### Leadership at a Glance

A leader is crucial to the success of every team. Take an orchestra, for instance, one that consists of all the best musicians in the world but lacks a conductor. Even though every member of the orchestra can play perfectly by themselves, they will only produce an incompatible melody in the absence of a conductor. The same concept applies to communities, [companies](https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/finance/corporate-structure/), and countries. Without a leader, nothing will ever run smoothly.

So, what makes leaders who they are? Why are some people elected as managers and presidents while the rest remain followers? Leadership theories were developed to find answers to these questions.

Leadership Theories

#### 1. Great Man Theory

According to the Great Man Theory (which should perhaps be called the Great Person Theory), leaders are born with just the right traits and abilities for leading – charisma, intellect, confidence, communication skills, and [social skills](https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/careers/soft-skills/interpersonal-skills/).

The theory suggests that the ability to lead is inherent – that the best leaders are born, not made. It defines leaders as valiant, mythic, and ordained to rise to leadership when the situation arises. The term “Great Man” was adopted at the time because leadership was reserved for males, particularly in military leadeTheorie

#### 2. Trait Theory

The Trait Theory is very similar to the Great Man Theory. It is founded on the characteristics of different leaders – both the successful and unsuccessful ones. The theory is used to predict effective leadership. Usually, the identified characteristics are compared to those of potential leaders to determine their likelihood of leading effectively.

Scholars researching the trait theory try to identify leadership characteristics from different perspectives. They focus on the physiological attributes such as appearance, weight, and height; demographics such as age, education, and familial background; and intelligence, which encompasses decisiveness, judgment, and knowledge.

#### 3. Contingency Theory

The Contingency Theory emphasizes different variables in a specific setting that determine the style of leadership best suited for the said situation. It is founded on the principle that no one leadership style is applicable to all situations.

Renowned leadership researchers [Hodgson and White](https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/7585108) believe that the best form of leadership is one that finds the perfect balance between behaviors, needs, and context. Good leaders not only possess the right qualities but they’re also able to evaluate the needs of their followers and the situation at hand. In summary, the contingency theory suggests that great leadership is a combination of many key variables.

[Fred Fiedler](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Fiedler)'s [contingency model](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiedler_contingency_model) focused on a contingency model of leadership in organizations. This model contains the relationship between leadership style and the favorable-ness of the situation. Fielder developed a metric to measure a leader's style called the Least Preferred Co-worker.[[6]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contingency_theory#cite_note-6) The test consists of 16-22 items they are to rate on a scale of one to eight as they think of a co-worker they had the most difficulty working with. A high score indicates the test taker is relational in style and a low score indicates the test taker is more task orientated in style. Situational favorable-ness was described by Fiedler in terms of three empirically derived dimensions:

1. Leader-member relationship – high if the leader is generally accepted and respected by followers
2. Degree of task structure – high if the task is very structured
3. Leader's position power – high if a great deal of authority and power are formally attributed to the leader's position

Situations are favorable to the leader if all three of these dimensions are high.

How to apply Fiedler’s Contingency Model:

1. Understand your leadership style - this information can be obtained by completing a Least-Preferred Co-Worker Scale. Low LPC indicates a task-oriented leader and high LPC indicates a relationship-oriented leader
2. Understand your situation - you have to describe your situation using the empirically derived dimensions
3. Decide which leadership style is best - this is mostly determined by which characteristics of a certain situation are low, unstructured, or poor, so the best fit leader can come in and make that characteristic better in that circumstance