



Professional Development

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Assessing Your Management Style

Have you ever evaluated your own management style or wondered how it compares to others?

While there is no right or wrong style, there are styles better suited to specific situations than others. Your challenge, as a manager and a leader, is to adopt the style that best fits the situation and the person or persons you are managing. If you are a one dimensional leader and tend to use the same style no matter what the situation, it can have adverse affects on the long-term performance of your staff.

Following are 6 managerial styles that are commonly seen in the workplace. While not the typical styles that are covered in management texts (autocratic and democratic), you will likely find one or more that describes you.

THE COERCIVE MANAGEMENT STYLE

The manager who uses this style is intent on obtaining compliance from employees. Communication by management is one way and direct. This manager tightly controls situations and uses negative, rather than positive, feedback. This manager is inflexible and wants employees to do their work exactly as the manager wants it.

THE AUTHORITATIVE MANAGEMENT STYLE

The manager's goal here is to provide vision and focused leadership, long term thinking and a clearly stated direction. Decisions are made by the manager, but some employee input is sought to reality test decisions. This style relies on the skillful use of influence to gain employee buy-in to decisions. This manager employs a firm but fair approach.

THE AFFILIATIVE MANAGEMENT STYLE

The manager who uses this style “partners” with employees to promote harmony, cooperation, and good feelings in the workplace. Affiliative actions include accommodating family needs that conflict with work goals, quickly smoothing tensions between employees, and promoting social activities within the team. The manager pursues being liked as a way to motivate people. This manager puts people first and tasks second.

THE DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT STYLE

The democratic manager focuses on building group consensus and commitment through group management of the decision-making process. A hands-off style is employed with a heavy emphasis on team participation. Employees are trusted to have the skills, knowledge and drive to develop decisions which the group is committed to. The manager's role is only to fine-tune and approve the plan.

THE PACESETTING MANAGEMENT STYLE

The pacesetter manager uses this style to focus on accomplishing a great deal of top quality work him- or herself. Employees are thought capable of achieving their own goals with little supervision. When performance is not up to standard, the manager will do it him- or herself. This manager's emphasis on "Doing it myself"

THE COACHING MANAGEMENT STYLE

The coaching manager focuses on the professional growth of employees. The manager helps employees to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and establish development plans that foster career goals. This manager creates an environment that supports honest, self-assessment and treats mistakes as learning opportunities.

Most managers have a dominant style or styles that they use more than others. Which style(s) do you use most often? Are they effective? Are you a one dimensional leader that uses the same style over and over again? Could you benefit from employing other styles? Is it time for a change?

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