

4 Styles of Management

It is not only important to know the different styles of management. It is also important to know when they work, when they do not, and what they accomplish that is different and better than the others. To get started, you must look at why managers have different styles. Styles of management are usually affected by the following:

- Manager's level of experience
- Number of employees being managed
- Whether organization is profit driven or not-for-profit
- Political consequences of poor management
- Financial consequence of poor management
- Manager's vested interest in the organization

All of these factors affect the style of management adopted by managers, but what you want to do is tailor your style in such a manner that it makes you most effective and successful as a manager of your particular organization, department, or project. Another way to look at it is that for certain situations you may need to change your management style accordingly. Look at the following styles more closely.

- **Authoritarian**—This style of management is one in which the manager is committed to making all decisions for the organizational unit with a focus on the best interest of the company. Management knows the decision-making and the reasoning behind decisions. Employees are expected to follow the direction of the manager, focus on the objectives, and complete all tasks assigned as communicated by the manager. Staff's questions concerning tasks are minimized and may be considered an act of insubordination. Although this style may not be conducive to a good relationship between manager and staff, for critical operations and projects such a style of management may be appropriate because one clear direction must be followed and maintained at all times with no deviations. Although communicating from employee or staff to management is not facilitated in this process, it gives the company a perception that the management has a clear vision, strategy, and plan for success. This style may only be effective for short-term projects where the ability to stay motivated is not necessary for completion.
- **Dictatorial**—In this case, the manager makes all decisions for the organization, but the staff and employees are made to feel that the decisions are best for them and their future. Another difference from the authoritarian approach is the fact that decisions are explained to the staff once they are made. The key to this approach being successful is that the promises made to employees as motivational incentives must eventually be realized or staff can become disenchanted. Do not over-promise and under-deliver or build up expectations to make employees experience a letdown in company performance or in your ability to deliver to them. This type of management may only work well if the business demonstrates strong growth; otherwise poor performance could result in disappointed employees.

- **Democratic**—In this style of management the staff members all have a say in the decision-making process, and makes decisions based on majority vote. Management listens to all communication and information to make a final decision. The democratic style is useful when making big and difficult changes because employee input may give you a reflection of how effective the change may be and how well staff will implement it. This type of management allows employees to always feel important to the organization and feel a sense of ownership in the processes that are implemented. Because employees have a vested interest in the daily activities at work they will take pride in the quality of the work that comes out of it. There are two negatives to this style: speed and sometimes-bad decisions. The extensive amount of communication that occurs before decisions are made puts the business at a competitive disadvantage. As discussed, time is of the essence in business decision-making and production. Also, because employees may not always have the company's best interest at heart, some decisions may be more beneficial to the employees than to the overall success and growth of the company. This style of management can be implemented in non-critical projects or business environments where the specifics of how tasks or processes are completed will not have a major effect on the overall success of the business.
- **Delegation**—This style of management relies heavily on delegating tasks and allowing other employees to make decisions. In this case, the manager acts more like a non-involved leader. Communication is usually kept at a minimum since the manager assumes that the delegated employee has everything under control. This is effective for allowing other employees to use their creative skills and decision-making skills to come up with unique solutions to the work process. Lack of communication is the only shortcoming in this style since this could result in lack of focus and vision of the objectives by staff members. This type of management may work best when working with professionals or contracted employees who are motivated by pride in their performance, personal drive, and image.

Regardless of the management style that you adopt at any time within your tenure as a manager, you must remember that you must not only make decisions about how you work with employees, but also how you work on changes and fixing processes. Whenever you encounter a problem, don't immediately think that it is the employee or think it's simply the process. It may be one, the other or both – that's if you are really a manager that focuses on solutions that last.

Successful managers or CEOs will tell you that for months or years they thought their business plan or processes were wrong, only to lose or terminate an employee and watch the company immediately transform into a highly successful organization.

The alternative is also true. Companies have hired and fired employees over and over again looking for the employee to help the business take off, only to find out that all along it was not the employee, but the business plan or processes. Armed with information, you are now a keen manager who is more likely to target any problem more accurately and quickly. The approach is simple – first look at the process and then look at the people involved.