

Leadership Theories

Leaderships Skills

Paul Newton



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Leadership Theories: Leaderships Skills

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Preface

This eBook describes the ten most popular contemporary leadership theories and models. You can use these as inspiration and a potential toolkit from which you can develop your own leadership style based on your own personality, the task at hand and the team that you are leading.

It describes following leadership theories and models:

- Action Centered Leadership
- Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid
- Dunham and Pierce's Leadership Process Model
- Fiedler's Contingency Model
- French and Raven's Five Forms of Power
- Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory
- Tannenbaum-Schmidt Leadership Continuum
- Lewin's Leadership Styles Framework
- Path-Goal Theory
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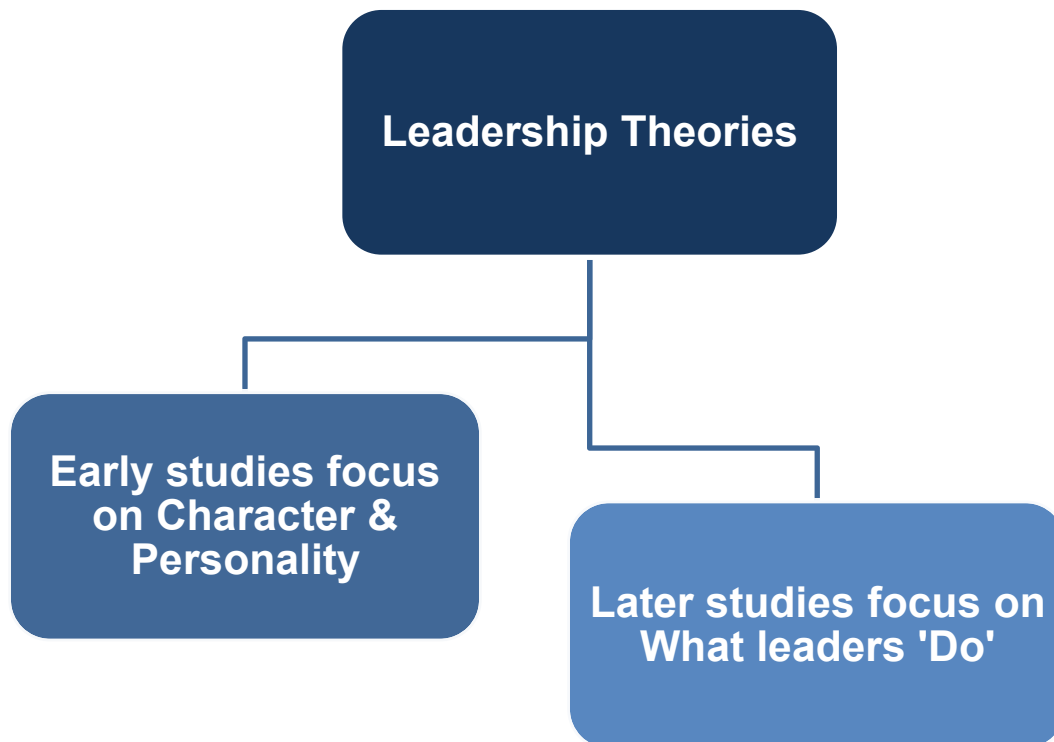
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Introduction

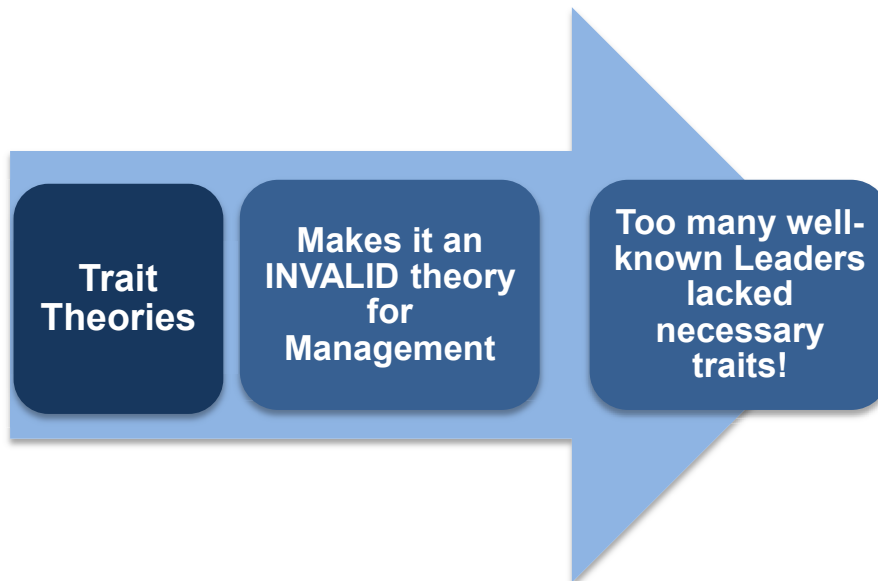
The subject of Leadership has been studied for hundreds of years and reveals an evolving succession of theories. The earliest theories focus mostly on the character and personality of successful leaders and how they behaved. The more recent theories focus on what leaders actually do rather than on them needing to have certain innate qualities or traits.



Early trait theories attempted to create a list of leadership qualities and behaviors associated with 'good' leaders. They saw these aspects as what anyone who wanted to lead needed to possess to be successful. They derived that a leader must have six basic qualities or behavioral traits to be a leader. They are:

- Honesty & Integrity
- Emotional Maturity
- Motivation
- Self-confidence
- Cognitive Ability
- Achievement Drive

Many of history's great leaders, both military and political, had this type of persona personal but there have been some significant exceptions that have damaged such theories.



The need for effective leaders within organizations has led to theories and methodologies that rely on behaviors that can be learned rather than ‘traits’ that a person either does or does not have. This plethora of research has led to four different types of leadership theories.

- *Contingency theories* – say there is no one leadership style that suits all situations. Success comes from several factors of which leadership is one. Features of the situation and the followers are also significant.
- *Situational theories* – suggest that it is the circumstances that face a leader that determine their behavior. Whether they alone or along with others share the knowledge needed to succeed.
- *Transactional or Exchange theories* – feature a defined transaction being made between a leader and his/her followers. Action is required when performance is above or below this agreed level.
- *Transformational theories* – concentrate on the links formed between a leader and his/her followers. This leader will inspire and motivate each team member to maximize their performance because they understanding the significance of the task overall. .

Key Points

- Early leadership theories tend to focus on the character and personality of successful leaders, whilst later theories concentrate on what leaders actually do.
- Trait theories do not stand up to scrutiny even in the context of political or military leadership.
- There are four major types of leadership that have been identified and refined into more detailed leadership models.
- Knowledge of these models can help you to become a better leader by providing insight into your own leadership behaviors.

Ten Leadership Theories

A working knowledge of these is essential if you want to become a successful leader because each one can offer you valuable insight into your own behavior. This eBook describes ten of the most popular leadership theories.



One of the great challenges when it comes to proper leadership is balancing the various interests of those who you are required to lead. Not everyone is going to have the same goals and aspirations, even within the same business or organization.

Therefore, it is the job of a good leader to reconcile all of those various interests and bring them together in a way that keeps the team working in the right direction. With good leadership, it is possible to bring everyone together in a common pursuit even if they have divergent goals among themselves.

Action Centered Leadership

The Action Centered Leadership (ACL) model presented by John Adair back in 1973 is notable because it can help reconcile the various goals and desires of individuals. While still accomplishing the specific goals set out for the team and the project as a whole.



At its simplest form, the model can be described by how it divides leadership into the areas of ‘Task’, ‘Team’ and ‘Individual’. Each element plays an important role in the leadership picture, and only when all three are balanced properly will the leader be achieving success.

Harmony among the three might not always be the easiest goal to reach, but it is the job of the leader to make it happen. Looking at each element in turn you can understand how each of these three aspects is important.

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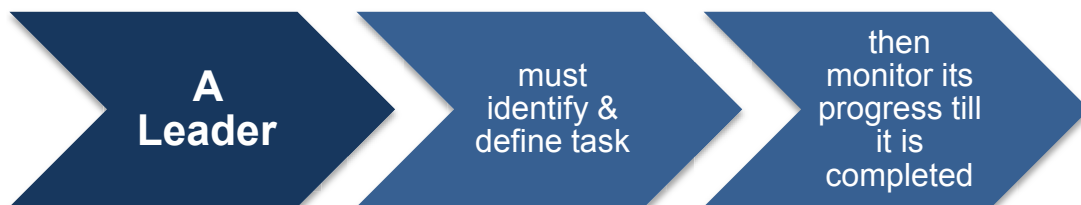


It All Starts with a Task

Without a task, there is no reason to have a team made up of individuals, and no reason to lead them in the first place. Every leadership role is developed because there is a goal in mind, and someone needs to be in charge of directing the team toward that goal. Such a goal can be rather general, such as simply running a profitable business, while other goals will be very specific – like developing a new product to launch to market by the end of the year. No matter what the goal is, that task is what will guide the leadership that has to be provided to the team.



