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How to change your Leadership Style

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## How to change your Leadership Style

**This step shows you how to understand your current management style and how to develop a high-performance leadership style to change the way you think, feel, speak, and act. A leadership style tells people how you will react in each situation. As a high-**performance leader you care about and develop your team, you are a role model for your team members who will aim to emulate your style, a style that should ideally radiate positivity, charisma, emotion, and an energy that infects your workplace for the better.

operate, the right leadership style promotes team member engagement and makes your team members feel more comfortable approaching you with questions, suggestions, and ideas. When you have a leadership style that fits your personality, your objectives, your team, and your business, not only can you focus more on exercising your strengths and achieving your goals but doing so becomes far easier. There exists a range of leadership styles, the most common and recognized of these being compiled by Carl Lindberg, they are listed here for comparison and completeness.

### ****Traditional Leadership Styles (1880’s to 1970’s)****

#### Commanding style.

A commanding manager makes all the decisions and gives orders to his or her team. Tight control and follow-up combined with high clarity in rules, roles, and expectations are key elements of commanding leadership. This style can be efficient in low-skilled teams and when decisions must be made very quickly. This style can lead to micromanagement, which is detrimental to employee engagement, especially in highly skilled teams in complex environments. The commanding style is also known as coercive or directive leadership. This style is like autocratic leadership but with a foundational difference: it is meant to be applied rarely and in a controlled fashion, whereas autocratic leadership is more of a permanent state and behaviour.

Advantages of the Commanding Leadership Style:

* Increased clarity on roles, expectations, and rules, beneficial for low skill teams.
* Confidence and decisiveness, especially useful in times of crisis.

Disadvantages of the Commanding Management Style:

* High dependency on the leader, who also need to know how to perform all jobs and tasks in detail.
* Morale, motivation, and engagement are low, and work climates can become toxic.
* Creativity and participation are minimal.

#### Autocratic style.

Autocratic is when the leader holds all the decision power and rarely consults others. Autocratic is unpopular, has many disadvantages, and leads to low engagement and sometimes to a toxic environment. Autocratic is useful in a crisis when control and fast decisions are crucial.

Advantages of the Autocratic Style:

* High clarity on structure, roles, and expectations.
* Quick decision making and improved crisis handling.
* Can lead to increased productivity in low-skilled environments, at least temporarily.

Disadvantages of the Autocratic Style:

* There is a lack of empowerment in the team, which leads to low engagement and accountability.
* Too strong dependency on the leader; after all, if only the leader can make decisions, not much happens without the leader’s involvement.
* Intimidation, punishment, or threats are common ways of ensuring obedience. This is, of course, not sustainable and can lead to a toxic work climate.

#### Transactional style.

Transactional is built on a clear structure of reward and punishment for different levels of performance. It is focused on results, efficiency, and performance rather than people and relationships. Transactional is often seen as the opposite of Transformational.

Advantages of the Transactional Style:

* There is a clear connection between performance and rewards.
* It can be very productive, especially when it comes to short-term results.
* Clear order, structure, and rules, enabling repetition and swift onboarding of new team members.

Disadvantages of the Transactional Style:

* The sole focus on performance can be demotivating and disengaging.
* Rewards have a limited impact on people’s performance; at some point, other factors start to matter more.
* The strict structure hampers creativity and innovation.

### ****Contemporary Leadership Styles (1970’s to date)****

#### Servant style.

Servant focuses on improving people, society, and organizations. In Servant, the leader serves others, which leads to strong ethics, and engaged, motivated employees. However, a Servant manager with too much focus on serving others can lose track of organizational goals and purpose. Servant was first defined in 1970 by Robert K. Greenleaf in an essay where he outlined that there were two types of leaders: Servant-First and Leader-First. The first type focuses on the success of others, and the second type cares more about themselves and their personal success. Servant stands out and is difficult to compare with the other styles.

Advantages of the Servant Style:

* Participation and a common cause led to high engagement.
* Strong ethical behaviour.

Disadvantages of the Servant Style:

* It does not work for all companies and organizations since an overarching cause is at the core of servant leadership.
* True servant leaders are challenging to find since they need to have a complete lack of ego.
* Business and organizational goals might be lost in the struggle for the long-term cause.

