

# Session: Leadership styles and characteristics

## Activity Sheet Four: Leadership style assessment

1. How, if at all has the consideration of the Hay McBer research on leadership styles helped you reflect on your own styles as a leader?

With reference to your leadership practice during the past week which style(s) have you employed most? Were they the most effective styles to use?

2. Use the 'leadership style assessment' tool and then consider the following:

In the light of the findings from that tool can you identify what your immediate priorities for your personal professional development in this area would be? (Was there anything that surprised you about the analysis?)

3. Given the current context of your academy and the team you currently lead, what impact will the learning from this session have on your current practice?

## Leadership style assessment

The five paragraphs under each of the following headings contain examples of **leadership attitudes and behaviours**:

- Defining objectives
- Making a plan
- Communicating
- Controlling progress
- Evaluating results
- Building the work team
- Developing individuals

Your task is to consider the statements (A, B, C, D, and E) under each heading and rate the paragraphs from most to least typical as a description of yourself.

Rank the paragraph which is most characteristic '1' through to '5' for the least characteristic.

There can be no 'ties'. If none of the paragraphs appear to typify your style, do not worry – rank them according to most and least typical.

Please turn over and begin!

## DEFINING OBJECTIVES

- A. I don't believe that it is necessary or always possible to set specific and measurable targets. I brief my team on what the job is, or what the boss wants done and then leave them free to get on with it.
- B. I like to explain why a job is necessary and then set targets as a guideline to keep operations within an acceptable range.
- C. I clearly define each individual's responsibilities to him and lay down standards of performance, quotas and deadlines, which I expect to be fully met.
- D. I like to know exactly what my objective is and what results are expected from my team. I ensure that each individual is clear about his overall objective and responsibilities within team and company aims. We set short term targets together against which his performance will be assessed and to which he commits himself.
- E. I believe in setting broad objectives with my staff. Asking them what they think they can achieve means that I am not seen as someone who just issues instructions. Thus I gain full commitment.

### MAKING A PLAN

- A. I work out plans with my staff in order to keep things running smoothly and to minimize friction between them. I like to involve them in making the plan, this way it is more acceptable to them. Together we select the most favourable plan and decide how they would like to tackle it, thus gaining their complete understanding and acceptance.
- B. I don't believe that the day to day operational problems of a manager can be solved by planning. If priorities are set something urgent always crops up and has to be dealt with immediately. Problems are best tackled by the individuals concerned. I don't interfere. I let them make their own decisions.
- C. I make short range plans based on peoples' past performance and what I can reasonably expect. I look for a workable plan which will be reasonably acceptable. In solving problems and making decisions I go for a good solid compromise on sound common sense.
- D. I believe that planning is entirely my responsibility and should be carried out on a systematic basis. I define the problem, collect the relevant information, weigh the alternatives and make a decision. I then decide exactly what resources are needed and allocate responsibilities to each individual.
- E. I believe that both short term and long term plans should be produced on a logical examination of the facts. I look for problem areas and advise my staff on the identification and elimination of the cause. In formulating a plan, where time permits, I like to get ideas and opinions from the team who will carry out the plan. I gain useful information and I usually get a fuller commitment to carrying out the plan.

## COMMUNICATING

- A. I see through communication as a formal system of passing instructions down through the chain of command, mainly as written directives and memoranda. I use meetings to tell people my decisions and get feedback by asking each person to report on his progress.
- B. Communication can often be a waste of time. I try to keep it to a minimum while making sure that I accurately transmit action points from my boss to my subordinates. My job is to make sure that the instructions I have been given are clearly passed to my subordinates.
- C. I believe that a high level of communication is extremely important in order to create a sense of belonging in the work team and to maintain good relations. Information conversation, chit-chat and gossip are a good way of providing a social and emotional outlet for people at work. Our house magazines and notice boards are always cheerful in tone. I'm always ready to listen to ideas and am careful not to hurt feelings by rejecting an idea.
- D. I believe in open candid communication at all levels. In order for information on policy decisions, changes and progress to be accurately passed down, understood and explained, I believe in fact-to-face contact in addition to written instructions. This allows questions to be asked to check understanding and also gives me feedback and an additional source of information. I hold regular meetings and when necessary ask for advice. I try to explain why I have rejected a suggestion and give recognition to an idea which is sound and should be implemented.
- E. I believe in passing information downwards in clearly through out form and explaining 'why' a particular action is to be taken. I also try to walk the job, chatting to people in order to test the informal channels and identify problems, tensions and reactions. I believe in a formal staff suggestion box scheme, although we don't always get a great deal from it.

