

6 Factors to Spotting Potential

A few weeks back when we were visiting our office in India, we took a few days and flew on over to Bangalore to attend the [EO](#) India regional event called [RIE](#). The India [EO](#) events are always a great time, as they're known for bringing in fascinating speakers and holding dinner events in extraordinary places such as castles, old forts or roof top venues. This year, staying true to their reputation, they brought in [Praful Patel](#), the Minister of State for Civil Aviation, [Vijay Mallya](#), the Chairman of Kingfisher Airlines and [Rasmus Ankersen](#), a self proclaimed high performance anthropologist.

The latter, Mr. Ankersen, was especially intriguing to me. He has done some very unorthodox research around the world to back up his hypothesis of determining how to spot potential in someone when it may not be presently visible. Ankersen is a native of Denmark, has written 3 bestselling books and has been in training camps in Moscow, Jamaica, Africa and Brazil (to name a few) to train with and help produce some of the most successful athletes worldwide.

Ankersen traveled to Moscow to study the training of the top tennis players in the world. He went to Jamaica to study the best sprinters in the world, to Kenya for the best long distance athletes, and Korea for the best female golfers in the world.

Checkout [this video](#) of Ankersen discussing his theory.

His research thus far has resulted in some key factors in spotting potential:

1) Always look behind a performance.

To determine what caused a performance, you have to see what was behind the performance itself. Was it raw talent that can be coached, or was it pure technique and heart without much raw talent?

2) Magnify what you can see.

Look at what you have and don't let it be static. A vision of what is possible with someone is important to see where the future is with them.

3) Know Yourself.

Know your capabilities, and know the difference between what you can improve and what you can't change. If you are gifted at growing managers of people on a business team and have a candidate with amazing analytical skills, but low people skills, you could develop their people skills, but couldn't contribute much to the growth of their analytical skills.

4) Give hunger greater priority than ability.

Hunger is something that you can't teach, and is much harder to pull out of someone than the skills necessary to be the best. If two people have the same basic skills, the one that demonstrates the hunger is the one you should be watching.

5) Stay Open Minded.

In order to do this, it requires that you not judge a candidate that may take more time to mature. Keep people curious about their potential and don't feed them negatives that can hold them back.

6) Have the courage to believe in potential.

It requires courage to believe that you can take someone that is not yet there and ripen them to reach their potential, even if it will take time. In our India office, we seek the candidates that are hungry to grow and learn, even if they

possess less experience in software skills, and bring them along to blossom into their full potential.

Listening to Ankersen's talk made me see the similarities between being a coach and being a manager. If you have a camp that consistently leads with medals, then it says something about the opportunity to grow the talent that is around you. What are you doing to pull out the best in the people around you?

Here's [another video](#) of one of Ankersen's interviews.