

Leadership Styles

The 5 styles of leadership summarized here are: Autocratic, Democratic, Evaluative, Participative, and “Laissez-Faire.” Each has its strengths and challenges.

AUTOCRATIC

An autocratic leader dictates tasks and timelines to a group and imparts a strong focus on an objective. At best, the autocratic leader leads a team to success under tight timelines and can be especially functional for a team with inexperienced and/or unskilled members. At worst, the autocratic leader denies input from all others and can dominate both task strategy and credit for success.

What situations in your community might benefit from the autocratic leader’s approach?

DEMOCRATIC

The democratic leader involves team members in planning and decision-making, often through a formal information gathering and/or voting process. At best the democratic leader encourages ideas and input from all team members and motivates teams toward success. At worst, the democratic leader can leave out input from less aggressive team members and override feedback from members once a decision is made. Democratic leaders should be skilled in conflict resolution techniques to illicit the optimum performance of a team.

What situations in your community might benefit from the democratic leader’s approach?

EVALUATIVE

An evaluative leader focuses on information gathering and research from team members and external sources in order to reach the best decision with a rationale to support it. At best, the evaluative leader seeks expertise from within their team to form decisions and shares an appreciation for inquiry and competence with the team. At worst, evaluative leaders may disregard some members’ input. Evaluative leadership requires flexible and open cooperation to be effective.

What situations in your community might benefit from the evaluative leader’s approach?



“LAISSEZ-FAIRE”

A “Laissez-Faire” leader gives little or no direction while providing feedback when prompted by team members. At best, the laissez-faire leader promotes an acute sense of competence and expertise in team members and allows others to rise to their performance potential. At worst, this style can lack accountability for team failures and not adequately coach members to success who may be uncomfortable in a self-directed environment by appearing to not care or be too busy to properly lead.

What situations in your community might benefit from the “Laissez-Faire” leader’s approach?

COLLABORATIVE

The collaborative leader uses consensus building and other group process to arrive at mutually beneficial decisions to maintain team motivation and buy-in. At best, participative and collaborative leaders are viewed as endeared colleagues by their team and maintain individual team member’s sense of value and contribution. At worst, participative leadership can botch the consensus process and fail to manage conflict among the group, thereby failing to reach a decision or a task objective.

Collaborative leadership requires the ability to unite groups of interested and capable people around a common need or vision and to facilitate the formulation of solutions and actions as determined by the group.

Several behaviors are important to collaborative leadership. These include:

- **Helping the group to create a shared vision, both for the outcome of their work and the process of their work.**
- **Establishing an open group process.**
- **Facilitating the group process.**

When done effectively, the collaborative leadership approach creates greater buy-in from all group members, generates the initiative of members to follow-through with implementation steps, and taps into additional resources.

What situations in your community might benefit from the collaborative leader’s approach?



Servant Leadership

“The servant-leader is servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.”

– *The Servant As Leader* by Robert Greenleaf, 1970.

Servant-leadership is a practical philosophy for people who choose to serve first, and then lead as a way of expanding their service. Servant-leadership encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment.

Larry Spears, CEO of the Greenleaf Center, identifies 10 characteristics critical to the development of servant-leaders:

1. Listening
2. Empathy
3. Healing
4. Awareness
5. Persuasion
6. Conceptualization
7. Foresight
8. Stewardship
9. Commitment
10. Community

1. Listening

Leaders have been traditionally valued for communication and decision making skills. Servant-leaders reinforce these important skills by making a deep commitment to listening to others. Servant-leaders are able to identify and clarify the will of a group by listening to what is being said (and not). This also requires attention to one’s own body, mind, and spirit.

2. Empathy

Servant-leaders strive to empathize with others to accept and recognize the unique skills, perspective, and expertise of every member of the group. The best intentions of team mates must be assumed, even when forced to address adverse behavior or performance.

3. Healing

Healing is a powerful force for transformational learning. Servant-leadership has the potential for healing one’s self and others in its practice. In “The Servant as Leader,” Greenleaf writes, “There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between the servant-leader and led is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something that they have.”



4. Awareness

External and internal awareness strengthens the servant-leader. Committing to foster greater awareness can be scary, as Greenleaf observed, “Awareness is not a giver of solace - it’s just the opposite. It disturbs.” The pursuit, however, is the link to better service and leadership through self-challenge and transformation.

5. Persuasion

Servant-leaders rely on persuasion rather than authority to reach decisions. Servant-leaders may convince others, rather than coerce. This offers a clear distinction between traditional leadership models and servant-leadership. The servant-leader seeks to build consensus among group members.

6. Conceptualization

Servant-leaders exercise the ability to dream, the ability to look at a problem or system from a conceptual perspective in order to think beyond on-the-ground realities or challenges. Servant-leaders seek the delicate balance between attention to conceptual integrity and details.

7. Foresight

Foresight enables servant-leaders to tap lessons from the past, features of the present, and potential consequences for the future. This practice is rooted in intuitive intelligence.

8. Stewardship

Greenleaf’s view for all systems was that a CEO, staff, directors, and trustees all play significant roles to hold their institution or organization trustworthy and accountable to all of society for the greatest good.

9. Commitment to the Individual Growth

Servant-leaders must believe in the intrinsic value of every person, beyond tangible contributions or performance. Commitment to personal, professional, and spiritual growth for each individual within the organization, system, institution, or team is essential to the practice of servant-leadership.

10. Building Community

The contemporary shift from local communities to larger institutions as the entities which shape human lives, and society, requires the identification of new ways and appropriate means to build community among individuals. The servant-leader pursues this effort for all those who work within the system, organization, institution, or team.

Adapted from: www.butler.edu/studentlife/hampton/principles.htm



Leadership Roles and Tasks

LEADERSHIP ROLES

The leadership roles listed below help a group accomplish its objectives by creating a climate that maintains group harmony and cohesiveness. These roles focus on the team's relationships between its members and how the team feels about itself as a group.

Encouraging – Being friendly, responding to and building on suggestions made by others, showing acceptance and appreciation of others and different ideas

Gate Keeping – Giving a quiet, less assertive or new person opportunities to join discussions

Setting Standards – Work with the group to set standards and guidelines for how the team conducts business and helping the group adhere to the standards it creates

Diagnosing Difficulties – Providing the lead in problem solving, raising issues and addressing problems that impede the team's process and progress

Expressing Personal and Group Feelings – Sets an example for constructive, honest communication

Conflict Management – Helping those with different opinions understand others' viewpoints and facilitating solutions acceptable to everyone

Evaluating – Creating an opportunity for people to express their feelings and reactions to the workings of the group

Relieving Tension – Bringing tense issues out in the open, providing the bigger picture or context to an issue or using humor



TASK ROLES

Task roles and functions focus on what the group is supposed to be doing to ensure that it carries out and completes its goals. Task role behaviors include:

Initiating Activity – Getting a task started, initiating a process to ensure that tasks are accomplished

Establishing goals – Working with the group to set realistic and achievable goals so that team members share a common understanding of the work they will be doing

Giving Direction – Reminding the team of its goals, helping the team develop a vision or refocusing activities when necessary

Giving and Seeking Information – Making sure the team has the information it needs to complete its tasks and soliciting information from the team to make sure people feel included, they understand what's going on and to leverage their best thinking

Setting Time Limits – Work with the team to set up appropriate timelines for task accomplishment as well as meetings, agenda items, topic discussions, etc.

Summarizing – Periodically summarize discussions, task and team progress or information shared

