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SUMMER 2024



WHEN IT COME TO LEADERSHIP, *Style* MATTERS

Leadership styles play an important role in shaping a team's dynamics and helping an organization achieve its goals. Each style comes with its own pros and cons, influencing how leaders interact with their teams and how teams respond to their leadership. Here are five examples of leadership styles that, depending on the situation and audience, could help improve your effectiveness.

AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

The autocratic leadership style can be effective when a situation calls for quick decision-making and clear direction. However, it can lead to a lack of employee engagement and creativity, as team members may feel disempowered, undervalued, and without a sense of ownership.

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

A democratic leadership style fosters teamwork, leading to higher levels of motivation and innovation. However, it can also result in slower decision-making processes and a lack of direction if consensus cannot be reached.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformation leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating teams to achieve their best. Leaders who adopt this style can create a vision that resonates with team members, leading to higher levels of commitment and performance. However, transformational leaders may also be seen as overly idealistic, leading to disappointment if expectations are unmet.

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SERVANT LEADERSHIP

A servant leader prioritizes the needs and development of team members. This leadership style can create a positive and supportive work environment where the leader can build strong, trusting relationships with their teams. However, this style can also be challenging, as it requires leaders to balance individual needs with the organization's goals.

LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP

The French phrase “laissez faire” means “allow to do.” This type of leadership style focuses on empowering team members to take ownership of their work and make decisions independently, which can boost creativity and innovation. However, it can also result in a lack of accountability and direction, as team members may feel uncertain about their roles and responsibilities. As you can see, each leadership style has advantages and disadvantages. The most effective leaders are often able to adopt one style, if not more than one style, to any given situation. Consider this as you look to balance the needs of your teams and bring out the best in them.

Note: These lists are not intended to be all-inclusive.

CALL TO ACTION

- Practice incorporating each leadership style into your daily activities.



TIME TO DISCUSS UNATTENDED VEHICLES

Freight at rest is freight at risk. It is one of the dangers motor carriers and their drivers face whenever a loaded trailer is left unattended. Truck stops, rest areas, and intermodal hubs are common targets for would-be thieves, but, in truth, cargo theft can occur anywhere. Thieves can be ingenious, and they are not just targeting high-value items like electronics. Baby food, toys, and tools, for example, are highly sought-after items because they are easy to sell and difficult to trace. The good news is that motor carriers can protect their equipment and reduce the risk of theft by taking a few simple precautions. Here are some security tips to discuss with drivers and your operations staff to help prevent cargo theft when the truck is unattended.

DRIVERS SHOULD...

- Use a padlock and seal on the trailer doors.
- Eliminate unnecessary stops, especially within the first 400 kilometers of driving.
- At each stop, inspect the trailer for tampering.
- Park in well-lit, busy areas, preferably with fencing and security.
- Remove the keys when leaving the truck unattended, and always keep them on your person.
- Roll up the windows and lock the doors when leaving the truck unattended.
- Never openly discuss shipment details in public (i.e., type of cargo, destination, etc.).
- Be extra vigilant of cargo theft over holidays.
- If dropping a loaded trailer overnight, park the trailer against the loading dock.
- Secure trailers with a king pin lock and other security devices when unhooked.

OPERATIONS STAFF SHOULD...

- Know the cargo being hauled and its value.
- Route drivers away from cargo theft hot spots.
- Give due diligence to pre-employment background checks.
- Develop formal security procedures to keep unauthorized personnel out of sensitive areas.
- Conduct security awareness training with all employees.
- Increase physical security at your terminals, including on-site guards, alarms, cameras, etc.
- Invest in quality locking devices such as air cuff, kingpin, and trailer locks. Monitor your Safety Measurement System (SMS) information regularly for fraudulent activity.

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CALL TO ACTION

- Conduct anti-theft training with all employees.



THE BENEFITS OF PROPER DUE DILIGENCE

Selecting qualified and reliable drivers is one of the important decisions a motor carrier can make. Ensuring the safe and on-time delivery of freight has a direct impact on the company's survivability, so deciding which applicants will be entrusted with the company's future should not be taken lightly. Herein lies the danger of improperly vetting job candidates. It would be imprudent for a motor carrier to hire a driver on word-of-mouth recommendations alone or without conducting proper background checks, road tests, and personal interviews. It may expose the company to potential losses and possible claims of negligent hiring. To further this point, here are some examples of how proper due diligence can benefit motor carriers.

VALIDATE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Road testing applicants is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak. The goal of an impartial road test is to observe the applicant's abilities, both behind the wheel and around the truck, to determine if they can safely perform the essential functions of the job. Using an experienced and trusted evaluator to conduct the road test gives motor carriers visible confirmation of whether a candidate meets these requirements. And while the employer may accept a CDL in lieu of conducting a road test, that is an avoidable risk. Observing a candidate behind the wheel, operating job-specific equipment, can offer a precise evaluation of their skills.

IDENTIFY RED FLAGS

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REDUCE TURNOVER

Due diligence can also help reduce turnover. Check the applicant's resume for habitual job hopping. It may be worth addressing in the interview. Likewise, with drivers travelling to the US, querying the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse may reveal a history of positive drug or alcohol tests or even a refusal to test, which may disqualify the candidate. On the flipside, many long-haul motor carriers invite the candidate's spouse in during the final interview before an official job offer is extended. This is done to ensure they completely understand the job's demands, including extended periods away from home. It is also an opportunity to share with the spouse how the company will support them while the driver is away.

IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

The FMCSA's Pre-Employment Screening Program provides motor carriers with a driver's history of regulatory compliance violations, moving violations, and crashes in the United States. Suppose a candidate has a history of not taking care of equipment and exhibiting risky driving behaviors, such as an excessive speeding violation. In that case, they may run a higher risk of being involved in an incident. These business interruptions cost money, so hiring reliable, safety minded drivers can help maintain operational efficiency.

PROTECT THE COMPANY'S REPUTATION

Hiring unqualified or unreliable drivers can also harm a motor carrier's reputation. Accidents involving poorly screened drivers can lead to negative publicity and damage the company's brand image. Customers and partners may lose trust in the company's ability to safely transport goods, leading to a loss of business. For these reasons and others, taking the time to give driver selection due diligence can pay big dividends in the long run and give the motor carrier peace of mind that its drivers are upholding the company's safety standards.

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CALL TO ACTION

- Give due diligence to your hiring and selection practices.

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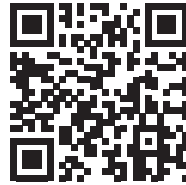
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