

## One-Dimensional and Two-Dimensional Leadership Styles

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**Abstract:** *In order to motivate their group members to perform certain tasks, leaders use different leadership styles. These styles are based on leaders' backgrounds, knowledge, values, experiences, and expectations. The one-dimensional styles, used by many world leaders, are autocratic and democratic styles. These styles lie on the two opposite sides of the leadership spectrum. In order to precisely define the leadership styles on the spectrum between the autocratic leadership style and the democratic leadership style, leadership theory researchers use two-dimensional matrices. The two-dimensional matrices define leadership styles on the basis of different parameters. By using these parameters, one can identify two-dimensional styles*

**Keywords:** *One-dimensional styles, two-dimensional styles, autocratic, democratic, directing, coaching, participating, delegating*

### 1. ONE-DIMENSIONAL STYLES

In order to motivate their workers to carry out assigned tasks, leaders use a whole range of different styles. These styles can be based on knowledge, moral values, experiences, and expectations of the leader. Due to this, a leader can use a unique approach to motivate the subordinates. Two basic styles used by many world leaders are **autocratic and democratic styles**. These styles are on the two opposite sides of the leadership spectrum, and this is why they include many other methods. The autocratic leadership style is characterized by the centralized decision making, clear instructions, and punishment and reward methods. On the other side, the democratic style is characterized by delegating decision making, participation in management, and motivation. Leaders, who use the autocratic style, are called autocratic leaders, while leaders, who use the democratic style, are

called democratic leaders.

Autocratic leaders usually strive for the total control of the decision making process. These leaders typically set rigid standards, organize tasks in details, and define the work methods. They also monitor the entire process to be sure that the assigned task is being carried out. The most important thing for all autocratic leaders is that each project is successfully completed. When they work, they are usually authoritative, cold, and self-analytical. They do not pay too much attention to the needs and desires of their associates and workers [12]. This type of leader can be found in the politics or military.

On the other side, democratic leaders are focused more on motivating their workers than on controlling them. These leaders usually set their work environments based on trust and friendship, and they try to establish personal relationships with workers. Democratic leaders allow their subordinates to participate in the

decision making process. These leaders understand their environments and are not afraid of the knowledge and experience of their associates and workers [6]. When they work, they are caring and trustful. Democratic leaders are also interested in professional and personal development of their workers, and they always try to provide them with additional inspiration. Workers are usually happier and more satisfied working with the democratic leaders than with the autocratic leaders. Obviously, the autocratic leadership style and democratic leadership style are very much different. The main difference between the styles is that the autocratic leadership style tends to be authoritative, while the democratic leadership style tends to 'democratic.' The autocratic style is based on the strict control systems, while the democratic style is usually flexible. However, both styles can be successful in different situations. This indicates that the effective leadership is also dependent upon external factors, such as the nature of the task.

In different situations, depending upon different external factors, leaders should know how to use both autocratic and democratic leadership styles. They need to assess which style is necessary in which situation, and they need to know what impact the chosen style will have on their workers and the overall business environment. Accordingly, leaders should use the autocratic style when their workers have no experience and when they are not ready to undertake the responsibility for the decision. Leaders can use this style when the decision needs to be made in a short period of time and when the time does not allow other workers to be involved in the process. For example, the autocratic leadership style can be used when there is an acquisition threat or during a reorganization process when swift and hard decisions are vital for the survival of the firm. Leaders can also use this style when workers are not functioning well together or when workers work from different geographic locations [12]. One of the weaknesses of the autocratic leadership style is that it does not encourage workers' participation. Generally, workers are normally in the position to contribute to better decisions if they can freely exchange information. Also, the autocratic leadership style does not contribute significantly to professional and personal development of workers. The workers can

become confused, if a leader, using the autocratic leadership style, is not in a position to successfully manage them.

