

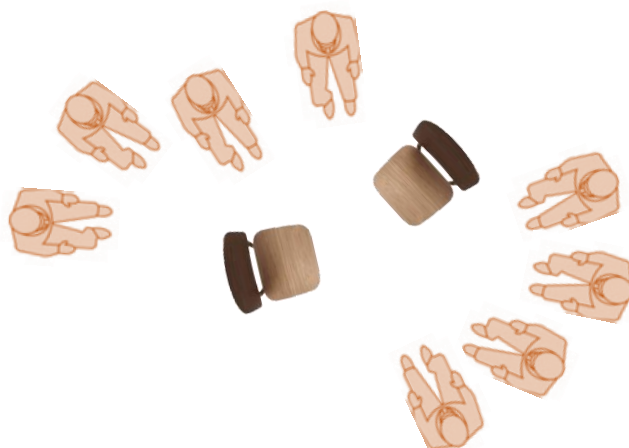
Leadership Style exercise

Purpose: to showcase leadership behaviors in a learning environment to enable group discussions around situational leadership and leadership styles. This would increase awareness of the pros and cons of various leadership approaches to everyday interpersonal challenges.

Setup: If this exercise is a part of a training day or longer meeting, use some of the free space in the room or get a different room if the configuration cannot be achieved in the same main room.

See diagram below. Put two chairs in the center of the space/room. Those participating in the exercise can stand or sit around the chairs during the role-play exercise and also for the discussion session afterwards. Those who are participating in the role-play exercise use the center chairs and then take their place with the others afterwards.

You may either use a flipchart to guide and capture responses during the discussion or a beamer and a laptop (using a screen in the room).



There are no specific **handouts**, but you may choose to share some with participants as pre-reading before the event or post-event reminders. Likely topics would include: leadership styles, how leaders deal with people, Leadership and EQ, Situational leadership etc.

Timing:

The initial set-up takes about 7 – 10 minutes. The roleplays about 10 minutes each – so that is 20 minutes. Debriefing at least 10 minutes – could be longer depending on how much discussion ensues. Another roleplay 5 minutes more.

Instruction:

1. Start the session by covering some basic information about situational leadership and leadership styles. Describe 4 specific situational leadership styles: (from Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey)

Coaching

This style is hands-on involvement in a specific task/activity that the employee is working on. Most helpful style when there is a pre-defined development need in this area. Style works best when the employee is already aware of the development need and is open to feedback and suggestions for improvement plus applying new ways of accomplishing the task at hand.

Directing

Taking control in a challenging situation and using your higher level of experience and knowledge to set the action that needs to take place next. This style of leader typically will set up specific goals and objectives for employees and may allow some deviations from more experienced staff - to make their own decisions provided the overall goals are still being met.

Delegating

The leader guides and checks in with the employee but otherwise delegates a task or project completely to an employee. Leaders use this style mostly with more experienced employees who are able to do work independently. This can be used with less experienced staff, but it means there should be more involvement and perhaps some coaching and more check-ins.

Supporting Style

For most experienced employees this leadership style is best and it focuses mainly on motivating and encouraging an employee. This could be seen as a type of delegation, but the employee has more freedom to act and has more accountability for outcomes. For example, the employee may be asked to do final presentations to managements or write final reports vs providing outcomes back to the manager to take final communication and reporting steps.

2. Tell participants that you are looking for 4 volunteers. Two of them will play the role of a particular type of leader and 2 of them will play the role of employees with specific issues going on.
3. Hand each of the volunteers a role sheet and give them 3-5 minutes to prepare for the conversation that they will have in the center of the room.
4. While the volunteers leave the room to read through and prepare for their roles, give the rest of the participants a quick overview of the role-playing that is about to happen. (*Do not share this with the volunteers who should be out of the room until you come and get them in about 5 minutes*)
 - a. *Lorraine – she is a working mother with many years of experience and great performance in the past. She has recently been in later than usual and leaving earlier than usual and seems distracted. Her boss would like to see her performance improve. He is a leader who has quickly risen to the level where he is now and has been in the role as her boss for only 1 year. The leader is worried about his personal bonus and career progression if Lorraine does not step up.*
 - b. *Peter is a young graduate who has joined 6 months ago. He is still very much living a college grad lifestyle – parties and fun with his friends most of the time. He is active on his mobile phone most of the day, does not believe in reading company manuals and believes he is doing a great job. His boss has more than 20 years with company and would like Peter's performance and commitment to improve. He is concerned about his department's quality and ability to perform given Peter's low quality output which is mostly corrected by other employees.*
5. Invite the volunteers back into the meeting room.
6. Those watching the role-play are to take note of how the leader/manager is dealing with the issue at hand and how effective the leader is with that approach.

