

SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Situational leadership theory is often referred to as the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory, after its developers Dr. Paul Hershey, author of *The Situational Leader*, and Ken Blanchard, author of *One-Minute Manager*.

The fundamental underpinning of the Situational Leadership Model is that there is no single "best" style of leadership. Effective leadership is task-relevant, and the most successful leaders are those who adapt their leadership style to the performance readiness (ability and willingness) of the individual or group they are attempting to lead or influence. Effective leadership varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it also depends on the task, job or function that needs to be accomplished.

The Situational Leadership II (or SLII model) was developed by Kenneth Blanchard and builds on Blanchard and Hershey's original theory. The Situational Leadership II model is a way to empower people and become a better leader. A leader who grows others.

"The goal of Situational Leadership II is to provide an environment that permits an individual to move along the development continuum — through the development cycle — from Development Level 1 (developing) to Development Level 4 (developed).

The leader uses a leadership style that is appropriate to the individual's development level at each stage of development on a specific goal or task. As the development level changes, the leadership style should change accordingly. There is no best leadership style because development levels vary from person to person and from task to task." Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph: *The 3 Keys to Empowerment: Release the Power Within People for Astonishing Results*

The four **leadership styles** are:

1. Style 1 (**S1**) – **Directing** (high directive behavior and low supportive behavior)
2. Style 2 (**S2**) – **Coaching** (high directive behavior and high supportive behavior)
3. Style 3 (**S3**) – **Supporting** (low directive behavior and high supportive behavior)
4. Style 4 (**S4**) – **Delegating** (low directive behavior and low supportive behavior)

Directive behaviours focus on how to do a task. These include telling and showing people what to do and when to do it and providing frequent feedback on results. Directive behaviours are the key to developing competence in others.

Supportive behaviours focus on developing people's initiative and on their attitudes and feelings toward the task. Examples of Supportive behaviours include praising, listening, encouraging and involving others in problem solving and decision making.

The main point of SLII theory is that not one of these four leadership styles is best. Instead, an effective leader will match his or her behaviour to the developmental skill of each individual for the task at hand.

The four **development levels** are:

1. Development Level 1 (**D1**) – (low competence and high commitment)
2. Development Level 2 (**D2**) – (low to some competence and low commitment)
3. Development Level 3 (**D3**) – (moderate to high competence and variable commitment)
4. Development Level 4 (**D4**) – (high competence and high commitment)

Competence is the knowledge and skills an individual brings to a task or goal. Competence is best determined by demonstrated performance. Competence, however, can be developed over time with an appropriate direction and support.

Commitment is a combination of an individual's motivation and self-confidence on a task or goal. Interest and enthusiasm can be exhibited through attentiveness, energy levels, and facial expressions, as well as through verbal cues. Confidence is characterised by a person's self-assuredness, the extent to which people trust their own abilities to do a task. If either motivation or confidence is low, commitment as a whole is considered low.

