



SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP®

Relevant Then, Relevant Now



SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP® : RELEVANT THEN, RELEVANT NOW

At its core, leadership is influence. Regardless of position, a leader is anyone who is able to influence others. Effective leadership is necessary to create and sustain a high-performing organization. Poor leadership can create a host of issues that undermine a company's performance, including mismanagement of resources, high turnover rates and diminished returns on investment.

With so much at stake in today's competitive business environment, organizations cannot ignore the importance of developing their leaders and the impact it can have on the business. Companies must equip their leaders with the tools and resources they need to skillfully navigate the demands of an increasingly diverse workforce and evolving global marketplace. And that starts with effective leadership development.

The [Situational Leadership® Model](#) transcends cultural and generational differences and equips leaders around the globe with the skills necessary to drive behavior change and increase productivity. For more than 50 years, the Situational Leadership® Model has enabled leaders at all levels of the organization to more effectively influence others.



The Situational Leadership® model
helps leaders learn how to think,
before it teaches them what to do.

Dr. Sam Shriver

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Developed by Dr. Paul Hersey in the late 1960s, the Situational Leadership® Model is frequently referred to as “organized common sense.” Dr. Hersey's original Situational Leadership® Model is based on

the relationship between leaders and followers and serves as a framework to analyze each situation based on:

- The amount of guidance and direction (task behavior) a leader gives
- The amount of socioemotional support (relationship behavior) a leader provides
- The Performance Readiness® Level that followers exhibit in performing a specific task, function or objective

Situational Leaders learn to demonstrate four core, common and critical leadership competencies:

DIAGNOSE:

Understand the nuances of the specific situation they are trying to influence

ADAPT:

Adjust their behavior in response to the contingencies of the situation

COMMUNICATE:

Interact with others in a manner they can understand and accept

ADVANCE:

Manage the movement toward higher performance

The Situational Leadership® framework, which stresses flexibility and simplicity in execution, prepares leaders to address the most pressing challenges pervasive in today's work environment.

ORIGINAL SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP® RESEARCH

By definition, a model is a repeatable process. To add value, that model has to be leveraged on a consistent basis. And to be used consistently, it has to be practical and simple – without being simplistic.

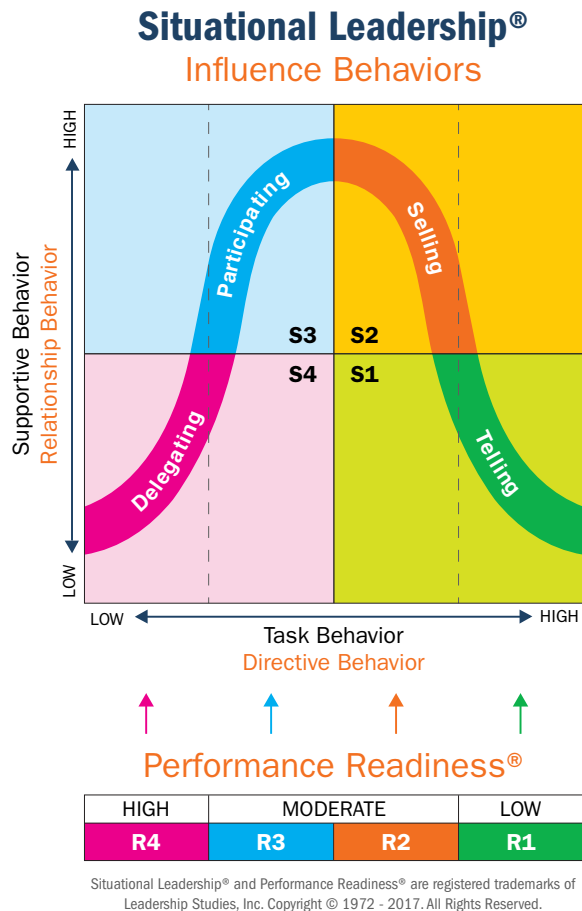


The concepts, procedures, actions and outcomes derived from the Situational Leadership® Model are based on tested methodologies that are hands-on, real-world and easy to apply. Dr. Hersey synthesized 50 years of research on the behavior of leaders and followers to develop the Situational Leadership® Model. The model provides a framework for leaders to match their behaviors with the performance needs of the individual or group that they are attempting to influence. It is about adapting the directive and supportive behaviors that leaders use to match the Performance Readiness® of others to perform specific tasks or functions.

