



## THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF DEVELOPING SUPERVISOR LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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### **Abstract**

*Supervisor leadership is one of the most significant factors influencing an employee's success and satisfaction on the job. Leadership may be an explanation of success or failure that is convenient or easy rather than accurate. Leadership prototype is equal to mental image of what a leader should look like. If leader's behavior matches follower's prototype, a better leader-follower relation and better outcome are ensured. However, there is no single, all purposeful style of behavior that is effective in all managerial situations. The best style of leadership is whatever works best in terms of three basics-leader personality, the employee's and the situations. The paper discusses the importance of developing best styles on supervisory competencies and leadership. The paper stresses the need to gain own techniques for developing the subordinates and staff to achieve maximum performance and organizational effectiveness. Trying to copy someone else's style usually does not work. The situation is different, you are different, and the shoe does not fit.*

**Key words:** *Leadership, You and Your People, Nature of Leadership, Choosing a Leadership Style, Developing Your Own Style.*

### **Introduction**

The idea that a supervisor must be a leader comes as a surprise to people who have never thought about it before. Fleisman (1957) reported that superiors rating of subordinate's effectiveness were negatively related to superior's consideration and positively related to their structure scores in productive groups. Elton Mayo & Associates (1945) emphasized certain management aspects like attitude of the superior's and their behaviour, satisfaction of the employees and their morale. The term leader is likely to be associated with politics or religious movements or guerrilla warfare situations in which people voluntarily become followers of the person who achieves Command. Although it is not necessarily true, it is generally assumed that the one who is followed is a "born leader" whose influence is based at least partly on charisma or personal magnetism. In a work situation, the supervisor is in command by virtue of being placed there by the company and its superiors. In the hospitality industry the term supervisor refers to a manager at a lower organisational level who supervises entry level or other employees who they do not have supervisory responsibilities. The employees are expected to do what the boss directs them to do that's just part of the Job, right? But if employees simply do what they are told, why is employee turnover so high, productivity so low, and absenteeism so prevalent? Why there is a conflict between employees and the management? The truth of the matter is that the boss is in charge of the employees, but that does not guarantee that the employees will put all of their efforts into the job. This is where supervisory leadership comes in.

### **Supervisor-Employee Relationship**

Industries are dependent on large numbers of people to fill low wage, entry level jobs that have little interest and no perceived future. Employees take these jobs either because no special skill, ability, or experience is required, or because nothing else is available. Some of these people consider the work as demeaning. Even though they are doing demanding work that is absolutely essential to the operation, management often looks down on them. They are frequently taken for granted, ignored, or spoken to only when reprimanded. Given the nature of the work and the attitudes of management and sometimes of other employees, it is no wonder, that turnover is high. Another level of hourly employee is the skilled or semiskilled. These jobs are more appealing, the monetary benefit is better, and there is sometimes a chance for advancement. Yet often find temporary employees. People who cannot find anything in their own fields are working there. Many employers assume that their employee will not stay long, and most of them do not. The industry employs people of all ages and backgrounds. In fact, an already diverse workplace is becoming more diverse than ever. This is due in part to the fact that new employees entering the workforce are overwhelmingly minorities, immigrants, and women. The employees want their supervisors to let them be more involved by listening to them and by allowing them to participate in decision making. Not surprisingly, employees do not want supervisors to bark orders in a militant fashion. They want training and expect management to invest time and money in their training and development. Availability of jobs, of course, varies with economic conditions and from one area to another. But even needing that paycheck does not guarantee that a person will work well on the job. That is why it is necessary to have supervisors and managers. Everyone knows that hanging on to the right people is really hard. In fact, most emerging businesses say that this is their greatest challenge and instead of wondering where all of the employees have gone, shouldn't we ask where all good leaders have gone.



