

A Review of the Sales Leadership Style and Type Literature with Adaptations for Sales Leadership

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One challenge facing managers is optimizing how they lead their employees. Literature shows that individual employees vary on the type of leadership they need and that managers can get more out of employees by giving each their necessary leadership style. Managers must identify the style of leadership needed by each employee and adapt their own leadership style to best suit each individual, which is difficult. This paper examines existing leadership literature to develop a typology that categorizes leadership styles based on two dimensions of employee needs, hands-on/off and transactional/transformational, to identify the optimal leadership style for each salesperson.

New technologies, more transparency, and globalization have drastically changed the business environment and are requiring managers to take a new view of how they lead (Lichtenstein et al. 2006). For example, sales managers are often reacting to new technologies or competitors offering similar products at a lower price. Organizations can only operate effectively in turbulent environments by having leaders that are able to see the need for change and are able to adapt to their employees in order to best motivate them. This is particularly important in the current climate of instability and risk for businesses, especially sales (Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky 2009). Adaptive leadership refers to the concept that the situation and stakeholders are analyzed, and the appropriate leadership style selected to achieve optimal organizational performance (Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky 2009). According to Allio (2013), a leader should respond to changing situations and needs to utilize numerous behaviors and attributes from more than one of the traditional leadership theories. Kohles et al. (2012) noted that followers each have different needs and perceptions of leaders and that leaders are faced with the challenge of understanding the differences in

each of their followers and tailoring their leadership methods through the use of adaptive skills to account for these differences.

Although the situation and stakeholders can be analyzed, there is no current guidance available to clarify the ideal leadership style to utilize for specific situations and stakeholder combinations especially for sales managers who often are dealing with a variety of salespeople as well as internal constituencies and thus must choose the right leadership style when dealing with each individual. Latham (2014) states, “research is needed that develops leadership frameworks and models that integrate transformational, servant, and spiritual leadership theories and include the context and a definition of success based on creating value for multiple stakeholders” (pp. 11).

Without leaders who are adaptable, the organization overall is not able to make necessary changes. The leaders in business that are adaptable to their environment, situation, and the people they work with have the competitive advantage; success is contingent on being able to adapt to any given situation (Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky 2009; Kohles et al. 2012). Though other leadership theories have proposed ways to adapt leadership styles, most have focused on adaptation in response to environmental contexts (Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky 2009) or organizational needs (Yukl and Mahsud 2010), and few have focused on the needs of those being led. Of those considering follower needs, they either generically categorize the followers (e.g., Hersey, Blanchard and Natemeyer 1979) or draw on a limited range of leadership theories to guide manager behavior (Avolio and Bass

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1991). This research is intended to help organizational leaders determine which leadership style or hybrid of styles should be used with a particular salesperson. Specifically, it will attempt to create a typology of leadership styles based on employee requirements. The literature review in this manuscript leads to a typology based on employee needs to serve as a reference when leaders need to understand how to optimize leadership style selection for a certain individual.

LEADERSHIP IN SALES

Salesforce performance and organizational outcomes are substantially affected by leadership. Leadership support from sales managers has positive effects on the performance of salespeople (Jaramillo et al. 2009) as the employee's vision can be elevated to a higher level, but it requires a balance between caring for the individual, encouraging teamwork, and achieving the task. Sales managers need to provide direction, support, evaluation, and control. The most effective leaders in sales provide role clarity, timely feedback, access to resources, necessary decisions, and responsiveness to reduce uncertainty (Wilkinson 2009). The motivation that sales managers can provide include extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Bennis and Nanus (1985) said, "Leadership is the pivotal force behind successful organizations and that to create vital and viable organizations, leadership is necessary to help organizations develop a new vision of what they can be, then mobilize the organization to change toward the new vision."

The history of leadership in sales organizations has evolved as managers attain more defined roles in multi-level business structures (Yammarino and Dansereau 2008). The critical link between upper management that establishes organizational plans and goals with the salespeople who implement them are the first level or sales managers. First level managers have the flexibility to use the leadership style they want to achieve upper management-imposed guidelines (Russ, McNeilly, and Comer 1996). Previously sales organization managers have focused on assigning appropriate sales territories and offering compensation plans, but over time, the role of managers has advanced to serve as decision-makers and problem solvers. Avoidant and rational decision-making and leadership style are linked to managerial performance in sales (Russ, McNeilly, and Comer 1996).

