

Compare & Contrast Leadership Models: Situational Leadership

and

Multicultural Leadership

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references and further reading

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situational leadership

The Situational Leadership theory from Kenneth Blanchard and Paul Hersey argues that leaders should vary their leadership style according to their analysis of the situation and the abilities of learners, rather than using a single leadership approach all the time.

situational leadership styles

No one leadership style is optimal for all leaders to use all the time. Effective leaders need to be flexible, and must adapt themselves according to the situation. Here are the styles defined in situational leadership theory.

S1 — Telling Style:

Leader makes decisions, gives specific task directions and closely supervises work. Leader defines the roles of the individual or group and provides the what, how, why, when, and where to do the task.

S2 — Selling Style:

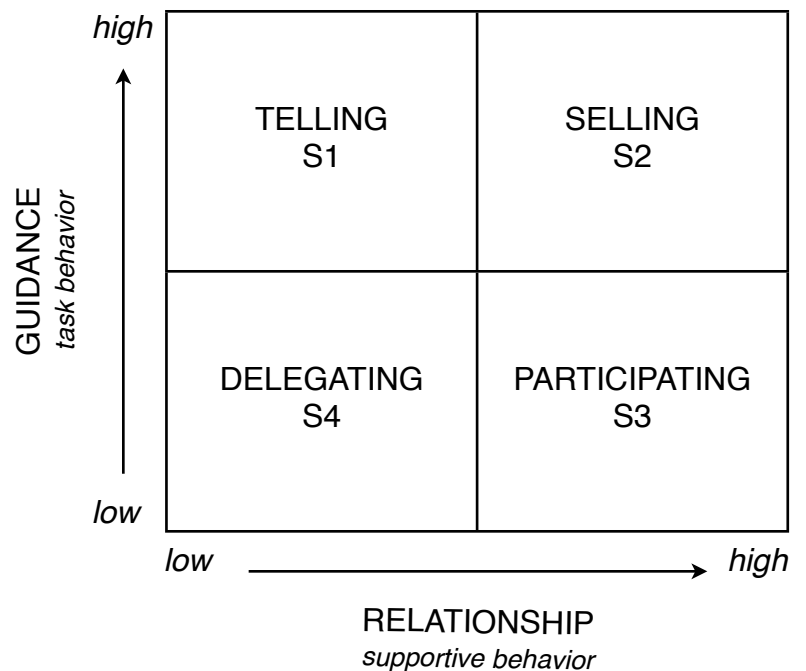
Leader makes decisions and explains task directions in a supportive and persuasive way. Provides socioemotional support to gain buy-in from followers.

S3 — Participating Style:

Learner and leader make decisions together, or the learner makes decisions with leader's encouragement. Leader emphasizes shared ideas.

S4 — Delegating Style:

Learner makes decisions. The leader is still involved in decisions; however, she or he have passed the process and responsibility to the group. The leader stays involved to monitor progress.



questions to consider

1. Why would or should a leader consider adapting her style to the needs of others?
2. Have you ever varied your own leadership style? What motivated you to change?
3. What leadership styles described here look familiar to you? Can you spot former or current managers or teachers among the leadership styles?

situational leadership

learner development levels

The appropriate leadership style depends on the individual or group being led.

A good leader develops the competence and commitment of their people so they're self-motivated, not dependent on the leader for direction and guidance.

According to situational leadership theory, a leader's high, realistic expectations inspire the high performance of followers; a leader's low expectations lead to the low performance of followers.

Here are the four learner development levels of situational leadership.

