



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

What Is Situational Leadership, And Why Should Your Team Embrace It?

Shannon Waller: In entrepreneurial companies, we need a lot of leadership. Today's conversation is all about situational leadership and how everyone can step up. Stay tuned.

Hi, Shannon Waller here, and welcome to Team Success. I was talking with a dear friend and colleague with whom I work, and we were talking about a situation, and it was one where there was an opportunity for her to kind of step up and step into, you know, being a leader, but she kind of held back a little bit. I was like, ooh. There's this thing called situational leadership. And she was like, oh, please tell me more. Now, there's books written about this. There's a lot about it. But I wanted to share because I think there's an opportunity.

So this actually applies obviously to team members and to team leaders and occasionally to entrepreneurs who, even though technically, yes, you are the leader of your company, you may or may not feel like stepping into that role in particular situations. So I think this is actually kind of a human thing. Let me put it that way. So, my definition of situational leadership is where it is based on your capabilities. So I'm going to say your Unique Ability, you love to do and you're best at, where you have the best impact, multiplier impact, where you can provide direction. So this is Strategic Coach's definition of leadership. This is providing direction where other people are confused. So this means you're addressing their dangers, you're helping to maximize their opportunity, and you're providing strategies and solutions. That's our definition of leadership.

And the cool thing is in a leadership position, if you're promoted to team leader, if you're the owner of the company, this is kind of the deal. You're expected to do this almost all the time, okay? However, there's a lot of opportunities for other people to step in. And I actually think this might be the essence of Unique Ability Teamwork. It's where everyone is a situational leader when it makes sense for them to be the one doing it. If you think about the traditional hierarchical situation, the pyramidal structure of hierarchies, think really, really large organizations. There are a few people at the top and lots of people at the bottom, and the people at the bottom are supposed to do what the people at the top tell them to do.

I don't know about you, but I don't like being told what to do. Actually, my insight was, I don't like being told what to do. My PRINT profile, I'm an 8, strong and self-reliant, pretty much says, don't tell me what to do. I realized this is my reason for being a leader. Could be a non-profit situation, in a for-profit company, I have always been a leader. Why? Bottom line, I didn't want other people telling me what to do. How does that sound? It was an interesting insight about myself that I had the other day. Other 8 PRINTs might also feel the same. If you don't know what a PRINT profile is, you can join Strategic Coach and we will give you access or you can look it up. We'll put the contact information in the show notes.



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But really, it was pretty entertaining when I figured that one out. So yes, I step into a lot of situations. Now I have learned to do it where it is my Unique Ability, trying to create value or leadership where I don't know what I'm doing really has not played out well, has not panned out. I do not recommend that course of action. So when it is what you love to do and are best at, and have maybe had experience with, hopefully, and you stepping in and saying, hey, I think this might be the direction to go in. This is the opportunity. Other people are like, oh, thank goodness, right? And frankly, I think there's room for every single person on a team to provide situational leadership. And this is whether or not you want to be a leader, and you might not want to be a full-time leader. You may not want that amount of responsibility. There's lots of reasons which are completely 100% valid.

But I have to tell you, in your area of expertise, I want you to step in and I want you to step up. I think it's important. And I think a lot of people hold themselves back because they think, oh, it's not my job. It's not my role to say that. But frankly, on a Unique Ability team, and especially on an entrepreneurial team, we're making it up as we go along. Like, even if we've been in business for a long time, which Strategic Coach has, we're still doing new stuff all the time. And there are new situations, there are new technologies. Just came back from Abundance 360. Super fun, by the way. Peter Diamandis and the team do a brilliant job there. Their AV production values are top notch. The topics are interesting. It's all about exponential technology.

I walked away from the part that I was able to be there, first couple of days, that's all about AI and robots. Interesting, but the point is there's new stuff coming down the pipe and so we need to be able to deal with it and that will require leadership from different people at different times and just counting on the people at the top to do that, frankly, I think that's a failing proposition. We need everyone to step up and be a leader.

