



Transform Your Leadership Style: Learn to Lead in an Agile Environment

Many organizations are shifting to an inclusive agile approach, emphasizing teamwork, communication, and flexibility. Agile leadership requires a change in management style, embracing uncertainty, continual learning, and servant leadership.

Servant leaders prioritize the needs of their team, promote collaboration, and trust team members. Agile practices benefit various managers in today's dynamic business environment, encouraging a shift from traditional command and control to servant leadership.

CHANGING MANAGEMENT STYLES



Many organizations are transitioning or have already moved from a traditional, plan-driven culture

into an organization, that uses a more inclusive agile approach and incorporates more brainpower and a wider group of business stakeholders.

In the Agile way, you must find ways to get the team members to know each other, then they can start to trust each other, then they can learn how to communicate, solve problems, have good debates, and make decisions.



Therefore, a different style of management is needed. However, if leaders are to lead and manage that change, then surely, they are the first people who need to change.

A great Agile leader supports teamwork, customer collaboration, employee satisfaction, and flexibility.



SERVANT LEADERSHIP

The leader puts the needs of the employees and team first.

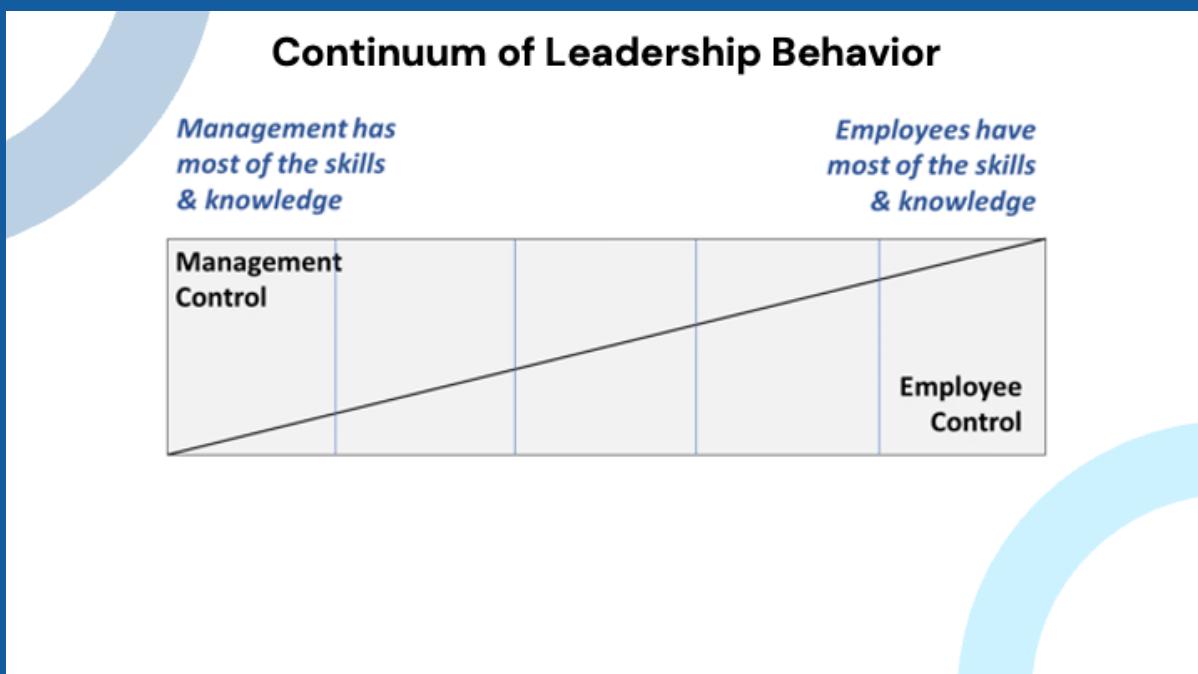
The leader is there to serve the people and not only the other way around.

