

## Mapping Situational Leadership Model to the Tuckman Ladder

An understanding of the development stage of a team can help a project manager adopt the appropriate leadership style.

### Objectives

In this reading, you will:

- Review the Tuckman Ladder
- Review the Hersey Blanchard situational leadership model
- Map the Tuckman Ladder with the Hersey Blanchard situational leadership model and determine the appropriate situational leadership style

### Tuckman Ladder Review

The Tuckman Ladder is a step-by-step overview of team development stages developed by Bruce Tuckman in 1965. The model shares four steps a team must complete to enter a high-performance development stage.

The table below summarizes the four stages of the Tuckman Ladder.

Step	Stage	Stage Characteristics	Level of Productivity
1	<b>Form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The team is coming together</li><li>• The goal is to create a clear structure, goals, direction, and roles</li><li>• Team members need guidance</li><li>• Productivity is low</li></ul>	Low
2	<b>Storm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Characterized by turbulence</li><li>• The team begins work</li><li>• There are high levels of disagreement and discontent</li><li>• Little work is being accomplished</li></ul>	Lower

3	<b>Norm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team begins to work together. Productivity increases. The turbulence begins to calm</li> <li>• Collaboration increases, and individual focus decreases</li> <li>• Reconciliation, reduced anxiety, and cooperation are evident</li> <li>• The team is beginning to trust each other</li> </ul>	Moderate
4	<b>Perform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team evolves into a cohesive unit</li> <li>• Everyone works well with others</li> <li>• The team is both efficient and effective</li> <li>• Productivity is high</li> <li>• Team members are self-directed and committed</li> </ul>	Moderate

### **Hershey Blanchard Situational Leadership Model: Review**

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard created the Situational leadership® model in the 1970s.

The model defines four specific readiness performance readiness levels for each team member or stakeholder. The model suggests that project managers adapt their leadership style to tasks and relationships in the workplace that map to the individual's or team member's readiness level.

Readiness level R4 indicates that the team member is self-directed. They are able, confident, and willing to perform at a high level.

At R3, the team member is still self-directed. However, they are insecure or unwilling to perform.

An R2 team member requires leadership direction. They are unable to perform their assigned tasks. However, the team member is confident, willing to learn, and ready to try.

At R1, the team member also requires leadership direction. They cannot perform their assigned tasks and are insecure or unwilling to learn and try.

The table summarizes how the different levels map with the strategies.

Situational Leadership Readiness Level	Situational Leadership Style
<b>R1</b>	Tell or Direct
<b>R2</b>	Sell or Coach
<b>R3</b>	Participate or Support
<b>R4</b>	Delegate or Monitor

### Mapping the Models and Leadership Styles

The stages in the Tuckman Ladder map perfectly with the readiness levels in the Hersey Blanchard situational leadership model. The project manager can determine the situational leadership style to implement depending on the level.

Tuckman Ladder Phase	Situational Leadership Readiness Level	Situational Leadership Style
Form	R1	Tell or Direct
Storm	R2	Sell or Coach
Norm	R3	Participate or Support
Perform	R4	Delegate or Monitor

**R1:** The team needs task support. Create ground rules, communicate roles and responsibilities, answer questions, and discuss what the project is and why it is important.

**R2:** The team needs both task and relational support. Effectively facilitate discussions. Listen and advise. Manage dysfunctional conflict. Coach the team to build their skills while maintaining motivational levels.

**R3:** The team still needs relational support. Stop telling and selling. Empower the team to work together to accomplish the goals of the project. Continue to build trust within the group. Be accessible and provide support as needed. Avoid the tendency to micromanage.

**R4:** Let the team manage conflicts and plan the work internally. Stay out of the way. Check-in with the group occasionally to ensure everything is tracking as planned. Periodically provide rewards and recognitions to maintain high motivational levels.

### **Conclusion**

Team members will be in different stages of development. As a project manager, treat each team member individually. Determine where they are on the ladder and apply situational leadership accordingly.