### CONTROLLING PROGRESS

- A. I don't believe in controlling progress by tight surveillance or by just issuing instructions. If you push people for production they will resist. I show people what to do, let them set their own work pace and give compliments, recognition and encouragement.
- B. I control progress by making sure that the laid down plans are followed, watching closely and taking corrective or disciplinary action when people are getting off track. I like to keep up a good work pace.
- C. People are more or less on their own, they like it this way. I give them the freedom to get on with things in their own way, and only exercise control when they have let things go wrong.
- D. I exercise control in order to keep people on the right lines. I give as much guidance as I can in the form of procedures and standards of performance and make spot checks in order to see how things are getting on. We often hold informal post-mortems.
- E. I control performance by knowing my objective and by my team and myself knowing the intermediate targets which must be taken to achieve this. By constantly checking, asking for feedback and giving guidance I can assess progress in the light of remaining time and any change or problems. The adequacy of the plan can then be reviewed and mistakes put right.

### EVALUATING RESULTS

- A. I evaluate results in terms of whether the activity is accurately completed, and by close inspection which allows me to identify any weakness or failure to measure up, assign responsibility and take action.
- B. I don't like to spend too much time fault finding when things have gone wrong. I give compliments along the way, praise people when things go smoothly and ease off the pressure when the job is done.
- C. I don't believe in post mortems, crying over spilt milk or in discussing my subordinates' action. People learn best by their own mistakes, without any interference.
- D. I evaluate results thoroughly against the objective both as an ongoing process during the job and on completion of the job. This provides a valuable learning ground. It enables me to learn how operations are being handled and to introduce corrections and improvements as a basis for greater efficiency in the future.
- E. I make spot checks as an activity progresses and my boss and I often have informal discussions on how we did.

## BUILDING THE WORK TEAM

- A. My subordinates work together well on their own. I don't have any morale problems and find that the pay and benefits are good motivators. When conflict arises between individuals I don't interfere or suppress it. The team always works the conflict out far better if left to themselves.
  
- B. I define a clear organisation structure to weld together my work team. I ensure that lines of responsibility are well defined and that each individual knows to whom he is accountable. I ensure that there is a small span of control so that no individual has more staff under him than he is able to supervise. I find that people will work hard and give the highest possible production if they are well supervised and given plenty to do. When I see conflict between team members interfering with work, I put a stop to it. I can usually persuade anyone in disagreement with me that my view is the right one.
  
- C. I place great emphasis on building the work team, creating a sense of identity through good conditions of work, social amenities, a feeling of belonging and good human relations. I get great loyalty from my staff because I treat each of them as an important individual and always encourage the expression of ideas and suggestions. This gives a real sense of commitment. When conflict arises, which is very rare, I try to relieve tension, soothe feelings and bring people together.
  
- D. I think of my staff as a team. I maintain good morale by knowing how to put things to them in a way and at a time when they will be accepted. I always explain why I am asking them to adopt a particular course of action and balance concern for results against consideration for how far people will go and what they will agree to. When dissension and conflict arise I can usually find a solution which both parties will abide by.
  
- E. In building my work team I ensure that each individual knows who his boss is, has only one boss and knows the limits of his responsibility and authority. I keep the number of people reporting to any individual as low as possible in order to permit contact on an individual basis. I try to ensure that members of the team will work well together through acceptable personality, and through having an objective towards which they feel committed. Wherever possible I consult my team before formulating a plan. I get valuable ideas and hence a genuine involvement. I feel that conflict in the work team is often valuable in generating ideas and is a healthy sign. However, where conflict is interfering with work I try to bring it into the open and resolve the cause.

