

# Leadership Styles

You would use this approach to consider and develop your own leadership styles, and those of your leadership team, to use styles effective to the situation.

## Projected performance gains



### Improved

- Awareness of business strategy
- Understanding of workforce challenges
- Focus on the customer.

**Better leadership is crucial to the success of any business, and everyone involved in it**

## What investment is needed to understand the concept?

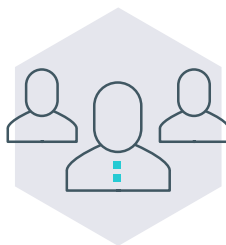
### DIFFICULTY



### Challenging

Change is a journey of many steps, some large and some small. Overall this is a long-term commitment.

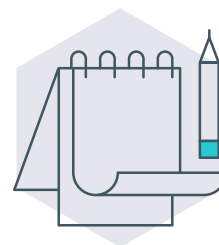
### ACTIVITY



### Individual and Team

Must always start with the individual, although views of team members might be sought.

### EQUIPMENT



### None

Except a willingness to reflect, listen, learn and try new ways of doing things.

## Explanation of the concept

There are many different leadership styles. An early model of leadership styles (from Kurt Lewin) described 3 styles:

### Autocratic Leaders

Autocratic leaders make decisions without consulting their team members, regardless of how useful this would be. This could be appropriate if necessary to make decisions very quickly (e.g. in a fire or emergency), or when there's no need for team input or agreement. However, this style can be demoralizing, and it can lead to high levels of absenteeism and staff turnover.

### Democratic Leaders

Democratic leaders make the final decisions, but they include team members in the decision-making process. As a result, creativity and engagement of the team is encouraged, resulting in high morale and employee satisfaction. It may not always be an effective style to use, though, when you need to make a quick decision.

### Laissez-Faire Leaders

Named from the French phrase which can be translated "leave things be", this style describes leaders who give their team members a lot of freedom in how they do their work, and allow them to set their own deadlines. They provide support with resources and advice if requested, but otherwise they don't get involved. This approach can lead to high morale and employee satisfaction. However, it is highly dependent on employees who have the necessary skills, knowledge, organisation and motivation.

As the leadership writer John Adair pointed out, the fact that there are defined styles can imply that one is wrong, and another is right. The key is to use a style which is appropriate to the people and the business need. Having said that, John Adair also concedes that there is virtually no place in today's environment for an authoritarian personality.

This issue is covered in the Situational Leadership section in the Coaching and Mentoring Factsheet 40.

Many other leadership styles have subsequently been described. For example:

- People-oriented Leadership - Focussed on the development of the team
- Servant Leadership - Leaders who see themselves as supporting and serving their teams
- Task-oriented Leadership - Primary focus on getting the job done
- Transactional Leadership - Focus on short term performance and reward
- Transformational Leadership - Longer term focus, inspiring high performance from the whole team.

Although these describe a number of recognisable styles, which may be useful to adopt in different circumstances, each leader will develop their own unique style.

### Substance over Style?

A key thread running through much writing on effective leadership boils down not to tools and techniques but to values or principles, based on the leader's character:

- Ritsuo Shingo describes how as leader of a Chinese Toyota start-up he put great importance on "heart to heart" relationships with stakeholders, even driving five hours to thank someone personally. The fact that people believed he authentically cared created big benefits later on.
- Stephen Covey, author of the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People", talked more about this in his "Principle-Centred Leadership" approach; "Trustworthiness at the personal level creates trust at the interpersonal level, which is the basis for empowerment at the leadership level".
- Jim Collins, in his book "Good to Great" which was based on a long-term study of highly successful companies, found that the best companies had what he called "Level 5" Leadership: An unusual blend of great personal humility and professional will or drive. In other words, combining a great task and strategic approach with a focus on people.

## Principles

The Shingo Model of Enterprise Excellence describes a number of principles which guide our behaviours if we are to be successful. Three of the principles speak directly to leadership behaviours:

### Lead with Humility

- Not needing to have the answer to every question, but listening to the ideas of the workforce
- Being prepared to spend time where the real work is done, to understand the real issues.

### Respect Every Individual

- Treat every employee with respect
- Including their health, safety and personal development.

### Create Constancy of Purpose

- Have a long term view
- Develop an authentic and compelling sense of purpose about where the organisation is headed, and be consistent about the direction.

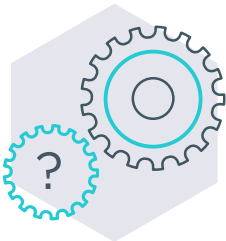
### Create Value for the Customer

- Maintain a focus on providing true value to the customer and all stakeholders of the organisation.

Different styles will be appropriate according to different individuals, teams and circumstances. However, these principles will help to guide the right course of action.

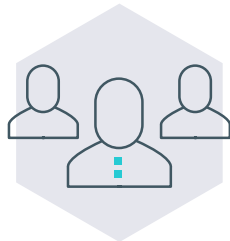
## What action should I take?

1.



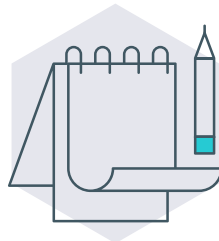
Take some time to consider your own leadership styles.

2.



Get views from trusted colleagues if possible.

3.



Note down the styles you are using, what is and isn't working well and what might you do differently?

4.

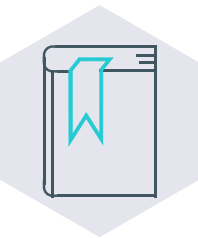


Consider seeking out a coach or mentor to help you practise new ways of doing things.

## Recommended reading



Different Leadership Styles:  
<https://youtu.be/BObxTwLQob4>



Adair, J. (2004). Not Bosses But Leaders. Kogan Page. ISBN 0-7494-3899-1

Autry, J. A. (2001). The Servant Leader. Three Rivers Press. ISBN 1-4000-5473-7

Collins, J. (2001). Good to Great. Random House Business Books. ISBN 0-7126-7609-0

Liker, J. K. and Convis, G. L. (2012). The Toyota Way to Lean Leadership. McGraw Hill. ISBN 978-0-07-178078-0

Oliver OBE, J. J. (2001). The Team Enterprise Solution. Oak Tree Press. ISBN 1-86076-225-5  
 Chapter 9 includes a useful case study on the change in management styles required in Leyland Trucks' successful transformation.

Shingo, R. (2016). My Leadership. The Shingo Institute Utah State University. ISBN 978-0-9971564-0-9



[GC Business Growth Hub Factsheet 40: Coaching and Mentoring](#)

## Glossary

### Leadership or Management?

Although this fact sheet is written from the point of view of a senior leader within an organisation, the basic concept of styles of leadership applies to anyone who has any responsibility for leading people, whether they are in a “senior leadership” position or a “middle management” position.

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