

Understand leadership styles essay sample



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Leadership studies stem back as far as the mid 19th century with the “ Great man theory’, Just as the title suggests the theory implies that only men hold the characteristics to become leaders and assumes that the traits are intrinsic or rather that leaders are born. Much later studies such as Tannenbaum & Schmidt’s Continuum looked at the balance between the use of authority by the leader and how much input the employee has in the decision making process, their studies categorize in to three main styles being, autocratic, democratic & Laissez faire or free rein.

In todays workplace a manager will use an array of styles dependent upon the situation they are presented with, below are examples of different factors and what styles may be adopted by a manger. Skill/Experience In this instance the style adopted is dependent upon the skill & experience of the ubordinate. Inexperienced staff are generally new to the business or role and therefore are less skilled. In this instance a manger will take on a more directing or autocratic style to get the employee started. This is normally exercised through basic instruction necessary for the employee to perform his or her duties on a day to day basis.

At the opposite end of the spectrum we have the experienced staff member, generally highly skilled competent & motivated individuals. In this instance a delegating or free rein style can be considered by the manager. Used correctly a manager will be able to fully utilise the more experienced team members to carry out tasks outside that of their normal remit, for example in the generation of standard operating procedures, overseeing training needs of less experienced members of staff or even area improvement projects.

Time dependency Time can play a big part in the style of leadership a manager utilises, some situations require immediate actions and necessitate an autocratic response others require team participation generating a democratic response. One of the more obvious situations where an autocratic response is required would be in an emergency situation such as a fire evacuation or drill. In this instance the manager takes complete control of the situation giving clear instruction to their staff to ensure their safety.

An autocratic style may also be adopted when urgent response is required. An example of this could be audit non conformance where a procedural or behavioural change is required. A recent example of this required a training brief to be delivered informing the team of the correct usage of sampling containers Vs rinsing cups. In this situation the content of the brief is not open to discussion the providing a signature as proof of briefing, the signed brief is then submitted to the audit body as proof.

Where more time is available a manager may elect to employ a democratic approach and consult his or her team to resolve any issues through one to one or group discussions. A recent example was presented when raw material discrepancies were highlighted within our aseptic facility. A departmental meeting was called in order to discuss how to implement improved control measures via the introduction of control logs.

The reasoning behind the change was presented to the team highlighting the associated losses and implications of potential customer service issues, implementation was then delegated to the team. 2. AC 1. 2 - Explain why these leadership styles or behaviours are likely to have a positive or negative

effect on individual and group behaviour. (24 Marks) Autocratic / directing
Advantages - When an autocratic style is adopted the team plays no active part in the decision making process.

Used under the correct circumstances though this style will yield the required output and in a timely fashion working well in time critical situations when a decision is required urgently. This style can also be advantageous when heading up projects where clear objectives and time scales are required.

Disadvantages - The drawbacks to an autocratic style if used inappropriately or in the wrong situation could be that you are perceived as controlling almost bossy, this may ultimately lead to resentment within the team or from individuals alike.

Another point to consider is that an autocratic leadership style can lead to a lack of creative solutions being generated by the team as they become dependent upon instructions from management, this can ultimately become detrimental not only to performance but also lowers morale. Democratic

Advantages - The team are given the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions therefore playing a part in the decision making process, this empowers the individual or team and as a result they feel valued, making staff feel valued can in turn increase morale and productivity.

By opening up issues to the team more ideas or solutions may be generated, some of which may not have been considered previously by the management team. Because decisions are usually decided by the majority, it reduces the chance of conflict, either between employees or between employees and management. Disadvantages - Time is required to open up issues to the team

or employees potentially delaying the decision making process, this option must be carefully considered by the manager before committing to it especially if time is of the essence.