



Develop Teams and Individuals to Enhance Performance

■ *Scope*

This unit examines the manager's ability to choose, assess, develop, evaluate and maintain a cohesive, high performing team. A lot has been written and talked about 'team building'. A lot of organisations spend huge amounts of money and time in conducting 'team building activities'; however, in reality one sees little of 'self managing' or 'high performing' teams within the UK work arena! Whilst in theory, this is a simple task of choosing the right people to work together to achieve the right goals, in practice there is an awful lot more in the art of bringing a group of people from diverse backgrounds, with diverse talents, and getting them to trust each and work together. This is no mean managerial task!

This unit has six elements:

- C10.1** Identify the development needs of teams and individuals
- C10.2** Plan the development of teams and individuals
- C10.3** Develop teams to improve performance
- C10.4** Support individual learning and development
- C10.5** Assess the development of teams and individuals
- C10.6** Improve the development of teams and individuals

Points to Ponder

In business as in sport, we all want a team greater than the sum of its individual players. Chances are that your dream team is sitting around the office. All you have to do is to fit them around nine defined roles. When the celebrations are over and the trophy safely tucked away in the silverware cabinet, there is one factor we will all agree on regarding the winning football or rugby team. They were not the best players there have ever been. Indeed only a couple of them would have been picked as 'world class'. Several may not even have flourished with another Premier club; however, collectively they were the best sporting team.

This was a team in the right sense of the word; there was something about the way they worked together that added up to a sum greater than the individual parts – a collective spirit, a managerial alchemy that made them such a force. Is there a lesson that can be gleaned from this triumph that can be applied to work life? Could the sporting teams have something to teach those of us who are engaged in law, accountancy, retail, or the government? If the collective works so well for sports, could it pay dividends for us?

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Responsibility for the team rests with its leader. The coach for the winning football or rugby team has an instinctive grasp of what makes a team function. For the millions watching the team play and win, the question lingers: if they can do it, can we? The answer is unequivocally yes.

Tracy Edwards, the yachtswoman who skippered the first women's crew to circumnavigate the globe says, 'we are a pack animal, from earliest times we have used the strength of the group to overcome the weakness of the individual. And that applies as much to business as to sport.' She should know; when she is not sailing around the globe, she is a management consultant. 'There are many parallels between sport and business,' she continues. 'For team leaders it is all about motivating and sustaining the group effort, and about setting goals. A manager has to understand that at times they have to listen and at times they have to lead. Most importantly, they have to remain motivated.'

When it comes to building teams from scratch, sport might not be the best role model for business. Sport sets out clear boundaries of its own; build a football or rugby team, you know that you need people who are quick, lithe, physically strong and fit. Their roles are already pre-determined. How do you set about constructing a team that fits the purpose of your business? Half the time, your team is something that is handed over to you; you have had little to do with picking them!

Dr Meredith Belbin began a research into the dynamics of teams, over twenty years ago at the Henley Management Centre, and developed a formula that works across business disciplines. A lot more work has gone into this research since then, however, he and his team identified eight characteristics of workers (later research brought in a ninth) which when brought together creates perfect team chemistry.

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The idea behind the Belbin method is to build the jobs around people. Define a job only by its core requirements; then, using this minimum specification, look at the person.

The roles are:

- **The plant** – creative, imaginative, unorthodox, good at solving difficult problems, little interest in people, poor at detail, can get bored quickly, needs careful handling to get the best out of them
- **The co-ordinator (chairperson)** – mature, confident, trusting, a capacity for welcoming contributions from team members, not the most creative but good at clarifying goals and promoting decision-making
- **The resource-investigator** – ‘always knows a man who can,’ maintains a range of useful contacts, extrovert, enthusiastic, can persuade others, lacks self-discipline, liable to lose interest once the initial fascination passes
- **The shaper** – dynamic, outgoing, highly strung, likes quick results and willing followers, ready to challenge inertia and complacency, pushes self and ideas, competitive, easily frustrated and impatient
- **The monitor evaluator** – good complement to the plant (or innovator), good judge of ideas and issues, strong critical thinking ability, strategic, can lower morale as shrewd evaluation is difficult to accept, lacks drive and ability to inspire
- **The team worker** – mild and accommodating but indecisive, good at getting the task done, good at sensing people’s feelings and reducing conflict, good listener
- **The implementer (or company worker)** – gets on with the job, strong self-discipline, strong organising ability, reliable, conservative, inflexible, prone to doubt new ideas
- **The completer finisher** – finishes jobs to a high standard, searches out errors and omissions, nags others to get the job done, strong sense of purpose, doesn’t allow carelessness, difficult to live with as tends to get bogged down in detail
- **The specialist** – brought in on a short term basis to provide rare specialist skills, single-minded and narrow in outlook but knows his/her way

It becomes somewhat evident that role-playing and games weekends where one spends hours dealing with team-building exercises are less significant than the workplace itself when it comes to building teams. What you as a manager need to do is to look at your staff and let them evolve into their natural hierarchical positions; you then capture the essence of **synergy**, ‘the whole is more than the sum of its parts.’

