



Becoming an Effective Leader of a Podiatric Practice

Which leadership style(s) works best for you?

BY JOHN V. GUILIANA, DPM, MS

We all strive to be great leaders. We recognize how important leadership is for gaining the trust and cooperation of our staff. However, leadership comes in many forms, and great leaders know how to adapt to changing environments and situations. Leadership involves guiding and influencing others toward achieving a common goal. It's a skill that comes easily for some physicians but is difficult for others. Leadership is a necessary ingredient for the success of any business, and podiatric practices are no different.

Leadership involves setting a vision for the future, setting a direction, and inspiring others to follow that path. It requires an understanding of your team's strengths and collaboration to achieve team success. However, leadership isn't a one-size-fits-all concept, especially in medicine. You must adapt to situations, personalities, and cultures to be an

effective leader. Extraordinary leaders rarely possess only one leadership style. While one type may dominate, their styles are often blended.

The seven most common leadership styles are:

1) The Autocratic Leader: This leader enjoys complete control. De-

team members, often resulting in higher motivation.

3) The Laissez-Faire Leader: This leader gives maximum freedom to the team and allows them to make decisions autonomously. While this level of empowerment sounds attractive, it could lead to a lack of direction or coordination if not managed effectively.

You must adapt to situations, personalities, and cultures to be an effective leader.

isions are often made without much input from the team. While this style can be efficient in certain situations, such as the small solo practice, it might suppress creativity and/or morale within a larger group practice.

2) The Democratic Leader: This type of leader involves the team in decision-making. That involvement allows for creativity, empowerment, and a sense of ownership among

4) The Transactional Leader: Leaders in this style focus on rewarding or punishing based on the outcomes. The leader operates on a system of rewards and consequences, often using a 'transactional' (monetary) approach to manage performance.

5) The Transformational Leader: This leadership style is frequent-

Continued on page 50

Effective Leader (from page 49)

ly favored by management experts. These leaders inspire and motivate their teams by setting a compelling vision, encouraging personal growth, and creating a positive work environment. This leadership style often creates higher staff engagement and commitment with reduced turnover.

6) The Servant Leader: This leadership style involves serving others first. Leaders prioritize the needs of their team members, creating a culture of empathy, support, and personal development.

7) The Charismatic Leader: Charismatic leaders possess magnetic personalities that draw people in. Their enthusiasm and vision inspire followers to work towards common goals with passion and dedication.

Again, it's important to emphasize that while some leaders naturally gravitate towards a particular style, influential leaders often adapt and

blend their approach based on the situation, the team, and their goals. Understanding which style works best in specific situations is crucial for effective leadership.

3) Learn from leadership articles and case studies to broaden your knowledge base.

4) Consider enrolling in leadership development programs, workshops, or courses.

5) Develop clear and concise communication skills. Articulating

13) Trust and empower your team members by delegating tasks. Delegation creates a sense of ownership.

14) Be patient. Leadership skills take time to develop. Embrace setbacks as learning experiences and persist in your journey towards success.

Remember that leadership development is a continuous journey. You

By embracing various leadership styles and continuously refining your skills, you will be better equipped to navigate the complexities of today's podiatric practice and guide your team toward success.

It's important to emphasize that while some leaders naturally gravitate towards a particular style, influential leaders often adapt and blend their approach based on the situation, the team, and their goals.

blend their approach based on the situation, the team, and their goals. Understanding which style works best in specific situations is crucial for effective leadership.

Developing leadership skills is an ongoing process that involves self-awareness, continuous learning, and practice. Here are some recommendations to enhance your leadership abilities:

1) Identify your strengths and weaknesses. This forms the foundation for your personal growth.

2) Request feedback from peers, mentors, or colleagues to gain insights into your leadership style and areas that need development. 360-degree performance reviews are helpful here, where you review the performance of the individual staff mem-

bers while they anonymously review you as their leader.

6) Understand and connect with others' emotions and perspectives. Empathy creates trust and stronger relationships within a team.

7) Always demonstrate honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior. Your actions set the tone for the team's conduct.

8) Hold yourself accountable for your actions and decisions. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them.

9) Adapt to change and be open to new ideas. Flexibility allows you to navigate through challenges and uncertainties.

10) Develop a problem-solving mentality. Encourage your staff to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth.

11) Seek guidance from experienced leaders. Mentorship provides valuable insight and advice.

12) Build relationships within and outside of podiatry. Networking exposes you to new perspectives and opportunities for learning.

can become a more effective and impactful leader by consistently refining your skills.

Lastly, it's important to note that leadership isn't a fixed concept. Leadership is a fluid and dynamic skill that constantly evolves. Effective leaders understand that success isn't just about achieving goals. It's also about empowering those around them and helping the team grow as individuals. By embracing various leadership styles and continuously refining your skills, you will be better equipped to navigate the complexities of today's podiatric practice and guide your team toward success. Leadership goes well beyond merely being in charge. It's mostly about inspiring growth and creativity as you develop a successful practice. **PM**



Dr. Guiliana is a nationally recognized speaker and author on topics pertaining to medical practice management. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management and holds a Master's Degree in Healthcare

Management. He has authored numerous columns in various journals and is the co-author of *31½ Essentials to Running Your Medical Practice*, as well as *The Million Dollar Practice...Keys to Success*. Dr. Guiliana is currently a Medical Director of Podiatry for Modernizing Medicine's award-winning technology. He can be reached at John.guiliana@modmed.com.