The RESOURCE

What's Your Management Style?

Management can be defined as "the process of organizing, coordinating, and directing people or things to achieve an objective". *Style* can be defined as "the way in which something is done or the approach one takes to a task". Therefore, the definition of *management style* is "the way in which one goes about organizing, coordinating, and directing in order to achieve an objective".

There is no perfect or ideal management style that works in all situations with all employees. What we are learning at PSP Metrics is that everyone seems to have a preferred management style, whether they have managed a thousand people or none. One's preferred management style is based on a combination of their personality and their experiences in business. A person's preferred management style can be changed over time with deliberate and conscious effort.

In our assessment work with thousands of managers over the past 25 years, we have observed seven different management styles with great frequency. These styles can be subsumed under three categories: advice-oriented, people-oriented, or task-oriented. Below, each management style is described in general terms. Which one is your preferred management style?

Advice-Oriented Management Styles

There are two advice-oriented management styles: passive and consultative.

➤ The **passive** management style is a hands-off approach in which the manager assumes that his/her best contribution is to stay out of the way and let direct reports do their jobs. Passive managers operate under the assumption that as long as team members have secure jobs, they will work hard and achieve objectives. Passive managers typically believe that the best advice is to give no advice.

➤ The **consultative** management style focuses on serving as a subject matter expert for one's direct reports, advising them whenever they request assistance. This is a very collegial approach to management which requires the manager to make him/herself readily available and accessible to team members.

People-Oriented Management Styles

There are three people-oriented management styles: facilitative, educative, and participative.

➤ The **facilitative** management style emphasizes creating the climate/conditions for employees to succeed, providing them with the resources

necessary to get the job done, as well as clearing obstacles out of their way. In a sense, the facilitative manager sets up his/her people for success.

➢ The **educative** management style actively trains or coaches others, either formally or informally, in how to get the job done. The educative manager looks for "teachable moments" where individuals or small groups can be given instruction, correction, or encouragement.

➢ The **participative** management style is one in which a manager functions as a player/coach, working side-by-side with direct reports to achieve an objective. Sometimes call team-oriented management, the participative style is a hands-on approach where the manager serves as an example for others and also actively solicits their input regarding work methods.

Task-Oriented Management Styles
There are two task-oriented management styles: directive and administrative.

➢ The **directive** management style is one in which a manager tells people what to do without encouraging their input or suggestions. At its extreme, a directive manager tells people not only what to do, but also how to do it. It is a "my way or the highway" approach.

➢ The **administrative** manager hovers over people and continuously follows up on directives in great detail, to the point of micromanaging others. Strict rules, policies, and procedures must be followed by team members and no deviation is tolerated.

No one management style is better than another. Each has its place in business. For example, the administrative style works quite well when one must manage newcomers or people who are "on the bubble" due to work performance problems. The passive style is effective with a highly experienced and motivated team who essentially is mature enough to be self-directed. The directive style works best in emergency or crisis situations.

Each of the management styles described above can be measured with tools of industrial psychology. In our experience, every manager has a "foundational management style" which fits into one of the categories described above. In other words, each manager leans toward either giving advice, taking care of their people,

or accomplishing the task at hand. As managers mature, however, they can develop more flexibility in their style, eventually developing the ability to adjust style according to the specific objective to be achieved and needs of their direct reports.

So, while each manager has a preferred or a foundational approach, the best managers can use different styles as needed. Managers should be encouraged to expand the number of styles that they can use. Doing so will increase their influence over the process and the likelihood of achieving their business objectives.

RESOURCES FOR LEADERS

Great by Choice by Jim Collins. New York: HarperCollins, 2011

For those who found useful ideas in Collin's previous book *Good to Great*, Jim has written another interesting book on what distinguishes those who continuously succeed in reaching business and life goals.

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"The Real Leadership Lessons of Steve Jobs" by Walter Isaacson in the *Harvard Business Review*, April 2012 (Reprint # R1204F, 800-988-0886 or http://hbr.org)

The author of the recent best-selling biography of Steve Jobs describes why it is more important to focus on the accomplishments of Steve Jobs, rather than on his personality. He outlines the 14 imperatives behind Jobs's approach to business.

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Family Business - Key Issues by Denise Kenyon Rouvinez and John Ward. New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005

This book presents a collection of articles by leading thinkers and practitioners on the family business. It covers topics such as strategy, governance and succession.

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The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business by Charles Duhigg. New York: Random House, 2012

This fascinating book explains what habits are, how they are formed and how they can be changed. It explains how habits can transform both individuals and businesses.

Predicting Successful Candidates

Predicting successful people is a difficult task: there is no silver bullet for making the job easier. It is a complex decision with many dynamic variables to get right. Most people try to simplify the process by placing most of their focus on *job knowledge* and *experience*, not realizing that *experience* is only one variable that is a lot grayer and less effective in its predictive power than one might expect. *Job knowledge* has similar challenges, as does *the right education*. We all know plenty of people who managed to graduate from college, including renowned ones, without learning a great deal or applying themselves. What other "common" variables do we typically look for? *Knowing the right people* always gives us a comfort level and, of course, *if the candidate says the right things* in the interview. But most employers have been fooled many times by the candidate who says all the right things and comes *well recommended,* but in the end, doesn't perform at the level expected.

Research shows that individuals fail in jobs for many reasons and job knowledge is typically at the bottom of the list. They mainly fail because they have poor listening skills, difficulty in their interpersonal relations, weakness in building or leading a team, trouble adapting to change, lack of follow through, and tunnel vision in their work activities. All of these derailers make it possible for smart people with the right job knowledge, experience, education and references to fail miserably and at tremendous cost and set back to the company.

