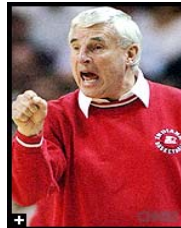


# Special Report

# *What is the Ideal Leadership Style?*



OR



*By Ron Koller*

# What is the Ideal Leadership Style?

From the desk of Ron Koller:

Several of the following persona's are considered, by American standards, to be successful. Which of the following leadership styles would and would not work in your organization?

	Dictators	Coaches	Caretakers	Delegators
Celebrities	 <b>Martha Stewart</b>	 <b>Dr. Phil</b>	 <b>Oprah</b>	 <b>Donald Trump</b>
Sports	 <b>Bobby Knight</b>	 <b>Phil Jackson</b>	 <b>Coach K</b>	 <b>Tony Dungy</b>
TV/Movie Characters	 <b>House</b>	 <b>Jerry McGuire</b>	 <b>Frank The Tank</b>	 <b>Lumbergh</b>
Business	 <b>Bill Gates</b>	 <b>Dieter Zetsche</b>	 <b>David Brandon</b>	 <b>William Clay Ford Jr.</b>

The more important question is, “which of these styles is the primary style in your organization and is it the appropriate style?”

# The 4 Leadership Styles

## Style 1 – The Directors (Motto – Just do it)

Style 1 leaders have high concern for the job at all costs. If one of the costs is concern for people, so be it. Style 1 leaders sacrifice the concern for people in their quest to direct and control results. They are directive to the max. In some cases, they are considered the dreaded *micro-managers*. In a more positive light, they are considered rescuers and *firefighters*. They have a keen sense for getting things done and know what to do.

## Style 2 – The Coaches (Motto – Treat people as they want to be treated)

Style 2 leaders have an equal concern for results and people. They do not sacrifice one for the other. Rather, they put both values equally in the forefront and balance both in their approach to lead.

## Style 3 – The Caretakers (Motto – Take care of your people and they will take care of your business)

Style 3 leaders are the opposite of style 1 leaders. They have a high concern for people first and foremost. They put this concern ahead of the job. They will not sacrifice a person's dignity in the name of getting the job done.

## Style 4 – The Delegators (Motto – Go for it)

Style 4 leaders believe in hiring very competent people, then letting them have autonomy. Their concern for people and the job are both great, but are not expressed in carrying out their business. Rather, once it comes time to get things done, they simply entrust their people to do the job without much involvement from the leader. This is a great contrast to the previous 3 styles.

## Add it all up, and ...

The reality is there is no such thing as a Style 1, 2, 3 or 4 leader. Rather, every leader needs to exhibit the qualities of these four leadership styles at one time or another with their different followers, depending on the situation.

Style 1 was just about the only leadership style throughout the industrial revolution until the internet boom. For a variety of reasons, Style 2 is most often used primary style in American business today. Styles 1 and 3 come in a tie for 2<sup>nd</sup>. Style 4 (delegation) is not nearly as common as the other 3 styles.

In order to crystallize our understanding of the 4 different styles, the rest of this article is dedicated to helping you relate to the 4 styles. We've chosen figures from pop culture to help clarify who represent each style. We've chosen several different categories so that we can relate to as many people as possible. The categories are celebrities, sports coaches, TV/movie characters and actual leaders. Please keep in mind that a few of the style personas are "one hit wonders." Almost all of them actually practice all 4 leadership styles. Some, however, are limited in their style range.

We hope that this article will stimulate discussions in your organizations. *Which styles of leaders do you have too many of? not enough of?* The answers are different from company to company. The value is in having the conversation. We hope this article will help make having this conversation a bit easier.

## The Celebrities

In American culture, celebrity is king. We start with celebrity because these people are very recognizable. Many people throughout the world know these people. More importantly, it is easy to see who these people represent.