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Investigate

1. *Scrutinise the team you are currently managing and identify the roles that best fit each member. You will now see gaps in your team in terms of team roles to constitute a successful team; go on to identify development pathways for each member*

Teams need:

- **Purpose** (what is the team for?)
- **Priorities** (what should the team be spending its energy on?)
- **Roles** (do the team members negotiate and renegotiate roles to achieve the team's goals?)
- **Relationships** (are the members working together effectively so that they understand each other's concerns, roles, pressures, perspectives? Are they supporting each other well?)
- **Promotion** (are they clear about how others outside the team see them and what messages they want to communicate to others?)
- **Procedures** (do they have procedures that are not too bureaucratic to co-ordinate and control what they do, to review progress?)

Organisations tend to be run by small senior management teams rather than large boards or by individuals. This is partly because large teams are not as effective at responsive decision making as smaller ones of around five to seven members and partly because most organisations are faced with a massive amount of complex decision making. There is also the belief that organisations function better when power is decentralised and does not rest in the hands of one person or a small group.

Teams vary in size, purpose, mode of operation and life span, however, in order to identify some of the types of teams you may be a member of, it is worth looking at some definitions. Shaw (1971) defines a team as two or more people who interact with one another so that each person influences and is influenced by each other person. Bush (1986) views a team as any number of people who interact with each other, share a common goal, are psychologically and physically aware of each other and perceive each other as a team.



What makes an effective team? Woodcock (1979 & 1994) suggests that successful teams have:

- **Balanced roles**
- **Clear objectives and agreed goals**
- **Openness and confrontation**
- **Support and trust**
- **Co-operation and conflict**
- **Sound procedures**
- **Appropriate leadership**
- **Regular reviews**
- **Individual development**
- **Sound inter-group relations**
- **Good communications**

Teams develop in identifiable stages. In order to manage the teams, managers must be able to recognise the stages of team development and adopt strategies to facilitate optimum performance. Tuckman & Jenson (1977) describe five stages of team development:

Forming – this stage is characterised by members experiencing uncertainty and anxiety. Typical behaviour at this stage will be politeness to each other and somewhat guarded in what they say and agree to do. Individuals will be assessing each other and the leader. During this stage, the leader needs to be able to define team objectives, individual roles, lines of communication and mode of operation.

Storming – this stage is characterised by conflict, open or hidden. Individuals will challenge each other and the leader; they may start to test their strength. People may simply opt out and refuse to take part in discussions or work with others. The team can feel it is not getting anywhere or degenerate into a rebellious band of people. At this stage the leader must bring out conflicts into the open, establish his/her role clearly by re-defining the roles and goals of the team. If this is done successfully, members will develop trust in each other and start moving forward.

Norming – this stage is characterised by team cohesion and satisfaction as a result of establishing behavioural norms within the group. Clear roles start to emerge and members are more certain about what they are expected to contribute. The team begins to establish procedures; individuals start to test the working of the team and determine their levels of commitment to it. They will begin to talk more openly and learn to listen to the views of others.

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Performing – this stage is concerned with successfully completing the task at hand. Individuals will have established a rapport with others, making allowances for weaknesses and building on individual and group strengths. There will be an open atmosphere where problems can be talked about and resolved without conflict; a supportive framework which gives the individual a sense of belonging. The team is most productive at this stage. The manager now steps back from directing and leading and becomes the supportive coach leaving the team to manage and being there to provide support as required. The team has become 'self-managing'. The manager seeks to provide clear objectives, boundaries and feedback.

Mourning – denotes the break up of a successful team; members mourn the loss of the support and team identity they had valued. However, it should be a time to remember what went on in the team and what made it so successful – a period of evaluation.

