**Leadership Styles**

A large part of group success is not necessarily who is leading but rather how they lead. The right leadership style and collaboration between employees can turn a dysfunctional team into one that is incredibly productive. On the flip side, a leadership style that does not fit can stymie growth and lead to limited production. Learn more about the different leadership styles below.

**Authoritarian –** THE BOSS! No room for others’ opinions; focus on getting the job done, the way they want it done.

These leaders focus on dictating the policies and procedures of what they control. This includes what goals are set, how they are achieved, and all related activities. Traditionally, authoritarians make decisions without any real participation or input from subordinates. The leader takes full control of the team and gives limited autonomy to the group. For this style to be successful, the authoritarian leader must be able to effectively motivate and inspire the group to finish the task. Groups must be comfortable with close supervision and limited input. This style is only effective in limited environments such as the military or some factory settings

**Paternalistic –** Take on a mentoring role, and create bonds with staff members, creating a family-like atmosphere.

Paternalistic leaders work by acting as a parental figure to subordinates. They show complete concern for the well-being of employees or followers and thus are trusted. As with authoritarian regimes, workers are expected to commit to the vision of the leader and rarely work independently. However, the workplace has more of a family atmosphere than with other styles. Paternalistic leaders may be susceptible to playing favorites with subordinates who have performed well or are more open in loyalty. Paternalistic leadership is more common in environments where co-workers have closer contact and personnel turnover is limited.

**Democratic –** seeks staff input and wants employees to understand their opinions matter; may encourage peer leadership (staff members leading other staff members)

Democratic leaders allow decisions to be made with the total input of other group members. It is the hope of a democratic leader that the general interest of the group will be promoted by practicing social equality. Democratic leaders encourage the discussion and debate of ideas to ensure that people feel involved. These leaders may falter when a decision must be made quickly and definitively. Without the proper time to discuss, communication issues can arise and projects may go uncompleted. Research shows that democratic leaders are incredibly effective and allow for higher productivity in group members. This style can lead to more creative solutions to problems especially when plenty of time is available for contribution, planning and action.

**Laissez-faire –** takes a hands-off approach to leadership, leaves decisions up to staff and does not provide many instructions, directions, or much advice.

Coming from the French phrase for “hands off,” laissez-faire involves giving all rights and power to make decisions to workers. This fully democratic style allows the leader to delegate tasks to followers while providing little or no direction. However, these types of leaders often offer guidance and support for workers. The downside to laissez-faire is that followers may feel like their leader is unavailable or distant, and employees lack regular feedback. However, this is a great style for followers who are highly skilled, educated or experienced and allows for workers to have a great sense of pride in their work.

**Transactional –** Focuses on processes and procedures, focuses on whether not employees follow processes and meet standards

This style is focused on increasing the efficiency of established routines and procedures. Transactional managers reward good performance and effort and initiate corrective action when workers do not meet acceptable performance levels. This allows managers to only intervene when workers are not successful and keeps teams working like a well-oiled machine. Research has shown that a lower level of emotions by team members makes transactional leadership more successful. When emotional levels are low, the leader and team are positively affected because all focus is on the given task.

**Transformational –** have big ideas, and try to way employees to think & act differently in the workplace; Want to inspire staff to constantly improve and change

Leaders in this style work to not limit themselves by their followers’ perception. Transformational leaders want to change their followers’ needs and redirect thinking. These leaders use terms like “challenge” and “inspire” to provide subordinates with a true sense of purpose and excitement. They also create vivid visions of what they and the group should aspire to be and create a culture. These leaders are charismatic, highly individualized and very intellectual. This is especially common among CEOs and is the style used by famous men like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates.

- See more at: <http://www.tuw.edu/business/leadership-style-quiz/#sthash.hzY3KUpF.dpuf>