

# The PE Executive Leadership Scorecard to Evaluate Exit Readiness

Based on our executive placements in PE-backed companies, cultural assessments, and conversations with PE sponsors and their portcos, certain competencies and personality traits consistently separate leaders who are truly exit-ready, regardless of role.

## Competencies Vs. Personality Traits

We've separated the scorecard into two sections—competencies and personality traits—because what leaders *can do* and *how they show up* both matter.

COMPETENCIES	DESCRIPTION (NORTH STAR)	PRIORITY (Select)
<b>Execution-First Leadership</b>	Rolls up their sleeves and operationalizes investor theses into action that future buyers can see, track, and value. Execution-first leaders “get it done themselves,” even when data is messy, constraints are tight, and circumstances aren't perfect.	HIGH MED LOW
<b>A Master Storyteller</b> <i>“Can they sell the story?” -Nearly all the funds we spoke to!</i>	Translates functional metrics into buyer-relevant narratives and explains why performance is durable, not just what the numbers are. Internalizes and executes based on how buyers think: EBITDA drivers, quality of earnings, deal multiples, segment growth forecasts, and more.	HIGH MED LOW
<b>Culture Setter</b>	Builds high-performing teams by developing people, identifying future leaders, and embedding accountability. Operationalizes strategic priorities into actionable behaviors while ensuring the organization can sustain performance under growth, integration, or exit pressures.	HIGH MED LOW
<b>Dual Mindset</b>	Captures the dual demands of PE leadership, rapidly experimenting and innovating with a <u>founder mindset</u> , as well as <u>possessing deep domain expertise</u> and <u>experience scaling an organization</u> for sustained performance through the hold period and toward exit.	HIGH MED LOW

*One tech investment firm described this as the ultimate “unicorn” competency.*

### On Having Strategic Bias

**“Not all leaders have strategic bias, but they all need to. These are strategic leaders who are more excited about the holistic picture of the organization and how to position it most favorably for the next buyer, and can step outside the everyday nuts and bolts.”**

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, SUPPLY CHAIN & LOGISTICS PRIVATE EQUITY FIRM

PERSONALITY TRAIT	DESCRIPTION (NORTH STAR)	PRIORITY (Select)
<b>Extroversion, Charisma &amp; Influence</b>	Translates to investor magnetism. Energizes teams, builds followership, and inspires investor and buyer confidence by turning strategy and performance into a compelling (and authentic) growth story people believe in and want to back.	HIGH MED LOW
<b>Composure &amp; Resilience</b>	Maintains clarity, sound judgment, and execution discipline under pressure, helping teams stay focused on value-driving priorities and signaling leadership stability through volatility.	HIGH MED LOW
<b>Self Awareness &amp; Humility</b>	Understands personal strengths and blind spots, actively seeks input, and surrounds themselves with complementary talent — reducing execution risk and enabling performance to scale beyond the individual.	HIGH MED LOW
<b>Competitive (the Constructive Kind)</b>	Channels a relentless drive to win into ethical, metrics-driven performance gains, fostering a culture of healthy challenge, pushing the envelope, and continuous improvement that elevates enterprise value, <u>not ego.</u>	HIGH MED LOW

*Sound familiar?*

### On Having (No) Ego

*Perhaps the most common theme amongst all convos w/ our fund partners.*

**“If a leader can't adapt is one thing; if they won't adapt is another. Leaders who cling to their own way and ego? Many folks don't survive that.”**

OPERATING ADVISOR, LEADING SOFTWARE & TECHNOLOGY PRIVATE EQUITY FIRM