Servant leaders are more likely to ask, *"How do you see it?"*

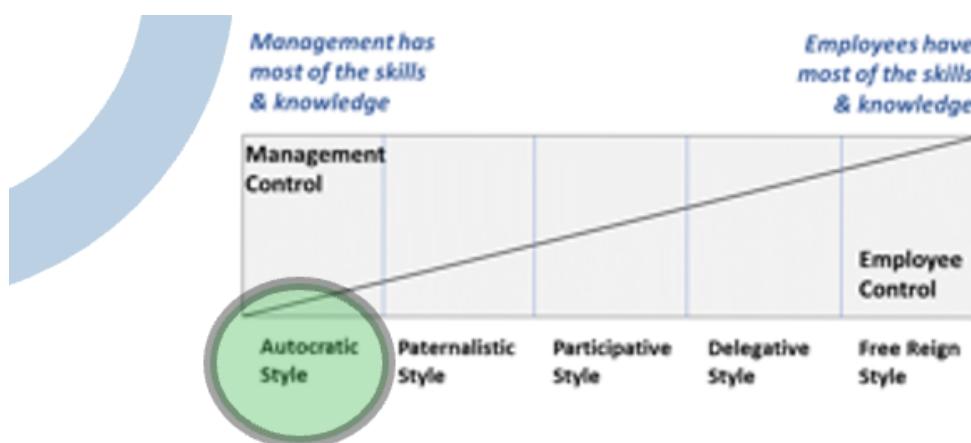
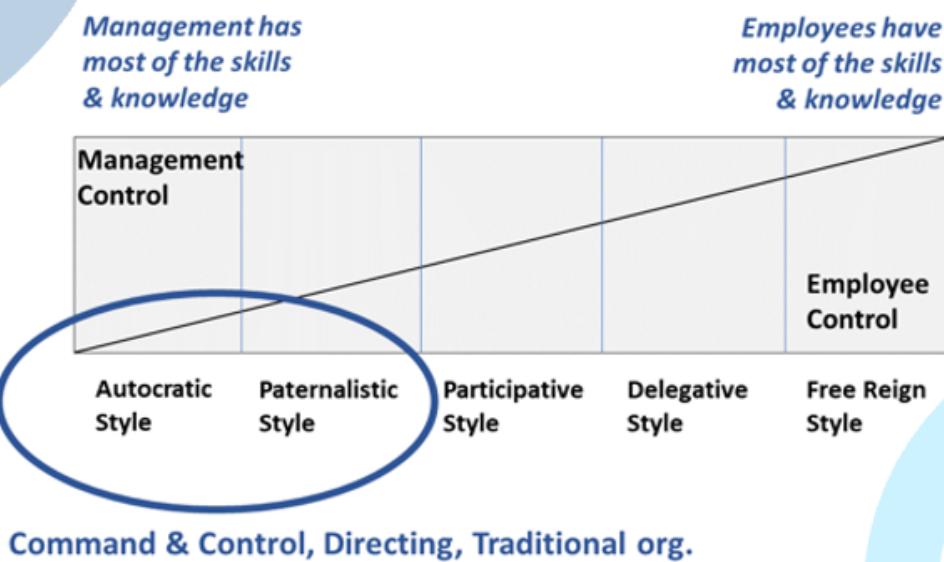
Wherever possible, they put their full trust in team members while they focus on the big picture