On the other side, leaders normally have an opportunity to use the democratic leadership style when their workers tend to be independent at their work. Leaders can also use this style when their workers have the necessary experience to do a specific task independently, and when they have the required knowledge and desire to make decisions. This style can be used when it is necessary to create new company visions, harmonic company operations, or when they are needed in order to establish a consensus. When using the democratic leadership style, one needs to pay particular attention to: a) creating visions for success, b) establishing clear communication norms, c) creating the environment of credibility and trust, and d) creating an organization based on the permanent improvement [2]. One of the weaknesses of the democratic leadership style is that it is time consuming. Besides, workers are often insufficiently mature to manage themselves or their tasks. These weaknesses can be minimized if the style is used at the right time and in a proper manner.

Leaders can make a mistake if they try to use the autocratic leadership style with the workers who want to be independent in making decisions. On the other hand, leaders can make a mistake if they use the democratic style with the workers who need directions and a rigid system of control. Many leaders make a mistake by failing to pay attention to the needs and desires of their subordinates or by applying the leadership style dictated by their organization.

Anyhow, while using both styles, the most important thing is that a leader discovers and uses workers' talents for achieving the company's goals. The research, that included more than 80,000 managers, carried out by Gallup, a research organization, and Marcus Buckingham, a consultant and an author, indicates that discovering and using hidden talents, for the purposes of an effective action, is one of the most important parts of a successful leader [1]. Once they find hidden talents of the subordinates, leaders need to know how to use the talents on as needed basis, and how to continue workers' education process.

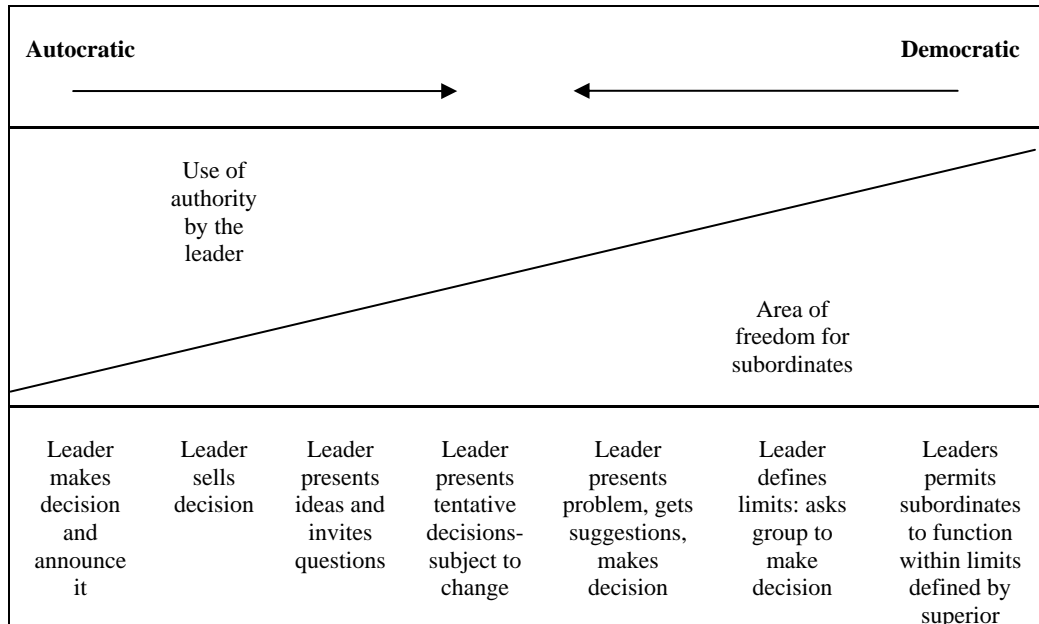


Figure 1. Autocratic Leadership Style Versus Democratic Leadership Style [modified 12]

The most significant common feature of the autocratic and democratic leadership styles is that both can be used for improving productivity of a single team. For example, many reports indicate that the effective leadership fluctuates in line with the ‘maturity’ of the team members. Team members normally go through four phases of maturity:

- 1) **Initial Phase** – during the initial phase, members learn how to work within the group and they adapt to both external and internal environments. During this phase, leaders should use the autocratic style, as it is necessary to direct workers almost completely (failing to direct workers during this period leads to confusion at work).
- 2) **Learning Phase** – during this phase, team members learn about their tasks and responsibilities. Leaders should use the autocratic leadership style, because in this phase, workers are usually not ready to undertake the responsibility for the success of a project. On the other hand, leaders

should also inspire and support the teams. At the end of this phase, some leaders decide to make gradual transfer from the autocratic to democratic leadership style.