Speaking of the variety of tasks that are possible for a leader to work toward, one of the most important jobs of the leader is to actually define and identify the task at hand. Sometimes this will be quite easy, but other times it can actually be a serious challenge. Teams work together better when they are clear on the task at hand, so providing that definition in no uncertain terms is a major part of the equation.



Among the other important parts of the task including identifying milestones along the way that need to be met, establishing who is responsible for which part of the task, and what will be defined as success in the end. Monitoring progress and making sure that the group is getting closer and closer to accomplishing the task falls on the leader, and is an important part of the Action Centered Leadership model.

Teamwork is Essential

Leading the team is what most people think of traditionally as being 'leadership'. Any given team is made up of individuals with various skills and experiences, so it is up to the leader to extract the best possible performance from each of them. The leader should define how the team works together, such as communication standards and methods for resolving conflict. Whenever two or more people are working together on a task there is bound to be conflict along the way – the best leaders are able to moderate those conflicts and resolve them quickly.

Encouragement is another important part of the Action Centered Leadership plan, especially for long projects. The members of the team need to remain focused on the 'prize' at the end of the task so they can remain motivated and determined to reach a successful conclusion to the project. Making sure that the team as a whole feels invested in the success of the group is something that a good leader will be able to accomplish.

Don't Forget About the Individuals

Forgetting about individuals within the team is probably the most common leadership mistake that is made by managers in all areas of business. It is tempting to just treat each individual as a robot who is programmed to only do what is best for the organization – but real life is just not that simple. Individual people have varying desires, fears, experiences, motivations, etc.

Extracting the best from each person on the team means treating them as the individual that they are. Offering rewards or praise for a strong contribution to the team is a common tact for getting the best possible performance from members of the team. Only when the leader is able to place each person in the role that is best suited for their skills and interests will the team be able to function as successfully as possible.

Action Centered Leadership is a popular leadership model to follow in large part because of the simplicity that it offers. Just by understanding the basics of the three areas of leadership provided in this model – Task, Team, and Individual – a leader will be well on the way to a successful project. Each of these three areas is vitally important, and it will be difficult to succeed in one area without support from the other. Bringing all three together properly isn't always going to be easy, but it is a goal that each leader in an organization should strive to achieve.

Key Points

- Action centered leadership involves balancing task, team and individual focus.
- Each of these three elements plays an important role in the leadership picture, and only when all three are balanced properly will the leader be achieving success.
- No matter what the goal is, that task is what will guide the leadership that has to be provided to the team.
- Making sure that the team as a whole feels invested in the success of the group is something that a good leader will be able to accomplish.
- Only when the leader is able to place each person in the role that is best suited for their skills and interests will the team be able to function as successfully as possible.

Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid

It's no secret that there are a variety of different management and leadership styles out there. In fact, you could argue that there is a different managerial style for each individual person that serves in a leadership role.

The Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid is a system that can be used to group like leaders into categories based on the methods that they use.

While no organizational system will ever be perfectly complete, this grid is a great way to understand more about certain leadership styles and how they work. Dating back to the early 1960's, this is a framework that has stood the test of time and remains relevant today.

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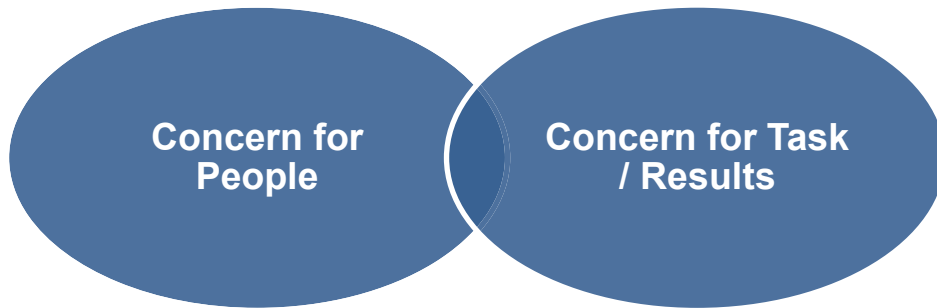
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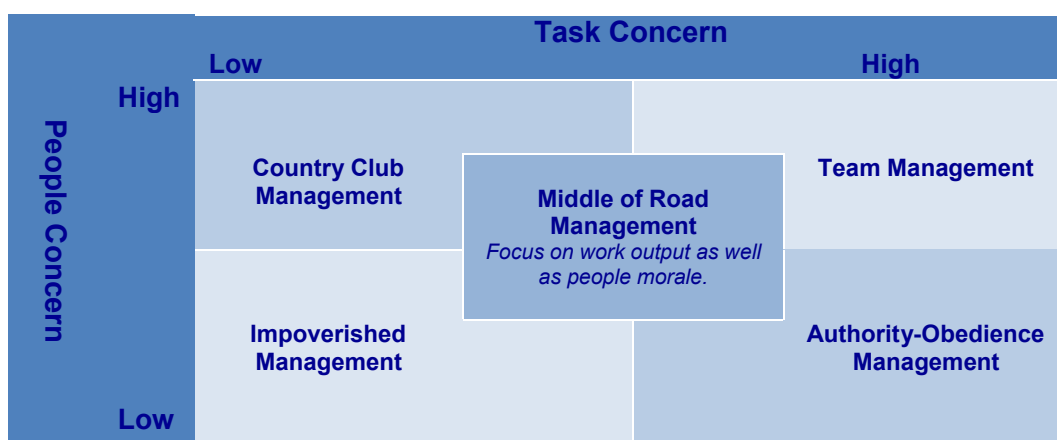
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The two dimensions of this grid quickly identify the priorities of the manager in question – ‘Concern for People’ and ‘Concern for Results’. It doesn’t get much simpler than that, and it shouldn’t take long to determine where along this grid you fit as a leader.

- *Concern for People.* The leader that emphasizes Concern for People over Results is one who is trying to do their best to further the careers of those they are leading. As the decisions are being made regarding who will work on what parts of a project. For example this leader is thinking before making assignments:
 - i. Which tasks will help each individual progress their careers?
 - ii. Which tasks are likely to be enjoyed?

- *Concern for Results.* Naturally, this is the opposite of the previous approach. With this kind of leadership, the only concern is for the job getting done as successfully as possible. This leader is one who sets aside any level of focus on the individuals and only things about the bigger picture for the organization. Whatever tasks need to be assigned to specific people in order to get the job done right is what will be done. If the individuals within the group don’t like it, that will be their problem to deal with.



The real benefit of using the Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid comes when you start to look at it in terms of four quadrants, and what each of those means for the manager. When plotted on the grid based on the two dimensions, there are four possible quadrants that a management style.

Impoverished Management – in this case, the manager is failing both in terms of the task and the people and is not a desirable position. The work isn't being completed successfully enough to satisfy the needs of the organization, and the individuals involved aren't getting what they need out of it either.

This is a systemic failure, and will usually result in bad outcomes for the leader in question. Getting out of this quadrant as soon as possible should always be the goal of a manager who finds that they are failing on both fronts.

Country Club Management – most employees will love their manager when this kind of system exists. The results may be suffering, and the manager's superiors may not be impressed with their performance, but the employees are happy because they are being put first and having their needs met through the actions of the leader.

While the short-term results of this method may be enjoyable because the work environment is free of tension and conflict, the long-term results tend to be less beneficial once the results come in and the group is falling short of expectations.

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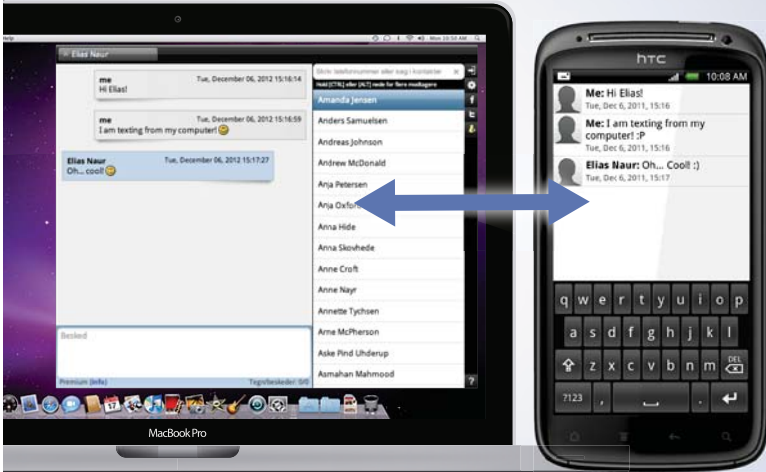
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Authority-Compliance Management – is the opposite of the Country Club management position. Instead of paying sole attention to the employees, this leader is only serving the needs of the project and the results they are looking for.

While they might reach the end goal, bridges could be burned in the meantime through the methods that are used. Unhappy employees tend to leave sooner, or decrease in production as their attitude drops. Short-term projects may benefit from this kind of strict management style, but it is unlikely to succeed over time.

Team Management – offers the best of both worlds. This manager is able to successfully juggle the needs of the organization as a whole with the needs of the individual employees involved.

Of course, since this is the best model for most managers to strive for, it is also the most difficult to achieve. The needs of your employees might not always correlate with what the company is looking for, so getting those things to balance out and keep everyone happy is a battle that takes time and effort to win.

