

Gender Differences: A Worksheet on Leadership Styles

Adapted from Leadership 101: Developing Leadership Skills for Resilient Youth, Facilitators Guide by Mariam MacGregor, Youthleadership.com, 2000, page 79. Used with permission from Mariam MacGregor,.

Traditional Leadership Model ("Masculine")

How things get done: Competition
Organizational Structure: Hierarchy
Expectations: Winning
How Problems are Solved: Rational

Key Characteristics

High control, strategic, unemotional, analytical

Power

Among Traditional leaders, "position" power tops the list of frequently used styles.

Outcomes

While the Traditional approach tends to be faster, it does not encourage working with others, shared accountability or participation in problem-solving. The Traditional approach relies more heavily on things outside the organization.

Teamwork

The lessons learned through traditional activities often have less to do with teamwork than they do with competitiveness and winning. Traditional team sports do not teach the same positive human values as cooperative games do.

Participation

Many Traditional leaders see increased member participation in decision-making as a breakdown of their influence, and in some cases, a threat to stability of the organization.

Relationships with Others

Many Traditional leaders regard relationships as a means to an end ("making connections") rather than regarding the relationship as important alone.

Conflict Management

Traditional leaders prefer a competitive response to conflict, frequently seen as a "win-lose" approach. The other type of behavior favored is "avoidance."

Problem Solving

Many Traditional leaders still over-rely on measurable ways to identify solutions to complex problems. Collecting data and information is how they effectively problem solve.

Pitching In

Many Traditional leaders believe that pitching in with the group can tarnish their image as the leader.

Modern Leadership Model ("Feminine")

How things get done: Cooperative
Organizational Structure: Team
Expectations: Quality Output
How Problems are Solved: Rational

Key Characteristics

Low control, empathetic, collaborative, high standards

Power

Modern leaders tend to use "personal" power to influence the organization and motivate others.

Outcomes

The Modern approach often helps create a more cooperative atmosphere by encouraging participation and shared accountability. The Modern approach draws more on the group's internal resources.

Teamwork

Connectedness and building networks (where one person is at the center) rather than hierarchies (where one person is on top) are elements of Modern Leadership.

Participation

Participation by all members is the philosophy for Modern leaders, including high communication, member input, encouraged creativity and increased autonomy.

Relationships with Others

For Modern leaders, establishing & maintaining effective relationships is a cornerstone on which this approach is built.

Conflict Management

Modern leaders work together with others to resolve conflict, and seek to find different, more satisfying solutions to complex problems rather than those proposed by either side. The other type of behavior favored is "accommodation" (finding room for everyone).

Problem Solving

Inductive reasoning (trusting a feeling) is used and allows the leader to solve problems with less measurable information. It is often more innovation-directed and is valued in organizations because it has to do with working with people.

Pitching In

Most Modern leaders are willing to put themselves into any situation to help out.