

Leadership Styles

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Introduction

What does leadership mean to you? Every business owner and CEO wants to be a good leader, but how can you be a good leader if you don't know what leadership really is?

Unfortunately, leadership doesn't have a one-size-fits-all definition. We all have our own ideas about what it means to be a good leader. For example, some people think leadership means guiding others to complete a particular task, while others believe it means motivating the members of your team to be their best selves.

Business News Daily asked 30 business owners and experts to define what leadership means to them. Their ideas may just lead you to create your own definition of leadership.

"Leadership is having a vision, sharing that vision and inspiring others to support your vision while creating their own." – *Mindy Gibbins-Klein, founder, REAL Thought Leaders*

"Leadership is the ability to guide others without force into a direction or decision that leaves them still feeling empowered and accomplished." – *Lisa Cash Hanson, CEO, Snuggwugg*

"Effective leadership is providing the vision and motivation to a team so they work together toward the same goal, and then understanding the talents and temperaments of each individual and effectively motivating each person to contribute individually their best toward achieving the group goal." – *Stan Kimer, president, Total Engagement Consulting by Kimer*

A true leader is secure in creating a framework that encourages others to tap into their own skills and ideas and freely contribute to the whole of the project or company." – *Judy Crockett, owner, Interactive Marketing & Communication*

Leadership is an influential process. The leader is in a position to shape, regulate, control and change the attitudes, behaviour and performance of his group members.

The latter are supposed to comply with the former's desires and directives and partially suspend their own judgment and discretion. There exists a particular relationship between the leader and his group members which is characterised by interpersonal and social interaction.



Importance of Leadership:

The following points highlight the importance of leadership:

(i) Effective direction:

An organisation comes into existence with certain objectives. To attain the objectives, the activities of the organisation must be directed. Direction of the activities is effected through leadership. In short, effective leadership directs the activities of an organisation towards the attainment of the specified organisational goals.

(ii) Source of motivation:

Leadership is the motivating power to group efforts. Effective leadership motivates the subordinates for higher productivity.

(iii) Confidence:

Leadership creates confidence in-the subordinates by giving proper guidance and advice.

(iv) High morale:

Good leadership increases the morale of the employees which, in turn, contributes to higher productivity.

(v) Development of team spirit:

Effective leadership promotes team-spirit and teamwork which is quite essential for the success of any organisation.

(vi) Encouraging initiative:

A progressive, forward and democratic minded leader, always encourages initiative on the part of the followers.

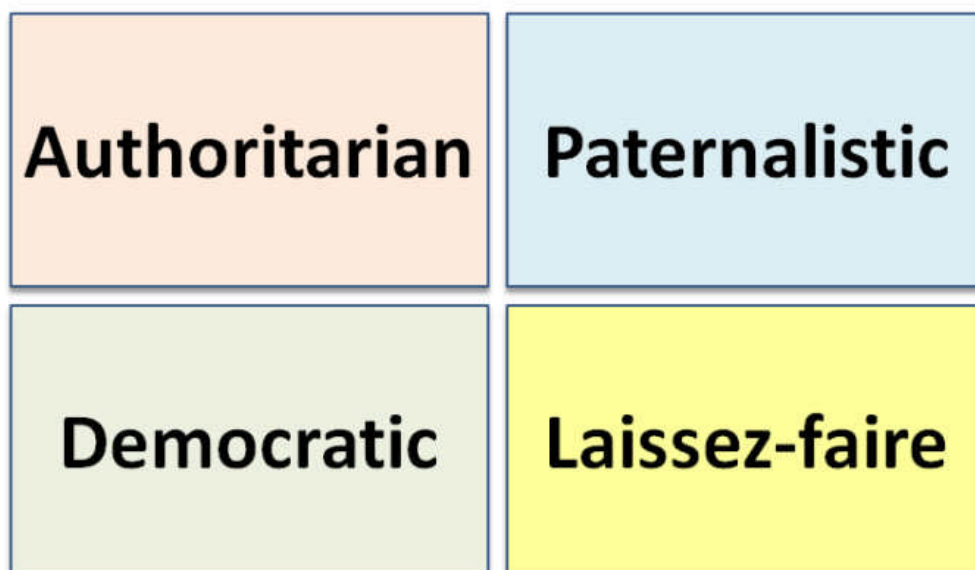
(vii) Overcoming resistance to change:

