

# Leadership style: case of nelson mandela essay examples

[Business](#), [Management](#)



## **Abstract.**

Leadership in any organization is important, different situations call for different types of leaders. The organization needs to have a blend of the different types of leaders, the analyzer, director, connector and creator. A comparison and contrast with the leadership style of an analyzer and a creator. The least effective style can be regarded as a director because he does not have consideration for people and their needs. Nelson Mandela was a great leader how can be described as a creator, he was able to think outside the box and visualize a free South Africa without oppression and governed by democracy. His connector abilities made it possible for him to inspire, persuade and motivate his followers regardless of the prevailing circumstances. He took many risks and was courages and after fighting for many years and being sent to prison his vision for South Africa came to pass.

## **Leadership.**

This essay is an assessment of different styles of leadership and uses the framework provided by Darling and Leffel (2010) to identify why the leadership style of Nelson Mandela made him such an effective leader. Bolden et al (2003), found that leadership is concerned with establishing and sharing a vision in order to get followers (pg. 8). The leader needs to clearly think through the vision so that he can convincingly communicate it to others and persuade them to follow him. The leader needs to provide the necessary information, knowledge and methods needed by his followers. Northouse (2000), found that the leader must also have the capability to influence the behavior of followers as he gives guidance and direction

needed to realize the vision (pg. 24). Leadership also has the aspect of motivating followers so that they work enthusiastically to archive specific goals and objectives. The leaders focus is on the horizon which at times is beyond what the organization has been involved in previously, he aims to get followers there.

Bolden (2003), found that leadership is much more than management, while management is concerned about the structures and systems, leadership is concerned about the people (pg. 7). Management is about administration and maintaining the status quo while leadership is about innovation and bringing change. Leaders have a long-range view and rely on inspiring trust amongst their followers while managers have a short-range view and mostly use control on those below them. The managers aim is to do things right and always ask when and how things should be done while the leader aim is to do the right things and always ask what and why. The managers and leaders are both important for the organization to succeed. It needs a blend of the leaders to create the vision and the managers for implementation and realization.

Dereu et al (2011) found that the Great Man theory of leadership holds the view that leaders are born, this means that one cannot learn how to be a leader (pg. 6). In agreement with this is the Trait theory of leadership which has the view that leaders are people who inherit certain qualities and traits that make the leaders. They have certain behaviors and personality characteristics that make them better suited for leadership. Example is charisma which cannot be taught. These two theories propose that people meant to be leaders have it in them and only rise up when they are needed.

Contrary to these are the behavioral theories and the management theories that are of the view that leadership can be acquired through being taught and observed. The theories propose that leadership is more about the actions rather than internal state of mind and mental qualities of the people.

### **Comparison and Contrast of analyzer and creator.**

Darling and Leffel (2010), found that the analyzer is a leader who is less responsive and less assertive in contrast to the creator who is more assertive and more responsive (pg. 360). The analyzer is less friendly and in carrying out his duties of leadership shows little expression of feelings expecting the same from his followers. This is opposite of the creator who is more friendly to peers and followers and shows more expression of feelings from himself and also from his followers. The analyzer has less interest in small talk and gets straight to the point of the meeting or conversation while creator is more interested in small talk and can spend a substantial amount of time discussing matters outside of work. The creator is able to break the ice and allow people to relax and communicate more effectively.

The creator can also be described as being spontaneous, excitable and outgoing, while the analyzer is serious, systematic, and precise. Creative leaders are more enthusiastic and imaginative while the analyzer is more thorough and follows logic. In the workplace the analyzer will dress more formally, speak softly and is less risk oriented, while the creator will dress less formally, speak loudly and is more risk oriented. The analyzer is also seen as less confrontational and take a bit longer to make decisions while the creator is more confrontational and makes decisions faster.

## **Least effective style of leadership.**

Organizations are faced with different situations that call for different leadership styles in order to get desired results. However the style that is likely to be least effective is the director because they are task and results oriented and have no concern for the people doing the work. The most important asset for any organization is the employees because of their innovations and different ways of doing things that creates a distinction with other organizations. Director approach would make them less effective because the employees need to feel valued and that their contribution to the task is important. Darling and Leffel (2010), the director's main aim is to get the work done and the objectives met (pg. 362).

The little concern for employees will also contribute to less motivation, less engagement and involvement in the tasks given. The director is firm, forceful and impatient causing conflicts at the workplace which if not managed will result in a hostile work environment with low performance and increased turn over. The director is independent and very decisive, he does not believe in small talk and gets to the point quickly. Their less friendly nature makes it hard to approach them and communicate effectively about tasks.

