

Types of Leadership

Frameworks, styles, and real-world examples

Designed for MBA / DBA / CEO programs

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Why Leadership Styles Matter

- Leadership effectiveness depends on context
- Different situations require different styles
- Strong leaders intentionally switch styles

Leadership Landscape

- Classical leadership styles
- Modern leadership approaches
- Contextual & situational leadership
- Future-oriented leadership

CLASSICAL LEADERSHIP STYLES

Autocratic Leadership

- Leader makes decisions independently
- Fast decision-making in crises
- Low team participation
- Example: Early Steve Jobs at Apple

Democratic Leadership

- Team members participate in decisions
- Encourages engagement and creativity
- Slower but higher buy-in
- Example: Google product teams

Laissez-Faire Leadership

- High autonomy for team members
- Leader provides minimal guidance
- Works with highly skilled teams
- Example: Creative agencies, R&D teams

Bureaucratic Leadership

- Strict rules and hierarchy
- Clear roles and procedures
- Low flexibility
- Example: Government and banking systems

Modern leadership approaches

Transformational Leadership

- Creates inspiring vision
- Motivates beyond self-interest
- Drives major change
- Example: Elon Musk at Tesla and SpaceX

Transactional Leadership

- Focus on performance and rewards
- Clear KPIs and expectations
- Effective for routine tasks
- Example: Sales organizations

Servant Leadership

- Leader prioritizes team needs
- Focus on empowerment and trust
- Builds strong culture
- Example: Starbucks leadership model

Charismatic Leadership

- Influence through personality and communication
- Creates emotional commitment
- Risk of dependency on leader
- Example: Martin Luther King Jr.

Visionary Leadership

- Clear long-term direction
- Aligns people around future goals
- Strong storytelling
- Example: Jeff Bezos at Amazon

Contextual & situational leadership

Situational Leadership

- Leadership adapts to team maturity
- Different style for beginners vs experts
- Highly flexible approach
- Example: Professional coaching

Adaptive Leadership

- Responds to uncertainty and change
- Encourages learning and experimentation
- Manages complex problems
- Example: Leadership during COVID-19

Strategic Leadership

- Balances short-term execution and long-term vision
- Resource allocation decisions
- System-level thinking
- Example: Satya Nadella at Microsoft

Coaching Leadership

- Focus on skill development
- Frequent feedback and mentoring
- Long-term performance improvement
- Example: Sports team coaches

Participative Leadership

- Shared decision-making
- Empowers employees
- Builds ownership
- Example: Agile Scrum teams

Value and people centered styles

Ethical Leadership

- Integrity and fairness
- Transparent decision-making
- Builds trust and legitimacy
- Example: Patagonia

Inclusive Leadership

- Values diversity and inclusion
- Encourages diverse viewpoints
- Better innovation outcomes
- Example: Unilever DEI strategy

Authentic Leadership

- Self-awareness and honesty
- Consistent values and behavior
- Builds credibility
- Example: Leaders sharing failures

Emotional Leadership

- High emotional intelligence
- Understands team emotions
- Improves morale and retention
- Example: Managing burnout

Empathetic Leadership

- Deep understanding of people
- Active listening
- Human-centered decisions
- Example: Respectful layoffs

Innovative and change leadership

Innovative Leadership

- Encourages experimentation
- Accepts failure as learning
- Drives creativity
- Example: IDEO culture

Entrepreneurial Leadership

- Opportunity-driven mindset
- High risk tolerance
- Fast decision-making
- Example: Startup founders

Digital Leadership

- Data-driven decision-making
- Technology adoption
- Digital mindset
- Example: Netflix

AI-Augmented Leadership

- Uses AI for decision support
- Human judgment remains central
- Productivity and insight boost
- Example: CEOs using AI copilots

Change Leadership

- Manages resistance to change
- Clear communication
- Stakeholder alignment
- Example: Organizational transformation

Dark leadership

Toxic Leadership

- Fear-based control
- Manipulation and blame
- High turnover
- Example: Abusive managers

Narcissistic Leadership

- Ego-driven decision-making
- Image over substance
- Short-term success risk
- Example: Charismatic but unstable founders

Micromanagement

- Excessive control
- Low trust in team
- Reduces motivation
- Example: Approval of every task

Passive Leadership

- Avoids decisions
- Lack of direction
- High uncertainty
- Example: Silent leaders in crises

Future of leadership

Network Leadership

- Influence without formal authority
- Collaboration across boundaries
- Trust-based leadership
- Example: Open-source communities

Platform Leadership

- Orchestrates ecosystems
- Enables others to create value
- Network effects
- Example: Apple App Store

Purpose-Driven Leadership

- Mission beyond profit
- Values-based decisions
- Employee motivation
- Example: Tesla sustainability mission

Global Leadership

- Cross-cultural competence
- Managing global teams
- Cultural sensitivity
- Example: Multinational CEOs

Crisis Leadership

- Decisive under pressure
- Clear communication
- Emotional stability
- Example: Emergency leadership

No Best Leadership Style

- No single best style exists
- Context determines effectiveness
- Flexibility is key

Leadership Style Diagnostic

- Team capability level
- Environmental uncertainty
- Speed vs consensus
- Organizational culture

Common Leadership Mistakes

- Using only one style
- Ego-driven leadership
- Ignoring context

Final Takeaway

- Leadership is a learnable capability
- Great leaders adapt intentionally

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