Unifying "One Best Style" and Contingency or Situational Theories

INTRODUCTION

What This Chapter Is About

Today, managerial style theorists are on two different tracks.

On one track are the many who believe that there is one best style—a style that is both highly task-oriented and highly people-oriented. Proponents of one best style include those listed in Table 8.3 on page 178: McGregor, Likert, O'Brien, Atkins, McManus, Merrill and Reid, Zoll, Hall, Thomas-Kilmann, Simpson, Lefton, and Blake, Mouton, and Bidwell. The latter are probably the most noted because of their well-known Managerial Grid® and 9,9 style. As acknowledged by Blake, Carlson, McKee, Sorenson, and Yaeger (2000), The Managerial Grid has a long, strong OD history because of its focus on experiential learning and its emphasis on participation.

On the other track are the contingency (situational) theorists, who believe that there is no one best style for all circumstances. The most noted proponents of this view are Hersey and Blanchard, because of their well-known situational leadership model.

Confusion as to which theory is correct largely stems from somewhat conflicting evidence. Although the experts mentioned earlier in connection with Table 8.3 have touted one best style, Benson (1994) and Norris and Vecchio (1992) have cited evidence that one style is not always effective and that a case-by-case or situational approach can sometimes be best. On the other hand, Avery and Ryan (2002) and Blank, Weitzel, and Green (1990) have observed that, while situational principles are popular and seemingly effective, there are times when they fall short.

This chapter attempts to reconcile and unify these two seemingly opposing definitions of managerial styles. It unifies them by reconciling the terms used for "styles," synthesizing the best concepts of both, and merging the two tracks of thought onto one.

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The chapter begins by summarizing the case for one best style. Next, it reviews concepts that are associated with situationalism, discusses several reservations about it, and goes on to explain why situationalism continues to be popular. Then, it attempts to unify the two theories by putting them into perspective—that is, by showing how one might be considered a subset of the other. Finally, the chapter presents a participative, developmental, "high task, high people" approach.

What Consultants, Trainers, and Facilitators Can Get Out of This Chapter

How can managers build enhanced empowerment and self-direction among their workers? That and related questions are the focus of this chapter. After studying this chapter, consultants, trainers, and facilitators should be able to help participants explore ways to

- Build a corporate culture and climate that increases workers' self-directedness
- Enhance workers' willingness to take more responsibility for their own development and general improvement
- Build a corporate culture and climate that encourages workers to develop themselves

What Practicing Managers, Participants, or Students Can Get Out of This Chapter

After studying and discussing this chapter, the student or seminar participant should be able to

- More effectively improve or further develop the managerial knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behavior of his or her subordinates
- More effectively participate in dealing with personal and nonpersonal socio-technical factors that are exerting dysfunctional influences on motivation, attitudes, behavior, interactions, and performance throughout his or her organization
- Effectively use an approach that prepares all personnel to participate effectively in developing themselves, their subordinates, and the organization as a whole
- Apply practices and behaviors that will reinforce developmental efforts throughout an organization

How Instructors and Participants Can Use the CD-ROM's Supplementary Materials

The accompanying CD-ROM contains the *Chapter Eleven Study Guide.* For the reasons already mentioned in earlier chapters, this class or seminar session preparation guide should be (a) completed by students and seminar participants and (b) used during the end-of-module superior-subordinates discussion, OD application, and team-building sessions that follow Chapter Twelve.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE FOR ONE BEST STYLE

Both Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid and The Managerial Target® embody an inherent conclusion that there *is* one best style: the Y, team, participative, System 4, 9,9, or "high task, high people" style. Newborough (1999) explained its efficacy by pointing out that it balances people and process. Chapter Eight used an adaptation of Raymond Miles's human resources

model (Figure 8.6 on page 186) to provide an additional rationale. The following points summarize conclusions derived from that model.

In one way or another, people's performance, development, and even satisfaction can all be considered task-related results. And in one way or another, their satisfaction, development, and even performance can all be considered people-related results. Therefore, *task-related results can also be people-related results, and people-related results can also be task-related results.* Thus, *task-oriented behavior can also be people-oriented behavior, and people-oriented behavior can also be task-oriented behavior.*

In addition, the spirit and intent of McGregor's Theory Y style and similar high task, high people styles is to *emphasize productivity for the sake of people as well as for the sake of productivity and to emphasize people for the sake of productivity as well as for the sake of people.* HT,HP is the style that enables a manager to integrate tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with their organization most effectively.

