

Individual management leadership style

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



There are few, if any, hotter topics in management, business and organization theory at the present time than 'leadership'. Leadership is the block at the top of the model of a good team, not because it is most important, but because it is the ultimate goal of an effective, efficient team. A good leader shares responsibility and glory, is supportive and fair, creates a climate of trust and openness, and is a good coach and teacher. Yet the test of a truly good leader is that the team operates as smoothly whether the leader is present or absent. Problem solving, decision making, team participation and conflict resolution are fundamental leadership activities. Rarely, are there any dead certainties in the world of business - especially in the current and foreseeable climate of uncertainty, ambiguity and paradox. Fear of failure, consequent risk-aversion and reluctance to move very far from 'safe ground' or comfort zones can severely limit the quality relevance and nature of decisions taken by those in managerial and leadership roles (Austry 50).

In the course of working through the above steps the problem solver will notice whether any of the steps or series of steps he or she makes reduces the distance to the goal—i. e. resolving or solving the problem. If this seems to be the case then the problem solver will continue with that line of enquiry. If the steps do not seem to be productive then alternative steps will be followed. Progress and search for solutions are related to constant feedback of information obtained from people and objects in the problem situation.

Problem solving involves the search for the most successful programs. However, successful problem solving may not so much be a search for a successful program as a search for the best problem space. It would seem,

however, that both are required to increase the likelihood of finding good solutions to problems.

Decision making is effective when the leader is aware of and uses many methods to arrive at decisions. Consensus is often touted as the best way to make decisions—and it is an excellent method and probably not used often enough. But the team the leader also uses majority rule, expert decision, authority rule with discussion, and other methods.

Effective decision making is essential to a team's progress; ideally, leaders that are asked to solve problems should also have the power and authority to implement solutions. They must have a grasp of various decision-making methods, their advantages and disadvantages, and when and how to use each. Leaders that choose the right decision-making methods at the right time will not only save time, but they will also most often make the best decisions.

A key aspect of the leader's decision-making style, in bringing about productive synergy, is the ability to create opportunities for dialogue and shared reflection with others which lead to joint ownership of problems, solutions and decisions. Communication is crucial in the natural development of synergy.

The asking of 'open' questions, in a non-threatening, non-judgmental way, with appropriate attendant body language, eg nodding, 'mirroring' posture and gesture, reinforcing and adding to the other's contributions – are simple, but crucial techniques for giving positive messages of approval and encouragement. A demonstrable shift from authoritarian to supportively

authoritative demeanour may be essential, before peak communication, synergy and 'flow' - indicating personal authenticity in decision making - can come about between people, with the resultant mutual and shared payoffs.

In the interests of both operational synergy and strategic crossfunctional interdependence, so-called 'private intending' in decision making needs to function at a level which reconciles the need for fast, adaptable individual initiative, on the one hand, with necessary collaborative responses, on the other. As organisations reduce, hierarchically, and become flatter structures, with greater emphasis upon project team working, so decision-making needs to be considered increasingly, as a natural team process, as well as an individual role prerogative - particularly as crucial end results come more and more to depend, ultimately, upon willing and accountable collaborative effort.

A team is a group of people who share a common purpose and work in a coordinated and interdependent relationship. Teams help members create a positive culture; one identified by high-trust levels. Team relationships allow members to align with the culture and the team's purposes. They lead to synergy. Successful leaders who commit to — and deliver — outstanding results, do so as a result of the effective leadership and management of their teams. They understand that their route to success is, inevitably through engaging, focusing and mobilizing others' brainpower, horsepower and commitment.

Team participation engages the mental and emotional involvement of leaders and followers: that is, the involvement of the member's egos as well as their physical and mental capacities. Teaming also asks members to

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exercise their creative self and to increase their personal sense of responsibility through involvement. Team members need to recognize that the corporation wants their total involvement. And, when given, involvement increases the member's sense of responsibility and ownership for the corporation and its results.

If communication is the most important team characteristic, participation is the second most important. Without participation, you don't have a team; you have a group of bodies. Balanced participation ensures that everyone on the team is fully involved. It does not mean that if you have five people each is speaking 20 percent of the time. Talking is not necessarily a measure of participation. We all know people who talk a lot and say nothing. It does mean that each individual is contributing when it's appropriate. The more a team involves all of its members in its activities, the more likely that team is to experience a high level of commitment and synergy (Depree 52).

Balanced participation means that each team member joins the discussion when his or her contribution is pertinent to the team assignment. It also means that everyone's opinions are sought and valued by others on the team. Participation is everyone's responsibility. As a team moves from a forming stage to more mature stages of group development, team members must make certain that everyone is an active participant. If you have team members who did not participate early in the formation of the team, they will withdraw even more as the going becomes more difficult. Two important things influence team participation: the leader's behavior and the participants' expectations.

A leader's behavior comes as much from attitude as from anything. Leaders who are effective in obtaining participation see their role as being a coach and mentor, not the expert in the situation. Leaders will get more participation from team members if they can admit to needing help, not power. Leaders should also specify the kind of participation they want right from the start. Will everyone share their own ideas and then decide what to do or will the group discuss the pros and cons of the leader's idea?

Leaders need to create a participative climate. They must make it a practice to speak last to avoid influencing others. Often a leader may put an idea on the table “ just to get things started.” But what happens? Everyone jumps on the idea and stops thinking. People may feel, “ Well, if that's what she wants, that's it.” Leaders need to reward risk taking. Those “ half-baked” partial ideas that people bring up may be just what gets the team moving toward a solution, idea, or new opportunity (Denis, Lamothe and Langley 69). Leaders must always protect the minority views. Anyone can think like everyone else. It takes courage to think and speak differently.

Conflict, while sometimes productive, often represents a negative effect on organizational interaction. Diversity sometimes intensifies conflict. Differing values, customs, and beliefs among employees provide the foundation for conflict. This kind of cultural diversity can produce negative results, confusion, and stress. While diversity produces more ideas, it also forces people to clarify their views. Conflict resolution becomes a significant leadership task in which leaders become mediators of difference. They need to be power brokers to allocate influence and resources. Leaders often need to resort to any of the following strategies for dealing with conflict (Storey 11):

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