

# Situational Leadership

Situational Leadership was created by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard when they merged their own individual leadership theories to create the model. The premise of this model is that there is not single most effective leadership style, rather there are different leadership styles which are appropriate for different tasks and individuals. Successful leaders are able to adapt their style to the people that they work with. The model is made up of two parts; the learners' *development level* and the leaders' *leadership style*.

## Development Levels

An individual's development level is a result of a combination of their competence and commitment.



**Competence** = level of skill, experience, knowledge or behaviour relating to a specific task.

**Commitment** = motivation to learn a task and their confidence in their ability to learn.

These development levels will have different needs and will therefore require a different leadership style from you.



## Leadership Styles

The four leadership styles of Situational Leadership offer varying degrees of support and direction. The leadership styles can be mapped across the development levels as below.

Three key considerations to remember are:

- 1) The importance of matching the development level to the correct leadership style. The consequences of “mismatching” can be detrimental to the learner. For example, being highly directive of someone and micromanaging their workload when in reality they require a more hands off delegating style.
- 2) An individual may need a different leadership style in different tasks – just because someone is D4 (highly competent and highly committed) on part of their role, doesn't mean they are D4 in all of them.
- 3) An individual can move back and forward through the Development Levels over time, so don't assume just because someone was D4, they will remain so – commitment or competency can drop too!

When establishing a learner's development level ask yourself:

- 1) *What is the specific task?*
- 2) *How good is the individual's demonstrated knowledge and skills?*
- 3) *How good are their transferable skills?*
- 4) *How motivated, interested or enthusiastic are they?*
- 5) *How confident / self-assured are they?*

Every leader will have a natural preference that they will use predominately.

### ***What do you think is your natural preference?***

Having an awareness of this is important so you are able to flex your style when needed.

*Let's Talk – Team Member  
Decides*

Low Directive  
High Supportive



*Let's Talk – Leader Decides*

High Directive  
High Supportive



*Team Member Decides*

Low Directive  
Low Supportive

*Leader Decides*

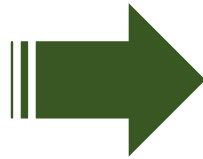
High Directive  
Low Supportive

# Matching development level to leadership style

## Development Level 1 – Enthusiastic Beginner

Feels:

- Inexperienced
- Curious
- Optimistic
- Excited
- Eager
- Enthusiastic
- Hopeful



## Needs Leadership Style 1 – Directive

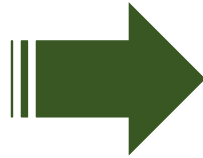
- Clear goals and roles
- Recognition of enthusiasm and transferable skills
- Timelines and priorities
- What good looks like
- Action plans – specific direction, how, when etc
- Boundaries and limits

# Matching development level to leadership style

## Development Level 2 – Disillusioned Learner

Feels:

- Overwhelmed
- Confused
- Demoralised
- Frustrated
- Discouraged
- Disillusioned
- Flashes of confidence



## Needs Leadership Style 2 – Coaching

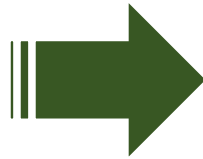
- Clear goals
- Perspective
- Frequent feedback
- Praise for making progress
- Help in analysing successes and failures
- Explanations of why the task is important

# Matching development level to leadership style

## Development Level 3 – Capable but Cautious Performer

Feels:

- Self critical
- Cautious
- Doubtful
- Capable
- Contributing
- Insecure
- Tentative / unsure



## Needs Leadership Style 3 – Supporting

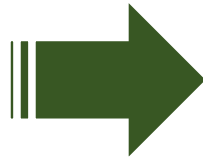
- An approachable mentor or coach
- Opportunities to test ideas
- Opportunities to express concerns and share feelings
- Support and encouragement to develop self-reliant problem solving skills

# Matching development level to leadership style

## Development Level 4 – Self Reliant Achiever

Feels:

- Justifiably confident
- Consistently competent
- Inspired / Inspires others
- Expert
- Autonomous
- Self-assured
- Self-reliant
- Self-directed



## Needs Leadership Style 4 – Delegating

- Variety and challenge
- A leader who is more of a mentor and colleague
- Acknowledgement of contributions
- Autonomy and authority
- Trust
- Opportunity to share knowledge and skills