#### Democratic style.

Democratic builds on empowering team members to participate in decision-making, with a strive toward consensus. The engaging climate welcomes everyone’s opinions, leading to robust solutions. However, the democratic manager still has the final say on any decisions. This style is sometimes slow but generally very effective. The Democratic style was introduced in the 1930s as one of the three leadership behaviours used in the Kurt Lewin experiments in 1938. The Lewin model assumes a leader has one of the three behaviours, and there is no push for leaders switching styles depending on circumstances. (Laissez-faire and autocratic leadership) were the other two in the Lewin model.) Democratic is also included in the modern framework based on Emotional Intelligence, also referred to as the Goleman leadership styles.

Advantages of the Democratic Style:

* Creativity and innovation are encouraged.
* Collaboration creates solid solutions for complex problems.
* Employee engagement is high.
* Team visions lead to high accountability.

Disadvantages of the Democratic Style:

* Collaborative decision-making is time-consuming.
* Productivity can temporarily decline when awaiting decisions.
* It does not work well in low skilled, inexperienced teams.

#### Coaching style.

Coaching focuses on improving employees to become better individuals and professionals with the leader as a coach. A Coaching manager can sacrifice initial performance for learning opportunities. Coaching is very effective in the long term but can be difficult and time-consuming.

Advantages of the Coaching Style:

* It leads to high engagement and low turnover within the team.
* It develops people to perform more and better in the future.
* Coaching builds empowerment and confidence in people.

Disadvantages of the Coaching Style:

* Coaching is difficult and time-consuming.
* Coaching requires commitment from both parties.

### ****High-Performance Leadership Styles (~2015 to date)****

#### Transformational style.

Transformational creates substantial change for team members as well as organizations. Expectations, aspirations, perceptions, and values are transformed into something better. Transformational develops the team members and motivates and inspires them to reach extraordinary success. Transformational was first defined by James MacGregor Burns in the late 70s as part of Full Range Leadership. Bass and Avolio developed Transformational and the Full Range Leadership Model further in subsequent years.

Advantages of the Transformational Style:

* It is excellent for change management and growth.
* High transparency and strong communication build participation and engagement.
* The shared vision results in inspiration, motivation, and collaboration.

Disadvantages of the Transformational Style:

* Transformational Leadership can be very time consuming and long term.
* It does not work well without a strong change element or vision.
* Can result in too much risk-taking and overlooking short-term requirements.

Source: Carl Lindberg, A Handbook of Leadership Styles, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

#### High-performance style.

A high-performance leadership style is a description of the way you think and act. It tells people what they should expect from you in any given situation. It is a personalised statement based on the work persona you want to project. It has characteristics consistent with the Team, Coaching, Servant and Transformational styles and is comprised of four elements: - personality, strengths, Traditional and Transformational behaviours which are inexorably linked to each other. High-performance leaders develop teamwork, they know they need to spend time with their teams, talk to them, and understand them and what they care for individually. Developed by Russell Futcher and defined in the ‘High-Performance Leadership and Teams Model’ - 2018.

A high-performance leadership style motivates others to do more than they thought possible. Managers and leaders using this style set challenging expectations for team members, and typically teams achieve higher performance outcomes. Team members are managed as individuals, identifying, and developing their strengths. High-performance leaders are supportive, provide mentoring and are role models who are respected and trusted.

Advantages of the High-Performance Leadership Style:

* It is excellent for change management and growth.
* It builds and manages High-Performance Teams.
* It suits a leadership position.
* It significantly boosts self-confidence

Disadvantages of the High-Performance Leadership Style:

* Implementing the Transformational qualities can be time consuming.
* It does not work well without a strong change element or vision.
* Can result in too much risk-taking and overlooking short-term requirements.

### ****How do you currently rate?****

Imagine that your team members are completing the survey below – how do you think you would rate? “Each statement is based on one of the ten behaviours of successful managers at Google. Your answers to these questions are a reflection or mirror of your current management style.