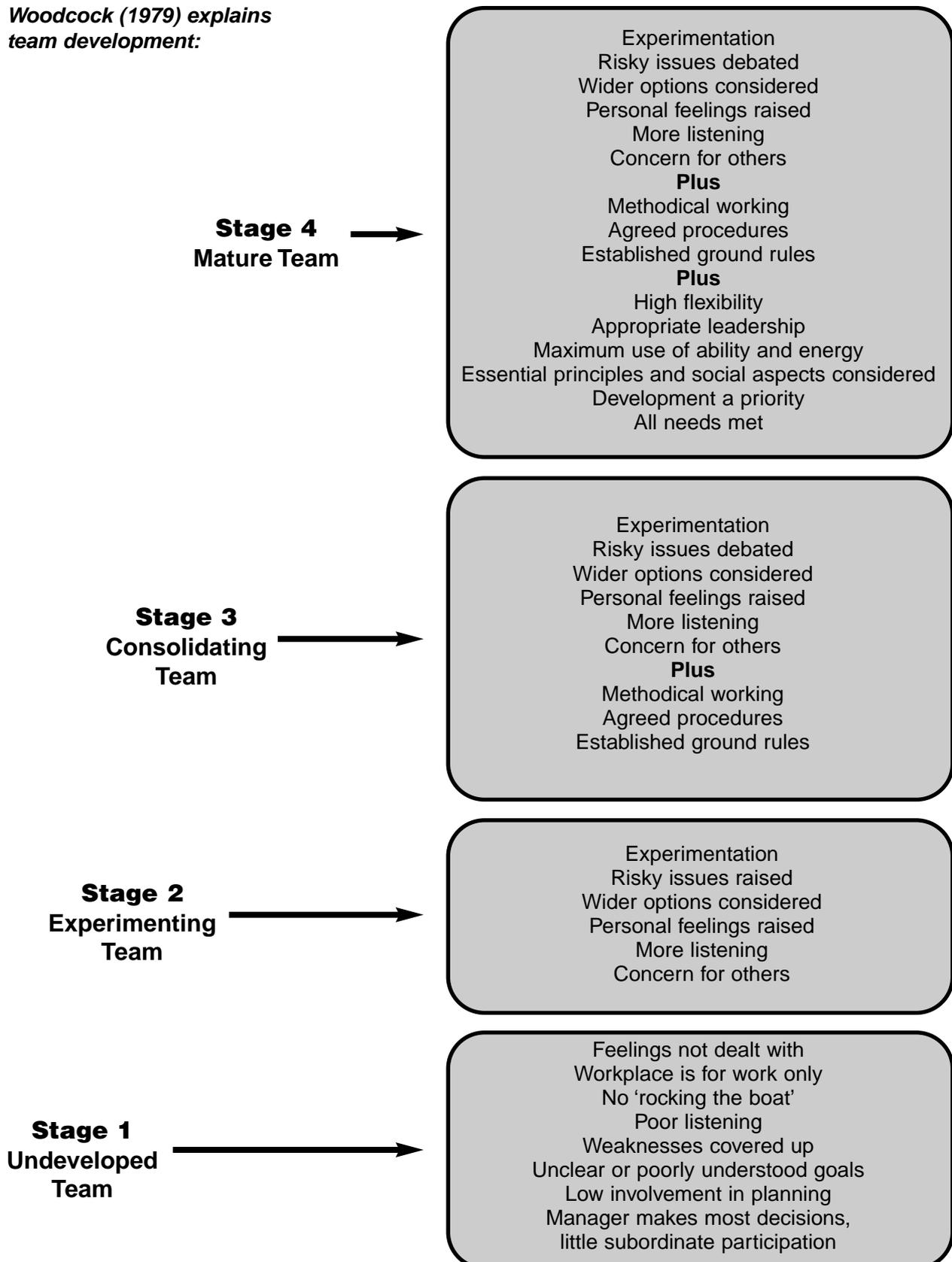
Investigate

- 2. Critically evaluate the team you are managing now. At which stage of team development do you reckon it is at the moment? Why? What are you currently doing to develop the team and each individual within it?*

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Woodcock (1979) explains team development:



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The manager's skills as a leader will be put to the maximum test during the process of building and developing a team; it is mainly the lack of those skills which is the root cause of teams never really reaching their top performance stage. Leadership is an important part of the management function, but organisations which allow decision making to be devolved to teams will, over a period of time, provide opportunities for leadership to be provided by many different individuals with a diversity of skills and expertise.

