



GOVERNMENT

32,000+

EMPLOYEES



STATEWIDE
ROLLOUT



Government

a Situational Leadership® Success Story



At a Glance

In few other professions does leadership have such a profound impact as that of law enforcement. Keeping the peace, upholding the law and protecting the public are some of their overarching duties where split-second decisions can either exacerbate or diffuse a given situation. These weighty tasks require leaders with the skills to direct or embolden others when the circumstances dictate to produce adept performers and positive outcomes.

To that end, our client, a statewide provider of criminal justice training, delivers professional development to an estimated 11,000 law enforcement leaders annually. Recognizing the intrinsic relationship between human skills and effective influence, they use Situational Leadership® to enhance officers' ability to curtail crime and safeguard citizens while fulfilling their responsibility and commitment to their communities.

Challenge

- Build leadership development competencies into existing curriculum
- Supplement technical aptitude with human and conceptual skills development
- Remain competitive in attracting and maintaining exemplary talent
- Preserve human capital investment

Results

- Updated curriculum to include two CLS courses
- Trained internal client instructors to teach CLS courses
- Applied Situational Leadership® to personal and professional development
- Reduced insurance payouts for the organization

Solution

- Fortify existing training program with the Situational Leadership® methodology
- Provide Situational Leadership® training for client instructors
- Institute foundational leadership development course
- Portray leadership in action with case study practice

Products

- *Situational Leadership®: Building Leaders*
- *Situational Leadership®: A Case Study Approach*

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The Challenge

Historically, the client offered two week-long supervisory courses (I and II) that included a summary of the attributes of great leaders but overlooked the process for developing them. According to the client trainer, “This left them hungry for more,” resulting in some participants seeking leadership development opportunities elsewhere. Others ended their learning journey after the first supervisory course because they believed they had “already received everything they needed.” Acknowledging the potential to optimize the program, the client commissioner at the time sought to include leadership development offerings to build those competencies as well.

In addition, the client recognized that their program concentrated disproportionately on technical proficiencies relevant to their specialized trainee population. As such, the development of human skills was largely untapped, affirming the need for a leadership model anchored to them. For leaders promoted to their position because of tactical expertise, the ability to deftly communicate, guide their personnel or “get out of their way” warranted further development and a straightforward, versatile tool for doing so.

With an estimated \$150,000 investment per officer, the state also sought to populate its workforce with high-caliber recruits as well as retain its seasoned personnel. The client trainer described the difficulty in selecting talent who not only meet the background and physical requirements but who exhibit outstanding performance. Featuring leadership development training would entice qualified top-tier applicants to join the state’s law enforcement agencies with opportunities for advancement and engage incumbent officers with the appropriate amount of direction or support.

Undoubtedly, positive results are imperative to the safety of law enforcement professionals and the public they serve. Understanding that on- and off-duty events can affect performance, the client desired a leadership framework rooted in empathy and accountability. To help law enforcement leaders empower and influence their reporting officers’ performance successfully, they needed a proven diagnostic process that would inform their approach to coaching and setting performance expectations through stages of both development and regression.

To address these challenges, the client selected the venerable and reputable champion of leadership development training, The Center for Leadership Studies (CLS) and the Situational Leadership® methodology, beginning a decades-long relationship of preparing exceptional leaders.

“The credibility of
Situational Leadership®
has lasted the time test.”

- Client Training Instructor

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The Solution

Between 1998 and 2003, the client organization updated their offerings to integrate Situational Leadership® into an eight-week criminal justice development program, setting the “foundation for developing” their people and building leadership fluency. In 2003, after further honing their curriculum, the agency debuted a three-week academy for first-line supervisors with *Situational Leadership®: Building Leaders* spearheading the learning event.

As CLS’ cornerstone program, *Situational Leadership®: Building Leaders* introduces the Situational Leadership® Model and the critical elements for intentional and constructive coaching. Armed with a combination of experience and education, internal client trainers attend two week-long training sessions on Situational Leadership®, perform teach-backs and obtain other mandated certifications to become state instructors.