It seems odd to think about in this day and age, but the first 50 years of research on organizational behavior in general and leadership development in particular were

disconnected, isolated and dispersed. Frederick Winslow Taylor's findings with Scientific Management (1911) were in direct contrast with the conclusions reached by Elton Mayo in the 1930s at the Hawthorne Electric Plant (Human Relations Theory). Concurrent research at Ohio State (Ralph Stogdill, 1948) and Michigan (Coch-French, 1948) produced four-box configurations that identified a leader's approach as a function of providing some combination of structure and/or support. Douglas McGregor's (1957) research suggested the assumptions a leader made about followers was the driving force behind leader behavior (Theory X, Theory Y), while Abraham Maslow (1954), Chris Argyris (1964) and Frederick Herzberg (1966) focused their attention on the factors that contributed to human motivation and development.

FIGURE 1



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The Situational Leadership® Model
changed the way I managed people.

Retired Senior Vice President, Biotechnology Industry

These various (and often juxtaposing) conclusions contributed to the foundational research that Dr. Hersey used to develop the Situational Leadership® Model, first published in 1969. After seeing this model create positive results for real-world leaders, Dr. Hersey concluded that there's no such thing as a bad leadership style, they all work! Leadership is about learning when to use each style to effectively influence others.

HOW IT WORKS

In essence, leaders using the Situational Leadership® Model (see Figure 1) start with the task and the person responsible to perform it, then ask:

- How much task-specific knowledge, experience or skill does this person bring to the table?



- Is this individual confident, committed and motivated to perform this task?

Answers to these simple questions produce four combinations of ability and willingness (Performance Readiness®) that the leader can use as a starting point:

R1

"I need clear structure and direction."

R2

"I am inexperienced, but highly motivated, so I need both encouragement and direction."

R3

"I have a good understanding of what to do, but I need support."

R4

"I am motivated, competent and confident."

The leader then determines leadership style as a function of:

TASK OR DIRECTIVE BEHAVIOR:

The extent to which a leader engages in defining roles, structuring activity and providing the what, where, when, how and, if more than one person is involved, who is to do what for a particular task.

RELATIONSHIP OR SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIOR:

The extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication, facilitates interaction and actively listens.

Various combinations of task and relationship behavior define [four leadership styles](#) the leader can employ

depending upon the assessment of Performance Readiness® for the task in question:

S1

Telling or guiding:

The leader leverages his or her base of experience to make decisions, provide direction and create movement.

S2

Selling or explaining:

The leader clarifies decisions and recognizes the enthusiasm of the follower in an effort to ensure understanding.

S3

Participating or involving:

The leader and follower brainstorm alternatives in an effort to mutually establish alignment.

S4

Delegating or entrusting:

The leader trusts the follower to leverage his or her base of experience to complete the task.

Leadership effectiveness depends on a leader's ability to assess the [Performance Readiness®](#) of an individual and use the appropriate leadership style for the situation. For example, a new hire with little knowledge and experience to perform a task would require more direction than an employee who has several years of experience. If a leader entrusts a new employee to perform the task with little guidance, then the employee will likely exhibit poor performance and ultimately feel frustrated and lost. But if a leader provides proper detail and instruction, then the employee will feel empowered with the knowledge to effectively perform the task. However, a leader cannot

simply provide direction without also providing some level of support. How much is some? It truly depends on the situation, which is precisely what the Situational Leadership® Model helps leaders to determine.

BENEFITS OF SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP®

At its core, the Situational Leadership® approach provides leaders with an understanding of the relationship between an effective style of leadership and the level of Performance Readiness® that followers exhibit for a specific task.

With application across organizational leaders, first-line managers, individual contributors and even teams, the Situational Leadership® framework utilizes task specificity to serve as a mechanism through which leaders maximize their influence-related impact.

BENEFITS OF SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP® :

- Is a multidirectional model that can be leveraged for influencing up, down and across the organization
- Creates a common language of performance that builds trust
- Accelerates the pace and quality of employee development
- Is a repeatable process that your leaders can leverage to effectively influence the behavior of others
- Utilizes task specificity to serve as a mechanism through which leaders maximize their influence-related impact
- Addresses situations where people are developing or regressing

INFLUENCE ACROSS GENERATIONS

While there has been speculation that millennials have significantly different motivations in the workplace compared to older workers, [research by The Center for Leadership Studies and Training Industry, Inc.](#) reveals that

the fundamental tenets of the Situational Leadership® Model are equally important to leading younger workers. This research has shown that both leaders and followers see influence as a primary driver of goal-directed behavior, from a freshly-hired millennial to a nearly-retired baby boomer.

