

M a n a g e r a s C o a c h

A G o o d P r a c t i c e G u i d e

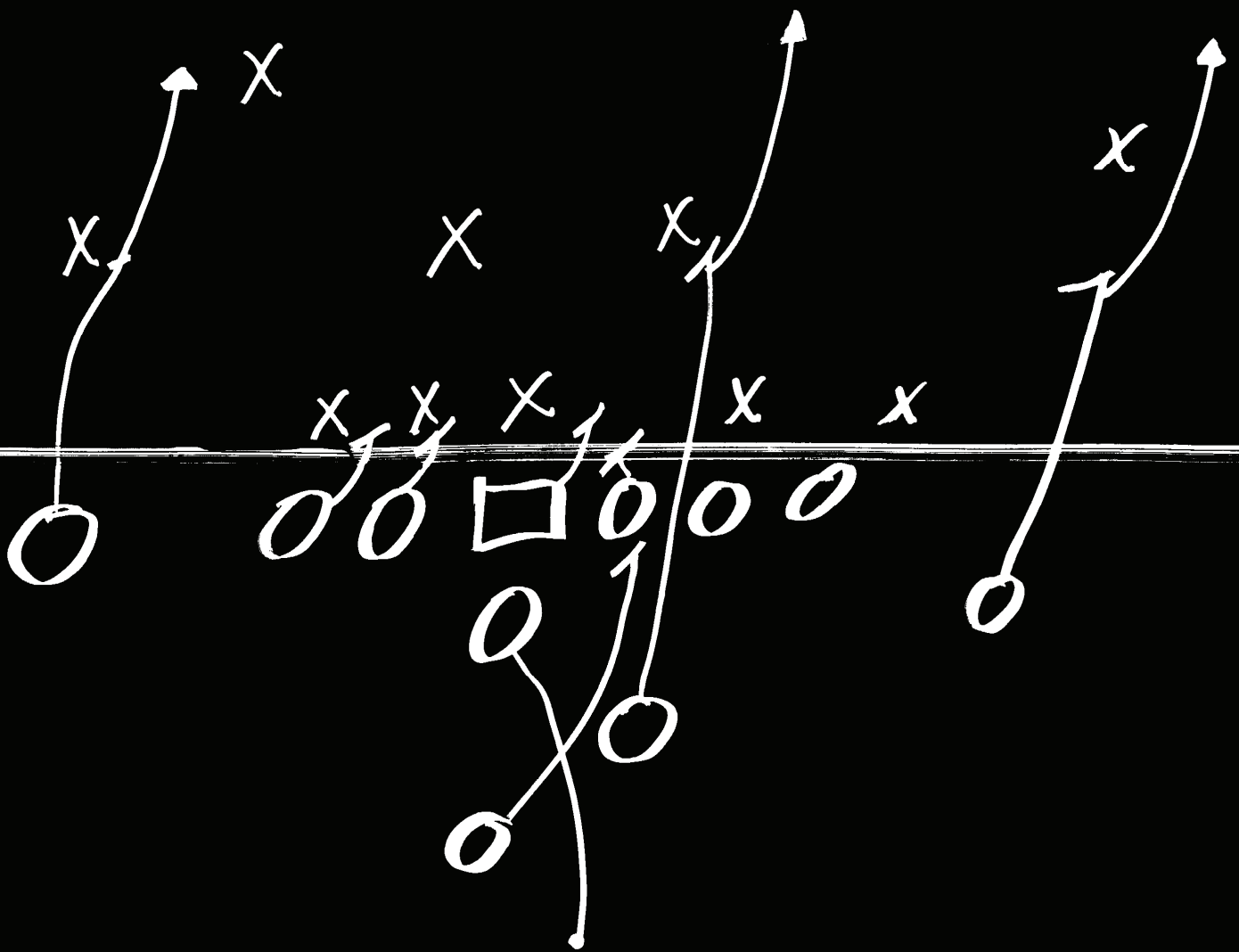


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Introduction

Strategies for developing the capabilities of staff are an important part of UniSA's overall organisational development framework. Organisations can no longer expect to be competitive unless they are able to attract and retain high performing staff, inspire them and support them to learn continuously.

