

COMPETENCIES DEVELOPMENT PLAYBOOK

Hi Rockstar!

Welcome to Your Competencies Development Playbook

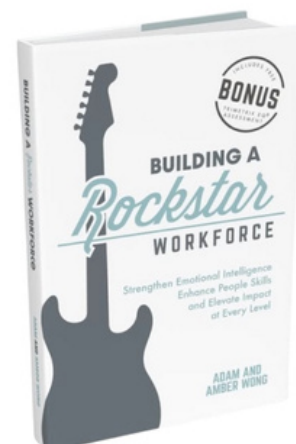
This playbook is designed to help you strengthen the leadership muscles that matter most. Inside, you'll find the 25 core competencies from Building a Rockstar Workforce—each paired with five practical ways to build them. Every suggestion is simple, workplace-ready, and unique, giving you real options to put into action right away.

Competencies are the transferable skills that make your technical expertise count. They shape how you decide, communicate, organize, adapt, and deliver under pressure—regardless of role, title, or industry.

Think of them like muscles: choose a few, train them with intention, and stack small wins over time. Use this playbook to identify 3–5 competencies that matter most right now. For each, pick 1–2 actions, put them on your calendar, and track your progress weekly. Momentum—not perfection—is what creates real growth.

Rock on,

Amber & Adam Wong



1) Diplomacy

Effectively and tactfully handling difficult or sensitive issues.

- **Pause–Probe–Paraphrase:** Before responding in tense moments, ask one clarifying question, then paraphrase the other person's point to their satisfaction.
- **Swap adjectives for facts:** Replace judgment words ("careless," "always") with neutral observations ("two deadlines were missed last week").
- **Two-option bridges:** When rejecting an idea, offer two viable alternatives to preserve face and progress.
- **Heat-check signals:** Agree with your team on a neutral phrase (e.g., "time out, fact check") to de-escalate and reset tone.
- **Write the hard note first:** Draft sensitive feedback in writing, sleep on it, then deliver verbally using the written version as a guide.

2) Interpersonal Skills

Effectively communicating, building rapport, and relating well to all kinds of people.

- **90-second warm start:** Begin key conversations with one personal check-in question and appreciative observation.
- **Communication map:** Ask colleagues their preferences (channel, depth, timing); log it and use it.
- **Mirror the model:** Match pace and formality to the other person for the first 60 seconds to build comfort.
- **Name & note:** Learn one new detail about each teammate weekly and reference it later to show you listened.
- **Repair quickly:** If you misstep, acknowledge it within 24 hours and restate your intent.

3) Leadership

Organizing and influencing people around a vision with purpose and direction.

- **One-slide vision:** Distill the team's next 90 days onto a single slide (why, what, how, when, owner) and review weekly.
- **Decide the decision style:** Clarify upfront if a choice is Consult, Consent, or Leader Call—then stick to it.
- **Visible priorities:** Maintain a top-3 priorities board; archive anything that doesn't ladder up.
- **Lead through questions:** Use "What outcome are we solving?" and "What would great look like?" to align thinking.
- **Weekly wins ritual:** Close each week by surfacing wins and lessons to reinforce progress.

4) Employee Development / Coaching

Facilitating, supporting, and contributing to others' growth.

- **15-minute growth check-ins:** Ask three prompts: "What went well? What was tough? What's the one practice this week?"
- **Shadow–Show–Shape:** Let them shadow, then you show, then they do while you shape with 2–3 cues.
- **Nudge library:** Create templated micro-nudges (texts/emails) tied to common skills; schedule them post-training.
- **Stretch with safety:** Assign a bite-size stretch task with clear success criteria and a mid-point review.
- **After-action notes:** Capture one keep/one change after key tasks; store in a shared growth doc.

5) Self-Starting

Demonstrating initiative and willingness to begin working.

- **2-minute launch:** If a task takes <2 minutes to start (open doc, draft outline), start now to break inertia.
- **Default first draft:** Volunteer to draft v1 even when ownership is unclear.
- **Trigger stack:** Pair task starts with existing habits (after standup → open priority doc).
- **Public commit:** Post a clear, time-bound next step in the team channel.
- **Remove the first friction:** Identify and eliminate the very first blocker before anything else.

6) Goal Orientation

Setting, pursuing, and attaining goals despite obstacles.

- **Outcome, not output:** Write goals as results ("reduce cycle time by 20%") with a single metric.
- **Weekly lead measures:** Track the behaviors that cause results (e.g., "3 stakeholder calls/week").
- **Red-yellow-green:** RYG every Friday and adjust next actions accordingly.
- **Obstacle rehearsal:** List top 3 likely blockers and pre-decide your responses.
- **Finish line visible:** Define "done" with a checklist everyone agrees on.

