

This message was published in the *Wall Street Journal* recently:

People don't want to be managed.
They want to be led.
Whoever heard of a world manager?
World Leader, Yes
Educational Leader, Political Leader, Religious Leader, Scout Leader,
Community Leader, Union Leader, Business Leader.
They lead. They don't manage.
The carrot always wins over the stick.
Ask the horse.
You can lead your horse to water, but you can't **manage** it to drink.
If you want to manage somebody, manage yourself.
Do that well, and you'll be ready to stop managing and start leading.

Categories of management style

In the remainder of this session, we look at a range of different management styles and develop an understanding of the different ways in which managers can operate.

McGREGOR'S THEORY X AND Y

McGregor, a management researcher and psychologist, believed that the way we manage others is decided by the views we have about people in general: in other words, the assumptions we make about each other. McGregor carried out some research and came to the conclusion that there were basically two different views of the world which could be summed up by the statements:

- People are basically lazy and prefer to do nothing.
- People are basically enthusiastic and like achieving things.

He called these views theory X and theory Y assumptions respectively.

It should be stressed that McGregor talked about beliefs and not what we observe. In this way, he suggested that a manager's style was dependent upon his or her assumptions about others, and not necessarily what people actually did or how they actually performed. For example, if you hold the view that people are basically lazy, then in managing you will probably constantly watch over them and even do the job for them at the first sign of difficulty.

Some examples of the beliefs are listed in table 1.1.

Theory X beliefs	Theory Y beliefs
People are basically lazy and prefer to do nothing	People are basically active and like setting targets for themselves
People work mainly for money and status	People look for many things in work including pride in achievement, enjoyment, friendship or new challenges
The main force keeping people at work is their fear of being fired	The main force keeping people at work is the desire to achieve their own goals
People are dependent on leaders	People like to be independent
People do not want to think for themselves	People know what is needed and can think for themselves
People need to be supervised closely	People will do a good job if they are trusted
People resist change and like to stay in ruts	People get tired of routines and enjoy new experiences

Table 1.1: Examples of theory X and theory Y beliefs



ACTIVITY 4: QUESTION

Take an honest look at yourself and tick the boxes in Table 1.1 that you believe represent your beliefs about people. Consider for a moment whether these beliefs have, or would have, a significant effect on the behaviour you adopt while managing people.



ACTIVITY 4: ANSWER

You may find that you have a predominant set of beliefs, either X or Y; alternatively you may find yourself with a mixture of the two.

One of the main criticisms of McGregor's theory is that it is too simplistic; it attempts to categorise beliefs under only two headings rather than face the fact that people tend to have a mixture of views about people. Indeed, when managers are asked to carry out similar self-awareness tests, the most common view that emerges is that either 'Some people are Theory X and others are Theory Y' or 'Some of the time people are lazy (theory X) but under other circumstances they are enthusiastic and hard working (theory Y)'.

In fairness, we should state that McGregor was simply making the point that we all tend to have a preference for one view or the other, and that most of our management actions are influenced by those assumptions.

AUTOCRATIC/DEMOCRATIC CONTINUUM

Another way of looking at management style is the autocratic/democratic continuum. This continuum has two extremes of management styles: **total authority** with no discussion and no employee involvement in decision making at one end and **total participation** in decisions at the other. In between is a range of alternative styles as shown in figure 1.2. It shows that there is no one way of acting when making decisions.