Sales organizations are stressful environments, as the marketplace is increasingly competitive. Salespeople are critical for a firm's success as they play an essential role in identifying and defining opportunities. Salespeople need to be able to successfully recognize opportunities and engage in solution selling by identifying needs or problems and assessing strategic options (Evans, McFarland, Dietz, and Jaramillo 2012). Therefore, it has become more important for leaders in sales to emphasize appropriate behavior and ensure salespeople are customer-oriented (Schwepker and Good 2010). Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp (2005) concluded that salespeople's adaptability does have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction where customer satisfaction has a positive influence on job performance. Similarly, the trend in sales organizations is a shift from transactional leadership to transformational leadership styles (Schwepker and Good 2010). Transactional leadership styles typically include connecting rewards and punishments to the performance of salespeople in terms of the established goals (Schwepker and Good 2010). Leader empowerment, a facet of transactional leadership, is better suited for salespeople with less job knowledge and experience than more ready individuals (Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp 2005). However, transactional leadership styles have drawbacks as salespeople are more likely to resort to unethical behavior as they are pressured to reach their goals (Schwepker, and Goode 2010). Conversely, ethical behavior is promoted by transformational leadership styles as subordinates are more likely to perform work consistent with their values because of being rewarded for their efforts. Leaders who utilize transformational styles are also more likely to raise followers' consciousness on how to reach outcomes beyond their own interests as they persuade others to achieve organizational goals (Schwepker and Good 2010). However, using the transformational leadership style is reliant on the leader being able to entrust power and responsibility to their team members.

Adaptive Aspects of Leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence people toward the attainment of goals (Daft 2016). Leaders often inspire engagement and organizational changes to meet new conditions. They create a vision for the future

and an environment that motivates and inspires while having a long-term perspective. Without leadership, organizations are unable to reach their main objectives (Daft 2016). Leadership has grown and developed to adjust to the need for adaptability in the diverse world that is increasingly competitive. Leadership is the product of tension, interaction, and exchange rules governing change in understanding and perception as it is dynamic and transcends individuals alone (Lichtenstein et al. 2006). The ability to influence others toward the attainment of goals is essential. Being adaptable is defined as having the ability to adjust to new conditions. In leadership literature this has been commonly called situational leadership, adaptive leadership, flexible leadership or full range leadership.

Hersey, Blanchard and Natemeyer (1979) introduced the concept of situational leadership (SLT) where a leader applies a different style of leadership based on the maturity level of the employee. This concept has been applied across many areas including coaching (Turman 2001), nursing (Adams 1990), and education (Meier 2016). However, the challenge for sales managers is how to categorize salespeople by maturity when often experience and performance are not directly correlated due to many outside factors (e.g., Ko and Dennis 2004). McClesky (2014) also notes that the application of and research into situational leadership as originally proposed has been plagued with problems related to internal consistency, conceptual uniformity and clarity among other weaknesses. In addition, since SLT does not clearly identify the style of leadership or leadership behaviors that should be used, it is difficult to apply beyond a conceptualization (McClesky 2014), and in sales, clear and simple implementation is key.

Adaptive leadership was first proposed as a theory by Heifetz (1994) as a counter to the more static traditional theories of leadership. Adaptive leadership focuses on leadership as a process rather than on the capabilities of the leader (Heifetz et al. 2004) and on the specific problems at hand. The leader needs to modify past behaviors to accommodate the new situation. This should induce a more creative solution from all involved in the leader-follower dynamic and lead to a positive change owned by those who will implement the solution. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) note that leaders face two types of

problems – technical (well defined with known solutions that anyone with expertise and proper resources can solve) and adaptive (no clear definition or solution and involving multiple parties who are necessary to solve the problem at hand). The theory of adaptive leadership states that these adaptive problems must be solved by leaders so that the organization can move forward (Heifetz et al. 2004). As Allio (2013) notes in support of Adaptive Leadership Theory, there is no one theory of leadership and that effective leaders need to draw from many different perspectives of leadership to be successful. According to James (2011), “Adaptive leadership is needed when organisations face challenges which require them to re-think their assumptions and practices, and the leadership required in this instance is very different from that required for technical/professional problems, however complex” (pp. 7). This leadership perspective has been applied in wide ranging areas such as medicine (Kendall-Gallagher and Breslin 2013) and the military (Cojocar 2009 and 2011). However, in this theory the focus is on the problem rather than on the relationship between the leader and followers or the needs of the followers that can be addressed by the leader.

