

A Partial History of Leadership Models

by George Campbell, Fall Line Systems Inc.

Early Ideas about Leadership

People did not start thinking about leadership in the mid-1800's but this is where we begin. We start here because contemporary thinking about leadership flows primarily from observational research that began in the 1860's and peaked in the 1960's.

Our purpose is to give you an understanding of the foundational elements of modern leadership thinking so you can see the strengths, limitations, and history of the models you will encounter in leadership training sessions and current writing on the subject.

Trait Theory

Sir Francis Galton¹ established much of the underpinnings of modern leadership thinking in his 1869 book Hereditary Genius². Galton's work was the first social scientific attempt to study genius and greatness. He argued that leadership success was built on a discrete number of personality indicators (traits).

Trait theory argues that leadership is unique to a select number of individuals and that these individuals possess certain immutable traits that cannot be learned. Research moved down two paths: identifying the traits leaders possess (The Great Man Theory) and developing ways to measure personality traits in prospective leaders. By 1940 researchers were very confident that they knew how to identify potential leaders: those individuals with the right personality traits.

Trait theory was severely tested during the Second World War. The U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force based much of their officer selection on leadership traits but found that leaders they had carefully selected did no better than random people who emerged as leaders during combat. After the war the U.S. Department of Defence funded research to discover why their officer selection methods fared so badly and to recommend new approaches to predicting leader success.

Pointing a New Way

R. M. Stogdill (1948)³ provided the definitive study of the Trait Theory's results for the U.S. military. He showed conclusively that there is no set of traits that can universally predict leadership success. He concluded that "the qualities, characteristics, and skills required in a leader are determined to a large extent by the demands of the situation in which he is to function as a leader."

¹ Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) was an extraordinary polymath who influenced sociology, psychology, anthropology, meteorology, and other fields. He produced over 340 papers and books, created the statistical concept of correlation, introduced the use of questionnaires and surveys to study communities, devised the first weather map, and devised a method for classifying fingerprints among other accomplishments. He was also, sadly, a pioneer in eugenics.

² Galton, F. (1869). Hereditary Genius. London: Macmillan

³ Stogdill, R.M (1948). Personal Factors Associated with Leadership. The Journal of Psychology. Volume 25, Issue 1, 1948.

The Ohio State Leadership Studies in the early 1950's followed up on Stogdill's work, analysing vast amounts of data provided by the military. They found that leaders' behaviour mattered much more than leader traits. About two thirds of leaders' behaviour that mattered fit into two criteria: initiating structure and consideration. Initiating Structure was defined as emphasizing formal goals, deadlines, task assignment, standard procedures, and high-performance standards; and Consideration as emphasizing trust, respect, warmth, concern, support, and rapport.

These two studies convinced most researchers and practitioners that leaders' behaviour (what you do) matters much more than leaders' personality (traits). Initially this insight led people to search for the Great Behaviour Set, one that fit every leader in every situation. After many years the need to adjust your behaviour to the situation became evident.

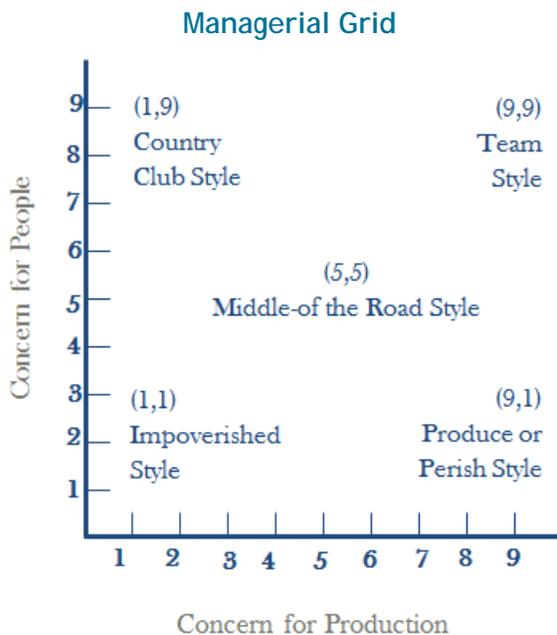
The focus on leaders' behaviour was extraordinarily important. This opened the door to training new leaders and for helping existing leaders become much more effective.

Two Highly Influential Leadership Models

Blake & Mouton Managerial Grid

Dr. Robert Blake and Dr. Jane Mouton developed the first commercially successful leadership style model, released in 1964. Their Managerial Grid was a direct descendant of the Ohio State Leadership Studies. It was an instant success, and it has greatly influenced subsequent leadership training.