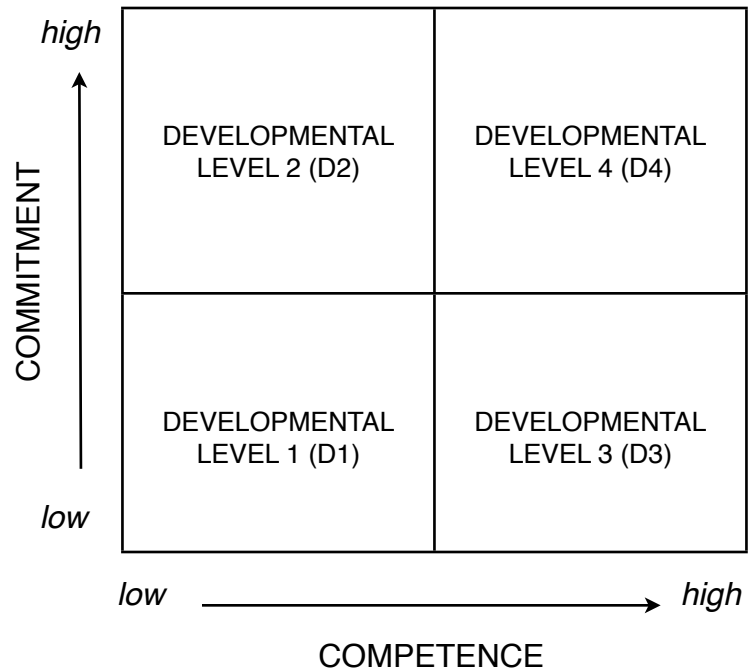
D1 - Low competence and low commitment. The learner lacks the specific skills required for the job at hand, but has the confidence and/or motivation to tackle it.

D2 - Low competence and high commitment. Learner has some relevant skills, but won't be able to do the job without help. The task or the situation may be new.

D3 - High competence and low or variable commitment. Learner is experienced and capable, but may lack the confidence to go it alone, or the motivation to do it well or quickly.

D4 - High competence and high commitment. Learner is experienced at the job, and feels able to do it well. May even be more skilled than the leader.

Similar to the leadership styles, the development levels are also situational. A person could be skilled, confident and motivated for one part of his job, but could be less competent for another part of the job.





questions to consider

1. How does it feel to have a leader who over-manages or under-manages you?
2. According to situational leadership, what accounts for the mismatch?
3. As a learner how can you encourage your leader to regard you with the adequate level of competence and commitment? How can you ensure you are getting what you need from your leader?

situational leadership

What happens when there's a mismatch between leadership style and learner development level?

	D1 - The learner lacks the specific skills required for the job at hand, but has the confidence and/or motivation to tackle it.	D4 - The learner is experienced at the job, and feels able to do it well. May even be more skilled than the leader.
S1 (Telling Style): Leader closely supervises work and defines the roles of the individual or group and provides the what, how, why, when, and where to do the task.		
S4 (Delegating Style): Leader has passed the decision making process to the learner.		

Highly directive leader leaves advanced learners feeling micromanaged

Hands-off leader leaves new learners feeling abandoned

advantages

- Theory is simple to comprehend.
- Can be applied by facilitators who understand the importance and variation of different learning styles.

disadvantages

- Challenging for some facilitators/managers to adapt to another leadership style.
- Model fails to distinguish between leadership and management. What is called leadership style is really a management style.
- Leadership, it can be argued, is not primarily about making decisions but about inspiring people to change direction.
- Theory focuses too exclusively on what the facilitator does.

multicultural leadership

Multicultural leadership places leaders in the context of diverse groups of people who employ intercultural awareness and communication skills. Increasingly the U.S. population, work places, and schools are becoming culturally and linguistically diverse. Leaders can no longer assume that the people they lead share the same perspectives, communication styles, culture, beliefs, and values as they do. Misunderstanding or misinterpreting verbal and nonverbal cues can cause confusion, leading to anxiety and tensions between leaders and the people they lead. Many people argue that it's this diversity that strengthens groups. Multicultural leadership argues that leaders need to learn leadership and communication techniques that honor different cultural perspectives, beliefs, and values. Leaders can approach the increasing diversity in a number of ways:

approaches to multiculturalism

- **Conservative multiculturalism** — leaders emphasize one dominant culture and the superiority of Western patriarchal culture. Leaders with this approach view 'different' learners as inferior and with lesser abilities and aim to assimilate diverse learners into the normative culture.
- **Liberal multiculturalism** — leaders emphasize similarities among diverse individuals and espouse the notion "we are all human, we are all the same" while overlooking meaningful differences. Leaders with this approach attribute inequalities to lack of social and educational opportunities.
- **Pluralist multiculturalism** — leaders focus on difference rather than similarity, celebrating diversity and cultural heritage but without challenging power relations and structural inequalities. Also known as "boutique multiculturalism."
- **Critical multiculturalism** — leaders challenge inequalities and recognize ways that power shapes dominant discourses and practices. Rather than focus on superficial differences, leaders focus on differences that are linked to social injustices, and are self-conscious about the elements of the normative culture that they transmit through their own words and actions.

