

## TYPES OF MANAGERS AND MANAGEMENT STYLES

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In any type of business, the manager is the person who ensures the accomplishment of the organizational goals by planning, organizing, leading, involving and controlling the entire activity, as well as by goal-oriented work. Basically, managers are people who lead their companies to the final achievement of the desired goals using the adequate means and decisions.

The position of manager involves several typical managerial activities within an organization and presents some special features that distinguish it from other jobs. Thus, a manager's activity is closely related to the current political and economical trend in our society. Also, getting a job as a manager is not very common, as while most of the jobs are a matter of personal choice at a certain moment, a manager's career is built using a specialized mechanism of selection, recruitment, training and promotion. Another characteristic is related to the duration of a manager's career: few cases can be mentioned of managerial positions covering the entire career of a person, situation which is quite common with other jobs.

The managerial activity is a rational one, requiring task achievement, following a logical order and economic principles, relying on a decisional and information system, etc...

All these elements are implemented by managers depending on their personal traits: physical qualities, personality traits (temperament, aptitudes, attitudes, flexibility and behaviour), professional knowledge and last but not least, the personal motivation which led to the choice of this position.

Given the above-mentioned elements, a manager's personal traits and his/her actions are reflected in the management style s/he adopts. A management style is always mostly influenced by the manager's behaviour.

Due to their variety, management styles have been classified by specialists using a series of criteria, as follows:

1. attitude toward responsibility;
2. authority used by the manager;
3. organizational initiative and consideration for the workforce;
4. concern for production and employees;
5. concern for production, employees and efficiency;
6. types of motivations, communication characteristics, nature of cooperation and decision-making strategy.

For a better understanding of what is a management style, next we will present different such styles according to the above-mentioned criteria.

1. The ***attitude toward responsibility*** is the first classification criterion and encompasses the following management styles:

a) *repulsive style* – characterized by the propensity to refuse being promoted to managerial positions. Also, it immoderately relies on the subordinates' independence. Under particular circumstances, s/he can adopt imprudent and inefficient solutions. Generally, managers who adopt this repulsive style hide some kind of inferiority complex, in other words, they almost completely mistrust their own forces. Their desire

to avoid responsibilities could explain their refuse to accept managerial positions, as well as the hasty decision-making when they are circumstantially forced to take such a job. The hasty decision-making adopted by these managers could reduce the tension triggered by the uncertainty preceding any decision-making stage.

2. *authoritarian style* – adopted by managers hunting managerial positions. These persons are very active and dynamic, creating a work environment characterized by tension and conflicts. They generally have a wonderful opinion about themselves, with a high self-confidence, strongly believing that they are entitled to get managerial positions, as they are the only skilled and capable to successfully achieve all the objectives related to their job. This attitude may entail the propensity of these managers to firmly maintain and enforce their opinions in decision-making. In case of failure, they will always find reasons and explanations that will absolve them from any responsibility. Thus, they will strive to reduce their own responsibility, leaving the entire burden on their subordinates, or other decision-makers. At the same time, this boost of confidence can also explain their tendency to act firmly even in uncertain situations and to persevere in reaching the desired goals.

c) *“laisser-faire” style* – highlights the lack of interest for a personal evolution in the company hierarchy. They are not very much concerned about getting managerial positions, but once promoted to these positions, they could make efficient managers. Their efficiency comes from their commitment to temperate, balanced attitudes and the desire to thoroughly reach all the proposed objectives. These managers are able to create a realistic image about themselves, just like about the others. They usually maintain a balance between the positive and negative traits of their personality, treating their subordinates as their equals. This category provides most of the leaders.

Something to be mentioned is that each of these management styles has both positive and negative aspects. Therefore, each style – *repulsive*, *authoritarian*, or *“laisser-faire”* – can be efficient or not, depending on the situation. Thus, managers adopting an authoritarian style are unlikely to be efficient in extreme situations, due to their bent for firm decisions and their ambition to reach all the goals. Under special panic circumstances, the repulsive managers are definitely not a good choice, because they tend to be hasty in decision-making (even to the detriment of the action quality), and they are not endowed with the propensity to persevere in reaching their objectives, so they cannot rise to the requirements of a critical situation.

