

The 6 styles of leadership

Where do
you fit?



Have you ever stopped to examine your style of leadership?

Strong leaders – like guides, mentors and teachers – have the power to strongly influence and change our lives. Therefore, it stands to reason that leadership skills affect the success of our teams and the businesses we run.

Fortunately, leadership is not an elitist sport. Like other management skills, leadership is a platform we can learn from and grow with.

At its simplest, 'leadership' focuses on **developing your team**. In contrast, 'management' is involved with the coordination and delivery of tasks.

That means leadership includes everything from team dynamics and communication, company culture, vision and strategy to learning what inspires – then drives – both individual and business growth.

Lets take a look at the six most common leadership styles.

Where do you think you'll fit?

Firstly, here's the six styles of leadership we're looking at:

1. Coercive
2. Authoritative
3. Affiliative
4. Democratic
5. Pacesetting
6. Coaching

One of the most recognised leadership studies to date was led by Daniel Goleman. Titled "Leadership That Gets Results", it showcases results from a three-year study of over 3,000 middle managers and divides leadership styles into 6 distinct types.



Coercive leadership style

'The boss'

“Do what I say” is the coercive leader's favoured management motto. Like a sergeant leading his troops onto the battlefield, this leader is armed with bucket-loads of initiative and balanced with self-control.

A style that's often synonymous with the armed forces, coercive leaders tend to:

- demand immediate compliance,
- react well during crisis,
- kickstart change/motivate; as well as
- confront problematic employees.

Remember that this style of leadership can prove destructive for more creative members and projects. Whereas followers feel safe and guided, more able employees may lose motivation and are likely to resent micromanagement.

Our advice

Think about implementing a flexible working scheme or adopting more of a growth mindset to build trust and earn respect from your people.



Authoritative leadership style

'The visionary'

The visionary leader, or authoritative leadership style as it's known to Goleman, is our more creative, eccentric and maverick teacher. They take a “**come with me**” approach, as they lead the business into their vision of what success could look like.

Stuffed with self-confidence and enough emotional intelligence to offer sincere empathy to others, this leadership style oozes charisma and enjoys expressing their ideas with clarity and passion.

(Think Hugh Jackman from the Showman with his tails and top hat, singing his values and vision to his cast and followers...)



Affiliative leadership style

'The carer'

We're entering touchy-feely territory here.

An affiliative style of leadership puts **people first**, concentrating on creating a harmonious working environment and building emotional bonds.

The affiliative leadership style requires lots of **empathy** and the ability to build relationships through a range of **communication** styles*.

This tact proves particularly helpful during stressful circumstances, and if applied well, can help to motivate employees to continue through the tough times. It can also be used to heal rifts in a team or to establish new teams.

On the flip side, this leader can struggle to understand how to improve poor performance and may be more hesitant to provide advice.

*Want to learn more about communication styles? Here's the perfect blog for you: [Understanding the 4 styles of business communications](#)

Democratic leadership style

'The listener'

"So, what do you think?" is a phrase you can expect to hear from leaders demonstrating the democratic leadership style of management.

They work hard to develop consensus through participation, using their skills of **collaboration** and excellent **communication** to lead their team.

From polls to surveys, to feedback to questionnaires, a democratic leadership style relies heavily on the views and opinions of their team.

These leaders are typically able to incorporate the broad spectrum of ideas, views and input from valuable employees, leaders and stakeholders to their advantage. So, in a nutshell, great for managing change and an agile workforce.

Top tip

Structure meetings by setting out rules and boundaries. Record these somewhere accessible, like your company documents section on Breathe.



Pacesetting leadership style

'The hustler'

With the highest of expectations, this style of leadership wants tasks completed yesterday. **"Do as I do and do it now"**, is their motto.

This approach is well-suited to highly competent and motivated teams, working to tight deadlines. Perhaps not the best-suited to everyday environments and less-pressured settings.

The drive to succeed and strong initiative of this leadership style is certainly admirable. However, tread with caution. Because of their own incredible passion and discipline, this type of leader could intimidate and unknowingly pressure employees.

Remember to walk a mile in their shoes and avoid micromanagement when considering individuals' workloads.



Coaching leadership style

'The mentor'

With an eye on the long-term, the coaching style of leadership focuses on developing others. They're like the Italian mother who's worth is measured in weight of spaghetti consumed.

"Try this." "Go on, try some more..." With a strong sense of focus on the individual, this leadership style works on the premise that each step is progress.

And that's how it works to bring out the best in people. Adjusting yet pushing the bar for consistent growth, while empowering their mentees to learn the skills that will drive the business forward.

Great coaches understand their team and accept that they, just like their people, are constantly learning..



What's your leadership style?

Each of us naturally leans towards one or two styles of leadership. The trick is not to view them as fixed. That's because research shows that leaders who sit in-between leadership styles deliver the best results.

Flexing between leadership styles makes sense - when no two days in business are the same; you can't expect to work the same and achieve different results.

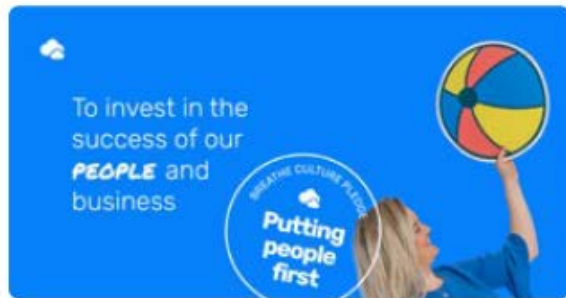
Try to use different techniques and traits from the leadership styles you identify most with, making sure you adapt to the specific situation.

Ultimately, it comes back to knowing your team, their strengths, preferred communication methods and challenges. Oh, and nurturing your culture, values and vision. Learn how to lead them and you'll see strong results.



Before you go...

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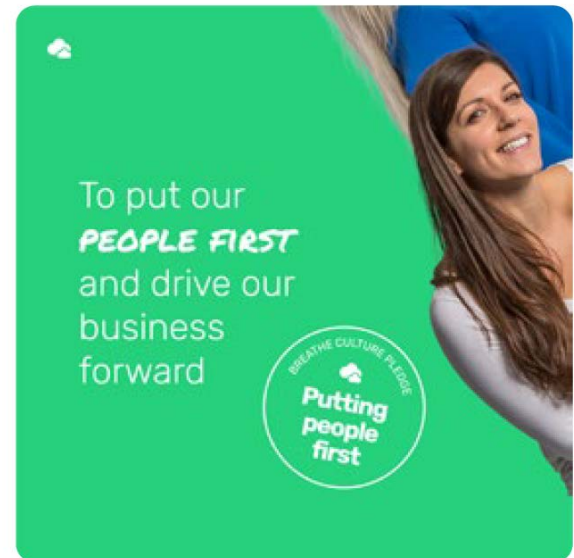


We want our people to be proud of the company they work for and its values. That's why we've joined the #BreatheCulturePledge - to show we're serious about our company culture & putting our people first. <https://bit.ly/2WKvHz3> @BreatheHR

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We've just taken the #BreatheCulturePledge and joined hundreds of likeminded businesses in committing to invest in our people and company culture to drive our business forward. <https://bit.ly/2WKvHz3> @BreatheHR

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We love to interact and see what you're up to ❤️

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