7) Understanding Others

Recognizing the uniqueness and contributions of others.

- **Strengths snapshots:** Ask each teammate for their top strengths and preferred work; document and use.
- **Perspective switch:** In debates, summarize the other view as if you hold it; get confirmation before sharing yours.
- **Contribution rounds:** In meetings, invite input from the quietest two voices first.
- **Assumption audit:** When frustrated, list assumptions you're making; verify the top one with a question.
- **Spotlight credits:** Publicly tie outcomes to specific contributions weekly.

8) Resiliency

Recovering quickly from adversity.

- **Name–Normalize–Next:** Label the setback, normalize it (common, temporary), choose the next micro-action.
- **Reset rituals:** Keep a 5-minute reset (walk, breathe box-4, desk clear) and use after tough moments.
- **Failure post-mortem:** Capture facts → lessons → safeguards within 48 hours.
- **Capacity buffers:** Keep 10% time unbooked to absorb shocks.
- **Progress journal:** Note one win and one lesson daily to reinforce bounce-back.

9) Decision-Making

Making sound and timely decisions.

- **Who decides & by when:** Name the DRI and deadline before analysis begins.
- **70% rule:** Decide when you have ~70% of the info on reversible choices; iterate.
- **Pre-mortem:** Ask, "It's six months later and this failed—why?" then mitigate.
- **Two-way vs one-way:** Classify decisions; use lighter process for reversible ones.
- **Kill criteria:** Define explicit conditions to stop or pivot.

10) Flexibility

Adapting to change with minimal resistance.

- **Version thinking:** Treat plans as v1; schedule "v2 check" after first results.
- **Try-it tickets:** Pilot changes for two weeks before full adoption.
- **Swap one habit:** Replace, don't remove—trade an old practice for a new one.
- **If-then plans:** "If X happens, then I will do Y" for the top 3 uncertainties.
- **Change narrative:** Write a 3-sentence "why now" story and repeat it.

11) Creativity & Innovation

Creating new approaches to achieve results.

- **Constraint sprints:** Brainstorm under a playful constraint (e.g., \$0 budget, 24 hours).
- **Idea quota:** Generate 10 ideas before choosing; quantity breeds quality.
- **Remix hunt:** Borrow a tactic from another industry each month.
- **Prototype fast:** Build a scrappy v0 mock in 60 minutes to test with one user.
- **Kill a darling:** End one beloved but low-ROI activity to free space for a new bet.

12) Influencing Others

Affecting actions, decisions, opinions, or thinking.

- **WIIFM framing:** Lead with the benefit to the listener in the first 20 seconds.
- **Proof stack:** Pair a story, a stat, and a sample to make ideas stick.
- **Social proof:** Show who else adopted the idea and the result they got.
- **Ask for a small yes:** Request a pilot or limited trial instead of full commitment.
- **Close with clarity:** End with one clear ask, owner, and date.

13) Futuristic Thinking

Imagining and creating what's not yet actualized.

- **Future press release:** Write the one-page announcement of success dated 12–18 months ahead.
- **Backcast milestones:** Work backward to quarterly checkpoints.
- **Signals list:** Track 3 external trends monthly and discuss implications.
- **Reverse risks:** List what would make the future vision fail; design safeguards now.
- **Story the future:** Share a 90-second narrative to make it tangible for others.

14) Planning & Organizing

Establishing courses of action to ensure effective completion.

- **Chunk to 90-minute blocks:** Break work into blocks with a defined deliverable.
- **One owner per task:** No shared owners; shared = unseen.
- **Kanban basics:** To-Do, Doing, Done board; limit WIP to 3.
- **Calendar the work:** If it matters, it lives on the calendar with start/stop.
- **Daily startup:** 10-minute morning review → pick top 3 → start #1.

15) Problem-Solving

Defining, analyzing, and diagnosing to form a solution.

- **Clarify the question:** Spend 5 minutes sharpening the problem statement.
- **5 Whys:** Push to the root cause before proposing fixes.
- **Smallest test first:** Design the lowest-cost experiment to learn fast.
- **Counter-example hunt:** Ask, "Where does the problem *not* happen and why?"
- **Decision log:** Record problem, options, criteria, and the chosen path for learning.

16) Project Management

Overseeing resources, tasks, systems, and people to obtain results.

- **RACI on one page:** Clarify Roles, Accountable, Consulted, Informed for key deliverables.
- **Milestone map:** Define 4–7 milestones with dates; update weekly.
- **Risk register:** List top risks, probability/impact, and owner for each.
- **Demo cadence:** Show progress every two weeks to surface issues early.
- **Change gate:** Require a simple impact check before adding scope.

17) Negotiation

Listening to many points of view and facilitating agreements.

