

A Vibe Learning Lab insight



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**Situational Leadership -
How top leaders manage talent**



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Introduction

Have you ever noticed that your style of leadership works well with some people and fails to deliver with others? If the answer is yes, you are in the same boat as many other leaders who try to influence their followers. You think you are actively being a leader and yes you are, however you are not seen by followers always as an effective leader. Perception, however, is reality. You manage by intention yet are judged by your impact.

**“As a leader, you have the power to influence, and you make a choice to either influence negatively or positively.”
— Jeffrey Gitomer**

Almost 50 years ago, Dr Paul Hersey (Center for Leadership Studies) designed a model called *Situational Leadership*. This model has helped more leaders diagnose and adapt their

behaviour better than any other leadership training programme in the world. Since its creation over 12 million people in 150 countries have used this model to strengthen their ability to diagnose situations and prescribe appropriate leadership behaviours and styles for their followers.

So what is this model and how does it work? Actually, it is very simple. It begins with the basic understanding that leadership is a process and not an event. The goal is to influence someone to do something that he or she might not otherwise do. This is not to be confused with manipulation because the endgame is that everyone - leader, follower and ultimately the organisation wins. The model seeks to define what is or is not Effective Leadership.

In essence the Situational Leadership model says that leaders need to use two different types of behaviour to influence others – task focused behaviour and relationship focused behaviour to varying degrees and in correct combination to be fully effective.



HIGH



RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIOUR



LOW



TASK BEHAVIOUR



HIGH



For organisations to achieve excellence in today's world, the commitment to develop people is becoming increasingly important. It is effective utilization of the human resources that is the cornerstone to high performing organisations.

(Excerpt from The Situational Leader by Dr. Paul Hersey © 1984,2,004, Center for Leadership Studies Inc.)

Author's note - The Hersey Situational Leadership® model is based on sound research and success stories conducted at the Center for Leadership Studies. The model has lasted for decades and resonated with millions of leaders worldwide because it makes sense as well as easy to understand and apply. Use it daily to manage talent.

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Task Behaviour

Task behaviour is defined as directive behaviour or providing guidance to employees. In other words, you are exhibiting task behaviour when you tell an employee What to do, How to do it, When it needs to be done, Where it should be done and Who is going to do it. It is clear and specific direction to employees. Relationship behaviour on the other hand entails two way communication, facilitative behaviour, active listening and socio-emotional support.

“Leadership is not an award or an entitlement; it’s a responsibility to the people that make your organisation great for your customers.”
— Ulrich Smallwood

Different situations require a different approach. The key for the leader is to flex their style and know when to apply each type of behaviour and to what degree. It is important to note that both behaviour types are always

used to some degree (high or low), therefore, there are 4 different possibilities or styles for the leader to choose from;

1. **High task / Low relationship**
(Leadership style - S1)
2. **High task / High relationship**
(Leadership style - S2)
3. **Low task / High relationship**
(Leadership style - S3)
4. **Low task / Low relationship**
(Leadership style - S4)

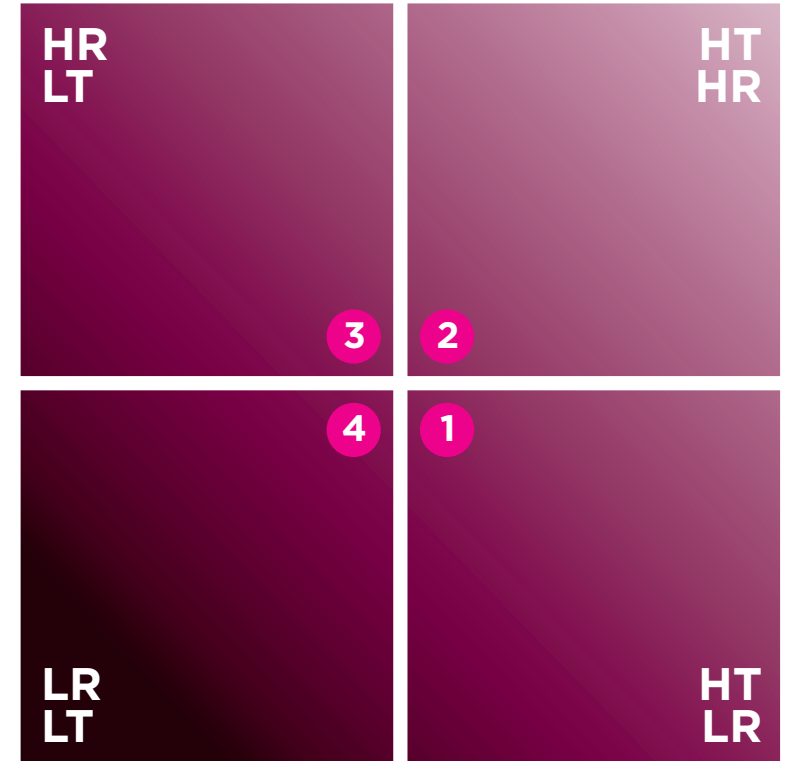


HIGH



RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIOUR

LOW



TASK BEHAVIOUR

HIGH





Your style of leadership

Your choice of style is dependent (situational) on where the follower is on a particular task? This is called Readiness. 'Readiness' is divided into the inter-dependent variables 'Ability' and 'Willingness'.

