

Types of Management Leadership Styles

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Management leadership is about finding ways to meet the needs of your employees and of your organization. There is no single correct management leadership style -- the best leadership style is the one that meets the challenges you are facing and the needs of the people you are leading. Effective leaders are often flexible and are able to change their style of leadership to suit changing circumstances.

Classic Styles

Classic styles of leadership describe how much control the leader gives to those below her. For example, in a laissez-faire style of leadership, the manager gives little direction to subordinates and allows them to get on with things. This style works best when employees are highly trained and motivated. In contrast, an autocratic style of leadership is one where leaders exert control over most aspects of the work and give little scope for workers to make suggestions or think for themselves. The participative leadership style stresses teamwork and invites employees to work together to help solve problems and increase performance.

Transformational Styles

The theory of a transformational style of leadership was first developed by academics James McGregor Burns and Bernard Bass, who described in their books how leaders can bring about change in organizations and in workers. Transformational leaders possess a vision of where they want the company to go and charisma and skills to implement that vision. Transformational leadership is also related to the charisma style of leadership, in which the leader inspires largely through their personal charisma, and to the visionary style of leadership, in which the leader sets out his vision for the organization and inspires others to achieve that vision. Transformational styles of leadership work well in entrepreneurial businesses.

Participative Styles

Some leadership styles focus on participation. One of these is the democratic style of leadership. In this style, the leader uses individual employees' knowledge and skills to help build a consensus for what direction the organization should move in. This style is appropriate when there are several directions an organization could take. The affiliative style of leadership emphasizes teamwork. In this style, the leader works to enhance teamwork and improve communications and morale. This style may help companies where employees have become discontented due to poor communications.

Strong Leaders

Some styles of leadership rely on the personality of the leader for direction. Styles of leadership relying on a strong leader include pacesetter, in which the leader sets high standards and may be obsessive about achieving. Michael Dell, of Texas-based Dell computers, has been described as a pacesetter leader for his constant focus on growing the business. In the commanding style of leadership, the leader "orders" employees in the manner of the military. This style may be useful in crisis situations. In the coaching style of leadership, the leader works one to one with workers to direct them and improve performance.