

# Strengths and Performance Risks of Different Styles of Leadership

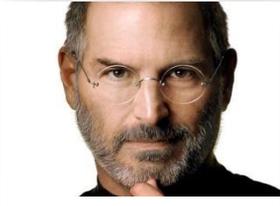
There are different leadership styles, each of which can be appropriate and effective in different situations. An effective leader uses their situational awareness and emotional intelligence to choose the appropriate style of leadership to match organisational, team and/or individual requirements. There are two polar opposite leadership styles, the directive leadership style on the one end and the democratic leadership style and a number of varying styles in between. While each of the styles have strengths, each pose their own performance risks. An awareness and understating of both strengths and performance risks help leaders to be more mindful of the intended and unintended consequences and manage the impact consciously.

Style of Leadership	Strengths	Performance Risks	Situation when this style is most effective
<p><b>DIRECTIVE LEADERSHIP (AUTOCRATIC/COMMANDING)</b></p> <p>Autocratic leaders make decisions based on their own perspectives, assumptions and conclusions. They rarely solicit information from those they lead.</p> 	<p>Quick decision-making</p> <p>Clear Direction</p> <p>When used effectively, this style draws an immediate and willing response from staff</p> <p>Most effective when a s drastic change in direction is needed</p>	<p>Can have a negative impact on culture if used indiscriminately/ if leaders don't know when to stop using it, e.g. immediately the crisis has passed.</p> <p>If used outside of a crisis it can create resistance; and may seriously damage the organization as it can alienate people and stifle creativity and innovation.</p> <p>Can demotivate highly skilled, competent staff over the medium to long-term because individuals are not being developed or listened to and they tend to rebel or leave.</p>	<p>When dealing with relatively straightforward tasks</p> <p>In crisis /emergency situations when others need clear direction and the leader has more information than the individuals concerned.</p> <p>When safety is at risk and the deviations will result in serious consequences</p> <p>With under-performing individuals where all else has failed.</p> <p>When you at the start up phase and you are in the process of building a team – creates a slot of structure and certainty</p>

Style of Leadership	Strengths	Performance Risks	Situation when this style is most effective
<p><b>DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP (PARTICIPATIVE, COLLABORATIVE, INCLUSIVE)</b></p> <p>This style is characterised by collaborative working and inclusive leadership practices. Leaders actively seek input from their teams, and they rely more on asking questions and listening than directing. When it comes to decision-making participative leadership can range from decisions being made by the leader after suitable discussion to decisions being made by consensus of the participants. The leader encourages others to take part in decision-making and problem-solving.</p> 	<p>Best used when you need to get your team on board with an idea and/or when you need your team's input.</p> <p>This approach often results in stronger understanding of solutions and decisions and emotional buy-in and commitment.</p> <p>Diversity of perspectives improves the quality of the thinking and by implication the quality of the solution/decisions</p> <p>Can energise and motivate group members to achieve their tasks</p>	<p>Risks when using this style with people who are inexperienced, lack competence, or aren't well informed about a situation. It's best to ask for input from team members who are motivated, knowledgeable and capable.</p> <p>May slow down tasks, encouraging talk not action</p> <p>Can frustrate members who like clear direction</p> <p>Inappropriate when rapid decisions are needed</p>	<p>When the leader needs the team to buy into or have ownership of a decision, plan, or goal.</p> <p>If the leader is uncertain and needs fresh ideas from skilled teammates.</p> <p>It is not the best choice in an emergency situation, when time is of the essence or when teammates are not informed enough to offer sufficient guidance to the leader.</p>

