

# IDENTIFY HIDDEN TALENT: THE MISSING BASICS MODEL

Use These 12 Missing Basics to Identify  
the Hidden Top Talent on Your Team

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## What are you looking for?

Over 27 years, we have developed several key competency models to identify top talent and help organizations make the most of the great people working for them.

Our **MISSING BASICS MODEL** is comprised of 12 soft skills too-often missing in today's best technical performers. This list is designed to help you go beyond mere skill qualifications to more effectively compare candidates for advancement and development, broken into three categories:

1. Professionalism
2. Critical thinking
3. Followership

As you read and re-read the descriptions of the missing basics, you should be asking yourself: What are the highest priority behaviors for your organization, for your team, for different roles on your team, and/or for the various individuals on your team? Which behaviors are crucial to success? Which ones offer the greatest potential to increase competitive differentiation?

# THE MISSING BASICS OF PROFESSIONALISM

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**Self-Evaluation:** Regularly assessing one's own thoughts, words, and actions against clear meaningful standards; and one's own performance against specific goals, timelines, guidelines, and parameters.

**Personal Responsibility:** Staying focused on what one can control directly—principally oneself—and controlling one's responses in the face of factors outside one's own control.

**Positive Attitude:** Maintaining and conveying a positive, generous, enthusiastic demeanor in one's expressions, gestures, words, and tone.

**Good Work Habits:** Wellness, self-presentation, timeliness, organization, productivity, quality, follow-through, and initiative.

**People Skills:** Attentive listening, observing, and reading; perceiving and empathizing; effective use of words, tone, expressions, and gestures—verbal, written, and otherwise—one-on-one and in groups; in-person and remotely.

# THE MISSING BASICS OF CRITICAL THINKING

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**Proactive Learning:** Keeping an open mind, suspending judgment, questioning assumptions, and seeking out information, technique and perspective; and studying, practicing, and contemplating in order to build one's stored knowledge base, skillset, and wisdom.

**Problem Solving:** Mastering established best-practices—proven repeatable solutions for dealing with regular recurring decisions—so as to avoid reinventing the wheel. Using repeatable solutions to improvise when addressing decisions that are new but similar.

**Decision Making:** Identifying and considering multiple options, assessing the pros and cons of each, and choosing the course of action closest to the desired outcome.

# THE MISSING BASICS OF FOLLOWERSHIP

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**Respect for Context:** Reading and adapting to the existing structure, rules, customs, and leadership in an unfamiliar situation.

**Citizenship:** Accepting, embracing, and observing, not just the rights and rewards, but the duties of membership/belonging/participation in a defined group with its own structure, rules, customs, and leadership.

**Service:** Approaching relationships in terms of what you have to offer—respect, commitment, hard work, creativity, sacrifice—rather than what you need or want.

**Teamwork:** Playing whatever role is needed to support the larger mission; coordinating, co-operating and collaborating with others in pursuit of a shared goal; supporting and celebrating the success of others.

# SEVEN THINGS INDISPENSABLES DO DIFFERENTLY

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In addition to the missing basics, we have identified seven things the most truly indispensable people do differently from the rest:

1. **They understand and believe in the peculiar mathematics of real influence versus false influence.** Real influence is the power you have when other people really want to do things for you, make good use of your time, and contribute to your success. The only way to build real influence is to serve others by adding value in every single interaction.
2. **They know what's required and what's allowed—up and down the chain of command—before trying to work things out at their own level.** You must go vertically before you go sideways (or diagonally): ensure alignment on priorities and every next step through regular structured communication up, down, sideways, and diagonally.
3. **They know when to say no (and “not yet”) and how to say yes.** “Yes” is where all the action is. Every yes is an opportunity to add value for others and build up your real influence. The key is setting up every yes for success with a concrete plan—a clear sequence, timing, and ownership of all the next steps.
4. **They work smart by professionalizing everything they do.** Indispensable people know what they want to be known for. That means mastering best practices, repeatable solutions, and job aids.

# SEVEN THINGS INDISPENSABLES DO DIFFERENTLY, CONT'D.

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5. **They finish what they start.** If you are always juggling, you will inevitably drop the ball. You must be able to handle a long and diverse list of responsibilities and projects, by executing one thing at a time. Keep a long to-do list and schedule. But break work into small doable chunks and find gaps for focused execution time.
6. **They keep getting better and better at working together.** If you lift people up, they will lift you up, too. Focus your relationship building on the work, and the work will go better. When the work goes better, the relationship will go better.
7. **They promote 'go-to-ism' throughout the organization.** It's not just about being a go-to person. It's also about finding go-to people wherever you need them. Build new go-to people whenever you have the chance. That's how you build the upward spiral of real influence.

# A NOTE ON CULTURE

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You can't control the culture of your entire organization (unless of course you are the big, big boss.) Still, whether you are the CEO, a manager with a small team, or someone working in collaboration with others, what you can control is your sphere—whatever part of the organization is your responsibility.

If your organization has a strong positive culture by design, then you need to be in alignment. What are the high priority behaviors? What are you doing in your sphere to drive and support and reward those behaviors in everything you do as a leader?

If your organization has a less than strong positive culture—or a culture by default—then it's all up to you. You need to create your own culture within your own sphere. You don't need to start a revolution. But you can be a little bit of a maverick. You can certainly be a change leader. Your results will speak for themselves—your team will stand out, not just in business outcomes, but in cohesiveness, morale, and retention.

What are the high priority behaviors that are most important in your sphere? Crucial to success? Or jet fuel for competitive differentiation? Make them the foundation of your culture. Focus on them relentlessly, and systematically drive those behaviors throughout your sphere in all your human capital management practices. Develop your own poignant language and symbols—slogans and logos. Make sure it aligns with your organization's "brand." Then sing it from the rooftops—make it 1000% clear. And start doing everything within your power to drive and support and reward those high priority behaviors in every employee within your sphere.

# ABOUT RAINMAKER THINKING

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Since 1993, Bruce Tulgan and RainmakerThinking have been helping leaders and organizations make the most of the great people working for them.

**We have a passion for developing hidden talent.**

We offer a number of services to help you achieve your goals:

- [Keynote Speeches & Workshops](#)
- [In-person Training](#)
- **Online Video Training for individuals and teams:**  
[RainmakerLearning.com](https://rainmakerlearning.com)
- **Assessment & Consulting**  
[Please contact us](#) to inquire directly about our assessment and consulting services.

**Have questions?**

We would love to hear from you: [mail@rainmakerthinking.com](mailto:mail@rainmakerthinking.com)



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