Leadership Styles – Daniel Goleman et al

Daniel Goleman - a leading authority on emotional intelligence – has identified six effective leadership styles:

Pacesetting	"Do it my way"
Commanding[1]	"Do it because I say so"

Visionary[2]	"Let's remind ourselves of the larger purpose"
Affiliative	"People first, task second"
Democratic	"Let's work it out together"
Coaching	"Let me help you develop"

These leadership styles – amongst other aspects – are contained within his excellent book, The New Leaders[3].

"Typically, the best, most effective leaders act according to one or more of six distinct approaches to leadership and skilfully switch between the various styles depending on the situation.

Four of the six styles – visionary, coaching, affiliative and democratic – create the kind of resonance that boosts performance. Two others – pacesetting and commanding – […] should be applied with caution".[4]

Two documents for each style are attached:

- A broader explanation of when it's appropriate to adopt this style
- A training guide to increasing your skills in this area.

When you've read the styles, consider:

- which ones you would use most frequently if you were your "ideal self"
- which ones you use most frequently today
- what it would take to shift you towards your ideal self

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[1] Goleman uses three different names for this style: directive, coercive and commanding.
[2] Goleman uses at least two names for this style: authoritative and visionary.
[3] The New Leaders. Goleman, Boyatzis and MCKee. ISBN 0-7515-3381-5.
http://www.gregorycoaching.com/coaching_books_and_tools/books_we_recommend/leadership__assertiveness_etc.phtml
[4] The New Leaders. Goleman, Boyatzis and MCKee. ISBN 0-7515-3381-5. Page 67.

Part I – The Dissonant Styles. *Apply with Caution.*

1. Pacesetting Style – "Do it my way"

Primary objective: Accomplishing tasks to high standards of excellence.

A leader using this style:

- Holds and exemplifies high standards for performance.
- Is obsessive about doing things faster and better.
- Asks others to do things to a high standard; and do them faster / better.
- Pinpoints poor performers, demands more from them.
- Rescues the situation if others don't perform, by assuming responsibility for the task or giving detailed instruction on "how to do it".
- Has little sympathy for poor performance.
- Seeks co-ordination with others only if it has an impact on an immediate task.
- Sees development of others as "showing them how to do it".

The Pacesetting Style is *most effective* when individuals are:

- Highly motivated, competent and know their jobs.
- Need little direction or co-ordination.
- Individual contributors, e.g. scientists
- Quick results are required, e.g. in a "sink or swim" situation.
- Similar to their managers (and the organisation needs more of the same).

The Pacesetting Style is *least effective* when:

- The leader can no longer do all his / her own work personally.
- Individuals need or want vision, personal development and / or co-ordination amongst themselves or others.
- Employees seek a trusting / empowering relationship where they can influence how they deliver the objectives.
- Employees are looking for some sense that the leader is interested in them as an individual not as a means to getting things done.

Summary
When used effectively the Pacesetting Style works for individuals who are completely self-motivated and understand their objectives. The style is less effective in times of change – when an explicit discussion around the mission and role of each individual is required.

It can also make extreme demands on the leader as s/he takes on more and more of the tasks of his / her direct reports.

To *increase* the Pacesetting Style, try the following:

- Maintain and develop your technical / professional expertise.
- Teach by example and model the behaviour you wish to see, e.g. first into work, last out. When employees need assistance, tell them or show them how **you** would handle the situation. Anticipate all potential obstacles and how to overcome them; and explain to them what **you** would do in those situations.
- Insist on excellence, don't accept mediocrity.
- Delegate only those tasks about which you feel comfortable s/he can handle. If the outcome is critical, add some back-up support.
- Emphasise results. Tell your employees that you'll leave them alone if they get the results you're seeking, otherwise you'll be following up regularly.

To *turn down* the Pacesetting Style, try the following:

- Ask yourself how it feels to be led by you. Ask others who are led by you. Listen to their answers. Ask yourself how you wish to be led. How does the Pacesetting Style fit with your answer(s)?
- Resist the urge to answer any question with THE answer. Ask a question instead, e.g. what are you minded to do about this? How do you see your options?
- Keep an open mind about THE answer. Maybe there is more than one answer.
- Offer support that doesn't include giving them THE answer, e.g. "how can I help you go forward with this issue?".
- Let go of the idea that you are the only one who can do things properly around here. Instead ask yourself how you are contributing to this perceived situation.
- Learn to listen properly, i.e. be fully present not just waiting for them to finish speaking so that you can speak.

