

Implementing the PDCA Cycle for Change Leaders

Understanding Your Leadership Style

John W. Moran¹

A Change Leader's main job is to motivate people to change to the new behaviors desired by the organization. Motivation is defined as the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviors². Motivation is what causes us to act differently. Change leaders need to understand what motivation is and how to use it correctly in leading change. Motivation is a key ingredient in making change since it is the way change leaders are going activate the behavior in others they desire in the organization.

There are three major components to motivation³:

- **“Activation** involves the decision to initiate a behavior – this what the change leader describes to the organization as to “Why” we must change.
- **Persistence** is the continued effort toward a goal even though obstacles may exist – this is the “How” we are going to change. It is the road map the change leader details out for the organization.
- **Intensity** can be seen in the concentration and vigor that goes into pursuing a goal – this is the “Passion” the change leader conveys to those involved to keep them moving forward.”

In our fast-paced, deadline oriented, and constantly changing work environment, it is important that we have a leadership style to help us initiate and manage change. Leadership style helps us to correctly focus our change message and convey our passion for the change to others in the organization. Change leaders need to understand the different types of leadership styles available that can be utilized depending on the audience they are addressing. Different audiences at different levels have different needs to address to help them make the change required. Change leaders need to have a variety of leadership styles to deliver the message of change from visionary to commanding depending on the audience's needs.

In Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence⁴ the authors describe six types of leadership styles that can be used to help us perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of ourselves and others when initiating change. Managing the emotions in the organization in a change process is key to successfully helping others adapt and adopt the required change.

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² <http://psychology.about.com/od/mindex/g/motivation-definition.htm>, accessed 1/17/2012

³ <http://psychology.about.com/od/mindex/g/motivation-definition.htm>, accessed 1/17/2012

⁴ Daniel Goldman, Richard E. Boyatzis, and Anne McKee, Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead With Emotional Intelligence, Harvard Business School Press, 2002

Leadership Style	When To Use it	What Does It Do?
Visionary	To create a new vision or direction	Motivates people towards a shared vision of change
Coaching	To help people improve their skills and performance	Aligns individual goals with the organization's goals
Affiliative	To motivate people during difficult times	Builds harmonious relations
Democratic	To reach agreements through consensus	Obtains input, commitment, and participation of those involved in a change
Pacesetting	To motivate people to reach a challenging deadline	Helps achieve stretch goals
Commanding	To quickly resolve a crisis	Helps to get out of an emergency

Each leadership style has its time and place in an organization but just using one style all the time as a change leader will not reach all the people involved in the change. As a change leader you must use the different styles to increase your effectiveness in making change. What works for one group may not be appropriate for another. You must "observe and listen" to determine which one is right for your audience.

Rate yourself on the following scale as to how often you use the six leadership styles and describe a recent example of the usage.

(1) – Never used, (2) – Rare occasion, (3). – Occasionally, (4) – Regularly (most comfortable)

Leadership Style	When To Use it	What Does It Do?	Rating of leadership Style Usage	Recent Example
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Using these leadership styles appropriately requires a combination of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management skills. Understanding and utilizing these leadership styles at the appropriate time and place will optimize your performance as a change leader to motivate and activate others to change.