



Finding a Personal Management Style

An aide to identifying and refining you own personal style

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Finding a Personal Management Style

(Published in *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Technology*, edited by James D. Berkley, Baker Books)

What is meant by management style, and how can we know what ours is and how to use it? The following exercises identify management styles and the typical behaviours that accompany each. Completing the exercises will help us characterize our personal management styles.

1. Personal Assessment

Using a five-point assessment scale, describe to what extent the 40 attributes below characterize your personal style (see table on next page). Choose two or three people who know you well to help you think through your answers as objectively as possible. Use a scale of 1-5, where 1 means "very uncharacteristic of me" and 5 means "very characteristic of me."

The 40 style attributes are regrouped into four columns below. Please transfer your numerical responses to the questions and total the four columns.

	I		II		III		IV
1.		2.		3.		4.	
5.		6.		7.		8.	
9.		10.		11.		12.	
13.		14.		15.		16.	
17.		18.		19.		20.	
21.		22.		23.		24.	
25.		26.		27.		28.	
29.		30.		31.		32.	
33.		34.		35.		36.	
37.		38.		39.		40.	
Total:		Total:		Total:		Total:	

Enter your total score for columns I-IV in the corresponding boxes on the matrix. The style with the highest points total signals your dominant, or preferred, management style. The higher the score for your preferred style relative to the other three styles, the more that style probably dominates your behaviour. More than one high score among the four shows you have a broad managerial-style repertoire—the capacity to utilize more than one style.

2. Personal Assessment Form

	Attribute	Your Management Style
1.	Decisive	
2.	People-pleasing	
3.	Organized	
4.	Change-oriented	
5.	Exhorter	
6.	Spontaneous	
7.	Efficient	
8.	Innovative	
9.	Controlling	
10.	Informal	
11.	Politically sensitive	
12.	Persuasive	
13.	Competitive	
14.	Sharing and participative	
15.	Closure-oriented	
16.	Visionary	
17.	Demanding	
18.	Sensitive	
19.	Concern for routine	
20.	Non-traditional	
21.	Perfectionist	
22.	Accommodating	
23.	Planner	
24.	Questioning	
25.	Confrontational	
26.	Procrastinating	
27.	Formal	
28.	Long-run focused	
29.	Results-focused	
30.	Emotional	
31.	Detached	
32.	Experimental	
33.	Power-conscious	
34.	Conflict-avoiding	
35.	Information-focused	
36.	Activist	
37.	Dominating	
38.	Contemplative	
39.	Detail-intensive	
40.	Controversial	

3. Style Matrix

Consider the following descriptions of management styles:

Style I: Commanders

(decisive, exhorter, controlling, competitive, demanding, perfectionist, confrontational, results-focused, power-conscious, dominating)

Commanders combine the directive interpersonal style with a strong relationships orientation, they like being in the driver's seat and thrive on using legitimate power to achieve ministry results.

Style II: Shepherds

(people-pleasing, spontaneous, informal, sharing and participative, sensitive, accommodating, procrastinating, emotional, conflict-avoiding, contemplative)

Shepherds are relational like commanders, but they prefer to facilitate (guide, encourage, equip) ministry members rather than to overly direct them.

Style III: Maintenance Managers

(organized, efficient, politically-sensitive, closure-oriented, concern for routine, planner, formal, detached, information-focused, detail-intensive)

Maintenance managers use formal, official policies and procedures to efficiently direct ministry activities in a way that permits independent action and decision-making, minimizing the need for group deliberation and participative management. They favour orderly, routine operations run "by the book."

Style IV: Entrepreneurs

(change-oriented, innovative, persuasive, visionary, non-traditional, questioning, long-run focus, experimental, activist, controversial)

Entrepreneurs like to operate independent of organizational bureaucracy with an eye toward facilitating change and innovation. They yearn to start projects hooked to a tantalizing vision of ministry progress.

4. Management Style Situational Effectiveness

Which of the four ministry styles is most effective? Well that all depends on circumstances. Each style has unique strengths and weaknesses, depending on the needs of the particular ministry. The table below provides insight into the situational effectiveness of each style for the ten most common managerial challenges.

	Commander	Shepherd	Maintenance	Entrepreneur
Jolting productivity	A	D	B	C
Defusing conflict	A	B	C	D
Fostering change	D	B	C	A
Bolstering moral	A	B	C	D
Implementing routine work	B	C	A	D
Implementing new projects	C	D	B	A
Building relationships	D	A	C	B
Managing a crisis	A	D	B	C
Goal setting	B	D	A	C
Keeping in touch with people's feelings	D	A	C	B

A = Style of greatest potential

B = Style of second greatest potential

C = Style of third preference

D = Style with least potential

Management-style flexibility is a virtue. We need to strive to utilize our preferred style in as many situations as possible that benefit from its strengths. We should also use any strong subordinate styles in a similar fashion.

It's important to know where our style strengths are relatively ineffective and seek out partnership opportunities with other leaders who hold complementary style strengths.



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