

Leadership Styles

When developing your leadership skills, one must soon confront an important practical question, "What leadership styles work best for me and my organization?" To answer this question, it's best to understand that there are many from which to choose and as part of your leadership development effort, you should consider developing as many leadership styles as possible.

Three Classic Leadership Styles

One dimension of has to do with control and one's perception of how much control one should give to people. The laissez faire style implies low control, the autocratic style high control and the participative lies somewhere in between.

The Laissez Faire Leadership Style

The style is largely a "hands off" view that tends to minimize the amount of direction and face time required. Works well if you have highly trained and highly motivated direct reports.

The Autocratic Leadership Style

The style has its advocates, but it is falling out of favor in many countries. Some people have argued that the style is popular with today's CEO's, who have much in common with feudal lords in Medieval Europe.

The Participative Leadership Style

It's hard to order and demand someone to be creative, perform as a team, solve complex problems, improve quality, and provide outstanding customer service. The style presents a happy medium between over controlling (micromanaging) and not being engaged and tends to be seen in organizations that must innovate to prosper.

Determining the Best Leadership Style

Situational Leadership. In the 1950s, management theorists from Ohio State University and the University of Michigan published a series of studies to determine whether leaders should be more task or relationship (people) oriented. The importance of the research cannot be overestimated since leaders tend to have a dominant style; a leadership style they use in a wide variety of situations.

Surprisingly, the research discovered that there is no one best style: leaders must adjust their leadership style to the situation as well as to the people being led.

The Emergent Leadership Style

Contrary to the belief of many, groups do not automatically accept a new "boss" as leader. We see a number of ineffective managers who didn't know the behaviors to use when one taking over a new group.

The Transactional Leadership Style

The primary focus of this leadership style is to make change happen in:

- **Our Self,**
- **Others,**
- **Groups, and**
- **Organizations**

- Charisma is a special leadership style commonly associated with transformational leadership. While extremely powerful, it is extremely hard to teach.
- Visionary Leadership, The leadership style focuses on how the leader defines the future for followers and moves them toward it.

From the short review above, one can see that there are many different aspects to being a great leader; a role requiring one to play many different leadership styles to be successful.

