

# SkillDirector Skill Practices

-- Learn while working! --



## Why Skill Practices?

**“I don’t have time for learning!”**

If you’ve got skill gaps, but people have no time for learning, you’ve got a problem.

The solution? Let them learn while working.

One of the most useful ways of accelerating learning transfer is via workflow learning – learning in the context of the activity you need to do as part of your job. Josh Bersin describes this as “The New Model for Learning: In The Flow of Work”. While traditional "on the job training" makes use of this practice, it has not historically provided sufficient structure to provide best practices.

SkillDirector skill practices were created to address the core/soft skills lacking in the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. Use them to learn skills that transcend the changes (digitization, artificial intelligence) that affect jobs today: business acumen, personal operational excellence (includes time management, communication, customer focus), problem solving, and sales acumen.

SkillDirector skill practices cover one learning objective and contain:

- Background – the circumstances describing the situation in which the skill practice must occur
- A template for performing the skill practice that enables consistent output/results
- Examples for the learner, along with instructions, so they don’t get frustrated with the activity

Duration varies based upon the learning objective, however, all skill practices involve the application of learning to something the learner must perform in their current job – a real business opportunity. This makes it more relevant, better retained, and does not take time away from the job – it directly applies the learning to something the learner needs to perform anyway.

Skill practices combine the best way to learn with a solution that overcomes excuses.

To see some examples, click here for a 1.5 minute [video overview](#).

## Interested?

Complete the form below with your areas of interest. Open this PDF in Adobe Reader and use Fill & Sign to update. [Then send the form to us for a quote.](#)

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## Instructions

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<b>Business Acumen (11)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<b>Strategic Communication Plan</b> Create a strategic communication plan for a customer	Apply knowledge of what's important to your customer into all communications
	<b>Resources Action Plan</b> Build a project action plan that engages the required internal and external resources	Engage the appropriate company and customer resources (systems, people, processes) to get things done better and faster
	<b>Financial Ratios</b> Calculate financial ratios, understand what they tell you about a customer's business, and use them to compare your customer's organization to competitors in their industry	Calculate financial ratios to build a better business case, and build credibility with members of the C level
	<b>Credibility</b>	
	<b>Earn Trust</b> Develop actionable steps that will help you build credibility with customers, partners, and internal colleagues	Develop actionable steps and structure to build trust and credibility with internal and external stakeholders
	<b>Create Mutually Beneficial Results</b> Use a structured process to develop mutually beneficial results when your interests may differ from those of external or internal stakeholders	Apply persuasive techniques to convince others your proposals deliver mutually beneficial results
	<b>Drive Constructive Tension And Change</b> Use a structured process to create a constructive tension that drives collaborative dialogue, faster decisions, and desired results	Utilize techniques that result in constructive tension to help take control of the buying or decision-making process
	<b>Develop True Believers</b> Use a structured process to efficiently handle objections and convert nay-sayers into true believers	Apply persuasive tactics in handling objections and winning over challenging dissenters

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<b>Business Acumen (11)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<b>Relationship Building</b>	
	<p><b>Map Your Network</b> Identify and prioritize the contacts in your network</p>	Prioritize your contacts based on the impact they have on your ability to reach your objectives
	<p><b>Build and Execute a Relationship Strategy</b> Use a Relationship Action Plan template to create structure and routine for developing and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships with the people who can help you the most</p>	Identify, prioritize, and strengthen your relationship with the people who can affect your objectives.
	<p><b>Become an Invaluable Resource</b> Apply a structured process to supporting contacts so you become an invaluable, “go-to” resource for them</p>	Uncover and apply methods to help you rapidly build trust and add value for key stakeholders so they continually benefit from being part of your network
	<p><b>Change a Relationship</b> Use a structured process to change or improve a relationship with a contact in your network that makes or influences decisions that have an impact on your objectives</p>	Create and execute a plan that improves and/or changes the nature of your relationship with contacts that make and influence decisions that impact your objectives.

