

## **NMA LEADS: A Personal Assessment**

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I admit it. I was skeptical at first about the value of the NMA Leadership Evaluation and Development System (LEADS), which is a new online assessment tool available on NMA National's website at [www.nma1.org](http://www.nma1.org). The price is certainly right at only \$35.00. But, I wondered, with already feeling spread so thin, if the two hours I needed to take the assessment, would really be a good investment of my time.

Until I decided to take the assessment, I also had not fully focused on the [NMA leadership competencies](#) to understand their significance to my work. I had only glanced at the colorful competency graphic with the circles that is on NMA National's homepage.

But, when I found out that the LEADS program had been recently changed so it has a restart feature to stop and resume the assessment anytime within 30 days, I committed to take it. The irony is that once I really took the time to read the competencies (which I highly recommend that you review before taking the assessment), I was hooked and I finished the 120 question assessment in one sitting without a break. I found this online tool to be challenging and thought provoking. Even with my background in transformational change, I was stretched to apply what I thought I knew about management theory and leadership best practices.

After I answered the last question in the assessment, I was automatically sent a Leadership Analysis that rated my understanding of the competencies by category. It provided me with an extensive reading list and links to:

- Purchase the books from Barnes & Noble
- Links to WorldCat library resources to borrow the books from my local library, which I really like!
- Browse links to getAbstract and other online resources.

Included in the Leadership Analysis were also recommended training courses and work assignments designed to apply what I'm learning in my actual work environment.

Having worked in the private sector on educational software, I am very impressed with this product! According to NMA's website, over 12 months of development and 1,700 hours of volunteer time went into designing and generating the LEADS contents and infrastructure. Although the product is still new and has a few kinks to work out, I highly recommend it. I felt it was well worth my time and a good investment in my future!