



The Leadership Style Differentiator

Most leaders have one or two styles of leadership that they prefer, often because they are comfortable using that style(s). The reality is that effective leadership means using a variety of styles based on the needs of the people you are leading. Over-supervising or under-supervising can have negative consequences, such as unmotivated, uninspired, disillusioned and/or uncommitted people.

The most common styles of leadership are indicated below (column 1). You can determine the best style of leadership to use based on the person’s knowledge and skill (column 2) and confidence and enthusiasm (column 3). For example, it is best to use a “telling” approach when the person is feeling confident and enthusiastic (column 3 -high), but their knowledge and skills are low (column 2).

Table One – What and When of Leadership Styles

1. Leadership Style	2. Is the person’s knowledge/skill low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do	3. Is the person’s confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do
A. Telling	Low or minimal	High
B. Guiding	Low or minimal	Low or minimal
C. Encouraging	High	Low or minimal
D. Entrusting	High	High

A new hire is a good example of when a telling style of leadership works best. The new hire is excited and enthusiastic (column 3 High) but they have limited knowledge relative to your Home’s policies, procedures, residents and staff etc. (column 2 is low or minimal).

Table Two – Example of best leadership style for a new hire

1. Leadership Style	2. Is the person’s knowledge/skill low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do	3. Is the person’s confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do
E. Telling	Low or minimal	High
F. Guiding	Low or minimal	Low or minimal
G. Encouraging	High	Low or minimal
H. Entrusting	High	High

Now, let’s take a look at a few scenarios and consider what style of leadership would be most effective. Ask yourself, “are the skills/knowledge needs of this person low or high?” And secondly, “are the confidence/enthusiasm needs of this person low or high?”

Scenario One

You have been charged with orientating a group of volunteers who will be assisting with the infection control screening of staff and visitors entering the Home. They are eager and excited to be able to provide help to the Home in these challenging times.

What style of leadership will ensure the volunteers success?

1. Leadership Style	2. Is the person's knowledge/skill low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do	3. Is the person's confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do
I. Telling	Low or minimal	High
J. Guiding	Low or minimal	Low or minimal
K. Encouraging	High	Low or minimal
L. Entrusting	High	High

Scenario Two

Susan is a long-tenured front-line staff who has just been re-assigned to your unit. While she has good skills, she is struggling with procedures on your unit and has expressed frustration with your different expectations.

What style of leadership would address the issue of different expectations on your unit, and help her overcome her frustration?

1. Leadership Style	2. Is the person's knowledge/skill low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do	3. Is the person's confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do
M. Telling	Low or minimal	High
N. Guiding	Low or minimal	Low or minimal
O. Encouraging	High	Low or minimal
P. Entrusting	High	High

Scenario Three

John, a co-worker (supervisor) shares with you his angst about an upcoming meeting he has with one of his staff. He explains that he has already had several uncomfortable/difficult exchanges with this staff prior to this latest incident. John has lots of experience, and a proven track record in handling staff issues, and in fact has given you very sound advice on several occasions.

What leadership style would help John overcome his hesitation in this situation?

1. Leadership Style	2. Is the person's knowledge/skill low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do	3. Is the person's confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do
Q. Telling	Low or minimal	High
R. Guiding	Low or minimal	Low or minimal
S. Encouraging	High	Low or minimal
T. Entrusting	High	High

Scenario Four

Based on her knowledge of the requirements and in collaboration with her co-workers, Terry, a staff member in your department, has revised and simplified the steps in a process She is now sharing the change to the process with you for final approval.

What style of leadership would encourage Terry to show imitative in problem-solving and collaboration when addressing issues in the future?

1. Leadership Style	2. Is the person's knowledge/skill low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do	3. Is the person's confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do
U. Telling	Low or minimal	High
V. Guiding	Low or minimal	Low or minimal
W. Encouraging	High	Low or minimal
X. Entrusting	High	High

Summary

Avoid the common pitfall of primarily using one or two leadership styles. Remember each style has strengths and limitations. In other words, it is not that one style is better than the others; it really depends on the needs of the other person (knowledge/skill and confidence/enthusiasm) at that particular moment. Effective leadership is about learning how to respond using each of these leadership styles.

Answers

Scenario One

The best leadership style for this scenario would be a **Telling** leadership approach. The volunteers are eager and excited to help the Home with screening staff and visitors (**enthusiasm high**). However, they have not yet been taught how to using the screening tool and Rapid Testing procedure and protocols.

Leadership Style	Volunteers' knowledge/skill low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do	Volunteers' confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to the task you are asking them to do
Telling	Low or minimal	High

Scenario Two

The best leadership style for this scenario would be a **Guiding** leadership approach. Susan is expressing her frustration with meeting expectations (**confidence and enthusiasm low**) and she is struggling with the new procedures (**knowledge and skills – low**).

Leadership Style	Is Susan's knowledge/skill low or high relative to the procedures on your unit?	Is Susan's confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to the meeting the expectations on your unit?
Guiding	Low or minimal	Low or minimal

Scenario Three

The best leadership style for this scenario would be an **Encouraging** leadership approach. John has the experience and knowledge to handle this staff issue (**knowledge and skills high**), but he is feeling worried and uncomfortable about the upcoming meeting with this staff (**confidence/enthusiasm low**).

Leadership Style	Is John's knowledge/skill low or high relative to handling this staff issue?	Is John's confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to the upcoming meeting with one of his staff?
Encouraging	High	Low or minimal

Scenario Four

The best leadership style for this scenario would be an **Entrusting** leadership approach. Terry has the knowledge relative to the requirements of the process (**knowledge and skills high**), and the confidence to problem solve and collaborate with her co-workers (**confidence/enthusiasm high**).

Leadership Style	Is Terry's knowledge/skill low or high relative to requirements of the process?	Is Terry's confidence/enthusiasm low or high relative to collaborating with her team?
Entrusting	High	High