Our conclusions: (1) It is both desirable and possible to behave in a highly task-oriented manner *and* a highly people-oriented manner at the same time. One need not make trade-offs between the two—especially if one behaves in an HT,HP manner within the context of Miles's human resources approach to management. (2) A major reason for HT,HP's greater effectiveness is that its participative, developmental practices do more than any other style to fulfill and leverage subordinates' ego and self-actualization needs, thereby helping to maximize their job satisfaction, motivation, morale, and performance.

The preceding points underlie this proposition: If it is both desirable and possible to behave in a manner that is both highly task-oriented and highly people-oriented at the same time, then why not do so?

Not only does one best style make sense conceptually, but there is also corroborating evidence. Various authorities' studies confirm the superiority of HT,HP (or whatever they called their very similar styles). For example, Blake and Mouton (1982a) reported the following: Research at the University of Michigan's Institute of Social Research involved Likert's System 1-2-3-4 model. Likert's System 4 is based on interdependent task- and people-oriented behavior and, therefore, approximates the 9,9 style. The research data indicated that "the closer a work group's leadership style is to System 4, the higher the productivity" (p. 32). Likert's (1967) conclusion was verified in many studies involving more than 20,000 managers and 200,000 employees. It should be pointed out that Likert's research approach involved moving System 4 managers from high-producing units to low-producing units and evaluating productivity on a before-and-after basis. System 4 managers significantly improved productivity in units that previously had non-System 4 managers. Blake and Mouton also cited corroborating research findings of Chris Argyris (1964) and Jay Hall (1986, 1988).

It should be unnecessary to recount the legion of studies and articles that have trumpeted the successes achieved by organizations that have adopted team management, quality circles, and similar participative management approaches. R. D. Cecil has conducted in-house, top-down management training and organization development programs that participants have praised because of the significant changes and benefits derived from their organizations' adoption of high task, high people attitudes, practices, and behavior. Nevertheless, while many managers, supervisors, and their subordinates would agree that HT,HP is the best all-around style, many managers and supervisors are unable to use that style, for various reasons. One often-cited reason is the complexity of socio-technical systems and the different and constantly changing circumstances with which managers must deal.

SITUATIONALISM

The following section briefly reviews Hersey and Blanchard's (1969, 1976, 1982) concepts, which were described earlier in Chapter Eight on pages 190–192. It outlines the basics of their situational leadership model, a prescriptive model that was influenced by the design of the descriptive Ohio State model. This review takes several of their major points one by one, discussing Blake and Mouton's and our own reservations in the process.

Several Reservations About Situationalism

First, Hersey and Blanchard assert that there is no one best style. Their opinion is largely based on the premise that researchers have proven that no one style works best. We think this premise is tenuous for several reasons: (1) As mentioned earlier, there is a very large and growing body of proof that various participative approaches (such as System 4, quality circles, 9,9, and HT,HP) are more effective than using a variety of styles. (2) At the time when Hersey and Blanchard did their research, participative concepts and approaches were not yet fully developed and were not being implemented as successfully as they are today. Early attempts to establish participative, "high task, high people" environments often failed to deal with all the key socio-technical factors that must be changed or improved if the performance, development, and satisfaction of managers and their subordinates are to be maximized. (3) The researchers to whom Hersey and Blanchard referred—for example, Fiedler (1967), Burns and Stalker (1961), and Lawrence and Lorsch (1967)—were the contingency theorists who had studied which managerial styles worked best when people's jobs were either mechanistic or organic. Those researchers all concluded the following: when tasks are mechanistic, directive and controlling leaders are most effective; but when tasks are more organic, more consultive or participative managers are more effective. However, as suggested earlier in Chapter Eight, such findings described the way things often are (or were, especially in those days) but not necessarily the way they can and should be (especially given what is known today). Mechanistic jobs can be made much less mechanistic (or more organic) through job reengineering, participative practices, and HT,HP behavior toward subordinates.

