

ILLUSTRATIVE SAMPLE · SUCCESS PROFILING

EXECUTIVE SUCCESS PROFILE

Defining what great leadership looks like at Compass Technologies.

Compass Technologies is invented, and so is every figure in this deck. The method is not.

REASON TALENT · CHRIS COULTAS, PHD

DEFINITION

What a success profile is

A rigorous, evidence-based definition of what exceptional leadership looks like in this business, at this moment. It is not a job description and it is not a values statement.

COMPETENCIES

What great leaders can do

The observable behaviours that separate high performers from the rest. Teachable, measurable, and each one tied to something the business needs.

EXPERIENCES

What great leaders have done

The crucibles a leader has already come through. They carry transferable judgment that cannot be taught in a classroom or intuited from first principles.

TRAITS

Why they are not in here

The characteristic ways a leader thinks and reacts. They are the mechanism underneath competencies rather than a requirement on their own: curiosity means nothing until it shows up as innovation, or as coaching.

WHY IT MATTERS

Without a profile, assessment has no anchor. Every instrument and every interview question should map back to a written definition of what great looks like here.

.42

is what a structured interview predicts job performance at, against .31 for cognitive ability. Structure means a written standard.

Sackett, Zhang, Berry and Lievens (2022), J. Applied Psych.

Why this work, why now

Compass Technologies is running three changes at once. That ambition is only as durable as the leaders trusted to deliver it.

THE BUSINESS CONTEXT

Three changes at once, none of them finished

The move off perpetual licences is two years in and about 60% complete, mid-market opened last year after a decade of enterprise-only selling, and the AI layer ships in the spring. Each one asks something different of the same leadership bench.

A culture built for a slower business

Engineering-led, consensus-driven, and slow to kill anything. That served a company shipping twice a year. It does not serve one that now has to decide at the pace the mid-market buys at.

A profile written for the company Compass used to be

The current eleven-item model dates from 2019 and describes the leaders who won enterprise deals on relationship and depth. Nobody has revisited it since the business model changed underneath it.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE PROFILE

The profile has to look forward, not back

It cannot describe the leaders who succeeded historically. It has to define the ones who will carry a subscription business into a segment it has never sold to.

Cultural behaviour is assessable or it is decoration

If deciding faster is a real requirement, it appears in the profile with a bar attached. If it does not appear, it is a poster.

Succession is not credible without it

You cannot calibrate whether a leader is ready for the next level without first writing down what ready means. Everything downstream inherits that definition.

SCOPE

Who the profile is built for

One enterprise foundation, three expressions of it. Director through C-suite is in scope; managers and individual contributors are a later phase.

DIRECTOR

The pipeline

Directors are crossing from functional expert to enterprise leader, which is where most derailments happen. The broadest population in scope and the highest-volume talent decision.

VP AND SVP

The complexity multiplier

VPs operate across functions at once. They shape strategy, develop other leaders, and carry the join between direction and delivery.

C-SUITE AND C-1

The apex

Externally visible, board-accountable, culture-defining. The margin for error is smallest and the cost of a misfit is highest.

THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS

Does this person have the behavioural foundation to lead at scale?

THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS

Does this person think like an enterprise leader or still like a function head?

THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS

Is this person ready to lead an organization rather than a function?

HOW IT WAS BUILT

Method

Three independent sources, one integrated finding. Documents reveal what the organization says, interviews reveal what leaders know, the survey reveals what they prioritize. Where all three agree, that is a finding rather than a hypothesis.

01

DOCUMENTS AND DATA

The organizational baseline

A systematic review of the current success profile, the role-specific profiles, the 360 instrument, the talent philosophy, the performance management design and the discovery questionnaire.

WHAT IT SURFACES

What Compass formally believes great leadership requires, what the current framework gets right, and where it is anchored to a prior era.

02

LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS

The lived reality

Structured interviews with the CEO and the CHRO, built to surface what actually separates high performers here rather than in theory.

WHAT IT SURFACES

The unwritten rules, the requirements that never made it into the framework, and the behaviours this particular set of changes demands.

03

LEADERSHIP SURVEY

The broader view

Nine senior leaders rated competencies, derailers and critical experiences, for the business as it is and as they expect it to be.