The Managerial Grid identifies five leadership styles. There is a clear preference for the Team Style which has maximum scores on the two scales: Concern for Production / Concern for People. Other styles result from lower scores on these scales. The scales are independent from each other, meaning you can have a high score on one and a low score on the other.



Concern for Production:

- Give clear direction
- Give specific instructions
- Maintain control
- Closely supervise

Concern for People:

- Provide encouragement
- Provide support
- Encourage two-way communication

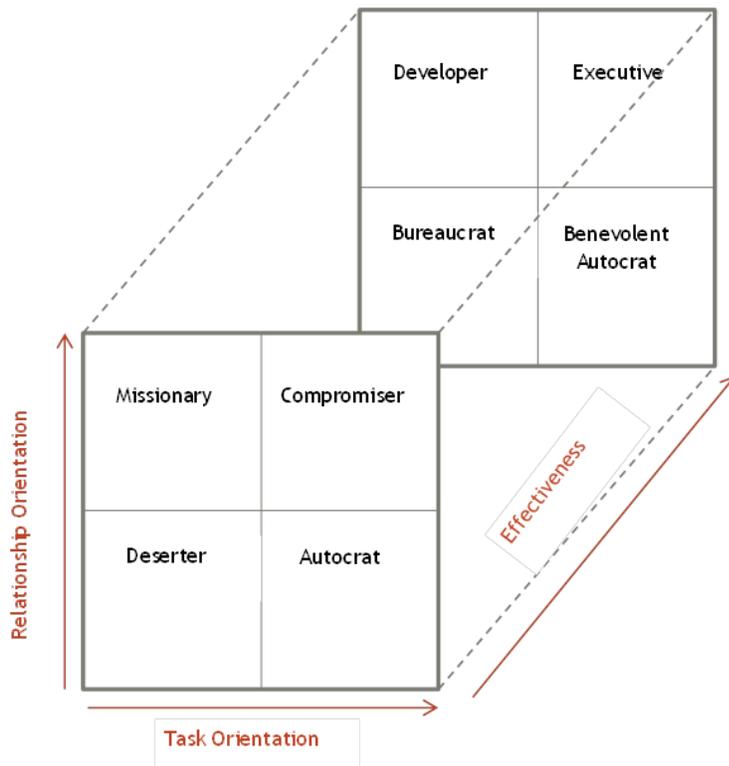
Managerial Grid assessment and training was extremely effective for participants. Many people thought about the connection between their leadership behaviour and their results for the first time in these sessions. However, the emphasis on a single most effective style clashed for many people.

The 3 - D Leadership Model

The Managerial Grid demonstrated very clearly that leadership success is tied to behaviour, and that some behaviours were much more effective than others. The gaping hole in the Managerial Grid was its quest to define behaviours that were superior in all situations. People intuitively understand that there was no magic Great Behaviour set.

In 1970 Canadian researcher W. J. Reddin⁴ developed the first user-friendly model that incorporated both Managerial Grid thinking and the need to adjust to the situation. Reddin's 3-D Leadership Model showed that the same leadership behaviour could be either effective or ineffective. What determined effectiveness was the fit with the reality of the job and the direct reports' skill and understanding.

3-D Leadership Model



Reddin was a pragmatist. In his mind behaviour that worked was superior to any that didn't. But what worked in one instance may cause problems in a different time or place.

Reddin's breakthrough was the development of tools for assessing the situation so that leaders could adjust their behaviour to fit. The better the fit, the further the movement along the effectiveness scale. For example, in a new job where there are pressing safety concerns it is paramount for the leader to focus on doing the task correctly, so no one gets hurt. This can be done to the exclusion of the

⁴ Reddin, WJ. (1970). Managerial Effectiveness. McGraw-Hill, New York

relationship, initially. Once these basics are covered the leader can then put energy into the relationship and toward building the team.

The 3-D Leadership Model’s choice of labels for the most effective leadership styles (Benevolent Autocrat, Executive, Developer and Bureaucrat) is certainly dated. The need to match your behaviour to the needs of others endures.

Situational Leadership Model

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard attended one of Reddin’s 3-D Leadership Style seminars in the early 1970’s and loved what they saw. Hersey and Blanchard simplified the presentation of the ideas and focused their analysis of the situation onto what they called the Follower Maturity.

