



## EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

# Understanding Your Leadership Style

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## Overview

Leadership style refers to the way in which a leader approaches directing, guiding, and motivating their team or organization. It encompasses their beliefs, values, and behaviors that shape their leadership approach.

Understanding your leadership style is crucial for effective leadership as it enables you to lead your team or organization in a way that aligns with your strengths, values, and personality. It can also help you identify areas for growth and development as a leader and adapt your style to different situations and individuals.

In this White Paper, we explore different leadership styles and how you can identify and develop your own leadership style for maximum impact.

## In This White Paper

- Identifying Individual Development Needs
- Creating a Development Plan
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Providing Opportunities for Growth and Development
- Overcoming Common Challenges in Coaching and Development



## Types of Leadership Styles

Leadership styles can vary greatly from one individual to another. Understanding the different types of leadership styles can help you identify your own style and determine how you can adapt it to become a better leader. Here are some of the most common types of leadership styles:

**A. Autocratic leadership:** This leadership style involves making decisions without any input from subordinates. Leaders who use this style are generally more focused on achieving results than on building relationships with their team members.

**B. Democratic leadership:** This style involves gathering input and ideas from team members before making decisions. Leaders who use this style are generally more focused on building relationships and collaboration within the team.

**C. Laissez-faire leadership:** This style involves giving team members a high degree of autonomy and allowing them to make their own decisions. Leaders who use this style are generally more focused on empowering their team members and allowing them to take ownership of their work.

**D. Transformational leadership:** This style involves inspiring and motivating team members to achieve a common goal. Leaders who use this style are generally more focused on building a shared vision and inspiring their team members to work towards that vision.

**E. Situational leadership:** This style involves adapting your leadership style to fit the situation at hand. Leaders who use this style are generally more focused on being flexible and adapting their leadership style to the needs of their team.

### SUMMARY

Understanding these different types of leadership styles can help you identify your own strengths and weaknesses as a leader and determine how you can adapt your style to become more effective in your role.

### Identifying Your Leadership Style

To become a successful leader, it is essential to understand your leadership style. Self-awareness is the foundation of effective leadership, and knowing your leadership style will help you communicate, delegate, and make decisions that align with your values and goals. Here are some ways to identify your leadership style:

#### A. Self-reflection and assessment

The first step in identifying your leadership style is to reflect on your leadership experiences and ask yourself some questions. What are your leadership values and beliefs? What motivates you to lead? How do you handle conflicts and challenges? Do you prefer to work independently or collaboratively? Answering these questions can give you insight into your leadership style.

You can also take leadership style assessment tests, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) or the DiSC assessment, to understand your strengths and weaknesses as a leader.

#### B. Feedback from others

Another way to identify your leadership style is to ask for feedback from colleagues, peers, and team members. You can ask for their honest opinions on how you communicate, delegate, and make decisions. You can also ask for feedback on how you handle conflicts and challenges. This feedback can give you a better understanding of how others perceive your leadership style.

#### C. Analyzing your decision-making and communication style

Your decision-making and communication styles are essential aspects of your leadership style. Analyzing your decision-making process can help you understand how you approach problems and make decisions. Do you rely on data and logic, or do you trust your intuition? Do you make decisions quickly, or do you take time to gather input from others?

Your communication style also plays a significant role in your leadership style. Do you prefer to communicate in writing or verbally? Do you give detailed instructions or provide general guidance? Do you listen actively to others' ideas and feedback?

### SUMMARY

By analyzing your decision-making and communication styles, you can gain a better understanding of your leadership style and how it influences your team's dynamics and success. Understanding your leadership style is crucial to becoming an effective leader. By reflecting on your experiences, gathering feedback from others, and analyzing your decision-making and communication styles, you can gain insight into your leadership strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge can help you develop your leadership skills and lead your team to success.

### Pros and Cons of Different Leadership Styles

Each leadership style has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, and it's important to understand them in order to determine the best approach for your organization and team.

#### A. Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leaders tend to make decisions without consulting their team members, and they typically expect strict adherence to their directives. Some of the pros and cons of this leadership style are:

**Pros:**

- Decisions can be made quickly and efficiently
- Clear hierarchy and chain of command
- Can be effective in emergency situations where immediate action is required

**Cons:**

- Can stifle creativity and innovation
- Can lead to resentment and low morale among team members
- Can result in a lack of trust and respect for the leader

#### B. Democratic Leadership

Democratic leaders involve their team members in the decision-making process and prioritize consensus-building. Some of the pros and cons of this leadership style are:

**Pros:**

- Encourages participation and engagement among team members
- Fosters a sense of ownership and investment in decision-making
- Can lead to more creative and innovative solutions

**Cons:**

- Can be time-consuming and inefficient in situations where quick decisions are necessary
- May lead to disagreements and conflict within the team
- May result in a lack of clarity around decision-making responsibilities and accountability

#### C. Laissez-faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leaders provide little direction or guidance to their team members, instead allowing them to work independently. Some of the pros and cons of this leadership style are:

**Pros:**

- Can foster creativity and innovation
- Allows team members to take ownership of their work
- Can be effective with highly skilled and self-motivated team members