Ability is determined by their Knowledge, Experience, and Skill.

Willingness is determined by their Confidence, Commitment, and Motivation.

Both factors can be diagnosed as existing in varying degrees (high or low), therefore, there are 4 different possibilities or degrees of readiness to choose from:

R1
Unable and unwilling
(Readiness level - R1)

R2
Unable but willing
(Readiness level - R2)

R3
Able but unwilling
(Readiness level - R3)

R4
Able and willing
(Readiness level - R4)



Follower Readiness

HIGH	MODERATE		LOW
R4	R3	R2	R1
Able and willing and confident	Able but unwilling or insecure	Unable but willing or confident	Unable and unwilling or insecure

“Read them, lead them, win with them.”
 — Dr. Paul Hersey, Dublin, 2006



Readiness

Once the leader is satisfied the Readiness diagnosis is correct for a particular task, he or she simply applies the appropriate matching leadership style. So, a Readiness level diagnosed as R1 would be matched by a Leadership style of S1 and so on.

In practical terms, if a member of staff is well capable of completing a particular task and has the confidence and commitment to do it, the best leadership behaviour to adopt is to simply allow the person to run with the ball (S4). However, it would also be important to remain accessible and check on progress; otherwise the staff member may think their leader is not that interested in the completion of the task. The leader is ultimately responsible and accountable.

*Readiness levels are Task specific
and not Person specific.*

Therefore for another task the same follower could be diagnosed as having a different Readiness level and consequently a different style of leadership behaviour is necessary. That style may be less of a delegating nature and might be more of a telling (S1), selling (S2) or participating (S3).

Conclusion

So in essence, the leader has to provide different combinations of relationship and task behaviour according to the need of the individual employee as he or she does a specific task.

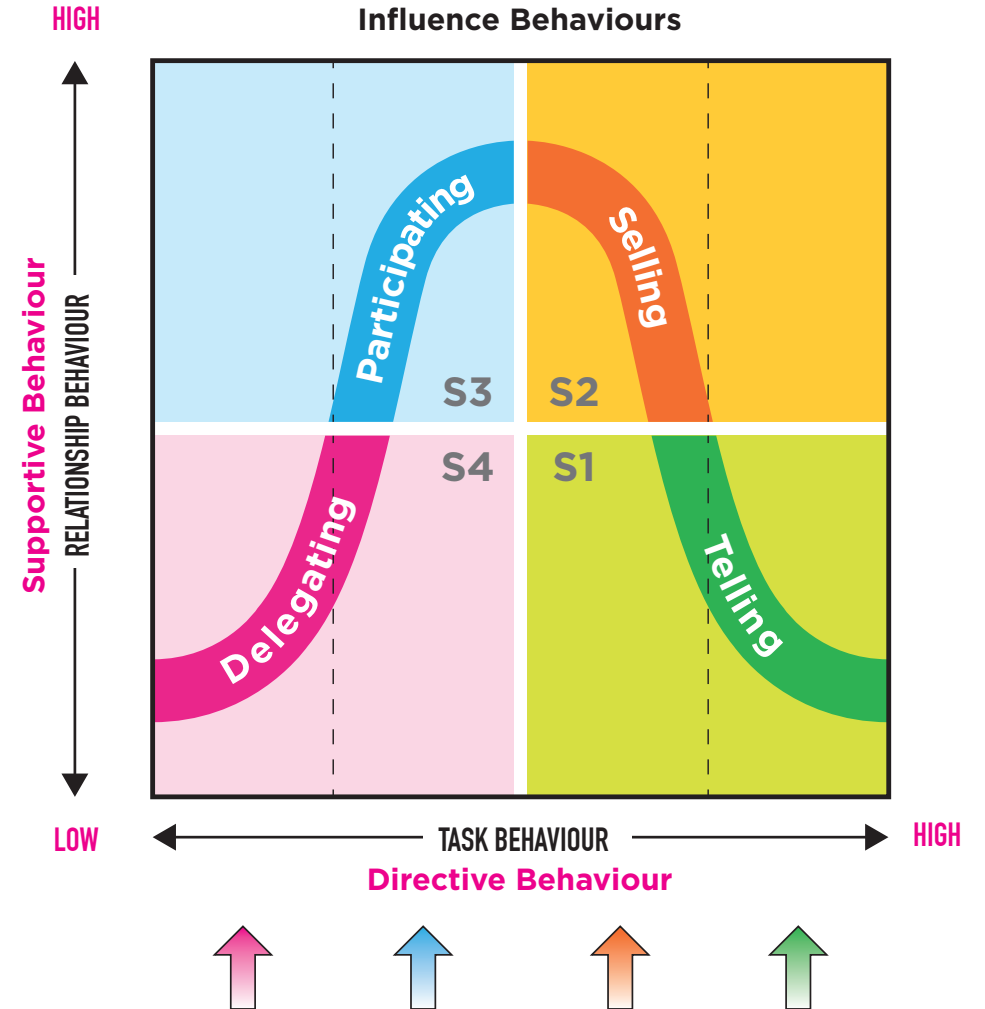
It's not just different strokes for different folks, but different strokes for the same folks for different tasks.

