

Trait and Style

Leadership Defined

Complex process – multiple dimensions. All organizations have two major groups – managers and employees (subordinates, associates, team members, etc.). All managers (supervisors) have **five functions**:

- Plan
- Organize
- Control
- Lead
- Staff

While a manager might have the **formal authority** to be in charge – be the leader – not all managers are **effective leaders**.

Five bases of power: referent, expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive.

Referent Power	Based on followers' identification and liking for the leader. A school teacher who is adored by her students has referent power.
Expert Power	Based on followers' perceptions of the leader's competence. A tour guide who is knowledgeable about a foreign country has expert power.
Legitimate Power	Associated with having status or formal job authority. A judge who administers sentences in the courtroom exhibits legitimate power.
Reward Power	Derived from having the capacity to provide rewards to others. A supervisor who gives rewards to employees who work hard is using reward power.
Coercive Power	Derived from having the capacity to penalize or punish others. A coach who sits players on the bench for being late to practice is using coercive power.

Source: Adapted from "The Basis of Social Power," by J. R French Jr. and B. Raven, 1962, in D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory* (pp. 250-269), New York: Harper & Row.

Effective leaders:

- Know how to lead and when to follow
- Have one or more close advisors (associates) who influence them
- Teach (mentor) leadership skills to their followers
- Realize the continuous need for change
- Influence followers to think of the organization's (as well as their own) best interests.

“Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing.”

(Bennie & Nanus, 1985) There is little evident that being a mean, tough manager (supervisor) is associated with leadership success.

Leadership: The influencing process of leaders and followers to achieve organizational objectives through change.¹ Without influence, leadership does not exist.² Leadership includes attention to goals.

Trait Approach – Who Leaders Are

Trait theory focuses on the innate qualities and characteristics that people like George Washington, Harriet Tubman, Eleanor Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Mother Teresa, Bill Gates, and Oprah Winfrey – to name a few. Basically, trait theory tries to identify a set of characteristics that can be associated with leadership.

Generally speaking, these can be grouped into five categories:

- ✓ Intelligence
- ✓ Self-confidence
- ✓ Determination
- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Sociability

The trait approach focuses on the leader – not the followers or the situation. Using the trait approach, managers (supervisors, team leaders, etc.) can develop a deeper understanding of who they are and how they will affect others in the organization.

Style Approach

The style approach places leaders in two broad categories of behavior: task behaviors and relationship behaviors.

¹ *Leadership, Theory, Application, Skill Development*, Lussier/Achua, Southwestern/Thompson Learning, 2001, page 6.

² *Leadership Theory and Practice 4th edition*, Peter G. Northouse, page 3.

Theory X and Theory Y – Douglas McGregor

Theory X Assumptions:

- People dislike work
- People need to be directed and controlled
- People want security, not responsibility

Theory Y Assumptions:

- People like work
- People are self-motivated
- People accept and seek responsibility

Styles of Leadership: Authoritarian, Democratic, and Laissez-Faire

Basically, leaders can behave in more than one style in any given situation. Sometimes these styles overlap each other.

Authoritarian leadership style has pluses and minuses and outcomes are both positive and negative. Some have compared this style to McGregor's Theory X. Depending on the situation, authoritarian leadership style is necessary:

- Emergencies
- Providing directions
- Setting Goals
- Meeting deadlines

On the negative side, followers' behavior can include:

- Dependency
- Submissiveness
- Loss of individuality
- Discontent
- Hostility
- Aggression

Democratic leadership style resembles Theory Y – leaders treat subordinates as fully capable of doing work on their own. They see themselves as facilitators – directing and guiding the work of others while encouraging communications between group members. Democratic leaders provide:

- Information
- Guidance

- Suggestions

The outcome of democratic leadership is mostly positive:

- Greater group member satisfaction, commitment, and cohesiveness
- More friendliness
- Mutual praise
- Stronger member motivation
- Greater creativity
- More participation

The negative side is basically that it takes more time and commitment on the part of the leader.

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style, as the name implies, is a “hands-off, let it ride” attitude toward followers. Very little is accomplished – followers are directionless – they tend to do nothing.