## DEVELOPING INDIVIDUALS

- A. In interviewing applicants I give factual information on the company and leave the employment decision to the candidate and my boss. I believe that the best form of training is letting new people find their own feet and their satisfactions.
- B. In interviewing individuals I look for someone who will fit in well with our work team and who has the appropriate personality and appearance. I believe in developing the individual's full potential and making him as happy and satisfied with his job as possible. I believe in guiding, encouraging and praising individual effort and would never give a damning appraisal where I could avoid it.
- C. I represent the company in a positive light to an interviewee who has suitable qualifications and is like to get on in the company. I make sure that new staff get a comprehensive induction into company procedures and systems and get their share of training towards a better understanding of their job. I'm always on the look out for transfer and promotion prospects for the better men.
- D. I believe selection is vital. In order to develop staff you must have the right material to start with. I look for a man with ambition, drive and determination. I haven't found a better form of training than throwing people in the deep end and letting them and me assess their capabilities. They are either managers or they aren't. I make sure they get any training which will help them reach their maximum performance level, and try to provide opportunities, challenges and responsibility to my brighter staff. I appraise people purely against whether or not they achieve their targets and make recommendations for promotion and salary on this basis.
- E. I see selection as a process of assessing whether the job is right for the individual and whether that individual will contribute soundly to the organisation. The matching process must be right. I try to assess the capabilities of new staff in a number of sections before I finally place them. I attempt to assess what that individual wants to get from his job and to provide as much of the appropriate job satisfaction, for example, responsibility or seeing an end result. Appraising performance against targets enables the identification of training needs to help the individual to meet his own and organisational objectives. An assessment of personality and potential is also important.

## Leadership attitudes and behaviours – score sheet

Instructions:

1. Enter scores vertically under each of the seven headings
2. Add scores horizontally, entering the TOTAL in the right-hand column
3. PREFERRED STYLE is indicated by the LOWEST score

Defining Objectives	Making a Plan	Communicating	Controlling Progress	Evaluating Results	Building the Work Team	Developing Individuals	TOTAL	Style
c	d	a	b	a	b	d		TELL
d	e	d	e	d	e	e		SELL
b	c	e	d	e	d	c		CONSULTS
e	a	c	a	b	c	b		CONSENSUS
a	b	b	c	c	a	a		FREE REIN

## Characteristics of the 'tell' style of leadership

### ***Defining Objectives***

I clearly define each individual's responsibilities to him and lay down standards of performance, quotas and deadlines which I expect to be fully met.

### ***Making a Plan***

I believe that planning is entirely my responsibility and should be carried out on a systematic basis. I define the problem, collect the relevant information, weigh the alternatives and make a decision. I then decide exactly what resources are needed and allocate responsibilities to each individual.

### ***Communicating***

I see communication as a formal system of passing instructions down through the chain of command, mainly as written directives and memoranda. I use meetings to tell people my decisions and get feedback by asking each person to report on his progress.

### ***Controlling Progress***

I control progress by making sure that the laid down plans are following, watching closely and taking corrective or disciplinary action when people are getting off track. I like to keep up a good work pace.

### ***Evaluating Results***

I evaluate results in terms of whether the activity is accurately completed, and by close inspection which allows me to identify any weakness or failure to measure up, assign responsibility and take action.

### ***Building the Work Team***

I define a clear organisation structure to weld together my work team. I ensure that lines of responsibility are well defined and that each individual knows to whom he is accountable. I ensure that there is a small span of control so that no individual has more staff under him than he is able to supervise. I find that people will work hard and give the highest possible production if they are well supervised and given plenty to do. When I see conflict between team members interfering with work, I put a stop to it. I can usually persuade anyone in disagreement with me that my view is the right one.

