



First, Break All The Rules

(What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently)
By Marcus Buckingham & Curt Coffman

The research that went into this book is very extensive, based on in-depth interviews of over 80,000 managers in over 400 companies.

Great managers may differ in age, race and sex and employ different styles and focus on different goals. But despite these differences they share one common trait: They do not hesitate to break virtually every rule held sacred by traditional wisdom. They do not try to help people get over their weaknesses as they do not believe that a person can achieve anything that they set their mind to with enough training. These great managers play favourites.

With today's tight labour markets, **companies are competing to find and retain the best employees using salary, benefits, promotions and training.** These efforts are often wasted since it is the front-line manager who is the key to attracting and retaining talented employees. The great managers select an employee for talent rather than skills and experience and then set expectations for them and define the outcomes and not the steps to get there. They motivate this talent by **building on their unique strengths** rather than dwelling on their weaknesses.

These managers know how to find the right fit for the person rather than focusing on the next rung up the ladder.



In this book you will discover that measuring the strength of a workplace can be simplified to these 12 questions and why:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?

2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the last 7 days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
11. In the last 6 months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?
12. This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

Great managers know that peoples' natures do not change. Each person is true to his unique nature and a great manager knows how to **motivate a talented employee** to get the best out of him. They capitalize on the differences rather than bemoan their failings. The manager's role is the "catalyst" role.



Beware that not all great employees are meant to be leaders-in- waiting. **“Great managers do things right. Leaders do the right things.”** Keep things simple. Dwelling on the weaknesses can be demoralizing and have undesired outcomes.

Every role, performed at excellence, requires talent. Great housekeepers have talent. Nurses, teachers and truck drivers can have talent. Every talent has a unique “filter” that allows us to understand the truck driver who drives twice as far but has half the accidents.



Skills, knowledge and talents, if you have all 3 you have something powerful. **Talent is not teachable. Skills are teachable.** Knowledge is something “what you are aware of”. Factual knowledge is things that you know and experiential knowledge is represented by understandings that you have picked up along the way. A love of precision is not a skill, nor is it knowledge, it is a talent. Knowing these differences is very important in understanding the great manager.

In this book you will learn how talents can be put into 3 categories: Striving, thinking and relating. Your talents are simply recurring patterns of behaviour. **Talent is a key priority for a great manager.**

Another key to a great manager is defining outcomes. He must retain control and focus people on performance. We learn that the outcome is key and not how the employee got there. This solution allows employees

to take responsibility. Great managers do have some rules of thumb. These rules relate to such things as accuracy, safety, company or industry standard, and more.

Casting is everything. It works for movies, for hockey teams and so why not for your company. Learn what this means, including spending most of your time with your best people. **Investing in the best** is the fairest, the best way to learn and the only way to stay focused on excellence. You will learn how to manage around weaknesses.



Another key for the great manager is **finding the right fit.** This section is particularly interesting. Phrases such as a “Rung Too Far”, “One Rung Doesn’t Necessarily Lead to Another”, “Create Heroes in Every Role” and others resonate.

As we near the end we learn the final step which should be the first step, i.e. **the art of interviewing for talent.** Ensure that the talent interview is separate from all the other steps of the recruiting process. Ask a few open-ended questions and then try to keep quiet. These tips and many more provide a great insight into a search for talent.

Finally we learn about **Performance Management** through steps that can be taken in a meeting setting and we also learn how an employee, who doesn’t have that super supervisor, can manage the situation. This is important since great managers are certainly in the minority.

This book is a must read for anyone wanting to **build a great team, a great company, where people want to work and perform.**

