

The Power of SLII® Training and Coaching

Methodology

In 2013 an independent case study was conducted to understand the impact of leadership training on leaders and their direct reports and the secondary effects of coaching to support the reinforcement of the concepts learned in training. One hundred twenty-four individuals participated in the pre-survey and 78 individuals participated in the post-survey.

The control group of managers received two half-day Situational Leadership® II (SLII®) program training sessions from The Ken Blanchard Companies®. Pre- and post-assessments were administered to the direct reports of these leaders before and after the SLII training.

The treatment group of managers received the same two Blanchard® half-day training sessions using SLII as well as three monthly coaching sessions in which they were able to review their assessment reports, diagnose problems, and work with a coach to brainstorm how they might use the concepts of SLII to solve these problems.

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of certain directive and supportive leader behaviors on

- The affect or emotional state of the direct report
- The interpersonal relationship of the direct report with the leader
- The satisfaction the direct report had in regard to the leader
- The connection to five specific work intentions—performance intentions, willingness to endorse the organization, willingness to stay with the organization, intent to exert discretionary effort on behalf of the organization, and intent to be a good organizational citizen

Results

Leaders in the control group saw the following improvements in the perceptions of their direct reports:

- Positive affect (emotional outlook) significantly improved almost 3 points from 16.7 to 19.2 out of a possible 25 points
- Intent to Perform significantly improved almost 2 points from 14.7 to 16.4 out of a possible 18 points
- Intent to Remain significantly improved from 12.9 to 15.0 out of a possible 18 points
- Organizational Citizenship behaviors significantly improved from 14.9 to 16.7 out of a possible 18 points

Leaders in the treatment group who received both training in SLII and coaching saw the following improvements in the assessments of their direct reports:

- Directive behavior scores significantly improved from 12.5 to 14.8 out of a possible 18 points
- Supportive behavior scores significantly improved from 13.3 to 15.6 out of a possible 18 points
- Leader satisfaction significantly improved from 18.1 to 21.2 out of a possible 25 points

Conclusion

In summary, both groups saw improvements, although these improvements differed. The control group saw improvements in regard to the intentions that were measured as well as positive affect, while the treatment group's improvements were in regard to the use of directive and supportive behaviors and follower satisfaction with the leader. We believe that the reasons for these differences could be linked to several things.

- Leaders in the treatment group who received training in Situational Leadership® II and coaching were most likely more focused on using the directive and supportive behaviors appropriately. We believe that the coaching they received shaped the way they communicated with direct reports. We also believe that it's likely that the coaching allowed these leaders to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be a situational leader. These leaders may have been more focused on developing their people rather than on outcomes, as their coaches may have set the focus and emphasis on direction and support rather than diagnosis.
- Leaders in the control group that received training in Situational Leadership® II but no coaching were possibly more focused on making the concepts in the model work and possibly less focused on the development of people. We believe these leaders understood the concepts of SLII but integrated them at more of a macro level.

Further research must be done to determine why each group had different results. The purpose of Situational Leadership® II is to teach leaders to develop their people to their full potential. The results of this study illustrate that SLII can help leaders improve their leadership abilities and develop their leadership effectiveness, but—when paired with coaching—SLII can have a dramatic long-term effect on leader effectiveness.



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