Wroten & Associates
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Situational Leadership

"The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority."
- Kenneth Blanchard

From Martin Luther King and Indira Gandhi, to Bill Gates or Steve Jobs there seems to be as many ways to successfully lead people as there are leaders. Choosing the right style of leadership for a given situation will help you become a more effective leader. By understanding a few key styles and their impact, you can develop your own approach to effective leadership.

Leadership is not a "one size fits all" thing. There are many types of leadership styles, so let's review some of them. Remember, the more leadership styles you become familiar with the more tools you will be able to use to lead effectively.

In the business world, "**Transformational leadership**" is often the most effective approach. Transformational leaders inspire people with a shared vision of the future. They set clear goals and motivate people in reaching them. And, they communicate clearly with their teams. Transformational leaders expect the best from everyone on their team as well as from themselves leading to improved motivation and high productivity. "**Autocratic leadership**" is where leaders have complete power over their staff. The benefit of autocratic leadership is that it is incredibly efficient. Tasks are completed quickly. While this style may not be embraced by staff members, it is often best used in crises situations and when decisions must be made quickly. "**Democratic/Participative leaders**" include team members in the decision-making process, encouraging creativity and participation. The benefits of this leadership style are high job satisfaction and motivation to work hard by team members. Because participation by team members takes time this approach, however, can slow the decision making process. "**Laissez-Faire leaders**" allow their people to work on their own. These leaders may give freedom to their teams to do their work and set their own deadlines. This style can be effective if the leader monitors performance and gives feed back regularly. This style is most effective when individual team members are experienced, skilled, and self starters. "**Task-Oriented leadership**" focuses only on getting the job done and can also be considered autocratic. These leaders define the work, roles required, plan, organize and monitor the work being done. They also perform key tasks such as maintaining standards of performance. The benefit of this style of leadership is that it ensures that deadlines are met.

These are only a few examples of leadership styles. Remember that no one style of leadership fits all situations so it is helpful that you have an understanding of a number of styles to assist you in adapting your approach to the situation at hand. Any leader can use any style, and a

good mix that is customized to the situation is generally the most effective approach.

Wishing you an insightful month!

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