### **Nature of Leadership**

Supervisor is going to be a leader. Now the question is “What is a leader, and how is it different from being a manager?” As a part of the management staff, one is expected to produce goods and services by working with people and using resources such as equipment and employees. That is what is being a manager or supervisor, is all about. An important managerial function is to be a leader. A leader can be defined as someone who guides or influences the actions of his or her employees to reach certain goals. A leader is a person whom people follow voluntarily. As a supervisor, one must do is to direct the work of people in a way that causes them to do it voluntarily. One doesn't have to be a born leader and don't have to be magnetic or charismatic. One has to get people to work for the organisation willingly and to the best of their ability. That is what leadership is all about. Although it is true that many leadership skills are innate and that not all managers make great leaders. It is also true that most managers will benefit from leadership training. Moreover, natural leaders will flourish in an environment that supports their growth and development. Therefore, activities surrounding leadership development are worth the time and expense. In theory, one has the authority over people because of the formal authority, or the right to command, given by the organization. Here the leader is the boss and has the power, the ability to command. The leader controls the hiring, firing, raises, rewards, discipline, and punishment. In all reality, the authority is anything but absolute. Real authority is conferred on subordinates, and one has to earn the right to lead them. It is possible for one to be the formal leader of the work group as well as have someone else who is the informal leader actually calling the shots.

The relationship between leader and the people is a fluid one, subject to many subtle currents and cross currents between them and the leader. If they do not willingly accept authority of leader, they have many ways of withholding success. They can stay home from work, come late, drag out the work into overtime, produce inferior products, drive the customers away with rudeness and poor service, break the rules, and refuse to do what the leader tell them to and create crisis. They can punish leader by walking off the job and leaving him in the lurch. Laying down the law, the typical method of control in hospitality operations, does not necessarily maintain authority; on the contrary, it usually creates a negative, nonproductive environment. A distinguished leadership expert noted, “managers are people who do things right, and leaders are people who do the right things.” Think about that for a moment. In other words, managers are involved in being efficient and in mastering routines, whereas leaders are involved in being effective and turning goals into reality. As a supervisor and leader, one's job is to do the right things at the right time, to be both efficient and effective. An effective supervisor in an industry is one who, knows and understands basic principles of management, and applies them to managing all the resource operations. The roles of a supervisor further amplified as setting of goals, demonstrating effective behaviours, decision making, managing skills, motivation, delegation and training. Supervisor to take suitable measures to get ideas and plans from subordinates and required to accept same. Try to achieve maximum support from the employee. Create an environment that the ideas and plans of the subordinates should always convinced by the superiors and senior management. Patience, tolerance, sensitivity, empathy, decisiveness, and sense of humor are most essential for an effective behavior of a supervisor.

### **Leadership Style**

Leadership Style is defined as the pattern of interacting with the subordinates by a leader. How one can direct and control the work of others, and how getting them to produce the goods and services for which he is responsible? It includes not only the manner of giving instructions, but the methods and techniques one use to motivate the employees and to assure that the instructions are carried out in time. There are several different forms of leadership styles. Autocratic, Bureaucratic, Democratic, and Laissez-faire are the most popular styles today. Before choosing a style of leadership, one must identify the pros and cons of each and then decide whether it will be the most effective style in an industry.

Autocratic leadership style can be identified with the early, classical approach to management. A supervisor practicing an autocratic style is likely to make decisions without input from staff, to give orders without explanation or defence, and to expect the orders to be obeyed. When this style of leadership is used, employees become dependent on supervisors for instructions. The wants and needs of the employees become second to those of the organization and the supervisor. In bureaucratic leadership style, a supervisor manages “by the book.” The leader relies on the property's rules, regulations, and procedures for decisions that he makes. To the employees, their leader appears to be a “Police Officer.” This style is appropriate when the employees can be permitted no discretion in the decisions to be made.

Democratic or Participative leadership style is almost the reverse of the Autocratic style. A democratic supervisor wants to share decision-making responsibility. They want to consult with the group members and to solicit their participation in making decisions and resolving problems that affect the employees. The employer strongly considers the opinions of employees and seeks their thoughts and suggestions. All employees are informed about all matters that concern them. One could compare a democratic supervisor to a coach who is leading his team.



Laissez-faire or Free-rein leadership style refers to a hands-off approach in which the supervisor actually does as little leading as possible. In effect, the Laissez-faire supervisor delegates all authority and power to the employees. The supervisor relies on the employees to establish goals, make decisions, and solve problems. At best, the Laissez-faire style has limited application to an industry.