Coaching is a one-on-one process of professional support, guidance, challenge and development that has emerged over the years as an invaluable process in:

- facilitating learning
- enabling transfer of knowledge
- improving staff capability for the long term
- facilitating effective delegation of work
- optimising staff performance, and
- creating a productive workplace climate.

Being able to operate as a coach is increasingly becoming an integral aspect of a line manager/supervisor's role.

This guide explores the elements and benefits of coaching. It provides tips on how to move to operating as a Manager-Coach, including highlighting the skills needed to make this transition. In doing so, it links to the range of Guides available to you as part of UniSA's *Tool Kit for Supervisors of Professional Staff*. It also complements learning programs offered to staff as part of UniSA's *WorkSmart* program.

I encourage you to provide us with any feedback you might have on the usefulness of this resource as well as to advise us of any other resources we might develop to assist you in operating in your role of 'Manager as Coach'.

Ruth Blenkiron
Director, Human Resources

Note: *in this Guide we have used the term manager to apply interchangeably with supervisor. It has been designed as a resource for those in both management and supervisory roles.*

What is Coaching?

Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur, with the aim of improving an individual's capability and performance. Coaching provides the opportunity for an individual to work together with another person to:

- discuss ideas
- problem solve specific issues or situations
- identify solutions or strategies
- enable a change in an individual's perception and/or behaviour, and
- build individual know-how, skills, confidence and effectiveness.

In essence, it provides for immediate on-the-job learning as well as 'just in time' learning tailored to the individual and their particular situation.

Coaching builds on traditional management skills and capabilities around supervision to enhance aspects of management that encourage individual growth and development and optimise performance.

Manager as Coach (refer [Appendix 1](#))

To coach staff means that you assist your staff to develop their skills and capacity and enable them to perform at their best.

From Manager	To Coach
From trying to work out how to manage staff	To asking your staff how they are best managed
From 'You report to me'	To 'Tell me how I can help you'
From telling staff how to behave	To communicating expectations and being an exemplary role model
From controlling staff actions	To enabling them to take better actions
From solving all the problems	To facilitating staff to solve problems
From tip toeing around staff issues	To building relationships where you can have frank and open dialogue about issues
From telling staff what to do	To building initiative & self-directed action
From delegating tasks that simply get the job done	To giving staff challenging assignments that stretch them
From building a compliant culture low in drive and initiative	To building a learning culture where the strengths of employees are optimised, two way feedback and learning is the norm, and commitment to goals is fostered

Review the list on the previous page and reflect on the changes you may need to make to enable your move from being a manager to a coach.

Select one of the changes you have identified. What can you do differently at once to take the first move to operating more as a coach and less as a manager?

Benefits of Coaching Your Staff

Over 50 years ago, Myles Mace in a book called 'The Growth and Development of Executives' published by Harvard University's Graduate School of Business Administration stated that:

'the most effective way of providing for the growth and development of people is through the conscious coaching of subordinates by their immediate supervisors'.

Managers 'get things done through people' so it makes sense to enhance staff capacity on the job through coaching. Staff who are *coached* to perform rather than *managed* to perform usually have more invested in the outcomes of their work and the achievement of team goals. Successfully applied, coaching enables managers to delegate work with more confidence.

Effective coaching can result in:

- enhanced performance, including increased ability to take initiative and find solutions to problems
- enhanced productivity due to increased motivation
- strengthened commitment to personal, professional and organisational goals
- increased retention of high performing staff
- greater levels of co-operation with change
- greater commitment to collaboration to achieve results.

Of course, staff being coached also experience the personal benefits of continually improving their skills and know-how, increasing their levels of self-confidence and job satisfaction, and enhancing personal growth as well as career development prospects.

The Risks of Not Coaching Your Staff!

