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Introduction:

Leadership is important in business because without it things can get confusing and not run very well. When there is a leader, workers know more clearly what they should do and what the boss wants. Having someone to look up to also helps people finish their tasks even if the work is hard. A leader can make the place feel more organised, even when everything is busy.

In this essay I will talk about different leadership styles that businesses can use to improve. I will focus on three leadership styles from David Goleman's ideas and explain what situations they are good for. I will also look at how these styles affect workers, like if they make employees happier or help them finish tasks better.

The essay will also explain some qualities that make a good leader in modern business so they can guide workers more effectively.

Main Body:

Leadership can mean many different things, and people understand it differently. Silva explains that "leadership is an evolving concept, but it could be satisfactorily defined as "the process of interactive influence that occurs when, in a given context, some people accept someone as their leader to achieve common goals"."¹ This shows leadership has many sides to it. It can be a way for a person to use social influence so others follow them to finish a task everyone agrees on. It can also be a personal skill where someone can organise what to do and get people to actually carry out the plan.

The first leadership style I will look at from Goleman is the Commanding style, which is also called the Coercive leader. This style is mostly about having a very demanding leader who just wants the tasks done and doesn't really ask for other people's ideas. They believe they have the real power and everyone else should listen to them. Goleman says this style is built on "do what I tell you"², which shows the leader is a

1 Silva, A. (2016). What Is leadership? [online] Journal of Business Studies Quarterly. Available at:

<https://www.proquest.com/openview/da932f3ddd496ce36e7f30f9e133b141/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1056382>.

2 Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership That Gets Results. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, pp.78–90.

strict and forceful authority figure who puts a lot of pressure on others. Goleman also argues that “Coercive leaders demand immediate compliance”³ meaning they expect people to follow orders right away without questioning anything.

This leadership style can work well as it “offers control and order, increased productivity and lack of insubordination.” (Digital Enterprise,2023) The organisation Digital Enterprise, argue that coercive leadership offers “direct leadership in which employees know what is expected of them, decisions are made faster and essentially the boss gets to decide what is best for the business, leading to less bureaucracy”⁴

One situation where this can work well is during a crisis. This is because the leader can manage the team using control and easily get order back.

But coercive leadership also has problems. Digital Enterprise says it can cause “long term productivity problems later, people leaving the job and the leader being unpopular.”⁵ They say workers can start to feel angry or annoyed at the leader if they are too controlling. This can be bad for the business because workers might quit or not do their work properly.

Another leadership style Goleman talks about is the democratic style. This is when workers can give their ideas and opinions about business decisions. The leader listens to what employees say and tries to use their ideas when making choices. Decisions are made together and everyone has some say. Goleman (2000) says “Democratic leaders build consensus through participation”⁶ which shows the leader wants workers to be

³ Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership That Gets Results. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, pp.78–90.

⁴Digital Enterprise (2023). Coercive Leader - What it is, The Pros, Cons and Signs You May be One. [online] digitalenterprise.org. Available at: <https://digitalenterprise.org/leadership/coercive-leader-what-it-is/>.

⁵ Digital Enterprise (2023). Coercive Leader - What it is, The Pros, Cons and Signs You May be One. [online] digitalenterprise.org. Available at: <https://digitalenterprise.org/leadership/coercive-leader-what-it-is/>.

⁶ Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership That Gets Results. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, pp.78–90.

part of the process. This style helps people feel important and motivated because their thoughts matter. It also tries to get everyone to agree on decisions to reach the business goals.

Democratic leadership is good because it can make workers happy. Sling (2022) says this style is helpful in business because “it allows participation, increases job satisfaction and leads to effective decision-making.”⁷ This is good because many people can give ideas and make better decisions. It also makes workers feel like they are part of the process and their opinions matter.

This style can be useful in business when the goal is to make employees more motivated or when there is a difficult problem that needs lots of ideas from different people.