According to Blake and Mouton (1982b), Hersey and Blanchard's assertion that no one best style exists is largely based on results obtained using their LEAD instrument (Hersey and Blanchard, 1976), which was designed to determine individuals' primary and backup leadership styles. It contained descriptions of twelve leadership situations, each followed by four alternative responses that correspond to the four situational styles. Hersey and Blanchard claimed that no one style best fits all of the twelve situations and that for each particular situation, one of their four styles fits or works better than the others. Blake and Mouton disagreed. They found a serious omission in the LEAD instrument. In their opinion, none of the four alternative styles was a 9,9 alternative. To put the LEAD instrument to the test, they (a) formulated a 9,9 alternative for each situation and added it to the instrument, and (b) administered the modified instrument to one hundred highly experienced managers from forty-one different companies, agencies, and institutions. According to Blake and Mouton, the 9,9 alternatives were consistently chosen as being the most effective for dealing with each of the twelve leadership situations—regardless of the level of subordinates' maturity involved. They repeated the same experiment with thirty-six M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s in the mental health profession and also with thirty-eight M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s who were academic administrators. The findings in those two studies were comparable

to those obtained in the first study. As a result of these experiments, Blake and Mouton (1982b) made the following observation: "These data lead to the conclusion that no justifiable basis exists for rejecting the One Best Style when the instrument used to evaluate leadership eliminates it from consideration" (p. 40).

Hersey and Blanchard identified two behavioral components of one's managerial style: task behavior and relationship behavior. Blake and Mouton pointed out that these two elements are behaviorally and operationally independent of each other and therefore are simply added together in the situational model. In their Managerial Grid, on the other hand, the levels of concern for productivity and concern for people are interdependent and interactive and therefore are not simply added together. (As explained in Chapter Ten, the same applies to task- and people-orientedness on The Managerial Target.) Thus, according to Blake and Mouton (1982b), a 9,9 alternative was omitted from the LEAD instrument because one cannot describe a 9,9 style by adding a given level of task behavior to a given level of relationship behavior. In Blake and Mouton's view, a 9,9 in situationalism would be more or less equivalent to a paternalistic (soft X) managerial style.

Second, situationalism is also partly based on another Hersey and Blanchard premise: managers cannot deal effectively with all the socio-technical factors that influence people's behavior on the job, so the 9,9 style may not always be appropriate under particular sets of circumstances. Therefore, they asserted that (a) the key to effective management involves the relationship between the leader and the follower, and (b) choosing an appropriate style should be based on the most manageable factor—a subordinate's maturity with respect to a specific task.

We have two major reservations about changing styles to fit different sets of circumstances. First, Chapter Ten discussed the underlying personal influences on managers' and leaders' behavior, with the following implications: (a) all managers, for whatever personal and nonpersonal reasons, tend to behave in a particular style most of the time; (b) because of their underlying drives, values, personality traits, knowledge, and other traits, they are not inclined to behave any other way—unless one or more nonpersonal variables are exerting very strong influences on them to do so; and (c) it is therefore extremely difficult, particularly in the short term, for most individuals to alter their behavior successfully from one style to another.

Second, changing styles often can easily confuse subordinates. For example, if a supervisor has five to ten subordinates, and if each has five to ten different tasks, and if each subordinate's level of maturity with respect to each task varies significantly, then the supervisor could be using different styles almost from minute to minute. This not only confuses the supervisor, who must decide which style is most appropriate at the moment, but also confuses subordinates, who are constantly witnessing and being subjected to inconsistent supervisory behavior.

Third, as mentioned earlier, Hersey and Blanchard assert that managers cannot deal with all the interacting socio-technical variables that influence people on the job. However, it is widely believed that most of the really important socio-technical variables *can* be changed, improved, or otherwise dealt with. In fact, a socio-technical factor analysis of why managers behave as they do, which was outlined in Chapters Nine and Ten, led to the development of this book's integrated MD/OD program. It trains participants in general management concepts, participative practices, and high task, high people attitudes and interpersonal behavior, so that they can participate as a team in changing or improving many dysfunctional socio-technical influences on them. This HT,HP program acknowledges that subordinates are each different in terms of their capabilities, motives, attitudes, developmental needs, requirements for various inputs, and responses to socio-technical influences. Thus, it deals with individual differences and with