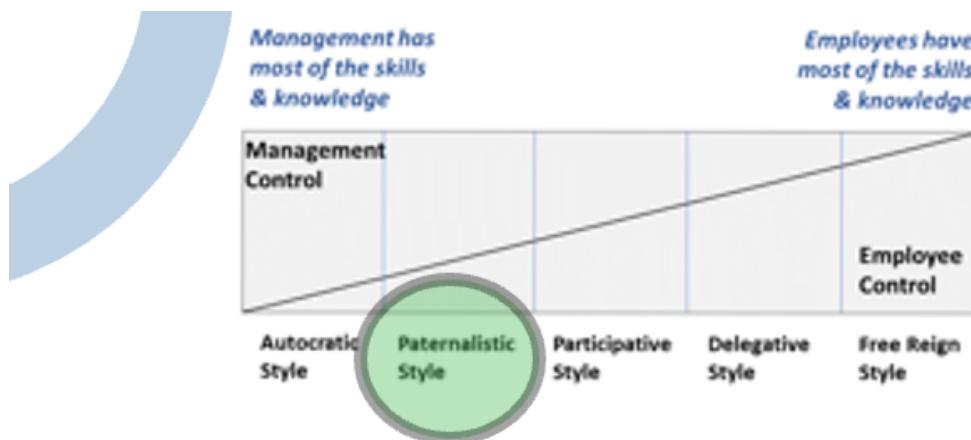
Here are a couple of recommendations to begin your quest to move from a traditional command and control management style **towards a more Servant Leadership style**.



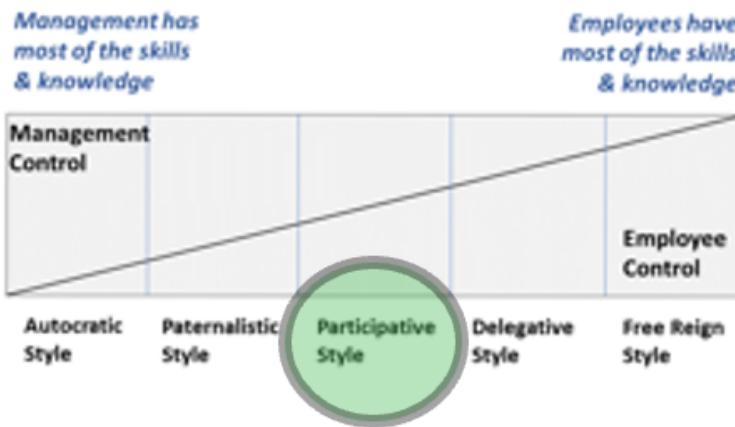
Continuum of Leadership Behavior



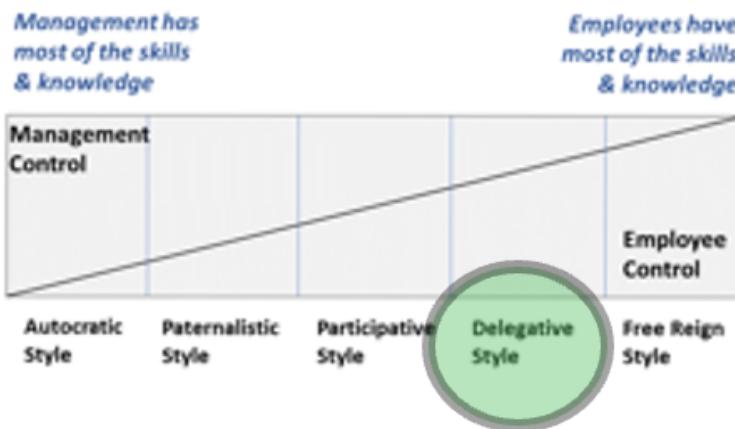
- Leaders make all the decisions with little to no input from team members.
- Can be efficient when decisions need to be made quickly
- Can be demotivating for team members, and stifle creativity and innovation.