2. Commanding Style – "Do it because I say so"

Primary Objective: Immediate compliance.

A leader using this style:

- Gives lots of directives by telling people what to do.
- Rarely seeks any input from the individual.
- Controls tightly through constant monitoring.
- Relies on negative, corrective feedback to emphasise what is wrong and achieve compliance.
- Motivates others by emphasising the consequences of getting it wrong.
- Can be closed to other styles of working; and may ridicule them as "soft".

The Commanding Style is *most effective* when:

- Dealing with relatively straightforward tasks.
- In crisis situations when individuals need clear direction and the leader has more information than the individuals concerned, e.g. in a hostile takeover situation or serious emergency.
- When deviations will result in serious consequences, e.g. safe and healthy issues.
- With under-performing individuals where all else has failed.
- Leaders know when to **stop** using it, e.g. immediately the crisis has passed.

The Commanding Style is *least effective* when applied:

- To complex situations.
- To 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.

Summary
When used effectively, the Commanding Style draws an immediate and willing response from staff. However, used outside of a crisis it creates medium term resistance; and may seriously damage the organisation.

To *increase* the Commanding Style, try the following:

- Get to know the job better than the individuals concerned.
- Give direct and unequivocal orders.
- Design rules and publicise them widely. Ensure that people understand the consequences of any deviation from them.
- Set strict standards of behaviour and do not be swayed by others' opinions or demands / requests.
- Monitor everything closely.
- Criticise any deviation from the rules.

To *turn down* the coercive style:

- Ask yourself how it feels to be led by you. Ask others who are led by you. Listen to their answers. Ask yourself how you wish to be led. How does the Commanding Style fit with your answer(s)?
- Learn to ask others' opinions. Be clear that you're interested. Reserve the right to make your own decisions but make sure that you've given real attention and consideration to people who hold different views to your own. Don't be tempted to "consult" without any intention of changing anything – the situation will get significantly worse if people feel duped by you.
- Let go of the idea that you are the only one who can do things properly around here. Instead ask yourself how you are contributing to this perceived situation.
- Learn to listen properly, i.e. be fully present not just waiting for them to finish speaking so that you can speak.
- Ask yourself why control is really so important to you. Listen to your answer. Ask yourself what it would take to trust others more?

Part II – The Resonant Styles.

1. Visionary Style – "Let's remind ourselves of the bigger purpose"

Primary Objective: Inspiring others by providing long-term direction and vision for individuals.

A leader using this style:

- Takes responsibility for facilitating the development and communication of a clear vision of how things can be.
- Solicits individuals' perspectives on the vision without surrendering authority or undermining the integrity of the vision.
- Sees selling the vision as part of the leader's job.
- Influences others by explaining, exploring and describing the vision
- Ensures that others align the vision with their jobs and objectives.
- Uses a range of methods (both positive and negative) to enhance other's motivation and performance.

The Visionary Style is *most effective* when:

- A new vision or clear direction is needed, e.g. when in a period of change – at an individual or organisational level.
- The leader believes in the vision; and sees it as being in tune with his / her own values and those of the organisation.
- The leader is self-confident, self-aware and empathic to others.

The Visionary Style is *least effective* when:

- The leader is not regarded as credible, i.e. others feel they know more about the organisation than the leader.
- When overplayed, i.e. if trying to steal power from a team-based approach.

Summary

When used effectively the Visionary Style motivates individuals by focussing their attention on the long term goals of the organisation; and how each individual contributes to its delivery. When not used effectively this style fails to take into account the natural talents and experience of the knowledgeable team members.

To *increase* the Visionary Style, consider the following:

- Formulate your vision, policy, strategy and objectives. Test it out with others. Consult appropriately – with commitment and honesty. Keep true to the integrity of the vision.
- Explain, communicate, influence others to understand and feel a part of the vision.
- Solicit input and consider it carefully. Respond to it quickly and honestly.
- Provide a rationale for the vision.

- Delegate responsibility for delivering the vision. Avoid getting involved directly with the doing. Remember that your job is to influence and check alignment.
- Ensure that the vision remains up to date and consistent with the current climate.
- Provide feedback on a regular and ongoing basis.
- Seek feedback on a regular and ongoing basis. Listen carefully. Act upon it where appropriate.
- Advance others on merit only.