So what is a better way to do it? How can we better predict who will be successful? First of all, we have to acknowledge that hiring is a very complex decision with lots of variables and requires gathering as much objective data and information as possible. Most employers fail in the initial steps in hiring candidates because they do not fully understand what is needed for success in a given position and have trouble even reaching agreement on that among those who are responsible for interviewing and making the hiring decision. They do not think through what key competencies will be required to be truly effective on the job and achieve desired outcomes. They are also not clear about how success will be measured on the job. They do not take into account the individuals that the person will be working with, or the work styles of their future boss and coworkers, or the overall company culture and how it fits the individual.

Assuming you have been unusually diligent in exploring the above issues, then you can proceed to ask the important questions about the candidate's job fit. *Can* the person do the job? *Will* they do the job? Will they get along with others? These are three important questions that must be answered in every selection decision. People often forget, however, to also think about how much training and development or supervision will be necessary and whether this person will stay with the company, be able to grow with the job and progress further within the company.

Better Methods for Predicting Success

There are many ways to increase the likelihood of choosing a successful candidate. There may be a favorite recruiter who has proven successful in the past because of their knowledge of the company and understanding of what it takes to be successful. Employers often have particular colleges or other companies that they like to draw from where they previously have found successful candidates. Often, however, people make the mistake of assuming that one or two successful candidates with a particular background will equal continuous success from that source. Every employer tries to obtain references from people who know the candidate, but keep in mind that individuals providing the reference may know very little about your company or the expectations of the job and, in fact, may not know a great deal about the candidate's actual previous performance. References are, at best, one variable to consider. Experience and background are natural data to collect, as is job knowledge.

Expressed interest in the job is also an important factor but buying a "mercenary soldier" does not typically work out effectively in the long run.

Naturally, the job interview has value, but interviews alone remove little of the risk from the hiring decision. They simply do not provide enough reliable information. Group interviews are notoriously less effective and often give a false sense of confidence and safety. Structured behavioral event interviews are a lot more effective and can add greater value than simply winging it.

Meeting with candidates multiple times to observe the consistency of their behavior and allowing them more than one setting to present themselves is of great value. Some candidates are slower to warm up but go on to do an excellent job, whereas other candidates have good roleplaying skills for the first interview but lack substance and the ability to sustain their roleplaying over multiple interviews and meetings. It can help to take them to lunch or dinner, or have them go on a facilities tour with one of your employees. Notice if they stop and talk to people and if they seem interested or disinterested. At the executive level, play golf with them if they are a golfer or take them to some kind of event. The more contact in different settings, the better for making observations. The more observations, the more reliable your information will be.

A valuable tool in gathering data on candidates is adding psychometric profiling that measures key skills as well as important work behaviors. Professional testing by experienced industrial psychologists can greatly increase the number of variables that are measured and results in much greater accuracy in predicting successful candidates. Most experienced industrial psychologists will use testing to measure "people skills": scores reflecting team orientation, adaptability, critical thinking skills, leadership, change management, results orientation, etc., that adds a great deal of objectivity to the selection process.

Lastly, a lot can be learned about candidates by observing how they handle the pressures of the selection process itself. Are they difficult, tending to complain about various issues or have unusual, perhaps unreasonable, demands around their travel? Do they treat lower level staff with respect, including the wait staff who serves their lunch? When negative behavior is observed, typically it will become more troublesome once the person is onboard and not on their best behavior.

It is also important to drop the idea of finding the "*perfect"* candidate. Every candidate will have strengths and weaknesses and the main task is identifying those accurately so the person's fit for the position can be determined and, then, what training and development plans can be made to best help them succeed.

Successful people have many similarities in their profiles and more often than not it is **not** because they graduated from the same schools or know the right people or have some exceptional job knowledge or experience. Successful people are hard workers who are goal oriented but are also adaptable in their thinking. They do not have to be the brightest, but they have to be "smart enough" and do have to be able to step back and see the bigger picture. They are able to adapt to changing working conditions and often seek out as much variety and challenge in their jobs as possible. While they are often demanding, those who are successful recognize the importance of building relationships and using their interpersonal skills to get things done. These individuals will stand out when you use multiple tools and check multiple variables in the hiring process. A high degree of patience will be required because predicting who will be successful in any organization is not a simple process; it is a highly complex one.

WHAT'S NEW @ PSP?

- Created a new Sales Competency Model to measure key competencies for introducing change and increasing sales success with follow-up 360 reviews by external and internal customers.

- Our article: "Innovation: The New Leadership Competency" will be published in the June issue of *ASTD Links Plus* which is a digital newsletter of the American Society for Training and Development.

- Assisted customers with their expanding hiring and employee development needs due to the fast growing economy in Brazil.

- Created a new Career Development Training Plan format with additional behavioral suggestions and training options.

- Reviewed research on CEO selection success based on internal vs. external company/industry background. Contact PSP for a summary.

- Developed 3 training modules in a wellness program for the insurance industry on methods of Habit Change.

- Designed pre-employment tests for Customer Service and Compliance Coordinator assignments at a worldwide spirits company.

- Provided pro bono assessment services for a local Habitat for Humanity chapter.

- Launched a North American Validation Study of power system operators in electric transmission and distribution companies.

- Created a success factor profile for Project Managers in the commercial construction industry.

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