1. I would recommend my manager to others.
2. My manager assigns stretch opportunities to help me develop in my career.
3. My manager communicates clear goals for our team.
4. My manager gives me actionable feedback on a regular basis.
5. My manager provides the autonomy I need to do my job (i.e., does not "micro-manage" by getting involved in detail that should be handled at other levels).
6. My manager consistently shows consideration for me as a person.
7. My manager keeps the team focused on priorities, even when it’s difficult (e.g., declining or deprioritizing other projects).
8. My manager regularly shares relevant information from their manager and senior leadership.
9. My manager has had a meaningful discussion with me about my career development in the past six months.
10. My manager has the technical expertise (e.g., technical judgment in Tech, selling in Sales, accounting in Finance) required to effectively manage me.
11. The actions of my manager show they value the perspective I bring to the team, even if it is different from their own.
12. My manager makes tough decisions effectively (e.g., decisions involving multiple teams, competing priorities).
13. My manager effectively collaborates across boundaries (e.g., team, organizational). Source: Google Project Oxygen.

### Your current management style dictates things like

* How successful you are and how much you achieve.
* Your stress levels.
* If you are admired and respected.
* If your team members want to be like you.
* How you respond in a crisis.
* How you relate to your team members.
* Always being on time.
* Never being late for meetings.
* Arriving early for work.
* Staying back late.
* How you give presentations.
* How you run a meeting.
* Your approach to mentoring and counselling.
* How your email is managed.
* If you are aggressive or assertive.
* Being controlling.
* Being an authoritarian.
* Being organised.

**By default, your current management style is simply a copy of your first or a previous manager, which you typically copy for better or for worse. Most often it is the latter, as the style will almost certainly be a Traditional style, meaning it has more negative consequences than positive.**

### What is your current management style?

If you have obtained an MBA within the last 30 years, or have been employed over that time, then by default you have been exposed to or are using a Traditional management style – a style that is still in use by most managers and leaders today. A lesser number use a Contemporary style with even less again using the newer, progressive Transformational and High-Performance Leadership styles. Whatever the style in use, it is comprised of four common elements: - personality traits, strengths, and Traditional/Contemporary behaviours. You may not have thought about it, but you do have a current management style made up of these things.

To describe your current management style means doing a brutally honest assessment of yourself, remembering that none of us is perfect. To describe your current management style, use the following method to create a list of descriptive keywords in order to construct a short paragraph that describes your current style.

1. To start with, construct a list of behaviours that currently apply to you from the lists below:

#### Personality Traits.

* Extroverted.
* Introverted.
* Loud.
* Excitable.
* Bossy.
* Arrogant.
* Impulsive.
* Lay blame.
* Conscientious.
* Agreeable.
* Neurotic.

#### Strengths.

* Leadership.
* Planning.
* Scheduling.
* Organizing.
* Writing.
* Technology.
* Giving Presentations.
* Being social.
* Motivating people.
* Creativity.
* Persistence.
* Teamwork.

#### Traditional/Contemporary management behaviours.

#### Planning.

* Responding to direction set from above.
* Establishing purpose.
* Setting goals, objectives, and strategies.
* Executing plans, improving the present.
* Establishing a budget.
* Managing around constraints.

#### Organizing.

* Exercising control through authority and formal influence.
* Establishing or changing team activities.
* Making decisions.
* Solving problems.
* Scheduling.
* Controlling roles and responsibilities and designing the organization.

#### Staffing.

* Organizing and recruiting staff, providing structure.
* Controlling subordinates, directing, and coordinating.
* Manages discipline.
* Sets roles and responsibilities.
* Obtaining, allocating or releasing resources to deliver objectives (People, equipment, facilities).
* Performance management and appraisals.
* Succession planning.

#### Leading.

* Focusing on things, looking inward.
* Does things right, manages change
* Uses authority, avoids conflict, act’s responsibility.
* Reactive, minimizes risk, maintains stability.
* Maintains the status quo.
* Time Management.
* Delegates.

#### Controlling.

* Collecting, analysing, and reporting performance information.
* Identifying issues and taking corrective actions.
* Designing controls.
* Establishing procedures.

1. Using the behaviours list, construct a series of sentences that describe how you currently manage.
2. Next merge the sentences into a couple of paragraphs.
3. Finally, aim to construct one paragraph that describes your current management style. Keep reworking the paragraph until you arrive at something you feel comfortable with.

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| People leave managers, not companies. |

### Create a high-performance leadership style

To develop a high-performance leadership style, the secret is to minimize your current negative management style behaviours and characteristics and maximize high-performance leadership behaviours in their place. To be successful the high-performance leadership behaviours need to be dominant. It is important to create a style that suits you and gets the best out of your team members, because how you manage them can make or break you and your business. The style you choose to adopt will influence not only how your team maintains itself, but also how it performs to reach its goals. You need to keep in mind that when creating a new leadership style, it is not how you perceive your style to be, but how others will perceive and react to it that is important.

