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## **LEADERSHIP STYLES**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, I tried to emphasize various *styles* of *leadership*, starting with three major types and others which until now, many theoreticians have found, by stressing some of the characteristics representative for each *style* of *leadership* described below. In addition, I outlined what *kinds* of *leadership* are suitable for military or business environment, trying to find out the type of structure where a specified *style* can be found. Nowadays, the environment continuously changes offering to a *leader* the opportunity to direct his or her people in a way that can fulfill or not the organizational objectives by using a proper *style*. This was my goal for choosing this topic, and to add some ideas from a military point of view. Of course, my paper has some limitations, but I have taken into consideration the fact that this topic will be on the target of many of us in order to develop, step by step, those *leadership styles* for the sake of our employees or subordinates, and for the *organization*.

*Key words: leadership, styles, type, model, kind, manager, organization, leader, team, follower.*

### **1. Introduction**

Motivation theories consider that we are motivated by the people around us. In this way, the key role of *leaders* is increasingly important in these uncertain times to help people to perform at their peak. So, understanding the importance of *leadership* is the core of an organizational success. Since we spend most of the time participating in various events influenced by a formal or informal *leader*, the person who is in charge in that event has a key role on the experience.

Michael N. Phan in *An Investigation of Leadership Models* said that the leadership process contains three key elements: the *leader*, the *follower*, and the *leadership* situation, because *leadership* is the result of the interaction among those three elements [1]. The *follower* is an area which is generally static, and the *leadership* situation is not often changeable, so it is the *leader*, who must make the change if the organizational objectives are not done. The *leadership styles* will determine the directions, because different *leadership styles* work different in an organization. *Leaders* promote or impede different *organization* cultures and grow diverse skills among the *organization* members, creating various *teams*. *Leadership styles* at any level will influence or control the efficiency of *teams*.

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The manner and approach of providing directions, implementing plans, and motivating people represent a *leadership style*. Shortly, *leadership* refers to the ability to influence and direct others to achieve a goal.

Although *leadership* is not exclusively in the military domain, it is an especially critical aspect of it. A common understanding of *leadership* is an important element of the overall theory of military conflict.

After twenty years of personal experience as a personnel officer, I believe that U.S. Army Leadership manual, FM 6-22 expresses the importance of the leadership best, by defining a leader as anyone “*who inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals; they motivate others to pursue actions, focus thinking and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization*” [2].

## **2. Leadership styles**

Researchers identify different *kinds of leadership*, establishing three major *styles of leadership*: authoritative or autocratic, participative or democratic, and laissez-faire or free reign. Besides those three major *styles of leadership*, there are other *models* such as reactive, cooperative/interactive, entrepreneurial, transformational and visionary.[3] This chapter describes in detail the first three major *styles* and briefly all the others.

### **Authoritative or Autocratic**

This *kind* has no confidence in the abilities of his or her subordinates, and wants full control, without the will of delegating the responsibility to anyone. They ignore the views of others, using intimidation and fear to persuade others to do something. Some of the appropriate conditions to use it is when you have all information to solve the problem, and you do not have enough time. This *style* works better with small and very capable *teams* which are very motivated. For instance, in the Army we can find this *kind of leadership* at the crew, group or platoon level where some people tend to think of this *style* as a tool of yelling, using demanding languages, and leading by threats and abusing their power which is working better during wartime but is less effective in a peacetime.

### **Participative or Democratic**

This *type of leadership* empowers the teams by delegating the responsibility, telling you “Let’s work together to solve this problem” and making you to become part of the *team*. However, the *leader* has the last word, relying upon persuasion at the last in order to get a consensus. In the Army, this is normally used if we are taking into consideration the fact that a *leader* does not know everything, and information is shared by both commanders and subordinates. The essence of this *style* is the involvement of subordinates in decision making process, and we can conclude that this *style* works better, from the battalion staff level to higher. This *style of leadership* allows commanders to make better decisions, even if they know the eventual outcome, but they still try to find any alternatives from their subordinates, because they have trust in their ability to come up with the right ideas.

### **Laissez-Faire or Free Reign**

In this *style*, the *leader* allows the employees to solve the problem and he or she tries to stay out of the way, doing as little directing as possible, while employees determine their own goals and take the work under their responsibility, make decisions, and solve the situations themselves. This is used when employees are able to analyze the situation and

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determine what needs to be done and how to do it. In order for this to work very efficiently, the *leader* needs his or her employees to be loyal, very skilled, trustworthy, sufficiently motivated and highly experienced. However, they need to receive directions from the outside coordinators.

The *leaders* should use it wisely because they cannot do everything and they should set priorities and delegate only certain tasks. This is not a *style* to use if the *leader's* personality tends to blame others when things go wrong, but this is a *style* to be used when leader has full trust and confidence in employees.

From a military point of view, this *leadership style* is not efficient during a crisis where instant decisions or fast reactions may be required.

Despite the fact that this *leadership style* is inefficient most of the times, it can work very well only if you have a great staff, usually within small compartments or departments which need innovation because it gives loyal and smart subordinates power to make most of the decisions. Only on very important issues does the *leader* get involved, but with the willing to listen to the opinion of others before making the decision.

### **Reactive**

This *kind of leader* is changeable and tends to react to circumstances changing tactics often because he or she does not know what to do. However, this *leader* is dependable and cannot build a trustworthy team, because the subordinates cannot trust the *leader*. For a military *leader*, changing tactics without having some kind of reliable theory behind it is in a doctrinal grey area.

### **Cooperative/Interactive**

This *leadership style* is based on the agreement of employees and harmony within members, rather than solving the challenges in a professional manner. It does not work in a military organization or in business if you need to make the right decisions.

### **Entrepreneurial**

This *kind of leader* directs using objectives and expects a certain level of results, but does not care how they are achieved. They are useful in an international market where many changes take place quickly. It is not a popular one, but sometimes it works in a very centralized hierarchical structure.

### **Transformational**

Transformational *leadership* enables innovative change through inspiration and empowerment, being first identified by Burns (1978) [3]. These *leaders* are charismatic and people simply want to please them. They are innovative in themselves and they inspire this in others and value it in a *team*. This *leadership style* is can change dynamically with the other changes connected to new technologies.

This *style of leadership* is probably the most useful in military organization especially in the middle of the battle where to must take right decisions in a very short time or in any international business activity involving fast changes.

### **Visionary**

This *kind of leader* tend to combine all the various methods of management and create their own identifiable *style of leadership*, using a little of all of the different *leadership styles* as the need arises. They have flexibility and can deal with rapid change. They work best with talented *teams*, which have highly professional, interdependent expert members who need little supervision. They can deal with a great deal of complexity, generally use advanced planning, though this is always flexible, and they are optimistic about the future. It works very well in all *kind of high military structures* where is needed a clear long term

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vision of the Army. Visionary *leaders* inspire commitment and cooperation and are trusted, because they set and follow their own standards of excellence [4].

### **3. Conclusion**

What is important to understand about all of these *leadership styles* is that a good *leader* uses all *styles*, depending on the environment and the relationships between the *followers*, the *leader* and the situation. Most *leaders* are a combination of many different *styles* and these are employed at different times as circumstances require. In fact, there are valuable elements in all these described *leadership styles* and in many others described in current literature.

The *leadership styles* are influenced by the time available, relationships, information management, employees training, internal conflicts, level of stress, type of task, and laws or standard procedures.

However, an excellent military *leader* should be the most capable person and should be concerned with the needs of the organization and of his or her subordinates, motivating and inspiring their team.

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