

How to Be a Good Leader

May 13, 2014

So you are the boss. Great! Than your life must be easy. You give orders and that's it, isn't it? Well, if you want to be a leader not just 'the boss' than your job is more complex than that. Find out what are the leadership styles and how to apply them to become a good leader.

It is never easy to motivate and guide employees, but a skilled leader always know which leadership style to choose to achieve the best results.

1. Autocratic or authoritarian style

'I want you to...'

Let me start by saying that the authoritarian or autocratic style is not bossing people around. Yelling and stressing out your employees is not the way of a good leader. Applying autocratic style means only that you tell your employees exactly what you want them to do and how you want them to fulfil their tasks. They don't need to be creative only motivated to follow your instructions. Authoritarian leaders are also required to keep a close eye on the employees and on their performance.

When to use this style?

- if you are short on time
- if you work with trainees or new employee with little relevant experience
- if the decision is already made and you are required only to pass on the information

What are the drawbacks?

- there is no room for creativity
- it can demotivate people

2. Democratic or participative style

'Let's ...'

A participative leader is always popular because he doesn't make the employees merely follow the instructions, but involves them into the decision making. Adopting this style, you can send the message that you trust your staff and value their work and opinion. It is really motivating, promotes creativity and by letting your employees share their ideas, they will feel more responsible to ensure the success. Don't be afraid to use this style. You won't lose their respect. On the contrary. It is a sign of strength and the final decision will be still yours.

When to use this style?

- if you need creativity to solve the task at hand
- if you want to motivate your staff
- if your employees have enough experience and knowledge to actively contribute to the solution of the problem
- if you do not know all the information necessary to resolve the problem

What are the drawbacks?

- it is time consuming
- you might face communication failure

3. Free reign or laissez-faire style

'You are in charge.'

It simply means you delegate the task to staff members you trust. Let's face it, you cannot do everything by yourself. There are times, when you have to pass on some smaller projects to competent people. In these cases, your biggest challenge is to find the right people for the job, because though you will let them make all the decisions, you are responsible for the outcome. So, use this style by all means, but with care.

When to use this style?

- if a co-worker would do a better job due to his experiences
- if you do not have time to deal with it yourself and you fully trust your employees

What are the drawbacks?

- you are responsible for the project even if you are not taking part in it
- you might not be happy with the solution they come up
- There is no recipe that ensures success, but you will have to combine all three leadership styles to lead a team successfully.