

Skill Will;
Coaching part I

MANAGERS

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."

Harvey S. Firestone

Coaching is such a vast topic, we thought we would break it down into smaller chunks. This chunk is about how you decide what style to adopt for a particular person to help them become as effective as possible as quickly as possible.

If you take penguins, when they are first born, their parents do everything for them – they feed them (even chew for them!), keep them warm and in the wild winters, all the young huddle together to protect each other. Imagine being a new starter in a company – you cannot do the thing you do not know, so you rely heavily on those more experienced than you to actively help you by pointing you in the right direction.

As you get stronger and more self sufficient, you need less direct supervision and a more 'flexible guidance' approach often involving setting a target/parameter and then just a check back mechanism. With penguins, once the babies are strong enough, they have to learn to fend for themselves very quickly. Being naturally inquisitive they get drawn to the sea but are often reluctant to dip their toes in the water. Mum or dad nudge them in the right direction but if they don't go in after a while they are chased into the sea and they simply have to get on with it! Do you notice any similarities with how people can be managed at work? Maybe you were managed in this way?

So this bite sized chunk will help you focus on your team and decide, for each person, what is the best management style I can adopt to help them be most successful and resourceful from the place they are in right now.

Overview

What is coaching?

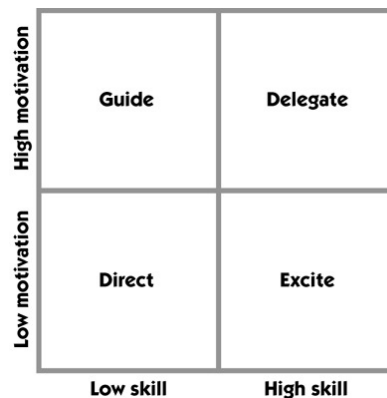
Coaching in its simplest form is the vehicle for helping people to get from where they are now to where they want to be.

What is skill will?

Skill will is a simple tool to help you identify where an individual sits on a scale. The scale represents two distinct axes:

How motivated are they towards work?

How skilled are they at doing the job?



By using this scale you can identify which of four different management styles you could adopt to help that person be most resourceful.

A word of warning

Like any four box model, this is management in its simplest form and often it is a combination of approaches that work. The reason we like this approach is that often we start by using our natural management style with people and often this works. But when it doesn't we get frustrated and this can be the start of a breakdown in a relationship. Skill/will can be used as a quick check mechanism to help us notice if we could try a different approach that might be better.

Give it a go and notice how it helps you most.

How to do it

1. First diagnose the individual's "skill" and "will" to accomplish the given task.
2. Then use the matrix to identify the appropriate management style
3. Finally agree with the Individual, which style you will be using and for what reasons

Step One

1. To illustrate the Skill/Will model, think of a character from your favourite TV soap or film etc. for each of the four quadrants and identify a word that describes the person and why you have put them in the particular box
2. Then identify what approach a manager should take to really support that person to do the best they possibly can

e.g: Billy Mitchell in Eastenders – High Motivation - very willing to do things but Low Skill – things always go wrong. What should a manager do to help him?

Guide – spend a lot of time explaining the task and then allow him to have a go but keep a very close eye on him, praising when he shows progress.

Step Two

Think about your team. For each member of your team identify which quadrant they are in and why.

Step Three

If you are more theoretical or reflective in your approach to learning, you may prefer to look at the guide on the back page before completing this step. If however, you are more activist/ pragmatist then you may want to complete this step first and then check back with the model on the back page.

Either

If you prefer logical/process steps:

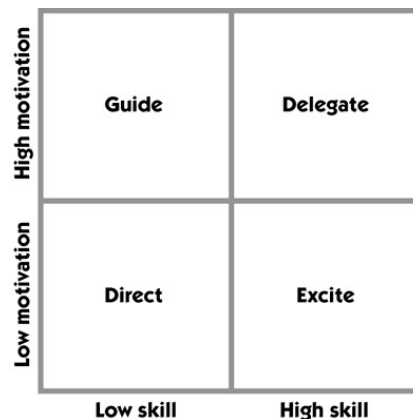
Draw up the quadrants on a piece of A4 and identify, for each quadrant, what practical steps you could personally take to support someone in each of the quadrants.

Or

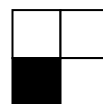
If you find that making collages and pictures helps you to build ideas (you might like to see connections and the whole thing) then:

On a piece of flipchart paper, using magazines/ craft materials attach images to symbolise the tactics you could employ to help you in each of the quadrants.

Practical steps



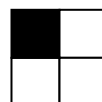
Details of each approach



Direct (skill and will are both low)

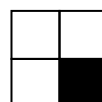
- First build the will
- Provide clear briefing
- Identify motivations
- Develop a vision of future performance
- Then build the skill
- Structure tasks for 'quick wins'
- Coach and train
- Then sustain the will
- Provide frequent feedback
- Praise and nurture

Supervise closely with control and clear rules and boundaries.



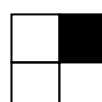
Guide (low skill, high will)

- Invest time early on
- Coach and train
- Answer questions / explain
- Create a risk free environment to allow early 'mistakes' / learning
- Relax control as progress is shown



Excite (high skill, low will)

- Identify reason for low will
- Motivate
- Monitor, feedback



Delegate (skill and will are both high)

high)

- Provide freedom to do the job
- Set objective not method.
- Praise, don't ignore.
- Encourage associate to take responsibility
- Involve in decision making.
- Use 'you tell me what you think'.
- Take appropriate risks
- Give more stretching tasks.

Don't over-manage.

Top Tips

Be flexible – people need variety to keep stimulated

Always provide a **clear framework** for people

Remember to **congratulate a good job!**

Be stretching but realistic in the targets you set.

Keep yourself updated on progress and **adapt your approach** according to that progress

If people are low in motivation, take the time to find out **what makes them tick** (see motivation free stuff).

If people are low in skill, **allocate an experienced member of your team** to support them – this is less threatening than constantly having to come to you.

If people are highly motivated – **let them get on with it** – watch for signs of boredom and add some variety if necessary.

If people are highly skilled look at what different, new jobs you can allocate – **is there anything you do that can be delegated?**

“Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity”

General S. Patton.

Apply this principle to all existing staff.