Flexible leadership literature (e.g., Yukl and Mahsud 2010) notes that rapid technological change, more outsourcing, increased globalization, and a more diverse workforce are examples of the type of changes that affect organizations and that these types of changes that affect organizations have increased in pace. Managers have increasingly encouraged values that support the ability of the company to quickly detect, interpret, and translate signals in order to develop new behaviors to respond to these changes. Yukl and Mahsud (2010) also note that change occurs more frequently as managers encourage and reward creativity and experimentation as employees are able to make their own decisions to meet new needs. Other terms associated with leaders who are able to adapt their behavior after diagnosing the situation accurately are flexible, agile, and versatile (Yukl and Mahsud 2010). Kaiser and Overfield (2010) note that the assessment of flexibility leadership is commonly based on coworker ratings of general tendencies of an individual to adapt their behavior to changes in the environment. They propose instead that good leaders balance the opposing demands of how to lead as well as what issues on which to expend their leadership capital and efforts, which

they claim better predicts leader effectiveness. Norton (2010) calls it a “metacompetency” that brings together a variety of skills. Like adaptive leadership, its focus on external stimuli, in this case environmental changes and context, to guide the adaptation rather than nature of the follower is not what is needed in the sales context where the driver of adaptation is the nature of the interpersonal connection between the sales manager (leader) and the salesperson (follower).

A similar conceptualization to adaptive and flexible leadership theories is full range leadership theory (Avolio and Bass 1991) which uses a single model suggesting that leaders use elements of transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership based on situational contexts and adapt which of the three they use accordingly. Full range leadership theory differs from adaptive leadership in that full range only draws from the three aforementioned leadership theories while adaptive leadership suggests that the leader draw from elements from any theory (Heifetz 1994). Anderson and Sun (2017) espouse the belief that the current version of full range theory is outdated due to the limited amount of leadership theories it contains and there needs to be an expanded model of full range leadership that is more open to the dynamic nature of society and organizations.

Effective leadership does not necessarily reside in the symbolic, motivational, or charismatic actions of leaders (Lichtenstein et al. 2006). Leaders need to inspire and motivate subordinates to improve instead of solely overseeing the work that they do. Salespeople that increase their self-efficiency increase their confidence to be more comfortable with innovation and use different techniques for customers (Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp 2005). Leadership theory has been transitioning to the new perspectives in our modern world to account for the complex adaptive needs of businesses (Lichtenstein et al. 2006). Toward this end, Bradberry and Greaves (2012) identified the first set of skills that together form the basis of productive, solid leadership as core leadership. Core leadership can ensure the building blocks are in place to become an adaptive leader. Core leadership skills alone will not make someone a great leader, but it is not possible to be a great leader without these skills (Bradberry and Greaves 2012). Core leadership includes strategy, action, and results.

Strategy is knowing how to anticipate the best course of action to follow to maximize success. It requires vision, acumen, and planning. Action is executing the chosen course and requires decision making, communication, and mobilizing others. The final category of core leadership is results. Leaders have to work hard and overcome the obstacles in their path to obtain the best outcomes. Results require risk taking, results focus, and agility (Bradberry and Greaves 2012).

According to Bradberry and Greaves (2012), any leader is capable of adapting with effort. The skills of adaptive leadership include emotional intelligence, organizational justice, character, and development (Bradberry and Greaves 2012). Emotional intelligence is the set of skills for the awareness of emotions of others and ourselves and how we manage ourselves with this awareness. Emotional intelligence requires self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Organizational justice is the ability to integrate what people think, what they want to hear, and the facts. Organizational justice requires decision fairness, information sharing, and outcome concern. Character is the distinctive mental and moral qualities of an individual. Character requires integrity, credibility, and valuing differences. The final category of adaptive leadership is development. It is the desire to continue to learn and develop those that they lead. Development requires lifelong learning and developing others (Bradberry and Greaves 2012).

In *Leadership 2.0*, Bradberry and Greaves (2012) suggest, “that adaptive leadership skills are what set great leaders apart – these skills represent the otherwise intangible qualities that great leaders have in common. Adaptive leadership is a unique combination of skills, perspective, and guided effort that enable excellence. The adaptive leadership skills can take a leader at any level to places others cannot go” (pp. 7). The changing environment sales organizations are facing are the dimensions of accountability, collaboration, and complexity. All levels of the organization need to be able to respond effectively to the dynamic environment (Ingram, LaForge, Locander, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff 2005) including the needs and preferences of those being led.

