

Team Leader

Self-Coaching Guide

Team Leadership Styles

A team leader can adopt one of two contrasting leadership styles: *Dominance* or *Prestige*. Dominance occurs when a decision has been made and the team leader needs to encourage the team to complete a task. Dissent and varied opinions are distracting and undermine achieving the end goal. Prestige, however, is crucial when evaluating options or creating new ideas. People need to speak up and offer alternative ideas, safe from any retaliation from a team leader who interprets such contributions as a threat. Dominant team leaders are, by definition, punitive. This is how they win and sustain power. They are also less empathetic. They don't feel they need other people, so don't tend to take their perspectives or read their emotions. Prestige-oriented team leaders, on the other hand, recognise that wise decisions depend on group input, and so are highly attuned to what others are thinking and saying. This team leadership style strengthens trust.

How can I be a good team leader?

Good team leaders recognise when to be 'dominant' and when to be 'prestige-oriented' in their leadership style. They also know what it takes to create high-performing teams.

Google investigated why some of their teams performed better than others. They discovered that who is on a team mattered less than how the team members interacted, structured their work, and viewed their contributions. Five key dynamics set successful teams apart from other teams at Google:

1. **Psychological Safety** – Team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other
2. **Dependability** – Team members get things done on time and do excellent work
3. **Structure & Clarity** – Team members have clear roles, plans and goals
4. **Meaning** – Work is personally important to team members
5. **Impact** – Team members think their work matters and creates change

'Psychological safety' was, by far, the most important dynamic and underpinned the other four. It involves providing a 'safe space' where team members can be their true selves. A place where team members:

- Feel accepted and respected
- Are encouraged to take risks, innovate, and contribute ideas
- Feel secure and not embarrassed
- Don't fear recriminations or negative consequences
- Are positive about the team and want to remain on it

A good team leader will create a high-performing team if they promote, encourage and, most importantly, demonstrate the above dynamics.

"Become the kind of leader that people would follow voluntarily; even if you had not title or position."
Brian Tracy

More Information

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