### ***Developing Individuals***

I believe selection is vital. In order to develop staff you must have the right material to start with. I look for a man with ambition, drive and determination. I haven't found a better form of training than throwing people in the deep end and letting them and me assess their capabilities. They are either managers or they aren't. I make sure they get any training which will help them reach their maximum performance level, and try to provide opportunities, challenges and responsibility to my brighter staff. I appraise people purely against whether or not they achieve their targets and make recommendations for promotion and salary on this basis.

## Characteristics of the 'sell' style of leadership

### ***Defining Objectives***

I like to know exactly what my objective is and what results are expected from my team. I ensure that each individual is clear about his overall objective and responsibilities within team and company aims. We set short term targets together against which his performance will be assessed and to which he commits himself.

### ***Making a Plan***

I believe that both short term and long term plans should be produced on a logical examination of the facts. I look for problem areas and advise my staff on the identification and elimination of the cause. In formulating a plan, where time permits, I like to get ideas and opinions from the team who will carry out the plan. I gain useful information and I usually get a fuller commitment to carrying out the plan.

### ***Communicating***

I believe in open candid communication at all levels. In order for information on policy decisions, changes and progress to be accurately passed down, understood and explained, I believe in fact-to-face contact in addition to written instructions. This allows questions to be asked to check understanding and also gives me feedback and an additional source of information. I hold regular meetings and when necessary ask for advice. I try to explain why I have rejected a suggestion and give recognition to an idea which is sound and should be implemented.

### ***Controlling Progress***

I control performance by knowing my objective and by my team and myself knowing the intermediate targets which must be taken to achieve this. By constantly checking, asking for feedback and giving guidance I can assess progress in the light of remaining time and any change or problems. The adequacy of the plan can then be reviewed and mistakes put right.

### ***Evaluating Results***

I evaluate results thoroughly against the objective both as an ongoing process during the job and on completion of the job. This provides a valuable learning ground. It enables me to learn how operations are being handled and to introduce corrections and improvements as a basis for greater efficiency in the future.

### ***Building the Work Team***

In building my work team I ensure that each individual knows who his boss is, has only one boss and knows the limits of his responsibility and authority. I keep the number of people reporting to any individual as low as possible in order to permit contact on an individual basis. I try to ensure that members of the team will work well together through acceptable personality, and through having an objective towards which they feel committed. Wherever possible I consult my team before formulating a plan. I get valuable ideas and hence a genuine involvement. I feel that conflict in the work team is often valuable in generating ideas and is a healthy sign. However, where conflict is interfering with work I try to bring it into the open and resolve the cause.

### ***Developing Individuals***

I see selection as a process of assessing whether the job is right for the individual and whether that individual will contribute soundly to the organisation. The matching process must be right. I try to assess the capabilities of new staff in a number of sections before I finally place them. I attempt to assess what that individual wants to get from his job and to provide as much of the appropriate job satisfaction, for example, responsibility or seeing an end result. Appraising performance against targets enables the identification of training needs to help the individual to meet his own and organisational objectives. An assessment of personality and potential is also important.

## Characteristics of the 'consults' (participative) style of leadership

### ***Defining Objectives***

I like to explain why a job is necessary and then set targets as a guideline to keep operations within an acceptable range.

### ***Making a Plan***

I make short range plans based on peoples' past performance and what I can reasonably expect. I look for a workable plan which will be reasonably acceptable. In solving problems and making decisions I go for a good solid compromise on sound common sense.

### ***Communicating***

I believe in passing information downwards in clearly through out form and explaining 'why' a particular action is to be taken. I also try to walk the job, chatting to people in order to test the informal channels and identify problems, tensions and reactions. I believe in a formal staff suggestion box scheme, although we don't always get a great deal from it.

### ***Controlling Progress***

I exercise control in order to keep people on the right lines. I give as much guidance as I can in the form of procedures and standards of performance and make spot checks in order to see how things are getting on. We often hold informal post-mortems.

### ***Evaluating Results***

I make spot checks as an activity progresses and my boss and I often have informal discussions on how we did.