The Situational Leadership® approach considers the entire [lifecycle of a typical employee](#) – from a new hire who needs direction and support to learn new skills to a seasoned employee performing tasks he or she has mastered long ago. [Regardless of an employee's age](#) or skill level, the Situational Leadership® Model provides leaders with a framework to appropriately engage and influence follower behavior.

INFLUENCE ACROSS CULTURAL DIVIDES

The Situational Leadership® methodology has been proven to upskill leaders around the world, according to research conducted by Advantis Research and Consulting. Whether a leader is based in North America, South America, Europe, or Asia, the benefits of the Situational Leadership® Model remain consistent.



As the baby boomer generation is exiting the workforce through retirement, Situational Leadership® has given our new and emerging leaders filling those roles an effective and efficient tool and thinking strategy that has decreased learning curves and improved our training processes.

Manager of Technical Training, Manufacturing Industry

Whether we're talking about a manager in Brazil, Taiwan, or Belgium, the leadership competencies gained by practicing the Situational Leadership® Model have been proven to drive business results such as market share, revenues, employee engagement and retention.

The reason behind this versatility is because the Situational Leadership® approach utilizes a common leadership language that can be applied across any boundary. Implementing the model requires a leader to establish objectives, assess Performance Readiness® and determine the appropriate leadership style within the context of a given situation and work environment. Even when attempting to influence the behavior of international employees, where interactions may be impacted by differences in culture or language, a leader can apply the Situational Leadership® framework to navigate any given situation or interaction.



As our organizations are becoming flatter and flatter, we see the importance of influence standing out more and more. The informal network is key to getting things done in many organizations and ours is no different. There are many instances where influence is what can drive the business faster and more efficiently than hierarchy.

Director of Leadership Development, Biotechnology Industry

INFLUENCE ACROSS THE BUSINESS

When analyzing influence across functional business units, leadership skills are most frequently used in positions that involve a high degree of person-to-person interaction both inside and outside the organization. While influence training can benefit all functional areas across the organization, influence skills are especially important to HR, sales, customer service and marketing departments. With so much at stake in today's competitive business environment, organizations need to ensure employees have effective leadership skills when interacting with customers, clients and vendors.

Across multiple studies, [research by The Center for Leadership Studies and Training Industry, Inc.](#) has found that influence is important to leading employees across a range of industries, job roles and working arrangements, as well as across the full spectrum of knowledge workers. Whether a follower is employed in a highly complex job and working remotely, or in a relatively basic job and part of a tightly knit team, the Situational Leadership® Model is universal—and universally effective.

DRIVING BEHAVIOR CHANGE

A leader does not merely impact the behavior of an employee through one or two interactions. Rather, having positive influence is a continuous process, requiring thoughtful application of influence-related strategy on a consistent basis over time. The Situational Leadership® approach recognizes that an effective leader, at any level, must be able to vary behavior not only as it applies to the successful completion of the task at hand, but also to encourage employees to seize upon new challenges and development opportunities.

Research by leadership expert Jim Collins suggests that great leaders understand the importance of motivating the right people the right way to seize opportunities and build organizational momentum. By identifying the most appropriate way to influence each individual, a leader can elevate the performance of the entire company, one employee at a time.



Given the high risk in decision making in our industry, the Situational Leadership® Model provided our emerging leaders with a much more heightened sense of awareness of their role in these decisions. The model has served as a template for talent selection, talent management, and day-to-day communications between managers and employees. There is less ‘winging it’ thanks in part to this structure.

