THE ESSENCE OF
SLII®

Introduction

Many organizations struggle to find solutions that increase productivity and results, while boosting employee engagement and retention. SLII® is a proven, time-tested leadership model that has been used to train more than 5 million managers in the world's most respected organizations. It teaches managers how to give their people what they need, when they need it, which accelerates their development—creating a more productive, passionate workplace.

You will find an overview of how SLII works below. To learn more about its impact, or how SLII might help your organization, go to kenblanchard.com.

Situational Leadership® was developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard. It was first published by those authors as "Life Cycle Theory of Leadership" in Training and Development Journal, May 1969. In 1985, Ken Blanchard and the Founding Associates of The Ken Blanchard Companies—Marjorie Blanchard, Don Carew, Eunice Parisi-Carew, Fred Finch, Laurence Hawkins, Drea Zigarmi, and Patricia Zigarmi—revised the original theory and model and called it SLII®. The leadership model used and presented in this product is SLII®.

Situational Leadership® is a registered trademark of Leadership Studies, Inc., dba The Center for Leadership Studies.
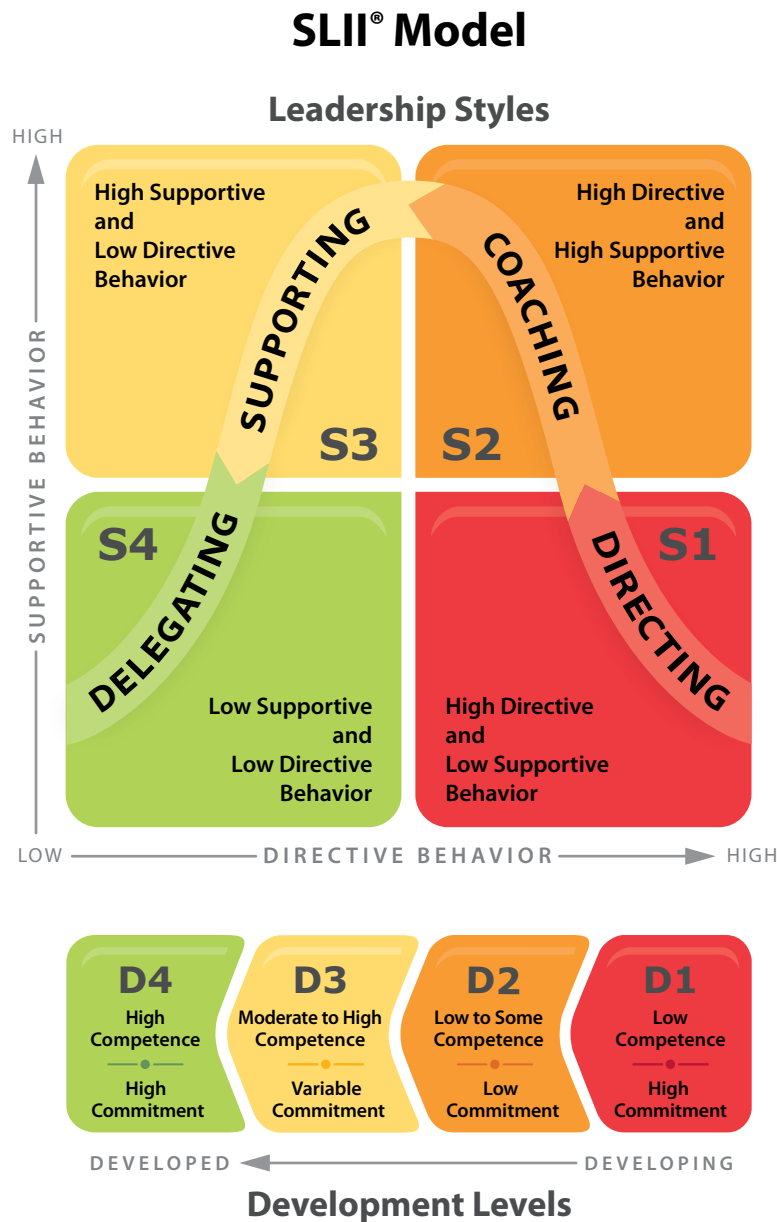SLII® is a registered trademark of The Ken Blanchard Companies.