A leader overcomes resistance, if any on the part of followers to organisational changes; through explaining to them the utility of such changes to both—the enterprise and the employees.

Leadership styles:

The following are main types of leadership styles:

- (1) Autocratic Leadership Style
- (2) Paternalistic Leadership Style
- (3) Democratic Leadership Style
- (4) Laissez-faire Leadership Style





Autocratic Leadership Style : This style is also known as the leader-centred style. Under this style, the leader keeps all the authority centred in his hands and the employees have to perform the work exactly as per his orders. If any employee is careless in his work performance, he is punished. The **authoritarian leadership style** or **autocratic leader** keeps strict, close control over followers by keeping close regulation of policies and procedures given to followers. To keep main emphasis on the distinction of the authoritarian leader and their followers, these types of leaders make sure to only create a distinct **professional** relationship. Direct **supervision** is what they believe to be key in maintaining a successful environment and follower ship. In fear of followers being unproductive, authoritarian leaders keep close supervision and feel this is necessary in order for anything to be done. Authoritarian leadership styles often follow the vision of those that are in control, and may not necessarily be compatible with those that are being led. Authoritarian leaders have a focus on efficiency, as other styles, such as a democratic style, may be seen as a hindrance on progress.

Examples of authoritarian communicative behavior: a police officer directing traffic, a teacher ordering a student to do his or her assignment, and a supervisor instructing a subordinate to clean a workstation. All of these positions require a distinct set of characteristics that give the leader the position to get things in order or get a point across. Authoritarian Traits: sets goals individually, engages primarily in one-way and downward communication, controls discussion with followers and donates interaction

Several studies have confirmed a relationship between **bullying**, on the one hand, and an autocratic leadership and an authoritarian way of settling **conflicts** or dealing with disagreements, on the other. An authoritarian style of leadership may create a **climate of fear**, where there is little or no room for dialogue and where complaining may be considered futile.

The leader does not decentralise his authority for the fear of losing his importance. Consequently, the responsibility of the success or failure of management remains with the manager.

Characteristics

Following are the characteristics of the autocratic leadership style:

(i) Centralised Authority:

In this style, a manager is not prepared to share his authority and responsibility with others. Consequently, all the authority of work performance remains centralised.

(ii) Single-man Decisions:

In this style of leadership, the manager himself takes all the decisions. He takes it for granted that he does not need any other individual.

(iii) Wrong Belief regarding Employees:

The manager is a victim of the thinking that the employees do not work when motivated by love and they require hard control. Impelled by this thought, managers take the help of the centralised leadership style.

(iv) Only Downward Communication:

The thinking and suggestions of the employees are meaningless in this style of leadership. Therefore, the communication is only downward which means that the managers only tell them their ideas but do not listen to the employees' ideas.

Advantages

The autocratic leadership style has the following advantages:

(i) Quick and Clear Decisions:

Because of the centralised authority all the decisions are taken by a single individual and hence there is no unnecessary delay and the decisions are comparatively clear.

(ii) Satisfactory Work:

Since the work performance of the employees is under strict control, the quantity and quality of the work happen to be satisfactory.

(iii) Necessary for Less Educated Employees:

This style is very useful for the less educated and persons of less understanding. They have no capability of taking decisions because of little education. The employees of this category can only work and not take decisions.

Disadvantages

This style has the following disadvantages:

(i) Lack of Motivation:

This style does not motivate the managers but it lowers the morale of the employees. This is natural because working in an environment of fear does lower their morale.

