

Finding Your Leadership Style

Ten different ways to lead God's people.

by Bill Hybels

1. Visionary leader

These leaders have a crystal-clear picture in their minds of what they want to happen. They cast visions powerfully and possess indefatigable enthusiasm to pursue the mission.

2. Directional leader

The directional leader has the ability to choose the right path at those critical intersections where an organization starts asking hard questions: "Is it time for a wholesale change or should we stay the course? Do we focus on growth or consolidation? Should we add facilities or relocate?"

These are directional issues, and they are capable of immobilizing an organization. But a leader with a directional style is able to sort the options.

3. Strategic leader

Visions excite and inspire people. They compel action. But unless people eventually see progress toward the fulfillment of the vision, they conclude the vision caster is just blowing smoke.

A strategic leader forms a game plan everyone can understand and participate in, one that will eventually lead to the achievement of the vision. A strategic leader challenges the organization to work the plan.

4. Managing leader

You'd be surprised how many visionary leaders are inept at managing people, processes, and systems. Many directional and strategic leaders are incapable of actually putting the players, resources, and systems in place for the goals of the organization to be achieved.

Managing leaders often aren't as popular as the leader who can give the big vision talk or make the big decision around the board-room table or put the big plan in place. But in the day-to-day world, someone has to manage the process to make sure we get where we want to go.

5. Motivational leader

These leaders possess insight into who needs a fresh challenge or additional training. They can sense who needs public recognition, an encouraging word, or a day off. They know when a change is needed.

Motivational leaders know that teammates get tired, lose focus, and experience mission drift.

6. Shepherd leader

This man or woman loves team members so deeply, nurtures them so gently, supports them so consistently, listens to them so patiently, and prays for them so diligently that the mission of the team gets achieved.

It's a different dynamic with shepherding leaders and their teams. Team members support their shepherd, and teammates often feel, whatever cause is important to the leader is fine with me. If you can shepherd a group of people, you're a leader, and you can really make a difference.

7. Team-building leader

Team-building leaders have supernatural insight into people. They find or develop leaders with the right abilities, character, and chemistry with other team members. They place people in the right positions for the right reasons who will then produce the right results.

8. Entrepreneurial leader

These leaders possess vision, boundless energy, and a risk-taking spirit. Their distinguishing characteristic is they function best in a start-up operation. They love being told it cannot be done.

The apostle Paul was an entrepreneurial leader. He wanted to build churches where Christ had not been named. He wanted to pioneer them, then let someone else run them so he could move on. He made no apologies for his leadership style.

9. Re-engineering leader

Some leaders thrive in a situation that has lost vision or focus. This kind of leader says, "Oh boy, I get to re-engineer this whole situation." They find out what the mission was and what it needs to be now. They decide how progress and success will be measured. They love to tune up, heal, and revitalize hurting organizations.

10. Bridge-building leader

This leader brings a wide variety of constituencies together under a single umbrella of leadership so that a complex organization can achieve its mission. This feat requires enormous flexibility in a leader - the ability to compromise and negotiate, to listen, understand, and think outside of the box. It requires not only the ability to be diplomatic; it requires also the gift of being able to relate to diverse people.

He or she seeks to unite them and focus their efforts.

Whatever your style, recognize it, celebrate it, and step up to the plate and lead.