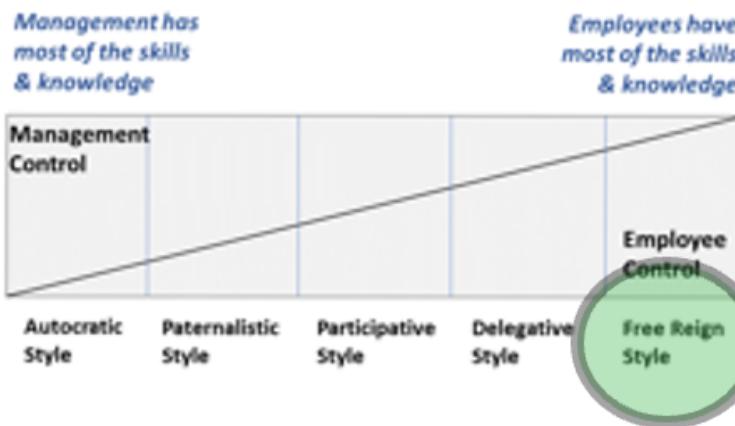
- Protect their employees and make decisions for their welfare.
- They provide structure and give guidance when necessary, but ultimately they control the decision-making process.
- might limit employee independence and stifle personal growth



- They encourage feedback and make sure everyone's voice is heard before a decision is made.
- Fosters a sense of ownership among the team and can lead to higher job satisfaction and engagement
- It can be time-consuming



- give a high level of autonomy to their team members.
- provide guidance and resources when necessary, but they generally allow their team to decide how they want to work and solve problems.
- It might lead to a lack of direction if not managed properly

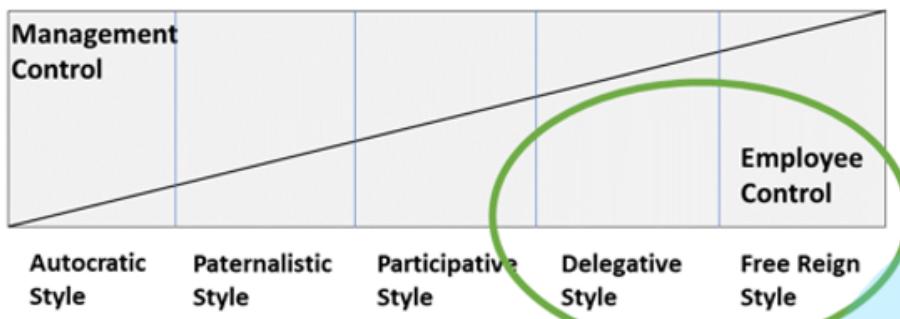


- An extreme version of delegative leadership
- Gives employees as much freedom as possible.
- All authority or power is given to the employees, and they must set goals, make decisions, and resolve problems on their own. This style can foster a high level of creativity and job satisfaction,
- Requires a high level of trust

Continuum of Leadership Behavior

Management has most of the skills & knowledge

Employees have most of the skills & knowledge



Servant Leadership

WHAT IS SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN AGILE AND HOW TO DO IT WELL



As products and services have become more complex and sophisticated, companies have realized that managers and senior company leaders can't always call the shots.



They need the skills and expertise of their teams. They need their creativity and innovation.



SO WHAT SHOULD LEADERS DO?

It is to become servant leaders

WHAT IS SERVANT LEADERSHIP?

"Servant leadership is characterized by leaders who put the needs of a group over their own. These leaders foster trust among employees by holding themselves accountable, helping others develop, showing appreciation, sharing power and listening without judging. While serving and leading seem like conflicting activities, these leaders are effective initiators of action."



WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO BE A SERVANT LEADER?

There is no single leadership style that works in all situations. A good leader should be capable of taking an adaptive and situational leadership approach that is appropriate

The way the servant leader role is implemented will be very dependent on the capabilities of the Agile team

- If the team is very strong and very capable, the role may be limited to a facilitation role
- If that is not the case, a more active leadership role may be needed

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT IN AGILE?

An agile approach is best suited for projects with a high level of uncertainty.

In that kind of environment

- A lot of individual creativity may be needed to find an optimum solution
- Maximizing the creativity of the team requires that the team be empowered as much as possible.