### Dictators      Coaches      Caretakers      Delegates

<b>Celebrities</b>	 <b>Martha Stewart</b>	 <b>Dr. Phil</b>	 <b>Oprah</b>	 <b>Donald Trump</b>
--------------------	--	--	--	--

Martha Stewart is a good symbol for the style 1's, the directors. Her reputation, as portrayed by Cybil Shepard, is that of a tyrant. The NY Times said, "there is a contrast between the sweet, benign "public" Stewart and the hell-on-wheels "private" Stewart.<sup>1</sup> She is direct, to the point and gets things done. She is not very warm and fuzzy. She can be, however, very instructive. Though it is often overshadowed by their lack of concern for people, this desire (and care) to instruct is their very intention.

Doctor Phil is our pick for Style 2, the coaches. Unlike Martha Stewart's persona, he spends more time listening and valuing other's opinions. His concern for people is evident. However, equal to his concern for people is his concern for getting things done. He doesn't just simply listen to people and make them feel good. He asks questions and waits, listens and waits. And then ... he jumps in with a heavy dose of instruction. He tends to get very directive by the end of his interactions. He can be very engaging and get a great two-way dialogue going. But make no mistake about it, he gets out his verbal prescription pad at the end of every discussion and doles out the advice.

Oprah is the poster child for Style 3, the caretakers. Need I say more. She is one beloved character in American culture. She is best known for caring about and empowering the disenfranchised. She restored nobility to the profession of stay at home mom. Her compassion and caring were the fuel that drove home her mission.

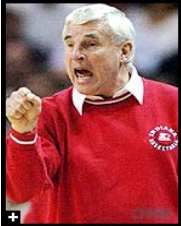



Donald Trump is our pick for Style 4, the delegates. "Wait one minute," you say, "that must be a mistake, he's a dictator." Well, yes he is. However, one of the biggest differences between Style 1's and Style 4's is time. Trump is involved in so many projects at once that he does not possibly have the time to control every step of every project and be successful. It is not humanly possible. And, as we saw on his hit TV show, The Apprentice, he had some very competent people at his side in the board room.

### ***Food for thought***

*Which styles are most prevalent in your organization? Are they appropriate? The styles that generally go hand in hand are the styles 1 & 2, 2 & 3 and 1 & 4. 1 & 2 are mostly high control companies. 2 & 3 are in the very high relationship cultures. I've yet to see a 3-4 culture. The 1-4 culture has been the most dominant over the years. It is a result of a lack of people skills. Many of these cultures have recently shifted from 1-4 to 1-2. Managers were forced to go to sensitivity training. The fresh blood that they hired was far more emotionally intelligent. For some companies, the pendulum swung so far in this direction that they became 2-3 cultures.*

## Sports Coaches

In the American culture, nothing is so galvanizing for men as sport. It is the great common denominator. I've heard business advisors say, "Never use sports analogies, because you'll lose half your audience." Well, to that I say, you're wrong! Instead, use a sports analogy *and* a celebrity analogy, and you've covered over 90% of the audience, and that's pretty good.

	<b>Dictators</b>	<b>Coaches</b>	<b>Caretakers</b>	<b>Delegators</b>
<b>Sports</b>	 <b>Bobby Knight</b>	 <b>Phil Jackson</b>	 <b>Coach K</b>	 <b>Tony Dungy</b>

Former Indiana University basketball coach Bobby Knight is the most recognizable Style 1, the director. One can't help but think of the word "dictator" when they think of Coach Knight. A few other word associations might be disciplinarian, chair-thrower and choker. This article is not here to judge character. It is to describe style. Love him or hate him, everyone knows the kind of style a leader has if we call him or her a "Bobby Knight." Napoleon would have worked well here, but coaching an army doesn't count. *Iron Mike* Ditka should get an honorable mention for Style 1 as well.

The classic style 2 coach is Phil Jackson of the Los Angeles Lakers. He is a "coaches" coach. Is he a motivator? Yes. Is he a task master? Yes. You get the best of both worlds with Phil Jackson. He shows an equal concern for people and the task at hand.

Basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski from Duke is our choice for most recognizable style 3, the caretaker. Again, you may think otherwise when you see him screaming at his players. Yes, he does exhibit the characteristics of style 1 and style 2 leaders. However, the name of his book was, "Leading with the Heart." If you don't think he's a good symbol, read the book.

Coach Tony Dungy, of the NFL's Indianapolis Colts, is our choice for style 4, the delegator. He is the only coach in the NFL that let's his quarterback, Peyton Manning, call his own plays. Just about every other coach in the league is style 1 or style 2. Many go as far as scripting out exactly what they want each person to do every single week. Instead, coach Dungy entrusts this decision-making to his star player. He is a good example of empowerment at the moment of truth.

### ***Food for thought***

*Don't throw out the baby with the bath water. By that I mean don't let Bobby Knight paint a bad picture for all style 1's. Guess what? The Food Networks star chef, Emeril Lagasse, is also a style 1 persona. He doesn't take calls, he doesn't ask for suggestions. He just stands there and tells millions of people what to do, day in and day out.*

*When do you think it is appropriate to use each of the 4 styles?*

*When do you think it is inappropriate to use each of the 4 styles?*

## TV/Movie characters

Let the fun begin. We just couldn't introduce these concepts to you without having a little fun with it.

### Dictators      Coaches      Caretakers      Delegators

TV/Movie Characters				
	House	Jerry McGuire	Frank The Tank	Lumbergh

Doctor House from the TV show with the same name is a brilliant example of style 1. House is very smart and is obsessed with getting the job done. And does he care at all about people and their feelings? Well, not in the least bit. He almost always gets the job done and tramples on someone's feelings in the process.

Jerry McGuire is our pick for Style 2. He's definitely high on the people skills meter. In the movie, he's there to support his guy in anything that he needs. Just as strong, however, is his need to pull the strings and get a deal done. He pours it on thick in both departments.

Our pick for style 3, is none other than Frank the Tank from the movie *Old School*. He is the consummate cheerleader. He is always trying to rally the troops. Does he give out clear guidance or direction in the name of getting things done? No way! His other buddies call the shots; he's there to pump up the guys to follow the leader. For those of you a little older, think of the John Belushi character (Pluto) from *Animal House*.

Cult classic *Office Space* spawned our pick for style 4, Lumbergh. I'm going to have to go ahead and ask you to trust me on this one. Lumbergh says a lot of words and phrases without really saying a whole lot. He doesn't give out a lot of detailed instruction. Neither does he have any concern for the feelings of his employees.

### ***Food for thought***

*You can't always judge a style just by looking at someone. Would you put Oprah and Frank the Tank in the same category based on appearance? No, that would be an insult to Oprah. We're not trying to focus on the individual. Rather, we need to identify how they lead people; how they get people to do things for them.*

*The same person can be a different style, depending on who they are leading. What style are you with your family? Your friends? Your coworkers? Your hired help (could be anyone from babysitter to painter)? Ah, you do behave differently... and so should you for different teams and different projects.*

## Real Leaders

For the “realists” out there, we’ve created this final section. If you can’t relate to the previous 4 categories, you are creatively challenged. Nonetheless, we still have a section for you. You probably control the budgets, so we have to make those that pull the purse strings happy.

### Dictators

### Coaches

### Caretakers

### Delegators

<b>Business</b>				
	<b>Bill Gates</b>	<b>Dieter Zetsche</b>	<b>David Brandon</b>	<b>William Clay Ford Jr.</b>

For real leaders, Bill Gates is the Bobby Knight of corporate America (that would be Style 1 my challenged friend). Said plainly, he’s a jerk. Probably the quote he is best known for amongst his employees is, “that’s the stupidest thing I’ve ever heard.”<sup>2</sup> Though extremely successful, he is a one-dimensional leader. Don’t believe it? Imagine this. Think of your local McDonald’s. Imagine Bill Gates managing that place for 1 day. We’d give him all the training that regular managers get, but it wouldn’t matter. His ego-mania would take over and drive every kid to quit. His inflexible leadership would result in failure. Don’t believe that the United State’s most successful entrepreneur is capable of failure? For you we have one word ... Google.

