

Adapting your management style

to the degree of autonomy of your subordinates

The challenge

One of the key roles of the manager is to support the performance and development of his/her subordinates. But how can you determine the most suitable attitude for doing so? Is it preferable to monitor your employee closely or, on the contrary, to allow him/her to act freely? Should you intervene immediately in the event of a difficulty, or is it better to wait until he/she asks for help? Of course, the answer depends on the personality and capabilities of your subordinate, as well as on the nature of the assignment and the context. The following grid will help you determine which management style is best suited to the situation.

Four styles of management

The most suitable management style depends on two principal parameters: the degree to which the subordinate has mastered the necessary skills and is motivated to progress.

MOTIVATION AND FAVORABLE CONTEXT

HIGH

Participative style

Make each task an opportunity to **provide your subordinate with more methodology & tools.**

- Guide your employee by giving him/her advice.
 E.g.: Share your own experience, explain a proven method, etc.
- Accompany your subordinate in problem resolution, particularly when he/she finds him or herself in an unfamiliar situation.
- E.g.: Take the time to analyze the problem and the various possible solutions together.
- Provide support, particularly in finding the necessary resources.
 - E.g.: Suggest putting him/her in touch with one of your contacts, facilitate collaboration with another department, etc.

Delegating style

The employee shows a high degree of autonomy which enables you to **empower him/her fully.**

- Clearly agree on the delegation "contract". It must specify the objectives, the assessment criteria, the room for action and the method by which work will be monitored.
- Make sure you are available when the employee expresses the need for support, while taking care not to reclaim responsibility for the mission.
- Recognize the right to make mistakes, which is a natural part of any learning process. In the event of failure, help the employee understand his/her mistakes and find solutions.

LOW MASTERY OF SKILLS

HIGH MASTERY OF SKILLS

Directive style

Your main objective is to **ensure that the task is correctly accomplished.** To do so, you must help structure the work of your employee.

- Give specific instructions while at the same time ensuring that your employee has clearly understood what you expect from him/her.
- Implement tools which will enable you to structure the work.
- E.g.: Draw up a schedule, fix milestones, define check-lists, explain the procedures to be followed, etc.
- Communicate in writing: this will clarify any possible misunderstandings and provide precious reminders to beginners.

Persuasive style

Try to **mobilize your employee** so that he/she will make the best use of his/her skills.

- Explain the **reasons** for your requests, present the consequences, etc.
- Present the context of the tasks entrusted, in relation to a more general project, to the group's strategic objectives, to recent events impacting the business, etc.
- Try to encourage and recognize the efforts of your employee.
 - E.g.: Show that you trust him/her, take the time to give him/her feedback, etc.