However, it will be worth the effort because the leader who is able to reach this quadrant of the grid is one that is likely to be well-received by his or her superiors for their work.

In the real world, things aren't always as black and white as they can appear on a grid and managers often adopt the *'Middle of the Road'* management approach. This means sometimes the focus is concentrated more on the task and at other times more on the people. Leadership styles and decisions take on many different shapes, and it isn't always easy to decide how they fit into a certain mold.

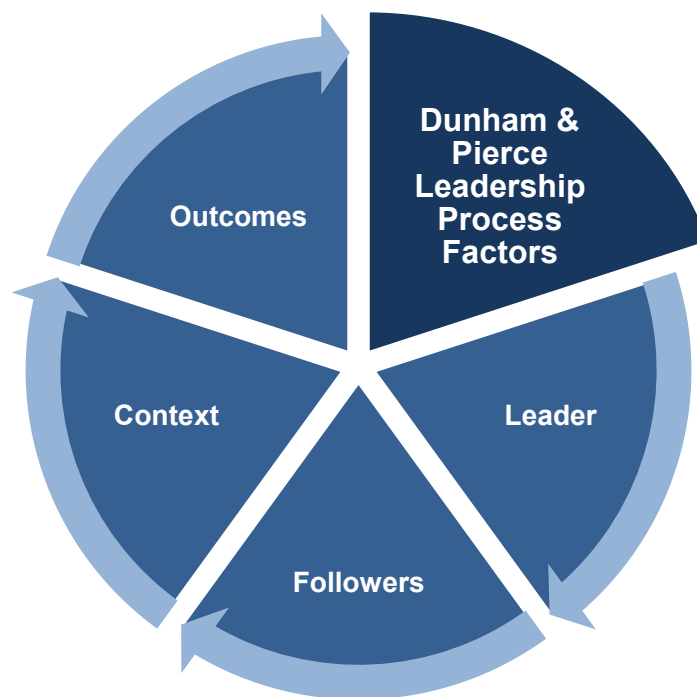
The Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid is a good starting point for understanding the basic leadership options that a manager has when dealing with their employees. Avoiding the extremes and trying to balance all of the various interests at any one time is usually the best tact to take. Whether using the grid to evaluate yourself or someone else in your organization, it is a tool that remains useful decades after its creation.

Key Points

- The Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid is a system that can be used to group like leaders into categories based on the methods that they use.
- It uses a two dimensional grid to identify the priorities of the manager in question.
- The axes are 'Concern for People' and 'Concern for Results' giving four possible quadrants that a management style can land in.
- Impoverished Management – the manager is failing both in terms of the task and the people.
- Country Club Management – employees are happy because they are being put first and having their needs met through the actions of the leader.
- Authority-Compliance Management – the manager is focusing too much on getting the task done at the expense of their team's wellbeing.
- Team Management – the manager is able to successfully juggle the needs of the organization as a whole with the needs of the individual employees involved.

Dunham & Pierce's Leadership Process Model

The Dunham and Pierce Leadership Process Model doesn't necessarily seek to define leadership, but it does the job indirectly. This model addresses all of the key elements that play a role in leadership, and helps the manager to understand how each part affects the other parts of the equation.



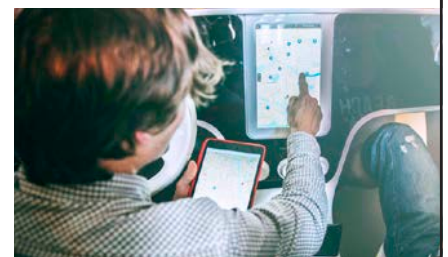
Leadership will never be simple, but using this model is a good way to 'get your head around' the various moving parts and hopefully bring it into better focus in your mind. According to Dunham and Pierce, there are four factors that play a role in the leadership process.

1. *Leader* – the person in charge of a project or team, regardless of what their title may be. That person may be referred to as an owner, a manager, a V.P., or any other title that confers power and responsibility. The important thing is that they are the person who a group of others answer to, and it is their performance that we are worried about with this model.
2. *Followers* – the people who are being led. Generally, these will be employees of the company in question. Most commonly, the Followers for a specific manager fall within a group or division of the company. The performance that the Leader is able to coax out of the Followers will largely be responsible for the outcomes that are achieved.
3. *Context* – refers to the circumstances under which the Leader is managing his or her team. Whether it is a project that will run for a predetermined length of time, or simply employees working on a day-to-day basis, the context of leadership plays an important part in what style of management is going to be most successful. This an element that is often skipped over in some leadership models and discussions.

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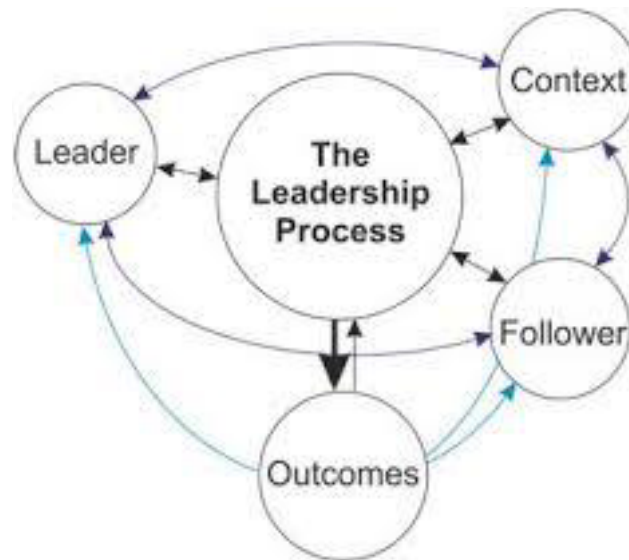


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4. *Outcomes* – the results of any project or task that has been worked on by the Followers under direction of the Leader. For example, if a well-defined project has been worked on for two months, the success or failure of that project will be considered an Outcome. Above all else, leaders tend to be judged on their Outcomes because they usually have the most direct influence over the bottom line. If you are a manager within an organization, it is probably your Outcomes that you spend most of your time concerned with.



The overarching theme of this model you should take away, it is that *all of the aspects of leadership are interconnected* in one way or another by a circular rather than linear relationship.

*Your actions as the Leader will affect your followers +
Your Followers actions are likely to affect you as a Leader (& your management style) +
Learn from your team and how their actions dictate the Context and the Outcomes =
A better chance of success.*

So what does this have to do with management from a practical sense? It should serve as notice that everything done within the context of a leadership situation is important, and it all comes around in the end in one form or another.

Things that are done to help the team and empower the individuals on a team can serve to improve future outcomes, while any negativity is likely to manifest in unwanted ways. Taking a holistic approach to management can be powerful when it comes to guiding a team toward long-term success.

This model has plenty to teach leaders and managers in a variety of settings, but some of the most important lessons are:

- *Grow relationships within the team.* Since this model of leadership is circular in nature, it only makes sense that growing relationships will help everyone perform better. When the relationships are strong from the top down, communication will benefit and the team should work more efficiently as a whole.
- *Let people do what they do best.* This is key for any leader, no matter what context they are working in. When people are able to spend time working on projects that they feel comfortable with and that match up with their skill sets, they tend to be happier (and perform better). When leaders fail to consider the skills of their people, it should be no surprise the results lag.
- *Offer feedback.* This point goes along with the point regarding relationships among the team. Feedback is valuable because it helps to steer the members of the team in the right direction, in a positive way. Opening the lines of feedback helps the Followers learn what is expected from them, and also gives them an opportunity to provide feedback to the Leader – which can be invaluable.
- *Act Ethically and Honestly.* The circular nature of leadership dictates that it is vitally important to act with a high degree of honesty on a regular basis. When deceit creeps into the system, it is likely to spread and have a negative effect throughout the organization.

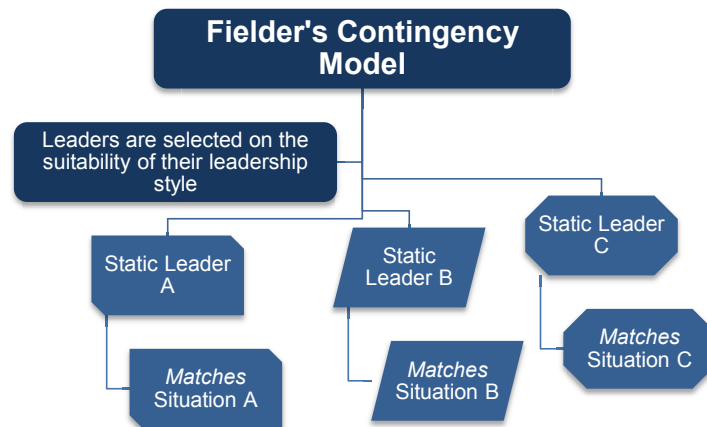
Leadership is complicated and sometimes scattered and chaotic, but the Dunham Pierce Leadership Process Model does a good job of highlighting the key points and identifying how they all affect one another. For the leader who is trying to keep a variety of different interests happy throughout the term of a project, this model can help to sort things out and keep them moving in the right direction.

