Leadership Styles —Discover Your Best Fit   by Rhea Blanken, FASAE

Yoda said – "Do or do not. There is no try."   Go Experiment!

Choosing Your Best Leadership Look

Even when advertised, we know one size does not fit all in fashion and nor does one style of leadership fit all either. It is important to recognize that styles are not locked in place. Rather, they are malleable if we are aware of them, and willing to change our style as needed. We can develop our styles to manage circumstances and advance our intended goals. Styles can and do change over time. Just as parenting skills for a baby advance when the child becomes a teenager and advance even more when the child grows into an adult.

There is a time and place for all leadership styles—no style is either good or bad. It's how they are used that brings success or failure. If a leader has one tactic he or she relies most of the time, it is almost certain to develop into a pattern or behavior, in other words a *style*. If that one style is all she uses, the results will be limited. Which style to employ – What guides the choice? It often depends on: the individual personality and frame of mind of the person or persons being led; the leader's current frame of mind; the leader's goals or objectives; the real and imagined authority between the leader and those led (protocols, policies, laws, etc.); the importance and influence of time on the action the leader wants taken; and the commitment needed to complete any desired actions.

What Designed Your Leadership Style ?

Who are your leadership role models?   What do you admire about them?   How does this translate to your current leadership role?

Waking Up to More Leadership Styles

Leadership and management styles are not fixed in place with an individual's personality. One is not born with a skill set that establishes a leader. They are acquired beginning early in school and on the playground. Some develop "take-charge" attitudes; others make friends fast, while others are happy just to make the team. As time goes on, school, college, jobs and life experiences shape a leader's philosophy and psychology. We ask ourselves questions about working with others, setting goals, and managing results? Answers to these questions come through individual experiences and become one's "winning formula" for success. When circumstances and results reinforce our internal decisions, one's model for success becomes "the way it is". However, over time a leader may experience his *winning formula* not producing the results it previously had. The new challenges ahead are requiring new leadership actions, behaviors and communications. It's time to unlearn being the leader we have been and expose us to our unconscious limitations.

Louis R Mobley, Director of IBM's Executive School (1950s-60s), first alerted us to the need for forgetting books and lectures and to go play games. He recommended being in simulations to wake us up to our *comfort perimeters* and the limits we live in regarding our leadership. To Mobley, leadership is not an intellectual occurrence obtained by reading about it. He encouraged turning intellectual knowledge into habitual behavior, teaching that success comes 20% from knowledge and 80% from behavior. This demands experimentation, practice and learning lessons from successful and unsuccessful execution. For him, waking up to leadership included being responsible for one's impact on others, being accountable for the influence of one's leadership style. He pushed for a "radical revolution in consciousness" believing leadership lives in both "how" we think and act, not only in "what" we think.

And Don't Forget the Followers

Leadership and followership goes hand-in-hand. Followers create their leaders and leaders influence their followers. As we become more aware of the leader/follower makeup and the language we use— the more accountable we become for the impact and influence we have on others.
Explore: awareness of the leader/follower culture; language used by leader/follower; plus ceremonies and celebrations for leaders AND followers?

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Style	Behaviors	When to Use	Follower Impact
Charismatic Oprah	• Influences others thru sheer "leaderness" • Energetic, motivating others forward • Inspire passion from their teams • Focus can seem more on self, less on team	• Engage followers to be in action • Expand an organization's position • Motivate and raise morale of team	• Can create risk for project or group to collapse if leader leaves • Leader's feeling of invincibility can ruin a team • Team success seen directly connected to leader
Command & Control Tom Coughlin New York Giants head coach	• Follows the rules, and expects others to do • Demands immediate compliance • Top down interactions from sole decision maker	• Action is critical with no time for discussions • Times of real urgency—safety, financial, legal, HR/personnel, jump starting a turnaround, keeping critical deadlines	• If used too often, it limits other's time to develop their own leadership skills • Little chance between orders to debrief what learned before next encounter • If used too long it feels restrictive
Innovative Richard Branson Virgin Group	• Grasps the entire situation and goes beyond • Can see what is not working and brings a new thinking and action into play	• To break open entrenched, intractable issues • To create a work climate for others to apply innovative thinking to solve problems, create new products and services	• Risk taking is increased for all • Failures don't impede progress • Job satisfaction and enjoyment exist • Respect for other's ideas present
Laissez-faire Donna Karan founder of DKNY	• Knows what is happening but not directly involved in it • All are trusted to keep their word • Monitors performance, gives regular feedback	• Leader is frequently out of HQ • Team is virtual • Aspects of project, under co-leaders, must come together by a specific date • Need for quick results from cohesive team	• Effective when team is skilled, experienced, self-starters in use of time/resources • Gives team members and individuals lots of autonomy, leads to high job satisfaction and increased productivity
Pace Setter Jeff Bezos Amazon	• Sets very high performance standards for themselves and their group • Epitomize behaviors seeking from others	• Staff are self-motivated & highly skilled, new projects embraced & ideas move w/speed • When action is key and results critical	• Cannot be sustained for a long time, staff often "burns out" from demanding pace expected • Delivers results at speed staff can't always keep up
Servant Herb Kelleher, SW Airlines co-founder & former CEO	• Leads by example with integrity and generosity • Puts service to others before self-interest • Values human equality, aims to promote greatness in services to others • Appreciates and trusts others	• When anyone from group, meets the needs of the team • Everyone is included in decision-making • Leader stays out of limelight, lets team get credit for the results • Most practical when leader is elected	• Focuses on what is in one's ability to do, lends a hand and provides tools to get the job done • Their organizations listed on "best places to work" • Can create a positive culture, lead to high morale • Ill-suited if time calls for quick decisions or meeting tight deadlines
Situational Pat Summitt all-time NCAA winning coach	• Varies from one situation to another • Links leader's conduct w/group's readiness • Is directing and supportive, plus empowering and coaching	• Affected by the group, its issues, effectiveness, issues and deadlines • Where ongoing procedures need refinement, re-invention, or retirement	• Can be confusing if many changes are too broad all at once • Can lessen uncertainty as leader adapts applicable behavior…or not
Transforming Ben & Jerry (Cohen & Greenfield)	• Expects their team and group to transform even when/if it's uncomfortable • Counts on everyone giving their best • Serves as a role model for all involved	• Motivate by strengthening team optimism, enthusiasm, spirit, and commitment • To encourage group to pursue innovative and creative ideas and actions	• Can lead to high productivity and engagement from everyone on team • Team needs detailed-oriented people keeping actions moving, ensuring planned work is done