7. Role play starts. Let each roleplay continue for about 10 minutes. Use your discretion to stop roleplay earlier or later depending on how things develop.
8. Discussion points after the roleplays:
 - a. The employees (volunteers) in both role-plays – how well did you feel your role-play boss handled your situation?
 - b. The leaders (boss volunteers) in both role-plays – do you feel that you reached the outcome you envisaged? If not, what made it tough?
 - c. (Whole group) What did the leaders in both cases do right? (What is a good idea to do in each of those situations?)
 - d. What do you think they should have done more of or less of? (the leaders)
9. Consider doing a do-over with another volunteer as the leader and the same employee volunteer to get closer to the ideal way to handle the situation.

ROLE SHEETS

The next few sheets describes the role that each of your volunteers need to play.

The volunteer should take 3 to 5 minutes to study his/her role and then be ready to talk to the leader in the center of the room (on those two empty chairs you have placed there)

EMPLOYEE 1 - LORRAINE

You are a working mother who has been having a tough time with car trouble recently. You live in your parent's farmhouse which is quite a distance out of town so it is not easy to use public transport. Your car trouble has started about a month ago and due to that you have been late almost every morning and have had to leave early to get rides with neighbors or friends to get home at night. You have also taken a lot of personal calls to organize the picking up of your children etc.

Your manager wants to talk to you and you are afraid of getting fired. Your family depends on you and you feel you have given the company the best years of your life the last 15 years so you deserve some consideration and compassion for the situation that you are in. You do not have a degree or special training, but you are a hard worker and previous years you have been given the employee of the month rewards a few times with performance bonuses. You have also been helping new employees get up to speed over the last few years which has made you feel like a valued veteran.

LEADER 1 – LORRAINE'S BOSS

You have been working with Lorraine for only one year. You have heard that she is a solid performer and you have certainly not seen any bad performance from her until recently. There were a few urgent jobs that needed to get done and she was not at her desk when you went looking for her. She is the most senior person in your department and you really needed her expertise to resolve some of the customer escalations you received. You also have seen her talking on her mobile phone at the elevators a few times during the last few weeks. You wonder if she is interviewing and looking for another job? Either way, your department is falling behind on important deliverables and you do not feel she is pulling her weight at a very critical time also for you as a leader. The performance of your department reflects on your leadership and you are really driven to get the next promotion. You are seen as a quick learner and you were quite young getting this role, but you are very determined to get higher up in management of the company and you cannot afford any mistakes to bring you down as a leader.

You are a no-nonsense results- driven leader who likes to see things done in the most effective and efficient manner. You want people to be enthusiastic and motivated and they must be team-players. And team-players always do whatever it takes for the team to succeed – that is your motto.

You have asked Lorraine to meet with you and you look forward to resolving this issue with her so that your department can get back on the road to delivering on time. You really need her help to get the results you need which also helps you get your personal performance bonus back on track!

EMPLOYEE 2 – PETER

You have graduated and joined the company about 6 months ago and you are very excited about the opportunities to learn more and get promoted into higher levels of management in the company. You have been given a lot of company manuals to read, but found it mostly not easy to interpret. Instead you have just observed how your coworkers get the job done and have copied their behaviors and actions. So far you believe it is going quite well. You like the people you work with even though some of them are quite old and talk about boring things during lunch. You are still in touch with all your college friends and you love that you guys are able to go out almost every night and weekends. Your boss wants to talk to you and you are sure it must be about a promotion because you have noticed that you get things done almost twice as fast as the old lady in the corner so life seems great to you!

LEADER 2 – PETER'S BOSS

You have been with the company for most of your working career, which spans over 20 years. You came in after graduating from college and you have worked your way up through the ranks over the years and feel proud of it. You are a traditional kind of leader who believes that hard work pays off in the end, but that it takes a lot of personal sacrifice and commitment to get where you got to – hierarchically. Your approach to managing employees is that they should earn their promotions and bonuses through hard work, long hours and always doing something extra that you should not have to ask for. You have made sure that everyone in your department can succeed easily by getting every single process and task written up in a manual to make it easy for new people to learn if they would take the time to do that.

You liked Peter when you interviewed him 6 months ago and hired him. Since then you are not sure that you have made the right decision. You have noticed that he spends more time on his mobile phone doing something – you are not sure what exactly. You have noticed that Peter is not following the updated procedures in the manual and it is quite irritating to you given that your departmental targets are falling behind due to his lack of interest in doing things the right way the first time. You have asked other employees to correct his mistakes sometimes during long evenings since Peter never works long evenings. He is always one of the first employees out of the door at the end of the day. He is also never in early in the mornings. You doubt his dedication and commitment to the company and your department and you have great concerns about his suitability as an employee in your department. You have asked him to join you for a meeting in your office to discuss your concerns and how you want him to improve.