- 3) **Motivation Phase** – during this phase, team members become motivated and ask for additional responsibilities. Apart from that, workers become self-confident, experienced, and resourceful. Leaders should reduce their participation during the decision making process and they should make room for the teams to act independently in their work. Leaders can use the democratic style during this phase.
- 4) **Final Phase** – during this phase, group members are completely independent and wish to accept full responsibility for the decision making. In this phase, leaders can use the democratic leadership style and leave the decision making process to the team [12].

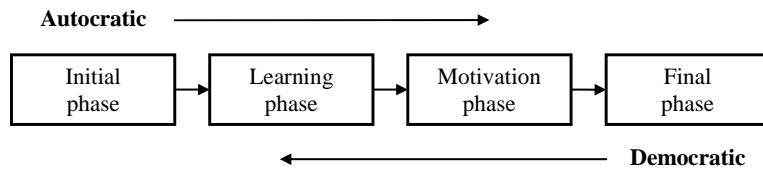


Figure 2. Leadership Styles through Development Phases

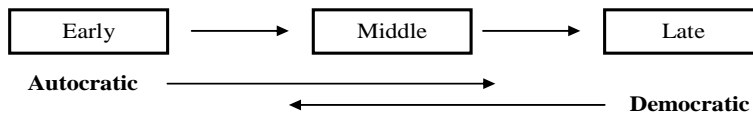


Figure 3. Leadership Styles through Career Development Phases

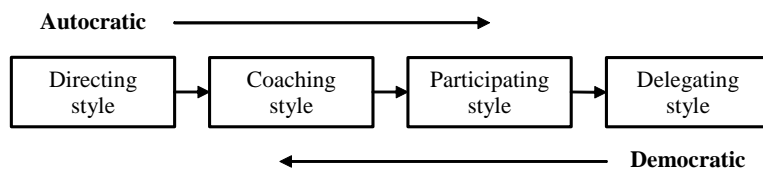


Figure 4. Links between Leadership Styles

It is important to note that leaders themselves go through development phases during their professional carriers. From the early improvement phase, when they need a mentor, until the late professional carrier phase, when they become mentors, leaders prefer certain leadership styles [1]. In the very beginning of the career, many leaders prefer the autocratic leadership style, while, in the sunset of their careers, they almost completely switch to the democratic leadership style. Leaders who realize this process are in a much better position to adapt their styles to the respective situation and avoid to be trapped in the trends of their professional development.

## 2. TWO-DIMENSIONAL STYLES

In order to precisely define leadership styles on the spectrum between the autocratic leadership style and the democratic leadership style, leadership theory researchers use two-dimensional matrices. The two-dimensional matrices define leadership styles on the basis of different parameters. Even though there are many two-dimensional matrices, one of the most popular was developed during the 70s by Paul Hersey, in his Center for Leadership Studies. Namely, Hersey defined leadership styles relative to: a) directives used by leaders

while in contact with their workers, and b) support provided by leaders to their workers. Leaders can provide different types of support to their workers, such as training, encouragement, careful listening, etc. On the other hand, leaders can provide more or less directives and guidelines in communication with their subordinates. This theoretic approach was called situational leadership. By using these two parameters, one can identify many different leadership styles, among which these four are the most significant: **directing, coaching, participating, and delegating** [9].

The directing leadership style, as suggested by the title, is mainly based on leaders' directives as opposed to being based on their support. This style is applied when workers know very little about the field they are working in, and when they do not wish to undertake the responsibility. The coaching leadership style is based both on leaders' directives and their support to the workers. This style is applied when workers are familiar with the field they are working in, and when their opinion is of the significance for the project. The participating leadership style is somewhat based on leaders' directives, while it is mostly based on leaders' support to the workers. It includes the participation of ideas, participatory decision making, leaders' intensive interaction with employees, employees' maturity (from modest

to intensive), and employees' lack of readiness to undertake the required responsibility. This is why leaders' support is necessary. The delegating leadership style is mainly based on providing support to workers, while being modestly based on leaders' directives. This style includes employees' undertaking of responsibility for the decision making, and is applied in situations when the followers have a high level of maturity. The relationship between the directive, working methods (operations), and the leadership styles is presented in Table 1.