And so look at the situation. If someone at the front desk, I want them to provide leadership, like get that person's phone call answered within three rings, maybe two, actually, you know, make sure they get to the person that they're looking for within 30 seconds. That's provide direction. Hey, I need you to take care of this. You know, whatever it is, there is an opportunity to do that. People in charge of our building, they can tell me what to do. I'm completely happy about that because they know their stuff. I was just recording a podcast about why I trust profiles so much. Katrina is in charge of my schedule. I don't tell her how to set it up. I give her direction about what I want, and we talk it through. Regular strategic planning meetings, game changer, phenomenal. Nicole Pitcher set them up. Thank you, Nicole.

But it's incredible. She provides leadership in terms of managing my time, my activities, and my relationships. She is in charge of that. This is what having a Strategic Assistant is all about. And I even co-wrote a book with Steven Neuner and Ryan Cassin called Superpowered about the incredible transformative impact of having a dedicated entrepreneurial executive assistant



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working with you, and it is with you. It's not really for you. In fact, as far as I'm concerned, I work for Katrina. She manages me. She tells me what to do. And my job is to follow the calendar.

Now, the cool thing is everything on my calendar is stuff I love to do. So I have a perfectly designed interest-based system, which is a great definition of ADD. We have interest-based nervous systems, not importance-based nervous systems. So I make sure that everything on my calendar is both interesting to me and important. And I'm a really good person. I'm a good human about following my calendar because it's all stuff I like. So what's to rebel against? Nothing. It works really well. And Katrina knows, as my support partner, that's actually her title, that that's her role. She takes full, complete ownership and leadership over that. And I don't have to worry about it. I'm not supervising her. We're trying to figure out a conflict.

And over the last three years, we can remember one. That's not very many, right? There's one little tiny little rub and it wasn't even to do with the calendar. It was kind of entertaining, but it just works really, really well. So she has her area where she takes leadership. She loves to do her stuff, has no interest in doing what I do and vice versa. If I could do what she does every day, I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be off the planet, but I wouldn't be here. So it's just key.

Now there's a resource that I want to share that I really enjoyed reading. It's called *Impact Players* by Liz Wiseman. So you might want to read this on behalf of your team. You might want to read it on behalf of yourself. But it kind of talks about this ability in certain situations and with certain projects that you can step in and take leadership. If you don't want to, you don't have to stay there forever. It's not about climbing a ladder. It's about contributing to making a result happen. So here's kind of a little five key points to summarize the book, but I want to whet your appetite to go and learn more.

So number one, do the job that's needed. Impact players focus on what is most important, not just what's assigned. Yeah, if anyone says to me, but that's not my job, it's an automatic trigger. I go from best self to worst self really quickly. With this one, I'm like, so? It needs to get done, let's figure it out, right? I don't know, job descriptions, role descriptions change frequently in companies. Our new book called *Casting Not Hiring*, new-ish book, a couple quarters ago, is brilliant. There's this phenomenal tool that Dan innovated, Dan Sullivan, that measures four different quadrants of success. And it's for your role, not your job. Jobs are part of other companies. In an entrepreneurial company, you've got a role. It kind of helps you figure out four things.

Number one is performance—what we want you to be alert to, curious about, responsive to, and resourceful about. So alert, curious, responsive, resourceful. What you're paying attention to. Then the results, because how you're behaving is not the same as the results of what you do. So that is, how are your results going to be faster, easier, cheaper, with a bigger impact? Useful to know. Really specifically, so that kind of might describe the overall role of what you



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do. So for instance, in our company, it's Membership Advisor, which is sales, Program Advisor, which is retention, marketing, all the things. You can fill out the roles for that. Then, specifically, the four projects for how you can be a hero in the next three to six months. Well, that's pretty good.

And then finally, and this is my favorite part, and there's two different versions of the 4x4, if someone's filling it out for themselves on their role, is that self-awareness of how they drive others crazy. So this is self-awareness. Again, support profiles are super helpful. It's like, what are the things that drive you nuts when other people don't do them because you think they should be because that's how you do it? Or just when circumstances are not lined up for you to be successful, you want to know that. So what about yourself that can drive other people crazy? Where can you be a bit, not extreme, but you know what I mean.