2. The second criterion refers to the amount of ***authority used by managers***. There are three management styles according to this criterion:

a) *permissive (“laisser-faire”) style* – dominated by the tendency to avoid any involvement in group organizing and leading, focusing on spontaneous organizing and coordinating activities. The presence or absence of the manager does not affect the activity efficiency.

b) *democratic style* - characteristic to managers who allow their subordinates` participation in leadership. These managers accept their employees` involvement in both objective setting and task assignment. From the point of view of its consequences, the democratic style is said to reduce tensions and conflicts, and to stimulate staff involvement. The group efficiency is marked by the manager`s presence or absence. These managers` reduced-control attitude might encourage innovative work.

The difference between a permissive and a democratic style is given by the manager`s morale. The democratic manager is high-spirited, because he supports the group. When it comes to the permissive manager, he is lower-spirited, as he does not support the group in fulfilling the given tasks.

c) *authoritarian style* – typical of the those managers who refuse their subordinates' involvement in leadership. These managers make their own decisions in setting objectives and choosing the suitable methods to reach them. They are focused on objective achievement and task assignment supervision, granting unlimited confidence to all their decisions related to goal accomplishment. As a consequence, this style will determine a tacit protest of the subordinates, reducing their possibility of professional improvement. The reduction of these opportunities is determined by the limitation, sometimes on the verge of exclusion, of the employees' participation in decision-making. The impossibility to take part in decision-making will decrease the sense of responsibility, reducing the participation and creative interest of the staff. This style entails an extreme critical attitude and the decrease of the employees' professional interest (professional alienation). Also, an exaggerated supervision of the staff will determine the subordinates' confusion and disorientation while the manager is not present, fact that induces and even determines the need of being controlled. The reduction in work efficiency when the manager is not there will determine a greater control on his employees. Thus, allowing more time to supervision, the authoritarian managers will reduce the time for creative and innovative activities.

3. The third criterion in the taxonomy of management styles are the ***organizational initiative and consideration for the workforce***, referring to the managers' approach to the organizational and humane aspects of their tasks.

By *organizational initiative*, Fleishman and Harris denote the managers' focus on managerial activities: task assignment, group creation, and task achievement procedures. These organizational activities (structural initiation) mirror the need felt by managers to limit uncertainty, to extend supervision on all activities involved in the production process. The structural initiation is considered an unailing factor of any managerial activity.

The term "*consideration*" involves the managers' propensity to stimulate their subordinates, treating them like equals. Leaders adopting this management style will focus mainly on building solid mutual relationships of trust, confidence and feedback. They will usually use financial incentives to appeal to their subordinates. Managers who do not have much consideration for their employees will rather choose to punish them, thus increasing tension and conflicts and eventually, being forced to impose their authority and control.

4. According to this other very important criterion, the management styles are classified depending on the managers' ***concern for production (P) and employees (E)***. The managers' level of concern for their employees and production can be assessed using a scale from 1 to 9. Level 1 is the lowest level of concern, while level 9 designates the highest degree of preoccupation. Depending on their final score, managers are introduced in the different squares of a grid, which was created using coordinates representing the two main dimensions: production and employees. In the grid below (Figure 1), representing the management styles, the marked squares emphasize the basic styles.

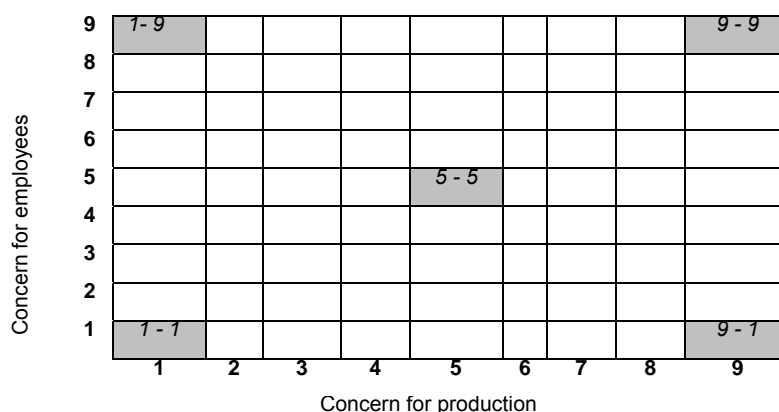


Fig. 1 – Management styles grid

According to the above-mentioned grid, the basic management styles are the following:

