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|  | **LEADERSHIP SKILLS** |
|  | Microsoft Office User |

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**LESSON 6**

**Basic Leadership Styles**

Just as with personality styles, there are numerous ways to categorize leadership styles based on decision making.

**1. The Autocratic Leadership Style**

*Characteristics of the autocratic leadership* *style*

The autocratic leader chooses to make the majority of decisions on his/her own. The autocratic style is repressive and domineering. Autocratic leaders like to keep the decision-making power to themselves. These leaders prefer to keep control and responsibility over work and projects. They are not very likely to delegate decision making to others even though they mostly assign duties and assignment to others. Autocratic style of leadership believes that followers cannot perform if let on their own and as such must be forced to work by leaders. They prefer a clear structure and set rigid expectations. They rarely consult with others and are not interested in developing their own skills or those of their followers. Though this leadership style is rather old-fashioned now, it still exists because there are times when it still works best.

*Advantages* *of the autocratic leadership* *style*

* Reduction of stress on the leader in the short-term because he knows he is in complete control
* Fast decision-making because there is no need for long consultation process
* Sometimes, the followers tend to be more productive as long as the boss is actually there

*Disadvantages* *of the autocratic leadership* *style*

* The leader with this style becomes unpopular for the long-term
* It could have detrimental effect on the organization as it become too reliant on the leader
* It does not give room for the development of decision-making skills of other members
* Increase in stress on the leader in the long-term due to bearing all responsibilities all the time
* Reduced motivation and morale by the followers
* Productivity suffers in the absence of the leader

*When to use the* *autocratic leadership* *style*

* Short-term, complex, technical, or urgent assignments
* Low-skilled positions with monotonous tasks that can lead to low motivation
* Where there is high turnover in the followers so keeping organizational knowledge in the leader is important.

**2. The Democratic Leadership Style**

*Characteristics of the democratic leadership* *style*

The democratic leader chooses to make certain decisions as a group. The democratic style is integrative and participatory. The leader consults and evaluates the opinion of the followers before making the decision he considers best. The democratic leader delegates a great deal of work and letting others have a say in what portion of the assignment they take on. Democratic leaders share the decision-making as well as the resulting responsibility with group members. They seek feedback and prioritize group member development. This leadership style is popular because when it is done well, it creates a harmonious, productive, evolving organization or society.

*Advantages* *of the democratic leadership* *style*

* Followers are more loyal and dedicated to the assignment because they feel they have had input in not just what was decided but on how it was decided.
* Followers want to work harder to deliver because they know that they will share in the credit
* The leader is at ease because followers take ownership of situations because that ownership is entrusted to them
* The organization will have a more positive and collaborative environment.
* There is room or individual development

*Disadvantages* *of the democratic leadership* *style*

* Slow decision-making due to long consultation process
* It not ideal situations requiring high-pressured decisions
* The leader may struggle to take the lead and keep control of the over-all process as others could take the lead

*When to use the* *democratic leadership* *style*

* Situations where it’s important or members to contribute their own creativity and knowledge
* When the leader needs to enhance team development

**3. The laissez-faire Leadership Style**

*Characteristics of the laissez-faire leadership* *style*

The laissez-faire style depicts weak leadership. It is a care-free style of leadership. Followers rather than the leader dictate the pace of the decision in the organization. It often portrays lack of commitment or dedication to leadership task or role.