

Effective Leadership - What is your Leadership Style?

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Five styles of leadership can be easily identified. It is beneficial to recognize the various types of leadership and the strengths and weaknesses of each. The most effective leaders move among these styles, adopting the one that meets the needs of the moment. They can all become part of your leadership tools. Rank your most common style from 1 to 5.

_____ **Visionary** - This style is most appropriate when a group needs a new direction. Its goal is to move people towards a new set of shared dreams. Visionary leaders have a good idea where a group is going, but not how it will get there – setting people free to experiment and take calculated risks.

How it builds teamwork: Moves people toward shared dreams.

Impact on the attitude of others: Most often it is strongly positive.

When appropriate: When changes require a change, or when a clear direction is needed.

Weakness: This style requires an experienced leader with highly developed communication skills.

_____ **Coaching** - This one-on-one style focuses on developing individuals, showing them how to improve their performance, and helping to connect their goals to team or organizational goals. Coaching works best, with people who are self-starters and want to improve.

How it builds teamwork: Connects what a person wants with the team or organization's goals.

Impact on the attitude of others: Highly positive.

When appropriate: To help an person improve performance by building long-term capabilities.

Weakness: The person must be self-motivated to rise above previous levels of performance.

_____ **Democratic** - This style draws on people's knowledge and skills, and creates a group commitment to the resulting goals. It works best when the direction the team or organization should take is unclear and the leader needs to tap the collective wisdom of the group. A problem is that this approach can be disastrous in times of crisis, when urgent events demand quick decisions.

How it builds teamwork: Values a person's input and gets commitment through participation.

Impact on the attitude of others: Usually positive.

When appropriate: To get valuable input from others.

Weakness: People must have a sufficient knowledge base to offer meaningful input.

_____ **Pacesetter** - In this style, the leader sets high standards for performance. He or she is obsessive about doing things better and faster, and asks the same of everyone. This style should be used sparingly, because it can undercut morale and make people feel as if they are failing.

How it builds teamwork: It sets challenging and exciting goals.

Impact on the attitude of others: When it is poorly executed it can be very negative.

When appropriate: To get high-quality results from others who are motivated.

Weakness: Too often, the leader tries to do too much.

_____ **Authoritative** - This is classic model of "military" style leadership – probably the most often used, but the least often effective. Because it rarely involves praise and frequently employs criticism. It undercuts morale and team unity. It is most effective in a crisis, when an urgent turnaround is needed. Even the modern military has come to recognize its limited usefulness.

How it builds teamwork: Soothes fears by giving clear direction in an emergency.

Impact on climate: Because it is often misused it is often highly negative.

When appropriate: In a crisis, to kick-start a turnaround, or with problem people.

Weakness: Use sparingly, and be sure to exercise emotional self-control.