

DEBATING ABOUT SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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Abstract:

In this paper we analyzed the circumstances of every day life which requires the need to adapt the leadership style. Leadership needs a lot of abilities and skills, including the capability to communicate. The paper deals with leader's need of changing the style of leading as organizational circumstances change. The process is efficient only when the leaders and the followers have the right climate. The importance of this process is reflected in the productivity of the organization. As the economic climate changes the leadership style needs to be changed and also the style of communication throughout the leader coaches, coordinates, evaluates and supervises. Leadership is about organizing a group of people to achieve a goal. The leader may or may not have any formal authority. Students of leadership have produced theories involving traits, situational interaction, function, behavior, power, vision and values, charisma, and intelligence, among others. This paper describes the styles of leadership which the leaders must use and switch when is needed in comparison with what leadership is about.

Keywords: situations, leaders, climate, changes, organization

Bass, approaches leadership in terms of styles and has described three well known styles of leadership, laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership. Other literature defined leadership as a position, a person, a behavioural act, a relationship or a process and others too define it as a process of influencing a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Rauch and Behling (1984) and Hsieh (1993) all regarded leadership as the process of influencing a group to move towards the goal.

locus of control, goal orientation, optimism, courage, tolerance to ambiguity, strong internal motivation.

Leadership has become more and more popular, due to the fact that people are possessed with intelligence and common sense. They can choose, think and follow what is right. That is

Early leadership theories concentrated on the characteristics of successful leaders, their traits, behaviour, power, influence and situational approaches while recent ones have focused on the role of followers and the correlated nature of leadership. In recent times, leadership characteristics have shifted to leadership styles/behaviours.

According to Murray Johannesen there are nine characteristics of leadership: self-esteem, the need to achieve, screening for opportunity, way being a leader is not a matter of managing, but innovating.

Introduction of leadership

A Dr. Stephen R. Covey in his book *The 8th habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness* said that "Leadership is

communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves." Nevertheless leadership is more than that, and the challenges of the changes made leader to adapt their style of leading. This way be successful given the existing work environment, or the specific needs of the business. The successful manager is able to utilize more than one leadership style as conditions of the organization change. This concept of situational leadership. However implementing situational leadership in an organization then becomes a matter of managers' capability to recognize the current work setting, or employee condition, and using best leadership style for the specific challenge.

In the present, there are two main theories describing situational leadership. The first model is based on Daniel Goleman's elements of intelligence: self, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Models of situational leadership

Goleman's Model of Situational Leadership

In Goleman's model, he combines his five elements of emotional intelligence to describe a total of six situational leadership styles, which are described below. Goleman focuses on the need of a manager to switch these six styles as conditions around them change Goleman identifies the following types of leaders:

- a) coaching leaders
- b) pacesetter leaders
- c) democratic leaders
- d) affiliative leaders
- e) authoritative leaders
- f) coercive leaders

Coaching Leaders focuses on helping others in their personal development and in their job-related activities. The coaching leader helps

of switching the styles of leading is called situational leadership. A situational leadership style is not based on the leadership skills of the manager. The theory behind situational leadership is based on using the style needed to others to get up to speed by working closely with them. They make sure employees have the knowledge and tools to get their job done. This situational leadership style works best when the employee already understands their weaknesses, and is receptive to ideas on how to improve.

The effectiveness of the Pacesetter Leadership Style appears when employees are self-motivated and highly skilled. The pacesetter leader sets very high performance standards for themselves and their group, and the leader exemplifies the behaviors that are sought from other members of the group. This leadership style needs to be used sparingly, since workers can often "burn out" due to the demanding pace of this style.

The Democratic Leadership Style offer members of the work group a say in almost every decision made by the team. The democratic leader creates flexibility and responsibility inside the group, and can help identify new ways to do things with other ideas. However leaders must be careful with this style, because the level of personal involvement required by this approach, and the decision-making process itself, can be very time consuming.

