The Situational Leadership Model

(Adapted from the model by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey in Management of Organizational Behavior, '96)

The *Situational Leadership Model* suggests that there is no "one size fits all" approach to leadership. Depending on the situation, varying levels of "leadership" and "management" are necessary. However, leaders must first identify their most important tasks or priorities. Second, leaders must consider the readiness level of their followers by analyzing the group's **ability** and **willingness**. Depending on the level of these variables, leaders must apply the most appropriate leadership style to fit the given situation. The four different types of situational leadership are:

Directing

Coaching

Supporting

Delegating

The Three Steps of the *Situational Leadership Model*

Step 1: Identify the Most Important Tasks or Priorities

Step 2: Diagnose the Readiness Level of the Followers

Step 3: Decide the Matching Leadership Style

Step 1: Identify the Most Important Tasks or Priorities

Suggestions to consider when deciding your three most important tasks or priorities:

1. Focus your three priorities or tasks on big picture items that will require <u>participation</u> and <u>commitment</u> from the entire chapter. This doesn't mean you should eliminate a possible priority just because you fear the chapter won't go along with it; it simply means that your priorities should be big enough that executing them will require the chapter's involvement.
2. Your three priorities should be fundamental to the success of the chapter. For example, "Creating a new recruitment slogan" is not as important as "Creating a working *Kai* Committee."
3. Whenever possible, be specific! For example, "Recruitment" is a vague priority, but "Create and execute a year round recruitment model resulting in a 25 man pledge class next fall" is specific.
4. Sometimes our best priorities are things we should STOP doing. For example, if your chapter has high-risk social practices (i.e. providing hard alcohol to underage guests), it is a worthy priority to "Eliminate high-risk social factors and create a new culture of social conduct in the chapter."
5. Don't hesitate to go after bold tasks such as winning the "Top Chapter" award on campus, achieving a 3.0 chapter GPA, or increasing your membership size to 75 men. All of these will require participation and commitment from the rest of the chapter.
6. Don't worry about **how** you will achieve the priorities just yet. Decide **what** they should be first!
7. You may need to brainstorm a list of 5-10 priorities and then narrow the list to your top three.
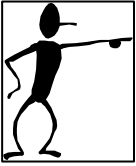

What are the three most important tasks or priorities that your executive committee will lead the chapter through this year?

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1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The Four Types of Situational Leadership

Directing – This leadership approach is most appropriate when the followers have low willingness and low ability for the task at hand. When the followers cannot do the job and are unwilling or afraid to try, then the leader must take a highly directive role. Directing requires those in charge to define the roles and tasks of the followers, and supervise them closely. Decisions are made by those in charge and communication is one-way. If the leader focused more on the relationship in this situation, the followers would become confused about what must be done and what is optional. Directing is often used when the issue is serious or comes with drastic consequences if not successful. The leader maintains a directive position to ensure all required actions are completed.

Coaching – This leadership approach is most appropriate when the followers have high willingness but low ability for the task at hand. Like Directing, Coaching still requires leaders to define roles and tasks clearly, but the leader seeks ideas and suggestions from the follower. Decisions remain the leader's prerogative, but communication is much more two-way. Followers needing coaching require direction and supervision because they are still relatively inexperienced, but they also need support and praise to build their self-esteem, and involvement in decision-making to restore their commitment. While Coaching, the leader spends time listening, advising, and helping the follower gain necessary skills in order to do the task autonomously next time.

Supporting – This leadership approach is most appropriate when the followers have low willingness but high ability for the task at hand. Supportive leadership works when the follower can do the job, but is refusing to do it or showing a lack of commitment. The leader need not worry about showing them what to do, but instead should be concerned with finding out why the followers are refusing and work to persuade them to cooperate. The key to supportive leadership is motivating and building confidence in people! Clarification on the details of the process won't matter, as the follower already knows what to do but lacks the motivation to act. Supportive leadership involves listening, giving praise and making the followers feel good when they show the necessary commitments for success.

Delegating – This leadership approach is most appropriate when the followers have high willingness and high ability. Leaders should rely on delegating when the follower can do the job and is motivated to do it. There is a high amount of trust that the follower will do well, and the follower requires little supervision or support. Delegating still keeps the leader involved in the decisions and problem-solving, but execution is mostly in the hands of the followers. Because the follower has the most control, he is responsible for communicating information back up to the leader. Followers at this level have less need for support or frequent praise, although as with anyone, occasional recognition is always encouraged.

The Situational Leadership Model

Ability Level

	Supporting	Delegating
	Directing	Coaching

Willingness Level