Key Points

- The Dunham and Pierce Leadership Process Model addresses all of the key elements that play a role in leadership, and helps the manager to understand how each part affects the other parts of the equation.
- This model states that there are four factors that play a role in the leadership process: the Leader, the Followers, the Context, and the Outcomes.
- The meaning of Leader and Followers is self-evident. Context refers to the circumstances under which the Leader is managing his or her team and Outcomes refers to the results of any project or task that has been worked on by the Followers under direction of the Leader.
- The model suggests that everything done within the context of a leadership situation is important and if you are able to learn from your team and how their actions dictate the Context and the Outcomes, everyone will have a better chance at success.

Fiedler’s Contingency Model

Developed back in the 1960s by Fred Fiedler, Fiedler’s Contingency Model is an interesting look at leadership styles and how different approaches can lead to very different results depending on the circumstances. As the term ‘contingency’ would indicate, this model is based on the idea that rather than having a single leadership style for all circumstances, the best approach is to be able to vary the leadership that is provided based on the group and task at hand.



Fiedler argues in this model that a specific leader is only able to lead in one fashion, meaning that another person will need to be tasked with the job if a different leadership style is required.

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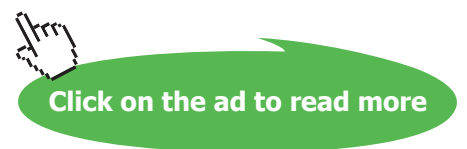
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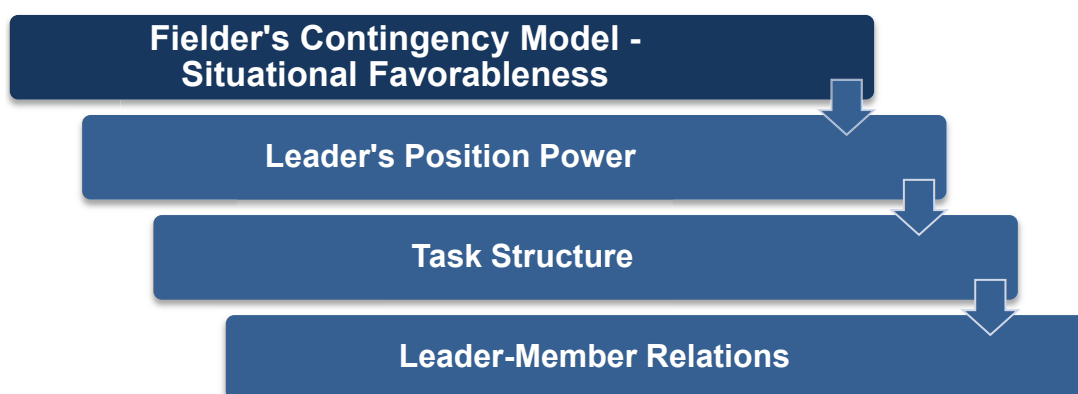
Right away, there are some elements of this model that make sense when you think about how they will be applied. Most people would agree that a 'one size fits all' approach is not going to be effective when it comes to leadership – rather, it will take a variety of styles and techniques to achieve success in the long run. However, the idea that an individual leader is unable to change their ways based on the needs of their team is one that will likely be argued by many. Regardless of where you stand on this topic, the model is certainly worth taking a closer look at for its many interesting insights.

Starting with the idea of a leader who is unable to change his or her ways, referred to as a '*Static Leader*'. Fiedler uses a scale to determine what kind of leader an individual will be (or already is). The scale used is the 'Least-Preferred Co-Worker' scale and is the subject of much debate as to its practicality. Basically, this scale asks a series of questions that the leader is supposed to answer while thinking about their 'least favorite' person that they have worked with over the years.

In order to arrive at a result, the leader is supposed to rank that person on a scale of 1-8 on a variety of personality traits such as Unfriendly to Friendly, and Hostile to Supportive. There are 16 of these rankings to complete, after which the leader will be left with a score that they can use to identify where they fall within the leadership spectrum.

- Low scores show a leader is more focused on tasks as opposed to relationships.
- High scores represent a leader that is more focused on building relationships with their teams.

The idea that these numbers are 'set in stone' is something that many people will disagree with. It seems logical that leaders will develop and evolve over time, potentially changing the score that they would receive on this scale. Also, depending on the person in question whom they were thinking about while answering the questions, the results could be skewed based on one strongly negative memory.



Making up the other half of this leadership model is the idea of 'Situational Favorableness'. Each of its three factors has a say in how a certain type of leader will fare in a given situation.

- **Leader's Position Power.** How much power is the leader being given in a situation? Is their word final when disputes arise, or does the next level of management dictate decisions down to the leader? The model classifies these rankings into two categories:
 - *Strong leader* one who has a high level of power within the organization.
 - *Weak leader* someone controlled from above to a greater degree.

- **Task Structure.** There are two kinds of tasks according to this model:
 - Structured tasks are detailed and clear as to what they expect from each of the team members.
 - Unstructured tasks may be open ended or undefined in terms of the goals and missions for the team.

- **Leader-Member Relations.** Judges how good the relationship is between the team members and the leader? The type of project that is being undertaken, and the ranking on the other two points on the Situational Favorableness scale will determine what kind of leader it takes to match up with the job. While most of the time a stronger relationship between leader and team is going to be preferred, that will not always be the case.

While Fiedler's Contingency Model is an interesting look at leadership styles and their effectiveness in certain situations, the limitations are pretty evident right from the start. Basing a person's leadership style on their interactions with one single co-worker could potentially lead to a misleading outcome, and each of the three factors probably aren't as black and white as they are required to be in order to use this model.

However, using this model to get an idea of what kind of leadership style you use, and what circumstances will be best-suited for you to manage, is an opportunity to gain insight and perspective. The Contingency Model can help you think about how you manage, and why you might be more successful in some situations than in others.

Key Points

- Fiedler's Contingency Model is based on the idea that rather than having a single leadership style for all circumstances, the best approach is to be able to vary the leadership that is provided based on the group and task at hand.
- Starting with the idea of a leader who is unable to change his or her ways, we see that Fiedler uses a scale to determine what kind of leader an individual will be.
- Making up the other half of this leadership model is the idea of 'Situational Favorableness', which has three components: Leader's Position Power, Task Structure, and Leader-Member Relations.
- Leader's Position Power refers to how much power is the leader being given in a situation. A strong leader is one who has a high level of power within the organization, while a weak leader is controlled from above to a greater degree.
- Task Structure – structured tasks are detailed and clear as to what is expected from each of the team members, whereas unstructured tasks may be open ended or undefined in terms of the goals and missions for the team.
- Leader-Member Relations refers to the relationship between the team members and the leader.
- Fiedler's Contingency Model can give you some insight into the leadership styles available to you provided that you are aware of its limitations.

French & Raven's Five Forms of Power

What is the difference between leadership and power? The answer to that question might not be quite as easy as it seems at first. In fact, the more you think about it, the more you likely come to the realization that leadership and power might be the same thing.



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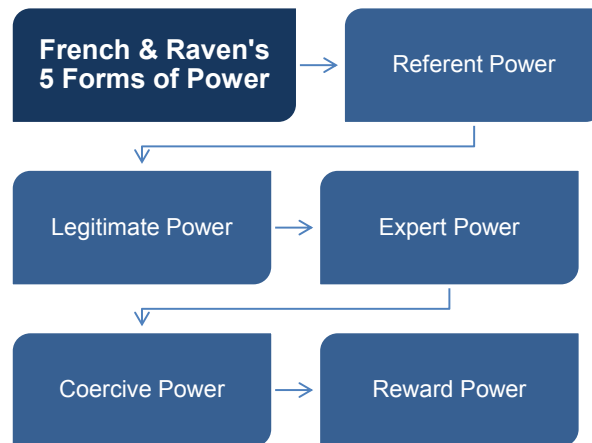
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In any situation where one person is deemed to be the 'leader', they are likely also the person with the most power to make decisions. If you find yourself in a position of leadership within your organization, it is safe to say that you have a good deal of power as well.



The 'Five Forms of Power' research was conducted by John French and Bertram Raven in 1959 and was important because it strived to determine what it is that makes someone powerful in a given setting. By describing each of the five types of power, you can assess your leadership capabilities.

1. *Reward Power* – is one of the more common types of power. The 'reward' can take many different forms, but it is typically financial when talking about a leader within a company. If you have the ability to reward your team members with things like bonuses or raises, you have the ability to command their attention through those rewards. Assuming the team members you lead are interested in achieving the rewards that you can offer, they will be likely to work well with you in order to improve their chances of receiving the rewards.

One of the problems that can arise from using rewards to command power is when you aren't able to offer rewards that are appealing to those whom you lead. For example,

If you don't have the power in your company to offer financial rewards of any significance, you have to try to appeal to your team with other benefits and perks that might not be as desirable to them.

In order for reward leadership to be effective, the leader must be able to offer rewards that the team members are striving to receive.

2. *Expert Power* – is achieved when you find yourself in a position of expertise based on your knowledge or experience. For example,

If you are working on a project with a group of co-workers whom are normally your peers – but you happen to be an expert in the specific field that you are dealing with – you may find yourself elevated to a position of authority and power.

