

THE CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP STUDIES®

THE GLOBAL HOME OF SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP®

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR THE MODERN WORKPLACE

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INTRODUCTION

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In today's rapidly changing economy, organizations are facing a myriad of challenges that are testing the skills and abilities of their workforce like never before. From managing a remote workforce to shifts in organizational structures, leaders are facing complex challenges that require them to rethink their strategies, adapt to new ways of working and navigate through uncharted territories.

As we continue to move toward an increasingly digital world, leaders are also grappling with the need to stay on top of the latest technologies and innovations, while also keeping a close eye on the impact of these developments on their organizations and employees. To be successful in this environment, business leaders need to be agile, resilient and adaptable, and they must be able to lead their organizations through times of uncertainty and change regardless of their position.

Let's take a deeper look at some of the challenges facing leaders today — as well as how learning and development (L&D) can help overcome them.

> **Leaders must be able to lead their organizations through times of uncertainty and change regardless of their position.**



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THE CHALLENGES OF THE MODERN WORKPLACE

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DISENGAGEMENT

Disengagement has always been a challenge, but the events of the past several years have accelerated it into overdrive. According to Gallup, only 21% of employees are actively engaged at work. Disengaged employees are less productive, less innovative and less committed to their work — all of which results in a decline in the overall performance of the organization. It is crucial for organizations to prioritize employee engagement to ensure the success and longevity of their business.

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TURNOVER

The cost of employee turnover can be staggering, as businesses must spend time and resources recruiting, hiring and training new employees to replace those who have left. In addition to the direct costs, there are indirect costs such as decreased productivity, decreased employee morale and decreased customer satisfaction. High levels of employee turnover can also impact a business's reputation, making it more difficult to attract and retain top talent.

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REMOTE WORK

Lockdown may have ended, but remote work remains a defining feature of the modern workplace. New technology solutions that allow for virtual communication and collaboration have led many organizations to embrace remote work to attract and retain top talent, increase productivity and reduce costs. Still, many of the challenges of remote work continue to plague us, such as maintaining a sense of company culture among geographically dispersed teams, managing work-life balance and ensuring organizational data security.

> **Remote work remains a defining feature of the modern workplace.**



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MULTIPLE GENERATIONS IN THE WORKFORCE

In an unprecedented shift in workforce demographics, many organizations now have members of five different generations working together — often on the same teams. While this brings unique perspectives and insights to the workplace, it can also present challenges for employers. One of the primary challenges is managing the different expectations and work styles of different generations. For example, younger workers may prioritize work-life balance and flexible schedules, while older workers are often motivated by more linear, traditional career trajectories. In addition, each generation may have different communication styles, with younger workers preferring digital communication channels and older workers favoring face-to-face interactions.



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WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE LOOK LIKE?

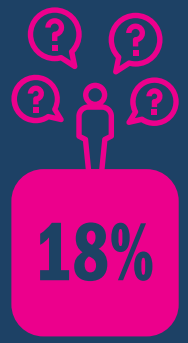
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UNDERSTANDING THE FLATTENED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

To succeed as a modern leader, you must first understand the ways in which organizational structure has shifted in recent years. While some continue to operate in a traditional, top-down system, many organizations have shifted to a flattened organizational structure that emphasizes a streamlined, lean hierarchy with minimal layers of management. In this type of structure, decision-making power is distributed more evenly among employees, communication flows more freely and employees are given more autonomy to explore new ideas, which encourages collaboration, creativity and innovation.

The flattened structure aims to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy, reduce costs and increase efficiency by empowering employees to take more ownership of their performance. However, without strong leaders, this environment can also result in a lack of structure and direction, unclear roles and responsibilities, and a lack of accountability. A recent study found that 18% of employees are disengaged because of a lack of clarity. Empowering people to do things they don't know how to do decreases engagement and increases a sense of hopelessness. That is why organizations that adopt the flattened structure must equip their employees with the skills to successfully collaborate across the business and influence their peers, colleagues and even their managers.

> **Organizations must equip their employees with the skills to successfully collaborate across the business and influence their peers, colleagues and even their managers.**



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RETHINKING THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

Historically, information in organizations flowed from the top down and managers had all the answers, but in today's world, information flows in all directions. Leaders might have knowledge and experience that is valuable to pass along, but the best ideas on how to get things done often come from those they are leading.

The role of today's leaders is to remove obstacles for their highly skilled teams and cultivate a culture and atmosphere where those individuals feel comfortable and confident in sharing their ideas. It is equally important that business leaders invest in developing the leadership skills of individual contributors to enable them to communicate and collaborate across the organization and hold themselves and others accountable.



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> Engagement is often the differentiating factor between adequate performance and excellent performance.

MAKING EMPLOYEES FEEL VALUED

Although there tends to be more emphasis on success than on engagement, it turns out that engagement is equally as important — if not more so. In the age of burnout, "quiet quitting" and The Great Resignation, engagement means making sure that your team's voices are heard, while also empowering them to take ownership of their own engagement.

Engagement is often the differentiating factor between adequate performance and excellent performance. Regular check-ins can help you stay aware of what motivates your individual team members. Take the time to know them as people with specific career aspirations, and you'll better understand the types of learning opportunities that will best drive their engagement.

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EMBRACING A BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF CONSTANT CHANGE

Constant change seems to be the new normal. Preparing your workforce to skillfully adapt to change is key to organizational resilience — and resilient organizations have a better chance of achieving their goals. Leaders play a critical role in encouraging employees to engage with, participate in and embrace change.

