Practical Leadership
Case Scenarios

Scenario 1

One of your employees is new to the company. She is excited about her new position and wants to begin working on performance expectations with her people. Unfortunately, she has had no formal management training and doesn’t understand how to write meaningful objectives.

Strategy

A. Be available to answer her questions and offer support but avoid telling her how to do the job.
B. Let her handle the situation.
C. Write out and give her very specific directions for MBOs and be certain she follows them.
D. Teach her how to develop meaningful objectives; let her try it out and review her progress.

Scenario 2

An employee with a questionable performance record is reluctant to try a new procedure. She claims she doesn’t have time to do this and would rather do her regular work. You have explained why the new procedure is very important, but this hasn’t really helped; she still continues to procrastinate in this area.

Strategy

A. Be patient and see if her performance improves with time.
B. Get her involved in the new procedure gradually; work with her on suggestions.
C. Listen to her concerns and try to sell her on the importance of the new procedure; be clear that the procedure must be implemented.
D. Determine specifically what she is to do and be certain she follows the new procedure.

Scenario 3

As a result of reorganization, you are going to implement a major change in the direction of your department’s efforts. Individuals in the department have a great track record in their old functions, but they seem uncertain about how this change in direction is going to affect their jobs.

Strategy

A. Discuss the organizational changes with your subordinates and involve them in developing strategies to handle the new situation.
B. Before intervening, see if the department members can resolve the problem by themselves.
C. Talk with the department members about necessary performance levels and be specific about how the changes should be implemented.
D. Listen to the department’s recommendations, then decide upon a strategy and explain your plan to the department.
Scenario 4
You are a middle manager with an excellent relationship with your boss. He has been bothering your immediate subordinates with excessive social conversation. The problem has gotten so bad that productivity is beginning to decline. You have received complaints from your subordinates.

Strategy
A. Have a friendly conversation with your boss and ask him if he thinks there is a problem.
B. Don’t say anything to the boss. Encourage your employees to work harder.
C. Meet with your boss and try to explain why new procedures might increase productivity.
D. Level with your boss on the productivity problem. Suggest specific changes.

Scenario 5
A manager who reports to you has been assigned to assist with your most important project in a field office. During the first two months he participated in most major decisions. His contributions have been extremely valuable. Now he has indicated his willingness to head up the next stage. This stage mostly involves analyses in his area of specialization.

Strategy
A. Direct him to do his part in the prescribed manner.
B. Discuss with him possible approaches to his part in the project.
C. Convince him of just what his role in the project should be.
D. Let him head up the next stage and run with it.

Scenario 6
A subordinate with six months experience in your area is trying hard to learn a new position. He has potential but seems to have problems understanding his new role. He was one of the top performers in his previous position.

Strategy
A. Provide detailed guidance to the subordinate concerning activities necessary in his new role.
B. Look for opportunities to discuss the role with him.
C. Elect not to get involved and see if his performance improves in the future.
D. Be supportive in discussing the situation with him and help him reach required performance levels by coaching on the job.
Scenario 7
You have been the head of a task force for a potentially unpopular program that is being implemented. You have missed the last two meetings because of unavoidable scheduling conflicts. Upon your return, you find the task force is meeting established objectives and that individuals are enthusiastic about their work.

Strategy
A. Incorporate group suggestions but re-establish your control of the task force.
B. Allow the group to continue formulating its own direction while you contribute when you can.
C. Participate with the group in establishing future directions.
D. Review performance toward objective with the group, then implement what you feel is needed and how it should be done.

Scenario 8
Your most productive subordinate seems very concerned about an upcoming organizational change. The change may affect her work.

Strategy
A. Leave her alone. Everything will work out.
B. Tell her how the change may affect her and show her what to do.
C. Talk with her about the upcoming change. Involve her in developing plans for maintaining productivity in the new situation.
D. Listen to her ideas, then explain how she can deal with the change.

Scenario 9
Your subordinate has come to you for help. He is highly motivated but seems very confused. He has the potential to do the job, but has a long way to go.

You listen to him and give him lots of encouragement. You let him know that you think he can succeed on his own.

A. Fit
B. Overleadership
C. Underleadership
**Scenario 10**

One of your managers comes to you quite often for advice. He works very hard and long hours. He stands up to really tough issues but usually not until after consulting you. You believe he has the ability to be an outstanding manager.

You listen to him, praise his accomplishments and potential and try to build his confidence by asking questions to facilitate his problem solving and decision-making.

- A. Fit
- B. Overleadership
- C. Underleadership

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**TIE-BREAKER**

**Scenario**

Your ten-year-old son keeps his room in immaculate condition. He takes great pride in how neat and organized it is.

When you came home from work today you noticed that his room was messier than usual.

**Strategy**

- A. Tell him to straighten out his room as quickly as possible.
- B. Explain to him how important it is to be neat and well organized.
- C. Discuss his feelings about keeping his room neat and clean.
- D. Don’t bother him. He will probably take care of it himself.