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<b>Personal Operational Excellence (21)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<b>Project Management</b>	
	<b>Task List</b> Use a structured process to differentiate, prioritize, and complete high value tasks	Create a personal project plan to consistently achieve daily operational excellence by prioritizing and completing high value tasks
	<b>Project Plan</b> Develop a project plan, with clear responsibilities and deliverables, and enroll and hold key players accountable	Develop a project plan and critical path with clear responsibilities and deliverables
	<b>Contingency Planning</b> Use a structured process to define and plan for both known risks and the unexpected so you can anticipate breakdowns in execution and quickly make changes when required	Demonstrate the ability to prepare mitigation and contingency plans, anticipate breakdowns in execution and quickly make changes when required
	<b>Mutual Accountability</b> Build mutual accountability and joint ownership through communication and resource engagement to support optimal execution	Build a sense of mutual accountability for results with self and others

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<b>Personal Operational Excellence (21)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<b>Time Management</b>	
	<b>Time Management: Avoid Interruptions</b> Create a plan for accomplishing activities that require focus while avoiding time consuming interruptions	Use a structured process for avoiding interruptions during activities that require focus
	<b>Time Management: Manage Tasks</b> Use a structured plan and productivity tools to schedule and manage tasks, to reduce stress and improve work-life balance	Use productivity tools to manage tasks
	<b>Time Management: Estimation</b> Use a structured process for estimating and planning for tasks you perform regularly, to reduce stress and improve work-life balance	Estimate the duration of tasks you perform
	<b>Time Management: Avoid Procrastination</b> Identify what and why you procrastinate and create a plan to overcome the root causes	Use techniques to reduce procrastination

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<b>Personal Operational Excellence (21)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<b>Customer Satisfaction and Communication</b>	
	<b>Customer Satisfaction: Recognize Customer Focus</b> Identify how you can apply customer-focused experiences you've received to experiences you deliver	Apply knowledge of customer focused behavior to interactions with internal and external stakeholders
	<b>Customer Satisfaction: Value Focus</b> For each of several internal or external requests, determine how you will meet them in a customer-focused way that delivers value	Respond to internal and external customer requests with a value focus
	<b>Customer Satisfaction: Recover When Things Go Wrong</b> Use the recovery steps to describe how you will handle a current situation requiring recovery	Demonstrate the ability to execute recovery steps in a way that turns a tough situation into one that drives customer loyalty
	<b>Communication: Select The Best Communication Method</b> Analyze whether how you plan to communicate with respect to current tasks is optimal and what changes to consider	Select the best communication to use in various scenarios
	<b>Build Chemistry With Others</b> Identify specifically how you will communicate with those with whom you work to optimally build chemistry	Leveraging awareness of your own personality type and communication style, adapt your communication style to the needs of others.
	<b>Break The Ice</b> Use a structured approach to prepare for a meeting with a new contact that maximizes chemistry	Follow a structured process to prepare to meet a new contact so you optimize the likelihood of building chemistry
	<b>Active Listening</b> Use active listening and discovery skills to understand "real" issues/needs and build chemistry, and the importance of verifying the conversation in writing	Demonstrate the use of active listening techniques such as probing and clarifying

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<b>Personal Operational Excellence (21)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<b>Customer Satisfaction and Communication</b>	
	<b>Effective Email Techniques</b> Write effective, customer-focused emails	Write effective, customer-focused emails
	<b>Customer-Focused Presentations</b> Prepare and deliver customer-focused presentations that address the needs and motivation of the audience	Prepare and deliver presentations that deliver value to the target audience
	<b>Customer-Focused Group Presentations</b> Prepare and deliver cohesive team presentations that address the needs and motivation of the audience	Prepare and deliver team presentations that deliver value to the target audience
	<b>Lead Meetings Effectively</b> Use a structured process to ensure that all meetings will achieve their purpose and deliver value to those participating	Prepare for and lead purposeful meetings that deliver value to all participants
	<b>Follow Through On Commitments</b> Use a structured process to ensure you drive action and follow through on commitments	Consistently follow up and through on all commitments
	<b>Share Knowledge / Train Others</b> Use a structured process to share experience, best practices and knowledge with others (informally or in small groups)	Share experience, best practices and knowledge with others effectively

