

# Leadership Styles

**Tony Kippenberger**

- Fast track route to mastering effective leadership styles
- Covers the key areas of leadership styles, from developing a style to suit the situation and organizational type to cross-cultural issues and the new interest in 'servant leadership'
- Examples and lessons from some of the world's most successful leaders, including David Simon and John Browne, Konosuke Matsushita and Herb Kelleher, and ideas from the smartest thinkers, including Manfred Kets de Vries, Ed Schein, Gareth Jones and Bob Goffee, Ken Blanchard and John Adair
- Includes a glossary of key concepts and a comprehensive resources guide

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LEADING

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# Introduction to Leadership Styles

Why is the style of leadership used today so important? Why does it need to be different from the way it's always been done? Chapter 1 explains:

- » how the shift from manual to knowledge work has changed what is now required of a leader; and
- » why the expectations and aspirations of employees call for a different leadership style.

“Becoming a leader is not easy, just as becoming a doctor or a poet isn’t easy, and anyone who claims otherwise is fooling himself.”

*Warren Bennis, author and leadership expert*

It is difficult, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, to grasp the scale of change that has occurred in the workplace over the last 100 years or so. But to understand the vital emphasis that is now placed on leadership, and in particular the style of that leadership, it is valuable to put these changes in context.

When the industrial revolution began at the end of the eighteenth century, it triggered a century of invention. In the process, it created a fundamental shift in the nature of production, from being craft-based to being technology-based. But the changes this brought about in the nature of work were deeply traumatizing and created a huge sense of alienation among a new type of production worker. People were forced, in their search for work, to move from the countryside to the grim, unsanitary conditions of the new industrial towns and cities. It was this alienation that prompted Marx to predict that the capitalist system would collapse. But it didn’t. Peter Drucker, the doyen of management scholars, who has been thinking and writing on the subject for 60 years, argues that the credit for this should go to one man – Frederick Winslow Taylor – and his theory of scientific management. “Few figures in intellectual history have had greater impact than Taylor. And few have been so wilfully misunderstood and so assiduously misquoted.”<sup>1</sup>

Taylor first began his study in 1881, two years before Marx’s death. What prompted him was his own alarm at the growing and mutual hatred between capitalists and workers. What he wanted to do was to increase workers’ productivity so that they could earn a decent living – a concept dismissed by his contemporaries, who believed that the only way a worker could produce more was by working longer or harder, or both.

## **THE PRODUCTIVITY REVOLUTION**

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Although machinery had vastly increased industrial output, manual workers themselves were no more productive in making or moving things in the late nineteenth century than they had been in Greek and Roman times. By studying time and motion and breaking down

every different element, Taylor identified the best way for each manual operation to be undertaken. Within a few years, productivity began to rise at a compound rate of about 4% a year – what Drucker calls the unrecognized productivity revolution. As a result, productivity roughly doubled every 18 years and is now some 50 times higher, in the advanced countries, than it was at the start of the twentieth century. Drucker argues that the consequent growth in living standards had, within a matter of 50 years, converted Marx's proletarians from potential revolutionaries into blue-collar, middle-class aspirants.

When Taylor began his study of scientific management, nine out of ten people were manual workers. Even by the middle of the twentieth century, in all the developed countries, the majority still were. But by 1990 that proportion had shrunk to 20% of the workforce. By 2010, Drucker believes, it will be no more than 10%. This, as he points out, means that the manual productivity revolution is all but over.

## THE MANAGEMENT REVOLUTION

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To create wealth in the future, what will matter is increasing the productivity of non-manual workers and that, Drucker argues, means “applying knowledge to knowledge” – a process that he places at the heart of what he refers to as the management revolution. Management, as he points out, did not emerge as a discipline until the late 1940s, up until that point organizations were “administered” rather than managed.

A flavor of the time can be caught in a book written in 1950 by William Newman, an early McKinsey consultant, entitled *Administrative Action: The Techniques of Organization and Management*. In it Newman expresses a concern: “Some writers separate the work of top administration from that of subordinates. Unfortunately, there is no agreement on whether the top level should be called management or administration or what is covered by the term selected . . .”

Drucker himself was one of the first to start studying the process of managing during and after World War II. As Drucker points out, at that time a manager was defined as “someone who is responsible for the work of their subordinates” – in other words, “the boss.” By the early 1950s, however, the definition had changed to someone who is “responsible for the performance of people.”

## LEADERSHIP REVOLUTION

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Beginning in the 1970s and rapidly accelerating during the 1980s, there has been a further change – one that places leadership in a pivotal role as an essential part of achieving ever better productivity and performance.

The shift from manual to knowledge work in most economies, the rise of living standards and therefore expectations, the growth in educational qualifications and sophistication, are just some of the things that have changed people's attitudes. The workforce of today is a far cry from that of 100 years ago. We live in an age where people have choices, where the deference common in an earlier age has disappeared, where the right to personal self-fulfillment is a widely shared belief.

As a result it is now recognized that, to get the best out of people, they need to be led, not just managed as subordinates. They need to feel motivated, committed, and even inspired. Persuasion, not coercion, is required. Status and position are no longer enough. To get the real results required in a highly competitive age, people need to want to give their best, not just be told to do so.

Autocratic and hierarchical management systems have given way to much more open and democratic ways of managing. Simultaneously, the reasons why someone should follow someone else's lead have changed markedly. A much more egalitarian society, increases in employee-empowerment, and the flatter nature of many organizations means that leaders now have to "win" followers.

And with this has come a whole new set of requirements for those who aspire to lead their organization – or parts of it – to success. Nowadays, competitiveness between organizations takes place not just at the level of the products and services they provide, but much more deeply at the level of the competences they possess. And nowhere are those competences more critical than in the style of leadership they have. The qualities, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of those whose task it is to bring out the best in their people.

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## NOTE

1 Peter Drucker, *Post-capitalist Society*, HarperBusiness, 1994.

# What are Leadership Styles?

Leadership styles are reflected in behaviors and attitudes, but these in turn are the outcome of complex interactions between the way we think and feel. Chapter 2 looks at what this means by:

- » explaining how these interactions work;
- » providing a definition of leadership style; and
- » looking at how far we can adapt our styles, without acting out of character.