Introduction to leadership

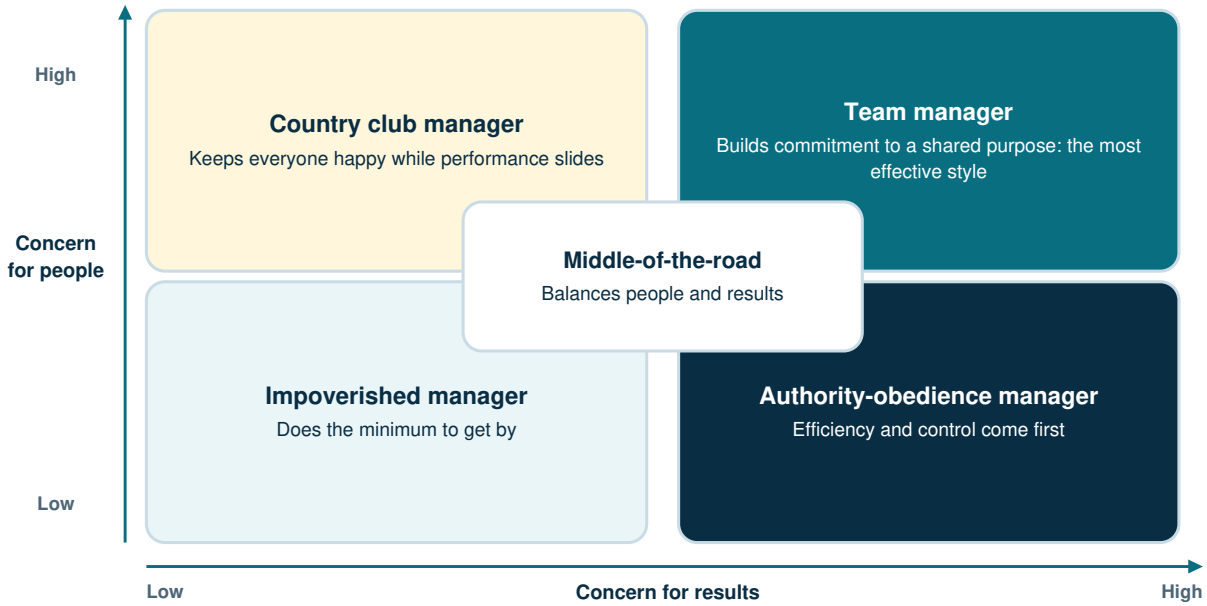
MODULE 1 | 1.6 | STUDENT COMPANION

Leadership can be described as the skill of inspiring and guiding a team, and giving its members the power to act, as they work towards a socially responsible vision. It is most visible at five levels: the board, the chief executive, senior management, general management and project management, but anyone can lead.

Three approaches to leadership

Approach	Core idea	Main limitation
Traits	Leaders are born with qualities such as ambition, energy, self-confidence and emotional intelligence	No reliable set of traits found; followers ignored; cause and effect unclear
Behavioural	Leadership behaviours can be learned; leaders vary in concern for people and for results	Ignores the situation
Contingency	The right style depends on the situation; some things can substitute for leadership	Leaders find it hard to change their natural style

The leadership grid



Case note: Google's Project Oxygen

In 2009 Google's people analytics team set out to prove that managers did not matter, a view many of its engineers held. The data showed the opposite: people with better managers were more satisfied and less likely to leave. Google identified eight behaviours its best managers shared, such as good coaching, empowering the team without micromanaging, interest in people's success and wellbeing, good communication and a clear vision, then built them into training and twice-yearly upward feedback surveys. Median favourable scores for managers rose from 83% to 88% between 2010 and 2012. That supports the behavioural approach: leadership can be learned.

Sources: Google re:Work, 'Learn about Google's manager research'; D. A. Garvin, 'How Google Sold Its Engineers on Management', Harvard Business Review, December 2013.

Leading versus managing

Managing: coping with complexity	Leading: coping with change
• Sets plans and budgets	• Develops a vision
• Organises the structure and staffs it	• Aligns people with it through communication
• Controls activities and solves problems	• Motivates by empowering people
• Reports on performance and coordinates	• Questions the way things are; asks what and why
• Keeps things stable over a shorter horizon	• Builds trust and takes a long-range view

Organisations need both, and a wise leader makes sure both roles are filled at the top

Five core tasks of strategic leaders



Practice questions

MODULE 1 | 1.6 | TRY THESE BEFORE THE WORKED ANSWERS

Question 1 - Leading or managing?

Activity	Leading or managing?
(a) Preparing next year's budget	
(b) Describing a vision of becoming the region's most trusted clinic	
(c) Setting the staff roster	
(d) Coaching a team member to take on a bigger role	
(e) Tracking weekly key performance indicators	
(f) Challenging the belief that customers only want face-to-face service	
(g) Allocating projects to staff	
(h) Holding open forums to rebuild trust after a restructure	
(i) Fixing a recurring stock shortage	
(j) Role-modelling the new customer service values	

Question 2 - Place each manager on the grid

Manager	Grid position and why
(a) Ben is friendly and liked, avoids any conflict, and his team regularly misses deadlines.	
(b) Farah sets tough targets, monitors every task closely and rarely asks for her team's views.	
(c) Greg passes work on without following up, rarely talks to his team and does only what is required.	
(d) Lena involves her team in setting goals, holds high standards and supports each person to meet them.	

Question 3 - Which strategic leadership task?

Imagine **Hana**, the new chief executive of a regional credit union. In her first year she (1) replaces the branch-only model with digital services plus mobile advisers who visit members; (2) sets three clear goals for the year that every team can link its work to; (3) speaks at every branch about the new direction and recruits 'strategy champions' in each team; (4) works with the board through a detailed analysis before deciding whether to merge with a neighbouring credit union; and (5) gives every initiative a named owner and a deadline and checks progress each month. Match each action to one of the five core tasks.

Worked answers

MODULE 1 | 1.6 | WORKED ANSWERS - ATTEMPT THE QUESTIONS FIRST

Question 1 - Leading or managing?

Activity	Answer
(a) Budget	Managing
(b) Vision of the most trusted clinic	Leading
(c) Roster	Managing
(d) Coaching for a bigger role	Leading (developing future leaders)
(e) Weekly KPIs	Managing
(f) Challenging an assumption	Leading (questioning the status quo)
(g) Allocating projects	Managing
(h) Open forums to rebuild trust	Leading (building trust)
(i) Fixing stock shortages	Managing (problem solving)
(j) Role-modelling values	Leading (promoting culture)

Question 2 - Place each manager on the grid

Manager	Grid position
(a) Ben	Country club: high concern for people, low concern for results
(b) Farah	Authority-obedience: high concern for results, low concern for people
(c) Greg	Impoverished: low on both
(d) Lena	Team manager: high on both, building commitment to shared goals

A manager balancing moderate concern for both, without excelling at either, would be middle-of-the-road.

Question 3 - Which strategic leadership task?

Hana's action	Core task
(1) Digital services plus mobile advisers	Identify the right business model
(2) Three clear goals	Set goals that direct and shape
(3) Branch visits and strategy champions	Champion the strategy
(4) Merger decision after detailed analysis	Make complex decisions
(5) Owners, deadlines and monthly checks	Make things happen