The Importance of Taking a Situational Approach to Management

Done well, performance management is a partnership.

But research indicates there are significant gaps between what employees expect from their leaders and what they actually experience at work.

Left unaddressed, these gaps represent a drain on overall organizational vitality through lowered employee intentions to stay, endorse, and apply discretionary effort as needed.

SLII® Model

Leadership Styles

HIGH

SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIOR

High Supportive and Low Directive Behavior

SUPPORTING

S3

High Directive and High Supportive Behavior

COACHING

S2

DELEGATING

S4

Low Supportive and Low Directive Behavior

DIRECTING

S1

High Directive and Low Supportive Behavior

LOW ——————— **DIRECTIVE BEHAVIOR** ——————→ HIGH

D4
High Competence

High Commitment

D3
Moderate to High Competence

Variable Commitment

D2
Low to Some Competence

Low Commitment

D1
Low Competence

High Commitment

DEVELOPED ←——————————————— DEVELOPING

Development Levels

SLII is a model and process that helps managers be more purposeful and intentional in their conversations with people.

This creates a culture where people are clear and aligned on objectives so they can achieve organizational goals faster.

Leaders learn how to give people the right amount of direction and support for each task or goal they face at the exact time they need it.

With SLII, managers and direct reports learn how to speak a common language that builds trust and a sense of partnership.

Leaders also learn how to adjust their style to fit the situation. Too much direction is just as bad as too little direction.

- Providing too much direction on tasks where a person is already competent feels like micromanagement.

- Providing too little direction when questions or problems come up feels like abandonment or being set up to fail.

We know from asking hundreds of thousands of people that the best leaders are situational leaders—they flexibly match each person's needs for direction and support with the right leadership style for that person, in that moment, on a specific goal or task.
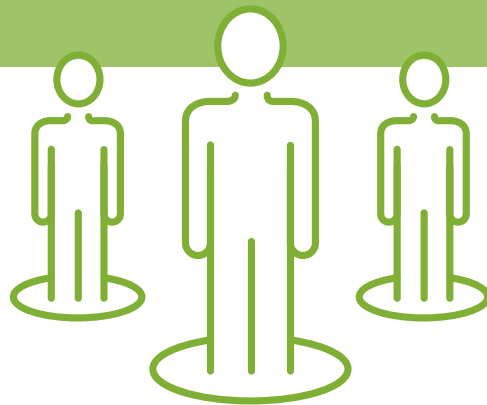
SLII®

SLII is a model for developing individuals to their highest level of performance on a specific goal or task. SLII is based on the relationship between an individual's development level (competence and commitment) on a specific goal or task and the leadership style (direction and support) the leader provides. Effective leadership lies in matching the appropriate leadership style to the individual's development level. This "match," using the common language of SLII, contributes to higher trust, positive intentions, and significant results.

SLII is not something you do to people; it is something you do with people.

Benefits to Partnering with SLII

When leaders partner with their team members to use SLII, the model will help them to

1. Focus on what's most important—SMART goals

2. Diagnose competence and commitment

3. Give or get the leadership style needed to increase competence and commitment

To be an effective leader you have to master the three skills. If there is effective partnering, the outcomes of SLII are achieved.

1 Goal Setting
Aligning on what needs to be done, when

2 Diagnosing
Collaboratively assessing an individual's competence and commitment on a specific goal or task

3 Matching
Using a variety of leadership styles, comfortably, to provide individuals with what they need

Alignment

It's about giving people the exact leadership style they need—
when they need it.

1 Setting SMART Goals

The first step in creating clarity and alignment is setting SMART goals. It's impossible to assess someone's competence and commitment unless you know exactly what he or she is expected to do. SMART goals are set during an Alignment Conversation.

SMART goals answer these questions:

S = Specific
- What exactly is the goal or task?
- What does a good job look like?
- When does the goal or task need to be accomplished?