Style of Leadership	Strengths	Performance Risks	Situation when this style is most effective
<p><b>LAISSEZ-FAIRE STYLE</b></p> <p>Laissez faire" is a French phrase adopted into English that means, "Let (people) do (as they choose)." Leaders leave situations run their own course, without interfering and provide little or no guidance. Team members are expected to solve problems on their own. While power is handed over to followers, yet leaders still take responsibility for the group's decisions and actions</p> 	<p>Team is empowered to make decisions and to organize its own processes so can lead to greater ownership and personal responsibility.</p> <p>Effective when people are experienced, knowledgeable, confident, creative, and driven, or if deadlines are flexible and processes are simple.</p>	<p>Situations can collapse into chaos if your people have low motivation or poor skills.</p> <p>Projects can go off-track and deadlines can be missed when team members do not get enough guidance or feedback from leaders.</p> <p>Can result in poor performance and outcomes.</p> <p>This style of leadership has been linked to negative outcomes including poor job performance, low leader effectiveness, and less group satisfaction.</p>	<p>Not suitable for groups lacking skills, and motivation.</p> <p>Can work for motivated teams with high expertise and skills who may value independence</p> <p>Works well when leader provides needed information and materials at start of project.</p> <p>A leader with this style may struggle in situations that require great oversight, precision, and attention to detail.</p>

Style of Leadership	Strengths	Performance Risks	Situation when this style is most effective
<p><b>SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>Situational leadership is an adaptive and flexible leadership style. Leaders use their situational awareness and emotional intelligence to understand the contextual requirement, team and other variables in their workplace and choose the leadership style that best fits their goals and circumstances.</p> <p>Daniel Goleman, the author of “Emotional Intelligence,” defined six styles within situational leadership (coaching , pacesetting , democratic, affiliative , commanding/directive, visionary)</p> 	<p>Coaching style: establishes rapport and build trust</p> <p>Pacesetting style: improves current standards and can get quick wins but it is best to use this approach sparingly</p> <p>Affiliative leadership: helps employees overcome personal challenges and builds trust</p> <p>Commanding: Gets immediate compliance in emergency/ crisis</p> <p>Visionary: Mobilizes people towards a vision</p> <p>Democratic: Forges consensus through participation</p>	<p>Coaching can fail when it's used with an employee who is not making an effort, or who needs a lot of direction and feedback</p> <p>Pace-setting: can create a highly competitive yet unhealthy work culture.</p> <p>Affiliative leadership: should not be used exclusively, because a sole reliance on praise and nurturing can foster mediocre performance and a lack of direction.</p> <p>Commanding: Can demotivate highly skilled, competent staff over the medium to long-term</p> <p>Visionary: May neglect current, operational problems</p> <p>Democratic: Lack of facilitation &amp; conflict resolution skills may result in discussions taken too long</p>	<p>Coaching: when you want to increase overall work performance of a particular employee or department.</p> <p>Pacesetting leadership style is best used when you need to get high quality results from a motivated team, quickly.</p> <p>Affiliative leadership: works best when the team needs to rebuild trust, whenever there is team tension or conflict or if the team needs to be motivated through a stressful time.</p> <p>Commanding: In a crisis, to kick start a turnaround, or with under-performing employees when all else has failed</p> <p>Visionary: When changes require a new vision, or when a clear direction needed</p> <p>Democratic: To build buy-in or consensus, or to get input from valuable employees</p>

Style of Leadership	Strengths	Performance Risks	Situation when this style is most effective
<p><b>CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>Charismatic leaders influence others by the nature of their personality, for example, by being highly visionary, inspirational and motivational. As with other styles of leadership, the charismatic leader can influence others for highly moral or immoral reasons. The charismatic leadership style relies on the charm and persuasiveness of the leader. Charismatic leaders are driven by their convictions and commitment to their cause</p>	<p>People rally those around them in service of a common goal</p> <p>Can create a vision of an organization that leads the industry - the message of the better future can motivate others to work together towards these goals.</p>	<p>Can lead to tunnel vision as the organisation can simply focus on the vision, without re-evaluating or re-examining its validity or attainability.</p> <p>Can lead to “yes-men” around the leader – lack of questioning or challenging the leader’s ideas, subordinates merely follow the orders.</p>	<p>Charismatic leadership works especially well in crises: - if work morale is low and the company is lacking direction, a strong, charismatic leader can provide the organization a needed boost and positive vision for the future.</p>
<p><b>VISIONARY LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>The visionary leader shares their view of the future and helps others to see how they can contribute to this vision allowing the leader and followers to move together towards a shared view of the future. Followers to understand how they play an important role in that future state. By doing so, the followers become committed to making that vision come true.</p> 	<p>Help organisation’s/ team’s move towards a new direction and keep focused on this</p> <p>Cultivate/promote creativity and innovation</p> <p>Ability to influence, motivate and inspire action</p>	<p>May not pay attention to necessary details</p> <p>Challenging to focus on the here and now and may neglect pressing problems and situations that need to be addressed</p>	<p>The visionary leadership style is most effective when an organization needs a new and clear direction to follow.</p> <p>When a new vision or clear direction is needed, e.g. when in a period of change – at an individual or organisational level.</p> <p>Effective in situations where they have to fight against old ideas, company politics, and external pressures.</p>

