

Situational leadership

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



In order to understand the two (2) situational leadership styles that will be discussed, it is important to first understand the concept of situational leadership. Situational Leadership has been defined as a basic interplay among many factors such as the task behavior, including the guidance and direction, that a leader gives, relationship behavior, which includes the socio-emotional support provided by the leader and finally, the follower's behavior, which reflects the performance readiness level that is manifested in the performance of a certain activity (Hershey 1984).

The concept of Situational Leadership, while not entirely a new idea, was originally developed to aid individuals in leadership situations without regard for the role that is being played by the actor in an attempt to become more effective in the daily interactions with other members of the organization (Hershey 1984). By providing leaders with a certain level of understanding with regard to the relationship, it produces an efficient and effective method of leadership.

One form of situational leadership is the High Task and Low Relationship model which can basically be explained a situation that requires instant results thus removing the need to establish relationships due to the importance of the task at hand (Hershey 1985). The typical examples of this situation include that of being an officer during an emergency or catastrophe when people immediately follow the orders of the superior without question. The problem with this type of situational relationship model is that it does not allow for the formation of relationships between the leader and the members.

This does not only apply to exigent circumstances but to volunteer organization situations as well. In this scenario, when the group members do not have the required experience on a given project, the leader needs to assert himself or herself by guiding the team throughout the completion of the task at hand (Hershey 1984). The positive aspect of this type of situational leadership is that it is often effective when there is adequate time at hand or when results are immediately needed.

These short term goals can be achieved as effectively as other situational leadership types because of the fact that it does not require familiarity among the members of the team (Hershey 1984). The downside of this type of situational leadership, however, is that it does not allow teams to forge relationships that can be strengthened to form a more effective team. In the long run, this lack of interpersonal relationships and socio-emotional support could prove detrimental to the success of the team or organization.

The High Relationship and Low Task model, on the other hand, focuses greatly on that other aspect, which is relationship (Hershey 1984). It is usually applicable in situations where the organizational structure is not required to be as highly developed due to the capacity of the members to show the ability to perform (Hershey 1984). While the capacity to complete the task is present, there is a need, however, to build support and encouragement systems in order to solidify team and individual confidence and allow for alternative methods to resolve problems such as fostering dialogue and discussion.

As opposed to the previously discussed approach, this style works best when the focus is not so much on the completion of the task but in the development of the network and the organization. The greatest strength of this system therefore is that it is geared towards reliability and long term goals (Hershey 1984). Adjustments can be easily made because of this. In pressure situations requiring new members or highly specialized tasks, however, this style is not as effective because it requires that the members be able to test out and try their skills.