However, often times this type of power is informal rather than official. You might find that you are commanding more attention in meetings and your opinion is being given more weight, but you might not have received any of the other typical signs of leadership.

Coming into power through being an expert in your field is something that can have long lasting benefits for your career. Because this kind of power is more organic than others – such as reward power – it is more likely to remain long after a specific project or task is completed. When others know that you are an authority on a given subject, that reputation should follow you throughout your career.

3. *Legitimate or Title Power* – is often the most recognized form of power and leadership, because it comes along with being appointed to a specific position. Why does the President have power? Because he holds the title of President, and all of the authority that comes with it. In this case, the power is granted more because of a person's title than the individual's character.

Within organizations legitimate power tends to fall with the people who hold titles like Owner, CEO, Executive, and other similar positions. This kind of power can be extremely useful while it is held, but it tends to go away as soon as the title is taken back and given to someone else.

4. *Coercive Power* – leaders control their team members by the ability to take things away, rather than 'reward'. If you can fire someone based on their lack of performance on the team, for example, you have coercive power to influence their actions. They are likely to try to impress you and meet your expectations in order to keep their job.

In many cases, coercive power is only good enough to get people to do the minimum required to avoid punishment. Unlike reward power, where team members may strive for excellence in order to achieve certain rewards, coercive leaders are more likely to get the bare minimum from their team who is simply hoping to stay out of trouble.

5. *Referent Power* – can be compared to an ‘x-factor’, because it is power that does not come for any obvious reason. Frequently, those who have referent power are simply well-liked by others based on their attitude, charm, or even good looks. They don’t necessarily have any logical reason for having come to power, yet they still hold sway over many people for some reason. If you are naturally a person that others gravitate towards and want to talk to, there is a good chance you already have a measure of referent power.

Understanding what kind of power you have as a leader – and why you have it – is a valuable lesson that can be used to better lead people. Most likely, you will have some combination of the five types of power that are outlined above. Think about what kind of power you already have in your position, and what kind of power you should be working toward achieving to further your career.



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Key Points

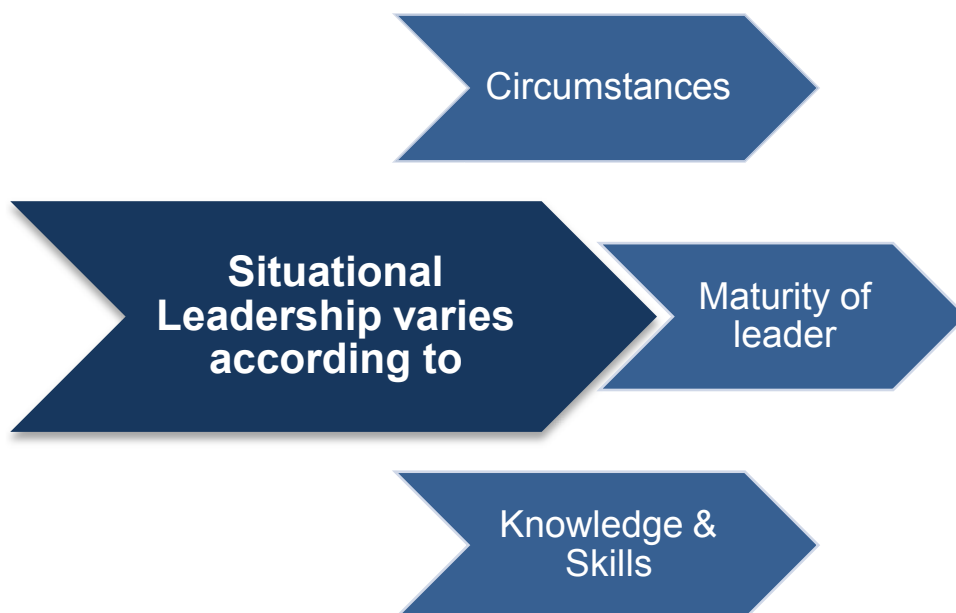
- French and Raven’s Five Forms of Power attempts to determine what it is that makes someone powerful in a given setting.
- Reward Power is typically financial when talking about a leader within a company, for example the ability to reward your team members with things like bonuses or pay raises.
- Expert Power is achieved when someone finds themselves in a position of power based on their knowledge or experience.
- Legitimate Power can also be referred to a ‘title power’, because it is the power that comes along with being appointed to a specific position.
- Coercive Power is the opposite of reward power and is based on the ability to take things away. In the workplace this would normally mean being able to demote or fire someone.
- Referent Power is power that is not achieved by any of the above, and may be based on something intangible like popularity, attitude, or charm.
- This model can help you to understand what kind of power you already have, and what kind of power you should be working toward achieving if you want to further your career.

Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory

Right in the name of this leadership theory, you can get a great indication of what it is all about. The term ‘situational’ indicates that:

Leaders should vary their approach based on the people they are leading, and the circumstances that surround the task at hand.

Indeed, the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory is one that is based around variable leadership, depending on a variety of circumstances. When a leader is able to adapt to the situation as quickly as possible, everyone will benefit in the end.



Specifically, this theory has to do with the maturity of those who are being led. To those who have worked as leaders in the past, it is no surprise that maturity should be considered when working on finding the right leadership style. For example,

Someone who is inexperienced in their field will likely lack the skills or confidence to take on tasks that would be comfortable for a more experienced employee.

Only when a leader is able to mold their approach to the maturity and talent of those that make up the team will the overall performance be up to par.

The Situational Leadership Theory offers up four potential leadership styles, and then four maturity levels that define the members of a team. Let’s quickly look at each of the four styles and levels that can then be paired up for optimal performance.

| Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory | | | |
|--|------|--|---|
| | | Task Behaviors | |
| | | Low High | |
| Relationship Behaviors | High | <p>Participating Style Shares Ideas <i>(Followers able, unwilling, not confident)</i></p> | <p>Selling Style Explain Decisions <i>(Followers unable, willing, confident)</i></p> |
| | Low | <p>Delegating Style Turn over decisions <i>(Followers able, willing, confident)</i></p> | <p>Telling Style Give Instructions <i>(Followers unable, unwilling, not confident)</i></p> |

The four leadership styles that are presented in this theory are:

- *Telling* – is the most direct form of leadership. The leader of the group simply tells each member what to do, and how they would like them to do it. This approach is less collaborative, and more directive in nature. There is very little working together between the leader and the team members, instead the leader simply provides specific instructions for the team members to follow through with.
- *Selling* – has a little more room for collaboration. While the team members are still directed by the leader, the leader is more likely to engage with the team members along the way. The ‘Selling’ title comes from the idea that the leader may need to convince some of the team members to follow his or her lead and do things in a specific way.

- *Participating* – is a process where the leader tries to build relationships with those on the team – really becoming part of the team. This is quite a departure from the Telling style, as the leader will blend in more fully with those who are working as part of the team. In fact, the leader might not even make all of the decisions in this style, perhaps deferring at certain points to members of the team with more experience or knowledge in a given area.
- *Delegating* – represents the leader passing on most of the responsibilities for a given project or task to various members of the team. This style is something that leaders of experienced teams will often use, since the employees that are being led may not need much in the way of direction at this point in their careers.

To go along with those four leadership styles, the Hersey Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory also provides four maturity levels that describe those who are making up the team.

- **Maturity Level 1 (M1)** – These are the least experienced of workers. At this point, they will need to be instructed on how to do just about everything that makes up the task they are responsible for. While this usually means a leader is dealing with younger and less experienced employees, it could also be that the employees simply don't have much knowledge or background in the task at hand for a specific project.

This maturity level matches up with the *Telling* leadership style, as the employees at this point will require complete direction for almost every task.

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- **Maturity Level 2 (M2)** – Moving up a step, these are still inexperienced people who possess only slightly more knowledge and skill than those at the M1 level. Maturity is not only a measure of the ability than an individual has to deal with a task, but their willingness to take on the task in the first place. M2 team members are those who are more eager to work on a job, even if they aren't yet ready to do it correctly without the help of the leader of the group.

The *Selling* leadership style is the proper match when dealing with M2 level team members.

- **Maturity Level 3 (M3)** – Getting close to the top of the scale, this group would include employees who are excited to work on a job and have most of the skill they need to get it done right. While they might not be able to quite get all of the job done without some help, they can get most of the way their on their own.

The *Participating* style is the one that matches with M3 individuals, because they don't need full direction and are more able to engage with the leader for positive collaboration.

- **Maturity Level 4 (M4)** – At the top of the scale, those that are rated as M4 are completely capable of handling a task – and they know that they can get the job done without the help of the leader.

Delegating is the leadership style of choice at this point simply because there is no need to be more involved than that. The team members have confidence, and expect to work independently.

The Hersey Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory promotes flexible leaders that are able to match their style to the experience and ability of those they are leading. Most people would agree that a good leader is a flexible one, and this theory falls right in line with that manner of thinking.

