Six Leadership Styles

These six leadership styles are described by Daniel Goleman in *Leadership That Gets Results*, which was published in the March-April 2000 edition of Harvard Business Review.

**Coercive**

*“Do what I say.”*

This approach can be very effective in a turnaround situation, a natural disaster, or when working with problem employees. But in most situations, coercive leadership inhibits the organization’s flexibility and dampens employees’ motivation.

**Pacesetting**

*“Do as I do.”*

A pacesetting leader sets high performance standards and exemplifies them. This type of leader is conscientious, highly motivated, and high-achieving. This style is particularly effective with employees who are self-motivated and highly competent. Other employees may feel overwhelmed by such a leader’s demands for excellence and resent their tendency to take over a situation.

**Authoritative**

*“Come with me.”*

An authoritative leader has passion and vision. They state the overall goal but give people the freedom to choose their own means of achieving it. This style works especially well when a business is adrift. It is less effective when the leader is working with a team of experts who have more experience.

**Affiliative**

*“People come first.”*

People and emotions are more important than goals and tasks. Affiliative leaders build strong connections that foster loyalty. This style is particularly useful for building team harmony or increasing morale.

**Democratic**

*“Everyone has a voice.”*

By giving workers a voice in decisions, democratic leaders build organizational flexibility, responsibility and help generate fresh ideas. A democratic leader is skilled at increasing collaboration and communication. The democratic leader prefers to help the group make decisions.

**Coaching**

*“Helping people help themselves.”*

This style focuses more on personal and professional development of others, than on immediate work. This type of leader usually has a well-developed sense of empathy and self-awareness. It works well when employees are already aware of their weaknesses and want to improve, but less well with those who are resistant to changing their ways.