LEADERSHIP TYPE

Social, physical, and work-related characteristics and personality traits have been studied in order to understand what makes a great leader (Coggins 2016). Leadership traits are developed through factors within a person's control such as habit and attitude. The traits of leaders were the focus of leadership success in early studies (Coggins 2016) and examination of leadership traits has reemerged. Research in the early 20th century attempted to determine what traits or behaviors make a leader great because many people believed leaders were born, not made. Researchers searched for the right combination of characteristics that made a successful leader (Coggins 2016). There was also the belief that there was only one effective form of management. Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939) introduced the first three leadership types: autocratic/authoritarian, democratic/participative, and laissez-faire leadership in the publication *Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates*. Greenleaf (1977) elucidated a specific form of democratic/participative leadership known as Servant Leadership that contains all of the elements of democratic/participative leadership with a focus on staying out of sight to allow subordinates to shine. This particular specification of democratic/participative leadership has taken hold and is used in most leadership research instead of democratic/participative leadership and this manuscript does this as well in the remainder of the discussion. A fourth type of leadership that came to prominence about the same time is charismatic leadership (Weber 1947). Details about these four most commonly explored types of leadership in the literature (autocratic, servant, laissez-faire and charismatic) are delineated below.

Laissez-Faire Leadership

The leadership type where the leader has a minimal role in decision-making and employees typically make the decisions is laissez-faire leadership. Leaders that use the laissez-faire leadership type are hands-off and transactional as they provide little guidance, provide the needed tools and resources for followers to make decisions, and solve their own problems as leaders take responsibility for the decisions and actions of the group (Coggins 2016).

Laissez-faire leadership is based on trust as employees are given a wide range of space to make decisions. Another way of thinking of laissez-faire leadership is to do what you want as long as the job gets done correctly. Laissez-faire is translated from its French origin as "leave it alone" or "let it be." The characteristics of laissez-faire leaders are that they initiate structure and clarify rules as they delegate authority to capable employees, provide rewards for successes, and display consideration, as they will allow staff to manage challenges but know when to step in to help or offer criticism. Effective laissez-faire leaders work with employees who are skilled, self-motivated, and comfortable working without close supervision (Gill 2014).

Laissez-faire leadership starts at the top of the organizational hierarchy. The hands-off, transactional approach allows skilled employees to function productively, be motivated to perform optimally, and receive reinforcement for successful performance. In sales, this leadership type allows employees to have plenty of flexibility to be creative (Gill 2014). Even though some leaders may believe they are empowering individuals, employees may feel as if the leader is indecisive or uninvolved especially if they are unavailable when needed for assistance (Boehnke, Bontis, DiStefano, and DiStefano 2003). Van Wart (2013) notes that "Sometimes leaders need to foster systems in which they are not needed or leave those systems alone when they are working well; delegation can be leadership at its best" (pp. 559).

Great laissez-faire leaders display common behaviors. They delegate authority to capable experts in order to maximize the leadership qualities of staff. The top laissez-faire leaders also praise accomplishments and reward success while providing constructive criticism as needed. Their staff is allowed to solve problems and manage challenges on their own with a great laissez-faire leader knowing when to step in and lead during a crisis. The people who work best under laissez-faire leaders are typically self-starters who excel at individualized tasks and don't need ongoing feedback (St. Thomas University 2014a).

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership (sometimes called traditional leadership) is the type where it is believed that the power is bestowed on the leader usually on the basis of their position. Leaders have power as those who were in the position previously had power and control. Another common characteristic is that the leader makes promotions for others based on whom they favor in combination with office politics. Autocratic leaders maintain information ownership and are not as likely to listen to ideas and suggestions (Keulder 2010). Rules and regulations are strictly enforced and staff performance is monitored based on the policy of the company. When problems arise, autocratic leaders are focused on the symptoms of the issue and develop a solution that is enforced upon the employees. Leaders that use the autocratic leadership type are hands-on and transactional as they oversee and monitor others closely as they assign tasks for others to do. They have short-term objectives with division of labor and guidance by rules and regulations (Keulder 2010).

Autocratic leaders allocate resources and time only when necessary. Idea generation with autocratic leadership types is decided on at the top of the hierarchy and pushed down for others to implement. Autocratic leadership is extremely hands-on as employees are closely monitored. This leadership type is also transactional as subordinates' roles and task requirements are clarified, structure is initiated, and responses are often given in regards to employee performance (Lindegaard 2009).

The changing workplace has businesses seeking innovative solutions in the challenging economic environment. There has been a push from autocratic leadership to more collaborative leadership with the goal being to empower employees, increase productivity, and encourage growth. The autocratic approach of an individual having singular authority from their position is diminishing as greater success comes from people earning their leadership position and working in more team-based settings (Lindegaard 2013).

Historically, autocratic leadership has been associated with dictators or tyrants. Although this type is not thought to be one of the most popular because of this association, it is one of the most common and powerful.

