



Eight Minutes, Not Eight Hours



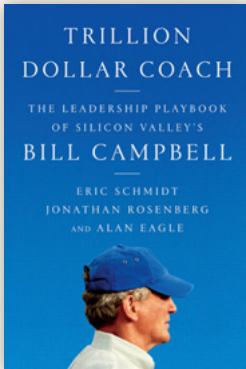
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Trillion Dollar Coach

The Leadership Playbook of Silicon Valley's Bill Campbell

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Trillion Dollar Coach captures Bill Campbell's stories and behaviors that played an instrumental role in the growth of several prominent Silicon Valley visionaries. Bill Campbell eventually became a coach to many people including Steve Jobs, Larry Page, and Eric Schmidt, among others. Although he passed in 2016, Bill Campbell left a legacy of wisdom. He loved shining the spotlight on others and shunned public attention so much that his ideas weren't documented until Google started teaching his principles to emerging leaders.

KEY QUOTE

"The top priority of any manager is the well-being and success of his people."

Key Concepts

The Caddie and the CEO. A good leader is concerned with the success of others and with creating a team atmosphere; he or she is willing to coach and inspires others to coach.

Your Title Makes You a Manager. Your People Make You a Leader. People respond to managers who have credibility, make good decisions, and from whom they can learn. Foster honest discussion, reject groupthink.

Build an Envelope of Trust. Trust creates psychological safety. It is the foundation of productive relationships and produces an atmosphere of courage.

Team First. Your first instinct should be to "work the team, then the problem" (p. 113). Value relationships and problem solving and eschew politics.

The Power of Love. Combine “a sharp mind and a warm heart” (p. 156).

The Yardstick. Measure your own success by the success of others.

THE CADDIE AND THE CEO

As a coach within Google, Bill Campbell became masterful at identifying tensions and figuring out how to resolve them. He would counsel the executives and often sat in on the meetings. Rather than providing opinions on products and strategy, he made sure “the team was communicating, that the tensions and disagreements were brought to the surface and discussed” (p. 15).

Campbell believed that a critical factor for success was for teams to act like communities, “integrating interests and putting aside differences to be individually and collectively obsessed with what’s good for the company” (p. 22).

YOUR TITLE MAKES YOU A MANAGER. YOUR PEOPLE MAKE YOU A LEADER.

As Google experimented with running a fast-moving product development team without managers, Campbell spoke with the engineers and learned that they wanted “someone from whom they could learn something and someone who could help them make decisions.” The managers coordinated resources and handled conflicts (pp. 33-34).

Campbell explained it this way. “Think that everyone who works for you is like your kids.” Bill once said. “Help them course correct and make them better” (p. 48).

Campbell believed that leadership evolved from management excellence. People want to feel valued, so it’s important to listen and pay attention (p. 35). The following is a selection of Campbell’s principles and methods for coaching people.

The “It’s the People” manifesto: Bill Campbell often repeated a manifesto, recorded in its entirety on page 39. “Great managers help people excel and grow,” he believed. Trusting the team “means freeing people to do their jobs and to make decisions. It means knowing people want to do well and believing that they will.” The top priority of a manager is the “well-being and success of their people” (p. 39).

“Trip reports”: Campbell encouraged teams to build rapport and better relationships by starting team meetings with more personal, non-business topics. This allowed team members to get to know each other and get everyone involved in the meeting from the outset. For example, if Eric Schmidt returned to Google from a trip, he would put a Google map on the screen marking the cities where he visited, and he’d describe interesting things he had observed in those places (pp. 42-45).

“Five words on a whiteboard”: Bill Campbell appreciated structure and took time to prepare for his one-on-one meetings with team members. These one-on-one meetings took place off-site at Campbell’s office. The meeting would begin with informalities and conversation that was often meaningful and layered, not surface chit-chat. Soon after, Campbell and the coachee would simultaneously reveal their own “five words on a whiteboard” – five things that they each felt were important to



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discuss. After revealing their topics, the two would merge the words to form an agenda for their conversation, instead of simply leading with Campbell's own agenda (pp. 46-48).

The throne behind the roundtable: "The manager's job is to run a decision-making process that ensures all perspectives get heard and considered, and, if necessary, to break ties and make the decision" (p. 57). Campbell would point out that teams should strive for the best idea and not consensus because the goal of consensus leads to groupthink.

Lead based on first principles: "Define the first principles for the situation, the immutable truths that are the foundation for the company or product and help guide the decision from those principles" (p. 60). Bill Campbell believed that the leader's job was to describe and remind the team of their first principles to make easier decisions. For example, an executive at Tellme consulted Campbell and then relied on the "immutable truths" of the company when making the decisions about whether to merge with AT&T and then, later, Microsoft (pp. 57-60).