various influences on behavior *situationally.* However, it does so within the context of a single style—one context or *approach* for (a) integrating tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, and people with people, and (b) dealing with the many socio-technical factors involved. In our view, therefore, the HT,HP approach is just as situational as situationalism in some respects and is actually more situational in other respects. It might be considered a *participative situational (socio-technical) approach.* By not dealing with various socio-technical factors and therefore not mitigating their dysfunctional influences on personnel, situationalism allows many variables to continue to operate as they did before, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of innumerable dysfunctional organizational phenomena. For example, without (a) enriching worker-level jobs, (b) using participative practices with subordinates, (c) otherwise behaving toward subordinates in an HT,HP manner, and (d) thereby making workers' job significantly less mechanistic, those mechanistic jobs will continue to exert dysfunctional, often X-oriented influences on the following: subordinates' motivation, attitudes, and behavior; superiors' perceptions of subordinates' attitudes and behavior; the nature of the organization; social phenomena; and other variables.

Fourth, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) observed that certain combinations of their four styles seem to work best at certain organizational levels—for example, high task behavior and low relationship behavior toward the bottom, but low task behavior and low relationship behavior toward the top. These phenomena are similar to the phenomena discussed on pages 198–202: the characteristics of very mechanistic tasks at the worker level (and their negative influences on workers' attitudes and behavior) exert Theory X influences on supervisors, while the characteristics of less mechanistic, more organic tasks at successively higher levels influence managers to behave in a more consultive or participative manner. It appears, therefore, that the use of situationalism does not really change things appreciably, partly because it does not involve behaving too much differently than many managers or supervisors are already behaving.

The preceding points lead us to draw the following conclusions:

First, situationalism essentially involves boss-centered (vertical) integration of tasks with tasks and, to some extent, people with their tasks and people with people. It seems to resemble a wheel structure (in which subordinates are at the ends of the spokes and only interact with the boss at the hub) more closely than an each-to-all or organic structure (in which boss and subordinates all interact freely with each other). On the other hand, as shown in Figure 4.2 on page 74, the participative or HT,HP approach explicitly emphasizes team-centered vertical and horizontal integration of tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with their organization. It involves managers working with subordinates to (a) make decisions regarding unit goals, plans, policies, and procedures, and (b) identify and solve problems affecting the unit's overall performance, development, and satisfaction.

Second, although situationalism can be considered a developmental approach, it does not seem to emphasize using participation in major integrative processes as a developmental tool. With respect to developing subordinates both individually and as a group, neither does it seem to set forth a micro approach that is as effective as the approach that will be illustrated shortly, using Figure 11.1. Nor, with respect to developing an effective HT,HP organizational environment, does it seem to set forth a macro approach that is as systematic and effective as the one illustrated in Figure 12.1 (page 267) and described further in Chapter Twelve.

Given these points, we advocate integrating tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with their organization within a consistent "high task, high people,"

participative, and developmental context while *providing inputs for subordinates' development in an individualized manner.*

Why Situationalism Is Still Popular

For the reasons mentioned in the preceding section, many academicians and practitioners disagree with situationalism and prefer to use Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid instead. In fact, according to a Grid International advertorial in *Business Week* (2004), Managerial Grid training was conducted for over 700 organizations and 250 multinational companies just during 2004 (and in thousands of companies since the 1950s). Even so, Hersey and Blanchard's situational model continues to be popular. Blake and Mouton (1982a) suggested various reasons, several of which are paraphrased here:

First, people, especially in the United States, now live in times that foster a "do your own thing" attitude. In situationalism, managers are free to use the style they think best under certain conditions. They are not encumbered by concerns for higher, more unified principles and ideals.

Second, because people are frustrated by the phenomenal complexity of the world (and of the organizations to which they belong), they seek simple, easy ways of doing things. Situationalism is simpler and easier to apply than the participative, developmental approach. Also, its use does not necessitate quite as extensive development of integrative, interpersonal, and group process skills as participative, developmental approaches require.

Third, many people rely on "common sense" rather than scientific concepts and principles. Unfortunately, to many people, common sense is not much more than what they have already learned or have become accustomed to doing. In our own view, situationalism seems to be commonsensical largely because it does not ask individuals at various levels in organizations to behave too differently than they are already behaving (because of the mechanistic or organic natures of their subordinates' tasks).

