

3: DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

Discussion Questions:

- 1. What is a leadership style?**
- 2. What are the three classic styles of leadership?**
- 3. What is situational leadership?**
- 4. What is Theory X and Y?**
- 5. What style of leadership is best?**

"LEADERSHIP IS A COMBINATION OF STRATEGY AND CHARACTER.
IF YOU MUST BE WITHOUT ONE, BE WITHOUT THE STRATEGY."

~ **GEN. H. NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF**

1. What is a leadership style?

- A. For many years leadership has been viewed as a _____
_____ such as self-confidence, intelligence, dependability, and concern for people. Achieving a consensus of which traits were most important and effective was difficult, and attention moved from traits to behavioral styles.
- B. A leadership style is a _____
Most successful leaders develop an individual style with which they are most comfortable and the one they prefer to use in the majority of situations and with a variety of people. A leader's preferred style is individualized and customized to the leader after years of experience and observation.

2. What are the three classic styles of leadership?

- A. _____ during the past century and when people think of a leadership style or approach, they usually think of the old classic and traditional leadership styles of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. These three styles are based on the leader's role in decision making and management.

- B. An _____ leader holds all authority and responsibility with communication usually moving from top to bottom of the organization. This leadership style assigns employees specific tasks and expects orderly results. This style is very directive and military in nature and has a high degree of concern for getting the job done. People commonly call this “do it my way or take the highway” approach in managing people.
- C. A _____ leader holds final responsibility but he or she also delegates authority to others, who participate in determining work assignments. In this leadership style, communication is active both upward and downward. Employee commitment is high because of participation in the decision-making process. This style takes a “let’s work together” approach and is known as a participative style and is preferred by modern organizations. Democratic leaders show much concern for their employees.
- D. A _____ leader gives authority to employees and allows them to work with minimum interference from management. Communication flows horizontally among group members and this style gives employees as much freedom as possible based upon their maturity, skills, and expertise. This style is called the integrative style and has a “do it your way” approach. This approach allows employees to more or less lead themselves with the leader offering advice and information when asked.

3. What is situational leadership?

- A. Situational leadership, commonly called the contingency theory, suggests that leaders should vary their style as there is “_____.” This approach originates from Fred E. Fiedler in his 1967 book, *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness*. Considerable research evidence supports Fiedler’s belief that the way a leader guides an organization should be based on three factors.
- B. Fiedler suggests _____ at hand by considering these three factors; the degree of confidence in and loyalty to the leader

exhibited by the follower, the degree to which the task is routine or undefined by the follower, and the degree of formal or position power held by the leader.

- C. Conclusions of the situational leadership approach suggest that some leaders function best in highly directive situations, whereas others are better suited for passive situations. Organizations should _____ because the same person may be effective in one situation but not the other.

4. What are Theory X and Y?

- A. In his 1960 book, *The Human Side of Enterprise*, Douglas McGregor suggested that _____ about what motivates those followers. A leader's attitude, beliefs, and expectations have a direct impact on the behavior of the followers.
- B. Theory X is a concept of employee motivation generally consistent with the autocratic style of leadership. Theory X assumes that _____ and will function effectively only in a highly controlled work environment. The logical outcomes of such assumption will be one in which the leader makes all the decisions and employees take all the orders.
- C. Theory Y is a concept of employee motivation generally consistent with the democratic or laissez-faire approaches. This theory assumes that employees accept responsibility and work toward organizational goals if doing so achieves personal rewards. This view is quite different from Theory X and takes a more _____ and is more appropriate and effective as a guide for managerial action.

5. What style of leadership is best?

- A. Today, most management and leadership experts agree that _____. Each of the styles described—autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire—has advantages and disadvantages. Even the two assumptions of workers expressed in Theory X and Y have appropriate application in given situations. Hundreds of research studies have been conducted to prove which leadership approach and style is best; there are still no definite conclusions.
- B. The best leadership style tends to occur when the _____. The style that is most effective depends on the interaction among employees, characteristics of the work situation, and the leader's personality. Situational leadership is the overall best tool to use; however, the direction that seems to be the most effective in the majority of situations is a _____.
- C. The effectiveness of the leadership style used in the organization does depend on _____. Substantial research has identified three basic skills—technical, conceptual, and human relations—as most beneficial to leaders. A balance of these three skills allows the chosen leadership style used in a given situation to be most effective.
- D. In developing a personal style of leadership, it is wise to consider several things beginning with an _____. Helpful suggestions include trial-and-error experience, on-the-job training, forms of education and training, and networking with several senior managers who can act as a coach and mentor assisting in the development of specific skills. Remember that as you develop as a leader, you will need to _____ and continue to refine, polish, and educate yourself.