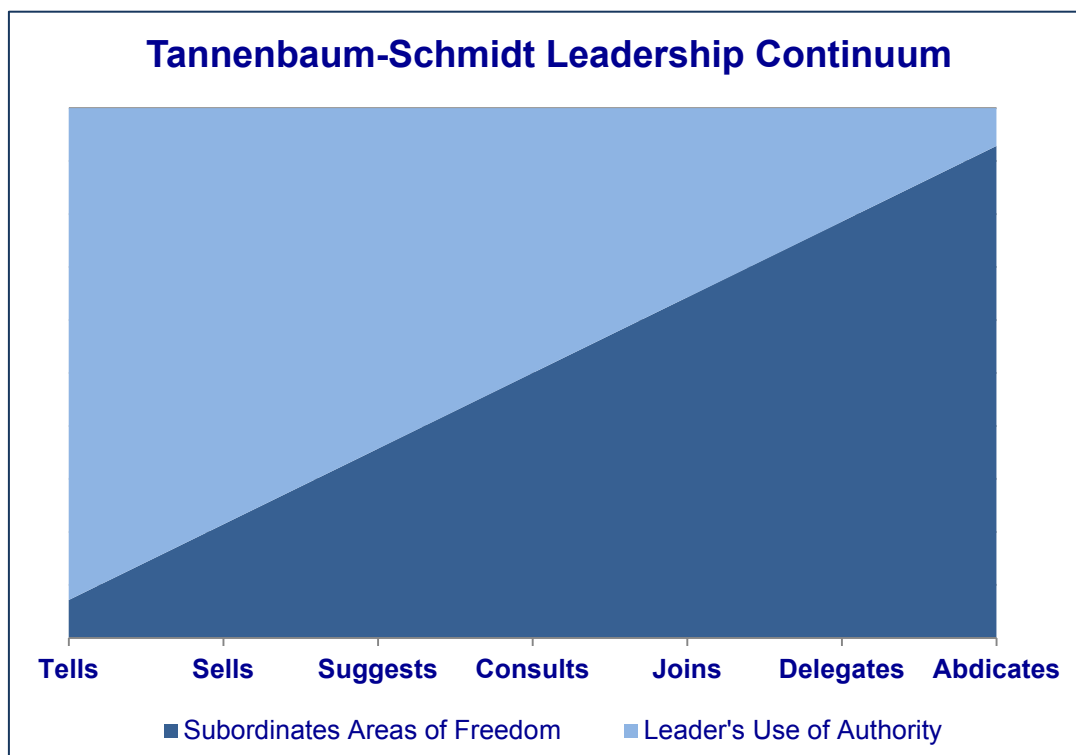
Key Points

- The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory is one that is based around variable leadership, depending on a variety of circumstances.
- The four leadership styles that are presented in this theory are Telling, Selling, Participating, and Delegating.
- To go along with those four leadership styles, the Hersey Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory also provides four maturity levels that describe those who are making up the team.
 - At a maturity level of M1, team members need to be instructed on how to do just about everything that makes up the task they are responsible for.
 - At a maturity level of M2, team members are those who are more eager to work on a job, even if they aren't yet ready to do it correctly without the help of the leader of the group.
 - At a maturity level of M3, team members might not be able to quite get all of the job done without some help, but they can get most of the way their on their own.
 - At a maturity level of M4, team members are completely capable of handling a task and they know that they can get the job done without the help of the leader.
- The Hersey Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory promotes flexible leaders that are able to match their style to the experience and ability of those they are leading.

Tannenbaum-Schmidt Leadership Continuum

Many leadership models and theories like to lump leadership strategies into just two or three categories and analyze them from there. While this can be helpful to get a general picture of how leadership works and what styles work under which circumstances, real life is usually more complicated than that. For this reason, a continuum makes a lot of sense because it covers a wider range of actual leadership approaches.

The Tannenbaum-Schmidt Leadership Continuum is a great example of this line of thinking. The continuum runs the spectrum of potential styles, and leaves plenty of leeway to land somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. Rare is the leader who will find themselves completely on one end of the equation or the other – nearly everyone will fall somewhere in the middle depending on their experience, personality, and the tasks that they are leading.



Before getting into the details of the points along the continuum, it is important to understand the extremes that mark each end.

- *Manager-oriented* Leadership – means that the leader acts mostly like a dictator, telling the team members what to do and leaving very little (or no) room for negotiation.

Most commonly, this is a strategy employed by leaders who are dealing with an inexperienced team, or a tight deadline that they have to meet. However, even the most strict leader will typically leave at least a little room for discussion and collaboration.

- *Team-oriented* Leadership – As you might imagine, this is a leader who provide his or her team with plenty of flexibility and encourages collaboration and the sharing of ideas.

Usually, this sort of latitude will only be afforded to a team that has a high level of experience and acumen in a given area. This kind of leader must have a great deal of trust in their team to allow such freedom.

Within those extremes, the Tannenbaum-Schmidt Leadership Continuum highlights seven points along the way that can be used to describe various leadership styles.

1-Tells – This style is very close to the extreme, as the team is given direct instructions and the interaction between the leader and the team members is very limited. Most of the time, a leader will use this style when they lack the trust that comes with experience in working with a team.

As time passes and a team works together more and more, the leader will usually evolve away from this direct management method.



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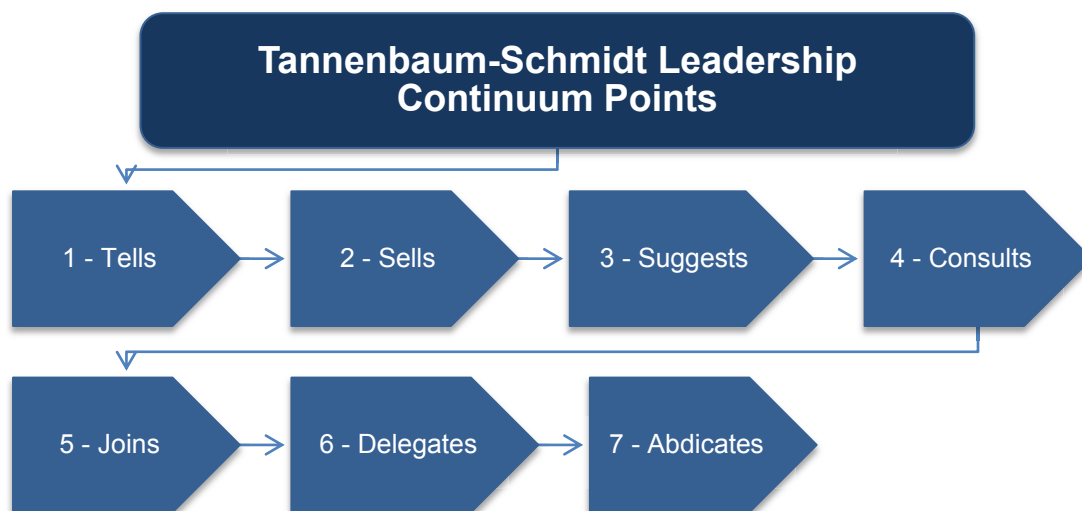
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2-Sells – Sliding a bit up the scale, this point is marked by leadership which is still direct, but also allows for a little bit of back and forth between the leader and the team. In the end, it is the leader that will be calling the shots, but at least the team is provided with the opportunity to give some input and have their voice be heard.

3-Suggests – When a leader using a suggesting style, they are softer in their approach to the team and want to make sure that the team feels like they have real, valued input in the process. How much that input is actually taken into consideration will depend on the level of experience among the team, and how much trust the leader has in them at this point.

However, this style can go a long way toward growing the experience of the team as it allows them a little more insight into the process than the previous two styles on the list.



4-Consults – As the name would indicate, this style of leadership is increasingly collaborative between the leader and the team. A leader is only going to feel comfortable moving to this position on the continuum when they are sure that the team members are experienced enough to put trust in their thinking and decision making.

This style goes beyond ‘superficial’ interaction with the team and actually gives them power over how the process is going to be dealt with. While consulting requires a team with experience and skill, it is a great way to keep all of the members of the team engaged in the process.

5-Joins – At this point along the line, the leader starts to become more a member of the team than a dictator who is telling everyone what to do. While the leader retains the power in the situation and will be the one responsible for making choices in the end, the team is genuinely used to help make decisions.

This kind of leadership is usually the choice of someone who is leading an experienced team made up of individuals who have highly developed skills in their specific areas of expertise.

6-Delegates – Moving closer to the other extreme, the leader who delegates is one who has a high degree of trust in his or her team. Rather than becoming a part of the team, the leader ‘steps back’ from the team and trusts them to get the job done.

Usually, there will be parameters put in place to make sure the team stays on track and is working toward the right goal, but the leader isn’t necessarily involved in the day-to-day decision making process.

7-Abdicates – is at the other end of the spectrum. It represents a point where the leader essentially relinquishes any involvement and trust the team to get the job done from start to finish.

The only connection the leader has to the team is bearing responsibility for the work that they do.

It is obvious that trust and experience are going to be essential to success at this end of the leadership continuum.

Using the Tannenbaum-Schmidt Leadership Continuum is an excellent way to understand the various approaches that leaders can take to managing their teams. Since it is more nuanced than many other leadership theories, a wider variety of leaders will find this tool to be a useful one. As you prepare to lead a new team, or work on improving the performance of your current team, consider the various styles represented within this model.