It's important to be intentional about personalizing your approach to supporting team members as they navigate disruption. As previously mentioned, frequently reevaluating learners' skills and general mental state is key. Business leaders need to stay in tune with people's changing needs so that they can work together to adjust their workflow or training as necessary.

ENABLING WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION

Gone are the days when employees separated their work and personal lives. To thrive and retain talent, organizations need to support a healthy work-life balance by providing flexible scheduling options, remote work opportunities and wellness programs that promote physical and mental well-being. By providing opportunities for employees to engage in professional development and skills training, businesses can foster a sense of purpose and motivation that can lead to higher levels of engagement — and thus retention of their top talent. Additionally, it's important to encourage open communication and collaboration among team members, which can help to build a strong sense of community and support.



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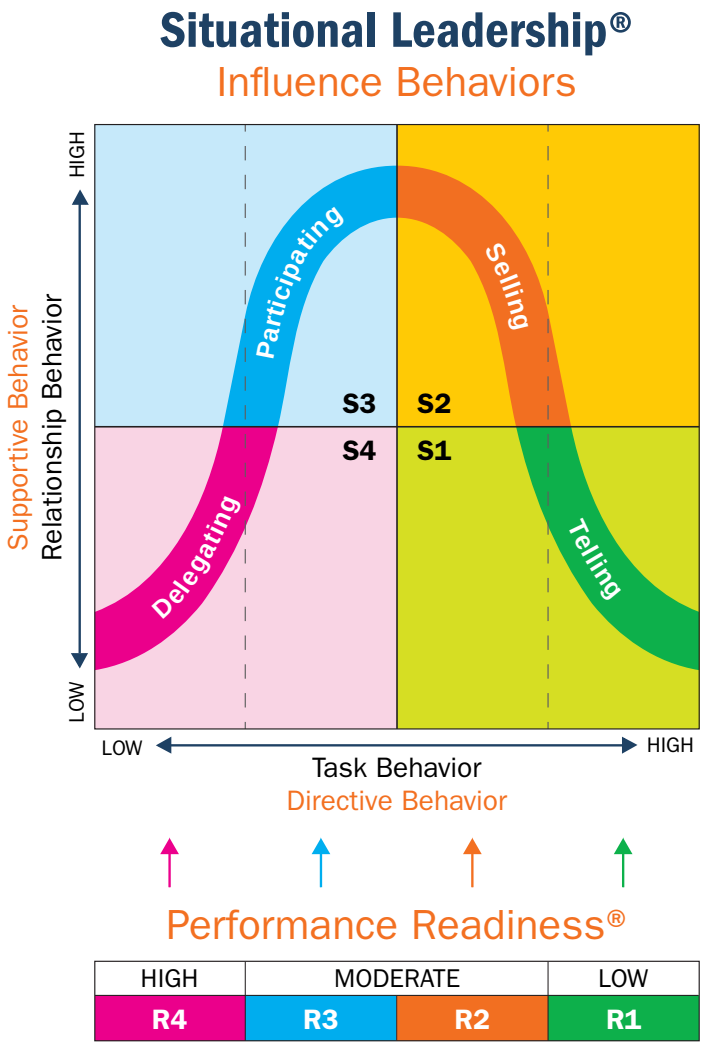
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THE SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP® MODEL

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The Center for Leadership Studies' Situational Leadership® Model has a proven history of helping organizations overcome their workforce challenges. It provides a framework and common language that enables managers and employees to define expectations, assess current performance and facilitate growth and development. The Situational Leadership® approach empowers multidirectional leadership by equipping employees with the skills to advocate for their performance needs and teaching managers to adapt their leadership style to meet the needs of others. Through task specificity and a focus on observed ability and willingness, the Situational Leadership® Model is also designed to remove biases from a leader's decision-making process, enabling leaders to make decisions based on a person's performance.

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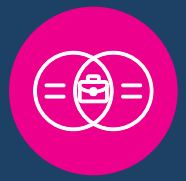


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Integrating the Situational Leadership® Model into the fabric of your culture helps organizations:



PROVIDE A COMMON LANGUAGE OF PERFORMANCE

Situational Leadership® training establishes a common language that enables leaders and followers to gain alignment on tasks, address barriers to success, communicate needs and provide support.



REDUCE TIME TO AUTONOMY

When employees understand their roles and responsibilities within the organization and are given a framework to assess their own performance and communicate their needs, it accelerates the quality and pace of development.



EMPOWER ACCOUNTABILITY

Employees are equipped with the skills to own their role in the leadership process by identifying and communicating what they need to be successful.



ENABLE AGILITY

In the face of change and disruption, the Situational Leadership® framework serves as a roadmap that allows organizations to navigate ambiguity and get back on track faster.

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CONCLUSION

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THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP

Organizations today are facing a myriad of challenges that are testing the skills and abilities of their workforce. As L&D professionals, it is your job to equip them with the skills needed to thrive in the modern workplace. Providing the leaders within your organization with a common and practical language of performance to use prepares them to navigate whatever life throws their way.

Provide your organization with a competitive advantage through Situational Leadership® training.



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ABOUT US

THE CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP STUDIES
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THE CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP STUDIES

For more than 50 years, The Center for Leadership Studies (CLS) has been at the forefront of leadership training and organizational development. CLS is the global home of the original Situational Leadership® Model — the most successful and widely adopted leadership training model available. Using this research-based model as the foundation, our influence-focused courses enable leaders to engage in effective performance conversations that build trust, increase productivity and drive behavior change.

Learn more at situational.com.

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