Vision Achievement SKILLS

# Professional versus Executive

## Two Distinct Approaches to Leadership and Contribution

START HERE

OBJECTIVES

1. To help people began to understand the conceptual and operational differences between an executive and professional approach to work.
2. To help people think through which role they more naturally play.
3. To briefly explain the professional-executive continuum.
4. To help people think through which style is most desirable in their current situation.
5. To provide an opportunity for thinking through some changes if someone determines that their current role requires them to move more towards the executive side of the professional-executive continuum .

I. Professional versus Executive - The Differences.

A. Personal Style.

1. Who Am I?

***Professional:*** An expert, the best.

***Executive:*** I know some things but I'd like to find others that are better than me to get this done.

2. My focus is . . .

***Professional:*** Personal doing and contribution.

***Executive:*** Thinking big picture - finding resources.

3. When repetitive problems occur I . . .

***Professional:*** Simply redouble my effort and try to get some more helpers.

***Executive:*** Thinking big picture - finding resources.

B. Leadership and Management.

1. What is my leadership focus?

   ***Professional:*** What needs to be done next, why is it important, and then, if at all possible, do it myself.

   ***Executive:*** What needs to be done next, why is it important, and what resource can I bring to bear on the need at hand.

2. How should I spend my time?

   ***Professional:*** Getting the job done. If you want it done right you should either do it yourself or closely monitor those who are needed to help.

   ***Executive:*** I spend most of my time thinking about the next steps. I will coach my down line people but they need to do the job without undue involvement from me.

3. How closely do people need to be managed?

   ***Professional:*** Quite closely. If you want things done right you have to control people fairly tightly to insure the proper result. In areas in which I am good you can count on me for tight management.

   ***Executive:*** Most people simply need to be given the desired results and then left to get it done. If they need help I will do some coaching but I am certainly not going to come even remotely close to doing their job for them.

4. How do you insure quality control?

   ***Professional:*** The best way to assure quality is to do it yourself or, at the very least, closely track those who are helping you. If you can't do it right - and I am the one who defines right - why do it at all?

   ***Executive:*** While I like quality, I believe there is a fairly wide range in most areas in which you could say quality occurred. I am more concerned with getting the job done, hopefully by someone else, than I am getting the job done exactly the way I would do it.

C. Working with team members.

1. Who should do this?

***Professional:*** In my field I am very capable. If what needs to be done is within my scope of capability I'd be the best to do it, if at all possible.

***Executive:*** In my field there are many better personal doers and even if there weren't I'd still like to find someone else to do it, if at all possible.

2. The people who report to me are mostly there to . . .

***Professional:*** Help me make a great contribution of my excellent skills - no one can do this quite as good as me.

***Executive:*** Take whole areas of responsibility and get the job done at least as good as I could.

3. When I involve other people I typically . . .

***Professional:*** Delegate (sometimes abdicate if my scope is getting complicated).

***Executive:*** Empower.

4. People.

***Professional:*** I get the most enjoyment from people who help me do the job right according to my standards.

***Executive:*** I enjoy people becoming leaders in there own right even if they do the job in different way than I would do the job.

D. Methods and Outcomes.

1. How do methods and outcomes relate?

***Professional:*** If you don't have the right method your outcome will not be excellent. I think outcome and method are equally important and I know the right method..

***Executive:*** I think that many methods get good outcomes. How a person gets the outcome is far less important to me than the outcome itself..

2. How important is it that things are done "right"?

***Professional:*** Extremely important. I have strong opinions about the right way and the wrong way to do things. Frankly, I am very good at getting things done right and I can tell others exactly what to do.

***Executive:*** It is more important that things get done even if they are not exactly the way I would do them. Good enough is OK as long as it meets our quality parameters. There are many ways to do something and I am happy to let others figure it out.

II. The professional/executive continuum.

A. Explain.

1. Where a given person is in their executive/professional style can range from pure professional to pure executive - with a virtually infinite number of gradations in between.
2. Likewise, what a given position requires in terms of executive or professional style can range from pure professional to pure executive - again, with a virtually infinite number of gradations in between.
3. For our purposes here, the important thing is to get some sort of an idea of where you are in terms of the professional/executive continuum along with what your position ideally requires in terms of that continuum.

B. Self assessment - the Executive versus Professional Personal Assessment may help you get a clearer picture of your own style.

C. Job assessment - the Executive versus Professional Position Assessment may help you get a clearer picture of the style required by your position.

D. Transition considerations - Based on your assessment how close a fit are you with the requirements of your position? Do you need to move from player to player coach? Or do you need to move from player coach to coach? What changes, if any, are needed? To what extent is it reasonable for me to make make changes or does the position need redesigning to fit my style better?