This leadership type is vital in a workplace environment where there is the demand for error-free outcomes such as in manufacturing or life-and-death situations in a hospital. The best autocratic leaders have common characteristics. The three pillars of a great autocratic leader are discipline, preparation, and victory. Great autocratic leaders are efficient, diligent, and precise. They are able to train others quickly, prevent the organization from becoming stagnant, keep individuals from missing deadlines, and effectively make decisions without consulting others (St. Thomas University 2014c).

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership works to fulfill the needs and goals of followers and achieve the larger mission of the organization. A servant leader primarily focuses on the well-being of the people they work with and the community they work in (Daft 2016). Unlike autocratic leadership, servant leadership includes power being shared while focusing on the needs of others and helping develop others. The goal of servant leaders is to encourage followers to perform to the best of the ability. Leaders that use servant leadership are hands-on and transformational as they listen closely to others while striving to understand and empathize as they can ultimately nurture the growth of employees. Servant leaders work often with others, are aware of individuals and situations in their environment, and can persuade them to work towards a goal rather than telling them what to do (Daft 2016). These leaders are servants first as they make sure that other individuals' highest priority needs are met and then the conscious choice brings one to lead (Greenleaf 1977). Servant leaders are focused on service to others from initial project planning to final implementation, and these leaders also help others grow individually.

Servant leaders are good listeners, empathetic, healing, self-aware, persuasive, committed to team growth, and community builders. The common personal qualities that servant leaders develop over time are being constructive, persistent, and motivating. Servant leaders in business have the advantage of building strong teams, seeing the big picture, building relationships and rapport with employees, binding people together with trust, defining success, and encouraging high levels of engagement (St. Thomas University 2014b). As servant

leaders emphasize genuine concern for subordinate welfare, there is typically a parallel concern by salespeople for customers. The increased customer orientation drives adaptive selling behaviors and sales performance outcomes (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts 2009).

The best servant leaders share common behaviors. These leaders have a strong sense of caring and responsibility for their staff. The top servant leaders make it a priority to ensure their employees build their professional skills and knowledge base. Some of these leaders block out time in their schedule to meet with individuals to discuss their progress. Servant leaders can improve the credibility of the organization's brand by gaining employee trust and creating a positive corporate culture. Another common behavior of servant leaders is to focus on contributions to the community such as a designated team volunteer day (St. Thomas University 2014b).

Charismatic Leadership

Weber (1958) identified charismatic leadership in his article "The Three Types of Legitimate Rule." The charismatic leadership type refers to gaining followers by personality and charm instead of authority or other external power. Followers' self-concepts are engaged in the interest of the mission stated by the leader. With charismatic leadership, symbolic leader behavior, nonverbal communication, appeal to ideological values, and display of confidence in self and followers are emphasized. This type of leadership gives meaningfulness to work by including commitment and moral purpose to work rather than threatening punishment or offering materialistic incentives. Charismatic leaders are skilled communicators that are committed to their cause and driven by their convictions. They are often identified in times of trouble as they have a clear vision with expertise in their field to reach a large audience. Leaders that use charismatic leadership are hands-off and transformational as they attract followers and lead them to feel inspired to take action (Shamir, House, and Arthur 1993). As others observe the humility, compassion, and maturity that a charismatic leader possess, they aim to change and do as the leader does (Shamir, House, and Arthur 1993).

Charismatic leaders are aware of their influential personality and constantly portray a good image for their followers by self-monitoring. Another characteristic of a charismatic leader is that they always strive for self-improvement. Riggio (2012) says that charismatic leaders are set apart because they are "essentially very skilled communicators – individuals who are both verbally eloquent, but also able to communicate to followers on a deep, emotional level. They are able to articulate a compelling or captivating vision, and are able to arouse strong emotions in followers." Charismatic leaders are hands-on as they engage with others by providing their clear vision to motivate followers to be better. Charismatic leaders are transformational as they rally those around them to serve a common goal and encourage boldness and initiative (St. Thomas University 2014d).

The personal characteristics often possessed by great charismatic leaders are high levels of self-confidence, dominance, and a strong conviction in the moral righteousness of their beliefs. Charismatic leaders often serve as role models by acting in the manner in which they want their followers to behave (House 1976). The characteristics of top charismatic leaders include sensitivity to their environment and needs of followers, visionary, articulate, and adept at using unconventional behavior. Charismatic leaders inspire others to work together, get commitment to a central mission, and create cohesiveness as workers have a clear purpose (St. Thomas University 2014d).