WHAT IT SURFACES

Prioritization. Which capabilities are genuinely essential, which are rising, and where the leadership team does not agree with itself.

What we found: the current profile

Nine documents reviewed, including the current eleven-item model, six role-specific profiles, the 360 instrument and the talent philosophy. Three things it establishes well.

Commercial depth and customer intimacy

Builds Customer Partnerships, Sells Value, Owns the Number and Technical Credibility establish that a Compass leader can carry a complex enterprise sale. That was the business for fifteen years and the model reflects it accurately.

Craft and technical judgment

Engineering Rigour, Systems Thinking and Quality Bar signal that how something is built matters here. This is the strongest part of the current model and the part least in need of revision.

Character

Integrity, Collaboration, Steadiness and Develops Others carry the culture. They function as a floor rather than a differentiator, which is the right job for them.

Where the model and the moment diverge

Four places where the profile describes the company Compass was rather than the one it is becoming. All four came out of the documents, before any leader was interviewed.

Speed and operating tempo

Nothing in the eleven items sets a standard for deciding quickly. Consensus is named as a value in the talent philosophy and never bounded. The mid-market motion requires a bound.

Commercial breadth beyond the enterprise deal

Every commercial item in the model describes a large, long, relationship-led sale. None of them describes a repeatable one.

Data and AI as leadership capability

Four of the six role-specific profiles list AI fluency as a key requirement. There is no enterprise-level equivalent anywhere in the competency model.

Killing work

Three separate documents praise persistence. None sets an expectation about stopping. In a portfolio this wide that is the more expensive skill.

What we found: the interviews

CEO and CHRO, interviewed separately. Six themes, each raised without prompting by at least one of them.

THEME	IN THEIR WORDS
Decides at the speed the market moves The capacity to commit on incomplete information and to say so, rather than convening another review.	"We do not have a quality problem. We have a nine-week problem. Everything takes nine weeks and no one can tell me why."
Sells a business, not a product Understands the unit economics of a subscription rather than the mechanics of a deal.	"Half my leaders can quote you a renewal rate. Almost none of them can tell you what it costs us to earn it."
Kills things Willing to stop work that is merely adequate, publicly, and to take the cost of that decision personally.	"We are extremely good at starting. I cannot remember the last time somebody came to me and asked to stop something."

The interviews, continued

Themes four to six. The second half of both interviews turned almost entirely to how leaders develop the people underneath them.

THEME

IN THEIR WORDS

Develops in the moment

Coaching as something that happens weekly and in the work, rather than in a form in March.

“Our best engineers become managers and nobody teaches them anything. Then we are surprised.”

Visible and in the room

Present, accessible, and close enough to the work to be useful in it.

“The people building the AI layer should be able to name three executives who have sat with them. Most of them can name none.”

Holds a standard without holding the work

Raises the bar for others rather than absorbing the task when it slips.

“When it gets hard, my VPs do the job themselves. That is a compliment to them and a disaster for the bench.”

Survey: what the business has to get through

Nine senior leaders named their top three to five business challenges. Five themes, each with a direct implication for what the profile has to measure.

Finishing the subscription transition

Named by 7 of 9. Revenue recognition, renewal motion and the sales compensation model all change at once, and the transition is only two thirds done.

Critical Thinking and Judgment · Drives Execution

Selling to a segment we have never sold to

Mid-market buys in weeks, not quarters, and does not want the implementation Compass is proud of. Named by 6 of 9.

Vision and Innovation · Resilience and Adaptability

Making the AI layer a product rather than a feature

Named by 5 of 9. The technology is not the constraint; deciding what Compass is selling once the layer exists is.

Operating tempo

Four respondents independently used the word slow about their own organization. Nobody proposed a mechanism for changing it.

Plans and Prioritizes · Drives Execution

Leadership bench

Named by 2 of 9, despite this survey being a talent exercise. Most leaders framed the problem commercially.

Develops and Supports People

FINDING THREE

Survey: competencies rated critical or essential

Nine leaders rated each competency on a five-point importance scale. Shown: the share who rated it four or five.



