

Leadership Styles

How-To

[NEXT IN DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP STYLE »](#)
[Email](#) [Printer Friendly](#) Share: [facebook](#)

Tips

All leadership styles can become part of the leader's repertoire.

Leadership styles should be adapted to the demands of the situation, the requirements of the people involved and the challenges facing the organization.

Adapted from "The Wall Street Journal Guide to Management" by Alan Murray, published by Harper Business.

Leadership is less about your needs, and more about the needs of the people and the organization you are leading. Leadership styles are not something to be tried on like so many suits, to see which fits. Rather, they should be adapted to the particular demands of the situation, the particular requirements of the people involved and the particular challenges facing the organization.

Related How-Tos

[What is the Difference Between Management and Leadership?](#)

[What Management Strategy Should I Use in an Economic Downturn?](#)

[What are the Common Mistakes of New Managers?](#)

In the book "Primal Leadership," Daniel Goleman, who popularized the notion of "Emotional Intelligence," describes six different styles of leadership. The most effective leaders can move among these styles, adopting the one that meets the needs of the moment.

They can all become part of the leader's repertoire.

Feedback

[Send Feedback on this How-To Guide »](#)

Visionary. This style is most appropriate when an organization needs a new direction. Its goal is to move people towards a new set of shared dreams.

"Visionary leaders articulate where a group is going, but not how it will get there – setting people free to innovate, experiment, take calculated risks," write Mr. Goleman and his coauthors.

Coaching. This one-on-one style focuses on developing individuals, showing them how to improve their performance, and helping to connect their goals to the goals of the organization. Coaching works best, Mr. Goleman writes, "with employees who show initiative and want more professional development." But it can backfire if it's perceived as "micromanaging" an employee, and undermines his or her self-confidence.

Affiliative. This style emphasizes the importance of team work, and creates harmony in a group by connecting people to each other. Mr. Goleman argues this approach is particularly valuable "when trying to heighten team harmony, increase morale, improve communication or repair broken trust in an organization." But he warns against using it alone, since its emphasis on group praise can allow poor performance to go uncorrected. "Employees may perceive," he writes, "that mediocrity is tolerated."

Democratic. This style draws on people's knowledge and skills, and creates a group commitment to the resulting goals. It works best when the direction the organization should take is unclear, and the leader needs to tap the collective

wisdom of the group. Mr. Goleman warns that this consensus-building approach can be disastrous in times of crisis, when urgent events demand quick decisions.

Pacesetting. In this style, the leader sets high standards for performance. He or she is “obsessive about doing things better and faster, and asks the same of everyone.” But Mr. Goleman warns this style should be used sparingly, because it can undercut morale and make people feel as if they are failing. “Our data shows that, more often than not, pacesetting poisons the climate,” he writes.

Commanding. This is classic model of “military” style leadership – probably the most often used, but the least often effective. Because it rarely involves praise and frequently employs criticism, it undercuts morale and job satisfaction. Mr. Goleman argues it is only effective in a crisis, when an urgent turnaround is needed. Even the modern military has come to recognize its limited usefulness.

Related WSJ Articles and Blog Posts:

[A Different Animal Seeks the No. 1 Post; Often, It's Not No. 2](#)

[Learning to Be the Boss](#)

[Advice for Women on Developing a Leadership Style](#)

[In His Rookie Year, A CEO Tests His Limits](#)

[Video: Steve Ballmer on Micromanaging](#)

Additional Resources:

How to Strike the Right Tone

[Video: To strike the right tone, it's better for leaders to start tough and soften than praise too much at first, says American Electric Power CEO Michael Morris.](#)

NEXT IN [DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP STYLE](#)

 Email  Printer Friendly Share:              