**Directing Leadership Style** – The directing leadership style is characterized by setting clear directions and rules. Leaders, using this style, command, indoctrinate, supervise, and control their workers. Apart from that, these leaders provide necessary information and training to their workers. The directing leadership style is very important during the early stages of a project as well as in situations requiring fast reactions, such as in acquisitions, reconstructions, etc.

Table 1. Source of Directive, Method of Action, and Leadership Styles [9]

	Leadership Style	Method of Operation	Source of Direction
1	Directing	Specific direction with close supervision	Leader
2	Coaching	Explanations why; show and tell, skill drills	Leader
3	Participating	Ideas, goals, decisions and shared functions	Team
4	Delegating	Work efforts/processes are given to subordinates	Team

Although this style is based on setting clear rules and directions, it can have both positive and negative impacts on the working environment of the company. Johnson has noted [9] that the leaders, using the directing style, have to be **directors, trainers, tutors, guides, controllers, counselors, confronters, and visionaries**. As directors, leaders explain to their workers what, how, and by when needs

to be done. They explain which working procedures should be used by the workers. Leaders also need to be the trainers when workers need assistance during their professional development. As trainers, leaders need to be careful listeners assisting their workers in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, leaders need to provide workers with the required knowledge, as well as encouragement. They also need to connect workers' desires with the goals of the organization. As tutors, leaders need to keep track of the work performed by their workers and assist them in overcoming problems arising from the lack of knowledge or experience. In these cases, leaders teach their subordinates and provide them with the necessary knowledge. Leaders, using the directing style, also need to be guides in cases when workers possess necessary knowledge and know what procedures they should use, but when they are missing the required directives. As controllers, leaders set rules and regulations to be observed during work. They also control their workers, and they sanction all violations of the prescribed rules. Leaders also play the role of counselors in cases when it is necessary to analyze the work of subordinates, and when it is necessary to provide advices to the workers in order to overcome certain problems. As confronters, leaders invite workers whose performance is not satisfactory. Leaders, using the directing leadership style, should be visionaries when it is necessary to draw workers closer to the vision, or when certain changes require a new vision. As visionaries, leaders are inspiring and emotionally intelligent. They push workers to adopt a common direction and explain how workers' efforts contribute to the company vision [9].

**Coaching Leadership Style** – The coaching leadership style is characterized by leaders' clear directions, as well as by their unreserved support to workers. Leaders, using this leadership style, provide clear directives, information, and advices to their workers, while, on the other side, workers share their opinion and recommendations with their leaders. It is vital that leaders provide necessary support to their subordinates in the form of training and public acknowledgments for their performance. During trainings, leaders should teach their workers how to perform certain tasks and check whether the workers are capable of doing the tasks. Johnson noted [9]

that leaders using the coaching style need to be **coaches, trainers, counselors, confronters, sponsors, mentors and visionaries**. As coaches, leaders should train their workers to perform the required tasks. They should also encourage their workers to perform the assigned tasks, and they should acknowledge successful completion of the task. In addition, leaders need to correct and critique workers in a manner that would increase their productivity. Together with this, leaders need to be trainers as well. Namely, they constantly need to teach their workers new methods and forms of conduct. This is why it is very important that leaders stay in a constant communication with their workers. As counselors, leaders assist workers in improving their performance. They encourage the workers and help them acquire required knowledge and overcome new challenges and problems. Leaders also play the role of sponsors. To certain extent, they are ready to involve workers in the decision making process and reduce their own influence. In addition, sponsors are ready to support their workers' efforts and provide rewards for the results. In regard to this, as mentors, leaders help their workers advance in their careers. They help them with learning and professional development. Finally, leaders, using the coaching style, should be visionaries. Leaders need to explain organizational visions to the workers. Apart from that, they link organizational visions with the workers' personal goals [9].