On the first day of the academy, participants complete a challenge course in which the trainers “use Situational Leadership® to teach Situational Leadership®.” Knowing it will be explored in the classroom later, the trainers assess the participants’ Performance Readiness® and provide task direction or support, debriefing after each activity. As the participants improve, the trainers adhere to the Situational Leadership® development process of reducing task and relationship behavior. The following day in Situational Leadership® discussions, participants are asked to draw on their challenge course perceptions of the trainers’ guidance or encouragement. This method tangibly illustrates the disconnect between indiscriminate coaching and successful results, enabling participants to internalize the logic of Situational Leadership® related to their firsthand experience.

For complementary practice, the client employs *Situational Leadership®: A Case Study Approach* during weeks two and three of the academy. Based on the movie, “*Twelve O’Clock High*,” the case study immerses participants in a dramatic scenario of human conflict during World War II. Familiar aspects, such as chain of command, technical ability and regulatory compliance, resonate with the client’s student base. Through the film’s character development, they see organizational commitment, accountability and empathy as the cast influences each other, providing a visual example of leadership in action.

As a passionate advocate of Situational Leadership®, the client trainer believes it “truly is the foundation of leadership.” Attributing the training’s success to the longevity and credibility of the Situational Leadership® Model, the client asserts it “instills confidence in the user.”



“When you break it down
to its simplest terms,
it really does have an
immediate impact.”

- Client Training Instructor

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The Results

- Integrated *Situational Leadership®: Building Leaders* and *Situational Leadership®: A Case Study Approach* into existing curriculum
- Provides participants with 400 to 500 hours of leadership development training
- Grew training enrollment from fewer than 100 to 1,800 participants
- Attributes fewer insurance payouts to Situational Leadership® training

With the integration of *Situational Leadership®: Building Leaders* and *Situational Leadership®: A Case Study Approach* to the supervisor's academy curriculum, enrollment surged from fewer than 100 people to 1,800. Participants now receive about 400 to 500 hours of leadership education and praise Situational Leadership® as the "most eye-opening and enjoyable" portion of their training. Their positive feedback includes statements such as, "This stuff works!" and, "I wish my chief had gone through this to help the organization advance and excel." The client trainer also reports participant discussions of Performance Readiness® and appropriate amounts of leader involvement.

As evidenced by the favorable response from participants, *Situational Leadership®: Building Leaders* has changed the way they think and speak about performance, putting the onus on the leaders to improve the performers. *Situational Leadership®: A Case Study Approach* demonstrates for participants that, despite rank, an individual working with key people can move an organization forward. The participants compliment the vignettes and glean from them, "If I lead with empathy, I can really have an impact on people." Additionally, the opportunity to partake in leadership development training provides incentive for agency rookies and a boon for veteran officers, reflecting their value to the organization and its desire to make them the best.

The client trainer considers what participants learn to be applicable for supporting the well-being of officers as well. An example the client shared concerned a motivated, top performer whose attitude and willingness had faltered. The supervisor, having been trained in the Situational Leadership® process, recognized this as regression and uncovered the cause was emotional personal trauma. Consulting the Situational Leadership® Model for guidance, the supervisor took action, supported the officer with high amounts of relationship behavior and witnessed the officer's behavior and demeanor improve, circumventing any potential self-harm or on-duty errors by distraction.

Moreover, the benefit of Situational Leadership® training has not gone unnoticed outside of the organization either. Their insurance provider has observed a decrease in the rate of payouts for the client as compared to other agencies without Situational Leadership® training. The client trainer deems this is because Situational Leadership® has suffused their leaders with the confidence to proactively intervene and prevent mistakes.

Throughout the organization's more than 20-year commitment to leadership, the client has refined their curriculum and reaped the benefits of using Situational Leadership®. As their preferred vendor, we are proud to continue their leadership training legacy by preparing the law enforcement leaders of tomorrow.

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