But this leadership style also has problems. Slingo (2022) says “it relies on employees having strong communication skills, certain skill sets, and sharing of company information”⁸. This can cause problems because some workers might know more than others, and some may feel left out or not know what to do. This can make the decision not as good. Sometimes a leader with more power and skills who makes the choice alone could solve the problem better. So even if democratic leadership helps people feel included, it does not always make the best decision. Also, this can make decision making longer which won't be helpful when fast decisions need to be made.

The last leadership style I will talk about is the visionary style, which is also called the authoritative style. Goleman (2000) says “Authoritative leaders mobilize people toward a vision.”⁹ The leader aims to show employees the importance of making decisions and how it reaches a common goal. Goleman (2000) also calls it a “come with me”¹⁰ style,

⁷ Slingo, L. (2022). What is democratic leadership? Pros, cons, and examples. [online] TopCV. Available at: <https://topcv.co.uk/career-advice/what-is-democratic-leadership-pros-cons-and-examples>.

⁸ Slingo, L. (2022). What is democratic leadership? Pros, cons, and examples. [online] TopCV. Available at: <https://topcv.co.uk/career-advice/what-is-democratic-leadership-pros-cons-and-examples>.

⁹ Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership That Gets Results. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, pp.78–90.

¹⁰ Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership That Gets Results. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, pp.78–90.

because the leader guides people and shows the way instead of just being strict and telling everyone what to do. It is more about inspiring and helping people than controlling them.

This kind of leadership can be good because Stobierski (2019) says it “brings clarity, provides direction and vision and breeds good will.”¹¹ It helps make clear decisions that the boss and workers can feel proud of. It can also motivate people by giving a goal that everyone can work for.

It is especially helpful in situations like improving company culture or when the business is in a crisis. It helps workers focus on the same goal and also lets them think for themselves to help get the business back on track.

But this style also has problems. Stobierski (2019) says the “authoritative leader can feel overbearing and must own up to their mistakes.”¹² This means, according to Stobierski (2019) the leader can put too much pressure on workers to follow the goal, even if they want to do things their own way. Also, the leader has to give a clear goal, and if workers understand it the wrong way, it is the leader’s fault.

Some key skills leaders need in the modern world to be a successful leader are good communication skills, team handling, conviction, respectfulness, patience and decision-making. Richard (2010) reports “Attributes of a great leader include: ability and desire, vision, planning and organizational skills, integrity, competence and confidence., communication and follow-up skills, emotional intelligence, team dynamics, risk-taking capabilities, motivation and success.”¹³

This can enable leaders to handle complex challenges and support sustainable growth by acting as an instructor as well as a good team leader.

¹¹ Stobierski, T. (2019). 5 pros & cons of authoritative leadership. [online] Harvard Business School. Available at: <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/authoritative-leadership-style>.

¹² Stobierski, T. (2019). 5 pros & cons of authoritative leadership. [online] Harvard Business School. Available at: <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/authoritative-leadership-style>.

¹³ Richard E. Bickerstaff Jr. “Leadership Attributes: Inspire Others to Greatness.” *Opflow*, vol. 36, no. 9, 2010, pp. 16–17. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/opflow.36.9.16>. Accessed 19 Nov. 2025.

Conclusion:

This essay talk about three of Goleman's leadership styles, the coercive style, the authoritative or visionary style, and the democratic style. All of them have good things and bad things. I think a good leader can use little bits from all of them to fix the problems of each. For example, a leader can be strict sometimes and make sure work gets done like coercive style but also be nice and let workers say what they think like democratic style. A good leader tells people what to do when needed but also listens and lets workers help make decisions. In contemporary organisations, the leaders should set out a demanding presence but also make sure employees are happy and feel included as the whole workforce creates the company and contributes to its success.

Therefore, leadership should include authority and compassion by allowing employees to participate and give feedback regarding certain decisions. But when there are a crisis or immediate decisions are needed the leader should act responsibly and take charge. Leaders should guide and boss their workers, and combining the elements of Goleman's leadership styles will lead to a more effective and holistic leadership style that is both making employees happy and ensuring tasks get done in the business.

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