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Transactional versus Transformational Leadership Style

The contemporary views of leadership include variable leadership styles and the view that situation dictates style choice. The two basic leadership styles are transactional and transformational, and while others may argue that each of these represents a distinct type and should be included with the four leadership types described above, the authors here agree with the Burns (1978) conceptualization of them as being the extremes of a single continuum. A leader who uses the transactional style is focused on providing punishments and rewards based on the performance of subordinates. Leaders that

prefer the transactional end of the spectrum excel at the functions of management, as they are concerned about day-to-day progress and conform to organizational norms. Transactional style leaders are important to all organizations. These type of leaders are focused on short-term goals and favor structure, procedures, and policies. Doing things correctly in the organization and following rules are what transactional leaders thrive on. The typical disadvantage of transactional style leadership is the tendency to be inflexible and imposed to change which can be difficult in faster paced environments.

Transactional style leadership approaches include pacesetter and commanding (Ingram et al. 2012). According to Bass, there are two specific forms of transactional leadership behavior that are contingent reward behavior and “management by exception” also known as contingent punishment (1985). Positive feedback serves as a motivational and informational function and has a significant effect on salespeople’s satisfaction and performance. Negative feedback serves as an informational function but not motivational and improves performance a minimal amount (Jaworski and Kohli 1991).

In order to lead change in an organization’s structure, transformational leaders are also important. Podsakoff et al. (1990) identified the key classes of transformational leadership behaviors as providing intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support, having high performance expectations, fostering the acceptance of group goals, providing an appropriate model, and articulating a vision. A transformational style leader works to bring about change and innovation by directing the behavior of followers toward a shared vision. The significant changes in followers ultimately result in significant changes in the organization overall. When transformational leaders inspire followers to understand their own potential in addition to the leader’s, a better future for the organization is created. Leaders using the transformational style are self-aware and authentic. Other characteristics they possess are the ability to collaborate, understand interdependence, and have humility. Transformational leadership approaches include servant, democratic, coaching, affiliative, and visionary (Ingram et al. 2012). Shannahan, Bush, and

Shannahan (2013) concluded that the ability for a salesperson to be coached fully mediates the relationship between sales performance and transformational leadership style rather than trait competitiveness.

Many people are more naturally adept at operating at the transactional or transformational end of the spectrum, but the most effective leaders are able to adapt to individuals by using the most appropriate style in that situation. Leaders who prefer transactional or transformational leadership need to be adaptive in selling and negotiation to yield the best results possible (Ingram et al. 2012). Transactional leadership tends to be more reactive, whereas transformational leadership tends to be more proactive ways of influencing subordinates (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich 2001).

Transformational leadership can improve employees’ work-related responses over those produced through transactional leadership. Transactional leadership may be preferable for enhancing affective and behavioral responses of salespeople (Dubinsky, Yammarino, Jolson, and Spangler 1995). “In total, the findings suggest that corporate chain activities, such as the level and clarity of store managers’ goals and supervisor monitoring, influence store manager behaviors, which in turn affect the sale of physical products and services” (Arnold, Palmatier, Grewal, and Sharma 2009). Being adaptable leads to more success whether it is inspiring subordinates to reach a goal as a leader or selling several products to another company as a salesperson. For leaders to be successful, they need to understand that each employee and customer requires a unique approach in order to be sensitive to their needs and adjust their use of transactional and transformational leadership behaviors to accommodate employee needs. Based on these characteristics, it is proposed that:

Proposition 1: Employees that have a need for transactional leadership style will have a greater affinity for the following leadership types: laissez-faire and autocratic.

Proposition 2: Employees that have a need for transformational leadership style will have a greater affinity for the following leadership types: charismatic and servant.

Hands-On versus Hands-Off Leadership Style

The level of leader involvement with followers is another style spectrum that warrants investigation as evidenced by the descriptions of the leadership types above. Hands-on style leaders are actively involved with the work being done. They interact directly with employees while keeping lines of communication open. Leaders at the hands-on end of the spectrum are more efficient and effective when they are aware of the difference between coaching, training, and teaching. These leaders are able to gain more ideas from employees and customers while being in contact with them more. Therefore, these leaders are able to have a better understanding of their business overall. Employees often respect someone who is consistently participating with the work alongside them rather than feeling as if they are just being delegated all of the work. There are disadvantages in addition to the advantages of leaders being hands-on. Being hands-on can cause employees to feel as if they are being micromanaged, which may reduce their motivation and productivity. Conversely, employees may begin to consider their boss as their close friend, which can cause the leader's authority to not be respected (Miller 2017).

