

ONE ON ONE OD COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

BY PAUL HERSEY AND
JOSEPH W. KEILTY

In response to requests from trainers and managers for assistance aimed at the improvement of communication between leaders and followers, we have developed a system known as Interaction Influence Analysis. Our research revealed that scholars such as Amidon and Flanders had developed and successfully tested systems for verbal and non-verbal interaction analysis designed to assist teachers with a means of observing and improving teaching. Research results tended to show teachers trained to recognize interactive communication patterns were more effective in communicating with their students. These systems, though successful, were not widely used. Our research concluded that the systems were not used more widely for three reasons: (1) An individual had to receive extended training (one to two semesters at the university level) in order to use the systems, (2) Most systems used a large number of categories, and (3) The systems tended to be

diagnostic rather than prescriptive.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s a British research team led by Neil Rackham developed an interaction training program. Published by Wellens Publishing, London, 1971, this program is entitled *Developing Interactive Skills*. It was designed to be used by trainers to help individuals improve their verbal and non-verbal interactions. Rackham's work is widely accepted and employed by BOAC and other corporations. The program is reported to have had a positive and lasting effect where used. Like the efforts of their American counterparts, however, the program requires long-term training and utilizes a large number of categories (44).

After reviewing these findings, efforts were made to design a system which could increase communication effectiveness, be mastered in a short period of time, and utilize relatively few verbal and non-verbal categories. The result is Interaction Influence Analysis.

A major feature of Interaction Influence Analysis is that it is

based on the Situational Leadership Model. This relationship extends the system to make it a practical prescriptive tool as well as a diagnostic procedure. Through application users are provided a framework within which they can focus on specific behavioral elements which make up leadership events. Users receive feedback as to which behaviors are being used effectively and ineffectively and are provided with a means for remediation. With the knowledge that situational leadership really works, this relationship is particularly significant.

According to situational leadership, there is no one "best" way to go about influencing people. Which leadership style a person should use with individuals or groups depends on the maturity level of the people the leader is attempting to influence. The "prescriptive curve" in Figure 1 shows the appropriate style directly above the corresponding level of maturity.

Each of the four styles — telling, selling, participating and delegating — in the "prescriptive curve" is a combination of task behavior

and relationship behavior. *Task behavior* is the extent to which a leader provides direction for people: telling them what to do, when to do it, where to do it, and how to do it. It means setting goals for them and defining their roles.