**Cons:**

- Can result in a lack of structure and accountability
- May lead to confusion and miscommunication among team members
- Can be ineffective with inexperienced or unmotivated team members

#### D. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their team members to achieve a shared vision, often through the use of charisma and enthusiasm. Some of the pros and cons of this leadership style are:

**Pros:**

- Encourages innovation and creativity
- Builds strong relationships and trust among team members
- Can lead to increased job satisfaction and motivation

**Cons:**

- Can be overly reliant on the leader's charisma and personality
- May lead to a lack of accountability and clear expectations
- Can be difficult to maintain over the long-term

### E. Situational Leadership

Situational leaders adapt their leadership style based on the specific situation or task at hand, utilizing a range of approaches as needed. Some of the pros and cons of this leadership style are:

**Pros:**

- Can be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances
- Encourages a personalized approach to leadership
- Allows for effective delegation and empowerment of team members

**Cons:**

- Can be time-consuming and require a significant amount of effort and planning
- May lead to confusion or inconsistency if not executed effectively
- Requires strong communication and decision-making skills

## SUMMARY

Understanding the pros and cons of different leadership styles can help you determine which approach is best suited for your organization and team. Keep in mind that different situations may call for different leadership styles, and the most effective leaders are able to adapt their approach as needed.

### Adapting Your Leadership Style

Understanding your leadership style is just the first step towards becoming an effective leader. It's equally important to adapt your style to the needs of your team and organization. Here are some tips on how to do so:

#### A. Understanding the needs of your team and organization

Different teams and organizations have different needs, and as a leader, it's your job to understand and address those needs. Take the time to get to know your team and organization, and assess what leadership style would be most effective in meeting their needs.

For example, if you're leading a team of creative professionals, a laissez-faire leadership style may be more effective, as it allows them the freedom to express their creativity and innovate without feeling stifled. On the other hand, if you're leading a team of sales professionals, an autocratic leadership style may be more effective, as it provides clear direction and accountability.

#### B. Developing new skills and behaviors

Adapting your leadership style may require developing new skills and behaviors. For example, if you're used to a more autocratic style of leadership, you may need to learn to listen more to your team's ideas and feedback. Or if you're used to a more democratic style, you may need to learn to make quick, decisive decisions in times of crisis.

Developing new skills and behaviors can be challenging, but it's essential for becoming a more adaptable and effective leader. Consider taking leadership training courses or seeking out a mentor who can help you develop these skills.

#### C. Finding a balance between different leadership styles

No single leadership style is always the best choice. Effective leaders know how to find a balance between different styles and adapt as needed. For example, a transformational leadership style may be effective in motivating and inspiring your team to achieve long-term goals, but in times of crisis, a more autocratic style may be necessary to make quick decisions and take action.

Finding the right balance between different leadership styles requires a deep understanding of your team and organization, as well as the ability to be flexible and adaptable. By mastering this skill, you can become a more effective and dynamic leader.

### SUMMARY

In conclusion, understanding your leadership style is essential, but adapting it to the needs of your team and organization is equally important. By understanding their needs, developing new skills and behaviors, and finding a balance between different styles, you can become a more effective and adaptable leader.

### Overcoming Challenges in Leadership Style

Effective leadership is not without its challenges. Even with a clear understanding of your leadership style, there are still obstacles that can arise. In this section, we will discuss some common challenges that leaders face and how to overcome them.

#### A. Addressing conflicts and communication breakdowns

No matter how well you communicate, conflicts will arise. It is important to address these conflicts head-on to prevent them from escalating. One way to do this is to set clear expectations and boundaries. Establishing ground rules for communication can help prevent misunderstandings and conflicts.

When conflicts do arise, it's important to listen actively and seek to understand the perspectives of those involved. Encourage open and honest communication and work together to find a solution that works for everyone.

#### B. Balancing competing priorities and interests

Leadership often involves making difficult decisions and balancing competing priorities and interests. To do this effectively, it's important to have a clear understanding of your organizational goals and values. This will help you make decisions that are aligned with your overall mission.

It's also important to communicate your decisions clearly and transparently. This will help build trust with your team and prevent misunderstandings.

#### C. Navigating different cultural and organizational contexts

As a leader, you may find yourself working with people from different cultural and organizational contexts. To navigate these differences effectively, it's important to be aware of your own biases and assumptions.

Take the time to learn about the cultural and organizational norms of those you are working with. This will help you build stronger relationships and prevent misunderstandings.

## Understanding Your Leadership Style Conclusion

Leadership style plays a crucial role in the success of any organization. In this blog, we defined leadership style and discussed the importance of understanding one's leadership style. We also covered different types of leadership styles, including autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational, and situational.

To identify your leadership style, we suggested self-reflection, feedback from others, and analyzing decision-making and communication styles. We also highlighted the pros and cons of different leadership styles, and how you can adapt your leadership style to meet the needs of your team and organization.

Finally, we discussed overcoming challenges in leadership style, including addressing conflicts and communication breakdowns, balancing competing priorities and interests, and navigating different cultural and organizational contexts.

In conclusion, understanding your leadership style is crucial to becoming an effective leader. By identifying your style and learning how to adapt to different situations, you can become a more versatile and successful leader. Remember to always prioritize the needs of your team and organization, and continuously work on developing your leadership skills.





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