

Title: Leadership in a Business Essay

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Table of Contents:

Introduction	2
Definition of Leadership	2
Leadership Styles	2-3
Leadership Skills	3-4
Conclusion	4
References	4

Introduction:

In this essay a definition of leadership will be provided based on different available sources. Then different leadership Goleman styles will be explored, providing advantages, disadvantages and examples of suitable applications in a business context. Key skills for leaders in business will be overviewed and explained, then related to possible challenges. Lastly a conclusion will be provided based on everything described and a few recommendations for leaders in contemporary businesses will be given.

Definition of Leadership:

Leadership is a wide field that spans across into a range of different areas of study in business. Because of this different academics will provide different definitions, two of those will be provided and then a definition given based on them. Peter Northouse says that "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." (Northouse, 2019). While Gary Yukl states that "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively." (Yukl, 2013). *Combining these two definitions you can say that "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand what needs to be done effectively in order to achieve a common goal"*

Leadership Styles:

One example of a leadership style presented by Goleman is the pacesetter style. The key feature of this leadership style is that the leader sets a very high standard of performance, and they expect the employees to meet those standards quickly and independently. The leader essentially leads by example, they demonstrate what needs to be done and expect the team to follow that example. One advantage of such a leadership is that it can be highly efficient and provide quick results, the strong focus on results will mean that employees have clear expectations about what needs to be achieved and will be able to create a focus and fast paced environment leading to good work efficiency. Another advantage of such a leadership is that it can be highly motivating and encouraging to the employees, when they see their leader working hard alongside them and creating a hard standard of work it can create respect and admiration from the employees and bolster the overall spirit of the team leading to increased productivity. One disadvantage of such a leadership is that it can create stress in the workplace, the employees can feel highly pressured to conform to a high standard of work and become demotivated when they fall short of it, this can lead to a higher staff turnover rate. Another disadvantage of the pacesetter style is that it can reduce creativity and initiative, because the leader sets very high standards and expects tasks to be completed in a particular way and to a particular standard, employees may focus on simply meeting the leader's expectations rather than experimenting with new ideas limiting innovation and creativity. Overall, this leadership

style works well in an environment with a motivated team and where results need to be achieved quickly without much room for experimentation. A perfect example of this is a team of tradesmen such as roofers. (*World Economic Forum, 2025*) (*Goleman, 2000*)

Another example of a leadership style presented by Goleman is the democratic style. In this style the leader encourages the employees to participate in the decision-making rather than making them by himself. One advantage of this leadership style is that employees feel valued and listened to because they have an opportunity to contribute their ideas and opinions. Being involved in decisions will give the employees a greater sense of responsibility and involvement which can greatly increase motivation in the team. Another advantage is that it can increase creativity, when different employees with different ideas and experiences are allowed to take part in the decision-making process new innovative ideas can emerge. One disadvantage of the democratic style is that it can slow down the overall work process, when multiple people are needed to come to an agreement for a decision it can take much longer than it would for a single person to make a decision. Another disadvantage is that it can be a source of conflict in the workplace, different opinions can clash and a decision satisfying everyone can become hard to reach, creating friction that can reduce the efficiency of the team. Overall the democratic style is best used in situations with a highly skilled team of professionals who have valuable insights and experience and where the overall end product is more important than the time it takes to achieve it. An example of this would be a team of marketing professionals working on a new ad for their company. (*World Economic Forum, 2025*) (*Fischer and Sitkin, 2023*)

The last example of a leadership style presented by Goleman is the visionary style. When using this style of leadership, the leaders will have a clear and inspiring vision for the future that they wish to bring the company towards, they will motivate and encourage employees to achieve this vision through their work in the company. One advantage of such a leadership style is that it can provide a clear direction and purpose to the employees, the employees can become motivated to achieve the leaders vision for the future and feel like there are a part of something important, increasing motivation in the team. Another advantage is that it can set a team or company that is off-track back onto good performance levels, a visionary style can bring about a new style and new ideas that can reinvigorate a poorly performing team. One disadvantage of this leadership style is that it can create a dependence on the leader for good performance, this leadership style is highly centered on the leader creating and upholding an inspiring vision for the future, so if the leader decides to leave the company/team or goes on temporary leave, the team can lose track of the vision and lose motivation. Another disadvantage is that it may leave some employees feeling alienated, if one or more employees don't agree with the vision set by the leader they will feel left out and unheard. This can lead to staff turnover. Overall this leadership style is best suited for a company that needs to change whether due to poor performance or necessity to adapt to the current market conditions. (*World Economic Forum, 2025*) (*Fischer and Sitkin, 2023*)

Leadership Skills:

In today's rapidly changing and demanding business environment effective leaders will require a range of skills to be able to compete in the market. One example of such a skill is communication, a good leader needs to be able to communicate clearly with employees, customers and stakeholders depending on the organisation. Employees who clearly understand their objectives will perform them more efficiently. During periods of change a leader with good communication skills can explain the need for the change and why it is necessary to the employees helping to keep motivation high during uncertain periods.

Another skill that is key in today's business environment is innovative thinking, a leader needs to be able to come up quickly with alternative solutions to problems and new ideas to stay competitive. This is particularly important in competitive industries where businesses need to continually adapt their products, services or processes to changing customer needs. Innovation can also help organisations identify new opportunities for growth and improve efficiency. One more skill that is important is resilience, resilience is the ability of a leader to remain focused, composed and effective when facing difficulties, setbacks or unexpected challenges. In a business environment, leaders may have to deal with financial problems, employee issues, changes in customer demand or unexpected disruptions. A resilient leader can remain positive and make rational decisions rather than allowing difficult circumstances to negatively affect their judgement. (Brassey, Smet and Maor, 2024)

Conclusion:

In conclusion the different Goleman leadership styles described; pacesetter, democratic and visionary each have their own advantages and disadvantages and are suitable to different applications, for example the pacesetter is more suitable to a team working on a deadline, but it would completely struggle in a creative environment where a democratic approach is much more suitable. Leaders of businesses need multiple skills to be able to efficiently navigate through today's constantly changing and challenging market. For those leaders my recommendations are that they strongly consider which style of leadership they should use based on the organisation they are leading, the skills and motivation of the employees in that organisation and the current overall situation in the organisation. They should also try their best to hone in their skills and apply them to their leadership.

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