As a high-performance leader you want to get the best out of your team, you want to be able to motivate and encourage team members to get them to perform tasks willingly, efficiently, and effectively. A great leadership style will achieve what you want, empowering your team members and creating higher job satisfaction. As much as ability, skills and innate intelligence have an impact on how well a team works, how high their self-esteem is can have an even bigger one - you can have the best team in the world but if your leadership style is poor, it will impact your team’s performance, in fact it will reflect it.

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| Personality traits are almost impossible to change, it is important to try to incorporate your better, more positive personal characteristics into your high-performance leadership Style. The same applies to your strengths, as these also play a large part in making you successful. |

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| Create a High-Performance Leadership Style |
| 1. Examine the current management style paragraph you have produced and highlight the aspects that:  * You like – they are positive, they achieve a good outcome. * Do not like - they are negative, they are things that do not work for you, they produce bad outcomes. |
| 1. Next, look at the high-performance leadership behaviours listed below, select those that are ‘most important’ to you, the ones you want to adopt. (Don’t worry about how you will adopt these new behaviours, simply identify those that you want.) |
| High-performance leadership behaviours. |
| * More considerate towards the needs and development of team members. |
| * Develop team members to successively higher levels of potential. |
| * Practise 'management by walking around’. |
| * Expect higher performance outcomes. |
| * Implement team engagement. |
| * Create an environment of psychological safety. |
| * Establish open communication. |
| * Am fair and reasonable, open, and honest. |
| * Respected, ethical and trusted. |
| * Accept individual differences. |
| * Build self-organising, high-performance teams. |
| * Inspire, am caring. |
| * Actively listens. |
| * Shares information. |
| * Manages conflict. |
| * Promotes innovation. |
| * Have charisma. |
| * Use emotional intelligence. |
| * Is a good influencer and is collaborative? |
| * Empower team members and do not micromanage. |
| * Am supportive, providing tools, training, and advice. |
| * Have an open-door policy. |
| * Set more challenging expectations. |
| * Create a culture of clear accountability. |
| * Take team members outside of their comfort zones. |
| 1. Next answer each of the following questions by ticking off behaviours that you have selected.  * As a manager, what do I want to spend most of my time doing? * How do I want my team members to describe me? |
| 1. Using the behaviours list you have created, construct a series of sentences that describe how you want to lead. |
| 1. Next merge the sentences into a couple of paragraphs. |
| 1. Finally, aim to construct one paragraph that describes a new leadership style. Keep reworking the paragraph until you arrive at something you feel comfortable with. |
| 1. What you have now is a description of a new high-performance leadership style that you want to transition to. The trick now is to reduce what you have down to one or two or three sentences, something that you can easily memorise and recite. It may take several iterations to do this but keep at it until you have a description that best describes how you want to lead and be described by others. |
| 1. Now reflect on what you have created, read it out aloud many times. What is your level of comfort with this description? This new style is all about how others will perceive and react to you, it is not just about how you see yourself. It can help if you think of the new leadership style as your 60 second elevator pitch of who you are, what you do and how you do it. |

### Example of a high-performance leadership style

“I am an enthusiastic CIO who is open and honest, fair and reasonable, someone who mentors, motivates, empowers and provides feedback. I develop my people to achieve more than they thought possible and to become professional in their chosen field.”

This can be described as:

* An enthusiastic CIO - I am optimistic, inspire teamwork, organise, plan, delegate and set goals.
* Open and honest - I am approachable, always available, truthful, receptive to new ideas and ways of thinking.
* Fair and reasonable - I consider both sides of a debate or argument and aim to make a decision that is best suited to the majority view or organisational aspirations.
* Mentors, motivates, empowers, provides feedback - I mentor, motivate, and believe in team engagement and psychological safety.
* I expect to work with professionals.

