



## Being The 'Break Through' Person



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Situational Leadership Explained

*A free ebook from  
ThreeFronts.com  
where we're all about  
process, quality, and knowledge.*

*We are actually recommending the adaption a theory long-entrenched in quality-centric industries such as automotive and manufacturing, called 'situational leadership.'*



## What is Situational Leadership?

If you are a lead manager you are not just managing a list of tasks, you are managing unique individuals. Their support of your larger vision means you need to gain their consensus, **they need to "buy" you** (especially if there is a high degree of organizational change involved). And to sell yourself, you invest the time to understand "where" each member is in their career journey and their job competencies, skills, knowledge, and process purpose.

Once you understand each individual, there is a framework to help you understand how to progress someone's skills and understandings throughout project work. It is situational leadership. Beyond inferred trust, situational leadership helps you gain deeper conferred trust for true collaboration, and its application fits any industry or organization, even the military.

This matrix (right) recognizes four different manager styles based on four types of situational team member needs.

*The most nurturing-intensive level is S1: Directing. Then, as capability maturity progresses, your nurturing begins to decrease as staff competency increases. Using situational leadership means you understand what a person may need at each level.*

The situational leadership matrix plots the four levels of direction and control. And, it is the development level of the 'follower' that determines the situational leadership style of the leader. You begin applying this approach by having conversations (with the follower, peers, and supervisor) that guide you in identifying each follower's current level.

Situational Leadership (Hersey, Blanchard)

Supportive Behavior	A lot	<b>Supporting</b> S3 For people with: High Competence Var. Commitment	<b>Coaching</b> S2 For people with: Some Competence Some Commitment
	Little	<b>Delegating</b> S4 For people with: High Competence High Commitment	<b>Directing</b> S1 For people with: Low Competence High Commitment

Little — Directive Behavior — A lot

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## Tools Mentioned Here\*

1. Force field analysis  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force-field\\_analysis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force-field_analysis)
2. Responsibility Matrix ("RACI")  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsibility\\_assignment\\_matrix](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsibility_assignment_matrix)
3. Hoshin Kanri is a change management concept that includes many elements discussed here. This is an excellent case study:  
<https://www.bmgi.com/resources/articles/seven-steps-hoshin-planning>

You want to gain any insights possible across motivation, learned skills, work style, recognition, values, even confidence and integrity. From there, you become a situational chameleon shifting your style to fit the development pace of individual followers (to continue influencing desired behavior). It is leadership through flexibility. It demonstrates an intentional investment in *people* and their future.

### Process Paralysis

Sometimes, just talking about tackling processes can leave people with an unsettling feeling. If process mapping and process analysis are new to your organization, there isn't previous experience to draw from that helps frame the exercise as a positive evolution. Unmanaged expectations could leave people fearful of "blame" games if results are not good. This causes process paralysis and needs to be resolved quickly. Everyone needs to hear, early and often, that process re-engineering is a positive opportunity. Its goal is to update technology, automate more areas, and improve quality to remain competitive and keep jobs.

### Being the Break-Through Person

But, with team trust achieved through situational leadership principles, your team is now ready to adopt a 'break-through' mindset. They will learn by example from you, the break-through person. This mindset is your personal roadmap of the larger vision and understanding that it will take focus to persevere:

- to break through individual personalities to be an effective team; and
- to break through the daily churn (overcome challenges and other obstacles) to achieve the end goal.

Continue having conversations to orient people what to expect and break-through any remaining team ambiguity. Be transparent about steps, criteria, timelines, roles, priorities, and desired outcomes. Your skills here enables productive collaboration needed while you're asking your "5 Whys".

### Conclusion.

Situational leadership is a strong strategy when you find everyone at widely different place in terms of their reaction to change, new skills adoption rate, and leadership needs. It helps you drive break-through change that guides everyone get to a better place.



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- "5 Whys" is a Six Sigma root cause and problem solving technique used by quality-centric organizations.
- Situational leadership for an organization is known as capability maturity (aka "CMMI").

**You have to know where you are and where you want to be. *Three Fronts lives in this gap.***