M = Motivating
- Is the goal or task meaningful for the individual?
- Will working on this goal build competence and commitment?
- Will working on this goal add or drain energy?

A = Attainable
- Is the goal realistic, reasonable, and achievable?
- Is the goal within the individual's control?

R = Relevant
- Is the goal or task meaningful work for the organization?
- Is the goal or task aligned with organization and work team goals?
- Is the goal or task a high priority in relation to other goals?
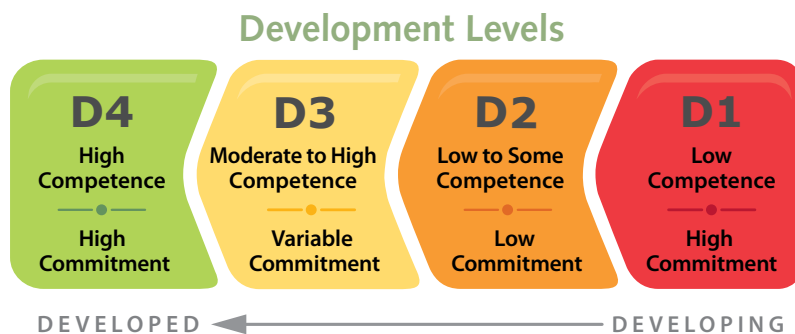
T = Trackable
- How will progress and results be measured and tracked?

SMART goals motivate. They get leaders and the people they lead on the same page.

> **Every good performance starts with clear goals.**

2 Diagnosing Development Level

Once SMART goals are set, it's possible to diagnose development level. Development level is a combination of two factors: **Competence**—the individual's demonstrated task-specific and transferable knowledge and skills on a goal or task; and **Commitment**—the individual's motivation and confidence on a goal or task. Development level is goal or task specific. It is not an overall rating of an individual's skills or attitude. There are four development levels.
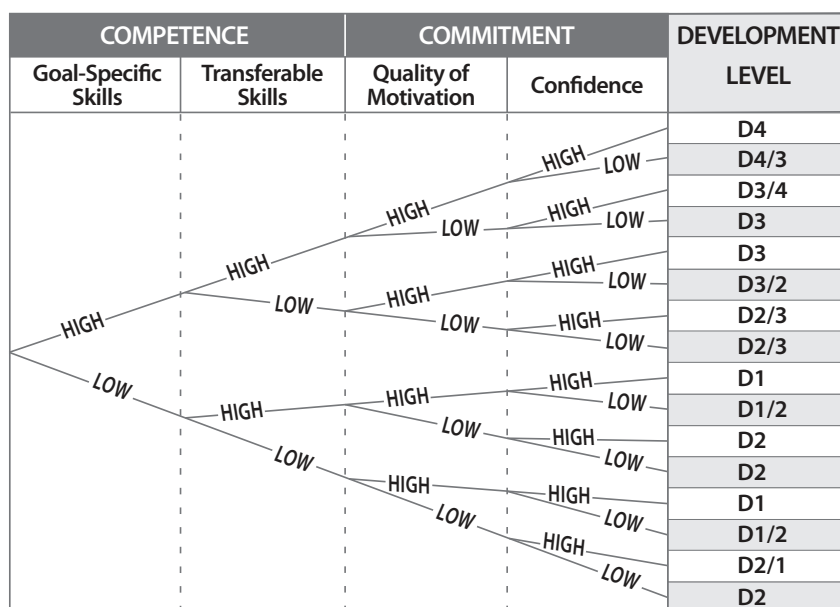
Development Levels

D4 High Competence High Commitment	**D3** Moderate to High Competence Variable Commitment	**D2** Low to Some Competence Low Commitment	**D1** Low Competence High Commitment

