

LEADERSHIP STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions - Think of a group or organisation in which you are a member. Visualise yourself in charge of a group discussion. As you lead the group, the following six problems arise. Read the first problem and possible solutions. Choose the best of the possible solutions and circle the letter, which matches that solution. Keep in mind that you are in charge of group discussion for a particular group.

1. Your group is having trouble getting started. You have tried to make everyone feel comfortable. You have allowed time to get acquainted. Everyone seems interested and cooperative, but reluctant to speak up.

- a. Wait until they're ready to speak up.
- b. Suggest that the group vote on what to do next.
- c. Make some specific assignments to different people and help them complete their assignments.

2. The group is operating extremely well. Members get along well with each other. Discussion is lively. Everyone is contributing to the group. You want to insure that this continues.

- a. Reduce your leadership. Let group members lead the group as much as possible.
- b. Be sure agreement is reached on each point before proceeding.
- c. Keep the group firmly under your control or the group will lose its momentum.

3. The group has been very productive. Two or three members have done most of the talking and all of the work. Everyone seems happy, but you would like to make some changes so that more members will get involved.

- a. Tell it like it is. Outline the changes and see that they are made.
- b. Propose the changes. Explain why they are needed, then let the group decide what will be done.
- c. Don't do anything that might threaten group productivity.

4. The group is working well and relations among members are very positive. You feel somewhat unsure about your lack of direction of the group.

- a. Leave the group alone.
- b. Slowly assert yourself to give the group more direction.
- c. Ask the group if you should provide more direction, then comply with their wishes.

5. The group was going great, but now it is falling apart. Members are beginning to bicker. It is hard to stay on the subject. Someone has just suggested that maybe the group should take a recess for two or three months.

- a. Let everyone have their say. Don't get involved.
- b. Take a vote on the suggested recess.
- c. Propose a new course of action for the group. If no one strongly disagrees, make assignments and see that they are carried out.

6. Your group has completed an excellent discussion of a topic they chose, but no one wants to take any action although several activities would be appropriate and each activity has been discussed.

- a. Suggest that the group move on to another topic. If no one disagrees, list possible topics.
- b. Choose an activity for the group and make assignments.
- c. Just keep quiet until the group arrives at a decision.

Scoring Your Leadership Style Tendencies

Each of the three possible solutions to each problem corresponds to one of the three styles of leadership:

Problem	Directive	Democratic	Non-Directive/Delegative
1	C	B	A
2	C	B	A
3	A	B	C
4	B	C	A
5	C	B	A
6	B	A	C

Assessing Your Results and Your Leadership Style Tendencies

In problem 1, the group needs direction. Voting would not be useful. A non-directive approach might work in the long run, but would be frustrating in the short term. (c) is the best solution.

In problem 2, there is no problem. "If it isn't broke, don't fix it!" (a) is the best solution.

In 3, the group is productive, but not everyone is contributing. The group needs help but a directive approach (a) might cause a rebellion. Non-directive (c) style would not get the quiet members involved. Go with (b).

Problem 4 is similar to 2. The group is working well. Resist the temptation to take action when none is needed. Try (a).

In problem 5, the group was all right, but now it is not. Leadership is required. Non-directive (a) leadership will only worsen the situation. If you vote (b), frustration may get in the way of reason. Directive leadership (c) is the best bet.

In 6, democratic leadership (a) is called for. A directive (b) approach would oppose the group's stated position. Since the group is at a stalemate, solution (c), the non-directive style, would not help.

How to Interpret this Exercise

The answers given above suggest the correct leadership style given the situation portrayed in each statement. However, if you answered differently, don't worry. You may have interpreted the problems in a different way than was intended. You may not be wrong at all. But if you chose mostly "directive" solutions, or mostly "democratic", or mostly "emergent", take care: you may need to work harder on developing the other two styles. An effective leader will develop their skills at each style and learn to use all three styles when necessary. Caution!! The purposes of this exercise are to point out three leadership styles, to reflect your tendencies in a specific situation, and to highlight the need for practicing "situational leadership". This exercise is not sophisticated enough to categorise your leadership style. Please don't look at the results this way.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

[Background Reading]

Introduction & Definition

Most leaders think very little about their own leadership style. They "do what comes naturally" when leadership is needed. If they are successful leaders, their instincts usually serve them well. To develop your leadership ability, however, you need to be more aware of how you lead.

A leader is someone who influences others. We all have an image of a leader. It can be described by such words as intelligent, courageous, persuasive, skilful, and powerful. You may have heard the myth that "Leaders are Born, Not Made!" However, numerous leadership studies and programs have shown that individuals with a desire to do so, can take steps to learn, practice and improve their leadership capabilities and develop into leaders.

In this course, our working definition for leadership is the following: ***Leadership refers to the initiative or ability of a person (or group) to mobilize &/or influence internal and/or external stakeholders to achieve desired results.***

Teamwork -- A leader cannot achieve success alone. The old notion that a leader is "the top of the pyramid" is false. An effective leader is involved and in touch with group members. He/she enables them to act by providing technical assistance, emotional support and vision. Effective leaders insist on the support and assistance of those affected by the project. They think in terms of "we" not "I."

