

The Four Major Styles of Leadership – Plusses and Minuses

Autocratic Leadership Style

Telling others what to do without any input from them

Positive Aspects

- Saves time
- Can decide quickly (relies on only one decision-maker)
- Provides clear direction
- May potentially avoid conflict
- Team members can focus on performing specific tasks without worrying about making complex decisions

Potential Negative Aspects

- Fosters low employee morale and engagement
- Doesn't bring in multiple points of view
- May lack big-picture perspective
- Lacks consensus/team ownership
- Deprives employees of learning opportunities

Bureaucratic Leadership Style

Establishing step-by-step procedures to help the team achieve a goal

Positive Aspects

- Easy to follow
- Process-driven, simple, minimizes errors
- Allows for quick decision-making
- Provides clarity of direction
- Results in fewer arguments; can reach solutions more quickly
- Provides clarity of roles
- Offers better risk control
- Operates at a high-quality level
- Avoids redundancy

Potential Negative Aspects

- Easy to get bogged down and not see the big picture
- Maintaining status quo; not self-improving
- Proves less motivating for team members
- Offers limited perspectives
- Results in less innovation/creativity
- Doesn't build relationships
- Offers little variety in thoughts/solutions
- Involves less development learning
- May be too rigid; team may be too wed to process

Charismatic Leadership Style

Using your own personal energy and enthusiasm to motivate team members

Positive Aspects

- Can create euphoria
- Drives high engagement
- Creates positive energy, momentum, enthusiasm
- Can be considered “fun”
- Mobilizes a team
- Often easier to get buy-in
- Allows for innovation and creativity
- Helps with staff retention

Potential Negative Aspects

- Creates blind (unthinking) following
- May be short-term in nature
- May lack detail and/or documentation
- Can be perceived as superficial/not credible
- Time-consuming – may take longer to achieve outcomes
- May result in being more liked than respected

Democratic / Participative Style of Leadership

Making decisions after having asked team members for input

Positive Aspects

- Drives employee engagement, builds a team, helps individuals learn and develop
- Often results in higher job satisfaction
- Gets team involved
- Allows for gathering of many different opinions
- Accesses expertise
- Can be enjoyable

Potential Negative Aspects

- Time-consuming / slow
- Consensus may not be reached in the end
- May appear directionless
- May lack a sense of ownership (the effect of groupthink)
- Possibility for inconsistent outcomes
- May lack accountability; the buck doesn't stop at any one specific individual