

## Leadership Styles

*"We must be the change we want to see in the world." Gandhi.*

Leadership style is crucial to success. We find leadership all around us. Leadership can be found in the world of business, sports, politics, religion, community, and home. Leaders must respond to the rapidly changing world and meet the challenges it demands.

Leadership style is defined as the manner and approach of influencing others by providing direction and motivation, while operating to accomplish a purpose in life or a mission to improve society or organisation.

From Mahatma Gandhi to Winston Churchill to Martin Luther King and to the present day, there are as many leadership styles as there are leaders. Fortunately, business people and psychologists have developed useful and simple ways to describe the main styles of leadership.

Understanding different leadership styles and their impact will help aspiring leaders become more effective leaders. Your leadership styles assessment is essential on this journey.

### *Using the Right Style for the Situation*

In 1930s famed psychologist Kurt Lewin identified three classic styles of leadership: Autocratic; Democratic; and Laissez-Faire.

Autocratic Style is an authoritarian form of leadership where one person makes the decisions.

Democratic Style is participatory and often most effective. Team members feel in control of their own destiny when included in the decision-making process.

Laissez-Faire Style is to minimize the leader's involvement in decision-making hence allowing the people to make their own decisions although the leader may still be responsible for the outcome.

Many studies carried out on leadership theories have identified a multiplicity of styles beyond the Lewin three.

These studies have described many leadership styles, and some are confined to fit within particular systems.

A summary of some of the leadership styles observed are listed below:

1. ENNEAGRAM Leadership Styles: Idealist, Mentor, Star, Innovator, Synthesizer, Partner, Futurist, Advocate, and Diplomat.
2. Daniel Goleman in Primal Leadership, describe six styles that have different effects on the emotions of the target followers: Coaching, Affiliative, Pacesetter, Democratic, Visionary, and Commanding.
3. A listing associated with the works of Andrew Dubrin: Autocratic, Charismatic, Democratic, Laissez-faire, People-Oriented, Servant, Task-Oriented, Transactional, Transformational, and Using the Right Style – Situational.
4. Leadership Styles for Managerial Effectiveness: Deserter, Missionary, Autocratic, Compromiser, Bureaucratic, Developer, Benevolent Autocratic, and Executive.
5. Bill Hybels in his book, Courageous Leadership, lays out ten leadership styles: Visionary, Directional, Strategic, Managing, Motivational, Shepherding, Team-building, Entrepreneurial, Re-engineering, and Bridge-building.

In the next following articles we shall define and look at the applications of these leadership styles in depth. The question for success is whether the style the leader is applying will influence his followers to be happily more productive within the operating environment.

It is wise to note that no style reflects better leadership capabilities than any other. There are equally successful as well as ineffective leaders within each style.

These are styles, not types. Any leader can use any style, and a good mix, customised to the situation, is generally the most effective approach.

It is for this reason that many good leaders use the style or a combination of styles that best fits the situation or developmental stage of the organisation. Let us take note of an organisation growth cycle.

Start-Up – Incubation Stage (Imagine and Inspire) or starting stage of an organisation requires a leader with a lot of determina-

tion to face the obstacles sure to beset any fledgling organisation. Leadership styles with the tenacity to get the idea off the ground. Can the dream be realized?

Adolescent – Growing Stage (Found and Frame) as the organisation gathers momentum; it may need to shift its attention to cementing the bonds of its team or bonding with the constituents. How are we going to pull this off?

Mature – Sustainability Stage (Ground and Grow) a mentor can step in to help one of the idea-centred leaders to construct the structure that will give the organisation its identity, service niche, standards, and its culture. In this stage the organisation should be establishing a sustainable strategic position in the field of service or ministry. How can we build this to be viable?

Stagnation & Renewal Stage (Produce and Sustain) is when facing many challenges of reaching goals and the services seem stale. This will need a leadership style that is analytical and will encourage renewal change to keep it from stalling and stagnating. How can the momentum be sustained? Decline & Shut-Down or Rebirth Stage (Review and Renew) is when conflicts and nothing major happening, and 'as always has been'. Requires a re-engineering style to institute change even a rebirth or else the organisation is laid to rest. What do we need to redesign?

While the situational and transformational leadership approaches are often highly effective, there's no one "right" way to lead or manage that fits all situations. To choose the most effective approach for the organisation leadership, consider the following: The skill levels and experience of your team; the work involved (routine, or new and creative); the organisational environment (stable or radically changing, conservative or adventurous); your own preferred or natural style.

Good leaders often switch instinctively between styles, according to the people, the task, and situation. Establish trust and balance the needs of the organisation against the needs of your team.