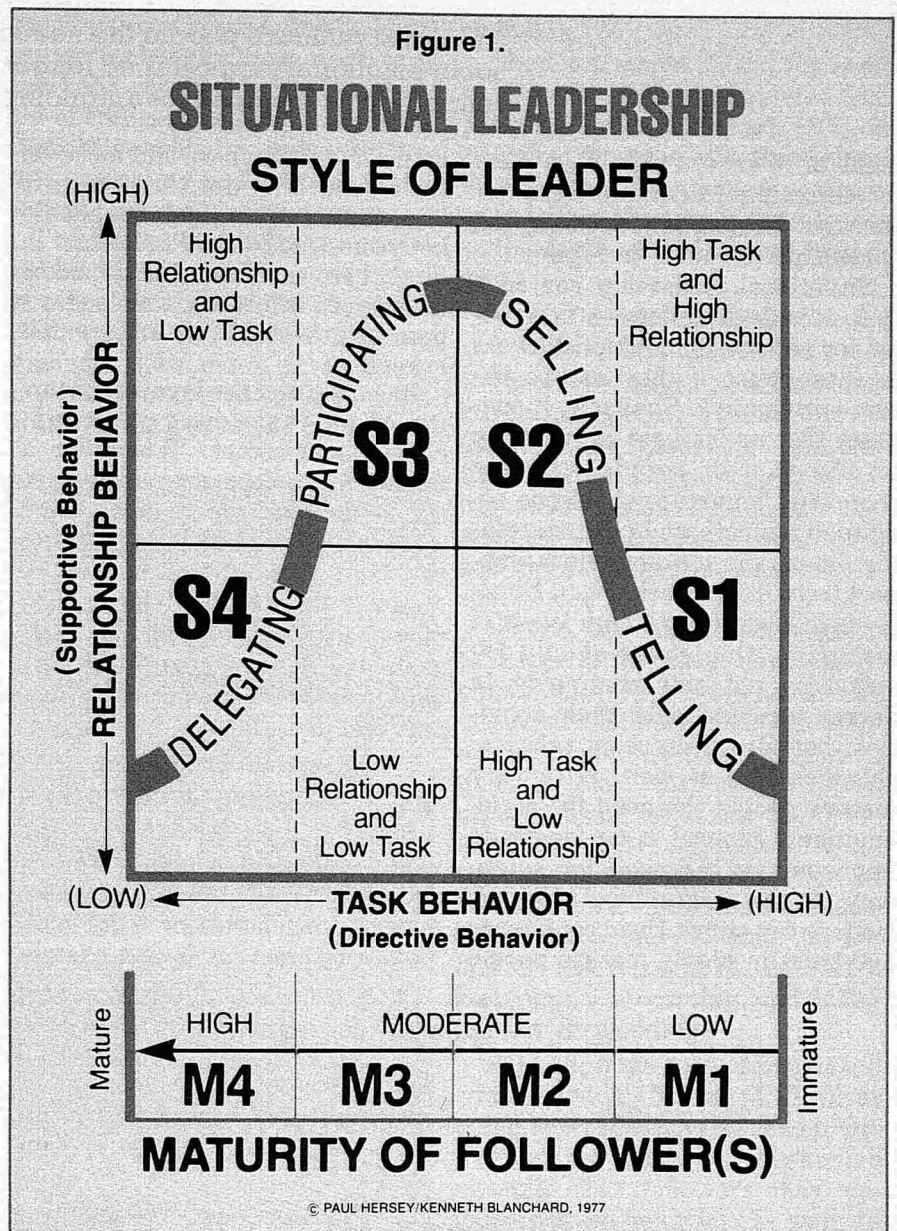
Relationship behavior is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication, which includes active listening and providing supportive and facilitating behaviors.

The maturity of followers is a question of degree. As can be seen in Figure 1, some benchmarks of maturity are provided for determining appropriate leadership style by dividing the maturity continuum below the leadership model into four levels: low (M1), low to moderate (M2), moderate to high (M3), and high (M4).

The appropriate leadership style for each of the four maturity levels includes the right combination of task behavior (direction) and relationship behavior (support).

- *Telling is for low maturity.* People who are both unable and unwilling to take responsibility to do something need clear, specific directions and supervision. This style is called "telling" because it is characterized by the leader defining roles and telling people what, how, when and where to do various tasks. It emphasizes directive behavior. Too much supportive behavior with people at this maturity level may be seen as permissive, easy, and, most importantly, as rewarding of poor performance. Telling involves high-task behavior and low-relationship behavior.

- *Selling is for low to moderate maturity.* People who are unable but willing to take responsibility need directive behavior because of their lack of ability, but also supportive behavior to reinforce their willingness and enthusiasm. This style is called "selling" because most of the direction is still provided by the leader. Yet through two-way communication and explanation of why certain things need to be done, the leader tries to get the followers psychologically to "buy into" desired behaviors. This style involves high-



task behavior and high-relationship behavior.

- *Participating is for moderate to high maturity.* Since the follower at this maturity level has the ability to do what the leader wants, but lacks self-confidence or enthusiasm, the leader needs to open the way for two-way communication and active listening to support the follower's efforts to use the ability that the leader already has. This style is called "participating" because the leader and follower share in decision making, with the main role of the leader being facilitating and communicating. This style involves high-relationship behavior and low-task behavior.

- *Delegating is for high maturity.* Since people at this maturity

level have both ability and motivation, little direction or support is needed from the leader. Followers are now permitted to "run the show" and decide on the how, when and where. At the same time, they are psychologically mature and therefore do not need above-average amounts of two-way communication or supportive behavior. This style involves low-relationship behavior and low-task behavior.

The key to using situational leadership is to assess the maturity level of the follower and to behave as the model prescribes. Implicit in situational leadership is the idea that a leader should attempt to help followers grow in maturity as far as they are able and willing to go. This develop-

"With very mature people the need for socio-emotional support is no longer as important as the need for autonomy."

ment of followers should be done by adjusting leadership behavior through the four styles along the "prescriptive curve" in Figure 1.