Fourth, when many individuals were children and adolescents, their parents behaved rather inconsistently toward them. They shifted from one style to another—for example, from parent (authoritarian) to child (permissive) to adult (more mature and participative). This has carried over into grown-up managers' approaches to dealing with various situations—that is, they behave differently in different circumstances rather than more consistently in most circumstances.

Fifth, situationalism provides some amount of freedom from having to make commitments. It enables managers to keep options open. We think it also gives them an opportunity to make excuses. If they cannot make a certain style work, they can say that it was not the right or best style instead of admitting that they may not have the motives, attitudes, knowledge, or skills required to make it work.

In addition, we see that individuals in many organizations—especially in traditionally mechanistic military and industrial organizations—resist the concept of participative management or leadership. This is largely because accepting, learning, and actually using participative approaches present tremendous challenges in terms of people's egos, abilities to change their own attitudes and behavior, abilities to deal with their organizational circumstances, and willingness to develop the requisite skills. Although situational (contingency) approaches may not have been purposefully designed to do so, we have the gnawing feeling that they introduce participative behavior in a way that makes such behavior more palatable to individuals who tend to resist the concept: (a) those who believe that some of their subordinates must be treated in a

more or less Theory X manner (because they seem to be unmotivated, unskilled, irresponsible, or untrustworthy); (b) those who are Theory X by nature and are unlikely to change their attitudes and behavior very quickly; (c) those who have never been exposed to participative practices and are not certain how well they will work; (d) those who need to acquire the necessary knowledge factors and skills and also need to develop a sense of security about their ability to apply them successfully; and (e) those who believe in participative management but will not be able to implement it fully until others in their organization begin to accept and implement it. Situationalism may allow these managers to adopt participative practices gradually and without feeling threatened by, in essence, saying to them, "OK, go ahead and behave toward your subordinates pretty much as you have been, but start making more use of modern management concepts and behavioral principles. Also, as your subordinates begin to show signs of increasing maturity, try (a) using participative practices with them and (b) delegating more authority to them. Then, as you develop more trust in your subordinates, begin to feel more secure about your own capabilities, get more accustomed to participation and delegation, and begin to experience the results that can be achieved, keep increasing the amounts of participative and delegating behavior."

TWO TRACKS TO ONE: COMBINING BOTH THEORIES INTO A SINGLE, SYNTHESIZED PERSPECTIVE

Hersey and Blanchard have done a commendable job of converting the descriptive Ohio State model into a highly developed prescriptive model. Nevertheless, anyone more accustomed to thinking about managerial styles in terms of Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid model will probably have some difficulty accepting Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model, for two main reasons: First and most obvious, the two models have dissimilar descriptions for similar style names. This difference and seeming conflict has caused confusion. Second and somewhat less obvious, Hersey and Blanchard's styles are not really styles in the same way that Blake and Mouton's are. Understanding the second reason leads to conceiving how "one best style" and situational theories can be integrated.

Consider McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y styles, Blake and Mouton's five distinctive styles, Likert's six Systems (1–4, 4T, and 5), and Miles's human resources and human relations approaches to actually be *approaches to management.* The most effective is the team, 9,9, participative, human resources, or HT,HP approach.

Then what are Hersey and Blanchard's "styles"? Rather than calling them *styles,* it might be more accurate and less confusing to call them *combinations of developmental task-related and socio-emotional inputs* (for developing people and achieving organizational objectives more or less within the context, spirit, and intent of the Theory Y style and the human resources approach). In other words, think of Hersey and Blanchard's four main combinations of developmental inputs as a more detailed description of the previously not-so-well-described developmental aspects of the participative (or developmental, team, or "high task, high people") approach. Reconciling the two style concepts in this way puts them back onto one track. Thus, they can coexist, with Hersey and Blanchard's developmental task- and relationship-oriented inputs constituting a developmental practices subset within the participative, developmental, or HT,HP approach.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL AND PARTICIPATIVE ASPECTS OF A HIGH TASK, HIGH PEOPLE APPROACH

Figure 11.1 differs somewhat from Hersey and Blanchard's model, but still takes account of several of their concepts and their emphasis on the development of subordinates. It extends others' earlier descriptions of HT,HP by describing in more specific terms what it takes to develop subordinates and increase their maturity with respect to greater self-direction and greater and more effective participation in management functions.

