



Leadership Styles

Visionary: When you are utilizing your Visionary Style, you are strongly driving the emotional climate upwards and transforming the spirit of the organization.

You do this by articulating where the company is going – not how it will get there – you leave people the opportunity to innovate, think and apply their knowledge. When people know the bigger picture – how their job fits into this bigger picture – gives people clarity. Using a Visionary Style you are able to create shared goals and shared goals build team commitment.

Visionary leaders:

- Retain talented people
- Offer people a unique brand
- Help people understand 'why'

Visionary is the most effective style.

Inspirational leadership is the EI competency needed most with this style. Other competencies that work well include:

- Self confidence
- Self awareness
- Empathy

The ability to be transparent is critical – the leader must sincerely believe in their vision.

Visionary leaders understand that distributing knowledge is the secret to success.

Empathy is most critical EI competency to a visionary leader.

When Visionary won't work:

Among experts or peers who are more experienced

If a leader becomes overbearing while calling it visionary



Coaching: Helps people identify their strengths and weaknesses – tying these to career opportunities.

Coaches are good at delegating and giving employees challenging assignments that stretch them vs tasks.

Works best with employees who show initiative and want professional development.

Least used style.

Will fail when employees lacks motivation or requires excessive personal direction and feedback.

When executed poorly, looks like micromanaging or excessive control. This can lead to undermining self confidence.

Most managers are not adept at this style.

Pacesetting leaders focused on high performance often think they are coaching when they are micromanaging – focusing on short term results like sales figures.

Coaching exemplifies EI competence in developing others. Works hand in hand with emotional self awareness and empathy.

Emotional awareness creates leaders who are authentic. Empathy means they listen first before reacting or giving feedback.



Democratic: Getting buy in – building trust and respect, keeping morale high.

Works best when the leader is uncertain about what direction to take and needs ideas from able employees.

Even if a leader has a strong vision, the democratic style works well to surface ideas about how to implement that vision or ideas on how to execute on it.

Drawbacks to Democratic style:

- Over relying on this style – endless meetings – consensus remains elusive
- Risk putting off making decisions
- Confusion, lack of direction

Builds on a triad of EI competencies:

- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Conflict Management
- Influence

Best communicators are superb listeners and listening is the key strength of a democratic leader.

Create the sense that they truly want to hear employee thoughts. True collaborators – working as team members rather than as top down leaders.

Know how to quell conflict and create a sense of harmony.

Empathy plays a key role in democratic.



Affiliative: Open sharing of emotions. Tend to value people and their feelings – put more emphasis on emotional needs than on tasks and goals.

Limited as a direct driver of performance – has good impact on a groups climate.

Behind only Visionary and Coaching in impelling all measurements upward.

Affiliative leaders garner great loyalty and strengthen connectedness.

When to use:

- Heighten team harmony
- Increase morale
- Improve communication
- Repair broken trust

Affiliative style = collaborative competence in action

Focus is on emotional needs over work goals.

Empathy – ability to sense the feelings, needs, perceptions of others – major competence in Affiliative Style.

Should not be used alone:

- Focus on praise can allow poor performers to go unnoticed
- Employee may think mediocrity is ok.
- Use this style in conjunction with the Visionary Style

Visionary leaders state a mission, set standards and let people know what behaviors further group goals.

Line that up with the caring approach of an affiliative leader and you have a great approach.



Pacesetting: Leaders who expect excellence and exemplify it.

Works well:

- In technical fields.
- Among highly skilled professionals.
- Hard driving sales teams.

Makes sense during a company's entrepreneurial phase of a company's lifecycle.

Group members are highly competent, motivated, need little direction.

Pacesetting style should be used sparingly:

- Unnerving to staff who feel too pushed
- Staff have to second guess what the leader wants
- Staff doesn't feel the leader will let them do things their own way
- Staff feels leader doesn't care about them – so driven – so goal oriented.
- Pacesetting can poison an environment.

The more pressure put on people's results the more anxiety it provokes. Continuing high pressure can be debilitating. As people shift away from pursuing an inspiring vision – pure survival kicks in. Pressure constricts their innovative thinking.

Pacesetting leaders don't get sustainable performance.

Successful Pacesetting:

- Must be combined with empathy.
- Must have competencies in communication and collaboration.
- Must have emotional self management.
- Can work well with Visionary and Affiliative.



Commanding: The least effective style. Sometimes called the coercive approach.

- Do it because I say so
- Demand compliance
- Don't both explaining the reason behind anything
- Don't delegate – seek tight control and monitor it
- Performance feedback focuses on what went wrong
- Commanding style erodes people's spirit, pride and satisfaction in their work.
- Also erodes a shared vision.

This style thrives in today's work places – left over from the 20th century command and control hierarchy. Predominantly in military and hospitals – but only usable in a battle or an E.R.

When can it work?

- Urgent turnaround
- Unfreeze useless business habits – shock people into action
- Fire in the building
- Approaching hurricane
- Problem employees

To be effective must combine it with influence, achievement and initiative. Also self awareness, emotional self control and empathy.

Commanding leaders have a drive to achieve so a leader exerts forceful direction in the service of getting better results. Doesn't wait for situations, but takes forceful steps to get things done.

Most important competency to use with Commanding Style is emotional self control – keep anger and impatience in check. Used with extreme caution – targeted situations only.