

Leadership Styles

Before we delve into describing leadership styles, it would be proper to distinguish between types of leaders and styles of leadership. Type of leader is determined and identified by the “personality” displayed by the leader in terms of core trait along with other traits and personal qualities being displayed and used to gain the trust of the people and lead them to commit to undertake the major task facing the organization.

On the other hand, “style” of leadership is defined and identified by the competencies and skills that the leader “applies” to guide facilitate and support the people of the organization in their efforts to accomplish the task.

Leadership style reflects a leader’s decision making behavior. It is the result of the philosophy, personality and experience of the leader. Leadership style refers to how decisions are made to providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people.



1. Authoritarian or Autocratic leadership

This type of leadership is known as Boss centered leadership. An autocratic leader exercises complete control over the subordinates. He centralizes power in himself and takes all decisions without consulting the subordinates. He does not delegate authority. The leader gives order and expects the subordinates to follow them unquestioningly. He gives reward and puts penalty to direct the subordinate.



Advantages:

- a) Autocratic leadership style permits quick decision-making.
- b) It provides strong motivation and satisfaction to the leaders who dictate terms.
- c) This style may yield better results when great speed is required.

Disadvantages:

- a) It leads to frustration, low morale and conflict among subordinates,
- b) Subordinates tend to shirk responsibility and initiative.

2. Participative or Democratic leadership

Democratic leadership is exactly what it sounds like -- the leader makes decisions based on the input of each team member. Although he or she makes the final call, each employee has an equal say on a project's direction.

Democratic leadership is one of the most effective leadership styles because it allows lower-level employees to exercise authority they'll need to use wisely in future positions they might hold. It also resembles how decisions can be made in company board meetings.

For example, in a company board meeting, a democratic leader might give the team a few decision-related options. They could then open a discussion about each option. After a discussion, this leader might take the board's thoughts and feedback into consideration, or they might open this decision up to a vote.

**Advantages:**

- a) Exchange of ideas among subordinates and leader improves job satisfaction and morale of the subordinates.
- b) Human values get their due recognition which develops positive attitude and reduces resistance to change.
- c) Labour absenteeism and labour turnover are reduced.
- d) The quality of decision is improved.

Disadvantages:

- a) Democratic style of leadership is time consuming and may result in delays in decision-making.
- b) It is less effective if participation from the subordinates is for name sake.
- c) Consulting others while making decisions go against the capability of the leader to take decisions.

3. Free-rein or Delegate leadership

In this style the leader says – “you take care of the problem”. Final responsibility always remains with the leader. A free-rein leader does not lead, but leaves the group entirely to itself.

Such a leader allows maximum freedom to subordinates, i.e., they are given a free hand in deciding their own policies and methods. It is used when the leader has full trust and confidence in the abilities of his subordinates.

Since a leader cannot do everything. He prioritizes the work and delegates certain tasks. This style may be used but with caution. This style is also known as laissez faire (non-interference in the affairs of others).

Advantages:

- a) Positive effect on job satisfaction and moral of subordinates.
- b) It gives chance to take initiative to the subordinates.
- c) Maximum possible scope for development of subordinates.

Disadvantages:

- a) Under this style of leadership, there is no leadership at all.
- b) Subordinates do not get the guidance and support of the leader.
- c) Subordinates may move in different directions and may work at cross purpose which may create problem for the organization.

Free rein style of leadership may be appropriate when the subordinates are well trained, highly knowledgeable, self-motivated and ready to assume responsibility.