Aspects of an MD/OD Program for a Single Unit

In contrast to the organization-wide macro MD/OD program illustrated in Figure 1.1 on page 20, Figure 11.1 illustrates a micro program for developing immediate subordinates in one's unit both individually and as a group. Such a program can be made available to one or more units when an organization is either unwilling or unable to conduct an organization-wide program.

The horizontal axis is a time line. On the vertical axis are various types of developmental inputs (A through G), which are provided in varying degrees during Phase 2 and Phase 3.

Like the preparation phase in Figure 1.1, the first step of Phase 1 in Figure 11.1 involves orienting personnel to the project that will be conducted. During that orientation, participative and developmental concepts and high task, high people attitudes and behavior are initially explained to all personnel. Again, this orientation is extremely important, because managers cannot successfully introduce, develop, and maintain an HT,HP atmosphere without increasing subordinates' understanding, receptivity, acceptance, support, cooperation, participation, and team spirit—all of which are necessary in order to alleviate their suspicions, apprehension, and possible resistance.

Step 2 of Phase 1 corresponds to "Do unit and individual development planning" during the preparation phase in Figure 1.1. (Also see substeps 1.1 through 1.3 in "MD/OD Project Preparation Phase Steps and Guidelines" on the CD-ROM.) This step accentuates a manager's roles as leader and change agent by making him or her more directly responsible for (a) subordinates' further education and development and (b) their participation in identifying, planning, and implementing unit and organizational changes.

Common Elements of Unit and Organization-Wide MD/OD Programs

Phase 2 primarily involves training and education but also involves providing subordinates with other inputs that will help develop their attitudes, knowledge, and skills. It is implemented over a period of about one year (during the implementation of other organizational and unit plans) or perhaps longer if necessary. Phase 2 involves aspects A–G:

Aspect A: Training in specialized technical, functional, or professional knowledge and skills. This type of training may be key to organizational success. If management and personnel believe that it is necessary in the short term, it should be provided intensely over, say, several months. Such training is shown tapering off to a sustaining level in the intermediate and long term as new technologies, methods, and equipment are introduced within the organization.

It should be noted that aspects B–G should all be addressed in one way or another during Modules 1–7 of the organization-wide MD/OD project illustrated in Figure 1.1.

G

Improvement
of attitudes
and mental
faculties

F

Socio-emotional
support

E

Operational
information and advice

D

Procedural
information and advice

C

Experiential
learning
through
participation

B

Formal
integrative
training

A

Technical, functional, or professional training

Total (cumulative) development over time (maturity level)

Initial orientation to participative (Theory Y) style (and its implementation)