(ii) Agitation by Employees:

Since the employees are not given any participation in taking decisions, they are turned into machines working like machines incapable of doing anything of their own. Similarly, managers can make the employees do as they wish. The employees consider such a leadership style as uninteresting and oppose it.

(iii) Possibility of Partiality:

Since all the authority is centralised in a single individual, he tries to please his favourites and flatterers by giving them work of less laborious nature. Such a partiality creates a feeling of bitterness and anger among the employees.

Evaluation

On the basis of the above-mentioned advantages and disadvantages, it can be asserted that this style is not practical. The chief aim of leadership is to motivate the employees so as to make them to follow the leader. This aim is not fulfilled in this case. Hence, this leadership style cannot be called more useful.

2) Paternalistic Leadership style

The way a Paternalistic leader works is by acting as a father figure by taking care of their subordinates as a parent would. In this style of leadership the leader supplies complete concern for his followers or workers. In return he receives the complete trust and loyalty of his people. Workers under this style of leader are expected to become totally committed to what the leader believes and will not strive off and work independently. The relationship between these co-workers and leader are extremely solid. The workers are expected to stay with a company for a longer period of time because of the loyalty and trust. Not only do they treat each other like family inside the work force, but outside too. These workers are able to go to each other with any problems they have regarding something because they believe in what they say is going to truly help them.

One of the downsides to a paternalistic leader is that the leader could start to play favourites in decisions. This leader would include the workers more apt to follow and start to exclude the ones who were less loyal. In today's market paternalism is more



difficult to come by according to Padavic and Earnest who wrote “business dimensional and Organizational Counselling.” They believe this because there have become more lay-offs and stronger unionization. This affects paternalistic leaders because the co-workers may not believe that their jobs are 100% ensured. When this happens, workers begin to look for bigger and better job opportunities instead of staying at one company for a longer period of time. Because of this, the leader may be thinking that you could be leaving and not fully believe you when you tell them something about a job opportunity. This could put the workers and leader at risk for a bad situation. According to B. M. Bass who wrote *Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations*, workers who follow paternalistic leadership also have better organization skills. The leader encourages organization because they allow the workers to complete tasks so that they can stay on top of their work. The workers complete tasks this boosts self-confidence and it makes them work harder to reach a goal and exceed the goal to prove to their boss they are working hard. Having this style of leadership can also help implement a reward system. This system will allow their workers to work even better because there is something for them at the end of the tunnel. While doing this they will also be able to accomplish more work in a set time frame.

Characteristics:

- (i) Better organisation skills: paternalistic leadership have better organisation skills.
- (ii) Trust and loyalty: there is complete trust and loyalty among employees.
- (iii) Increase the self confidence: this leadership increases the self confidence among employees.

Advantages:

- (i) Motivates employees: due to increase in self confidence it motivates employees.
- (ii) More trust on employees: there is more trust and loyalty among employees.

Disadvantages:

- (i) Leader become more partial: the leader became more partial and shows some time favouritism.
- (ii) Exclude the employee who is less loyal.

(3) Democratic Leadership Style

This style is also known as group-centred leadership style. These days this leadership style is very much in vogue. Under this style, decisions regarding different works are

not taken by the manager alone but they are taken in consultation with the employees. This leadership style is based on decentralisation. The manager respects the suggestions made by his subordinates, and also makes efforts to fulfil their necessities. This style of leadership encompasses discussion, debate and sharing of ideas and encouragement of people to feel good about their involvement. The boundaries of democratic participation tend to be circumscribed by the organization or the group needs and the instrumental value of people's attributes (skills, attitudes, etc.). However, the democratic style of leadership still requires guidance and control by a specific leader. The democratic style demands the leader to make decisions on who should be called upon within the group and who is given the right to participate in, make and vote on decisions.