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<b>Sales Acumen (26)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<p><b>Account/Territory Plan</b> Create an account or territory plan for how you will achieve your goals, and prioritize the opportunities and accounts to pursue</p>	Create an individual account/territory plan that prioritizes the opportunities/accounts to pursue
	<p><b>Competitor Analysis Activity</b> Use a Competitor Analysis framework to profile a competitor and identify their likely strategy</p>	Demonstrate the ability to organize competitive data into a competitor profile
	<p><b>Identify Competitors Activity</b> Identify your present and future direct and indirect competitors and how you can position against them</p>	Identify and position against both direct and indirect competitors
	<p><b>Compare Strategies</b> Uncover, interpret, and align customer strategies with your own</p>	Leverage an understanding of customer and your organization's strategies to create long-range strategic plans that will create new opportunities for both
	<p><b>Program Alignment</b> Create a structure around enlisting the right internal people to help you deliver a custom solution/program that yields benefits for both the customer and your organization</p>	Enroll relevant stakeholders to jointly develop and execute a custom offering/program that aligns company and customer strategies and value drivers, creating a "business fit" that provides incremental value for both parties
	<p><b>Influence Others</b> Use a structured process to help you persuade, negotiate, and compromise with internal and external stakeholders</p>	Influence others to support your ideas and programs
	<p><b>Manage Misalignment</b> Identify solutions that are not in alignment with customer strategies and develop alternatives that benefit the customer and your organization</p>	Overcome situations where the customer and your organization are misaligned

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<b>Sales Acumen (26)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<b>Sales Planning</b>	
	<b>Organizational Dynamics</b> Examine the people in an account to identify how to tailor your business case, and with whom to build relationships	Leverage knowledge of who has authority/responsibility to identify a networking strategy and tailor your offering
	<b>Opportunity Politics</b> Identify the political players in your account, the role they play, and assess if your lineup is strong enough to win	Assess the political situation in an account to determine if you can win and develop a people strategy for doing so
	<b>Identify and Prioritize Trends</b> Uncover and apply the knowledge required to generate relevant, actionable insight and foresight (“teachable moments”)	Uncover key trends to develop “teachable moments” that help customers reframe their perceptions, look at their own businesses differently, and become motivated to action
	<b>Develop Insight</b> Use trend information to develop, apply, and deliver insight (“teachable moments”)	Convert key trends into insight that enables you to create and tailor “teachable moments” that help customers reframe their perceptions, look at their own businesses differently, and become motivated to action
	<b>Convert Insight To Foresight</b> Use trend information to develop insight and apply, and deliver foresight (“teachable moments”)	Convert insight on a specific trend into foresight, which enables you to predict likely outcomes and develop tailored solutions to challenges and opportunities that arise out of those outcomes
	<b>Challenge The Status Quo</b> Develop unconventional, unobvious insights and foresights that challenge the status quo, devising solutions based on those insights and foresights, and then driving those solutions to decision with conviction	Demonstrate new thinking that challenges the status quo and helps meet unmet needs

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<b>Sales Acumen (26)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<b>Sales Execution</b>	
	<p><b>Create Buyer Alignment</b> Align your sales process to the customer’s buying process and determine if you can win</p>	Leverage your knowledge of the customer’s decision making process to determine how to proceed with your sales process
	<p><b>Qualify the Opportunity</b> Use a structured process to qualify opportunities to “can I compete?” (products), “can I win?” (relationships), and “do I want to win?” (strategic alignment)</p>	Demonstrate the ability to qualify opportunities
	<p><b>Tailor Solutions</b> Use in-depth customer knowledge to deliver tailored solutions that will differentiate us from the competition</p>	Uncover and leverage in-depth customer knowledge to tailor solutions
	<p><b>Build a Business Case</b> Using the provided templates, follow the step by step process to build a business case and to influence your ability to get price</p>	Demonstrate how to apply knowledge of how the customer makes money to quantify financial value
	<p><b>Align Value Propositions</b> Align value propositions to the customer’s strategies—and to the outlooks, perspectives, and beliefs of the individuals who make and influence purchasing decisions</p>	Tailor value propositions to a customer’s strategy and specific individuals
	<p><b>Tailor the Message</b> Tailor your communications so they are better received by individual stakeholders</p>	Tailor messages to individual value drivers
	<p><b>Perform Backward Scheduling</b> Apply a process called backward scheduling to your opportunity action plan to accelerate closure</p>	Document an action plan that uses backward scheduling to get a customer to drive an opportunity to closure