Traditional “command and control” management styles have been found to be less effective in today’s organisational environments, which frequently require:

- a rapid response
- resilience
- greater problem-solving capacity as well as individual initiative
- consistently high individual effort and performance in order to remain competitive, provide superior service, and ensure organisational success.

‘Better personnel management uses coaching instead of command and control...(because) employees who feel valued and find personal satisfaction in their jobs will go to extraordinary lengths to meet and exceed ... expectations’ (*Supervision, July 1994*).

Furthermore, at a time when organisations are grappling with skills shortages, staff attraction and retention is critical. Coaching supports the professional and career development of staff, as well as enhancing motivation and job satisfaction - all factors that can help to attract and retain high-performing staff.

‘Coaching is now one of the strongest retention tools in a manager’s arsenal’ (*HR Focus, October 1999*).

Coaching in Action

When applied, coaching is:

- **Holding a conversation and engaging in dialogue.** Coaching is not about telling the staff member what to do. Rather it is about encouraging them to reflect and learn. As adult learners, we generally like to create our own solutions rather than be told what to do.
- **Collaborative.** Coaching is about brainstorming issues together. Share your experiences of similar situations. Jointly identify possible solutions to problems.
- **Focussed on achieving outcomes.** You want the staff member to leave your meeting with a course of action to take.
- **Present and future-oriented,** with consideration given to the past where appropriate. When we dwell on the past and a problem, the problem often ‘gets bigger’. If we focus on the way forward and a solution to the problem, the problem becomes more manageable and we have the energy to deal with it.
- **Challenging to the individual, in a positive way.** Ask open-ended questions of the staff member to encourage them to reflect on the issue or situation and think through the possible options. This is your

opportunity to enable the staff member to see the situation differently, to embrace a different way of dealing with it, and potentially to change their approach or behaviour.

- **Focused on the staff member.** Your aim is to focus on their needs and learning requirements as well as facilitating ways for them to find the answers (rather than you providing the answers or directing). You want the staff member to take ownership of the problem and to take action to solve it. From this they learn and are more likely to develop capacity to find solutions to problems independently.
- **Dependent on high quality feedback.** Positive feedback builds self-confidence and makes people want to take more action. Review how implementation of the action plan went. Identify learnings. Celebrate successes.
- **Encouraging the individuals to achieve.** We learn better when we discover for ourselves. Enable your staff to 'extend' themselves and remember 'blame' has no place in coaching!

To be effective, coaching depends on a positive relationship between the Manager-Coach and staff member being coached. The relationship needs to be based on trust - where the staff member knows he/she can come to you and brainstorm issues in a supportive environment and leave with encouragement and your support to take action on a chosen solution.

Coaching Approach

A popular coaching approach is GROW:

G oals – identify what is to be achieved

R eality – understand the issue or situation

O ptions – discuss options or choices available and think through the impact of each

W hen – agree on a course of action.

You may like to take this approach with your staff members.

It is important to acknowledge that a coaching approach may not work in all cases. This will be the case, for example, if a staff member requires excessive personal direction, or if you as the manager lack the skills to guide the staff member appropriately. When a manager is responsible for a staff member who needs excessive direction, he/she needs to reflect on the potential causes of this to guide strategies for dealing with it. For example; it may be due to a lack of confidence, skills, motivation, clarity about work goals, or a 'spill over' from a previous leadership style that did not encourage self-management. When this occurs, it is useful to consider the motivational

issues carefully and then seek advice from managers or HR specialists on approaches that might be taken to address the issues identified.

Coaching Skills

To be effective as a Manager-Coach, a range of capabilities is required. These include being able to:

- build positive relationships with staff
- know your staff and therefore adapt your coaching style. Consider the staff member/coachee in terms of *situational leadership principles* (refer [Appendix 2](#))
- provide quality feedback. You want to deliver feedback that builds motivation not fear or apathy
- be receptive to receiving feedback. Be open to reflecting on and potentially learning from what you hear
- listen actively. Empathise (= Listen with your Ears > **E**mpathise, **A**cknowledge, **R**eflect, **S**ummarise)
- enable dialogue through open or facilitative questioning
- encourage learning and behavioural change through feedback and reframing.

