What Kind of Leader Are You?

Kendall Payton, editorial associate

Leaders across any industry must know how to manage their teams effectively for the best results—but there is not just one approach to successful leadership. By knowing your leadership style, you will be able to reach your full potential as a leader and use your strengths to help your team.

Every manager approaches leadership differently based on communication styles and even personality. In fact, a survey of 860 HR leaders revealed the top two priorities for leaders this year are organizational and change management (53%) and employee experience (42%), according to Gartner, Inc.

All styles are different, based on autonomy or flexibility within a company. Some of the most common leadership styles include:

1. **Servant**. "The servant leader is servant first," according to Purdue University. "It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first." This leadership style is focused around the idea that a satisfied team produces better work.
2. **Democratic**. This style is based on the concept of using staff's opinions to make decisions in order to reach a solution. Once the group comes to a consensus, it is brought to management who makes the final decision.
3. **Pacesetting**. This style provides performance standards in increments of which team members are held accountable to reach. Performance is measured through quality over quantity, but leaders shouldn't overuse the approach of this as it can impact staff when goals aren't met.
4. **Coaching**. The coaching method focuses solely on an individual staff member's talent to develop expertise within their field and career. To be most effective, leaders should have a deep knowledge on their team's strengths, weaknesses and motivations.
5. **Autocratic.** An autocratic leadership style is where management makes the main decisions, and workers comply to them. This allows the company to execute their vision in the most efficient manner, especially for jobs that need conformity for worker safety.

To be an effective leader, knowing your team is essential for the development of your company as a whole, and communication and feedback are key attributes to include with any leadership style to be successful.

When you initially decide how to lead your team, you may have to adjust based on how the team receives your management. Start off by making small changes. Being flexible, open to new ideas and a role model for those on your team are a few ways to gain respect and ultimately be the leader you need to be for your team.