Situational leadership contends that strong direction — task behavior — with immature followers is appropriate if they are to become productive. Similarly, it suggests that an increase in maturity on the part of people who are somewhat immature should be rewarded by increased positive reinforcement and socio-emotional support (relationship behavior). Finally, as followers reach high levels of maturity, the leader should respond by not only continuing to decrease control over their activities, but also decreasing relationship behavior as well. With very mature people the need for socio-emotional support is no longer as important as the need for autonomy. At this stage, one of the ways leaders can prove their confidence and trust in highly mature people

is to leave them more and more on their own. It is not that there is less mutual trust and friendship between leader and follower; in fact, there is more, but it takes less direct effort on the leader's part to prove this to mature followers.

Regardless of the level of maturity of an individual or group, change may occur. Whenever a follower's performance begins to slip — for whatever reason — and motivation or ability decreases, the leader should reassess the maturity level of this follower and move backward through the "prescriptive curve," providing any appropriate socio-emotional support and direction.

Situational Leadership and the Communication Process

Situational leadership can provide the basis for understanding and improving attempts to communicate when two or more individuals interact. It is our conten-

tion that attempts to influence others by using a specific style based on their maturity are more successful when the leader employs an interactive communication behavior commensurate with the desired style. Interaction influence analysis gives users a systematic means to reach this end.

To use the system an individual must first have a knowledge of situational leadership. The second step is to learn nine categories which designate verbal and non-verbal behavior used by sender or receiver during an interaction. These nine categories are known as behavioral elements. They are:

Directing — behavior which includes telling what, where, when, how and on some occasions who is to perform certain activities. . . .

Questioning (2. Closed) — elicits behavior where the individual usually responds quickly, with one or very few words — (2'. Open) — stimulates behavior where the individual often responds more slowly needing time to think through ideas on content, feelings, and values.

Supporting — communication behavior which is intended to give praise or encouragement and to express care or concern.

Attentive Listening — behaviors which show the other person neither support nor rejection but that you are interested in their ideas and would like them to continue.

Accepting — behaviors which convey agreement with ideas or feelings.

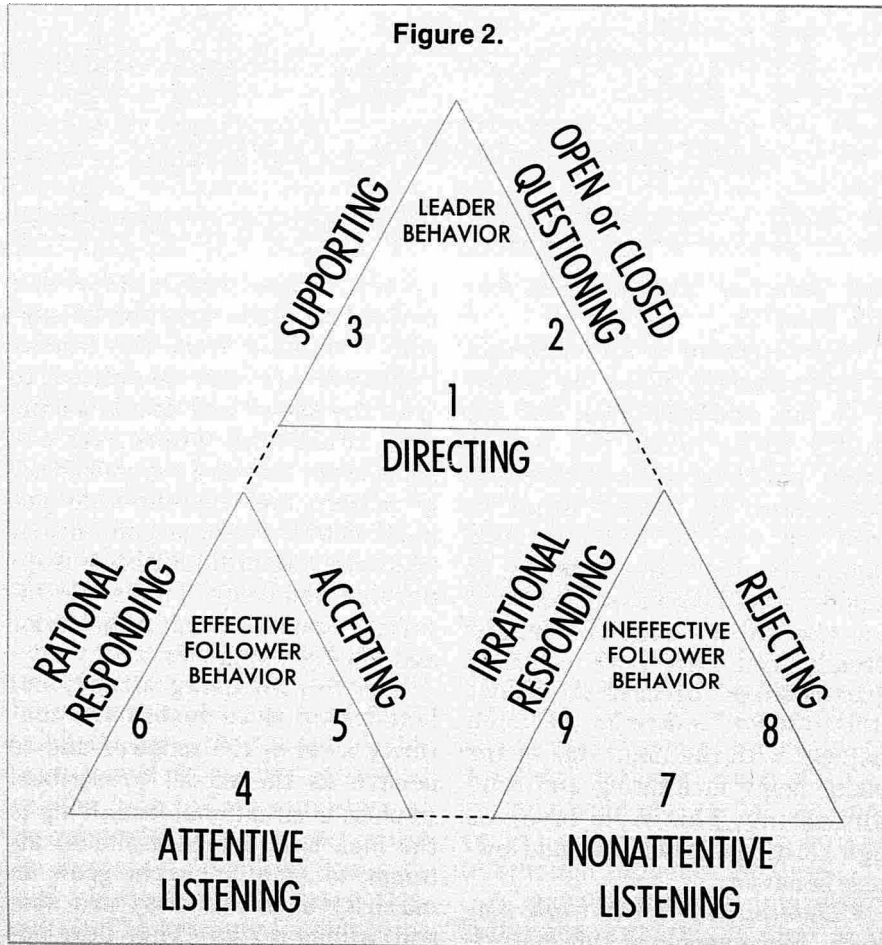
Rationally Responding — behaviors which are pertinent to the transaction, on the topic, understandable, and clearly stated.

