

LEADERSHIP STYLES

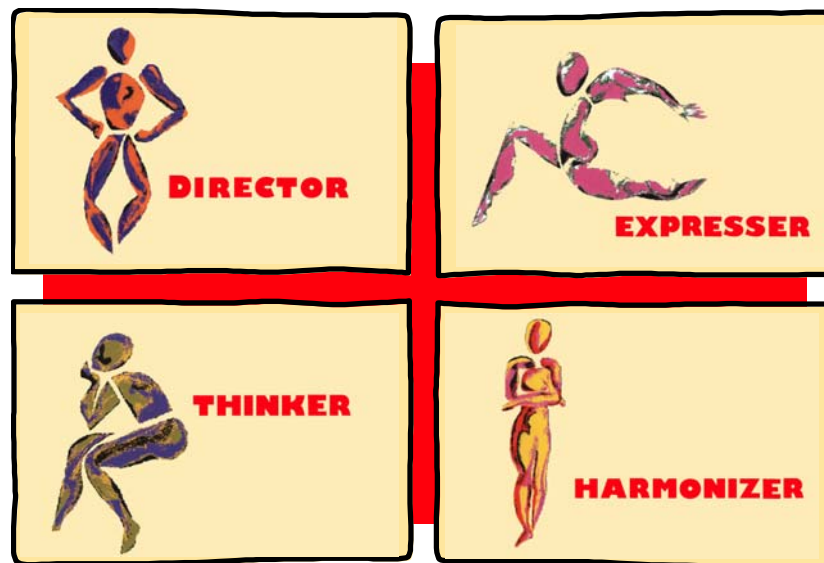
Introduction

Skillful leadership requires many things. Among them is being aware of your own leadership style – and how it affects other people. Knowing your style, and adjusting it to fit the needs of the situation, helps build trust.

This tool describes four different leadership styles. It shows you how to identify your own style, and then provides a chart showing the strengths and weaknesses of each style. Finally, it concludes with two exercises to help you become a more successful leader.

The Starting Point

Everyone has a “natural” leadership style that corresponds to his or her communication style. There are four basic communication styles: Director, Expresser, Thinker, and Harmonizer.



To determine your communication style, take the Straight Talk® survey and discover whether you are a Director, Expresser, Thinker or Harmonizer.¹

¹ You can access the Straight Talk survey at www.straight-talk-now.com. It takes approximately five minutes to complete the survey and see your results. The entire process is free.

Interpreting Your Results

When you take the Straight Talk survey, you discover where you “fit” on the matrix below. Each of the four quadrants reflects one of the four basic communication styles. For example, if you are a Persuader, Dictator, Explorer or Initiator, your basic style of communicating is Director. If you are a Charmer, Entertainer, Diplomat or Socializer, then your basic style is Expresser, as shown below.



Leadership Styles

Once you've figured out your communication style, refer to the chart below for the corresponding leadership style:

Communication Style:	Leadership Style:
Director	Commanding
Expresser	Innovating
Thinker	Deliberating
Harmonizer	Caring

These four leadership styles are summarized below, along with their characteristic strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Commanding	
Goal oriented Emphasis on bottom line Makes quick decisions Willing to take risks	Pursues big, risky challenges Makes abrupt decisions Lack of esprit de corp Lack of communication
Innovating	
Idea oriented Emphasis on people Entertaining, fun Willing to take risks	Lots of ideas, goals Lack of clear priorities Difficulty with follow through Hard to gain commitment
Deliberating	
Fact and process oriented Emphasis on precision Stress academic credentials Lots of quality control	Linear thinking Unwilling to take risks Tends to miss deadlines Blind to the big picture
Caring	
Relationship oriented Emphasis on team Fun, warm, friendly Loyal to the cause	Avoids conflict, change Makes decisions slowly Not clear about purpose, goals Tendency toward bureaucracy

Modifying Your Leadership Style

Effective leaders change their leadership style depending on the needs of their organizations. At times they are forceful and directive. At other times they are empathetic and caring. In the box below appear some typical management challenges along with the leadership style best suited to it.

Situation	Best leadership style
A group is stuck and unable to make a decision.	Caring or Innovating
A group is faced with a crisis.	Commanding
A group is lacking creative spark.	Innovating
A group is lacking trust and cohesion.	Caring or Deliberating
A group is feeling overwhelmed by too much to do.	Commanding or Deliberating
A group needs to deal with the loss of one of its members.	Caring

Leading Groups

As a leader of a group, you should try to help a group move toward a balanced style of communicating. For example, if a group is paralyzed by indecision, then a commanding style will get them moving. If a group is acting too quickly, then a deliberating or caring style is appropriate.

Here are four types of groups – again using the Straight Talk model – and the behaviors that typically accompany each group:

Director Groups	Action is better than inaction. We should act quickly. We should reward bold decisions.
Expresser Groups	Every idea is a good idea. People should try anything once. We should reward creativity.
Thinker Groups	Analysis can solve any problem. There's a right way to do things. We should reward people who do things right.
Harmonizer Groups	Teamwork is essential to success. People shouldn't argue, but seek to understand. We should reward people who work together.

Exercise 1

Reflect on 2-3 decisions *you made* that didn't work out very well. Then reflect on your leadership style. Think about the actual situation and remember how you performed. *What could you have done differently?* There are no right or wrong answers. However, your appraisal will help you develop your leadership skills.

Decision you made	Characteristics of your leadership style	Things you could do differently

Exercise 2

Reflect on a 2-3 decisions *made by a group you supervise* that didn't work out very well. Then reflect on your leadership style. Think of the actual situation and remember how you performed. *What could you have done differently?* There are no right or wrong answers. However, your appraisal will help you develop your leadership skills.

Decision made by a group you supervise	Characteristics of your leadership style	Things you could do differently