

Leadership that gets results

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The single most important job of a leader is to deliver results. Research shows that there are 6 basic leadership styles that draw from different components of emotional intelligence (EI). While each style has its own place, the best leaders can seamlessly change styles as the situation demands, in order to get the best results.

The 6 styles of leadership are as follows:

The Coercive Style: *"Do what I tell you."*

Coercive leaders dictate terms to people, and expect them to meekly comply. The Coercive style is effective in stressful situations, to trigger turnarounds or to deal with problem employees. But it limits the organisation's flexibility and demotivates employees. Thus, its overall impact is quite negative.

The Authoritative Style: *"Come with me."*

Leaders who adopt the Authoritative style state the overall goal, but leave people free to decide how they want to achieve the goal. Self-confidence, empathy, and the drive to catalyse change, underlie this style. Authoritative leaders flourish in situations that demand a new vision or a clear direction. However, this approach is not very effective in cases where the leader is not as experienced as his/her team members.

The Affiliative Style: *"People come first."*

Creating harmony and building emotional bonds are the hallmarks of the Affiliative style. The EI competencies that underlie this approach are empathy and social skill. The Affiliative style comes in handy while boosting the morale of people in demanding situations, or to end disagreements between team members. Obviously, the overall impact is rather positive. But, excessive focus on praise may lead to ignoring poor performers. Also, Affiliative leaders seldom offer advice, which may leave employees confused.

The Democratic Style: *"What do you think?"*

Democratic leaders lend a voice to employees and thus encourage participation. Collaboration, team leadership and effective communication are characteristics of this style. The Democratic approach is fruitful when it is required to reach consensus, or to gain insights from valued employees.

Undoubtedly, its overall impact is positive, but not as much as is expected. The Democratic style often ends up in countless meetings and employees feeling leaderless.

The Pacesetting Style: "Do as I do, now."

Pacesetting leaders set high standards of performance, and lead by example. They display conscientiousness, the drive to achieve, and the ability to take initiative. They have a very positive impact on highly competent, self-motivated employees. But others tend to feel overburdened with the leader's demands for excellence. So, the overall impact of this leadership style is negative.

The Coaching Style: "Try this."

Coaching leaders focus more on the development of individuals rather than on the tasks. This style is derived from empathy and self-awareness. Coaching helps an employee improve performance and build on her strengths, provided she is coachable and does not show rigid behaviours. The overall impact of the Coaching style is positive.

The more styles a leader is proficient in, the better the ability to handle different situations. Being able to switch between the Authoritative, Affiliative, Democratic and Coaching styles creates the optimal environment for employees to give their best, leading to great results.