### ***Building the Work Team***

I think of my staff as a team. I maintain good morale by knowing how to put things to them in a way and at a time when they will be accepted. I always explain why I am asking them to adopt a particular course of action and balance concern for results against consideration for how far people will go and what they will agree to. When dissention and conflict arise I can usually find a solution which both parties will abide by.

### ***Developing Individuals***

I represent the company in a positive light to an interviewee who has suitable qualifications and is like to get on in the company. I make sure that new staff get a comprehensive induction into company procedures and systems and get their share of training towards a better understanding of their job. I'm always on the look out for transfer and promotion prospects for the better men.

## Characteristics of the 'consensus' (democratic) style of leadership

### ***Defining Objectives***

I believe in setting broad objectives with my staff. Asking them what they think they can achieve means that I am not seen as someone who just issues instructions. Thus I gain full commitment.

### ***Making a Plan***

I work out plans with my staff in order to keep things running smoothly and to minimize friction between them. I like to involve them in making the plan, this way it is more acceptable to them. Together we select the most favourable plan and decide how they would like to tackle it, thus gaining their complete understanding and acceptance.

### ***Communicating***

I believe that a high level of communication is extremely important in order to create a sense of belonging in the work team and to maintain good relations. Information conversation, chit-chat and gossip are a good way of providing a social and emotional outlet for people at work. Our house magazines and notice boards are always cheerful in tone. I'm always ready to listen to ideas and am careful not to hurt feelings by rejecting an idea.

### ***Controlling Progress***

I don't believe in controlling progress by tight surveillance or by just issuing instructions. If you push people for production they will resist. I show people what to do, let them set their own work pace and give compliments, recognition and encouragement.

### ***Evaluating the Results***

I don't like to spend too much time fault finding when things have gone wrong. I give compliments along the way, praise people when things go smoothly and ease off the pressure when the job is done.

### ***Building the Work Team***

I place great emphasis on building the work team, creating a sense of identity through good conditions of work, social amenities, a feeling of belonging and good human relations. I get great loyalty from my staff because I treat each of them as an important individual and always encourage the expression of ideas and suggestions. This gives a real sense of commitment. When conflict arises, which is very rare, I try to relieve tension, soothe feelings and bring people together.

### ***Developing Individuals***

In interviewing individuals I look for someone who will fit in well with our work team and who has the appropriate personality and appearance. I believe in developing the individual's full potential and making him as happy and satisfied with his job as possible. I believe in guiding, encouraging and praising individual effort and would never give a damning appraisal where I could avoid it.

## Characteristics of the the 'free rein' style of leadership

### ***Defining Objectives***

I don't believe that it is necessary or always possible to set specific and measurable targets. I brief my team on what the job is, or what the boss wants done and then leave them free to get on with it.

### ***Making a Plan***

I don't believe that the day to day operational problems of a manager can be solved by planning. If priorities are set something urgent always crops up and has to be dealt with immediately. Problems are best tackled by the individuals concerned. I don't interfere. I let them make their own decisions.

### ***Communicating***

Communication can often be a waste of time. I try to keep it to a minimum while making sure that I accurately transmit action points from my boss to my subordinates. My job is to make sure that the instructions I have been given are clearly passed to my subordinates.

### ***Controlling Progress***

People are more or less on their own, they like it this way. I give them the freedom to get on with things in their own way, and only exercise control when they have let things go wrong.

### ***Evaluating the Results***

I don't believe in post mortems, crying over spilt milk or in discussing my subordinates' action. People learn best by their own mistakes, without any interference.

### ***Building the Work Team***

My subordinates work together well on their own. I don't have any morale problems and find that the pay and benefits are good motivators. When conflict arises between individuals I don't interfere or suppress it. The team always works the conflict out far better if left to themselves.

### ***Developing Individuals***

In interviewing applicants I give factual information on the company and leave the employment decision to the candidate and my boss. I believe that the best form of training is letting new people find their own feet and their satisfactions.

[SW/Middle Leaders/Leadership Style Assessment, June 2005]