The Affiliative Leadership Style is most effective in situations where morale is low or teambuilding is needed. This leader is easily recognized by their theme of "employee first." Employees can expect much praise from this style. Unfortunately, poor performance may also go without reprimand.

The Authoritative Leadership Style can be very effective in this type of situation if your business seems to be drifting aimlessly. The authoritative leader is an expert in dealing with the

problems or challenges at hand, and they can clearly identify goals that will lead to success. This leader also allows the employees themselves to figure out the best way to achieve those goals.

The Coercive Leadership Style should be used with caution because it's based on the concept of "command and control." The coercive leader is most successful in situations where the company or group requires a complete turnaround. It is also effective during disasters, or when dealing with under performing employees - usually as a last resort.

Ken Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model

The second situational leadership model we're going to discuss is derived from the leadership theory explained by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey. In this model, Blanchard and Hersey describe two fundamental concepts: that of

leadership style, as well as the development level of the person being led. The fundamentals of which the situational leadership theory is based on is there is no single "best" style of leadership whereas successful leadership is task-relevant and leadership style must be adapt to the maturity ("the capacity to set high but attainable goals, willingness and ability to take responsibility for the task, and relevant education and/or experience of an individual or a group for the task") of the individual or group they are leading. That effective leadership varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it will also depend on the task, job or function that needs to be done. The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Model rests on two fundamental concepts; leadership style and the individual or group's maturity level.

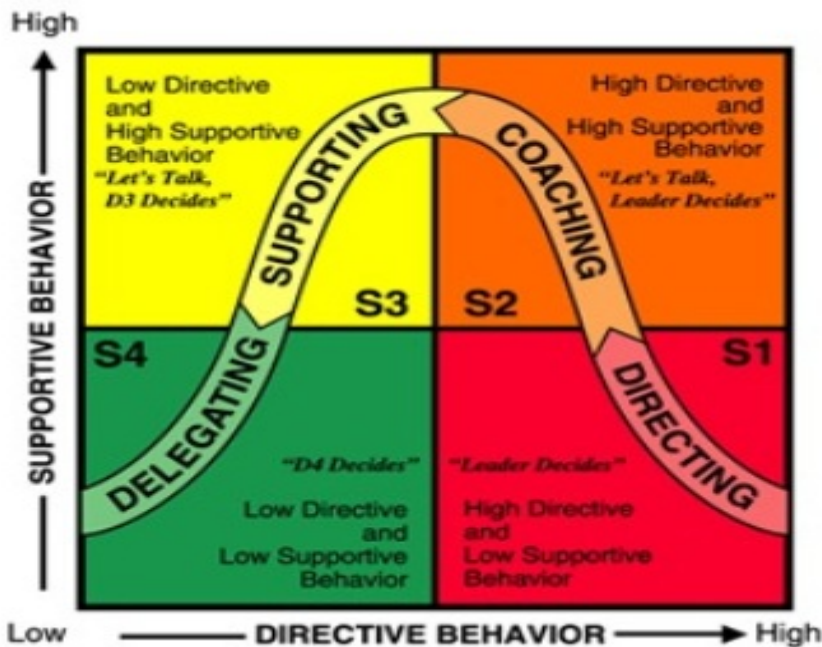


Figure 1. Situational leadership styles

Source: <http://www.blanchard-bg.com/>

Blanchard and Hersey described the situational leadership style in terms of the amount of the direction, and the support, that the leader provides to

followers. The situational leadership styles they described fall into the following four types:

- a) telling leaders

- b) selling leaders
- c) participating leaders
- d) delegating leaders

The telling leader defines the roles and goals for each follower, and then supervises them very closely. All important decisions are made by the leader, and announced to the followers. This means communication is predominantly one-way. These leaders tell others what to do.

The selling leader defines the roles and the tasks of each follower, but also seeks ideas and suggestions from followers. Decisions are made predominantly by the leader, but the communication style used is two-way. These leaders are good at "selling" their ideas.

A participating leader passes along the day-to-day decisions, such as dividing up the workload, to their followers. The participating leader will help to facilitate discussions, and takes part in the decision-making process, but ultimate control is with the followers.

