

Leadership

Self-Coaching Guide

How can I be a good leader?

Good leaders recognise that, to be effective, they have to be flexible and able to use different leadership styles which are matched to the situations and people involved. The four basic leadership styles are:

1. **Directing** – Leader provides solutions, specific instructions, and close supervision
2. **Mentoring** – As per *Directing*, but Leader also supports progress by providing explanations and asking for suggestions
3. **Coaching** – Leader supports progress but now asks questions about problem-solving and shares decision-making responsibility. [See SCG – ‘How can I have focused and structured conversations’.]
4. **Delegating** – Leader no longer provides support and hands over all problem-solving and decision-making responsibility. [See SCG – ‘How can I be good at delegating’ for more about this skill.]

The diagram opposite shows how these four basic leadership styles relate to the levels of *Directive Behaviour* and *Supportive Behaviour*, as a person progresses through their stages of development.

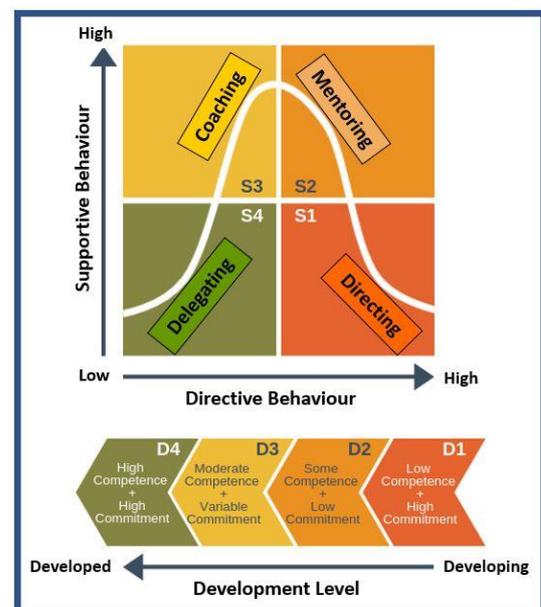
Directive behaviour is high in structure, control and supervision, i.e. a Leader tells a person exactly what to do, how to do it, and then closely supervises their performance. Supportive Behaviour is high in encouragement, listening and assistance, i.e. a Leader listens to a person, supports and encourages them, and gets them solving problems and making decisions.

Applying ‘*situational leadership*’ requires a Leader to learn how and when to apply these three skills:

1. **Flexibility** – Employ all the different leadership styles to different situations and people, flexibly.
2. **Diagnosis** – Recognise the leadership style a person needs, as different people are at different stages of development. Note that for the same person, this could be different depending on the situation and tasks/goals involved.
3. **Contracting** – Agree the leadership style a person needs for a situation or task/goal with them and how this will work in practice.

The diagram above shows the most appropriate leadership style for each stage of development in terms of a person’s current levels of *competence* and *commitment*. Competence relates to their skills and experience; commitment relates to their confidence and motivation. If a person does not respond appropriately to a particular leadership style, the leader should go back to the previous development stage and use that appropriate leadership style.

" The best leaders don't know just one style of leadership – they're skilled at several, and have the flexibility to switch between styles as the circumstances dictate." Daniel Goleman



More Information

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