DEVELOPED ←——————————— DEVELOPING

Development Level Descriptors

D4 Self-Reliant Achiever	**D3** Capable, but Cautious, Contributor	**D2** Disillusioned Learner	**D1** Enthusiastic Beginner
Competence	**Competence**	**Competence**	**Competence**
☐ Accomplished ☐ Consistently competent ☐ Recognized by others as an expert	☐ Demonstrated competence; experienced ☐ Makes productive contributions ☐ Generally skillful and adept	☐ Has some knowledge and skills; learning; not competent yet ☐ Doesn't know how to move forward ☐ Inconsistent performance and progress	☐ New to the goal or task ☐ Inexperienced ☐ Don't know what they don't know
Commitment	**Commitment**	**Commitment**	**Commitment**
☐ Self-reliant; autonomous ☐ Justifiably confident; self-assured ☐ Inspired; inspires others	☐ Sometimes hesitant, unsure, tentative ☐ Not always confident; self-critical ☐ May be bored or apathetic	☐ Discouraged and frustrated; may be ready to quit ☐ Overwhelmed; demotivated ☐ Confused and concerned; afraid of making mistakes	☐ Eager to learn; curious; willing to take direction ☐ Enthusiastic; excited ☐ Confident about transferable skills and confident learning won't be difficult

Development level is goal or task specific!

Diagnosis Chart

Use this chart to identify development level on a specific goal or task.

Example 1

On a specific goal or task, an individual has

GOAL-SPECIFIC SKILLS —High

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS —Low

MOTIVATION —High

CONFIDENCE —Low

This individual's development level is D3/2.

Example 2

On a specific goal or task, an individual has

GOAL-SPECIFIC SKILLS —Low

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS —Low

MOTIVATION —High

CONFIDENCE —High

This individual's development level is D1.

3 Matching Leadership Style

Leadership style is a pattern of behaviors leaders use, over time, as perceived by others. There are two basic leadership style behaviors: **Directive Behavior**—telling and showing people what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and providing frequent feedback on results; and **Supportive Behavior**—listening, facilitating self-reliant problem solving, encouraging, praising, and involving others in decision making. There are four leadership styles consisting of four different combinations of Directive and Supportive Behaviors.

Leadership Styles

Style 1—Directing—High Directive Behavior and Low Supportive Behavior

The leader provides specific direction about goals, shows and tells how, and closely tracks the individual's performance in order to provide frequent feedback on results.

Style 2—Coaching—High Directive Behavior and High Supportive Behavior

The leader explains why, solicits suggestions, encourages, and continues to direct goal or task accomplishment.

**Style 3—Supporting—Low Directive Behavior and High Supportive Behavior**

The leader and the individual make decisions together. The role of the leader is to facilitate, listen, draw out, encourage, and support.

Style 4—Delegating—Low Directive Behavior and Low Supportive Behavior

The individual makes most of the decisions about what, how, and when. The role of the leader is to value the individual's contributions and support his or her growth.

SLII® Model

Matching Leadership Style to Development Level

Leadership Styles
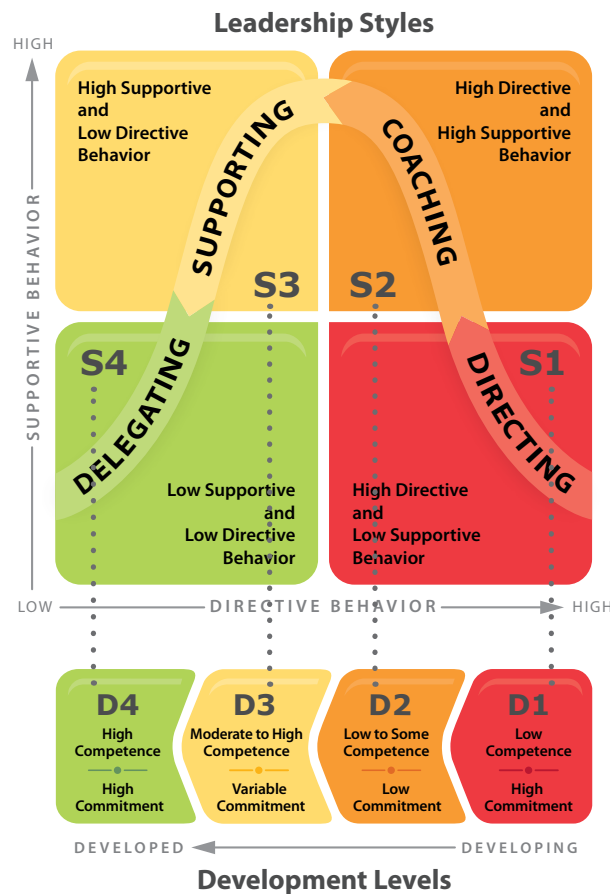
In all four styles, the leader