- the style of the *apathetic manager* (square 1-1) – typical of those managers who show very low interest for both their subordinates and production. They make minimum efforts to achieve the goals of their group or organization, and to properly lead their employees;
- the style of the *task-oriented manager* (square 9-1) – specific to those managers who make a priority from solving all the production difficulties, paying minimum attention, or sometimes even neglecting their subordinates. Their efforts aim at the achievement of the company objectives, imposing a very busy and tiring working schedule, and permanently requiring their employees' participation. Organizing is the key word with these managers. The activity efficiency can only be ensured by a minimal relationship with their subordinates. In this case, efficiency depends directly on solving the technical aspects of this activity;
- the style of the *group-oriented manager* (square 9-9) – reveals an increased interest for their employees (E) and the production (P). The efficiency of these managers is given by the amount of effort made to favourably solve the problems related to both above-mentioned categories. The relationships between these managers and their subordinates rely on mutual respect, being interactive, cooperative and participative;
- the style of the *staff-oriented manager* (square 1-9) – focuses on human resources, taking care of all their employees' problems, of creating a pleasant work environment (ergonomic, psycho-social). Their interest for production is minimal. Sometimes, they show a lack of interest close to apathy toward production;
- the style of the *moderate undetermined manager* (central square 5-5) – pays the same importance to the staff and production, maintaining a balance between the concern for subordinates and that for the production. That is why this style is also known as "*balanced*". It determines optimal performance and ensures the increased morale of the employees.

The sociologists Blake and Mouton divided the grid into 5 almost equal areas which represent the basic management styles: area A corresponding to the style introduced in square 1-1, area B corresponding to the style from square 9-1, area C corresponding to the style from square 9-9, area D corresponding to the style marked in square 1-9, and area E corresponding to the style presented in square 5-5. The five areas are marked in the management styles grid from Figure 2.

In the system defined by Blake and Mouton, the ideal management style for all the potential situations is 9-9. The productivity and the staff mood and morale are in balance at an optimal level. This maximum balance state is usually reached by making up a team from all the subordinates. Also, the labour division is used, and managers involve an

increasing number of employees in planning, objective setting and decision-making. At the same time, the team members are offered all the relevant information, being assigned important tasks, thus feeling valuable and useful. This management pattern involves some kind of “philosophy” on management and leadership, along with an efficient strategy to implement this philosophy.

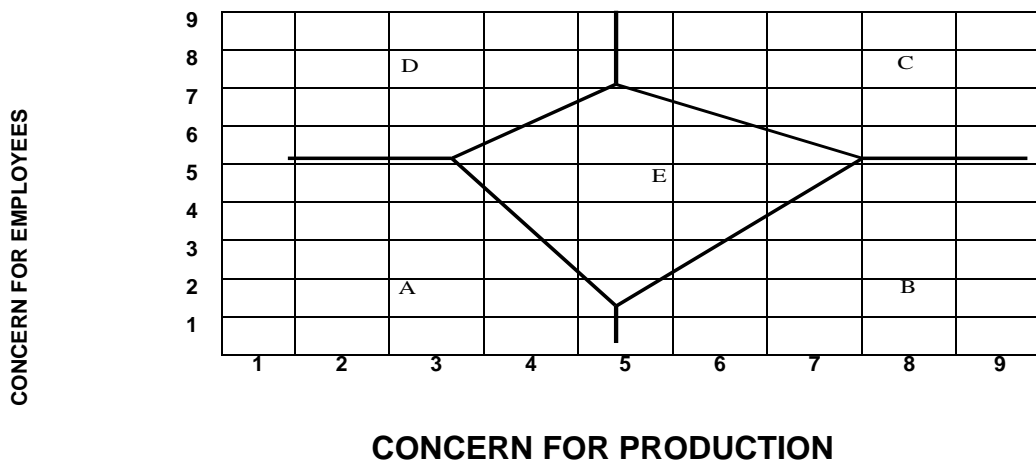


Fig. 2 – Aspects of the management styles

5. Another criterion refers to the managers' **concern for employees, production and efficiency**. W.I. Reddin approached the fourth criterion, and improved it by adding the element “*efficiency*”. According to him, eight management styles can be outlined, divided into two main groups: *efficient* and *inefficient*. The classification of these styles mainly relies on the efficiency of each type of managerial attitude.

