

Defining Leadership

Leadership is defined as influence, that is, the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals. Ideally people should be encouraged to develop not only willingness to work but also willingness to work with zeal and confidence. Zeal is order, earnestness and intensity in the execution of work; confidence reflects experience and technical ability. Leaders act to help a group attain objectives through the maximum application of its capabilities. They do not stand behind a group to push, they place themselves before the group as they facilitate progress and inspire the group to accomplish organizational goals.

Leadership Styles

1. Autocratic: The phrase most illustrative of an autocratic leadership style is "Do as I say". Generally, an autocratic leader believes that he or she is the smartest person at the table and knows more than others. They make all the decisions with little input from team members. This command and control approach is typical of leadership styles of the past, but it doesn't hold much water with today's talent.

2. Authoritative : The phrase most indicative of this style of leadership is "Follow me". The authoritative leadership style is the mark of confident leaders who map the way and set expectations, while engaging and energizing followers along the way. In a climate of uncertainty, these leaders lift the fog for people.
3. Pacesetter : "Keep up!" is the phrase most indicative of leaders who utilize the pacesetter style. This style describes a very driven leader who sets the pace as in racing. Pacesetters set the bar high and push their team members to run hard and fast to the finish line.
4. Democratic : Democratic leaders are more likely to ask "How do you see it?" And whenever possible they share information with employees that affects their work responsibilities. They also seek employees opinion before making a final decision.
5. Coaching : When you have a coaching leadership style, you tend to have a "Consider this" approach. A leader who uses a coach approach seeks to unlock people's potential. Leaders who use a coaching style open their hearts to and doors to people. They believe that everyone has power within themselves.
6. Affiliative : A phrase often used to describe this type of leadership is "people come first". Of all the leadership styles, the affiliative leadership style

approach is the most up close and personal. A leader practicing this style pays attention to and supports the emotional needs of team members. The leader strives to open up a pipeline that connects him or her to the team.

7. Laissez-Faire: The laissez-faire leadership style is at the opposite end of the spectrum from autocratic. Of all the approaches, this one involves least amount of oversight. You could say that the autocratic style leader stands as firm as rock on issues, while the laissez-faire leader lets people swim with the current.

Qualities of a good leader

1. Vision: Perhaps the greatest quality any leader can have is vision - the ability to see the big picture of where the organization or team they are working within is headed, what it's capable of and what it will take to get there.
2. Inspiration: Equally as important as having a vision is the ability to convey that vision to others, and get them excited about it. This means maintaining a positive yet realistic presence within the organization helping team members stay motivated and engaged and remember what it is that they are working for.

3. Strategic and critical thinking: A good leader will be able to think critically about the organization or team they work within and develop a clear understanding of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. They will be able to course-correct when necessary.
4. Interpersonal Communication: Good Leaders must be able to interact with other people in a way that feels genuine. This does not mean you have to be an extrovert to be a leader. It means to demonstrate empathy, engaging in active listening and building meaningful working relationship with those around you.
5. Authenticity and self awareness: One of the key ways to become a great leader is to be self aware enough to understand your strengths and your flaws and to build an authentic leadership style that is true to who you are and how you do your best work.
6. Flexibility: Leadership also means being adaptable and nimble when the situation calls for it. Nothing ever goes according to plan - whether you encounter minor roadblocks or large obstacles. Good leaders will embrace the ever changing nature of business and meet challenges with a flexible attitude - and be able to build inspire the same willingness to adapt in those around them.

Leadership Functions:

Following are the important functions of a leader:

1. Setting goals: A leader is expected to perform creative function of laying out goals and policies to persuade the subordinates to work with zeal and confidence.
2. Organizing: The second function of a leader is to create and shape the organization on scientific lines by assigning roles appropriate to individual abilities with the view to make its various components to operate sensitively towards the achievement of enterprise goals.
3. Initiating action: The next function of a leader is to take the initiative in all matters of interest to the group. He should not depend upon others for decision and judgement. He should float new ideas and his decisions should reflect original thinking.
4. Co-ordination: A leader has to reconcile the interests of the individual members of the group with that of the organization. He has to ensure voluntary co-operation from the group in realizing the common objectives.

5. Direction and Motivation: It is the primary function of a leader to guide and direct his group and motivate people to do their best in the achievement of desired goals, he should build up confidence and zeal in the work group.
6. Link between management and workers: A leader works as a necessary link between the management and the workers. He interprets the policies and programmes of the management to his subordinates and represents the subordinate interests before the management.