Situational Leadership Styles

The Situational Leadership model identified four possible leader styles. When the leader’s behaviour matches the needs of the followers, the style (Telling, Selling, Participating or Delegating) is effective. On the other hand, the same behaviour is counterproductive in situations where it does not fit with the maturity of the followers. The counter productive styles are labeled in red.

Situational Leadership

People: HIGH	Participating (Patronizing) Follower: Competent Not fully Confident	Selling (Manipulating) Follower: Confident Not fully Competent
People: LOW	Delegating (Abdicating) Follower: Competent Confident	Telling (Punishing) Follower: Not Confident Not Competent
	Task: LOW	Task: HIGH

Task Behaviour:

- Give clear direction
- Give specific instructions
- Maintain control
- Closely supervise

People Behaviour:

- Provide encouragement
- Provide support
- Encourage two-way communication

Competence: LOW	Competence: HIGH
Confidence: LOW	Confidence: HIGH

Growth of Follower Maturity

Followers mature along two independent pathways. One path is that of competence. Early on in a job when the follower's competence is low it makes sense to have a tight supervisory style. As competence grows the same style would be experienced as punishing micromanagement.

The second maturity path is that of confidence. Followers who are competent but not fully confident need support. Those who are both confident and competent need freedom.

Matching Leadership Behaviour to the Situation

Situational Leadership Grid

People: HIGH	<p>S3 Share ideas and facilitate in decision making (Participating)</p>	<p>S2 Explain your decisions and provide opportunity for clarification (Selling)</p>
People: LOW	<p>S4 Turn over responsibility for decisions and implementation (Delegating)</p>	<p>S1 Provide specific instructions and closely supervise performance (Telling)</p>
	Task: LOW	Task: HIGH

Follower Maturity Levels to Match

S(tyle)1:

Low Confidence / Low Competence

S(tyle)2:

High Confidence / Low Competence

S(tyle)3:

Low Confidence / High Competence

S(tyle)4:

High Confidence / High Competence

Competence: LOW	Competence: HIGH
Confidence: LOW	Confidence: HIGH

Leader effectiveness in this model is determined by matching leadership style to the maturity level of the follower. When confidence and competence are both low, Style 1 (S1) fits. When competence is low but confidence is high, Style 2 (S2) fits. When competence is high, but confidence is low, Style 3 (S3) fits. When competence and confidence are both high, Style 4 (S4) is the best match.

There is no one best way to act as a leader. The best leaders adjust their behaviour to fit what is appropriate while remaining consistent about their principles and values.

Leadership Traits or Leadership Behaviour

The nature or nurture debate continues. (The phrase “nature or nurture” was coined by Sir Francis Galton). Clearly some people have a natural talent for leadership, and this is based on their personality traits. We are not arguing that personality of leaders does not matter. It is just that the behaviour of leaders matters more.

Organizations continue to use personality instruments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as part of their leadership development programs. These personality instruments are very popular, and they are useful to leaders in two ways. First, they help individuals understand their own drives and limitations more deeply. This can enable people to be more comfortable in their own skin and thus act in a more authentic manner.

Secondly, personality instruments demonstrate how different some others are—many leaders are shocked to learn that people around them view the world and absorb information differently than they do. This revelation can open the door to empathy which helps them shift to fit the needs and limitations of other people.

Research continues to reinforce the basic understanding about leadership success that emerged from the Ohio State Studies in the early 1950’s—that leadership behaviour matters above all else. trumps personality every time.

Leadership during Moments of Truth

There can be a vast chasm between having power and using it wisely. We learn about the wisdom of a leader during moments of truth, when their judgement is truly tested by an ethical or otherwise challenging dilemma. In these instances, behaviour reveals character, and this shows us whether or not to expect wisdom when new challenges emerge.

A Word about the Author

George Campbell is the President of Fall Line Systems Inc. George has consulted to leaders for more than 30 years, helping them build strategy, strengthen teams, and develop healthy, productive workplaces. George is based in Calgary, Alberta.

Acknowledgement

The ideas in this paper are based on the work of **Robin Stuart-Kotze**, a mentor and great friend of George’s. Robin is a scholar of leadership and the author of many insightful books on the subject. His book *Performance: The Secret of Successful Behaviour*⁵ is a terrific read for anyone who finds this paper of interest.

⁵ Stuart-Kotze, Robin (2006). *Performance: The Secrets of Successful Behaviour*. FT Prentice Hall, London.