome
- Meet with your manager or a trusted peer to review the situation and ask for suggestions on how you and the other party can move closer to a win-win agreement.
- Apply your win-win strategies to resolve the conflict.
 - ⇒ find a goal which both you and the other person can agree and focus on.
 - ⇒ maintain a focus on your common objectives.

- ⇒ monitor your thoughts and feelings throughout the discussion. Note the reactions you are having to what the other person says. How does the other person respond to your actions?
- Discuss the results of the meeting with your manager or a trusted peer.
 - ⇒ review the initial starting positions of yourself and the other person. How much closer were both of you at the end of the discussion?
 - ⇒ review what you thought and felt at the time. Did you experience strong emotions? Discuss what you did to control your feelings.

Reflection Tip:

- * Plan a strategy for incorporating what you have learned to successfully resolve your next difficult situation.

Build awareness of what you are feeling in stressful situations.

- Stop and ask yourself the following questions next time you are in a stressful situation:
 - What is happening right now? what am I?
 - ⇒ doing? (pause)
 - ⇒ thinking? (pause)
 - ⇒ feeling? (pause)
- What do I want to do right now? Think about your objectives in the current situation. What do you want to achieve?
- What am I doing that is getting in the way of achieving my objectives? Think about what you want to do next. Say to yourself, "I choose to..."
- Be clear about your choice of action, then do it.

Reflection Tip:

- * Pace yourself so you don't wear yourself down. Numerous studies have proven that some stress has a positive impact on an individual's performance. At some point, though, stress becomes a negative force, and will very quickly interfere with your effectiveness. You need to learn where that point is for you, as it is different for everyone.

Keep a log, over the next month, of situations that are particularly stressful and involve interpersonal conflict and stress.

- Write down the key points describing the situation.
 - ⇒ when did it occur, who was involved, what was the outcome?
- Note how you reacted to the situation. What did you think, feel and do at the time? What was the outcome? Were you satisfied with the result of your behaviour?

- Review the situations and try to identify any common themes.
- Recognize if there are specific types of situations that cause you to react badly.
- Work on improving your reaction to stress.
- Use the chart below to keep track of these situations.

Stressful Situation	Reaction	Outcome

Reflection Tip:

- * Think about what you could change in your schedule, priorities or outlook that might make situations less stressful for you, and feel more like positive challenges. Build an action plan for making these changes and follow through.

Investigate the barriers that prevent agreement in conflict situations.

- Determine the root cause for disagreement. Consider the following categories:
 - ⇒ Facts – what are the issues? what actually happened? what is the data or information?
 - ⇒ Methods – how should the situation be resolved? what are the steps?
 - ⇒ Goals – what needs to be accomplished?
 - ⇒ What outcome would best satisfy everyone involved?
 - ⇒ Values – what is important to each individual or group involved in the situation?
- Use the above categories to help establish the source of the disagreement or conflict. Discuss these sources with those involved to help clarify assumptions and, in doing so, reduce tension and clear the way for removing barriers to resolution.
- Listen to the viewpoints of others as if you are hearing them for the first time. Be open to new ideas and perspectives.
- Consider how the other person views the situation. Seeing the situation from the other person's perspective may provide new insights to resolving the conflict.

Practice calming others.

- Be on the lookout for situations where you can help others calm down. When there is an opportunity, seize the change to practice calming others.
- Try a variety of techniques such as:
 - ⇒ Calmly listening to the person who is upset
 - ⇒ Speaking in a calming tone of voice
 - ⇒ Holding yourself in a relaxed, non-threatening way (body language)

- You can be confident that with practice you will become increasingly skillful at calming others.

Reflection Tip:

- * After each incident reflect on what worked and what didn't.

Level 4 Activities

Develop your skills in preparing and delivering motivational and engaging speeches and presentations.

- Use the following guidelines in developing the speech or presentation.
 - ⇒ Begin your speech or presentation with a strong and explicit statement of purpose. Answer the question "Why are we here?" "What do we need to achieve?"
 - ⇒ Provide an overview of what you intend to address. Answer the question "What is it we are going to talk about?"
 - ⇒ Give the appropriate background so that the audience understands the context. If necessary, explain any technical terms or concepts.
- Constantly monitor the audience's reaction to adjust your tempo and maximize the effect of points that seem to arouse interest.
- Where possible, personalize the information you are presenting in order to help convey your passion for the message.

Reflection Tip:

- * What part of your speech or presentation elicited the most positive reaction? Why?

Conceptualize and articulate your vision of an initiative or new direction

- Review all the events surrounding the initiative in your department/unit, such as changes to the strategy.
- Anticipate the reasons behind potential resistance to the initiative and think about what actions you can take to alleviate that resistance.
- Build a persuasive case for the initiative that is personally meaningful to people and develop a communication plan to articulate the initiative. Present the message to a select group for feedback on the content. Make any necessary changes.
- Implement the communication plan to your organization as well as others who will be impacted. Ensure the vision is visible to all staff. Develop multiple two-way communication channels so that you can effectively monitor the organization's reaction to the message and make yourself available to answer any questions.

Reflection Tip:

* Consider concise pictures or statements that sum up your vision.