Traits of a Good Leader compiled by the Santa Clara University and the Tom Peters Group:

- Honest - Display sincerity, integrity, and candor in all your actions. Deceptive behaviour will not inspire trust.
- Competent - Base your actions on reason and moral principles. Do not make decisions based on childlike emotional desires or feelings.
- Forward-looking - Set goals and have a vision of the future. The vision must be owned throughout the organization. Effective leaders envision what they want and how to get it. They habitually pick priorities stemming from their basic values.
- Inspiring - Display confidence in all that you do. By showing endurance in mental, physical, and spiritual stamina, you will inspire others to reach for new heights. Take charge when necessary.
- Intelligent - Read, study, and seek challenging assignments.
- Fair-minded - Show fair treatment to all people. Prejudice is the enemy of justice. Display empathy by being sensitive to the feelings, values, interests, and well-being of others.
- Broad-minded - Seek out diversity.
- Courageous - Have the perseverance to accomplish a goal, regardless of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Display a confident calmness when under stress.
- Straightforward - Use sound judgment to make a good decisions at the right time.
- Imaginative - Make timely and appropriate changes in your thinking, plans, and methods. Show creativity by thinking of new and better goals, ideas, and solutions to problems. Be innovative.

Research has found that this leadership style is one of the most effective and creates higher productivity, better contributions from group members and increased group



morale. Democratic leadership can lead to better ideas and more creative solutions to problems because group members are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas. While democratic leadership is one of the most effective leadership styles, it does have some potential downsides. In situations where roles are unclear or time is of the essence, democratic leadership can lead to communication failures and uncompleted projects. Democratic leadership works best in situations where group members are skilled and eager to share their knowledge. It is also important to have plenty of time to allow people to contribute, develop a plan and then vote on the best course of action.

Characteristics

Following are the characteristics of democratic leadership style:

(i) Cooperative Relations:

The chief characteristic of this style is the existence of cooperative relations among the managers and the employees. Participation in the management decisions gives the employees a feeling of self-respect, as a result of which the employees are always ready to be cooperative in every way.

(ii) Belief in Employees:

The managers inherently believe that the employees by nature want to work, do their work with interest, accept their responsibility and try to perform their work in a good manner. This faith of the managers in the employees increases their morale.

(iii) Open Communication:

This style encourages open communication among the managers and the employees. Open communication means both ways communication, meaning thereby that apart from saying their own thoughts the managers receive the suggestions of the employees with pleasure.

Advantages

Democratic leadership style has the following advantages:

(i) High Morale:

Under this style, the enthusiasm of the managers and the employees is sky-high. Both consider each other their well-wishers.

(ii) Creation of More Efficiency and Productivity:

Since the employees are participants in the decision making, they give full cooperation in implementing them. In this way their efficiency increases.

(iii) Availability of Sufficient Time for Constructive Work:

Under this leadership style, the workload of the managers gets decreased. By using their spare time constructively they make the development and expansion of the enterprise possible.

Disadvantages

Following are the disadvantages of the democratic leadership style:

(i) Requirement of Educated Subordinates:

The chief characteristic of this leadership style is that the subordinates are made partners in taking decisions, so much so that some little affairs are left to them. Such cooperation can be expected only from the educated employees.

(ii) Delay in Decisions:

It is clear that while taking decisions the subordinates are always consulted. This makes it a long process.

(iii) Lack of Responsibility in Managers:

Sometimes the managers try to evade responsibility by observing that the decisions were taken by the subordinates because they were made partners in taking some important decisions. Thus, they must be held responsible.

Evaluation

After having studied the merits and demerits of the democratic leadership style it can be said that only this style is really a practical leadership style. If all the employees are fully acquainted with this style after giving them training, this can be made more suitable.