Non-Attentive Listening — behaviors which convey lack of interest or concern for the topic or transaction.

Rejecting — behaviors which convey criticism or the rejection of ideas or feelings.

Irrationally Responding — behaviors which are not pertinent to the transaction, sometimes off the

Figure 2.



topic, lack clarity, or not understandable.

Once the behavioral elements are learned dialogue between individuals can be recorded allowing for diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses which exist in communication attempts. Pairs of behavioral elements are recorded simultaneously for leader and follower as communication takes place. The resulting pairs are known as *Transaction Sets*. After recording the initial set subse-

quent sets are recorded only when one or both individuals shift to a new behavioral element. The number of transaction sets in any communication will vary in accordance with the nature and purpose of the dialogue.

The interaction influence model pictured in Figure 2 is constructed from the nine behavioral elements. The model is represented by three triangles. The sides of each triangle are numbered to correspond to the definitions of the behavioral

elements.

The top triangle (1, 2, 3) is used to describe leader behaviors. The bottom triangle on the left (4, 5, 6) is used to describe *effective* follower behaviors. The bottom triangle on the right (7, 8, 9) is used to describe ineffective follower behaviors.

Correlation With Situational Leadership

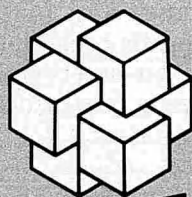
The three leader behaviors, (1) Directing (giving guidance), (2) Questioning (gathering information), and (3) Supporting (providing socio-emotional support) correspond to quadrants one, two, and three of the situational leadership model.

Where, one might ask, is quadrant four of the situational leadership model represented in the interaction influence analysis model? In answering this question it must be clear that when appropriately using quadrant four, the leader delegates responsibility to the follower for that function or activity. As a consequence, leader behavioral elements shift to the bottom left triangle (4. Attentive Listening, 5. Accepting, and 6. Rationally Responding).

Although we have designated triangles (1, 2, 3) and (4, 5, 6) as being representative of leader behavior, we wish to emphasize strongly that followers may engage in these behaviors as well. In a similar manner, either leader or follower may engage in behaviors depicted in triangle (7, 8, 9). The appropriateness of the use of any behavioral element is based on:

1. The maturity of the follower,
2. The style employed by the leader, and
3. The specific objectives for a leadership event.

Through proper use of the system, interactions can be easily analyzed allowing not only diagnosis of the interaction, but a prescription for remediation based on the situational leadership model. Training needs in the vital areas of communication and leadership are treated in a more holistic manner by using this approach. Events can be viewed in sets of behavioral components while providing opportunities for specific skill devel-



select the Best

a program in interviewing & selection by the wmi corporation

In many companies, managers from different departments and levels of responsibility participate in the interviewing and selection of people. After the interview, too often managers really can't answer these most important questions:

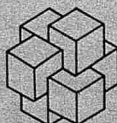
- Can the applicant do the job (ability)?
- Will the applicant do the job (motivation)?
- Is this the job best suited for the applicant?
- Was the interview conducted in accordance with EEO Guidelines?

SELECT THE BEST can help solve these and other interviewing problems. This is an in-house program to teach your managers the skills of effective, legal interviewing and selection.

We would like to discuss how SELECT THE BEST could meet your needs. For information call

DALE JENKINS or KIM NELSON (206) 455-2323

WMI CORPORATION



1621 114th Ave. S.E.
Bellevue, WA 98004

Circle No. 209 on Reader Service Card

opment.

