mark s kenny

Directs Work

From Doing to Directing: Participant Guide

UNDERSTANDING DIRECTS WORK

Directing Work Means:

Giving clear _____, delegating _____, and staying _____ to make sure the work gets done.

Skilled Behaviors:

- Provides clear direction and accountabilities.
- Delegates and distributes assignments and decisions appropriately.
- Monitors progress by maintaining dialogue on work and results.
- Provides appropriate guidance and direction based on people's capabilities.
- Intervenes as needed to remove obstacles.

Less Skilled Behaviors:

- Provides incomplete, vague, or disorganized instructions.
- Delegates work to people without giving them sufficient guidance.
- Sets goals and objectives so easy to achieve that people are demotivated in the process.
- Saves high-profile tasks for self.

DO – DUMP – DIRECT

DO:

DUMP:

DIRECT:

Which one do you default to most often?

Why We Fall into Do/Dump

Trust:

Control:

Time:

Avoiding uncomfortable conversations:

Which barrier gets in your way most often, and how does it affect the way you direct work?

Three Micro-Strategies

The Don't Rescue Rule:

The One Task Release Rule:

The How to What Rule:

DIRECTING WORK WELL: SET → SUPPORT → SOLVE

1. SET = CREATE CLARITY

When delegating work, be clear on:

- What does success look like?
- Who owns it?
- When is it due?
- How will we know it's done well?
- When will we check progress?

Confirm understanding

Ask: "Walk me through how you're going to approach this."

What to delegate

- Delegate work others can own, including opportunities to develop their capabilities.
- Delegate decisions and responsibilities within their authority, not just routine tasks.

Adjust direction based on capability

Less experienced:

More experienced:

When delegating, explain:

- Why this work matters.
- Why you're asking them to take it on.

Practical delegation tools

Ask Them What You Should Delegate

- What do I do that you could help me with?
- What do I do that you could do with a little help from me?
- What do I do that you could do by yourself?

The One Task Release Rule

What's one thing I'm doing that someone else could own?

One Degree More Clarity

- Add one more sentence.
- Give one example.
- Clarify one expectation.

2. SUPPORT = STAY ENGAGED WITHOUT TAKING OVER

What does SUPPORT look like?

Monitor without micromanaging

Agree on check-ins when assigning the work, not after you become worried about it.

The frequency and type of check-in depend on:

- The person's capabilities and experience.
- The importance and complexity of the task.
- The risks involved.

Questions that keep ownership with them

- "What's your next step?"
- "What are you seeing right now?"

How might agreeing on check-ins ahead of time change how employees experience your follow-up?

A simple accountability conversation

1. Clarify the expectation

   "Here's what we agreed needed to happen."

2. Name the gap

   "Here's what I'm seeing that's different."

3. Invite their perspective

   "What's getting in the way?"

4. Agree on the next step and follow-up

   "What needs to happen now, and when will we check back?"

3. SOLVE = REMOVE OBSTACLES

Ask:

- What's getting in their way?
- What do they need from you?
- What can you help remove?
- What remains their responsibility?

DIRECTING WORK: PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Round 1: Reality Check

What would you be tempted to do? Would that be DO, DUMP, or DIRECT?

Round 2: Now Direct It

Set — Create Clarity

What needs to be clear?

How would you confirm understanding?

Support — Stay Engaged

How will you monitor progress?

What would you say during your next check-in?

Solve — Remove Obstacles

What can you help remove, and what remains their responsibility?

Round 3: The Accountability Moment

What would you actually say to the employee using the four-step accountability conversation?

MY TAKEAWAYS

One insight I want to remember:

Where will I stop doing and start directing?

What will I do differently when I'm tempted to take over?

ABOUT MARK | KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Mark Kenny helps organizations align people, priorities, and execution so they can move forward as one team.

Through highly interactive keynotes and leadership experiences, he uses the Uncommon Collaboration™ framework to help teams overcome the fragmentation that pulls people apart, slows momentum, and gets in the way of execution.

CONNECT WITH MARK

mark@markskenny.com
(615) 656-0465
LinkedIn profile: markskenny