

Situational Leadership Case Studies

Read each case study and determine what action you think would be most appropriate for the leader to take in the situation. Rank your answers from 1-4 with #1 being the most appropriate leadership response and #4 the least appropriate leadership response.

1. You serve as the Project Director in your department and have been assigned responsibility to design and implement a new initiative. You have hired/recruited a Project Team that is eager to begin work with you in developing and implementing the new initiative. You have scheduled a series of planning meetings with your Team. At these first meetings of the Team, YOU WOULD...

- _____ a) Make sure that you define the responsibilities of the team, present an overview of the design process you are going to use, direct the work of the team in developing the new project, and closely monitor progress in implementing the project.
- _____ b) Direct the work of the team in designing and implementing the new project and encourage team members to work together by recommending ideas, making decisions on the final design, and implementing the project.
- _____ c) Facilitate the work of the team by encouraging cooperation and involvement of all team members as they design and implement the new project.
- _____ d) Allow the team to design and implement the project on their own with your support and with the resources that you have given them.

2. The Team that you coordinate as Project Director has been working well together over the past year to design and implement the organization's plans and projects with your input and facilitation. As the new year begins a number of new projects are being introduced and several new members are being added to the team who do not have previous experience with your projects. YOU WOULD...

- _____ a) Use several Team meetings to direct the work of the team in creating the new programs, while teaching the new members about the organization's work and their new role. Then work to closely monitor the performance of the entire team as they introduce the new projects.
- _____ b) Guide the entire team in creating the new projects, incorporate the ideas and suggestions of all team members, encourage effective teamwork, and take time to introduce the new team members.
- _____ c) Welcome the new members to the team, put them with other members of the team who can help them learn how to design and implement the organization's projects, while you facilitate team development and teamwork.
- _____ d) Ask if there is anything you can do to help the new members and support their excitement about being new team members.

3. As Project Director you have worked closely with one of your teams for several years. Their work is excellent and the team gets along well together. Recognizing their abilities, you feel they can now work more on their own. You have begun this year to redirect your energies to other projects and teams, and they have continued to work effectively. You must now ask them to accept additional tasks and responsibilities. YOU WOULD. . .

- _____ a) Assign them the new responsibility, make sure they know what to do, and supervise them closely.
- _____ b) Give them the new responsibility. Tell them that you are pleased with their past performance and that you are sure they will do well with this new responsibility. Facilitate the team's meetings.
- _____ c) Make sure they know what you want them to do, but incorporate any helpful suggestions they have.
- _____ d) Let them determine how to complete the new responsibility and be available to support them and provide the information and resources that will be needed.

4. You have just been appointed Project Director. One of the teams that you are about to lead has worked together for several months. You have found that the team is beginning to perform effectively on the tasks assigned to them but somewhat overwhelmed by the project and the demands of working together as a team. You are unsure about how you fit into the group and what your role should be. YOU WOULD. . .

Rating

- _____ a) Assume the leadership of the team, direct the design and implementation of its projects and tasks, and closely monitor their performance.
- _____ b) Facilitate the planning and implementation of the team's work and develop the ability of team members to work together.
- _____ c) Do what you can to make the team feel important and involved, and support their continued work.
- _____ d) Attend the team meetings, but let the team continue to work as it has in the past year.

Analysis of Team Leadership Case Studies

The #1 response is the most appropriate leadership style, best matching development and leadership style. Use the summary of Situational Leadership concepts at the end analysis for further elaboration on development level and leadership styles.

- 1. You serve as the Project Director in your department and have been assigned responsibility to design and implement a new initiative. You have hired/recruited a Project Team that is eager to begin work with you in developing and implementing the new initiative. You have scheduled a series of planning meetings with your Team. At these first meetings, YOU WOULD. . .**

Rating

- 1 a) Make sure that you define the responsibilities of the team, present an overview of the design process you are going to use, direct the work of the team in developing the new project, and closely monitor progress in implementing the project.
- 2 b) Direct the work of the team in designing and implementing the new project and encourage team members to work together by recommending ideas, making decisions on the final design, and implementing the project.
- 3 c) Facilitate the work of the team by encouraging cooperation and involvement of all team members as they design and implement the new project.
- 4 d) Allow the team to design and implement the project on their own with your support and with the resources that you have given them.

