

Not 4x4 but 2x2!

Whilst many blokes like "4x4"s I love "2x2"s! If you have spent any time with me in a training or coaching session it doesn't take me too long to relate what we are talking about to a "2x2". For me (and those I work alongside) it helps put ideas into a fuller context and enables us to decide where we fit. The big criticisms of "2x2"s are that they tend to polarise people and things never work into four boxes as we are all so different and certainly much more complicated than a one of four! Taking these criticisms into consideration I still believe that "2x2"s do help people think and develop more effective ways of doing things.

In this newsletter we are looking at four "2x2"s that could be used in the four areas of training that Christian Training is involved in: Leadership, Coaching Individuals, Team Work and Training to Train.



Coaching Individuals



One of the most frequent questions asked is how can I manage my time more effectively and efficiently. Peter Drucker (management guru) is quoted as saying, "Until we can manage time, we can manage nothing else". I think he's right, if we can't make the most of the time available to us then it becomes a source of stress and pressure and stops us from managing other things in our life and work.

This "2x2" provides a way of putting the right priority to our tasks by simply deciding how important they are and what is their urgency. The "2x2" looks something like this:

	Not important	Important
Urgent	Delegate	Do
Not Urgent	Leave	Plan

This means that the non-urgent, unimportant get left and that priority is given to the tasks that are important and urgent. Of course, it is never as simple as that because when we deal with those who work with us then whose "importance" are we looking at? Is it important to me? To my boss? To those I manage? To those I serve? In addition to this, for those things that are not important for me to do and yet are urgent I need to delegate and delegation takes time and trust and someone good enough to delegate to!

There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven. - Ecclesiastes 3:1

Team Work

What kind of team do you belong to? Is it like being with your friends? Is like a family? Is it too pressured? Does your team help you be the best you can be? A way of analysing what your team is like is to look at how supportive it is and how challenging it is. Here's the "2x2":

	Low Support	High Support
High Challenge	Pressure	The best!
Low Challenge	Dull	Family

Pressure – little support but lots of challenges, this type of teamwork eventually wears you down and leads to blame shifting and looking for the scapegoat when things go wrong.

Dull – no support or challenge. It can mean very distant relationships and no growth as there is nothing to strive for.

Family – supportive but not challenging. It is a very comfortable place to be, and it sounds nice and cosy. But where am I being stretched? How am I going to develop in a team like this?

The Best! – lots of support and challenge. I should grow and develop here without feeling that I'm being given a rope to hang myself with.

So what kind of team do you belong to? At work? At church? Your home group? Your closest work team? Any social activity team?





Leadership

There are many ways of analysing leadership and this "2x2" is just a quick and simple way of identifying how a leader is in terms of their activity and how they are perceived by others. It is a "2x2" that polarises leaders and puts them into boxes. When I've used this "2x2" with leaders they have invariably said that they are not just in one box. But which box are they mostly in? Under what circumstances do you gravitate to one particular box? Which box do they most naturally fit?

	Low Task	High Task
Low People	Thinker	Director
High People	Relater	Socialiser

There is not a right or wrong answer in this "2x2". All types of leader can work with different teams and in different circumstances, all they need to do is adapt their behaviour and style. Many leaders have used this "2x2" to understand how they are seen by the people they lead and as a result have made positive plans to change their leadership style. Which style of leader do you think is right for which circumstances?

We could take the "2x2" further by identifying other distinctives for the four types of leader.

	Socialiser	Thinker	Director	Relater
Needs	Action	Belonging	Competency	Recognition
Wants	Excitement	Rules	Productivity	No change
Fears	Boundaries	Change	Mistakes	Rejection
Style	Expediency	Organiser	Visionary	Facilitator
Contribution	Resolver	Stabiliser	Builder	Catalyst

You may not agree with any of the words which describe the type of leader but they do at least encourage us to stop and think about how we would be best to lead.

Training to Train

What is the purpose of training someone? All we are trying to do is help them to be both willing and able to do their work. This "2x2" looks at the responses we might have for people who are willing and able and those that are not.

	Not willing	Willing
Able	Motivate	Release
Not Able	Review	Train

The most difficult box to find someone in is the "review" box, they are both unwilling and unable – someone suggested in a recent training event that they should be sacked! Certainly there needs to be some careful discussion in this box as it is so easy to destroy someone rather than build them up. It may be that they are not willing and able to do this particular task but may be perfectly willing and able to do another job. Someone did say that the individual in this box is a "waste of space" – this is not right! They are most probably not in the right space.



"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each should be careful how he builds. For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:10,11)

Your 2x2

There are four "2x2"s in this newsletter. I'm sure you know of more, you can even create your own. Just sitting here in my office I have created a new "2x2" to reflect on the usefulness of this newsletter. We could judge it by being thought provoking or not and realistic or not. The "2x2" would look like this:

	Doesn't give ideas	Gives ideas
Realistic	Same old!	Helpful
Not realistic	Time-waster	Impractical

What do you think? Please get in contact with any new "2x2"s and your thoughts about this newsletter.