The delegating leader is still involved in the workgroup's decisions, and helps to solve problems, but the ultimate control is with the followers. In fact, with this situational leadership style, the followers decide when to get the leader involved.

Blanchard and Hersey's situational leadership model also recognized the importance of the development level of those being led. Their theory states that the leader's style needs to reflect, in part, the competence and commitment of the followers. Those two dimensions were then used to derive the following four development levels of those being led:

- a) Low Competence, High Commitment
- b) Some Competence, Low Commitment
- c) High Competence, Variable Commitment
- d) High Competence, High Commitment

In Blanchard's model of leadership, there exists an ideal type of leadership style to apply to each development level. Much of that logic is the same as that found in Goleman's model.

As mentioned earlier, implementing situational leadership in an organization is really nothing more than training managers how to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of each leadership style, and how this knowledge can be applied to a given work situation. It's also important for managers to recognize their intrinsic leadership style, because that will often be the style they will fall back into in times of stress.

Successful leaders in any organization are able to quickly recognize the correct style to apply in a given situation. They make use of that style to achieve superior business results. Regardless of the model or theory used to describe leadership styles, both Goleman and Blanchard agree on this last point: flexibility is the key to success. It is also important to analyze the relationship between leaders and their followers and the interdependency of the roles. There are not heroes, but there is a team. The notion of "Servant Leadership" emphasizes the leaders' duty to serve his/her followers - leadership thus arises out of a desire to serve rather than a desire to lead. Robert Greenleaf, founder of the Center for Servant Leadership describes it as follows: "The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He or she is sharply

Different from the person who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an. Unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve – after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types.

Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of Human nature.

The difference manifest itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived?" (Taken from the Servant as Leader published by Robert Greenleaf

Characteristics of Servant Leaders are as follows: "Servant-Leadership is a practical philosophy which supports people who choose to serve first, and then lead as a way of expanding service to individuals and institutions. Servant leaders may or may not hold formal leadership positions. Servant-leadership encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment." Taken from the Center for Servant Leadership web site, April 2003.

The emphasis on serving a higher purpose has made this model popular within the Church and other religious institutions.

The servant leaders may be part of only one situation but all situations are different. What you do in one situation will not always got the same effect in another. You must use your judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. For example, you may need to confront an employee for inappropriate behavior, but if the confrontation is too late or too early, too harsh or too weak, then the result may not be the one expected.

The situation normally has a greater effect on a leader's action than his or her traits. This is because while traits may have an impressive stability over a period of time, they have little

consistency across situations (Mischel, 1968).

Different People need different styles of leadership. By instance, a new hire requires more supervision than an experienced employee. A person who needs motivation requires a different approach than one with a high level of motivation. You must know your people! The main point is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. You must come to know your employees' *be*, *know*, and *do* attributes.

Conclusions

Situational leadership is at this moment the more modern and effective theory. As world changes, people changes and different situations appears. The primary need is to be able to recognize the individual characteristics and what the employees need for their development and under different circumstances. In these way the leader is in position to realise the real potential of his employee. The unicity is every person characteristic and everyone has a different behaviour when is faced with different situations or when he is in a team. The leader must be able to address them appropriately based on the specific time. A good leader must recognize the skills and qualities of his employee and contribute at everyone's evolution.

As a leader you must adapt your style, you must change yourself and evaluate for being successful. Situational leadership tell us that there is not only one best style of strategy and the leader must be flexible. Leadership is about people and situational leadership is about how a leader handles in different situations made by the people. The adaptation of the leadership styles has the goal to reach the best from the people. The incapable to become able, the insecure to become confident, and the unwilling person to become willing.. Blanchard& Hersey developed a model and not a theory, so

this model can be changed, can be improved, can be shaped. These models inspire the leaders, but we can also have a look on other ways of leaderships since the road to efficiency is pretty hard. Kouzes& Posner (1987)

believed that leaders need to: challenge the process, to inspire a shared vision, to enable others to act, to model the way, to encourage the heart in order to be successful.

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