

In summary:

1.

Decide and tell	Decide after consultation and/or recommendations	Employees share in the decision	Delegate the decision (with clear parameters)
#1	#2 #3	#4 #5	#6

(Moving to the right, boss becomes less directive about outcomes.)

2. Influence increases appropriate to the employee's experience, knowledge, skill, and proven performance.
3. All styles are potentially positive.
4. Effective managers mix styles. The key is to be clear about what you are doing and to be skilled in doing it.
5. Styles (2), (3) and (6) are especially important for fast-moving organizations.
6. All styles are used to achieve empowerment. (The fantasy of many empowerment programs is that only styles (5) and (6) are appropriate.)
7. Finally, all styles are participative, though each defines a different level of participation.

*Increase of
Employee Influence*

Factor 5 Decisions Are Made

Action Idea: Make Decisions

Before reading this read the action ideas for Factor 3, *Build Influence Structures*, and Factor 4, *Be Clear about Your Decision-Making Style*. If you have read these and still find decision making difficult, perhaps you have an analytic "make sure you have total accuracy" style or such a high concern for consensus or relationships that you wait too long to "bite the bullet."

Decision-Making Binds of Differing Styles

A high analytic style prizes attention to detail and accuracy. When things get tense and anxiety rises, such a manager seeks even more data. "I need more information," "I need to think about this," "Give me more time and I'll decide." If this description fits you, then your challenge is to take action sooner than seems right.

One such highly analytic manager decided that he would begin making decisions when he judged that 75% of the facts were in. This was very difficult for him because all of his childhood upbringing in his family and in his education to be an engineer had cultivated strong beliefs/judgments such as, "Don't be too rash," "Look before you leap," "Make sure you are right before deciding," or "Caution is the greater part of valor." While these behaviors had served him well in his engineering career, they became his "Achilles heel" when he overused them as a manager. The new, fast-moving managers above him were results-oriented. They accused him of being "nit-picky" and of "beating around the bush." Of course, such was not his intention. To develop a quicker decision-making style, he encouraged his results-oriented and spontaneous employees to push him so that he could achieve an appropriate balance between the need for accuracy and the need for making quicker decisions.

A manager with a high concern for good relationships could get stuck on not making decisions that might cause unhappiness. A hard-charging manager, on the other hand, may make decisions too quickly, without adequate details or understanding of the impact of those decisions. Such a

Factor 4 Distinguish Between Decision Making and Influence

Action Idea: Be Clear about Your Decision-Making Style

Lack of clarity about decision making and influence is a dominant cause of mistrust and low productivity. You can increase trust by being clear about who makes the decision and by understanding that there are different decision-making styles, all of which are okay. It is okay to:

1. Decide unilaterally and announce your decision. Ask for a paraphrase to make sure you have been clear.
2. *Nearly* decide, but seek council from selected/all employees prior to your final decision.
3. Describe a problem; state that you must and will decide but that first you want input, perhaps recommendations.
4. Tell the group that you will accept a majority decision even if you are outvoted. You give up veto power.
5. Go for consensus, meaning that everyone agrees that the decision is reasonable, following a thorough discussion that includes everyone's input. Again, no veto power is used.
6. Delegate the decision.

Each of these six styles carries both positive and negative consequences. The best managers learn to use them all; overuse of any one can be disastrous! Your effectiveness increases when you have clarity within yourself about which style is best for any given situation and clarity with your employees about which style you are using at any particular moment.

Effective managers most often use styles 2, 3, and 6 above. Managers of highly interdependent work groups also use approach 5, which frequently is cumbersome but encourages input and ownership of the results.

Mistrust is created when employees think you are doing what is stated in 4, 5, or 6 while you really already have decided the outcome. Managers influenced by participative management ideals often feign the use of consensus (5) when they are really being unilateral (1) or nearly so (2). People quickly catch such a discrepancy. It doesn't work; it creates mistrust.

While effective managers are careful to use it wisely, it is often necessary to use the authoritarian mode (1) in which leaders *announce* goals, visions, and directions. Most employees want to be involved in the path toward achieving the goals more than in setting the goals. When trust is high, people follow enthusiastically when leaders say, "Follow me on this path."

If overused, style 1 is totalitarianism with resulting apathy, scapegoating, and sabotage. But, used in the context of trust, of clarity about the mode being used ("I need this done today"), and of *a balance with the other styles*, it can be dynamic and visionary. Style 6, if overused and without both clear parameters and consequence management (clear reinforcement and reprimands when appropriate), will likely result in permissivism and anarchy with resulting chaos and dysfunctional performance.

Also, it is possible to use one of these styles for decision making but a different style for implementation. In Factor 1, *Obtain Clear Sponsorship*, the decision to pool secretarial resources is a style 1 decision, while the group-involvement implementation is a style 3 decision.

The following three guidelines should be applied:

1. Decide which style you will use (this will vary from situation to situation).
2. Make this choice clear to all involved.
3. Invite opinions or questions about the decision-making style you have announced. Do not defend your choice or pretend to use a style that does not seem *right* for you on this occasion.