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<b>Sales Acumen (26)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<p><b>Negotiation Planning</b> Use a structured process for planning negotiations, include your pricing and negotiables strategy, as well as your timing</p>	Plan for negotiations using a structured process that best positions you for success
	<p><b>Selling To Senior Leaders</b></p>	
	<p><b>Tailor Analyses</b> Tailor a high level business needs analysis and the solution you offer to the needs of each member of the senior decision making team</p>	Tailor a high level business needs analysis to the needs of each member of the senior decision making team
	<p><b>Tailor Discovery Questions</b> Tailor discovery questions to members of the senior decision making team based on what's important to them</p>	Tailor discovery questions to each member of the senior decision making team
	<p><b>Get A Meeting With Senior Leaders</b> Follow a structured process and utilize planned communications to get meetings with senior leaders</p>	Follow a structured process and planned communications to get meetings with senior level decision makers
	<p><b>Prepare Strategic Messaging</b> Prepare a presentation/proposal, incorporating brand messaging and business value, for the senior decision making team</p>	Prepare a presentation/proposal, incorporating our brand messaging and business value, for the senior decision making team
	<p><b>Develop A Presentation Strategy For Senior Leaders</b> Use a structured process to verify you will deliver value to each attendee, anticipate questions and objections, and have an action plan for success</p>	Design a strategy for presenting to the senior decision making team

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<b>Problem Solving &amp; Analysis (12)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<p><b>Decision Making Models</b> For a specific decision you need to make, identify which decision-making model to use and why</p>	Select the appropriate decision process to improve the quality of decision making
	<p><b>Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills Inventory</b> Use a structured inventory for assessing your own problem solving and decision-making capability so you can identify opportunities for self-development</p>	Assess your problem solving and decision-making capability and identify areas for improvement
	<p><b>Structured Decision Making</b> Use an examination of a recent past decision that did not produce the desired outcome to identify the impact of applying a systematic decision-making process</p>	Apply a systematic decision-making process to enhance the likelihood of a positive outcome
	<p><b>Problem Definition</b> Use tools to create a clear problem definition that improves the quality of the solution</p>	Use tools to create clear problem definitions that improve the quality of solutions
	<p><b>Identifying Potential Problem Causes</b> Use tools that identify potential problem causes to guide you to a solution</p>	Use tools that identify potential problem causes to guide you to a solution
	<p><b>Gather Decision Making/Problem Solving Data</b> Use tools for gathering and analyzing data for a decision you need to make or a problem you need to solve</p>	Use tools for gathering and analyzing data for a decision you need to make or a problem you need to solve
	<p><b>Select Evaluation Criteria</b> Use tools to select relevant evaluation criteria that guides your alternative solution search</p>	Use tools for selecting evaluation criteria for a problem you need to solve
	<p><b>Generate Alternatives</b> Use tools to generate and evaluate alternatives in decision making and problem solving</p>	Use tools for generating and evaluating alternatives for a decision you have to make or a problem you need to solve

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<b>Problem Solving &amp; Analysis (12)</b>		
<b>Select</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
	<b>Solution Implementation</b> Use tools to plan for solution implementation in decision making and problem solving	Use tools to plan for solution implementation in decision making and problem solving
	<b>Nominal Group Technique</b> Use this technique to gather and prioritize ideas, decisions, or solutions	Use the nominal group technique to gather and prioritize ideas, decisions, or solutions
	<b>Divergent vs Convergent Thinker</b> Use a tool to identify your dominant type of thinking; then apply that knowledge to current problems/decisions to look at it from a different perspective and expand your thinking	Use knowledge of your dominant type of thinking (divergent vs. convergent) to think about other ways of looking at a current problem or decision
	<b>Six Hat Tool</b> Learn a technique for optimal group decisions making to get everyone to think about a problem/situation in the same way to spot issues and opportunities that might otherwise be missed	Use the Six Hat Tool for group problem solving or decision making

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