This is a D1 team (“Enthusiastic Beginner”) that needs an S1 (“Directing”) leader. They are enthusiastic but not competent. The leader needs to provide direction and information, and develop the skills of the team. The best response is A (S1). As the team develops competence the leader can adjust his or her style toward the S2 style of “coaching.”

- 2. The Team that you coordinate as Project Director has been working well together over the past year to design and implement the organization’s plans and projects with your input and facilitation. As the new year begins a number of new projects are being introduced and several new members are being added to the team who do not have previous experience with your projects. YOU WOULD. . .**

Rating

- 2 a) Use several Team meetings to direct the work of the team in creating the new programs, while teaching the new members about the organization’s work and their new role. Then work to closely monitor the performance of the entire team as they introduce the new projects.
- 1 b) Guide the entire team in creating the new projects, incorporate the ideas and suggestions of all team members, encourage effective teamwork, and take time to introduce the new team members.
- 3 c) Welcome the new members to the team, put them with other members of the team who can help them learn how to design and implement the organization’s projects, while you facilitate team development and teamwork.
- 4 d) Ask if there is anything you can do to help the new members and support their excitement about being new team members.

This is a D3 group (“Capable but Cautious, Performer”), but with the addition of new projects and team members they are now a D2 team (“Disillusioned Learner”) that needs direction and support from the leader (S2 “Coaching”). With the leader’s assistance the team can move quickly to D3 because they have demonstrated that they can learn and do their tasks effectively, and function well together. The best style for the new leader is S2 “Coaching” and gradually moving toward S3 (Supporting) as the team masters the new projects.

3. As Project Director you have worked closely with one of your teams for several years. Their work is excellent and the team gets along well together. Recognizing their abilities, you feel they can now work more on their own. You have begun this year to redirect your energies to other projects and teams, and they have continued to work effectively. You must now ask them to accept additional tasks and responsibilities. YOU WOULD. . .

Rating

- 4 a) Assign them the new responsibility, make sure they know what to do, and supervise them closely.
- 2 b) Give them the new responsibility. Tell them that you are pleased with their past performance and that you are sure they will do well with this new responsibility. Facilitate the team’s meetings.
- 3 c) Make sure they know what you want them to do, but incorporate any helpful suggestions they have.
- 1 d) Let them determine how to complete the new responsibility and be available to support them and provide the information and resources that will be needed.

This is a D4 team (“Self-Reliant Achiever”) and the leader’s style has been S4 (“Delegating”) for the past year. They have shown that they can do the current work and function effectively as a team. To respect them as “Self-Reliant Achievers” the best response is D because the leader is delegating them full responsibility, while being of assistance as needed.

4. You have just been appointed Project Director. One of the teams that you are about to lead has worked together for several months. You have found that the team is beginning to perform effectively on the tasks assigned to them but somewhat overwhelmed by the project and the demands of working together as a team. You are unsure about how you fit into the group and what your role should be. YOU WOULD. . .

Rating

- 2 a) Assume the leadership of the team, direct the design and implementation of its projects and tasks, and closely monitor their performance.
- 1 b) Facilitate the planning and implementation of the team’s work and develop the ability of team members to work together.
- 3 c) Do what you can to make the team feel important and involved, and support their continued work.
- 4 d) Attend the team meetings, but let the team continue to work as it has in the past year.

This is a D2 team (“Disillusioned Learner”) that is learning the task, but needs the leader’s support. They are overwhelmed, which is natural as they learn the scope of the work. This calls for an S2 (“Coaching”) leadership style that is concerned with continuing task accomplishment, while developing the ability of the team to work effectively together. They need supportive behaviors to compliment the facilitation of the team’s work. The best response is B.

Analysis of Individuals & Teams I Lead

Teams OR Individuals I Lead	Development level	My current leadership style with this individual or team and its match with development level	Changes you might make in your leadership style and practices: things to stop doing, things to start doing