Now, the other version of this to me is very interesting and entertaining. It's what drives me crazy. So as I was saying, this is when the circumstances are not set up for success for you. When things move really slowly, oh, kill me now. I need a pace. I'm a fast-paced person. I want to know that we're making progress. One of Dan's, and also mine, but mostly Dan's, is when things go into a black hole, so he wants something to happen, he's probably done an Impact Filter for it, but then there's the black hole, and he never hears about it again. It could be happening, it might not be happening, but he doesn't know. It's in the abyss. That is not a successful strategy. So he will be upset at that particular thing.

It's really fun as a manager when you're filling this out, or a leader, it's like, here's what personally drives me crazy. And this is going to be consistent amongst any role descriptions that you're creating for people because you're you. You're the common denominator. So what drives me crazy is going to be probably consistent among all the roles that you do. As I said, we've had our team do it. And then it's that self-awareness of how you drive other people crazy which we all do, and it's good to know that ahead of time. It's just a cool awareness piece.

But anyway, that's the point about the role versus a job. And when you have a role, that means you kind of expand the territory. You're focused on the result of what has to get done, not just the little tiny little linear process you think you need to do to get there. It's actually getting alert, curious, responsive, and resourceful to make sure that result happens. Okay, so let's do the job slash role that's needed. Step up and take ownership. This is one of my entrepreneurial attitudes in The Team Success Handbook is take ownership. Oh, my Lord. People don't own it. Again, why are you in my world? They handle uncertainty with confidence and take responsibility. Interesting thing about the word responsibility. Most people think it means take the blame. That's one half of it. It actually means being able to respond.



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So can you stay out of being freaked out long enough? Can you not have that fear response? And can you or will you take action? That's what it means to be responsible. You'll make sure that something gets done. And so that means also taking credit when it's due or, you know, taking responsibility or it's like owning up when you didn't. There was a situation recently where we screwed up as a company. And my email to the people we needed to help fix it was like, oops, we messed up, because we did. That is taking ownership and responsibility for something. And then there's no argument. We're not passing the blame. We're not trying to make anyone else wrong. We don't even have to analyze it. We just need to get into action to fix it.

Oh my gosh, it was great. It happened so fast. Great teamwork. Highly recommend it. Adapt and stay flexible. I call this being open in my book. This means that, things change. Do not get too locked in. I'm all for 80% consistent systems, but please, please, please leave 20% flexible. So as she says, they adjust their approach as circumstances change. Right now, the big world change is AI. There's probably a few others, but in terms of workflow, that's one of the big ones. Now, I really love this point. Make work easier for others. Instead of creating more work, they collaborate effectively. Positive and collaborative teamwork is our number one core value at Strategic Coach. This means figuring out the best path, being positive that we can get the result, and collaborating with one another, using each of our talents, our areas of Unique Ability, to make that happen.

And then the last one is deliver with a finish line mentality. They see tasks through to completion with high standards. Yes, quality is a thing. As you can tell, it's important to me. So I love the summary of the book, but she goes into some great stories and great examples. And I think this is a wonderful part of the conversation around being a great situational leader. You don't have to do it all the time. And you have permission to speak up, you have permission to make suggestions.

Now, do you have permission to go around and say, my way is the right way and do it regardless? No. We're not talking about that. I don't want anyone to do that, even if you own the company. But it's more, again, do the job that's needed, step up and take ownership, adapt and stay flexible, make work easier for others, and deliver with a finish line mentality. You will be a brilliant impact player and a brilliant situational leader.

So I hope this conversation provokes your thinking. I hope it inspires you to take action in an area where you have not. I think we can all grow other leaders around us and support them in doing that. We don't need to be the one that's in charge of everything all the time. Encourage your team to do this, too. Encourage your colleagues to do this. I don't care if you have a team of receptionists. All of you can step up and do that. Each of us has an area of expertise where we can contribute and create value and provide leadership. So, on that note, thank you so



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much for listening. Any questions or comments, please let me know at questions@strategicoach.com. And as always, here's to your team's success.