Director of Talent Acquisition and Talent Development,
Pharmaceutical Industry

But what about when the company is going through change? According to The Center for Leadership Studies and Training Industry, Inc. research, the following sources of organizational power are the most critical:

REFERENT POWER:

The leader displays behavior over time that earns employee trust and respect

EXPERT POWER:

The leader has accumulated relevant subject matter related knowledge and experience

LEGITIMATE POWER:

The leader has the ability to reward, sanction and make appropriate decisions relative to their position or title

Ultimately, leadership is the primary mechanism that drives change and **organizational power is the fuel that enables leadership.**

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

Although influencing behavior is the essential outcome of the Situational Leadership® Model, it is certainly not the only one. The Center for Leadership Studies and Training Industry, Inc. recently revalidated research has shown that when the task or directive behavior of a leader is matched with the needs of a follower, the follower is likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with their job, higher levels of meaningfulness of the work he or she does, and improved work-family balance. While supportive behavior is also important to follower engagement, it was most critical to ensure a follower is receiving an appropriate amount of formal and informal recognition.

Furthermore, research by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman suggests that good managers create and sustain employee satisfaction. Their research reveals that the best managers treat every employee as an individual and choose to focus on employee strengths instead of weaknesses – which is exactly what our research has shown with respect to how followers respond to the influence attempts of an effective leader.

The Situational Leadership® methodology approaches performance as situation-specific, requiring leaders to assess performance based on a specific task and work climate. Leaders should frequently reassess the performance of individuals to continue meeting their needs, in terms of both direction and support. As employees progress, leadership practices should evolve and reflect that progression – as what was once the appropriate amount of task guidance can become a source of dissatisfaction as employees mature and become increasingly familiar with their role, responsibilities and tasks. **Failing to alter leadership styles** can negatively impact employee engagement and performance.

FACTORING IN MOTIVATION

Employees are unique. What motivates one may demotivate another. The Situational Leadership® framework acknowledges these differences and reflects that the task-specific willingness of each employee will be different. Pulling from decades of scientific research on human motivation, Daniel Pink suggests that the secret to high performance and job satisfaction is largely intrinsic – stemming from our need to be self-directed, to learn and master new skills, and to do something meaningful.



The Situational Leadership® Model takes the motivational level of employees into consideration when selecting a leadership style. For example, a motivated and willing employee will require less coaching than an unmotivated individual. Since motivation largely comes from within the individual, leaders must understand what motivates their employees – or risk diminishing engagement and productivity.

THE POWER OF TRUST

Earning the trust of others is an investment that leaders need to make every day. It cannot be gained through a training course, promotion or raise. Leaders must continuously be mindful of their words and behavior because all that hard-earned trust can be burned in one single action (or inaction).

Trust and credibility are the core principles of effective leadership. Employees must have confidence in their leaders' ability to deliver results. Distrust, on the other hand, can create a breeding ground for discontent, poor performance and employee turnover – all of which can negatively impact an organization's bottom line. Building and sustaining a strong foundation of referent power helps leaders build trust with those they attempt to influence. Without trust, leaders will not be able to effectively manage change.

Furthermore, management theorist Simon Sinek suggests a great leader is someone who makes their employees feel safe and secure. Humans have an evolutionary need to feel safe. When we feel safe, the natural reaction is to trust and cooperate. By being supportive of employees no matter where they fall on the continuum of Performance Readiness®, leaders are building a culture of trust that breeds employees who are willing to go above and beyond.

INFLUENCE TODAY

Today's workplace is in a constant state of change. As organizations shift from a structured top-down hierarchy to a more collaborative and team-centric dynamic, there is a growing demand for leaders at all levels. In this complex and evolving workplace culture, we are all leaders. And

we all hold the power to motivate and inspire others to take action. Now more than ever, we need leaders with the skills to successfully collaborate across the business.

In fact, leadership expert John Maxwell suggests, "99% of all leadership occurs not from the top but from the middle of an organization... all of us can lead effectively, even if we're not the VP or CEO." To put this in context, leadership is the cumulative impact of an individual's attempts to influence up, down and across the organization, ultimately impacting business results by driving authentic behavior change in every direction.

The Situational Leadership® Model can provide leaders and managers with the tools necessary to influence others and to help them appropriately cultivate and exercise their power to influence and affect change. As organizations strive to be more nimble and respond to changes at the speed of business, leaders are essential. While power often gets a bad rap in business, it can be a positive driver of influence.

Whether it's up, down or across the organization, effective influence skills can enable leaders to positively influence the behavior of others, make strategic decisions, manage conflict, and affect change. Leadership training on influence can be a powerful way to equip leaders with the tools to better understand why their own attempts to direct behavior succeed or fail. Armed with this knowledge, leaders can more effectively collaborate across the business and move the needle on organizational performance.

Contact our team to learn how you can start building Situational Leaders in your organization!

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