Servant leadership primarily focuses on the following:

- Shielding the team from external interruptions
- Removing impediments to the teams progress
- Communicating the project vision
- Providing essential resources the team needs to stay productive



THE KEY QUESTIONS A SERVANT LEADER NEEDS TO ASK ARE:

- *What can I do to serve my team better and help them achieve their goal?*
- *What can I do to develop the skills of my team members and help them perform at their best?*
- *How can I help product owners and management to prioritize better and focus on business value and organizational goals?*



EXERCISE

- *What can I do to serve my team better and help them achieve their goal?*
- *What can I do to develop the skills of my team members and help them perform at their best?*
- *How can I help product owners and management to prioritize better and focus on business value and organizational goals?*



AGILE LEADER COMPETENCIES

So we have now seen the definition and characteristics of servant leadership but how can we translate this into **actionable competencies**?

Agile Coach Competency Framework which highlights key abilities that every Agile leader or manager should develop.

In essence, these competencies offer a roadmap for effective leadership and management in an Agile environments



AGILE-LEAN PRACTITIONER

Have experience with:

- Scrum team or an Agile environment
- A self-organized environment is crucial.
- Agile development practices, testing
- Agile leadership and management
- General understanding of Lean principles, Kanban, and Extreme Programming is useful as well.



- Search for additional resources to get some insight
- Attending conferences and discussing real situations
- Joining user group events



TEACHING

Leaders and managers have a responsibility to ensure their team members are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their tasks.

For you to be effective you must know more about the subject than the group you are training

Most of the time the training will be on a best practice or process



The training we do is in order to give the team additional information that they might want to use to improve their processes.

We can explain why the process or practice is recommended and valuable.

Train for a short time and then have them activate the learning with an activity or exercise.



MENTORING

Sharing their own experiences and insights to guide their team.

This could be in the context of professional development or helping team members navigate through challenges they face in their roles.

Mentoring is usually done one-on-one but can be done in groups as well

You must know more about what you are mentoring than the person you are mentoring.



When you are mentoring, you share your experiences, thoughts, opinions, and ideas with others.



FACILITATION AND COACHING

You suppress any experience you have apply the skills of listening and curiosity, and let the team decide.

You are responsible for framing the discussion, not for the content.



FACILITATION AND COACHING

Facilitation is about not only making sure meetings happen but also how to make them efficient and valuable.



FACILITATION AND COACHING

The most important realization in coaching is that it's not about your understanding, or your advice or suggestions. As a good coach you ask so-called powerful questions to let the team realize what they want and why.



FACILITATING

Act as a facilitator, ensuring smooth communication within the team, leading discussions, resolving conflicts, and helping the team reach a consensus

Have process authority:

You own the process of the interaction but do not add knowledge directly into the discussion.

Creating an open and safe space to allow the group to find their answers



COACHING

Helping their team members realize their potential and improve their performance.

It's about fostering a sense of ownership and independence within the team members, encouraging them to find their own solutions and strategies.



Key Coaching Tools:

- **Flow of the Conversation:** This is a structured way to guide a coaching session from introduction to conclusion.
- **Powerful Questions:** Asking insightful questions lies at the heart of effective coaching.
- **Active Listening:** Not merely about hearing what the other person is saying but engaging with them empathetically.



BUSINESS MASTERY

A working knowledge of the organization's business model, competitive landscape, and stakeholder needs is vital.

- Align team initiatives with organizational goals.
- Enable the team to see how their tasks fit into the larger business strategy.
- Facilitate dialogue between team members and stakeholders.



CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Managers play a special role in guiding their teams through changes, whether they're big game-changers or small tweaks.



TECHNICAL MASTERY

While managers don't need to be technical or coding experts, they do need to have:

- A baseline understanding of the technical aspects that their team deals with daily.
- Capability to converse intelligently with technical team members to solve problems and remove obstacles.

Baseline technical knowledge ensures that the manager can make informed decisions, provide valuable input during problem-solving sessions, and understand the team's technical constraints and opportunities.



EXERCISE: WHICH COMPETENCES DO YOU HAVE?

Begin by taking stock of where you stand with each competency.

Shade each segment of the circle to represent your current proficiency level.

Next, using a different shade, highlight the areas where you aim to improve.