### **Traditional-Style Boss**

In the hospitality industry, the traditional method of dealing with hourly employees has generally been some variation of the command-obey method combined with carrot-and-stick techniques of reward and punishment. The motivators relied upon to produce the work are money (the carrot) and fear (the stick)-fear of punishment, fear of losing the money by being fired. All too often, the manner of direction is to lay down the law in definite terms, such as cursing, shouting, and threatening as necessary to arouse the proper degree of fear to motivate the employee. People who practice this autocratic method of managing employees believe that it's the only method that employees will understand. Perhaps that is the way the supervisor was raised, or perhaps it is the only method the supervisor has ever seen in action. In any case, it expresses their view of the people involved that "employees these days are no good." Some employees are simply bad employees. However, cursing, shouting, and threatening seldom help them to improve. Many employees do respond to a command-obey style of direction, but those employees often come from authoritarian backgrounds and have never known anything else. This style is traditional and military. However, for your average employee, it does not work. It may be enough to keep people on the job but not working to their full capacity.

When coupled with a negative view of the employee, this style of direction and control is far more likely to increase problems than to lessen them. This style may backfire by breeding resentment, low morale, and adversary relationships. In extreme cases, the boss and the company become the bad guys, the enemy, and employees give as little as possible and take as much as they can. In response, close supervision and tight control are required to see that nobody gets away with anything. In this type of atmosphere, customer service suffers and patrons go somewhere else. We are also learning more about what causes employees to work productively, including many of the things; such as positive work climate, person-to-person relations, and other people oriented methods and techniques. At this point, let us look at some current theories of leadership and see how-or whether-they can be applied in hospitality service settings. These theories emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, following the discovery that making employees happy does not necessarily make them productive. The theories are based on what behavioral scientists, psychologists, and sociologists tell us about human behavior. They explore what causes people to work productively and how this knowledge can be used in managing employees.

### **Theory X and Theory Y**

Douglas McGregor, (1950), stated that business organisations based their management of employees on assumptions about people that were wrong and were actually counterproductive. He described these faulty assumptions about the average human being as Theory X

- They have an inborn dislike of work and will avoid it as much as possible.
- They must be "coerced, controlled, directed, threatened with punished" to get the work done.
- They prefer to be led, avoid responsibility, lack ambition, and want security above all else.

McGregor argues: "These characteristics are not inborn." He believed people behaved this way on the job because they were treated as though these things were true. In fact, he stated, "This is a narrow and unproductive view of human beings," and he proposed Theory Y. The features of Theory Y are as follows:

- Work is as natural as play or rest; people do not dislike it inherently.
- Control and the threat of punishment are not the only means of getting people to do their jobs. They will work of their own accord toward objectives to which they feel committed.
- People become committed to objectives that will fulfill inner personal needs, such as self-respect, independence, achievement, recognition, status, and growth.
- Under the right conditions, people learn not only to accept responsibility, but also to seek it. Lack of ambition, avoidance of responsibility, and the desire for security are not innate human characteristics.
- Capacity for applying imagination, ingenuity, and creativity for solving on-the-job problems is "widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population."
- The modern industrial organization uses only a portion of the intellectual potential of the average human being.

Thus, if work could fulfill both the goals of the enterprise and the needs of the employees, they would be self-motivated to produce, and consequently, coercion and the threat of punishment would be unnecessary. Theory X fits the traditional-style manager and it is safe to say that this pattern of thinking is still common in many other industries as well. However,

behavioral science theory and management practice have both moved in the direction of Theory Y. Theory Y is a revised view of human nature with emphasis on using the full range of employees' talents, needs, and aspirations to meet the goals of the enterprise. A popular way of moving toward a Theory Y style of people management is to involve one's employees in certain aspects of management, such as problem solving and decision making. Usually, such involvement is carried out in a group setting: meetings of the employees for the specific purpose of securing their input. The degree of involvement the boss allows or seeks can vary from merely keeping the employees informed of things that affect their work to delegating decision making entirely to the group. The participative management style, mentioned earlier, results when employees have a high degree of involvement in such management concerns as planning and decision making. Enthusiasts of a participatory style of leadership believe that the greater the degree of employee participation, the better the decisions and the more likely they are to be carried out. However, others point out that the degree of participation that is appropriate for a given work group will depend on the type of work, the people involved, the nature of the problem, the skill and sensitivity of the leader, and the pressures of time—the situational leadership approach, to be discussed shortly. The degree to which the boss involves the employees may also vary from time to time, depending on circumstances. One is not going to make a group decision when a drunkard is making a scene in the work floor or when a fire alarm is going off on the seventh floor.

