

# Situational Leadership as a Success Model



Communication with employees, an own leadership style, the atmosphere in teams – these are current leadership topics in both Germany and Eastern Europe. During a seminar, Belarusian and Moldavian executives got to know different models of successful team leadership and how to apply them to their own cases from their day-to-day management experience. The model of situational leadership was of particular interest as it quickly led to good results in a case study from one participant's business practice.



**Cologne.** The managing director of a large Belarusian software company is already successful in the business-to-business segment. He now wants to also offer his products in the business-to-government segment and has hired a new employee for this purpose. As an objective, this colleague is to establish contacts to public authorities and thus create a basis for future sales channels. She has already had a successful career with public authorities and is an acknowledged expert in her field. However, she has a rather reserved manner, and she has specialised knowledge but lacks process skills. In the software company, she may and should take decisions – something that she was neither encouraged or allowed to do in her former job with the authorities.

The managing director is not satisfied with her performance because she does

not make decisions, has a problem fixation in meetings, delays processes and does not integrate herself into the internal structure. Other departments already react negatively to her as she represents a 'bottleneck' and delays internal processes through her indecisiveness. Now her boss is faced with the question of whether to dismiss her or whether he can still do something to change the difficult situation into a positive one.

## Situational Leadership

The Americans Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard has developed the Situational Leadership Model. In this model, they

compare four leadership styles of managers with the four so-called development levels of employees. Not every leadership style is always adequate – it depends decisively on the development level of the individual employee. The challenge for the leader is therefore to have a complete set of leadership styles at his disposal and to apply them as required.

It is also important to become aware of one's preferred leadership style. The MP participant named leadership style 4, i.e. delegating, as his 'natural favourite leadership style'.

With the exception of the managing director who presented the case study, all of the seminar participants took part in a collegial consultation in order to demonstrate the point of view of the colleague concerned. They were to assume the colleague's role and express in the first person how they would feel in her place and what they expected from the supervisor. It very soon became clear that the colleague hoped to receive more support and more coaching from the supervisor. In her new job in the new company, the colleague is between development level 2 (moderate competence, occasional commitment)

and development level 3 (high competence, frequent but not constant commitment) on the development level scale.

After the collegial consultation round, the managing director, who had been listening to the colleagues, realised that he needed to act differently with this employee if he wanted to lead her to success and that his natural leadership style (delegating) was not the best choice in this case. It also became clear to him that he would still have to act as her coach for

at least a year to bring her up to development level 4. Only then would he be able to return to his natural leadership style.

With the aid of the leadership model, the managing director decided not to dismiss the employee, but to regularly carry out meetings and coaching with her every two weeks. In the process, the colleague would be able to gain the internal know-how she lacked in order to be successful in her new position. 'The model not only

helped me to reach a definite decision on whether I should dismiss the colleague, it also showed me a new approach. This, combined with the definition of my own favourite leadership style, was an 'aha!' experience, and I will apply it in other cases in the future, too.' ■



Thomas Benischke is a coach and trainer with an emphasis on executive development, conflict and team building. In cooperation with TWIST Consulting he offers management seminars for foreign delegations at the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. [www.benischke.com](http://www.benischke.com)

## trAIDe – your partner in global business



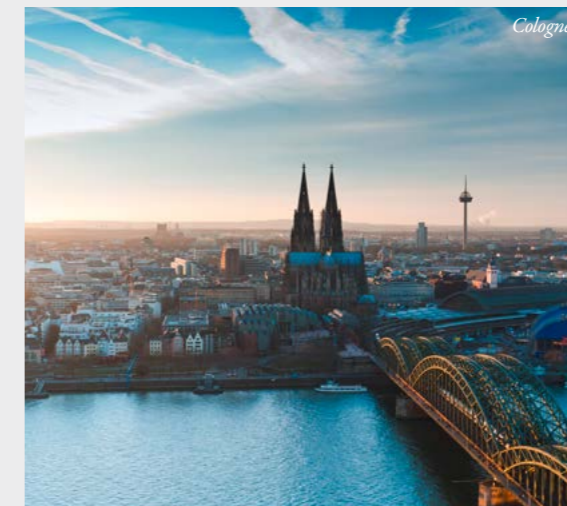
**Cologne.** The trAIDe GmbH consortium based in Cologne is part of the new training centres for the Manager Training Programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. In cooperation with the Rheinisch-Westfälischen Technischen Hochschule Aachen International Academy GmbH, it supports MP participants on behalf of the GIZ. Since 2014, trAIDe has prepared participants from North Africa, Mexico and India for business with Germany.

trAIDe is a partner in international business relations for both export and import companies. Customised matchmaking facilitates the set-up and development of lasting international business relations. Tools developed in-house to cater to the supported companies' needs in an efficient and targeted manner guarantee success here.

After completing the Manager Training Programme, alumni are offered a broad range of complementary services. These include in-depth advice and concretisation of the projects arising from the establishment of individual contacts during the Manager Training Programme. Hurdles preventing successful project implementation often still exist after the programme is complete and must be overcome. Solutions to these initial hurdles facilitate the mutual development of long-term partnerships.

For alumni aiming to purchase products or services in Germany, trAIDe offers concrete business and cooperation projects to find and mediate further potential business partners through intensive partner sourcing. The trAIDe network thus offers the opportunity to not only identify the ideal partners in Germany but also in countless other markets worldwide.

A comprehensive market analysis through to the regional level is indispensable prior to beginning export operations on the German market. This includes competition analyses, the mediation of market volumes, sales opportunities, logistics, and distribution channels as well as the determination of a competitive price based on this. Besides preparation of these com-



prehensive analyses, store checks can additionally be conducted for the consumer goods industry to further review the suitability of products for the German market and gain an overview of common product designs. A marketing strategy can then be developed from the information gained to successfully position products on the German market. ■

**More information:**  
[www.traide.de](http://www.traide.de)

	Leader's Leadership Style	Employee's Development Level
1	<b>Directing:</b> low focus on relationship high focus on tasks	low competence, low commitment
2	<b>Coaching:</b> high focus on relationship high focus on tasks	moderate competence, occasional commitment
3	<b>Supporting:</b> high focus on relationship low focus on tasks	high competence, frequent but not constant commitment
4	<b>Delegating:</b> low focus on relationship low focus on tasks	high competence, high commitment