The **Trait** theories of leadership suggested that individuals possessed traits of character which marked them as good leaders:

- **Intelligence**
- **Initiative**
- **Self-assurance**
- **The 'helicopter trait' (the ability to rise above a particular situation and see it in its broader context and then to descend to attend to detail or empower others to do so through effective delegation)**

Core leadership traits described in early studies are no longer taken seriously by management theorists, mainly because the characteristics found in good leaders vary from individual to individual. Hunt (1992) came to the conclusion that effective leadership in a management context tended to be:

- **High achievers**
- **People with high energy levels**
- **Goal-directed**
- **Politically active**
- **Loner (content with and confident in their own company)**
- **Field-dependent (psychologically capable of differentiating the important from the unimportant, the central from the peripheral)**

Hunt emphasised that the above qualities are not essential characteristics of good managers but simply qualities that tend to be found in effective managers.

The most important indicators of potential in managers are:

- **An ability to work with a wide variety of people**
- **An early overall responsibility for important tasks**
- **Experience of leading people early in career**
- **A wide experience of several functions before mid-career**



Trait theories have severe limitations, in that they represent only one kind of appreciation of what makes a good manager, and as such contributes only to one part of the jigsaw of leadership.

To be an effective leader you need to be able to:

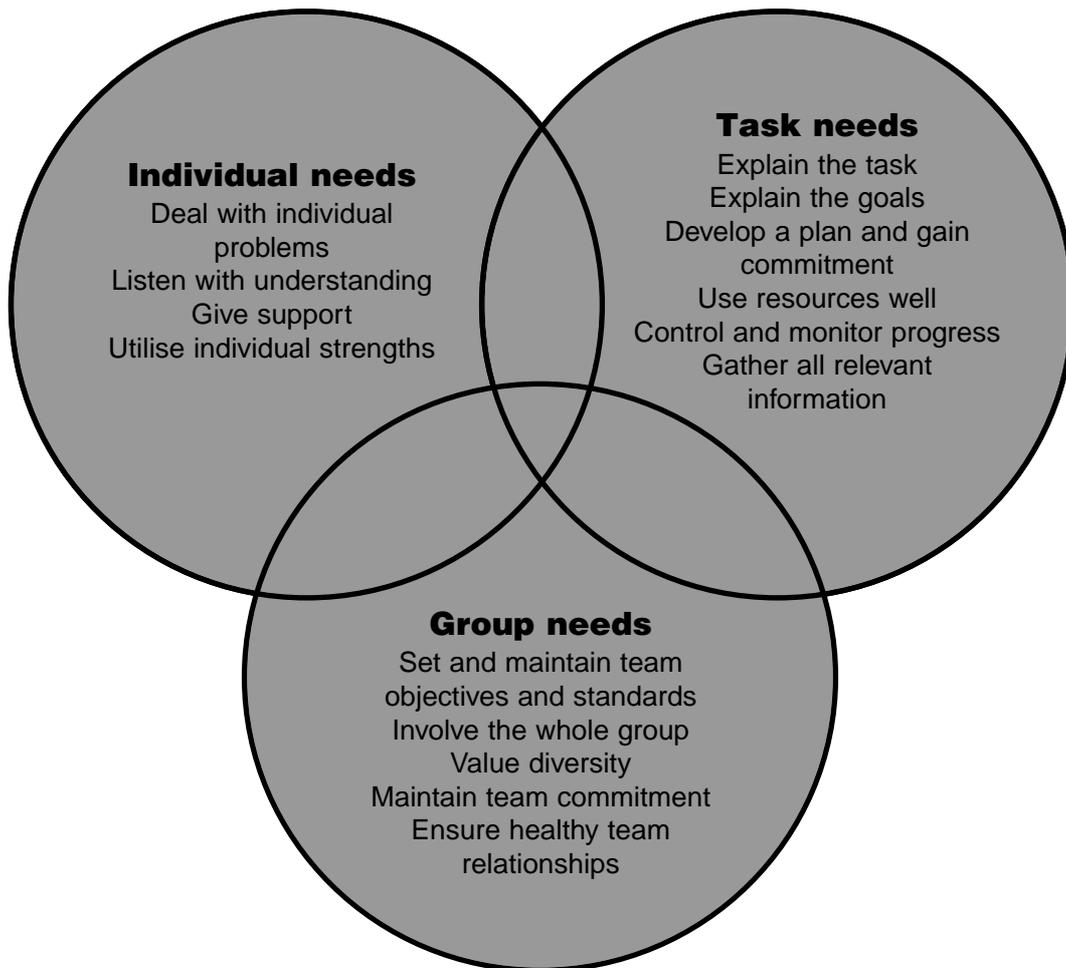
- **Identify and understand the power sources which will support that leadership**
- **Develop the practical skills which underpin effective leadership**
- **Identify and apply an appropriate style to each individual and situation**
- **Continually review and adjust your performance in the light of experience**

