

## Advising Styles and Skills

Situational advising allows you to change your advising style to match the development needs of the individual or organization you advise. Your advising style is the way you advise when you work with someone. It is how you conduct yourself, over time, when you are trying to influence the performance of others.

### ADVISING STYLES

You will need to vary these based on your assessment of the students/groups readiness level. Many times, advisors may struggle with students because they believe that they need a higher level of interaction or direction when the student is actually able to accept more of a delegating style and vice versa.

**Directing:** The advisor provides specific instructions and closely supervises task accomplishments. Use this style with students/groups that are at a low level of readiness.

**Coaching:** The advisor continues to direct and closely supervise task accomplishment, but also explains decisions, solicits suggestions, and supports progress. Use this style with groups that have a few leaders that are at a higher readiness level who will need your support with the rest of the group to get things accomplished.

**Supporting:** The advisor facilitates and supports the efforts toward task accomplishments and shares responsibilities for decision making with the students. Use this style with students/groups that are just starting to understand the concepts that will lead to success - the group is just starting to "get it".

**Delegating:** The advisor empowers the students to conduct their own decision making, problem solving, and delegating. Use this style with students/groups that are at a high level of readiness.

### ADVISING SKILLS

**Flexibility:** You must be able to move from one style to another in order to meet the needs of the different types of students and multiple circumstances you will encounter.

**Diagnosis:** You have to learn how to diagnose the needs of the students you advise. Determining what is needed as opposed to what is wanted is sometimes a difficult task. It is also important to note that what is needed is not always the thing that will get the most positive response - it is what will lead the student through a problem, set the standard for the future, or help to teach the student a valuable life lesson.

**Contracting:** You have to learn how to come to some agreements with students. It can be helpful to work together to reach an agreement as to which advising style they seek from you. This is a valuable lesson for assisting students with understanding the rules of engagement and interaction that will be carried forth as they mature.