To ascertain the strengths you will bring to a coaching relationship with your staff, why not complete '[A Self Assessment of your Coaching Attributes](#)'. This self-assessment tool will give you insight into your innate strengths and your potential 'blind spots'.

Refer to the following UniSA Guides for more information on the above skills:

- [The Art of Supervision: an action learning tool kit](#)
- [Quick Guide for Supervisors of Professional Staff](#)
- [Providing Quality Feedback: a good practice guide](#)
- [Mentoring @ UniSA: a good practice guide for staff](#)
- [Tips for Giving and Receiving Feedback](#)

And look out for relevant workshops as part of UniSA's [WorkSmart](#) series.

Before Coaching

To be effective as a coach, it is important that you reflect on the following before embarking on a coaching approach:

- How well do you know yourself? Be honest with yourself about your biases, prejudices, limitations, and skills set, including emotional intelligence. It is important to be aware of these and consider how you will manage them, as successful coaching requires a non-judgemental style of questioning and challenging.
- Identify your own coaching style and skill level. Complete '[A Self Assessment of your Coaching Attributes](#)' and be mindful of your 'blind spots' as you enter into coaching.
- Learn more about coaching and its benefits. Educate yourself on coaching concepts, tools and skills as you need.
- Practise coaching. Solicit and accept feedback so you can continually improve. Take action to improve!
- Find a 'coaching mentor' if you need one
- Explore with your line manager whether you can have access to an Executive Coach.

Other Resources

CCH, *Australian Master Human Resources Guide* (2006), 4th edition.

Goleman, D (1998), *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Bloomsbury.

Grant A (2003), *Solution Focused Coaching*, Momentum.

Grant A and Greene, J (2005), *Coach Yourself @Work*, ABC Books.

