

The Six Leadership Styles at a Glance

Our research found that leaders use six styles, each springing from different components of emotional intelligence. Here is a summary of the styles, their origin, when they work best, and their impact on an organization's climate and thus its performance.

| | Coercive | Authoritative | Affiliative | Democratic | Pacesetter | Coaching |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| The leader's modus operandi | Demands immediate compliance | Mobilizes people toward a vision | Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds | Forges consensus through participation | Sets high standards for performance | Develops people for the future |
| The style in a phrase | "Do what I tell you." | "Come with me." | "People come first." | "What do you think?" | "Do as I do, now." | "Try this." |
| Underlying emotional intelligence competencies | Drive to achieve, initiative, self-control | Self-confidence, empathy, change catalyst | Empathy, building relationships, communication | Collaboration, team leadership, communication | Conscientiousness, drive to achieve, initiative | Developing others, empathy, self-awareness |
| When the style works best | In a crisis, to kick start a turnaround, or with problem employees | When changes require a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed | To heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances | To build buy-in or consensus, or to get input from valuable employees | To get quick results from a highly motivated and competent team | To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strengths |
| Overall impact on climate | Negative | Most strongly positive | Positive | Positive | Negative | Positive |