1. Sets goals
2. Stays connected
3. Gives feedback

The goal is a MATCH

S1 ➜ D1

S2 ➜ D2

S3 ➜ D3

S4 ➜ D4

Over time, with a match, individuals learn to provide their own direction and support.

Two types of MISMATCH

Oversupervision
S1/S2 with D3/D4

Undersupervision
S3/S4 with D1/D2

There is no best leadership style; it depends on the situation.

S3   Supporting

S3 Intention

Build confidence in competence

How

1. Ask D3 for input about what and how
2. Listen and encourage
3. Facilitate problem solving by asking open-ended questions

S2   Coaching

S2 Intention

Re-energize and reteach

How

1. Explore concerns and encourage
2. Explain why
3. Redirect and reteach
4. Involve in problem solving

S4   Delegating

S4 Intention

Value Contribution

How

1. Acknowledge expertise
2. Support autonomy
3. Invite innovation and ongoing learning

S1   Directing

S1 Intention

Help others build competence

How

1. Acknowledge transferable skills and/or commitment
2. Give direction about what, how, and when
3. Check in frequently

Be the
Leader Your
People Need

THE SLII EXPERIENCE™

You want your managers to be effective and know how to lead successful teams. But often, they don't have the skills to be flexible leaders, so they don't lead their people as effectively as they could. Many organizations struggle with finding training solutions that will develop their leaders to be the best they can be.

We know how frustrating it can be when your managers lack what it takes to impact performance. Research shows that employees need different levels of direction and support from their leader, depending on the task at hand. The problem is that most managers have only one leadership style that they apply to everyone, in every situation. The best leaders are situational leaders. They know how and when to provide the right leadership to help their team members succeed.

As the world's most taught leadership model, SLII teaches managers the skillset they need to guide their people through predictable stages of development and provide them with what they need to be successful. Backed by years of research and proven results, the SLII framework has stood the test of time. When people get the leadership they need when they need it, their performance accelerates, work passion increases, and your organization thrives.

Training your managers to be situational leaders will result in:

Accelerated Development

A Common Leadership Language

Increased Retention and Morale

Proactive Problem Solvers

THE PROVEN FORMULA TO BOOST MANAGER EFFECTIVENESS

Organizations can choose how they deliver The SLII Experience™, allowing learners to be more in charge of their learning journey beyond the classroom. Each delivery format follows a four-part learning path to ensure your managers master the content and become situational leaders.

- **LAUNCH**—Receive a portfolio of assignments to explain the concepts and engage learners in the content of SLII

- **LEARN**—Participate in activities that will teach leaders the skills and language they need to become situational leaders

- **PRACTICE**—Participate in activities that will develop new skills through robust, real-life practice

- **MASTER**—Assimilate strategies to deepen and extend the learning so it becomes second nature to set SMART goals, diagnose development level, and use the matching leadership style

When you work with Blanchard to deepen the skills of your leaders, you can be confident that you'll make an impact in your organization. We partner with you each step of the way to teach you proven best practices that will result in the greatest return on your investment. Leaders deserve to be equipped with the right framework and tools to be successful. With more effective managers, morale and engagement will go up, team members will feel supported, employees will become more creative problem solvers, and overall company productivity will increase.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Individuals in leadership roles who want to increase their effectiveness

Executives and senior-level managers

Mid-level or new managers or supervisors

READY TO GET STARTED?

Here's how to implement a successful training initiative, in three easy steps:

1. Decide—we'll help you decide who gets the training and why

2. Prepare—we'll help you order materials and prepare the facilitator

3. Deliver—we'll help you deliver impeccable training at your company

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