

# FOUR TYPES OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

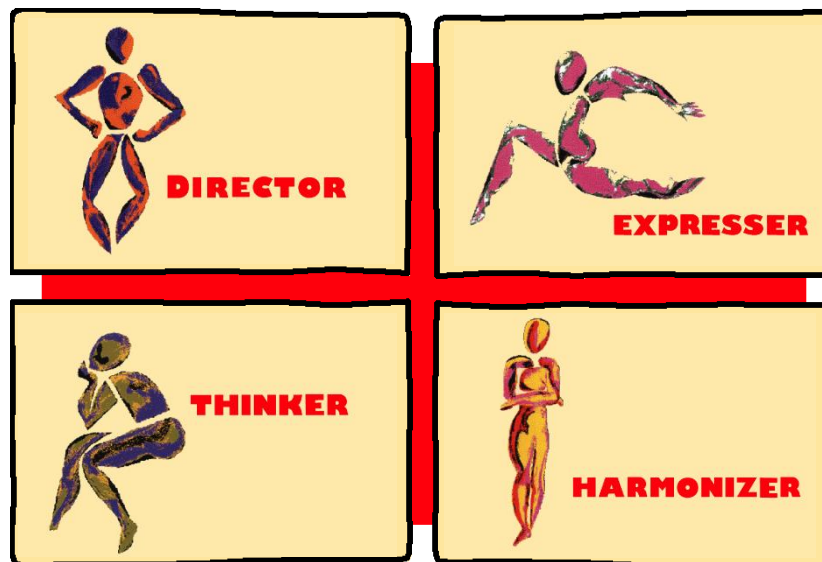
## Introduction

Skillful leadership requires many things. Among them is awareness of your own leadership style – and how it affects other people. Knowing your style, and adjusting it to fit the needs of the situation, is one of the keys to being an effective leader.

This tool describes four different leadership styles. It shows you how to identify your own style, and then provides a chart showing the strengths and weaknesses of each style. Finally, it concludes with two exercises to help you use this information to become a more successful leader.

## The Starting Point

Everyone has a “natural” leadership style that corresponds to his or her communication style. The Straight Talk® system<sup>1</sup> shows four basic communication styles: Director, Expresser, Thinker, and Harmonizer.



To determine your communication style, take the Straight Talk® survey and discover whether you are a Director, Expresser, Thinker or Harmonizer.

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<sup>1</sup> The Straight Talk system was developed in 1998 and is used worldwide. To learn more – and to take the survey – go to [www.straight-talk-now.com](http://www.straight-talk-now.com). It takes approximately five minutes to complete the survey and learn your style. The entire process is free.

## Interpreting Your Results

When you take the Straight Talk survey, you discover your style and where you “fit” on the matrix below. Each of the four quadrants reflects one of the four basic communication styles. For example, if you are a Persuader, Dictator, Explorer, or Initiator, your basic style of communicating is Director. If you are a Charmer, Entertainer, Diplomat, or Socializer, then your basic style is Expresser, as shown below.



## Leadership Styles

Once you've figured out your communication style, refer to the chart below for the corresponding leadership traits:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Director</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Goal oriented</li> <li>▪ Emphasis on bottom line</li> <li>▪ Makes quick decisions</li> <li>▪ Willing to take risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pursues big, risky challenges</li> <li>▪ Makes abrupt decisions</li> <li>▪ Lack of esprit de corps</li> <li>▪ Lack of communication</li> </ul>
<b>Expresser</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Idea oriented</li> <li>▪ Emphasis on people</li> <li>▪ Entertaining, fun</li> <li>▪ Willing to take risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lots of ideas, goals</li> <li>▪ Lack of clear priorities</li> <li>▪ Difficulty with follow through</li> <li>▪ Hard to gain commitment</li> </ul>
<b>Thinker</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fact and process oriented</li> <li>▪ Emphasis on precision</li> <li>▪ Stress academic credentials</li> <li>▪ Lots of quality control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Linear thinking</li> <li>▪ Unwilling to take risks</li> <li>▪ Tends to miss deadlines</li> <li>▪ Blind to the big picture</li> </ul>
<b>Harmonizer</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relationship oriented</li> <li>▪ Emphasis on team</li> <li>▪ Fun, warm, friendly</li> <li>▪ Loyal to the cause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Avoids conflict, change</li> <li>▪ Makes decisions slowly</li> <li>▪ Not clear about purpose, goals</li> <li>▪ Tendency toward bureaucracy</li> </ul>

## Assumptions of Each Style

Each leadership style tends to make assumptions about other people because of the way that style processes and interprets information.

### Directors assume:

- People don't see the big picture.
- People don't get enough done.
- People aren't decisive.
- People take too much time.
- People shouldn't waste time talking about their feelings.

### Expressers assume:

- People aren't creative enough.
- People need to be more daring.
- People need to lighten up and have a good time.
- People should say what's really on their minds.

### Thinkers assume:

- People don't focus enough on details.
- People don't care about getting things done right.
- People don't understand what's involved.
- People don't understand how we do things here.

### Harmonizers assume:

- People aren't sensitive enough to other people's feelings.
- People don't give us enough time to get things done.
- People don't value small talk.
- People argue too much.

## Situational Leadership

Effective leaders adapt their leadership style to the needs of their organization and the situation they are in. At times they are forceful and directive. At other times they are empathetic and caring. In the box below appear some typical management challenges along with the leadership style best suited to it.

Situation	Best leadership style
A team is faced with a crisis.	Director
A team is lacking creative spark.	Expresser
A team is lacking trust and cohesion.	Harmonizer
A team needs to solve a tough problem.	Thinker

## Team Styles

Here are four team styles – again using the Straight Talk® model – and the behaviors that typically accompany each type:

<b>Director Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Action is better than inaction.</li> <li>▪ We should act more quickly.</li> <li>▪ We should reward bold decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>Expresser Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Every idea is worth considering.</li> <li>▪ People should be willing to try anything once.</li> <li>▪ We should reward creativity.</li> </ul>
<b>Thinker Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis can solve any problem.</li> <li>▪ There's a right way to do things – and a wrong way.</li> <li>▪ We should reward people who do things the right way.</li> </ul>
<b>Harmonizer Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good relationships are essential to our success.</li> <li>▪ People shouldn't argue, but seek to understand.</li> <li>▪ We should reward people who work well together.</li> </ul>

As a leader of a team, you should try to help move the team toward a balanced style of communicating. For example, if a team is paralyzed by indecision, then injecting more of the Director leadership style will get them moving. If a group is acting too quickly, then a Thinker or Harmonize style is appropriate.

LRI's expert consultants can help you develop effective leadership skills.  
Please call us for a free consultation at 800-598-7662  
or email [info@leadingresources.com](mailto:info@leadingresources.com).

**Exercises**

Here are two exercises to help you build awareness of leadership styles.

**Exercise 1:**

Reflect on 1-2 decisions you made that didn't work out very well. Then reflect on your leadership style. Think about the actual situation and remember how you performed. What could you have done differently?

Decision you made	Characteristics of your leadership style	Things you could have done differently

**Exercise 2:**

Reflect on a 1-2 decisions made by a team you supervise that didn't work out very well. Then reflect on your leadership style. Think of the actual situation and remember how you performed. What could you have done differently?

Decision made by a team you supervise	Characteristics of your leadership style	Things you could have done differently