To *turn down* the Visionary Style:

- First of all, ask yourself – why do I want to turn down this style? As Goleman says, "Any leader would be wise to grab for the visionary "golf club" more often than not. It may not guarantee a hole in one but it certainly helps with the long drive".
- If you're over playing this strength – and it can happen - then ask yourself which of the other styles it is appropriate for you to turn up. Focus on the "To *increase*…" section of that style.
- Ask others for their feedback on *exactly* which aspects you're overplaying, e.g. It may be that they're feeling you're too distant from them. Ask yourself and them how you may address this most effectively without throwing out the bay with the bath water!

2. Affiliative Style - "People first, task second"

Primary Purpose: Creating harmony among individuals and between leaders and individuals.

A leader using this style:

- Places more emphasis on the individuals than the task in hand.
- Cares for the whole person.
- Shares his or her emotional challenges with the team members in an appropriate manner.
- Rewards personal characteristics and behaviours (the hows) as much as the delivery of the task.

The Affiliative Style is *most effective* when:

- The individual requires direct assistance, e.g. counselling and emotional support.
- Seeking harmonious relationships between diverse and conflicting groups.
- When used as part of a repertoire of styles, e.g. coaching, visionary etc.
- Recovering trust and loyalty amongst a team.

The Affiliative Style is *least effective* when:

- The leader lacks empathy – the ability to sense the feelings, needs and perspectives of others.
- Individual performance is weak or inadequate; and corrective feedback is necessary.
- In crises or complex situations needing clear direction.
- Used alone, i.e. not in conjunction with other styles.
- With individuals who are task-orientated and see relationships with the leader as inappropriate / unnecessary or distracting.

Summary

When used effectively, the Affiliative Style motivates individuals by supporting them during highly routine or stressful times. By strategically and explicitly focussing on the human element, this style succeeds in gaining loyalty and support – and getting the task done.

When not used effectively this style can lead to low standards, a sense of favouritism and frustration.

To *increase* the Affiliative Style, try the following:

- Identify and act to resolve conflict. Recognise the individual positive traits in people and accept them for who they are. Resist judging them harshly for not being like you.
- Encourage and reward harmonious and appreciative behaviours.
- Sympathise and empathise with others.

- Trust your people to perform. Trust that people who are respected and given authority and resources will deliver.
- Initiate personal contact with your employees – find out what makes them tick, what they enjoy and hate, what's going on in their lives.
- Provide social activities and personal gifts.

To *turn down* the Affiliative Style, try the following:

- Ask yourself how the team is performing. Are there any weak points and people? Is there anyone who needs some constructive and critical feedback that you're avoiding? Ask yourself what would allow you to provide that feedback? What's holding you back? Listen to your answers and act upon them.
- Force yourself to take a hard look at your range of leadership styles – are you relying too heavily on this one? What are the implications of that?
- If you're over playing this strength – and it can happen - then ask yourself which of the other styles it is appropriate for you to turn up. Focus on the "To *increase*…" section of that style.
- Ask yourself – what's the purpose of my role? How much time are you devoting to the people aspects? Track how much time you're devoting to the other aspects of your role. Be honest with yourself. Decide how to go forward.
- Ask for feedback from your team members. Encourage them to tell you how it really is as they won't be keen to hurt you. See it as an over-played strength that can be adjusted.

3. The Democratic Style – "Let's work it out together"

Primary Objective: Building commitment and generating new ideas.

A leader using this style:

- Trusts that individuals have the capability to develop the appropriate direction for themselves and their team.
- Invites individuals to make decisions affecting their work.
- Reaches decisions by consensus.
- Holds many meetings and listens to others' concerns.
- Rewards adequate performance and rarely gives negative feedback or punishes others.

The Democratic Style is *most effective* when:

- The team members are competent.
- When individual contributions must be co-ordinated.
- The leader is unclear about the best way forward and wants to hear others' ideas and contributions before deciding.
- Used after the Visionary Style has set the outline of the vision and the leader now seeks engagement and participation.

The Democratic Style is *least effective* when:

- In crisis and there is no time to hold long meetings.
- Individuals are incompetent or need close supervision.