www.psych.usyd.edu.au/coach

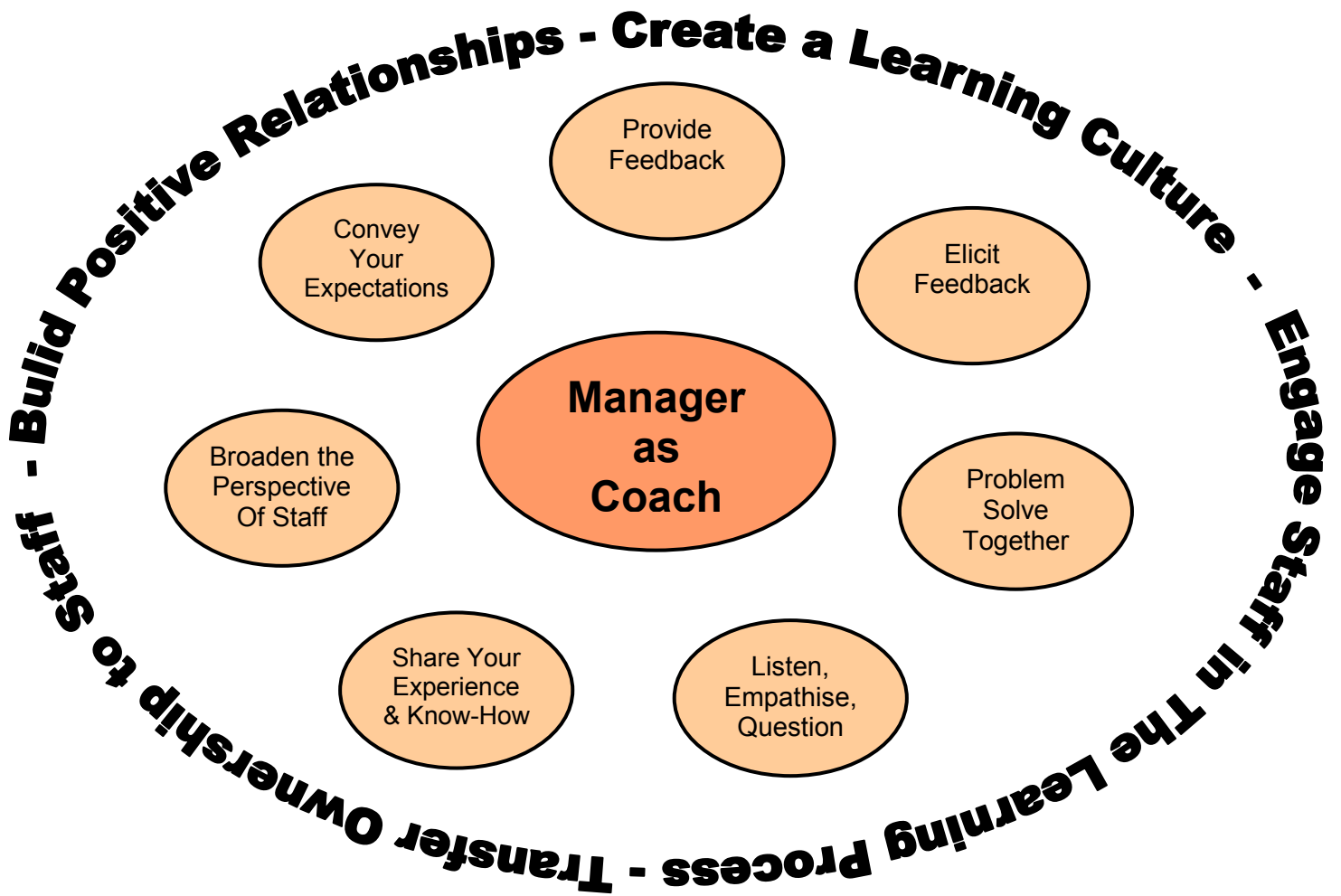
Landsberg, M (1997), *The Tao of Coaching: Boost Your Effectiveness at Work by inspiring and developing those around you*, Profile Business.

Scott, S (2002), *Fierce Conversations*, Berkley Publishing.