A two-step approach is used to analyze data which an individual has recorded.

First — Study of the transaction sets looking for recurring patterns of leader and/or follower behavior. An example of such recurring patterns could be the category which is paired with or follows each use of the behavioral element, directing.

Second — A nine by nine matrix constructed from the recorded transaction sets can be completed as a means of analyzing an interaction.

By using the matrix totals from each of the leader and follower categories are used to calculate ratios which compare the extent to which individuals engage in specific behaviors. Examples of such ratios are:

1. Leader directive to supportive.
2. Follower accepting to rejecting

3. Leader open to closed questioning

4. Follower rational to irrational responding

Although it may be interesting to examine a number of ratios, we suggest that the most meaningful way to use ratios or totals is on the basis of specific objectives for the event being examined. One would expect very different data to emerge when dealing with the low-level maturity individual than with the high-level maturity individual. Proper use of interaction influence analysis can assist managers in making more appropriate style maturity matches by supplying a means to observe and change behavior.

Application of the Model to Training

A successful method to learn, apply, and reinforce interaction influence analysis is the micro-coaching lab. As few as two persons can conduct a lab, although four is the ideal number. Required are a knowledge of interaction influence analysis categories and a means of observing the transaction. A trained observer can serve this function but a videotape replay system is far more effective.

When participants are familiar with interaction influence analysis behavioral elements, each is assigned task cards which explain situations and roles to be played. The roles are leader, follower, cameraman and observer. The task cards give specific directions for leader and follower to play while being taped. Each session is five minutes in length. Roles are constructed so as to emphasize various styles and maturity levels in a given situation. Leader and follower behavioral elements are specified. Participants use their own creativity in playing their roles. Immediate feedback is given in terms of the situational leadership model and interaction influence analysis behavioral elements. This is accomplished through the use of videotaped replay. During the replay the work group views, records and discusses the session before making the next tape. In subsequent sessions roles change

so that each individual has a chance to give and receive feedback.

Pilot studies have demonstrated that the use of interaction influence analysis and situational leadership blend to create a powerful learning dynamic for managers. Gains which we wish to emphasize are those which help participants to learn how to increase their style range in task and relationship dimensions. Interaction influence analysis helps to identify — diagnose — specific behaviors and goes on to provide strategies to build greater range and adaptability. This diagnostic-prescriptive technique can be mastered in very short training programs and applied immediately.

REFERENCES

- Amidon, Edmund J. and Evan Powell. "Interaction Analysis as a Feedback System in Teacher Preparation." *Nature of Teaching*. ed. Lois N. Nelson, Waltham, Mass: Blaisdell, 1969.
- Flanders, Ned A. "Intent, Action and Feedback: A Preparation for Teaching." *The Journal of Teacher Education*. Vol. 14 (September, 1963).
- Gumpert, Raymond A. and Ronald K. Hambleton. "Situational Leadership: How Xerox Managers Fine-Tune Managerial Styles to Employee Maturity and Task Needs." *Management Review*. ed. American Management Associations. Vol. 68, Number 12 (December, 1979).
- Hersey, Paul and Kenneth Blanchard. *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*. Third Edition. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977.
- Knapp, Mark L. *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction*. Second Edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978.
- Rackham, Neil, Peter Honey, and Michael Colbert, eds. *Developing Interactive Skills*. Great Britain: Wellens Publishing, 1971.

Paul Hersey is founder and director of the Center for Leadership Studies, Escondido, Calif., and professor of Organizational Behavior and Management at California American University, the Graduate School of Applied Behavioral Science.

Joseph W. Keilty is president of California American University, Escondido, Calif., and partner in the Center for Leadership Studies, Escondido, Calif.

PICK YOUR FLICK QUICK

Olympic's FILM FINDER

Lists 1,510 Audiovisual Training Programs by title and groups them under 676 subject headings

- Saves hours of searching
- Instant information at your fingertips
- Includes suppliers' names, addresses, and phone numbers
- Up-to-date, comprehensive, and useful!
- **Just \$24.00** (quantity discounts available)

Order from
Olympic Media Information
71 West 23 Street,
New York, NY 10010
(212) 675-4500

Circle No. 191 on Reader Service Card