Leadership characteristics include:

- **A clear sense of vision and purpose**
- **Staying focused**
- **Communicating effectively**
- **Making the best decisions you can and observing and learning from the results**
- **Identifying key stakeholders and working with them**
- **Being prepared to take risks**
- **Empowering employees (delegation without a framework for review is abdication, you delegate responsibility but not accountability)**

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John Adair's Action Centred Leadership is already mentioned in another unit, but as you will recall, he asserts that a leader has to satisfy three needs – achieving the task, and seeing to group maintenance needs and individual needs.



1. **Achieving** the task involves defining objectives, aims, the boundaries of the task and time limits. In terms of teams you are likely to be leading at present or in the future tasks also involve allocating jobs, setting standards, controlling the work, decision-making, controlling the data, communicating ideas, inviting ideas and evaluating them, measuring performance against set standards and negotiating and resolving conflicts.
2. **Developing each individual** means ensuring that he/she is fully aware of the goals and the standards of performance required. In setting individual objectives, a good leader will follow the **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound) principle. Bear in mind that objectives set with employee input and involvement are likely to attract their commitment and desire to succeed than those imposed on them without their participation. A robust performance appraisal system will be the best way to achieve consistency, continuity and fairness. This will also provide the basis for identifying individual development needs and the appropriate pathway to organise this development. Remember individuals learn differently from one another. You need to ensure that when objectives are set, the indicators for measuring success or failure are also established and understood by the team members.



3. **Maintaining the team** requires the leader to ensure that the team is held together through good communication, support, high spirit and morale. An important characteristic here is **task interdependence**, the degree to which the work performed by one member influences the work of others. As this interdependence increases, team members need to interact more frequently and intensely with each other. **Social loafing** is the tendency of individuals to put forth less effort when they work in teams than when they work alone, the leader needs to watch out for this and take steps to reduce this tendency by:

- **Making individual contribution to the team identifiable**
- **Emphasising the valuable contribution of individual members**
- **Keeping team size at the appropriate level**

The above three core responsibilities overlap, but must be taken seriously by the leader even when individual members or indeed the whole team is delegated to take on part of the responsibilities.

Investigate

3. *Following on from the previous exercise, focus on one of your team members and write a reflective report on his/her suitability within your team, the individual's dominant team role, your assessment of him/her; the way you have set objectives for him/her and identified development needs and the action plan you have agreed together to achieve it. If you haven't done any of this, explain how you will go about it, in the light of what you have learned in this unit.*

The Leadership Styles Continuum (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1958)