BUILD AN ENVELOPE OF TRUST

The most important currency in a relationship is trust. To Bill Campbell, trust means you keep your word, and you have loyalty, integrity, and discretion.

Only coach the coachable: Leadership is not about you. It's about serving something bigger, whether it's a company or a team. Campbell believed that people who are coachable are curious, want to learn new things, and are brutally honest with themselves (p. 85-87).

Practice free-form listening: While in a coaching session with Bill, you had his undivided attention. He wasn't looking at his phone, emails, or texts. Even when he was coaching his little league teams, he held by this standard. Bill advised to give your "full undivided attention – don't think ahead to what you're going to say next – and ask questions to get to the real issue" (p. 92). This allows people to feel understood and supported (pp. 89-92).

No gap between statements and facts: When providing feedback, be relentlessly honest and candid. But also combine negative feedback with care. Former Google executive, Kim Scott, explains in her book that radical candor is "saying what you really think in a way that still lets people know you care" (p. 93). Bill led this by example. He would provide the feedback as soon as possible and, if it was negative, he would deliver it privately (pp. 92-97).

Don't stick it in their ear: "Don't tell people what to do. Offer stories and help guide them to the best decisions for them" (p. 99).

Be the evangelist for courage: One person noted that Campbell "blew confidence into people" (p. 100). Courage is difficult and people are afraid of taking risks. "He believed you could do things even when you yourself weren't so sure, always pushing you to go beyond your self-imposed limits" (pp. 99-103).



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TEAM FIRST

If you get the team right, you'll get the issue right. When faced with an issue, Bill Campbell believed it was more important to focus on the team tasked with resolving the issue. By being empathetic and caring about the team, teams are more effective.

Work the team, then the problem: Bill Campbell was known to be a “coach of teams. He built them, shaped them, put the right players in the right position, cheered them on, and kicked them in their collective butt when they were under-performing” (p.109). Campbell’s approach was to focus on the team, not the problem. He was consumed with “team building, assessing talents, and finding the doers” (p. 113).

Pair people: By assigning tasks to a couple of people who don’t usually work together, it “develops trust between the two people, usually regardless of the nature of the work.” While the deliverable matters, the opportunity to build trust and teamwork is also invaluable to the team’s success (pp. 123-124).

Peer feedback: Because peer relationships are so vital to strong teams, Campbell helped design a peer feedback survey that was used for years at Google. It gathered opinions on four areas of a person’s performance, including people’s behaviors in meetings (pp. 125-126).

Get to the table: Bill Campbell believed “winning depends on having the best team, and the best teams have more women” (p. 131).

Solve the biggest problem: “Identify the biggest problem, the ‘elephant in the room,’ bring it front and center, and tackle it first” (p. 134).



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THE POWER OF LOVE

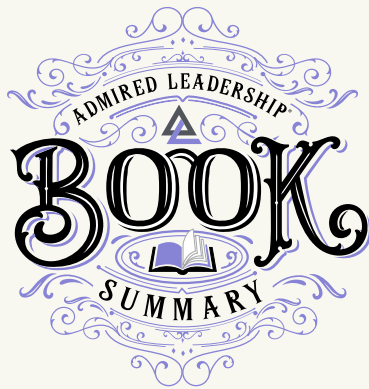
Bill Campbell would bring people in with his colorful profanities and bear hugs. He would go deep, learn names, ask questions, look at their photos, and, most importantly, care. His compassion for the team was seen and felt by many people he worked with. He advised to “show up” when things get rough, understand, and truly care about people, but don’t fake it (pp. 160-165).

The percussive clap: When Apple would release a new product, Campbell would sit in the front row and “clap and cheer, give double fist pumps, he would get so excited for the team.” He showed love for the work they were doing. An executive at Google, Clay Bavor, “has incorporated the ‘Bill Campbell clap’ – the BCC – into the culture of the team” to cheer demonstrably for people and their success (pp. 166-168).

Always build communities: While some people endow scholarships, Bill endowed a regular Super Bowl trip. Bill built community instinctively. For example, he sponsored high school reunions and organized get-togethers at a local bar. Because communities are built inside and outside of work, he realized that a place is much stronger when people are connected (pp. 168-173).

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Schmidt, Rosenberg & Eagle. (2019). **Trillion Dollar Coach: The Leadership Playbook of Silicon Valley’s Bill Campbell**. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.



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The Latest and Greatest Books for Leaders

We work hard to stay abreast of the current writings on leadership, especially those books our clients are reading or have been recommended to read. As a benefit to our clients and to facilitate our own learning, the Admired Leadership team has long maintained a tradition of summarizing the newest books of interest to leaders. Better to read a summary for eight minutes before investing eight hours in the entire book. After reading a good summary, we believe leaders are able to make better choices as to what to ignore, what to peruse and what to make the time to read closely.

