GENERAL

one minute manager situational leadership

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Leadership is an ever evolving discipline. From the timeless principles of the *One Minute Manager* to the dynamic framework of *Situational Leadership*, managers today need a toolbox that blends proven techniques with adaptive strategies. This article explores how the concise, action oriented approach of the One Minute Manager can be seamlessly integrated with the flexible, context driven model of Situational Leadership to create a powerful, results oriented management style.

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Introduction

In today's fast paced business environment, managers cannot afford a one size fits all approach. Teams differ in skill, motivation, and experience. A leader who can assess a situation and adapt their style accordingly is more likely to inspire high performance and retain top talent.

The **One Minute Manager** offers three simple, yet powerful techniques: One Minute Goals, One Minute Praises, and One Minute Reprimands. These methods emphasize clarity, appreciation, and constructive feedback—all delivered in a brief, respectful conversation.

Conversely, **Situational Leadership**—developed by Hersey and Blanchard—highlights that the most effective leadership style depends on the follower's readiness (competence and commitment). It defines four primary styles: Directing, Coaching, Supporting, and Delegating.

When combined, these frameworks create a robust, adaptive management system that empowers leaders to respond quickly, maintain accountability, and cultivate a culture of continuous improvement.

Understanding Situational Leadership

Origins and Core Concepts

Herbert K. Hersey and Paul R. Blanchard introduced Situational Leadership in the 1960s, arguing that leadership effectiveness hinges on the follower's *readiness level*. Readiness is measured across two dimensions:

- Competence: The follower's skill level and knowledge.
- Commitment: The follower's confidence, motivation, and willingness to perform.

By evaluating these dimensions, a manager can select the most appropriate style. The model's four styles are:

1. Directing: High directive, low supportive—ideal for low readiness employees who need clear instructions.
2. Coaching: High directive, high supportive—suitable for employees with some competence but low commitment.
3. Supporting: Low directive, high supportive—fits employees who are competent but lack confidence.
4. Delegating: Low directive, low supportive—best for highly competent and highly committed employees.

Situational Leadership emphasizes that a leader should **monitor progress** and **adjust style** as the follower's readiness evolves.

Benefits of Situational Leadership

- Flexibility: Adapts to diverse team dynamics.
- Employee Development: Guides employees toward higher competence and commitment.
- Efficiency: Reduces micromanagement by matching style to needs.
- Improved Morale: Employees feel supported and empowered.

Core Principles of the One Minute Manager

The One Minute Manager, popularized by Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson, distilled effective management into three concise practices. These practices are designed to be executed in just one minute each, ensuring that conversations remain focused and productive.

One Minute Goals

Clear, written goals provide a shared understanding of expectations. The key is specificity: goals should be concise, measurable, and aligned with organizational objectives.

One Minute Praises

Immediate, specific praise reinforces desired behaviors. It acknowledges effort, fosters positive reinforcement, and builds a culture of recognition.

One Minute Reprimands

When performance falls short, a brief, constructive reprimand addresses the issue without humiliating the employee. It focuses on the behavior, not the person, and encourages corrective action.

Why It Matters

- Promotes clarity and consistency in communication.
- Reduces time spent on meetings and misunderstandings.
- Encourages ongoing feedback rather than annual reviews.
- Supports a positive work environment.

Blending the Two Approaches

While Situational Leadership offers a strategic framework for adapting style, the One Minute Manager provides practical tools to execute that strategy efficiently. Integrating them yields a management style that is both *adaptive* and *action oriented*

Mapping One Minute Techniques to Situational Styles

Situational Style	One Minute Application
Directing	One Minute Goals: Provide explicit, step by step instructions.
Coaching	One Minute Praises: Offer praise for effort and progress; One Minute Reprimands: Deliver constructive feedback.
Supporting	One Minute Praises: Focus on encouragement and confidence building.
Delegating	Minimal One Minute interactions—focus on One Minute Goals and occasional check ins.

Benefits of the Hybrid Model

- Combines clarity and accountability with flexibility.
- Reduces the risk of micromanagement while maintaining control.
- Encourages continuous feedback loops.
- Supports rapid decision making without sacrificing employee development.

Step by Step Implementation

Adopting the One Minute Manager Situational Leadership blend requires deliberate planning. Below is a practical roadmap to guide managers through the transition.

Step 1: Assess Your Team's Readiness

1. Conduct a quick competence assessment—review skill levels, past performance, and training records.
2. Gauge commitment through one on one conversations, employee surveys, or observation.
3. Plot each team member on a readiness grid (low/high competence vs. low/high commitment).

Step 2: Define Clear One Minute Goals

For every task or project, create a goal statement that is:

- Specific: "Increase monthly sales by 10%."
- Measurable: Include metrics and deadlines.
- Aligned: Tie to broader company objectives.

Share these goals in a brief meeting or via email, ensuring everyone understands the expectations.

Step 3: Match Leadership Style to Readiness

Using the readiness grid, assign the appropriate Situational Leadership style for each employee. Document the style and the rationale so you can reference it during interactions.

Step 4: Execute One Minute Interactions

- Directing: Deliver clear instructions and monitor progress with short check ins.
- Coaching: Offer frequent praise for effort, then provide constructive feedback when needed.
- Supporting: Focus on encouragement, ask open questions, and remove obstacles.
- Delegating: Set expectations, then step back; intervene only if necessary.

Step 5: Review and Adjust

Every two weeks, revisit the readiness grid. As employees grow, shift their style accordingly. Document changes to

maintain a clear record of progress.

Step 6: Foster a Culture of Feedback

Encourage team members to practice the One Minute techniques with one another. Peer praise and constructive criticism can reinforce the system and reduce managerial burden.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Retail Sales Team

At a mid size retail chain, the store manager implemented the hybrid model. New hires received **Directing** style with **One Minute Goals** outlining daily sales targets. After a month, as they gained confidence, the manager switched them to **Coaching**, offering praise for improvements and brief reprimands for missed targets. Within six months, sales increased by 15%, and turnover dropped by 20%.

Case Study 2: Software Development Squad

A tech startup's lead developer used **Supporting** for junior engineers, giving them autonomy while providing regular encouragement. Senior engineers were delegated with **Delegating**style, allowing them to own projects. The team's velocity improved by 25%, and the average time to resolve bugs decreased by 30%.

Case Study 3: Customer Service Department

In a call center, the supervisor applied **One Minute Praises**to recognize agents who resolved calls quickly and with high satisfaction scores. Agents who struggled received brief, constructive reprimands focused on skill gaps. Over a quarter, customer satisfaction scores rose from 82% to 90%, and agent productivity increased by 18%.

Common Challenges & Solutions

- Misinterpreting the "One Minute" concept

Solution: Clarify that the "one minute" refers to the interaction, not the entire conversation. Encourage quick, focused updates.

- Solution: Communicate the rationale, involve employees in goal setting, and celebrate early wins.
- Solution: Use a shared digital tool to log goals, praises, and reprimands for transparency.

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