4) LAISSEZ FAIRE LEADERSHIP STYLE

This leadership style is also described as Individual- centred style. In this style, the manager or the leader takes little interest in managerial functions and the subordinates are left on their own. It refers to that leadership style in which the leader gives his subordinates complete freedom to make decisions. The [laissez-faire](#) leadership style is where all the rights and power to make decisions is fully given to the worker. This was first described by Lewin, Lippitt, and White in 1938, along with the autocratic leadership and the democratic leadership styles. The laissez-faire style is sometimes described as a "hands off" leadership style because the leader delegates the tasks to their followers while providing little or no direction to the follow. If the leader withdraws too much from their followers it can sometimes result in a lack of productivity, cohesiveness, and satisfaction.

Laissez-faire leaders allow followers to have complete freedom to make decisions concerning the completion of their work. It allows followers a high degree of autonomy and [self-rule](#), while at the same time offering guidance and support when requested. The laissez-faire leader using guided freedom provides the followers with all materials necessary to accomplish their goals, but does not directly participate in decision making unless the followers request their assistance.

This is an effective style to use when:

- Followers are highly skilled, experienced, and educated.
- Followers have pride in their work and the drive to do it successfully on their own.
- Outside experts, such as staff specialists or consultants are being used.
- Followers are trustworthy and experienced.

This style should NOT be used when:

- Followers feel insecure at the unavailability of a leader.
- The leader cannot or will not provide regular feedback to their followers.

Characteristics

Following are the characteristics of the free-rein leadership style:

(i) Full Faith in Subordinates:

A prominent characteristic of this style is that the managers consider their subordinates capable, active and responsible individuals and have full faith in them.

(ii) Independent Decision-making System:

In this style, the management-related decisions are taken by the subordinates instead of the managers. They can, however, consult the managers.

(iii) Decentralisation of Authority:

This style is based on the principle of decentralisation. It means that the managers widely distribute their authority to enable every individual to determine his objective and make his plans accordingly. The managers only perform the function of coordination, direction and general control.

(iv) Self-directed, Supervisory and Controlled:

After having once explained the objectives, the only job of the manager is to interfere only in adverse situations. The supervision and control is done by the employees themselves.

Advantages

Free-rein leadership style has the following advantages:

(i) Development of Self-confidence in Subordinates:

When all the authority in their work performance is given to the employees, they become habituated in taking decisions which creates self-confidence in them. They start doing better work in future.

(ii) High-level Motivation:

When the manager gives the subordinates all the authority by showing full confidence in them they start considering themselves an important part of the concern.



In this way they start feeling that they are not a part of the enterprise but are the enterprise itself. With the onset of this feeling there is nothing left in their motivation.

(iii) Helpful in Development and Extension of the Enterprise:

The development and extension of an enterprise where this leadership style is adopted is at its climax. The reason for this is the time available with the managers to find out the possibilities of development and extension.

Disadvantages

This leadership style has the following disadvantages:

(i) Difficulty in Cooperation:

Since there is no close supervision and control by the managers everybody starts functioning independently. Some employees with opposite point of view become a hurdle in the attainment of objectives of other people.

Such people do not work themselves, nor can they see others work. It becomes difficult for the manager to establish coordination among such employees.

(ii) Lack of Importance of Managerial Post:

In this leadership style, the post of a manager is rendered less important because he does not make any plan, or take any decision or exercise any control.

(iii) Suitable only for Highly Educated Employees:

This style is useful only when every employee is fully educated so that the work can be assigned to him with full confidence. This leadership style is not suitable for leading uneducated or semi-educated people.

Evaluation

This style gives rise to the feelings of cooperation and self-respect among the employees on the one hand, while on the other hand, it cannot be adopted in all the situations because this style will be successful where only the educated people are to be provided leadership.

Its greatest weakness is that its use makes a leader or the manager unimportant. Hence, in conclusion it can be said that this leadership style is not practical in modern times.



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Hence, Leadership is not about finding ways to lead better or to motivate your team. It's about being there from the beginning as equals and becoming a mentor when they need you to be one.