Boss Centred Leadership

Manager makes a decision and announces it

Manager 'sells' decision

Manager presents ideas and invites questions

Manager presents tentative decision subject to change

Manager presents the problem, gets suggestions and makes decision

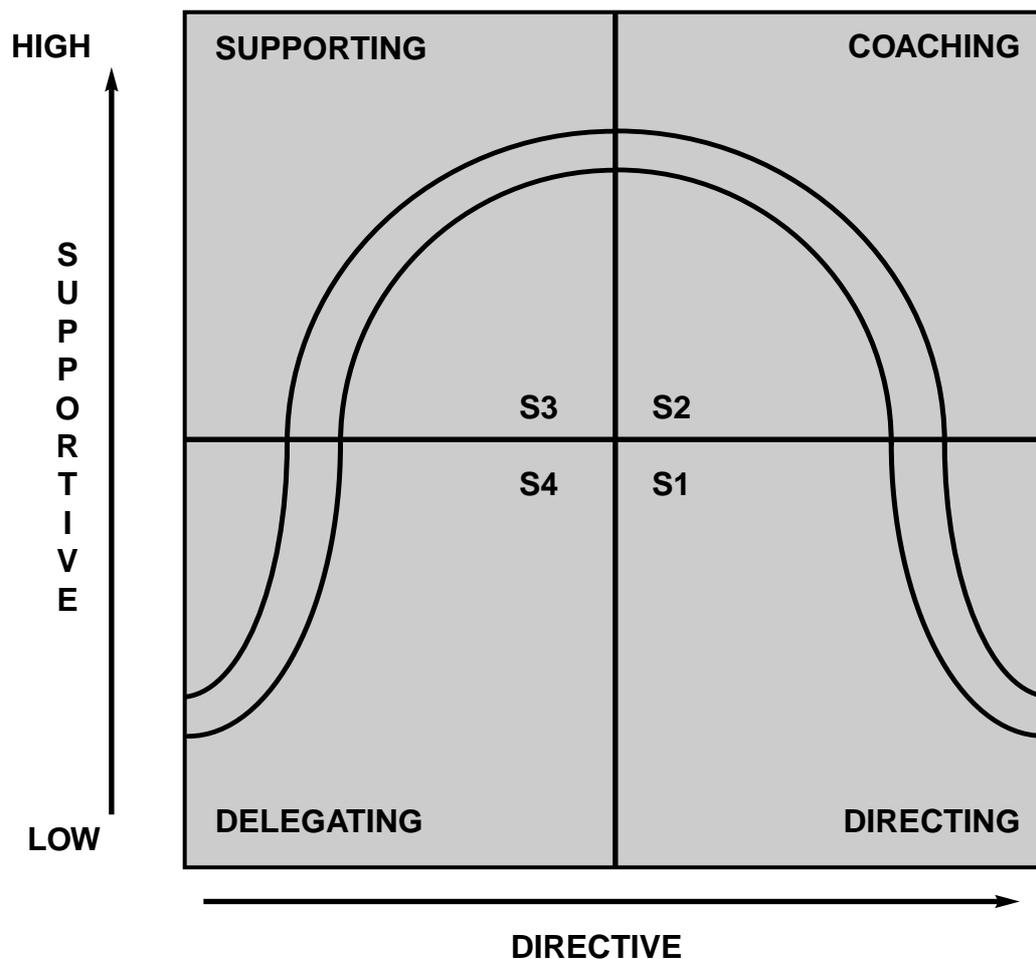
Manager defines the limits of the problem and asks the group to make a decision

Manager permits subordinates to function within limits defined by superior

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■ *Subordinate Centred Leadership*

Situational Leadership (Hershey and Blanchard, 1997)



S1 Directing – high directive, low supportive behaviour from the leader provides specific instructions, roles and goals and closely supervises task accomplishment. If the team members are at the initial stages of development and learning, this style is appropriate.

S2 Coaching – high directive, high supportive behaviour. Leader explains decisions, solicits suggestions from team members and supports efforts towards task accomplishment. As team members begin to learn and grasp tasks, leader allows them more freedom.

S3 Supporting – high supportive, low directive behaviour. Leader makes decisions together with team and supports efforts towards task accomplishments. Team members have considerably progressed with personal development.

S4 Delegating – low supportive, low directive behaviour. Leader turns over decisions and responsibility for implementation to team members who have by now reached their peak performance.

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The key to situational leadership is the ability to assess the maturity level of the follower and to model behaviour appropriately. Leadership behaviour should be adjusted through the four styles as team members mature. Directive behaviour is appropriate for undeveloped members if they are to develop and mature. An increase in maturity should be reinforced by coaching behaviour. With mature members the leader allows more autonomy; with those who have reached a very high level of maturity, the leader is confident enough to give them independence.

Investigate

- 4. Taking your activity in exercise three further, identify what particular leadership you provide to the individual concerned. Explain your rationale, and what measures you have put in place for the further development of that person.***

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■ *Guidance for Gathering Evidence for this Unit*

All elements call for a personal narrative from you explaining how you choose, assess, develop, evaluate and maintain a cohesive high performing team. You should also clearly indicate where you have provided supplementary work evidence. Note - remember units C13 and C5 are closely linked with this unit and as such, evidence gathered for these might be cross referenced against this unit.

Possible Sources of Supporting Evidence

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<i>Possible Source of Evidence</i>	<i>Used</i>	<i>Location in Workplace/Portfolio</i>
Documentation showing you assessing team members against performance standards		
Setting objectives in discussions with them (appraisal documents)		
Identifying development needs		
Organising training/development events		
Monitoring progress and giving feedback		
Memos requesting resources for training, organising training		
Minutes of meetings to discuss team development		
Testimony from others indicating your commitment to developing others; and memos or documents where you have delegated work to team members		
You will also need evidence to show that you are fair and consistent in providing opportunities to team members, value diversity and confidentiality as well as evidence showing that you discuss team development with your own manager		
Candidate's Signature		
Assessor's Signature		
Comments:		