Summary
When used effectively the Democratic Style motivates individuals by empowering them to make decisions about their own work. It is designed to create teamwork and commitment.

When used ineffectively the Democratic Style causes confusion, delays and conflict amongst individuals due to lack of focus and direction.

To *increase* the Democratic Style, consider the following:

- Hold information-sharing meetings. Keep everyone involved and well informed. Always try to involve everyone who might be directly affected by any decisions.
- Demand excellent meeting management skills of yourself and others – otherwise you'll miss deadlines and defer making decisions.
- Don't, however, forget to allow people opportunities to explore ideas and ask questions. Differentiate between genuine exploration and deviation / time wasting.
- Ask employees to share the decision making with you.
- Seek consensus. Allow everyone to be heard before making important decisions.

To *turn down* the Democratic Style, consider the following:

- Consciously differentiate between decisions that are most effectively dealt with through democracy; and those that require a leader to act more authoritatively. Resist referring all / most decisions through the democratic process.
- Ask yourself what it will take to feel more confident in your own decision-making.
- Consider the consequences of over-reliance on this style. Ask yourself how you might address these short-comings and read up on that style's "To *increase…"* section.
- Ask yourself what opportunities are being missed by the long decision-making process. Are there other ways of retaining the advantages whilst losing the disadvantages?
- Catch yourself deferring a decision to a committee and make a decision instead.

4. The Coaching Style – "Let me help you develop"

Primary Purpose: Long-term professional development of individuals.

A leader using this style:

- Helps individuals identify their individual strengths and weaknesses in the light of their aspirations.
- Reaches agreement with individuals on both the manager's and the individual's roles in the development process.
- Provides on-going support, challenge and feedback.
- May trade-off short-term performance for longer term development.
- Share exciting assignments for development purposes.

The Coaching Style is *most effective* when:

- The team member acknowledges a discrepancy between where they are and where they would like to be.
- Individuals are motivated to take initiative, be innovative, take risks and seek professional development.

The Coaching Style is *least effective* when:

- In crisis and there is no time to invest in longer-term development of individuals.
- The leader lacks personal credibility; or coaching skills, e.g. empathy, emotional intelligence etc.
- When individuals are seeking direction and feedback – they will be uncomfortable with the self-management aspect of the coaching style.

Summary
When used effectively the Coaching Style motivates individuals by linking their daily work to their personal development intentions and long-term career plans. It helps individuals develop sound thinking strategies that build their confidence in functioning more autonomously and at a higher level.

When used ineffectively the Coaching Style causes confusion, delays and conflict because individuals are unsure what to do.

To *increase* the Coaching Style, consider the following:

- Establish professional and personal development goals. Try to reality check their suggestions and resist telling them what to do. Seek to understand their perspective and not enforce your own.
- Contract to help. Ask them how you can support them. Resist finishing the discussion in one session if they can't come up with any ideas. Ask them to book a follow up session with you – show them you mean to support them and want their ideas.
- Resist telling employees what to do in any given situation. Encourage them to consult with you; but ask them questions, e.g. how do you feel about this challenge and how do you want to feel about this challenge? What are you minded to do nest? How do you see your options? What would move you towards that? Have you ever had a situation like this before and what did you learn from it?
- Seek opportunities for their personal development. Offer them assignments that will challenge them but will move them towards their goals. This may involve you advocating their involvement in an area outside your immediate responsibility. Trust that you will reap your rewards later.
- Encourage partnership. Review employee's progress and share responsibility for it. Don't takeover – it's their life.

To *turn down* the Coaching Style, consider the following:

- First of all, ask yourself – why do I want to turn down this style? As Goleman says, "The coaching style may not scream 'bottom-line results' but, in a surprisingly indirect way, it delivers them".
- If this style is an over-played strength – it happens – ask yourself exactly what's going wrong here. Seek feedback. Listen to the answers. What other styles need to be turned up? What's missing?
- Check that you've really been applying the coaching style effectively and have the skills for it. To quote Goleman again, "Leaders who are also pacesetters – focussed exclusively on high performance – often think they're coaching when actually they're micro-managing or simply telling people how to do their jobs. Such leaders often concentrate solely on short-term goals […]. That […] bent keeps them from discovering employee's long-term aspirations – and employees in turn can believe that the leader sees them as mere tools for accomplishing a task, which makes them feel underappreciated rather than motivated".