perspectives of culture

Three perspectives of culture are useful to understand:

- **Objective culture** — history, facts, and language of a group.
- **Subjective culture** — beliefs and values, and how people in a group treat each other.
- **Culture as lived experience** — people in a group enact a culture influx and interacting with the political and social environment.

advantages

- Thinking from multiple perspectives encourages more innovation and creativity.
- Multiple points of view can strengthen learning and work.
- Creativity feeds on diversity.
- Groups that listen to each other across cultures can draw from a broader range of experiences.
- Multicultural leaders are better able to adjust to change.
- Multicultural groups that elicit diverse perspectives avoid "group think."

disadvantages

- Groups must overcome their communication differences in order to succeed.
- Diverse groups may have to work harder or differently to achieve cohesion.
- Some of the advantages if improperly managed can become disadvantages.
- Leaders must learn about the cultures and leadership models represented in their diverse groups.
- Some meanings can be lost in translation.

questions to consider

1. What is your approach to multiculturalism? What experiences in your life have shaped your approach?
2. Should a leader care about cultures different from their own, or different from the dominant culture? Why or why not?

multicultural leadership

concepts for leaders of multicultural groups

1. Individualist or collectivist?

- **Individualist cultures**, such as mainstream U.S. culture, highly value individual initiative and achievement. Social pressure exists for individuals to live up to their potential, pursue their own dreams, and live independently. Credit and reward — or blame and punishment — fall on the individual.
- **Collectivist cultures**, on the other hand, highly value group cohesion. People identify themselves as members of a group (larger than family). Social pressure exists to work for the success of the whole, even if it means making personal sacrifices. In turn, the group plays a role in nurturing and protecting group members. Credit and reward — or blame and punishment — fall on the group.
- People in individualist cultures may misunderstand collectivist cultures as “conformist,” and collectivists may perceive individual cultures as “selfish.”
- Groups in individualist cultures tend to want input from all members of the group; whereas collectivist groups wait to hear from the leader in order to form consensus. In a multicultural context, individualists in the group may speak out easily, while collectivists may wait to hear the opinions of the leader. As a leader, if your intention is to hear everyone’s voices, you may have to experiment with new ways to elicit the opinions of collectivist group members.

2. Low context or high context communication?

- In **low-context communication styles**, such as mainstream U.S. communication, little is left to the imagination. The content of a message is communicated through **words**. Messages tend to be direct and detailed, and require people to speak openly about information to make sure others understand.
- **High-context communication** depends on more than the words to impart the message. Information is also conveyed through the *context* of the communication, including *how* and *when* a person says something, and *nonverbal clues* like body language.
- Low-context communication tends to take place in individualist cultures and cultures with a high degree of diversity — where you can’t assume people are coming from the same perspective as you. High-context communication tends to be the norm in collectivist cultures and assumes that people have a high degree of shared knowledge about the society.
- To a newcomer, high-context communication seems ambiguous. Newcomers may easily miss much of the content of a message. Low-context newcomers may experience low-context communication’s directness as brash and even rude.

questions to consider

1. Is your culture individualist or collectivist? How has that affected you as a leader?
2. Is your culture’s communication style high- or low-context? Have you been immersed in a culture with a different communication style from your own? How did you experience being a newcomer?

leadership styles comparison and contrast

<u>key questions</u>	<u>situational leadership</u>	<u>multicultural leadership</u>
What examples can you cite from your own life (good or bad)?		
What are the goals of each?		
In both, the leader adapts to the needs of the learner. On what basis does the leader adapt?		
How often or quickly does the leader need to adapt to each learner?		
How does the learner get what they need from the leader, and how does the leader assess what the learner needs?		