Which management style suits

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Smart leaders coach their subordinates to boost their skills-- FOTOSEARCH

A debate often rages within workplaces across Kenya about whether task-oriented or people-oriented leadership yields the best results. In the literature too, researchers jostle between the two different leadership behaviour types.

Leaders strong in transactional skills hold three specific capabilities prevalent in social science research.

First, boundary spanning behaviours include external activities that encompass managing external transactions with staff. Such transactions involve negotiating resource usage and goal setting with workers and other stakeholders, as well as scanning the workplace and industry
environment for new information and interesting creative ideas to induce more resource access to the firm.

Second, transactional leaders excel in setting disciplinary standards followed consistently, setting rewards for staff actions, and clarifying expectations when employees ask.

Good transactional leaders also stay on top of whether the organisation’s rewards and disciplinary measures remain appropriate for the industry and for the behavioural targets that management desires. A leader should not just set the goals and then go blind as to the effectiveness of such procedures.

Third, initiating behaviours aid a transactional leader whereby the manager plans, organises, and controls subordinates. Such a leader initiates activities, structure tasks and highlights explicit attempts to achieve the organisation’s targets.

Person-focused leadership behaviours, on the other hand, incorporate six different abilities that must be displayed by a manager. Notice the different emphasis on the employee’s psychology first rather than the task first in comparison to the earlier three transactional behaviours.

First, a people-oriented leader utilises his or her emotional intelligence to perceive, appraise, express, and regulate their own emotions as well as in reading others. An emotionally intelligent leader would more likely set appropriate targets for staff abilities and know what type of communication and responses are appropriate under different conditions.

Second, charismatic leaders hold enormous personal power from their magnetism that causes profound and astonishing effects on their subordinates.

People-oriented managers with charisma utilise their highly articulate speech patterns to form impressions on followers to garnish support and excitement for a shared organisational vision while remaining sensitive to their employees’ needs and the constraints of the firm.

Third, transformational leaders convert their follower’s values, desires, and needs into team-first mentalities whereby the employees reduce their own self interests.

Fourth, empowering leaders exhibit behaviours that give their workers autonomy and responsibility instead of controlling power themselves.

Fifth, considerate leaders exhibit human-relations oriented behaviour highlighting two-way communication and listening with mutual respect.

Sixth, people-oriented leaders coach their subordinates so they enhance their skills, capabilities, and career horizons through intentional one-on-one feedback, encouragement, and advice.

Now, on a five-point scale, assess your own leadership behaviours in each of the above nine categories. Give yourself a “1” if you feel you rarely display the behaviour, “2” if you occasionally invoke that behaviour, “3” if you frequently utilise such behaviour, “4” if you
usually do indeed incorporate such behaviours in your daily leadership, and “5” if you almost always use the behaviour mentioned in your daily leadership journey at your firm.

Then, total three transactional leadership behaviour individual scores and divide by three to arrive at your transactional average. Also, total your six person-focused leadership behaviours answers, but this time divide by six to get your average. Which of the two do you score highest in?

In order to get a more clear and accurate picture, have your colleagues and subordinates also rate you on the nine behaviours and see if their perceptions of you match your own self-perception. A good leader should hold high self-awareness and not manage out of tune with reality.