It is all a matter of applying the right amount of relationship and task behaviour after a correct diagnosis has been made.



Situational Leadership

Influence Behaviours



Performance Readiness

HIGH	MODERATE		LOW
R4	R3	R2	R1



So if leaders want to remain versatile and agile, they need to:

1. *Diagnose the task*
2. *Adapt to the readiness level*
3. *Communicate appropriately*

It's like riding a bicycle, once you've mastered the process; you rarely fall off and skin yourself!

Takeaways

Effective influence skills are the hallmark of a leader, and professionalism is the result of a leader's competencies.

Situational Leadership makes the complex challenge of leading and managing people easier.

Put simply, the outcome is better relationships, better performance and better results for the individual, the leader and the organisation.

**“The only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks.”
— Ronan Kinahan**



How Abraham Lincoln demonstrated agile and versatile leadership

1. *Empathy*

He was able to put himself in the place of others so that he could appreciate their point of view. Equally he forgave others and was not likely to hold grudges in order to future proof support.

2. *Humor*

He told great stories to illustrate his beliefs, and he often used self-deprecating humor to connect with others

3. *Generosity of spirit*

He was willing to publicly take the blame when things went wrong, and he admitted mistakes openly and honestly.

4. *Perspective*

He put events and activities into context rather than being overwhelmed by an individual event.

5. *Self-control*

When frustrated, he would write letters to himself and then tear them up. He thought and reflected before he acted.

6. *Sense of balance*

He was able to take time to relax, entertain friends, and let go of the stresses of his office.

7. *Social conscience*

He frequently looked for opportunities to serve and work for others as well as provide a line of sight.



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*Inspiring learning solutions customised
for corporates since 2002.*

*“Amazing, before today I was trying to find and develop my one leadership
style but I did not realise until today that my style and effectiveness
depends on the task and readiness level of the individual”*

Global bank Leader

*“Excellent, a session that enables you to link valid theory to practical
reality. Probably behaviour changing too”.*

Associate Director HR Financial Services

Vibe is one of the exclusive facilitators for the
Centre for Leadership Studies.
To date, Ronan Kinahan, the team principal at **Vibe**
has helped organisations use Situational Leadership across Europe.

Special thanks to:

Richard and Shaughn at AMP Visual,

Dr. Paul Hersey.

Designed by AMP Visual.com

Situational Leadership - A visual learning workshop from Vibe Training

Programme Objectives

- Explore how to use the Situational Leadership® model to make changes to leadership behaviour that is tactical, informed and appropriate.
- Develop diagnostic skills to determine the skill and motivation levels of employees.
- Become more flexible in leadership behaviour – treating individuals and situations according to their needs.
- Improve communication skills and develop a language to effectively influence employee behavior.

Outcomes, you will learn how to

- Utilise a proven method to determine goal and task alignment.
- Consciously select a leadership style most appropriate for any task.
- Apply a communication style that is consistent and flexible to influence employee behaviour.
- Engage in a process that will cover tough performance issues in a non-emotional way.
- Build both personal and positional power with employees leading to greater development and retention of talent.

Modules, what's explored

- The Process of Influence when managing talent.
- Lead Self® Questionnaire – diagnostic read on my leadership style and flexibility.
- Determining employee readiness and willingness to perform tasks effectively.
- Leadership behaviour styles – telling, selling, problem solving, delegating.
- My leadership style and flexibility.

“Success is a function
of sustainable individual, brand
or organisational point of difference.
It’s that simple.”

Ronan Kinahan

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