Key Points

- The Tannenbaum-Schmidt Leadership Continuum describes a spectrum of leadership behaviors from autocratic to democratic.
- Within those extremes, it highlights seven points along the way that can be used to describe various leadership styles.
- The ‘Tells’ style involves the team being given direct instructions about how to accomplish the task.
- The ‘Sells’ style allows for a little bit of back and forth between the leader and the team is provided with the opportunity to give some input and have their voice heard.
- The ‘Suggests’ style is designed to make the team members feel like they have real, valued input into how the task is going to be accomplished.
- The ‘Consults’ style works when a leader is sure that the team members are experienced enough to put trust in their thinking and decision-making.
- The ‘Joins’ style involves the leader becoming more a member of the team than a dictator who is telling everyone what to do.
- The ‘Delegates’ style involves the leader stepping back from the team and trusting them to get the job done according to a predetermined brief.
- The ‘Abdicates’ style represents where the leader essentially relinquishes any involvement and trusts the team to get the job done from start to finish.

Lewin's Leadership Styles Framework

Not only can leadership strategies vary from person to person, but the same person can often use different strategies in different situations in order to achieve maximum results. The leader who is stuck in only one way of thinking and never responds to the changes going on around them is one who is unlikely to be a leader for long.

The Lewin's Leadership Styles Framework dates back many years – to the 1930's, in fact – but it is still relevant today because it divides leadership styles up into three easy to remember groups. While these groups might not necessarily capture all of the subtlety that is contained within a given leader or manager, they do a good job of highlighting the overall approach.



Lewin's Leadership Styles Framework *Pair right leader style with right situation*

Based on the situation, any of these three styles could be the perfect one for the job. At the same time, any of these three could be the wrong one for the job if used under incorrect circumstances. Pairing the right leadership style with the right situation is a task that every leader should take quite seriously. The three leadership styles that Kurt Lewin presented in his framework are:

- **Authoritarian Leadership** – This leader is one who takes command and doesn't care to pass on any of the decision-making responsibility to members of his or her team. An authoritarian leader makes decisions independently and is convinced that they are the correct decision for the circumstances regardless of the feelings of any members of the team. Typically, there would be very little interaction between the leader and team members under this type of leadership style.

The leader will pass down assignments and objectives to the team, with specific instructions on how to get the job done. There are both positives and negatives associated with this style of leadership.

- On the positive side, it can be an effective strategy when dealing with an inexperienced team who lacks the knowledge to take a more autonomous role in the project. When a team is made up of individuals who need specific instructions to succeed, the authoritarian leader could be the perfect choice for the job.
- At the same time, an experienced team might push back against this type of leadership because it doesn't offer them the freedom and creativity that they feel they have earned.

It is important that the leader evaluate carefully the members of the team before deciding how to best lead them through any task.

- **Participative Leadership** – this type of a leader is going to get involved as part of the team and get to work. While they remain in charge and hold decision-making power, the process is far more collaborative and cooperative. Team members are encouraged to give their ideas and their feedback, for the good of the group as a whole.

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The leader will consider ideas put forward by the team and may take them up if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the project. Generally speaking, this kind of leader is better-liked by the members of the team because they are seen as one of the group – as opposed to acting as a dictator who simply passes down orders.

Of course, this type of leadership will not work with every team. Thinking about the inexperienced team from the previous example, participative leadership might not be the right way to get them through a project.

- o Without strong leadership, their lack of experience could become a major problem.
 - o However, a team with moderate experience and plenty of enthusiasm could be just right for this option. As long as there is enough knowledge in the group to keep the project moving in the right direction, the participation of the leader should only further the productivity achieved.
 - o Also, the members of the team may stay better engaged and motivated because they feel invested as part of the process.
- **Delegative Leadership** – is the most ‘hands off’ from the leader’s perspective. A leader who delegates the majority a project is one that has complete trust in his or her team and will allow them to run with the job. Other than monitoring the progress of a given project, and checking in the status of the work from time to time, this leader will likely leave the team members alone to do what they do best.

Not surprisingly, this is typically the preferred style of the leadership from the team member’s perspective – having a leader who is available when needed, but not getting in the way or micromanaging the work. It should go without saying that using this management style with a team who isn’t prepared to handle it properly is a recipe for disaster.

- o An inexperienced team, or one that isn’t properly motivated and focused on the task at hand, could use the freedom provided by leadership delegation to get off-task and fall behind on project deadlines.

If a leader is going to trust his or her reputation to the performance of the team, they need to be highly confident in each member of that group.

As you can see, the three styles of leadership put forward by Lewin’s Leadership Styles Framework each can be successful when put to use in the right time and place. Trying to use the wrong style with the wrong group of people, however, could lead to big trouble for both the members of the team and the leader.

As the group evolves and changes over time, so too should the management style that is being used adapt to the needs of the team as a whole. When the leadership style closely matches the profile of the team in question, great results can occur.

Key Points

- Lewin's Leadership Styles Framework divides leadership styles up into three easy to remember groups.
 - Authoritarian Leadership involves the leader passing down assignments and objectives to the team, with specific instructions on how to get the job done.
 - Participative Leadership is collaborative and cooperative. Team members are encouraged to give their ideas and their feedback, for the good of the group as a whole.
 - Delegative Leadership is the most 'hands off' from the leader's perspective and the leader needs to have complete trust in his or her team and be prepared to allow them to run with the job.
- The three styles of leadership put forward by Lewin's Leadership Styles Framework each can be successful when put to use in the right time and place.

Path-Goal Theory

Any time there is a leader being placed in charge of a team, it is a safe bet that there is a goal or an objective at stake. Whether than goal is short-term, such as creating a new product that will launch in three months, or longer term like developing a branding strategy over the next five years, the goal is out there to be reached. Without goals, teams would have no target to direct their activities and productivity would be almost impossible to achieve.

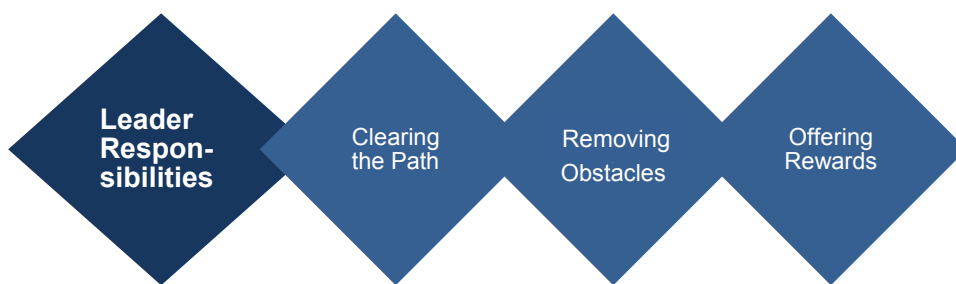
At the same time, there is a path that leads the way to those goals. It might help to think of the path as the day-to-day reality of the process that is needed to reach the goal. Inevitably there will be roadblocks along this path – some small, and some large – so team members will need to be creative and agile in order to get around the blocks and stay on course to reach the target.



But what role does the leader play in this process? Trying to help a leader define their place in this equation so that they can give the team they manage the support they need without getting in the way.

Striking the right balance between supportive and intrusive is a difficult thing to do. That is what the Path-Goal Theory is all about and was developed by Robert House in the early '70s. He presented three different responsibilities that leaders take on throughout a project.

1st. Clearing the path. Basically, this refers to the process of helping see the way from the start to the finish. While the end goal might be clearly defined, the midpoints that need to be reached in order to arrive at the end successfully might be a little harder to identify. An experienced leader should be able to help his or her team figure out the best path to reach the goals that they are charged with. Frustration is quick to set in among team members when they can't figure out which direction to head, so taking command at this point of the process is a sign of strong leadership.



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2nd. Removing obstacles. Rare is the project that doesn't run into difficulties along the way. When the team is confronted with challenges that they aren't immediately able to resolve, the leader may need to step in and take control of the situation. This could be as simple as providing the team with resources that they need to solve a problem, such as adding a new team member that brings a specific skill to the group.

In order to make sure a project stays on schedule and is completed successfully, a leader will want to watch out for major roadblocks standing in the way of the team.

3rd. Offering rewards. Motivation is a big part of success in any endeavor, but especially in ones that take place over long periods of time. Making sure that the individual members of the team are properly motivated and excited to work on the project is as important as anything else that takes place.

Whatever kind of motivation that a leader can offer – usually financial, but also including time off or other perks – can serve to maintain morale among the group and keep them charging ahead toward a successful conclusion.

In order to achieve those three objectives above, the Path-Goal Theory highlights four different styles of leadership that could be used. Naturally, it is up to the team leader to determine which of these styles – or what kind of blend – will be best to get the team from the start of the project to the finish.