Thus, the group of the *efficient styles* highlights the following types:

- organized style* – typical of managers who make use of modern management methods, of science, technology and innovation;
- humane style* – corresponding to managers who focus on human resources, thus ensuring efficiency;
- technical style* – specific to managers who fundamentally center on production, always seeking rational solutions for technical problems; their subordinates understand the necessity of the adopted solutions;
- moderate style* – adopted by managers who create a balance between production and staff expectations, permanently obtaining a good feedback.

The group of the *inefficient styles* is composed of:

- uninterested style* – specific to those managers who do not care much about their production, employees or final results, which finally leads to their employees' loss of interest for the production;
- paternalistic style* – is found with those managers who are too concerned about their staff (almost like in the relationship between parents and children), and determines a reduced interest of the staff to get involved and take responsibility in the company's activities;
- abusive style* – typical of managers who focus mainly on the production, being cold, distant or even uninterested in their employees; this style can generate tension and conflicts, due to their employees' tacit opposition to the exaggerated tasks;

d) *undetermined style* – by which the manager, relying on the extreme balance between the two groups on interest – production and employees, shows exaggerated caution and lack of determination in decision-making.

6. The classification according to the ***types of motivations, communication characteristics, nature of cooperation and decision-making strategy*** was initiated by Likert, who created a system of 4 categories of styles:

a) *dictatorial style* – characterizes those managers who initiate communication only downwards, give orders and are too severe supervisors; this style can arise their employees' tacit opposition, which decreases productivity, reduces the staff satisfaction and interest in their job;

b) *autocratic (authoritarian) – kind style* – is specific to those managers who set objectives by themselves, but accept discussing assignments with their employees, which ensures the partial use of their employees' experience. The tacit opposition of the subordinates is reduced but still present. Being excluded from objective setting, the staff might perceive all the tasks as obligations, and they will not identify with those objectives which only accidentally reflect their own aspirations;

c) *participative-advisory style* – refers to the managers' propensity to discuss with their subordinates work and production issues. These common discussions will bring about final decisions and task assignment. However, the main objectives are established by the manager alone. The prior consulting of the subordinates offers them the opportunity to take part in both decision-making and management. The tacit opposition of the staff may occur however.

d) *extremely participative style* – implies a large participation of the subordinates in the production process. Their discussions and suggestions do not only report on the manufacturing process, but also on objective setting. Setting objectives after previously consulting the employees determines their identification with the established objectives, thus stimulating motivation and interest. As a matter of fact, objectives are updated in every stage of the manufacturing process, by adjusting the company interests to those of the staff. Objectives are established by managers alone only in special, emergency situations. This management style does not exclude the tacit opposition of the subordinates, but it is stray and accidental.

These styles differ from one another depending on the level reached by each of their composing dimensions (motivation, communication, cooperation, participation, etc.).

In conclusion, just as shown before, the management styles can be categorized in two basic groups (with their corresponding aspects and variations): the *authoritarian style* and the *participative style*.

The outlining of these categories is the result of an analysis made on the activity of some managers of different companies, institutions, organizations, and on some elements like the subordinates' responsibility, their loyalty to the company, and the nature and intensity of the conflicts. Likert emphasizes the capacity of the authoritarian style to entail for short and medium-term best results. The negative counterparts of this style are the precarious circumstances that will reduce the subordinates' participation in the manufacturing process.

As compared to the authoritarian style, the participative style offers fewer medium and short-term results, but they are improving on long-term, becoming even performant. This favourable performance evolution results from a positive influence exercised on a set of variables. Therefore, the managers adopting a participative style are appreciated by their employees; also, loyalty and communication are developed, while tension and conflicts are reduced. Yet, according to Likert, in order to assess the performances of the

participative style (in terms of value and deficiencies), a longer period is needed, of at least 2 years. In other words, the results of this style can only be seen in time.

While the participative style ensures future performant results, the authoritarian one can only offer medium and short-term performant results.

The participative style helps developing decision-making abilities and taking responsibility of these decisions. The adoption of this style requires some behavioral changes from both managers and subordinates. But the behavioural change is a long-term process which can only produce in the presence of a certain flexibility and acceptance of failure (short and medium-term risk-taking). Yet, the initial costs for the implementation of the participative style can pay off in future higher performances.

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