Initial development analysis and planning

| Phase 1 | Phase 2 (Aspects A–G) | Phase 3 - → |
| Step 1 | Step 2 | |

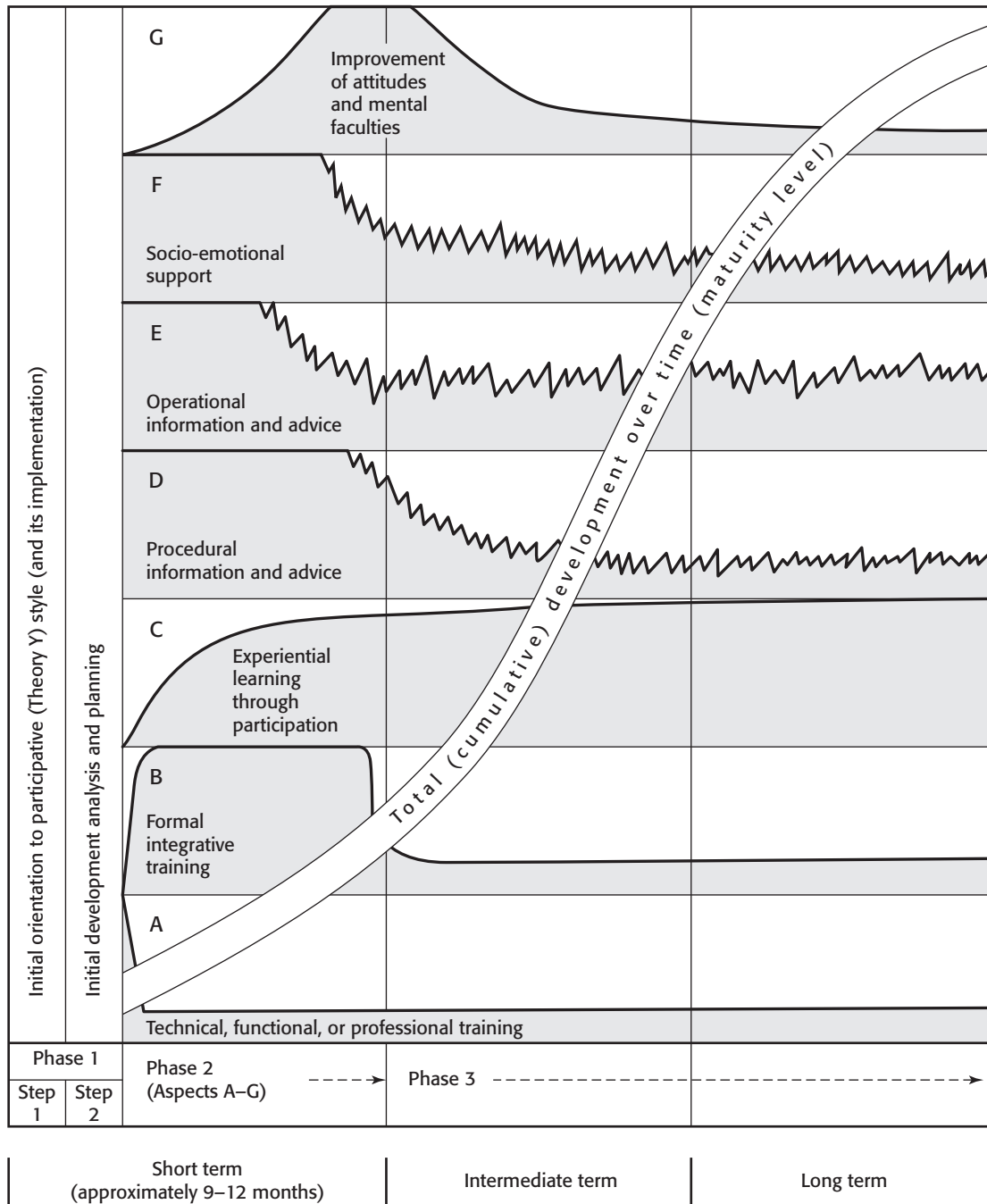| Short term (approximately 9–12 months) | Intermediate term | Long term |

Figure 11.1. Synergistic Inputs and Phased Developmental Activities for Developing Subordinates and a Participative Unit (or Organizational) Atmosphere

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Aspect B: Formal integrative (managerial or supervisory) education and development program. Next, an intense MD/OD program such as the one illustrated in Figure 1.1 is conducted for unit members over nine to twelve months (or possibly longer). It covers these areas: (a) managerial (integrative) functions and processes; (b) methods, tools, and procedures for performing those functions; (c) individual, organizational, and managerial behavior concepts; and (d) interpersonal skills (for example, interpersonal awareness, sensitivity, conflict resolution skills, and communication skills). Such a program is aimed at developing more functional integrative and interpersonal attitudes and higher levels of integrative and interpersonal skills. It can also be used as a vehicle for organization-wide development. This program also tapers off to a sustaining or reinforcing level in the intermediate and long terms, but it never drops to zero, because intermittent supplementary education or training usually becomes necessary as new integrative technologies, methods, and tools are instituted. Also, follow-up sessions can be used to keep concepts alive in people's minds, reinforce what they have learned, and further develop the associated skills.

Aspect C: Experiential learning through participation. During the MD/OD program illustrated in Figure 1.1, personnel participate in superior-subordinates discussion and OD sessions on how to use what they have been learning to improve themselves, their job performance, their interpersonal interactions, and the organization. As they participate in analytic, goal-setting, planning, problem-solving, and decision-making activities, they further develop knowledge and skills as they learn from the examples of superiors and their own application of the concepts, principles, and practices to which they have been introduced. As they are encouraged and enabled to be more self-directing and self-controlling, they further develop the associated knowledge and skills. Note that the intense education and skill development they are receiving helps accelerate their experiential learning. The more they were taught initially, the more they are able to learn subsequently. Although their accumulated experience (or maturity) grows rapidly in the short term, it eventually approaches a saturation level. Even so, it never hits 100 percent, because there is always more knowledge to acquire and more experience to gain through the application of what has been learned.