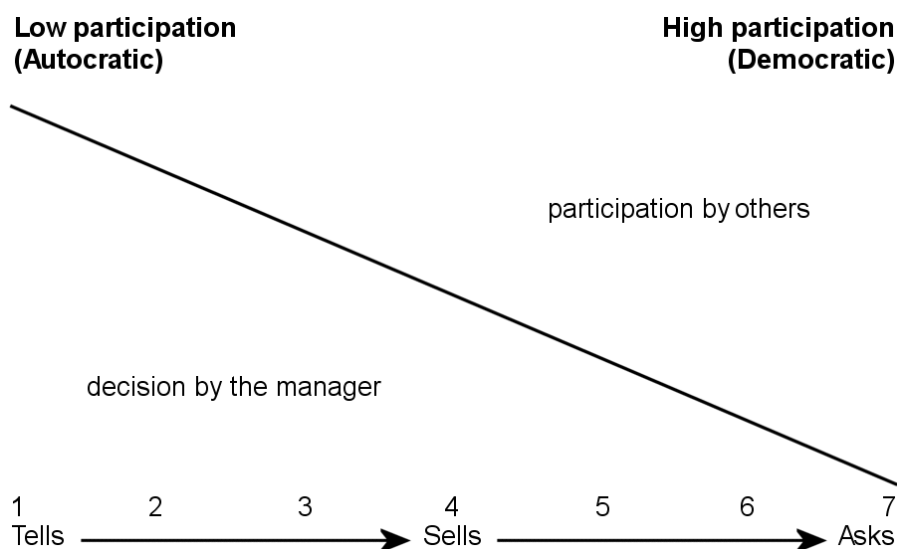


Figure 1.2: The autocratic/democratic continuum

The way a manager behaves can depend on the expectations of the individuals and the group with whom he or she is working, and his or her own ideas about being a manager. Choosing the appropriate style along the continuum can be a problem, particularly if you are naturally inclined towards one style and not very familiar with the other.

The style that operates within a group may vary according to the needs of the situation, so that a highly authoritarian style (with low participation in decision making) may be appropriate during an emergency (if, for example, a building catches fire) or when it is otherwise essential that all members of the group do the same thing (for example, during a surgical operation). In such cases the members of the group can achieve the objective most readily by acting in unity, even though the action taken may not be theoretically the 'best' action.

BLAKE'S GRID

Another look at management style comes from an idea by Blake who, like McGregor, was interested in the attitudes of managers. He saw that the basic problem for the manager is in balancing the need to finish the job with the needs of the people doing the job.

Concern for task	1.9				5.9					9.9
	1.5				5.5					9.5
	1.1				5.1					9.1

Concern for people

Figure 1.3: Blake's grid

In Blake's grid, we can see several combinations of numbers which refer to slightly different styles of management, with the first figure relating to people and the second to task.

- 1.1 – total abdication: no concern for task or people
- 1.5 – some concern for task but none for people
- 1.9 – high concern for task but none for people: the harsh autocrat
- 5.1 – some concern for people but none for task
- 5.5 – a medium concern for both task and people
- 5.9 – some concern for people but a higher concern for task
- 9.1 – high concern for people but none for task: 'the social-club manager'
- 9.5 – some concern for task but a higher concern for people
- 9.9 – a high concern for both task and people: 'the ideal manager'



ACTIVITY 5: QUESTION

The three ways of examining management style looked at so far, could be said to be observations of individuals' attitudes rather than specific managerial traits. On this basis, each of us possesses attitudes in one form or another even if we are not currently managing anybody or anything.

With this in mind, and as an exercise in self-awareness, identify your style in each of the three theories described in this section.

- Are you predominantly theory X or theory Y?
- Are you an autocrat or democrat?
- Are you task-oriented or people-oriented?

Attempt your self-analysis in the context of a current or recent activity you have undertaken with others, either as a manager or as a student.



ACTIVITY 5: ANSWER

There are some broad correlations between the three theories which should show in your self-analysis.

If you identified yourself as predominantly Theory X then one would expect a judgement on participation to lead towards the autocratic end of the spectrum. Equally, your style assessment on Blake's grid would lean towards 1.9 rather than 9.1 or 9.9.

If on the other hand you identify as a Theory Y person, then your Blake's grid position would be 9.1 or 5.1 and you would probably see yourself as democratic.

A more complex mixture of these theoretical types might suggest that you have a more flexible, situational style.