### Situational Leadership

Situational leadership model developed by Kenneth Blanchard and Paul Hersey, leadership behaviors are sorted into two categories: directive behavior and supportive behavior. Directive behavior means telling an employee exactly what you want to do, as well as when, where, and how to do it. The focus is to get a job done, and it is best used when employees are learning a new aspect of their jobs. Supportive behavior is meant to show caring and support to your employees by praising, encouraging, listening to their ideas, involving them in decision making, and helping them reach their own solutions. This method is best used when an employee lacks commitment to do a job. By combining directive and supportive behaviors, Hersey and Blanchard came up with four possible leadership styles for different conditions. When an employee has much commitment or enthusiasm but little competence to do a job, a directing style is needed; this is high on directive and low on supportive behaviors. Suppose that you have a new employee full of enthusiasm who knows little about how to do the job. A directing style is appropriate: train the new employee by giving multiple instructions, make the decisions, solve the problems, and closely supervise. Enthusiastic beginners need this direction. A directing style is also appropriate when there is a fire and you need to get your employees out of danger. As new employees get into their jobs, they often lose some of their initial excitement when they realize that the job is more difficult than or not as interesting as they originally envisioned. This is the time to use a coaching style, with lots of directive behaviors to continue to build skills and supportive behaviors to build commitment. In addition to providing much direct supervision, you provide support. You listen, encourage, praise, ask for input and ideas, and consult with the employee.

When employees become technically competent on the job, their commitment frequently wavers between enthusiasm and uncertainty. In a situation like this, the use of a supporting style that is high on supportive behaviors and low on directive behaviors is required. If an employee shows both commitment and competence, a delegating style is suitable. A delegating style of leadership is low on directive and supportive behaviors because one is turning over responsibility for day-to-day decision making to the employee doing the job. These employees don't need much direction, and they provide much of their own support. By using the view of situational leadership, one needs to assess the competence and commitment level of the employee in relation to the task at hand before choosing an appropriate leadership style. Table given below gives the qualities demonstrated by the employees and its use. As a supervisor, goal should be to build the employees' competence and commitment levels to the point of getting quality results by the way of using less time consuming styles, such as supporting and delegating.

When an employee demonstrates	Use
Low competence, High commitment.	Directing leadership: High directive, low supportive.
Some competence, Low commitment.	Coaching leadership: High directive, high supportive.
High competence, Variable commitment.	Supporting leadership: Low directive, high supportive.
High competence, High commitment.	Delegating leadership: Low directive, low supportive.

### Transformational Leadership

Burns, a prominent leadership researcher, proposed that leadership is a process that is either transactional or transformational in nature. Transactional leaders motivate employees by appealing to their self interest. In other words, employees do their jobs and give their compliance in return for rewards such as pay and status. Transactional leaders stress communication of job assignments, work standards, goals, and so on, in order to maintain the status quo. On the other side of the fence are





informational leaders. Instead of using rewards and incentives to motivate employees, transformational leaders do the following:

- Communicate with and inspire employees about the mission and objectives of the company.
- Provide employees with meaningful, interesting, and challenging jobs.
- Act as a coach and mentor to support, develop, and empower employees.
- Lead by example. By appealing to employees' higher-order needs, transformational leaders gain much loyalty that is especially useful in times of change.

Additional qualities or parameters required to be followed by the supervisor are enumerated below. These qualities pay excellent dividend to a supervisor on execution of the task in his hand. Qualities mentioned below will possibly maintain a balance between the subordinates and attain excellent results or standards in negotiation of the tasks.

**Emotional balance:** Supervisor works in situations which involve authority, leadership, meeting targets and deadlines, conflicts, etc. The successful supervisors have to be able to maintain emotional balance and self-control so that they may face various situations confidently and successfully.

**Being Proactive:** Supervisor has objectives to achieve. They cannot play everything in advance. Several respond to the needs of the situation which has arisen suddenly. The superior must be able to have qualities such as being committed, having a missionary zeal, taking responsibility instead of passing the blame to others.

**Creativity:** It means that the supervisor must have the ability to come up with new responses to situations. They must have new ideas and also be able to recognize a good idea when it comes from another source.