- **BATNA first:** Define your best alternative before talks begin.
- **Trade, don't cave:** Prepare give-gets—what you can offer and what you'll ask in return.
- **Label & pause:** Name the other side's concern and leave silence.
- **Package proposals:** Present 2–3 bundles to reveal priorities.
- **Write it down:** Summarize agreements in plain language on the spot.

18) Conceptual Thinking

Analyzing hypothetical situations and abstract concepts.

- **Model on a napkin:** Sketch the system (inputs → process → outputs → feedback).
- **Name the pattern:** Identify the recurring pattern (bottleneck, feedback loop, incentives).
- **Analogy test:** Explain the concept using an analogy a non-expert would get.
- **Edge case scan:** Explore extremes to test the model's limits.
- **Assumption ledger:** List assumptions and flag the top two to verify.

19) Teamwork

Cooperating with others to meet objectives.

- **Clear lanes:** Define who owns what; remove overlap.
- **Help hours:** Hold a weekly window where teammates can grab quick help.
- **Hand-off checklist:** Standardize what "ready for you" means between roles.
- **Shared score:** Pick one metric the whole team moves together.
- **Rotate facilitation:** Different team member runs each meeting to build empathy.

20) Continuous Learning

Regularly learning new concepts, technologies, and methods.

- **Learning sprint:** Choose one skill/month with a weekly practice block.
- **Teach-back:** Share a 5-minute lesson from what you learned each Friday.
- **Source mix:** Follow one book, one course, one practitioner to triangulate.
- **Reps tracker:** Count repetitions, not hours, for the core sub-skill.
- **Retire & replace:** Sunset one outdated practice each quarter and swap in a better one.

21) Personal Accountability

Being answerable for personal actions.

- **Public scoreboard:** Track your top promises where stakeholders can see them.
- **If late, state:** When you miss, notify early with a new date and what you'll do differently.
- **Definition of done:** Agree on acceptance criteria before starting.
- **End-of-day review:** Note what you promised, delivered, and what rolls over—with reasons.
- **Accountability partner:** Pair weekly to review commitments and consequences.

22) Time & Priority Management

Prioritizing and completing tasks within time frames.

- **Top-3 rule:** Pick three critical tasks daily; do #1 before email.
- **Time blocks:** Schedule focus blocks and protect them with DND.
- **Batching:** Group similar tasks (inbox, approvals) once or twice daily.
- **Stop list:** List what you'll *not* do this week to make space.
- **Weekly plan:** Plan next week on Friday; calendar the big rocks first.

23) Conflict Management

Understanding, addressing, and resolving conflict constructively.

- **Issue, not identity:** Frame problems around behaviors/impacts, not people.
- **Joint agenda:** Co-write the agenda for tough conversations.
- **Two truths:** Start by summarizing both perspectives before proposing fixes.
- **Option building:** Generate at least three solutions together before choosing.
- **Follow-through:** Document agreements and schedule a check-in.

24) Customer Focus

Anticipating and exceeding customer needs and expectations.

- **Outcome interviews:** Ask customers about desired outcomes, not features.
- **Journey map:** Chart a customer path; fix one friction point per month.
- **Fast feedback loop:** Close the loop on every ticket with a "what else would help?" question.
- **Time to value:** Measure and reduce the time from purchase to first win.
- **Moments of delight:** Define two low-cost, high-impact touches and automate them.

25) Appreciating Others

Identifying with and caring about others.

- **Specific thanks:** Give recognition that names the behavior, impact, and value tie-in.
- **Gratitude cadence:** Share one appreciation in each team meeting.
- **Peer shout-outs:** Create a channel or ritual for peer-to-peer kudos.
- **Behind-the-scenes praise:** Spotlight invisible work regularly.
- **Credit transfer:** When praised, redirect credit to teammates by name.

WHAT'S NEXT

Put Your Growth Into Motion

You now have a full playbook of practical actions—25 competencies, 125 ways to strengthen them. Don't try to do it all at once. Start small, stay consistent, and let the momentum compound.

Here's Your Next Step:

1. Select 3–5 competencies that matter most to your role and goals.
2. Commit to 1–2 actions for each and schedule them right away.
3. Check in weekly—celebrate progress, adjust where needed, and keep moving forward.

Growth Doesn't Happen in Isolation

It's amplified when shared. By talking about your insights, you not only reinforce your own learning but also inspire those around you.

Ways to Share:

- Post one takeaway on LinkedIn or your favorite platform.
- Share a key insight with your team at your next meeting.
- Encourage a peer to take the assessment and compare notes.

Final Thought:

Competency growth isn't about perfection. It's about building capability through steady practice. Each rep makes you stronger, more adaptable, and more impactful.



With gratitude, Amber and Adam Wong