M.Y.M.
Personal Development Plan: 6 Skills to Make Your Mark

Skill #6: Teamwork & Leadership

Cornell CALS
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
How Will You Make Your Mark?

M.Y.M. Personal Development plans are designed to supplement the M.Y.M. Skills Assessment tool on DUST. Each plan will help you think about...YOU! You the leader. You the team player. You the person unlike any other.

Use the following creative exercises to prompt insights about your qualities, talents, perspective and opportunities for growth.* What is the role or roles that best suit your personality within a team setting? How can you boost your value in any role, on any team? Find out how with this Personal Development Plan for Teamwork and Leadership.

A Checklist for Teamwork & Leadership

Like the saying goes, a team is only as good as its weakest link. Use the checklist below to identify behaviors that represent your strengths as a team member and/or leader, and also those areas that represent your weaknesses.

I am able to...
- Recognize and adapt to work styles and preferences of others
- Recognize situations in which it is appropriate to lead, follow or be effective in either role
- Wield influence within a team from any position
- Comprehend how fellow group members think or feel about an issue
- Elevate the performance of others in a team setting
- Anticipate and work to mitigate causes of team failure
- Acknowledge the contributions of others
- Communicate a shared vision within a group
- Inspire and motivate others

I am comfortable with...
- Collaborating with diverse groups of people
- Taking on different roles, depending on the needs of the group
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Delegating project responsibilities to other group members
- Mediating conflict between members in a group
- Partnering with others with complementary skills and strengths
- Voicing my thoughts and opinions even when not in a leadership role
Exercise #1: Clustering

Use the circle below with the word “ME” inside it. For the next 10 minutes, annotate this circle with word associations and thoughts related to how you work in a team. This is called “clustering,” also known as spatial brainstorming.

The purpose of this exercise is to tap into your creative “flow.” To that end, do not overthink! Simply record your thoughts as they come.

Reflection Question

Glance at your cluster briefly to note what stands out. What is your first impression? In a sentence or two, describe here the team player you see.

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Exercise #2: Captain’s Pick

Take a few moments to remember times in your life (as a child, family member, friend, peer, intern, college student...) when you had to collaborate or join forces with others in some form of team activity, or for a common goal. Reflect on your behavior in those situations. Now answer the following two questions:

**Why should you be picked first for a team?**

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**Why should you be picked last?**

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Exercise #3: Once Upon a Team

Complete the story below by filling in the blanks. Base your answers on a personal experience in your past when working on a team at school, on the job, in a club or in another type of organization.

Once upon a time, I worked on a project to___________________________________________________________.

The role I played on this team was______________________________________________________________.

My biggest hope was ____________________________________________________________________________.

Our biggest challenge was______________________________________________________________________.

We addressed this challenge by__________________________________________________________________.

Specifically, my role was to______________________________________________________________________.

Things were moving along until__________________________________________________________________.

To meet this new challenge, I/we______________________________________________________________.

I felt ________________________________________________________________________________________.

My team members would describe me this way, “__________________________________________________.”

I realized that I am really good at__________________________________________________________________.

I realized that I am not as good at__________________________________________________________________.

Next time I’m on a team, it’s important I work with someone who_____. Two things I would like to focus on for my personal development as a team member are ____________________________________________ and ________________________.

Two things I would like to focus on for my personal development as a leader are ________________________ and ____________________________________________.
Exercise #4: Learning by the Letter

Now that you’ve examined the critical skills for team success, write a letter to a freshman in the Class of 2022. Explain to the student the importance of mastering these skills, even while in college. Explain why an understanding of team dynamics, including their own role in a group, will affect their success as a student, landing that first job out of college, and throughout their career. Be specific and provide concrete examples from your own experience.

Dear Future Freshman:
Exercise #5: Taking Action

Every Cornell experience brings with it the opportunity to meet people who inspire you, hone your leadership skills and handcraft your future. Who are the people and what are the experiences that will influence your success? Start thinking now!

Team Building:
Name 6 people who embody (or can help you define) effective team work and leadership. You may or may not know these individuals personally, though consider how you might connect with one or all of them over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person’s Name</th>
<th>Why You Chose Them?</th>
<th>Deadline for engaging them, directly or indirectly (i.e., follow on Twitter)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Leadership Opportunities:
Engaged Learning, clubs, courses in and out of your major, volunteer work, internships...what experiences serve your goals and interests, and present you with a chance to lead?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience or Opportunity</th>
<th>Why did you choose this?</th>
<th>Deadline for finding out more</th>
</tr>
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# Exercise #6: Telling Your Story

In a job interview it’s a given that employers are going to ask about your ability to lead and expect you to convince them you are right for their team. Follow this STAR model to tell your story succinctly and convincingly. It’s important to identify your specific role in the situation. **Tip:** Be sure to use “I” not “we” in the telling.

## STAR Model Formula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Example Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pick a moment. What were you doing when this story happened? Where were you? Who was in the room? What do you remember thinking at the time?</td>
<td>Example: I am the musical director of Key Elements, a co-ed A Capella group at Cornell. We are often called on to perform at big events and we were supposed to sing at the law school graduation dinner. I was in charge of organizing the group’s performance. We had been practicing for weeks. The morning of the event, I got an email: 4 of our 7 group members had come down with the flu. Uh oh...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Example Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did you have to do at that point?</td>
<td>Example: I had 6 hours to figure out how 4 people could sing songs when there were 7 voice parts! (Requires a great deal of creativity and thinking on the spot). I also knew I’d have to motivate the group to adapt to the changes because most would probably want to cancel. It was such short notice, I didn’t want to do that.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Example Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What action did you take to move things forward?</td>
<td>Example: I started by figuring out which voice parts are absolutely essential and wrote out the changes to each song. Then I got the group together to practice. I kept the focus on the music, because I knew that if we just sang, instead of talking about the situation, we’d realize we could do this.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Example Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What happened and what did you learn? What does this story say about you as a person?</td>
<td>Example: I am good at adapting when things don’t go as planned.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## My Story:

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<th>S:</th>
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<td>T:</td>
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<tr>
<td>A/I:</td>
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<tr>
<td>R:</td>
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Congratulations!

You have completed your Personal Development Plan for Teamwork and Leadership. Now take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned or to jot down any remaining questions while they are fresh in your mind.

Reflections:

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Questions:

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Want more? Coaching Conversations!

Make an appointment with your advisor to hear their perspective on teamwork and leadership. Or check out CALS Alumni Mentor Network (cornell.evisors.com) to make an appointment with an alum. These “coaching conversations” are a great way to learn how others connected their goals to the resources and people of Cornell.
Here. There. And Everywhere.

Your future comes down to two things: the stuff you should do to meet your personal goals and the stuff you want to do because it sounds great. **CALS Student Services** can support you on both of those paths. Course selection, academic support, extra-curricular activities, study away programs, career search prep and more!

Come see us to discuss your career and academic plans, and help you figure out your future, your way.

*Appointments can be made by using the [online scheduling tool](#) or by calling 607.255.CALS*

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**New Resources You Will Want to Check Out:**

- **M.Y.M. Skills Assessment and Skills Library** found on the [CALS Career website](#)
- **CUeLINKS** – [a platform](#) of 1000+ alumni mentors on call to support you with career conversations, resume critiques, mock interviews and more!