www.fierceinc.com

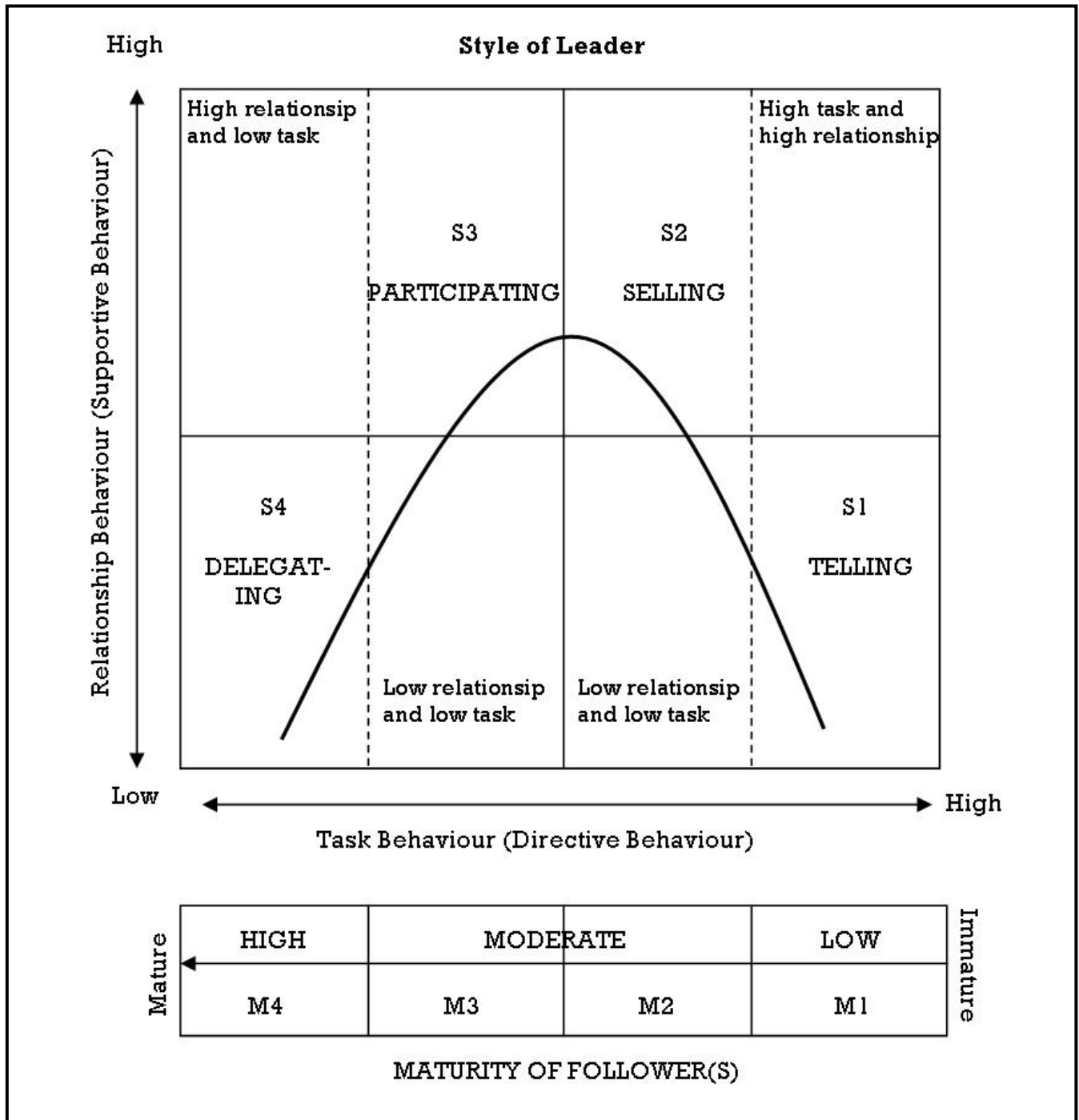
Whitmore, J, (2002), *Coaching For Performance: Growing People, Performance and Purpose*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

www.performanceconsultants.com



Appendix 2 – Situational Leadership

Situational Leadership



The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership model demonstrates that there is no one best way to influence people.

The specific leadership style that should be used with individual or a group will depend on their maturity.

The model classifies managerial behaviour into two categories, task behaviour and relationship behaviour.

Hersey and Blanchard define maturity as a person's willingness and ability to take responsibility for his/her behaviour.

They also argue that maturity should only be considered in relation to a specific task. Thus an employee is never mature or immature generally, but rather people bring different degrees of maturity to the different tasks that they do.

They offer a prescriptive curve, which shows the appropriate style directly above the corresponding level of maturity.

Four management styles are shown on the curve – telling, selling, participating and delegating.

Each is a combination of task behaviour and relationship behaviour. Task behaviour refers to the extent to which a leader provides direction for his/her staff, for example telling them what to do, how to do it and when. Relationship behaviour is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication with them. This includes active listening, and the provision of supportive and facilitative behaviours.

As far as the maturity of the follower is concerned, this is a question of degree.

Four levels are proposed in the maturity continuum. The appropriate leadership style for each of the four maturity levels includes the right combination of task behaviour (direction) and relationship behaviour (support).

Hersey and Blanchard's argument is that:

- telling is appropriate for low maturity followers
- selling should be used with followers with a low to moderate maturity
- participation is suitable for moderate to high maturity while
- delegating is reserved for followers of high maturity.

The key to using the situational leadership model is to assess the maturity level of one's staff. The model also suggests that the leader should try to help staff to grow in their maturity as far as they are willing and able to do so. This is done by the leader adjusting his/her behaviour in accordance with staff maturity.

Hersey, P and Blanchard, K. (1984), *Management of Organisational Behaviour: Utilising Human Resources*, Prentice Hall.