## **Leadership of Nelson Mandela**

Of the four main leadership styles outlined by Darling and Leffel (2010), Nelson Mandela could be regarded as both a Connector and a Creator. A connector is more concerned about the people, their feelings and their needs. Ripka (2007) found that Mandela displayed these characteristics in that he fought for democracy in South Africa (pg. 17). He was always

empathetic with the suffering of the people and very sensitive about their needs. According to Ripka (2007) Mandela succeeded due to his ability to use consensus in decision making (pg. 17). He was able to build commitment and motivation and thus utilize the skills of all his followers. The connector concerns about interpersonal relationships and often show great trust to his followers, Stengel (2008), found that Mandela had a great connection and trust with his followers such that when he was thrown into prison they were extremely upset and demanded for his release (pg. 1).

Hall (2006), found that Mandela is a connector as he was a very patient man who knew what he wanted to accomplish and even when it took too long to be realized he did not give up (pg 5). He was sent into prison for twenty seven years but that did not stop him from pursuing democracy in South Africa. He was also diplomatic and respectful which is seen when he was carrying out negotiations with the government in 1985. The connector attributes are also seen in how he treated his followers always working in cooperation with them. He was always ready to have talks, explain things and answer any questions that they had ensured that everybody was involved and contributed on their part. Mandela was loyal to the goal he had set to achieve and even when circumstances were very difficult he did not turn back. He was loyal and supportive to the people he was leading, he never betrayed showing that he was a connector.

Darling and Leffel (2010), describe a creator as someone who thinks outside the box and has the big picture concerning a situation, Mandela showed this when he fought for a democratic South Africa (pg 361). He could visualize a nation without apartheid and governed through democracy, where blacks

were not oppressed by the whites. A creator is optimistic and enthusiastic, Ripka (2007) found these attributes evident in the life of Mandela, he was convinced that they would succeed in ending oppression in South Africa (pg. 17). He was involved in the creation and leading of Youth League of African National Congress who held strikes, protests and petitions against the government. He was so determined that when they were banned, he organized them to continue with their meetings underground.

Mandela's creator abilities were seen by his repeated risk taking ventures. Brink (1998), found that Mandela was risk oriented (pg. 1). When he was in prison he took a bold step of meeting with the South African president and discussed his release from prison. Despite the fact that he was a prisoner he also communicated his endeavors to spearhead the change of the nation to one governed by democracy. This was also a risk because some of his followers thought he had sold out to the government. Stengel (2008) found that while in prison Mandela took risk although he did not succeed, when he sought to have the guards address the prisoners with respect (pg. 1). A similar case of taking a risk was when he tried to have the voting age lowered to allow citizens of 14 years vote. Mandela's readiness to take risk was also present in his social life as seen when he ran away from home and went to Johannesburg to avoid an arranged marriage.

The creator is depicted by his ability to charm and persuade people. Hall (2006), found that Mandela was a charismatic leader who had a great convincing ability (pg. 8). He was able to excite the blacks in South Africa and persuade them that it was not right for them to be oppressed by the whites. He was able to come up with new approaches and ways to end apartheid in

South Africa and could not be shut down. When one way failed he would seek an alternative and eventually he succeeded by being elected as the first democratic leader. Brink (1998) found Mandela to be an inspiring leader who did not leave the people he was leading behind (pg 1). He records that even when in prison Mandela never wavered from his course, this served to motivate his followers and even his fellow inmates to continue with the fight.

Effectiveness in organizations is used to refer to the extent to which previously set objectives and goals were achieved. Also used to assess the degree to which previously identified problems have been solved. Nelson Mandela is regarded by many as a successful leader, because even though he was faced with many obstacles, some even life threatening he accomplished his goals. He led his followers to bringing an end to apartheid in South Africa and making it a democratic nation. Although the process to freedom took so many years Mandela managed to keep his followers motivated and not to lose sight of the goal. They were harassed, beaten and imprisoned but did not stop following their leader who had persuaded them that they would succeed if they remained steadfast. He realized his vision, and according to Ripka (2007) Mandela is regarded as a revolutionary and a great leader who helped organize the fight to end racism and apartheid in South Africa (pg. 317).

## **Conclusion.**

Leadership style is an important factor to consider when solving problems or pursuing certain goals and objectives. There is no better leadership style that



is suitable in all circumstances. The style of Nelson Mandela as a connector allowed him to create strong relationships, persuading, inspiring and motivating his followers. These qualities coupled with his unwavering patience brought success and realization of his vision. He was a creator who had a fresh look at things and could visualize a new nation without racism and oppression. His success is evident in that apartheid ended in South Africa and the country is governed through democracy. If it was not for the leadership of Nelson Mandela, South Africa may have remained for many years tied down in oppression, racism and the citizens being denied the right to exercise their democratic rights.

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