

Four Keys Coaching Guide

The Four Keys to great management are concepts that Gallup discovered from their study of best managers. The approach that the best managers take deviates from conventional wisdom in four broad areas: selection, setting expectations, motivation and development. Compare how you perceive each concept... do you follow conventional wisdom or do you follow best practice?

Conventional Wisdom		Best Practice
Based on experience, intelligence & determination	Select	For Talent
Define the right steps	Set Expectations	Define the right outcomes
Help the person identify & overcome weaknesses	Motivate	Focus on strengths
Help the person learn and get promoted	Develop	Find the right fit

We find that the best managers select people for jobs, position them in the right role, set expectations, creates the environment that motivates the employee to use their strengths and develop those employees for their future.

This Coaching Guide will help you apply the best practices of great managers. The guide is divided in four sections, one for each key. With the exception of Selection, each section has questions for you to ask your employees during your one on one meeting. These are the “Analysis and Discussion” questions. After your meeting, spend some time reflecting on the discussion and answer the “Self-Reflection” questions.

Select for Talent

When selecting for talent, the manager must first identify the talents needed for the particular role they are hiring for. It is important to understand the difference between skills, knowledge and talent. Here are some quick definitions.

Skills are defined as the basic steps to a given activity; the how-to's. These can be taught.

Knowledge is defined as what you are aware of; it is acquired understanding.

Talent is the range of performance. It is the naturally recurring pattern of thought, feeling or behavior that can be productively applied. For example, in basketball, you can learn the skills to dribble, but you can't be taught how to play like Michael Jordan.

To get started, study your best. What is it that they do differently than the rest? What talents do they have that the others do not? Identify the talents.

Ask talent questions to a few of your best employees and a few of the "rest". Is there a difference in the way they responded? Was this difference consistent? If so, then it is a good question. If they don't, it might not be worth asking.

Ask the question to all new applicants. Record what they say and after they've been hired, check back to see if the people who performed well answered the question in a consistent way.

"Which are the right questions to ask?"

1. **Make sure the Talent Interview stands alone.**

This interview has one purpose: to discover the candidates recurring patterns of thought, feelings and behaviors and determine if they match the job. The talent interview should mirror what he will face on the job behaviorally. On the job, he will face many situations every day to which he could respond any number of ways. How consistently he responds will be his performance.

2. **Ask a few open-ended questions and then try to keep quiet.** A person's unaided response to an open-ended question is powerfully predictive. Trust it, no matter how much you might want to hear something else.

- 3. Listen for specifics.** Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior; therefore you will want to use behaviorally-based interview questions. Questions that begin with “tell me about at time...” The specifics you want to listen for are about time, person, or event. For behaviorally based interview questions, visit our website at <http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/jhhr/OrganizationDevelopmentandTraining/Leadership/interviewingguides>
- 4. Clues to talent.**
 - a. **Rapid learning.** Ask the candidate what kinds of roles she has been able to learn quickly, what kind of activities come easily to her.
 - b. **Satisfactions.** Ask what his greatest satisfaction is, what kinds of situations give him strength, what he finds fulfilling.
- 5. Know what to listen for.** It’s ok to have your favorite questions; you just need to know how the best answer that question. Then listen for that answer.

The concept of talent applies to everything that great managers do. However, the activity of selecting for talent is separate. It occurs when you make the hiring decision. This key can be easily separated from the other three keys. The other three keys: defining the right outcomes, focusing on strengths and finding the right fit are all interwoven and are dependent on the person. Great managers turn all three keys at the same time, all the time.

Setting Expectations: Define the Right Outcomes

Before being able to hold your staff accountable, they need to know the rules of the game. This is one of the first things that need to happen as you hire new employees. As the manager, you need to be outcomes oriented. Find ways to measure the outcomes and performance will improve. Don't settle for mediocre. You very often get what you expect.

Analysis and Discussion:

- What do you believe you get paid to do?
- What do you want to accomplish in your current role?
- What do you want to accomplish in the future?
- What do you think I expect of you and how can we determine whether or not you are meeting these expectations?
- What do you expect of me (the manager)?

Self – Reflection Questions

- How does their understanding of what they get paid to do compare to what you think?
- How clear is this individual's goals?
- How could you support this individual in reaching their goals?
- Does this individual accurately understand what you expect?
- Are the individual's expectations of you clear and realistic?
- How can you help this individual measure the outcomes of these expectations?

Motivation: Focus on Strengths

Don't try to perfect each person, instead help each person cultivate his or her talents. Help them become more of who they are. Be drawn to each person's differences and capitalize on them. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" is a phrase we are all familiar with. However, great managers realize this is ineffective. We can't all be Michael Jordon, no matter how hard we try.

Begin talking with your staff member by using the Strengths Tool in Appendix A. It is a template that guides the two of you through a discussion of strengths and weaknesses.

Analysis and Discussion:

- What is most satisfying about your work?
- What about your work motivates you the most?
- What was the best recognition you ever received?
- When you achieve your goals, how would you like to be recognized?
- When you are successful, whom do you want to know it?

Self-Reflection

- How can you link this individual's motivators and satisfiers to recognition?
- What strengths lead to achievements for this individual?
- How do you plan to recognize this individual?

Developing: Find the Right Fit

To engage a person it is important to help the individual find the right role for them. We are often miscast into roles for a myriad of reasons. Sometimes a person is miscast because they performed their previous role exceptionally well, they were promoted. More often than not, people get promoted to a level of incompetence. As a manager, you need to find out how you can keep a person focused on doing what they do best to develop and promote them horizontally.

Analysis and Discussion:

- Does this role thrill you? What does or doesn't thrill you?
- What parts of this role did you learn quickly?
- What about this role brings you strength and satisfaction?
- Is there a particular skill or knowledge you would like to acquire? What is the best way for you to acquire it?
- How often do you think you and I should get together to discuss how things are going?
- How should we measure your progress?

Self-Reflection

- How can you help this individual create opportunities to acquire the skills and/or knowledge they have identified?
- How do/could you define this individual's progress through clear numbers and measurement?
- How can you create "levels" of achievement within their existing role?
- What actions will you take to enhance the productivity and engagement of this individual?

Appendix A

The Strengths Tool