- *Supportive leadership* – represents a setting in which the leader is working to build relationships with the individual people on the team. Showing an interest in each individual as a person is a highlight of this method, which is important in terms of keeping morale high. A supportive leader likely already knows that the team members are capable of getting the job done, so they focus their efforts instead of managing relationships.
- *Directive leadership* – is evident in situations where the leader acts more like a dictator in terms of simply passing out assignments and objectives. Normally this kind of leading is done when the members of the team lack the needed experience to work more autonomously. Instead, they must be guided by hand throughout the process, so the leader takes a more powerful role right from the start.
- *Participative leadership* – is where the leader treats the members of the team more as equals than as subordinates. The team members' will likely feel empowered by this approach and it should spur them on to stay motivated and strive for success throughout the project. Their opinions will be valued and listened to by the leader, who will act more as a member of the team than a dictator of the group.
- *Achievement-oriented leadership* – the leader lays out opportunities along the path for team members feel rewarded and their accomplishments recognized as they drive towards completion. This is really only a viable option when the team is made up of experienced workers who don't need any guidance or assistance in order to get the job done right. When a leader notices that morale and motivation are lagging in the group, this style might be just the right fix.



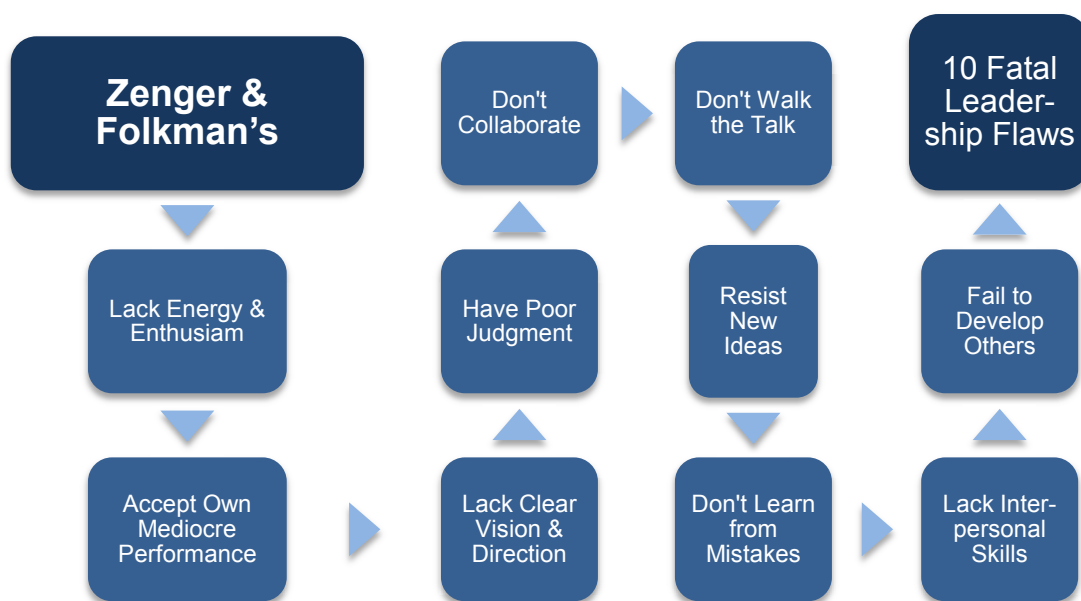
The Path-Goal Theory lays out a clear method for getting a team from the start of a project to the finish. With the three responsibilities understood, and the four different styles of leadership in hand, the manager can set to work making sure their team has everything they need to complete the objective as required.

Key Points

- This theory presents three different responsibilities that leaders take on throughout a project, including clearing the path, removing obstacles and offering rewards.
- Clearing the path refers to the process of helping the team to produce a roadmap for the project.
- Removing obstacles means that when the team is confronted with challenges that they aren't immediately able to resolve, the leader may need to step in and take control of the situation.
- Offering rewards involves making sure that the individual members of the team are properly motivated to work on the project.
- Path-Goal Theory highlights four different styles of leadership that could be used to achieve the above objectives.

Zenger & Folkman's 10 Fatal Leadership Flaws

Leaders have flaws. No matter how qualified an individual is to hold a position, or how prominent that position may be, they are a still a human being just like anyone else. With that said, a smart leader will look at him or herself critically and be able to determine where their flaws may lie. While perfection is likely an unattainable goal, consistent and steady improvement is not. Rather than choosing to ignore any flaws that they may have, the best leader is the one who is able to acknowledge and address their shortcomings.



With this thinking in mind, Zenger and Folkman's 10 Fatal Leadership Flaws take a close look at the most common flaws that plague leaders within even the biggest companies in the world. This study is a relatively young one, only having been published a few years ago. However, it has already garnered plenty of attention and is a valuable reference for anyone in a leadership position.

1. *Lack of energy and enthusiasm* – A leader should always be the one providing the energy to a project or a team – not the other way around. When the leader lacks the energy and excitement to motivate the team that they are in charge of, the project is destined to fail right from the start. Not everyone is going to be a cheerleader, but all leaders should be properly motivated and driven to succeed.
2. *Accept their own mediocre performance* – Settling for just good enough is never the hallmark of a quality leader. By setting the bar as low as possible and then claiming victory when they step over it, this kind of leader won't be responsible for taking the organization to new heights. In order to find real achievement, it is important the leadership doesn't settle for just so-so.
3. *Lack clear vision and direction* – A leader isn't really a leader if they don't have a direction and vision of their own – they are simply a follower of a higher-ranking leader. In order to take the reins of a project or a team and guide it to a favorable conclusion, a good leader will be able to bring their own vision to the table. This approach to leadership requires confidence and determination because the choices that are made might leave the leader open to criticism in the case of setbacks.
4. *Have poor judgment* – Making decisions and proper judgments is at the heart of being a good leader. The whole idea behind leadership is having someone available to make the hard choices that need to be made from time to time. A good leader will have a knack for making the right call – while a poor manager will fall short in this area. There is really no way to know how an individual will fare in terms of judgment until they are put into the fire and tested.
5. *Don't collaborate* – Just because someone is put in a position of leadership doesn't mean they should set out on their own and ignore the input of others. Smart leaders know that collaboration is an opportunity to gain valuable insight from other intelligent people and further the cause of the organization as a whole. Often it is leaders who are insecure in their own abilities that resist the collaborative efforts of others.
6. *Don't walk the talk* – This is one of the classic mistakes of leadership – not leading by example. When a leader sets out specific guidelines or expectations and then fails to live up to them, it will not look good to the rest of the team. Instead, the leader should be the first one in line to obey all of the conditions that have been put in place to dictate the actions of everyone on the team. Only when they are willing to play by their own rules will they be seen as having integrity.
7. *Resist new ideas* – Good ideas can come from anywhere, but some leaders are too stubborn or scared to take them if they don't come from inside their own head. Resisting good ideas that come from others is a typical mistake of a bad leader. It shouldn't matter where an idea came from as long as it is genuinely in the best interest of the team – and the organization as a whole.

8. *Don't learn from mistakes* – Mistakes are always opportunities to do better next time – if a leader is willing to see them as such. A poor leader is more likely to make excuses for their mistakes than they are to learn from them. Those who don't learn from the mistakes they have made are destined to repeat them again and again. The top leaders in any organization are likely the ones who accept their failures and grow so that they don't make the same mistake in the future.
9. *Lack interpersonal skills* – At its core, leadership is all about interpersonal skills. The way a leader interacts with those who are on the team – as well as others in the organization – will largely determine their success or failure in the long run. The leaders who are well liked and are able to connect with those around them will be far more likely to be viewed favorably. Among leaders with similar performance results, the ones who have the best interpersonal skills will almost always rise to the top.
10. *Fail to develop others* – The best leaders are more concerned with the growth of those on their team than they are their own development. When a leader is completely committed to make each member of the team the best that they can be, the overall good of the organization is served. Selfish leaders will typically be short for their positions as the performance of the team is going to suffer.

Zenger and Folkman's 10 Fatal Leadership Flaws should be required reading for anyone in a position of leadership. Many leaders are unable to accept their own flaws and acknowledge the fact that they make mistakes – but that is exactly what a great leader is willing to do. If you are in a leadership position, take the time to look inwardly and think about these ten points. When you spot any of them in your own performance, take the necessary steps to correct your leadership style and you will be better for the effort.

Key Points

- Zenger and Folkman's 10 Fatal Leadership Flaws take a close look at the most common leadership flaws and is designed to help leaders acknowledge and address their shortcomings.
- If you are in a leadership position, take the time to look inwardly and think about these ten points.
- If you spot any of them in your own performance, then take the necessary steps to correct your leadership style and you will be better for the effort.

Summary

It is evident that there are plenty of different ways in which a leader can manage his or her employees or team members. No matter the setting, there are a variety of options available to the leader depending on what strategy they believe will pull the best possible performance out of their team.

No two people are exactly alike, and even those who try to follow the same methods will inevitably have their own unique style that they use in an attempt to get the job done. While there is room for individuality in leadership, it is also important that a leader knows what style they are using and how it affects the outcomes and the people that they lead.

This eBook describes the different ideas and teachings about leadership as a source of inspiration. These provide managers with a broad base from which to form the style of leadership most suited to them personally and the situation they are asked to manage. This toolkit helps you to develop your own leadership style based on your own personality, the task at hand and the team that you are leading.

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