

LEADERSHIP STYLES

This syllabus shows that at the end of the lesson, you should be able to:

- (1) Outline the essential characteristics of a good leader
- (2) Differentiate among the various leadership styles

Begin by looking at a few concepts.

LEADER

A leader is one who is able to employ the most appropriate strategies for getting the work done in order to meet the goals of the organisation. Some people are 'born' leaders, others can learn the art, while many can never do so.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the motivating of people, towards the goals of the organisation.

LEADSHIP STYLE

Leadership style refers to the way in which a person leads.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD LEADER

- **Intelligence.** Sound reasoning in decision making
- **Judgement.** Decisions must be made on the basis of careful review of all the facts. Also includes judgement.
- **Initiative.** Be able to act in situations that were not planned.
- **Dependability.** Followers must be able to depend on those entrusted with leadership to complete tasks efficiently and on time.
- **Honesty.** Gains respect and inspire others to do things that normally they would not do.
- **Courage.** To be bold, not afraid or timid.
- **Confidence.** Self-confidence of the leader often inspires confidence in others.
- **Understanding.** To recognise the feelings of others. Praise the success of those they lead, but be careful to encourage rather than condemn those who fail.
- **Aggression.** To be forceful. However, aggression must have a limit, otherwise it will be counter-productive (people will produce less instead of more) in that followers may be alienated and then efficiency of the organisation may suffer.
- **Flexible.** Adjust to difficult situations.
- **Foresight.** Ability to foresee things and plan for the future.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Authoritative/Autocratic

A strict leader who normally is the sole decision maker in the business. This type of leader decides single-handedly what to do and it is done, disregarding whatever others may think. Thus, the autocratic leader is the absolute authority on all matters. He believes that he/she is an expert on all matters. Subordinates are motivated by the 'big stick' method; that is, the subordinate that does not obey will be punished by lack of promotion, demotion, suspension or dismissal. Problems are invariably the problems of the leader.

Laissez-faire/Free Reign

The leader stands back and lets his subordinates plan their own work and take their own decisions as far as possible. The manager gives little or no direction to workers. Employees are given broad directions on tasks to be accomplished and are left to find their own methods, make their own decisions and draw up plans to achieve objectives.

This style is normally practised in creative productions and services of advertising agencies.

A variety of ideas are placed in production input. However, employees may become too dormant and inefficient if left too much on their own.

Democratic/Participative

Most popular with workers. Those likely to be affected by a decision are consulted before the decision is made. The leader reserves the right not to accept the majority view. Those lower down become involved and interested in the policy.

This tends to slow down decision making and is expensive in staff time. However, employees are comfortable in the working environment because of the interchange of ideas and variety of opinion. This style tends, therefore, to be efficient.

Charismatic

A charismatic leader is one who is able to lead simply by reason of his or her outstanding personality or character. The leader adopts a high level of persuasion and is able to convince subordinates to carry out tasks.

This type of leader is relatively rare, but can be very successful in motivating others to do things to support him or her.

A leader may combine any of these styles as circumstances dictate. No single leadership style is best for all occasions (explain). It is generally assumed, however, that the democratic style is best to yield long-term efficiency and productivity.