The situational leadership theory was developed in the 1970s by Paul Hersey, professor and author of the book Situational Leader, and Ken Blanchard, leadership guru and author of The One Minute Manager.

Effective leadership varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it also depends on the task, job or function that needs to be accomplished.

Leadership styles are divided into behavior types:

1. **Telling** - is characterized by one-way communication in which the leader defines the roles of the individual or group and provides the what, how, why, when and where to do the task.

2. **Selling** - while the leader is still providing the direction, he or she is now using two-way communication and providing the socio-emotional support that will allow the individual or group being influenced to buy into the process.

3. **Participating** - this is how shared decision-making about aspects of how the task is accomplished and the leader is providing less task behaviours while maintaining high relationship behavior.

4. **Delegating** - the leader is still involved in decisions; however, the process and responsibility has been passed to the individual or group. The leader stays involved to monitor progress.

Of these, no one style is considered optimal for all leaders to use all the time. Effective leaders need to be flexible, and must adapt themselves according to the situation.