Hands-off style leaders let employees work by themselves with minimal monitoring. Tasks are often delegated to others based on their position. Team leaders would report to the manager and the line of authority would not be bypassed. An advantage of the hands-off leadership style is that employees are given a sense of fulfillment because they feel trusted to do their work. Creativity and growth is fostered as employees are allowed to respond to situations as they please instead of being told what to do (Miller 2017). When everyone understands their role, then there is effective compartmentalization for large projects to be completed even on a tight schedule. Similar to the hands-on end of the spectrum, there are disadvantages with hands-off leadership as well. Leaders may be overly confident in the abilities of employees because they do not understand the people and processes of the business as well. There is also not as much mentorship, and control of employees may be lost if they are not monitored (Miller 2017).

Managing people is where the greatest need for balance and adaptability lies and thus regulating the level of involvement the leader has with each follower based on that salesperson's needs become paramount for successful sales leaders. The situation has to be completely understood and then the correct leadership style in regards to sales leader involvement must be chosen and executed properly for a leader to be the most successful. Leaders should be on the hands-off end of the spectrum at times to prove their faith in others and utilize a hands-on style when others require more guidance. This adaptability in the hands-on and hands-off leadership styles is important in selling and negotiations. In selling and negotiating, there are certain times to be hands-on and hands-off to enhance adaptability to allow the sales or negotiations process to operate more efficiently and effectively (Miller 2017).

It is proposed that:

Proposition 3: Employees that have a need for hands-on leadership style will have a greater affinity for the following leadership types: servant and autocratic.

Proposition 4: Employees that have a need for hands-off leadership style will have a greater affinity for the following leadership types: charismatic and laissez-faire.

Typology Development

The propositions presented in the preceding section led to the creation of the following 2-by-2 typology (see figure 1). It draws on the descriptions of the four different leadership types and the two types of leadership styles. It argues that the four types of leadership are particular constellations of the two styles, and that the optimal leadership type depends on the need for each style exhibited or expressed by the salesperson. Given that most sales managers are former successful salespeople, this model is an extension of the adaptive selling paradigm (Spiro & Weitz 1990) that is applied to an internal customer and should be easy to implement. In many ways it functions similarly to the social style matrix (Merrill and Reid 1981) commonly referenced in adaptive selling, except that instead of adopting the other party's social style to better communicate,

the sales leader attempts to adapt their leadership type to meet the style needs of the salesperson. In addition, this typology draws on the foundation of full range leadership theory to show that needs internal to the follower can be used to select the optimal leadership style for an individual at a given time and that depending on where the employee falls on each axis the optimal style might involve a hybridization of styles. The model is also an application of Complexity Leadership Theory as proposed by Lichtenstein et al. (2006) as it accounts for the leadership process between individuals. This typology allows the categorization of individual style needs on the axes of transactional/transformational and hands-on/hands-off.