WHAT STANDS OUT

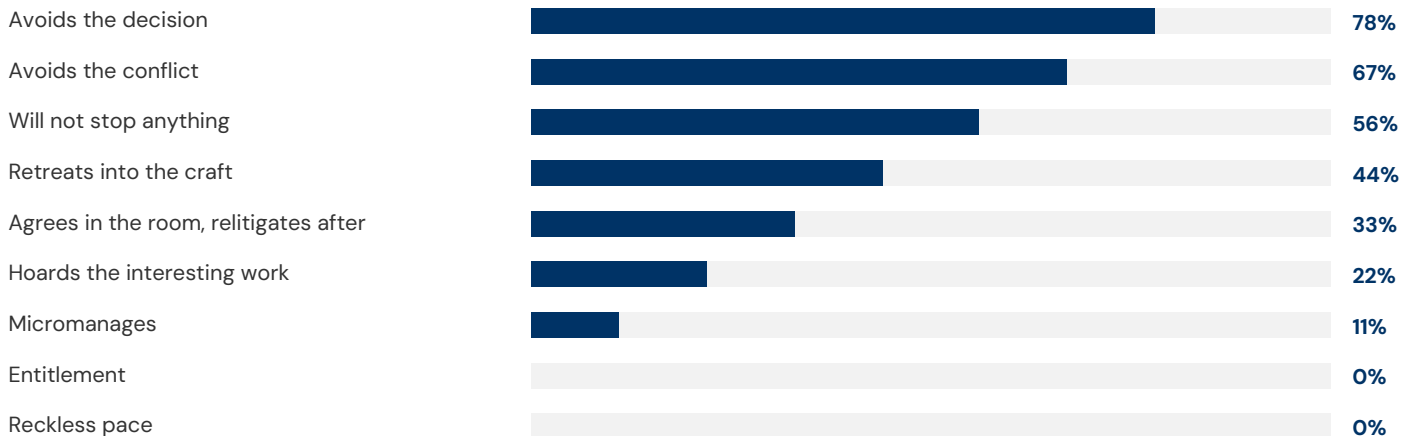
Two competencies are unanimous. Six of the eight clear 67%, which is unusually high consensus and means there is very little discretionary content in this profile.

Develops and Supports People is the lowest rated item at 44%, and the CEO describes it as the threshold for enterprise readiness. That gap between the chief executive and the team is the finding on this page.

FINDING THREE

Survey: derailing behaviours

Each leader named their top three derailers from a list of nine. Shown: the share who named each one.



WHAT STANDS OUT

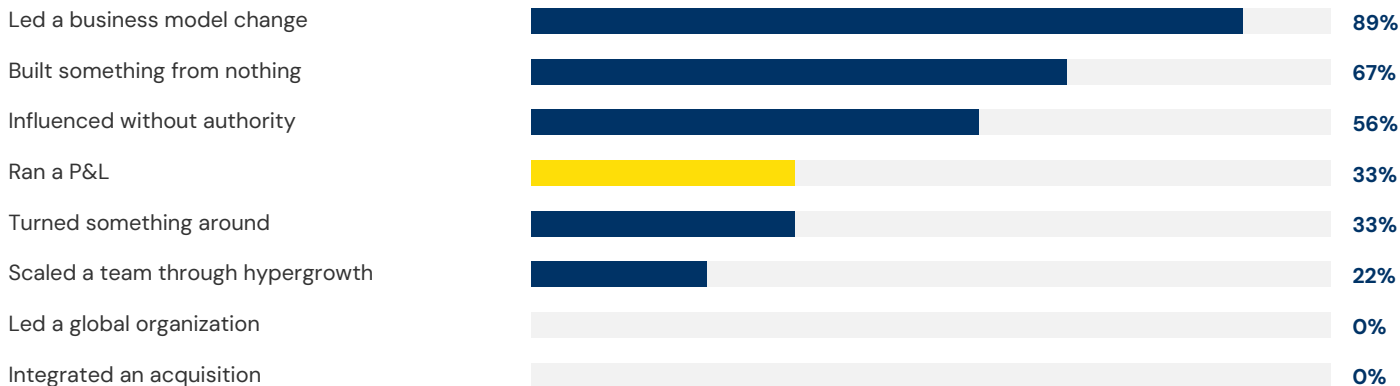
The top three form one coherent picture rather than three separate risks: the leader who will not decide, will not surface the disagreement, and will not stop anything.