**Mental Agility:** Supervisor must have the ability to grasp problems quickly, to think of several things at the same time, and assess the whole situation quickly. In the busy modern world of business, this quality is necessary for success.

**Learning Habits:** Effective supervisors are independent as learners. They take responsibility for the rightness of what is learned, and are not dependent on others.

**Self-knowledge:** Whatever the supervisor does is affected by their own view of their job and role, objectives, strengths, and weakness, etc. So they must be aware of these attributes. Hence the supervisor must develop skills looking at him critically.

### Developing Own Style

Applying theory to reality is going to be something you work out for yourself. No one can teach you. Since even the theorists disagree among themselves, the choice is wide open. But don't throw it all out; a lot of what the behavioral scientists are saying can be very useful to you. There does seem to be general agreement, supported by research and experience, that the assumptions Theory X makes about people are, at best, unproductive and at worst counterproductive, if not downright destructive. However, an authoritarian style of leadership can be effective and even necessary in many situations, and there is actually no reason why it cannot be combined with a high concern for the employees and achieve good results. As for Theory Y, probably two-thirds of the workforce has the potential for a Theory Y type of motivation—that is, working to satisfy such inner needs as self respect, achievement, independence, responsibility, status, and growth. The problem with applying this theory in the hospitality industry is really not the employees. It is the nature of the work, the number of variables you have to deal with (including high employee turnover), the unpredictability of the situation, the tradition of authoritarian carrot-stick management, and the pressures of time. The pace and pattern of the typical day do not leave much room for group activity or for planning and implementing changes in work patterns to provide such motivation. Furthermore, your own supervisor or your company's policies may not give you the freedom to make changes. In conclusion, Theory Y does not always work for everyone. However, it is remarkable what is possible when an imaginative and determined manager sets out to utilize this type of motivation and develop this type of commitment. The best style of leadership, for you, is whatever works best in terms of these three basics: your own personality, the employees you supervise, and the situations you face. It should be a situational type of leadership, just as your management style must be a flex style that reacts to situations as they arise.

Mr. A may give an order to Mr. B but say "please" to Mr. C. You may stop a fight in the industry with a quick command when employee Mr. M and another employee Mr. S keep picking up each other's orders, and then later you may spend a good hour with the two of them helping them reach an agreement to stop their running battle. You may see responsibilities you could delegate to Mr. J or to Mr. K. You may see opportunities to bring employees in solving work problems, or you may solve them yourself because of time pressures or because the problems are not appropriate for group discussion. Be truly open-minded, avoid taking sides, recognize your own bias, don't let titles or prestige influence your decisions and avoid

absolute wordings in your decisions are the parameters to be considered and followed while taking any decisions. You can borrow elements and techniques of Theory Y without erecting a whole system of democratic or participative management. If something does not work for all three of you-yourself, the employees, the situation-don't do it. What you need most in finding what works best is awareness: awareness of yourself and the feelings, desires, biases, abilities, power, and influence you bring to a situation; awareness of the special needs and traits of your various employees and awareness of the situation, the big picture, so you can recognize what is needed, conceptual skills and human skills. To manage these changes in the work place following factors to be enforced for a better results:

- Determine the method for introducing and selling the change of the team.
- Break the change down into smaller steps.
- Create a contingency plan.
- Monitor the implementation of the change including results and behavior.
- Accept and plan for the results of change.

### Conclusion

Success in life is measured by what we have overcome to be what we are and by what we have accomplished. How we are more important than what position we have. It reveals that there is no "one best" style for all situations. Attempt to define and determine a proper managerial style is an extremely complex task for any manager. Leadership may be an explanation of success or failure that is convenient or easy rather than accurate. Leadership prototype is equal to mental image of what a leader should look like. If leader's behaviour matches follower's prototype, better leader- member relations and better outcomes are ensured in the business environment. There is no single, all purposeful style of behavior that is effective in all managerial situations. The best style of leadership is to be in you and should be identified. As supervisor leadership is one of the most significant factors influencing an employee's success and satisfaction on the job. The above discussion is aimed at enhancing the supervisory competencies and leadership capacity of one's own without copying someone else's style which does not work as the same shoes do not fit for all. Once the challenges in formulating techniques for developing subordinates and staff are achieved, a supervisor could ensure maximum performance which results to organizational effectiveness.

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