

THE GEO-SAMPLER

Let's face it, not much would get done without leaders. We know; it seems to be a pretty self-evident idea. But despite the seemingly countless books and articles that have been written on the subject, it still feels like a vague subject. And there really is no one way leadership shows itself. To borrow from Shakespeare, some are born into it, some achieve it, and, much like this presidential election year, others have it thrust upon them. With that said, in this edition of the *GeoSampler*, we'll take a closer look at some specific leadership styles, as well as a few ways you could develop them. Ready? Good. Follow our lead.

ON LEADERSHIP

The late Peter Drucker—noted management consultant, educator and author—said that, “Management is doing things right; leadership is doing right things.” In other words, we should stop making the mistake of interchanging the two. Managers help to achieve the success of others. Leaders bring a talent that helps achieve a particular goal. And when it comes to who can actually do what, it's best to follow this simple rule of thumb: not everyone can manage; anyone can lead.

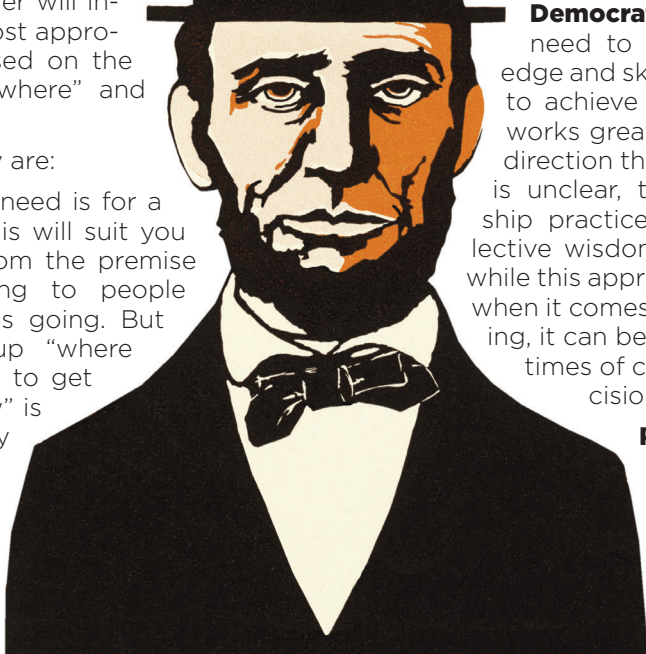
So how does one lead? Well, there are several ways. In fact, when you get right down to it, there are six basic ways. And each one taps into a specific set of skills that may be required for a specific set of circumstances. So, while one leadership style may work in a military-type situation, it may not be the best practice for a community center organization. Civic volunteers probably won't respond too well to an order of “drop and give me 50.” A good leader will incorporate the most appropriate “how” based on the “who,” “what,” “where” and “when.”

In a nutshell, they are:

Visionary. If the need is for a new direction, this will suit you best. It works from the premise of communicating to people where a group is going. But it only offers up “where to go,” not “how to get there.” That “how” is accomplished by giving individuals the freedom to innovate, experiment and take calculated risks.

“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.”

Abraham Lincoln



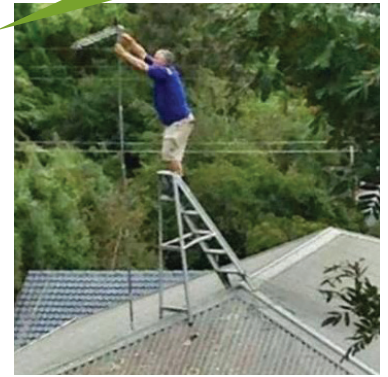
Coaching. Perhaps you're more of a one-on-one kind of person. This type will suit you just fine. This focuses on developing the individual, showing him or her how to improve performance, and helping to connect personal goals to shared goals. This works best for those who show initiative and want more professional development. You just need to be mindful not to micro-manage, which could lead to stifling the person's self-confidence.

Affiliative. This type is perfect when you need to emphasize the importance of teamwork. Not to get too “Kumbaya” on you, this style creates harmony by connecting people to each other. This plays a critical role in helping to increase morale, improve communication or repair damaged trust. The one caveat is that its focus on group praise can allow lower level performance from an individual to go uncorrected, and it may come across that mediocrity is tolerated.

Democratic. Sometimes you need to lean on the knowledge and skills of others in order to achieve the goal. This style works great for that. When the direction that needs to be taken is unclear, this type of leadership practice taps into the collective wisdom of the group. But while this approach has great merit when it comes to consensus building, it can be quite detrimental in times of crisis, when quick decisions are needed.