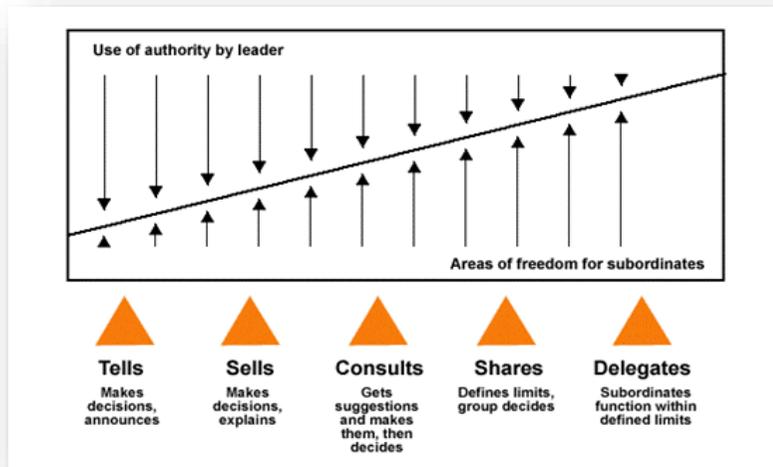
# LEADERSHIP STYLE CONTINUUM – FROM DIRECTIVE (TELLS) TO DEMOCRATIC (EMPOWERS)

[Video: Tannenbaum-and-schmidt-continuum-of-leadership](#)

The Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum (1958) is a simple model of which shows the relationship between the level of freedom that a manager chooses to give to a team, and the level of authority used by the manager. As the team's freedom is increased, so the manager's authority decreases. This is a positive way for both teams and managers to develop. Leadership style depends on a variety of factors, including the leader's personality, the perceived qualities of subordinates.

The continuum represents a range of action related to the:

- Degree of authority used by the leader or manager
- Area of freedom available to non-managers



Four main styles of leadership are identified in the Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum of Leadership:

## **TELLS**

Leader identifies problems, makes decision and announces to subordinates; expects implementation

## **SELLS**

Leader still makes decision, but attempts to overcome resistance through discussion & persuasion

## **CONSULTS**

Leader identifies problem and presents it to the group. Listens to advice and suggestions before making a decision

## **SHARES**

Now decision-making sits with the team. The manager defines the problem and sets boundaries within which the group can operate, which may constrain the final decision.

## **DELEGATES**

Leader defines the problem and passes on the solving & decision-making to the group (which manager is part of)

# Leadership Style Self-Assessments

[Sage\\_LeadershipStyleAssessment.pdf](#)

[www.londonleadershipacademy.nhs.Analyse\\_your\\_leadership\\_style-LAL1.pdf](http://www.londonleadershipacademy.nhs.Analyse_your_leadership_style-LAL1.pdf)

[www.psychologytoday.com\\_leadership-style-test](http://www.psychologytoday.com_leadership-style-test)

## References:

- Eric Flamholtz and Yvonne Randle's [Leadership Style Matrix](#) .
- The Blake-Mouton [Managerial Grid](#) .
- Robert House's [Path-Goal Theory](#) .
- Goleman et al's [Six Emotional Leadership Styles](#) .
- Tannenbaum and Schmidt's [Leadership Continuum](#) .
- Rath and Conchie's [Strengths-Based Leadership](#) .
- Greenleaf's [Servant Leadership](#) .
- Collins' [Level 5 Leadership](#) .