Visioning -- A leader also develops a vision of the organization's future. It is important to communicate this vision to members of the group, allowing them to respond and become part of the visioning process. You should build a vision with others. Visioning is a collaborative effort! Your group will grow and prosper by building commitment to a vision or dream that is shared by all. Telling others outside of the organization about the vision is important to the process of developing your own commitment to it.

Risk Taking -- A leader is a risk taker and an innovator. New ideas may come from you, from others in the organization, or from the community. A leader should recognize good ideas, actively support them, and encourage action. One may call them early adapters of innovation. Just think of the first time you played baseball. You probably were not perfect at hitting the ball or running the bases. Leaders are learners and must be able to learn from their mistakes as well as their successes. So must they encourage their group members and support them through their mistakes. Without mistakes, there is no learning or growth. All changes and innovations involve risk and challenge.

Recognition & Encouragement -- An effective leader must take the time to recognize and reward people for what they've done. Individuals may become tired, bored or frustrated with a particular task or goal. They are often tempted to give up. A leader must provide the encouragement to motivate members to carry on. Recognition comes in many forms; it may be given to individuals or to groups. It may be as simple as a word of encouragement: "You did a great job, thanks." Whatever the method, give credit and praise when and where it is due. And do not forget to reward yourself. Celebrate once a goal or milestone has been reached. Showing a genuine concern and respect for your work, your people and your community may be the best strategy in reaching your goal of outstanding leadership.

Leadership Styles -- Most writing on leadership deals with three styles of leaders. These three styles are called by different names; characteristics of each are included below. Each column represents the different names used.

Directive	Democratic	Delegative/Non-Directive
Authoritarian	Democratic	Emergent – waits to see other leaders emerge
Initiates task	Initiates process or discussion	Laissez-faire
Direct others	Involves others	Defer to others
Decisive	Facilitates consensus building & decision- making	Refuses to make decision for group

When a leader is directive, that leader initiates action, structures activities, motivates others, delegates responsibility, and praises or reprimands subordinates. A democratic leader gets results by leading discussions, asking questions to involve others, encouraging others to volunteer for responsibilities, confirming commitments, and asking for a vote to get a consensus decision or a majority decision. A non-directive leader refuses to make decisions for others, uses silence until someone in the group speaks out, gives non-verbal support [nods, smiles] to others who show positive leadership, and gradually fades out of a group when others in the group show an ability and a willingness to take over.

Different situations require different styles of leadership. Evacuation of a burning building calls for directive leadership. Deciding among several suggestions for an organisation's social event calls for democratic leadership. Helping qualified, experienced, enthusiastic committee heads calls for non-directive leadership.

Leadership will be most effective if a leader can look at a situation, decide what style of leadership is needed by the group and act accordingly. When a leader is able to use each of the three leadership styles appropriately, we call that effective facilitator leadership. A facilitator then may direct, use democratic leadership or intentionally let the group provide its own leadership. The style used will vary according to the leader's formal role within the group, the size of the group, skills and experience of group members, motivation and goals of group members. It also depends on group maturity. An effective facilitator leader will learn to quickly consider all of these factors and choose the best leadership style for the situation.

Improving Facilitator Leadership Skills

If you would try to improve your facilitator leadership, try the following:

Directive Leadership -- Before you "take command" of a group, think about it. Does the group need directive leadership? Are you the best person to direct? Who in the group will compete with you for leadership? How can you win that person's cooperation? Recognise individuals' contributions. Praise them in front of the group. Keep criticism infrequent, constructive and private. Don't hog all of the jobs. Don't seek all of the glory. Delegate responsibility, make assignments, then see that those responsibilities are met. Think before you speak. Speak briefly and to the point. Get advice before you decide. When a decision is bad, admit it and reorganise.

Democratic Leadership -- Make each group member feel important by asking for opinions, especially from the quieter members. Use a variety of techniques for decision-making [majority voting, negative voting, consensus, compromise]. Ask questions to get others involved. Encourage group decisions; discourage individual decisions. Summarise agreements and commitments.

Delegative/Non-Directive Leadership -- Listen, observe, consider what is happening and why. When group members say or do something useful, smile, nod in agreement, give a "thumbs up" signal. When people ask for your opinion, turn the question back to them or to a quieter member by saying, "I'm not sure. What do you think Jill?" When people ask for you to decide, turn the decision back to them by saying, "I really don't feel I should decide for the group. What are the possible decisions? What are the pros and cons of each? Which possibility would you choose?"

In summary, a "Facilitator" Leader assesses the situation and chooses an appropriate leadership style:

Directive	Democratic	Delegative/Non-Directive
Initiates Structures Motivates Delegates Reprimands	Asks Questions to Involve Others Leads Discussion Tests to See if Consensus Exits Encourages Others to Take Responsibility	Fades out Gradually Uses Silence Gives Non-Verbal Support Refuses to Make Decisions Confirms Commitments