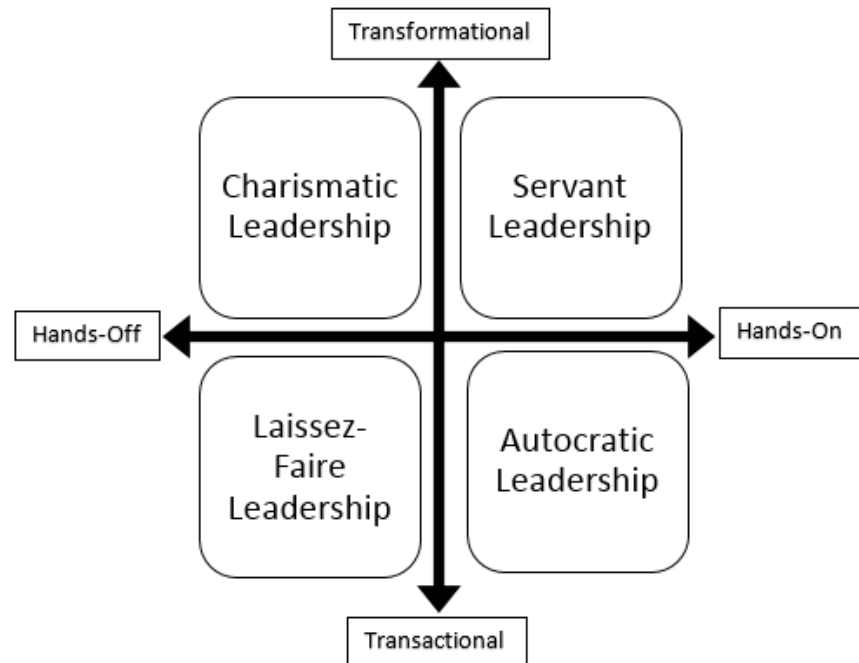


Figure 1:
Typology of Leadership Based on Sales Person Leadership Style Needs

IMPLICATIONS

The framework created from the extant literature on leadership in sales demonstrates that it is possible to come up with a typology of leadership styles based on individual level needs for certain leadership styles resulting in the selection of an optimal type of leadership for each salesperson. The research conducted allows a leadership style to be selected based on employee needs for two easily measured spectrums. Sales managers are able to determine which leadership style should be used for a given employee or in a given situation. Leaders that adapt to their employees and employees that adapt to their customers best navigate the unpredictable business environment. Charismatic leadership is transformational and hands-off. Servant leadership is transformational and hands-on. Laissez-faire leadership is transactional and hands-off. Autocratic leadership is transactional and hands-on.

The need to be adaptable in leadership and sales has been explained by many researchers, but there has not been a clear method to approach the different situations and stakeholders. This method allows sales managers to identify and implement the most successful style of leadership (including hybrid styles) given the salesperson's current needs based on clear measurements. This is more customized to the needs of the salesperson than attempting to categorize

salespeople into ambiguous categories based on perceived maturity as suggested by Hersey, Blanchard and Natemeyer (1979). This is also the first typology to propose selecting leadership style based on employee cognitions and desires rather than environmental context (e.g., adaptive leadership) as proposed by Heifetz et al. (2009) and DeRue (2011) or organizational needs as proposed by flexible leadership theory (Yukl and Mahsud 2010 and Kaiser and Overfield 2010). This model extends the notion of adaptability for sales leaders to include the needs of the followers in line with Anderson and Sun's (2017) call for a new full range theory of leadership.

The typology allows researchers to further explore how needed the different leadership styles are and if other leadership styles exist that would fit within the grid. Future research suggestions include identifying if it is possible to predict leadership style needs using the measures of the transformational/transactional style spectrum and the hands-on/hands-off style spectrum. Salespeople and managers will greatly benefit from having a more thorough understanding of how to adapt to different situations in selling, negotiations, and leadership. Adaptable salespeople and managers will allow more overall success in a company and economy when adaptability is understood and applied across the different sectors.

For sales managers, the implication is that they can use the adaptive abilities they gained as a successful salesperson to also be a successful sales manager. Just like adaptive selling is altering sales behavior based on perceived information about the selling situation across customer interactions or during a customer interaction (Spiro and Weitz 1990), adaptive leadership requires responding to environmental cues and the grid assists in this. As salespeople should determine whether a relational or transactional orientation would be appropriate by evaluating early on the context of customer interaction, sales leaders must do the same to their style based on interactions with their employees. Weitz (1981) also noted three key factors of relevance in the sales interaction as the adaptive use of influence techniques, the importance of establishing bases of influence, and the effectiveness of the adaptive use

of influence tactics; and these same factors play into successful adaptive sales leadership. Thus, the concept should be easily taught to sales managers and the typology proposed should serve as a guide as they select the best way to lead their teams.

Although the use of the typology will prove to be helpful for salespeople and managers to understand how to function, it is critical that the approach for each individual is reviewed on a regular basis. As people are gaining experience in their roles of an organization, they will likely have varying needs as they develop professionally in the organization. This can be implemented as the annual performance review is conducted at all levels of management and potentially more frequently for newer employees. As boundary spanners, salespeople often acquire an understanding of customers and products beyond that of their sales managers, making it important to acknowledge subjugated knowledge in coaching and leadership. Employees that have certain needs over time could benefit from being assigned a different manager based on the leadership style they typically use. Future research is needed on the best measures of the hands-on/hands-off and transactional/transformational dichotomies in order to predict leadership style need in salespeople and to assess the validity of the typology.

Future research in this area should examine the strength of the links between the proposed simple metrics and their ability to predict employees' stated need in terms of leadership styles (hands-on/hands-off and transactional/transformational) as well as their implicitly (e.g., behaviorally demonstrated) needed leadership style. Another important link is to determine if the congruity of the sales manager's leadership style with that of the salesperson (e.g., applying adaptive and flexible leadership based on an employee's leadership style need) leads to improved sales performance. Another avenue for future research is to compare performance outcomes of leadership style choice based on employee need, as proposed in this manuscript, versus performance outcomes of leadership style choices based on maturity, as proposed in situational leadership theory (Hersey, Blanchard and Natemeyer 1979, Meier 2016).

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