Aspect D: Procedural or methodological information and advice. So that subordinates will actually be able to apply their developing integrative knowledge and skills by participating in think-work processes (such as the superior-subordinates discussion and OD sessions) and thereby gain experience by doing, managers, consultants, or group process facilitators must provide them with whatever supplemental procedural or methodological information and advice they might need (for example, how to structure, perform, and participate in group think-work processes). Call it "on-the-job input" for effective self-management and team management. Guiding subordinates in this manner contributes to their knowledge, enables them to participate more effectively, and helps ensure that they will experience greater success and job satisfaction. Notice that the flow of such information never fades to zero. There is always some amount of additional information—a sustaining level—that can help subordinates manage themselves and participate in both unit and organizational integration more effectively.

Aspect E: Operational information and advice. For the same reasons cited in the preceding paragraph, managers, consultants, or group process facilitators must also provide subordinates with operating information and advice such as the following: (a) guideline goals, plans, and budgets for the unit and for specific jobs; (b) information on organizational and unit systems; (c) data necessary to perform think-work tasks on their own; (d) feedback concerning their performance or results; and (e) advice on how to perform specific tasks even better. Many of these inputs are contained in an organization's central database. Often, however, a manager must make

sure that these types of information are getting directly to subordinates in a proper format and timely manner. Such inputs can be used by subordinates to plan individual activities, coordinate group activities, monitor and evaluate their individual and group performance, and work together to solve problems of mutual concern. Again, notice that the flow of this information never drops to zero. There is always a sustaining level of information that subordinates need in order to manage themselves and their job-related interactions with others effectively.

Aspect F: Socio-emotional support. During the intense first year of development, personnel are expanding their skills in order to deal with increased responsibilities for self-management and mutual cooperation. Because they are experiencing great change, they need considerable socio-emotional support—what Hersey and Blanchard called "relationship behavior" (described in Chapter Eight). Personnel need encouragement to take on greater team think-work responsibilities. They need constructive feedback when they make mistakes, so that they will not make the same mistakes again. They need positive feedback and reinforcement when they have put forth maximum effort, used their capabilities to the fullest, and performed their responsibilities in a praiseworthy manner. They need support when nonpersonal forces thwart their efforts. They may need emotional support as personnel changes involving superiors, colleagues, and subordinates occur. They may need consoling when events in their personal lives are getting them down. Note that after the initial intense period during Phase 2, the level of this type of input also tends to taper off to a sustaining level, but again, it never goes to zero. People need occasional emotional support, because change is inevitable and problems always seem to keep cropping up.

Aspect G: Improvement of attitudes and mental faculties. The top category is essentially the development of more functional attitudes and improved abilities that will increase individuals' and groups' learning and thinking effectiveness (for example, inclinations to be more analytical and creative, and mental capabilities involved in perception, memory, class logic, and propositional logic). The rise between Phase 2 and Phase 3 indicates a surge in training in such areas. Because these areas are rather complex, let us simply point out here that as people apply integrative and interpersonal concepts, methods, and tools, they are, in fact, developing more functional integrative and interpersonal attitudes and are further developing the brain's circuitry for better learning and thinking.

All of these inputs are important to personnel's overall development. Note that, as inputs are provided and attitudes and capabilities are further developed, the cumulative development over time is constantly increasing. In other words, not only is maturity with respect to the technical aspects of tasks increasing, but equally, if not more important, maturity with respect to integrative and interpersonal attitudes, knowledge, and skills is also growing rapidly and accumulating over time.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Chapter Eight described various managerial or leadership styles. Chapters Nine and Ten explained nonpersonal and personal influences that tend to underlie the use of those styles. This chapter described a micro approach for developing immediate subordinates, many aspects of which also apply to developing an organization as a whole. Chapter Twelve discusses the implications of all these socio-technically related inputs for designing and conducting organization-wide, integrated management development and organization development projects.