Pacesetter. There is always a need for everyone to “up their game” when it comes to getting things done. When there is a clear call for high

“if you're not the lead dog, the scenery never changes.”



What's in a Name?

- GREEN DAY**
Original Name: Sweet Children
- VAN HALEN**
Original Name: Rat Salad
- PEARL JAM**
Original Name: Mookie Blaylock
- NIRVANA**
Original Name: Pen Cap Chew
- BLACK SABBATH**
Original Name: Polka Tulk Blues Band
- KISS**
Original Name: Wicked Lester
- THE GRATEFUL DEAD**
Original Name: The Warlocks
- THE WHO**
Original Name: The High Numbers
- RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS**
Original Name: Tony Flow and the Miraculously Majestic Masters of Mayhem
- PINK FLOYD**
Original Name: The Tea Set
- THE CLASH**
Original Name: The Weak Heartdrops
- STONE TEMPLE PILOTS**
Original Name: Mighty Joe Young

standards in performance, this style is the answer. It's all about getting everyone to do things better and faster, and it doesn't play favorites – asking for the same out of everyone. But while it's great for making up lost ground towards a particular goal, it can undercut morale and make people feel as if they are failing. In other words, use it sparingly.

Commanding. This is the iconic, some might say stereotypical, vision of leadership. The classic military model that is probably the most used. However, while it may be the most often thought of, it is often the least effective. That's because it rarely involves praise and frequently employs criticism, undermining morale and job satisfaction. This is only effective amid a crisis, when an urgent turnaround is needed. Even our modern military now recognizes its limited usefulness.

And keep in mind, no person is bound by just one leadership style. While some people may be better at a particular method over another.

LEADER, LEAD THYSELF.

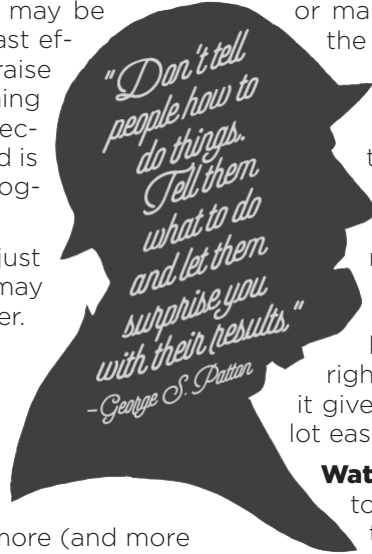
Think you lead in a vacuum? Think again. Your effectiveness is completely dependent on the performance of those you're leading. And nothing will define your skill level more (and more loudly) than how well others follow your lead and the results that come about because of it. So, in order to get the most out of everyone else, it's best to start by making sure you're getting the most out of you. And that means finding ways to improve your leadership skills. Here are a few easy ways to do so.

Go straight to the source. Want to find out your strengths and weaknesses as a leader? Ask the people you're leading. Encourage honesty, as they will always have the clearest vantage point when it comes to that. It might require growing some thicker skin, but as long as it can be done constructively from all sides, it can provide you with tremendous insight into what you do well and where to improve.

Don't fear the "hands off" approach. The entrepreneur or manager inside you just wants to take control of the situation and make it all better. It's that type of thinking that helped you get to where you are today. But that doesn't help the team grow. For that to happen, others need to learn. At times it's critical to know when to step back and let others find a better way to get things done.

Divide and conquer delegate. Believe it or not, it's not all up to you. If it were, nothing would get done. Get to know each individual's strengths and what they can bring to the table. Then train and trust those talents to do the right thing. Share your responsibilities. Not only will it give everyone a true sense of value, it'll make life a lot easier and manageable.

Watch and learn. Yes, a good leader knows when to provide answers. A better leader understands that he or she doesn't have all the answers. And that is the type of person who will be inspired by other leaders. After all, the great mentors know that they will always be pupils first and foremost. So don't be afraid to learn from the success (and failures) of others to develop your own skills.



Kevin Lichtenfels

Since 1991, Kevin Lichtenfels has been instrumental in ensuring accuracy in the data clients rely on to complete their projects. A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, Kevin is particularly proud of Geotechnics' testing involvement in various nuclear power plant construction projects. Kevin has two children, four grandchildren and is proud to serve as Assistant Chief of Wilkins Township Volunteer Fire Company No. 3.



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