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| Limiting your leadership style to one or two or three sentences is important as it easier to remember and recite. Reciting your new leadership style over and over, makes it become almost second nature, i.e., a habit. As this new style becomes more integrated into your daily thinking, it moves from your conscious awareness level into your subconscious awareness where it operates on "automatic pilot", executing without any conscious effort and with a sense of confidence and calm. This is how it fundamentally changes the way you think, speak and act. |

### Practicing your high-performance leadership style

The secret to getting your new leadership style to take root and change the way you think, feel, speak and act is repetition and the timing of the repetition. As with learning anything new, repetition is the key as it psychologically changes your subconscious which in turn influences how your conscious mind works. It will take a few weeks for your new way of thinking, speaking, and acting to kick in, but it will happen, and you will change. Perseverance is required. Continually practising and reciting to yourself will influence the way you lead. Here are the best times to practice reciting your new leadership style:

1. In the shower.
2. On your way to and from work.
3. Before you do your emails.
4. Before you have a 1:1 conversation.
5. On your way to a meeting or waiting for one to start.
6. During meetings before you speak.
7. Before giving a presentation.

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| As a suggestion, whilst you are practising, pause for a moment before you speak each time, use the pause to recite to yourself your new leadership style. There is no rule that says we must immediately blurt out a response or answer to someone. Pausing also makes you look and sound more statesmanlike, people will notice it and respect and admire it. Then, speak slowly, aiming to match your words and tone with your new style. |

You can test if your new style is working by noticing people’s reactions to your conversations and the observations and comments you are making. Look at team members faces and eyes for a facial reaction and listen to their words in response to what you have said. If you are doing well, when asked to come and see you, team members will run to your office - in a positive way.

### Important things to consider

* Your leadership style is contagious, the central finding of EI research is that emotions are contagious, attitude and energy ‘infect’ a workplace for better or worse. Accordingly, your team members will emulate your leadership style and they will in turn be influenced by it. I was often described as having ‘energy’ that radiated and infected everyone around me, it was only because even in the face of adversity, my leadership style made me remain positive and confident and as a result so did my team members making them feel supported and also confident.
* Team members will copy the pace you set, the sense of urgency you create, even your work habits like arrival and departure times. They will copy your behaviours, your ways of thinking, the way you delegate, how you deliver on commitments and the trust you give.
* The right leadership style promotes team member engagement and makes your team members feel more comfortable approaching you with questions, suggestions, and ideas.
* When you create a leadership style that fits your personality, your team, and your business, you can focus on exercising your strengths.
* Your leadership style directly affects your confidence, performance, productivity, and respect. It improves your team’s morale and retention. Engaged team members are motivated and supported making them more productive. Disengaged team members are more likely to be unsupported, causing frustration and disruption.

### Summary

1. **Rate your current management style. -** Imagine that your team members are completing the survey questions provided – how do you think you would rate?
2. **Your leadership style dictates things like**. - How successful you are and how much you achieve, your stress levels, if you are admired and respected.
3. **Traditional Management Styles (1880’s to 1970’s). -** Commanding style, Autocratic style, and Transactional style.
4. **Contemporary Management Styles (1970’s to date). -** Servant style, Democratic style, and Coaching style.
5. **High-Performance Leadership Styles (~2015 to date). -** Transformational and High-performance style.
6. **What is your current management style?** - If you have obtained an MBA within the last 30 years, or have been employed over that time, then by default you have been exposed to a Traditional management style which in all likelihood is what you are using today.
7. **Develop a High-Performance Leadership style**. - To develop a high-performance leadership style, the secret is to minimize your current negative management style behaviours and maximize high-performance leadership behaviours in their place. To be successful the high-performance leadership behaviours need to be the most dominant. It is important to create a style that suits you and gets the best out of your team, because how you manage them can make or break you and your business.
8. **Practicing your High-Performance Leadership style.** - The secret to getting your new leadership style to take root and change the way you think, feel, speak and act is repetition and the timing of the repetition. As with learning anything new, repetition is the key as it psychologically changes your subconscious which in turn influences how your conscious mind works. It will take a few weeks for your new way of thinking, speaking, and acting to kick in, but it will happen, and you will change. Perseverance is required. Continually practising and reciting to yourself will influence the way you manage. Here are the best times to practice reciting your new leadership style.
9. **Important things to remember**. - Your leadership style is contagious, team members will also copy the pace you set, the sense of urgency you create, even your work habits like arrival and departure times. The right leadership style promotes team member engagement and makes your team members feel more comfortable approaching you with questions, suggestions, and ideas. When you create a leadership style that fits your personality, your team, and your business, you can focus on exercising your strengths.

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