**Participating Leadership Style** – The participating leadership style is characterized by the participation of workers and teams during the decision making process. Although workers and teams participate during the decision making process, the final decision and responsibility lies with the leaders. For this leadership style to be successful, workers and teams need to have the required knowledge and experience, and they need to be ready to be a part of the decision making. On the other hand, leaders, using this style, must not be afraid to transfer a part of the process to their teams or workers. They also need to constantly encourage and reward their workers. Johnson noted [9] that leaders, using the participating style, must be **participants, trainers, coordinators, team builders, consultants, counselors, mentors and visionaries**. As participants, leaders transfer responsibility to their workers, and they take part in the

operations of the team. They accept information and advices from their followers and help them realize the goals. In addition, leaders, using the participating style, play the role of a trainer. They are devoted to the advancement of their workers and train them in different fields, including management and leadership. As coordinators, leaders establish communication with other parts of the organization in order to obtain required materials and knowledge necessary to achieve the goals. This is why it is vital for leaders to have strong communication and negotiation skills. They must be familiar with their workers and their skills, and they need to be capable of creating harmonic teams in order to perform the assigned tasks. As consultants, leaders help their followers overcome problems. Namely, certain problems may exceed workers' knowledge and experience. In these cases, leaders' assistance is vital for the success of a project. Leaders, using the participating style, need to be counselors, that is, they need to provide constant encouragement to the workers for the purpose of achieving maximum results. They can use different methods in order to support efforts of their workers. As mentors, leaders help their workers in continual development and training. In addition, they publicly acknowledge their workers' efforts and successes, and they provide them with rewards. Finally, as mentors, leaders are devoted to the organizational visions and they harmonize workers' personal goals with the organization goals [9].

**Delegating Leadership Style** – The delegating leadership style is characterized by the transfer of authority and responsibilities to the workers and teams. Leaders, using this style, share projects and tasks with their followers and allow them to complete the tasks independently. For this style to be successful, leaders need to be familiar with their workers and their education, knowledge, skills, goals, desires, leadership potentials, etc. In this way, leaders are in a position to delegate projects to the suitable workers. During the delegating process, leaders communicate the goals, standards, procedures, and authorizations to their followers. Afterwards, leaders transfer projects to the followers, and the leaders focus on supervision and evaluation of the work. Johnson noted [9] that leaders using the delegating style must be **delegaters, trainers,**

**empowerers, coordinators, consultants, counselors, mentors, and visionaries.** As delegaters, leaders need to know when the followers are ready to accept the responsibility for projects. In addition, they need to delegate projects to the suitable persons in a proper manner. This is why leaders need to have good communication with the workers and teams. On the other hand, leaders need to be trainers, and they need to provide constant education to their followers regarding issues significant for their organizations' success. Leaders, using the delegating style, need to be efficient transferors of responsibilities and authorizations. They need to know how to make their workers and teams independent so that they perform the assigned tasks successfully. As coordinators, leaders need to be able to balance several tasks and several teams. In addition, they need to coordinate trainings and seminars for workers to develop certain skills. Leaders need to be counselors as well, that is, they should help their workers and teams overcome problems exceeding their knowledge and experience. As mentors, leaders direct, support, and educate their workers. Finally, a leader needs to be a visionary. As such, he/she needs to present and draw workers closer to the vision of the organization.

### 3. EXTERNAL FACTORS AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

Different factors of both internal and external environments impact the two-dimensional leadership styles. One of these factors is an organizational culture of a company. Some organizational cultures are autocratic, while some are democratic. Leaders usually use the leadership style typical for the culture they are working in. The nature of the top management is also a factor impacting the choice of the leadership style. Within the company, leaders usually adopt leadership styles used by their supervisors. In these cases, leadership styles are transferred from the top management to the lower level of the organizational structure. The time limitations also impact the choice of the style. If the time is limited, leaders usually use the autocratic styles, since they have no time to involve workers in the decision making process. Furthermore, knowledge and experience of the workers, in many cases, can have a significant influence on leaders. Leaders, managing experienced workers, skillful in the field they work in, tend to use the democratic leadership style. Finally, a need to have the control and the leader's nature can impact the choice of the leadership style. Namely, if leaders need to have a better control of the workers, they usually use the autocratic leadership style. The nature of a leader also impacts the choice of the leadership style. By their nature, some leaders are autocratic, while some are democratic.

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