

What makes a great leader? From Mahatma Gandhi and Winston Churchill to Martin Luther King and Steve Jobs, there can seem to be as many ways to lead people as there are leaders. Fortunately, experts have developed useful, simple ways to describe the main styles of leadership. By understanding these styles and their impact, you can develop your own approach to leadership and become a more effective leader of your student organization.

Adapting Your Approach to Leadership

Leadership is not a "one size fits all" thing. Often, you must adapt your style to fit a situation or a specific group. Your leadership style may be stronger in one area, but it is useful to gain a thorough understanding of other leadership styles. After all, the more approaches you are familiar with, the more tools you will have to lead effectively.

Let's take a deeper look at some of the leadership styles that you can use. Consider the following questions as you read about each style:

- What is my natural leadership style? Is it a mix of several styles?
- When would I use each of these styles?
- How will my leadership style benefit my organization and its members?
- Which style should I work on cultivating? For myself? For others?

Autocratic	Charismatic	Participative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders have complete power • Team members have little say • Decisions are made quickly • Best used in crises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders inspire enthusiasm in their team • Team is excited and committed • Carries great responsibility, and needs long-term commitment from leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders make final decision, but include team in the decision-making process • Team members feel in control of their destiny and are motivated • Slow decision-making

Transformational	Laissez-Faire	People-Oriented	Servant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders inspire and expect the best out of the team/themselves • Leaders are typically big-picture people and therefore need the support of detail-oriented people • Team members are highly engaged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders give team members complete control, allow them to work on their own • Team member feel sense of autonomy and creativity • Effective if leader monitors performance and provides feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders focused on organizing, developing, and supporting the team as well as being participatory • Leaders are friendly and approachable • Team members want to be part of the team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders meets the need of the team and leads by example • Team members feel part of a community • Not suitable for situations that need quick decisions or have tight deadlines

Reference

Mind Tools. Leadership styles: choosing the right style for the right situation. *Mind Tools: Essential Skills for an Excellent Career*. Retrieved from <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_84.htm>.

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