THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

FLEXIBILITY

The ability to change plans in response to current realities and adapt tactics to achieve a desired result.



LEADERS LEAD THEMSELVES

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY FLEXIBILITY MATTERS

Flexibility is one of the 25 core competencies that define a complete leader. As you grow this capability, you'll notice real shifts in how you lead yourself and influence others.

This guide is built for a 90-day journey. You'll explore the foundations, assess where you stand today, practice new behaviors, sidestep common traps, and track your progress, at your own pace or alongside a coach.

WHAT STRONG FLEXIBILITY LOOKS LIKE

- You maintain productivity during transitions, even in the midst of chaos
- You can champion change, not just survive it
- You seek out new initiatives that improve your job and your organization

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Flexibility matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF FLEXIBILITY

THE DEFINITION

The ability to change plans in response to current realities and adapt tactics to achieve a desired result.

Like any skill worth mastering, Flexibility rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **Knowing your own reactions**

Change can bring anxiety, excitement, or anger. Being aware of your own attitudes to change, as well as other people's, is the starting point for managing any change well.

2 **Understanding why people resist**

People support change they believe brings gain, makes logical sense, offers welcome challenge, comes from someone they respect, or came from a process they had a say in. They resist its opposites.

3 **Championing change**

The most flexible people seek out opportunities to change and manage the process, while still making changes directed by others or by organizational priorities.

REFLECT

Which element feels most familiar? Which one feels like a stretch right now?

SECTION 03

YOUR STARTING POINT

Before you move forward, take an honest look at where you are today. Read each statement and mark how often it's true of your leadership.

I recognize changing circumstances and adjust my tactics in order to achieve optimal results.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I resist the temptation to insist on doing things my way when people ask me to consider alternatives.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I am comfortable living with a certain amount of ambiguity, without losing focus on my goals and desired results.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I am willing to change directions, priorities, and schedules when circumstances dictate it is wise to do so.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I am aware of how I personally react to change, and I manage that reaction.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I explain the reasons for a change to the people affected, and stay open to their input on how it happens.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

REFLECT

Looking at your answers, where is your greatest opportunity for growth? What patterns do you notice?

SECTION 04

FLEXIBILITY IN PRACTICE

Competencies grow through deliberate practice. Work through the activities below in order, or choose the ones most relevant to your context.

ACTIVITY 01 30 min

Reacting to Change

Before you manage anyone else's reaction to change, understand your own.

TRY IT

1. List three changes that have occurred recently in your personal or professional life.
2. For each, note how you felt, and try to identify why the feelings were negative or positive.
3. Write what you did that helped, and what made things worse.

ACTIVITY 02 45 min

Championing a Change

Take a policy or structure you believe needs changing and build a real plan for it.

TRY IT

1. Name the change you're proposing.
2. List the tasks needed to gain support, with a person responsible, resources, and due date for each.
3. Write the expected outcome, then start on the first task.

ACTIVITY 03 40 min

Long-Range Goals

Flexibility is easier when you know which direction you're flexing toward.

TRY IT

1. Obtain a copy of your company's long-range plan and mission statement.
2. Create a picture of where you'd like to be in three to five years in light of them.
3. List at least five new goals or directions you'd like to take.

ACTIVITY 04 25 min

Learning From Others

Flexibility is visible in other people. Study it where you find it.

TRY IT

1. List people inside and outside your organization who stay flexible when priorities shift.
2. For each, write the specific flexible trait you admire.
3. Choose one trait to practice deliberately this month.

ACTIVITY 05 20 min

Model the Change

Be the first to implement a new technology or follow a new procedure.

TRY IT

1. Identify a current change you're expected to support.
2. Be the first to adopt it visibly, and say out loud why you're doing so.
3. Stay open to new ideas about it, both others' and your own.

ACTIVITY 06 30 min

Communicate Through Transition

People accept change faster when they feel informed and involved.

TRY IT

1. For a change underway, plan honest, clear, regular communication: status meetings, written updates.
2. Get buy-in from the departments and individuals the change will affect.
3. Expect productivity to lag while people master new behaviors, and plan for it.

SECTION 05

COMMON FLEXIBILITY TRAPS

As you practice, watch for these common pitfalls. Naming them now makes them easier to catch in the moment.

01 **Insisting on your own way**

When people offer alternatives and you always steer back to your original plan, you're managing change in name only.

02 **Planning change in secret**

People resist change that was kept quiet during planning. Involving them early costs less than overcoming their resistance later.

03 **Expecting instant adoption**

Productivity dips during change because people need time to accept and master new behaviors. Treating the dip as failure creates panic.

04 **Confusing flexibility with drift**

Adapting tactics is the skill; abandoning your goals whenever circumstances shift is not. Stay comfortable with ambiguity without losing focus on results.

REFLECT

Which trap feels most familiar? How will you stay aware of it as you practice?

SECTION 06

YOUR 90-DAY PRACTICE

Lasting change comes from a few focused habits, practiced consistently and tracked honestly. Build your plan below, on your own or with your coach.

CHOOSE YOUR THREE HABITS

Based on everything above, which three habits will make the biggest difference in growing your Flexibility over the next 90 days?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

BUILD IN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY

Write questions you can answer each week to measure progress and surface obstacles. The best ones are answered with “yes,” “no,” or a number.

Q1 _____

Q2 _____

Q3 _____

Accountability partner: who will you share these with?

_____

Completion date: when will you evaluate & celebrate?

_____

Measurements of success

How will you celebrate?

SECTION 07

GO DEEPER

Keep building your Flexibility with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK	**The Complete Leader, Ch. 2.3: Flexibility**	The full framework and examples behind flexible leadership.
PODCAST	**The Complete Leader Podcast**	Episode 64 explores flexibility in practice.
ONLINE	**Flexibility competency library**	Videos, articles, and podcasts at TheCompleteLeader.org.

CAPTURE YOUR INSIGHTS

As you work through these resources, which ideas most apply to your own growth in Flexibility?

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Flexibility is an investment in yourself and everyone you lead. Return to this guide often: revisit the activities, reread the traps, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Every complete leader started exactly where you are now.