Entitlement drew zero selections and is the CHRO's most emphatic derailer. Items at zero stay in the profile: the interviews surfaced risks the survey did not.

FINDING THREE

Survey: the experiences that build readiness

Each leader named the top three career experiences that prepare somebody to lead at the enterprise level.



WHAT STANDS OUT

Led a business model change is the defining proving ground at 89%, which is exactly the thing Compass is asking its leaders to do now.

Running a P&L came in at 33%, below building from nothing and below influencing without authority. That makes it a floor rather than a differentiator, which is how the profile tiers it.

Where the three sources agree

Each method contributed something the other two could not. Convergence across methods is what turns a reading into a finding.

DOCUMENTS

The organizational baseline

- Commercial depth and technical credibility are real strengths and are treated as the ceiling rather than the floor
- Character items carry the culture and are correctly specified
- Nothing in the model sets a standard for speed, for stopping work, or for data and AI capability

What the organization formally says it values, and the first signal of where that has drifted from what it now needs.

INTERVIEWS

The lived reality

- Speed is the CEO's single non-negotiable and appears nowhere in the profile
- The ability to stop work was raised unprompted by both interviewees
- People development is described as a threshold for enterprise readiness rather than one competency among several

What leaders actually experience as differentiating, including risks a document review cannot see.

SURVEY

The broader view

- Two competencies are unanimous: Critical Thinking and Judgment, Drives Execution
- Develops and Supports People is the lowest rated item at 44%, and the CEO calls it the threshold
- Led a business model change is the defining experience at 89%; running a P&L is a floor at 33%

Prioritization, and the places where the leadership team disagrees with its own chief executive.

ALL THREE CONVERGE ON:

Judgment under incomplete information · Execution through other people · Development as a threshold · The willingness to stop work

What changed, and why

The recommended profile is shorter than the one it replaces. Every change traces to a specific finding from at least two of the three sources.

CURRENT, 11 ITEMS

- Builds Customer Partnerships
- Sells Value
- Owns the Number
- Technical Credibility
- Engineering Rigour
- Systems Thinking
- Quality Bar
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Steadiness
- Develops Others

One flat list. No tiering, no distinction between what is a floor and what separates people, and no experiences at all.



RECOMMENDED, 8 COMPETENCIES AND 5 EXPERIENCES

Eight competencies organized under the four questions every follower asks, and five experiences split into a floor and four differentiators.

Shorter, because eleven was a list rather than a standard

Nothing was deleted for being wrong. Commercial depth and technical credibility are still in here, inside Critical Thinking and Drives Execution, which is where an assessor can actually score them.

Development moves from an item to a threshold

Both interviews put it there and the survey rated it last. Where those two disagree, the profile follows the people accountable for the outcome.

Experiences are tiered for the first time

P&L is the floor at 33%. Business model change, building from nothing, influencing without authority and turning something around are what separate.

The recommended success profile

Eight competencies under the four questions of the Journey Leadership Framework, and five critical experiences in two tiers.

Where are we going?

Vision and Innovation

Sees where the work should be heading, including the option nobody has put on the table yet.

Communicates and Inspires

Turns a destination into something people actually want to walk toward.

Who am I going with?

Earns Trust

Whether you can be relied on and believed when it costs you something.

Develops and Supports People

Whether being on your journey is good for the people who join it. Raised to a threshold here: below the bar disqualifies at VP and above.

How will we get there?

Critical Thinking and Judgment

Works out what is actually true, and what actually matters, before committing.

Plans and Prioritizes

Turns a direction into a plan people can follow. The new half here is subtraction: what comes off the list, and who owns that.

Can you get us there?

Drives Execution

Converts the plan into a delivered result, through other people and through whatever is in the way.

Resilience and Adaptability

Keeps performing when the journey gets harder than anyone planned for.

CRITICAL EXPERIENCES

FLOOR

Necessary, and not sufficient
Ran a P&L or a GM seat

DIFFERENTIATORS

What separates enterprise-ready from functionally excellent
Led a business model change · Built something from nothing · Influenced without authority · Turned something around