Dieter Zetsche is our pick for Style 2. Credited with turning Chrysler around, Dieter displays the people skills that most leaders in the automotive industry do not have. He is a Phil Jackson in a land of Bobby Knights. When push comes to shove though, he can and will get into the details. (He’s a German engineer, for pete’s sake.) However, he has the wisdom to know when to use the right skills (people/technical) at the right time.

Though the name David Brandon is not nearly as well known as the rest of the people in this report, the name *Dominoes Pizza* is very recognizable. Brandon took over the struggling Dominoes when it had 150%+ turnover. He turned the company around. Did he do it by ordering everyone around and dictating to every store exactly what they had to do? Well **no**, that would have been the reason why turnover got to the staggering number it did. Disempowered, disenfranchised people do not perform well. Instead, David Brandon restored dignity and respect for the individuals on the front lines of his company. In doing so, he earned a spot as the model Style 3 leader.

To round out our cast of real leaders, we chose Bill Ford Jr. to represent style 4’s. He was a style 3 president. But his exit from that role and assuming total control as Chairman of the Board have put him into the position of delegator. He has now entrusted the future of Ford to his successor. He’s turned over the reigns to someone else to run the company while he still owns a controlling interest. He’s also delegated the operations of this football team, the lowly Detroit Lions, to other people as well.

### *Food for thought*

*How is “success” defined in our organization? Is it just technical skills, or is it both technical and people skills? There is truly no one best leadership style. It depends on the situation and the people involved.*

No matter what, people in our sessions walk away with some limiting beliefs about leadership styles after viewing the material you've just seen. As a result, we've created a final section to ensure that you understand the true nature of leadership styles.

***Myth***

***Truth***

<i>All style 1's are mean tyrants. Style 1 is bad.</i>	<i>Style 1's get a bad rap because most style 1's are emotional dolts. However, not all style 1's are mean. Remember Emeril ... he's direct and to the point, without any care of what other people think.</i>
<i>Style 2-3 organizations are the future, 1-4's are aging dinosaurs.</i>	<i>It is true that the 2-3 cultured organization is currently en vogue. This is the result of the pendulum swinging from heavy autocratic to heavy democratic. The laws of physics tell us that this pendulum will rest somewhere in between, where it belongs.</i>
<i>Oprah is our savior. Style 3 is great.</i>	<i>The Oprah style has hijacked many organizations and the downside is <b>too much Oprah equates to too little accountability.</b></i>
<i>Style 2 is the best because it is the best of both worlds.</i>	<i>Style 2 takes a lot of time. Phil Jackson can afford to have all his players read philosophy because they all make millions of dollars and don't work 40+ hours a week for 48 weeks a year.</i>
<i>There is one best style.</i>	<i>Not so. It depends on the task at hand and the person you need to do that task. Once you assess the task and the person you want to perform the task, you then choose the most appropriate style. That also means that for each task/person combo, there is a least appropriate style. Both Bobby Knight and Oprah can be right or wrong depending on the situation.</i>
<i>Dumping is an appropriate form of delegation.</i>	<i>Dumping is, unfortunately, all too common in organizations. Giving someone work to do and letting them decide how to do it is not always a good thing, given certain circumstances.</i>

**References**

<sup>1</sup>Erickson, Hal. All Movie Guide, [http://movies2.nytimes.com/gst/movies/movie.html?v\\_id=287195](http://movies2.nytimes.com/gst/movies/movie.html?v_id=287195)

<sup>2</sup>Playboy Interview, 1994, <http://ei.cs.vt.edu/~history/Bill.Gates.html>