

THE MANY FACES OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

GOALS:

1. Identify the difference between an organizational Administrative Leader's and an Organizational Supervisor's Roles.
2. Clarify the successful role and necessary intellectual qualities of an Administrative Leader.
3. Recognize the difference between the appropriate use of urgent, democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, and hybrid Administrative Leadership behavior.
4. Increase awareness of the leadership concept and expected leadership behavior related to IT ALL DEPENDS.
5. Provide considerations for the hiring of an Administrative Leader.

COMPARING ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP ROLES WITH SUPERVISORY LEADERSHIP ROLES

As it is with most things in life---to truly understand and know what something IS, you must understand and know what something IS NOT. Therefore, it is helpful to understand the difference between the administrative leadership role and the administrative supervisory role in an organization. A comparison of an organization's Administrative Leader role and an organization's Administrative Supervisor role is as follows:

An "Administrative Leader" is a person who is responsible for making and enforcing leadership decisions for an entire organization.

An "Administrative Supervisor" is a person under the direction of an Administrative Leader within an organization and is responsible for managing, monitoring, and regulating a designated portion of the organization or staff performance.

ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEADER'S ROLE

An Administrative Leader of an organization is the ultimate person who determines organizational accountability and understands the intellectual, systematic, and commercial workings of an entire organization. This person holds Administrative Supervisors accountable for managing employee behaviors according to established organizational employee policies/guidelines.

The Administrative Leader is the ultimate person "in the know" who requires positive organizational behavior(s). Ultimate successful outcomes happen by maintaining positive behaviors that are goal-oriented and objective-related—and hopefully, an organization is "smart enough" to have such clear guidelines of organizational expectations in place. Goals are related to long-term outcomes, whereas objectives are related to short-term outcomes designed to help attain long-term goals. The Organizational Leader directs and evaluates the Administrative Supervisor's performance to comply with the Administrative Supervisor's job description.

THE “IT ALL DEPENDS” LEADERSHIP STYLES & RELATIONSHIP TO THE THREE AMIGOS

The effective role of the Administrative Leader requires an intellectual understanding of the different personal leadership styles (see below) and when to use one style or another to maintain organizational/business stability. The Administrative Leader’s choice of behavior(s) or action(s) for getting any leadership job accurately accomplished always requires the Administrative Leader to think and behave according to the leadership concept of IT ALL DEPENDS. This “smartness” needed to determine the most effective administrative leadership style depends on personal psychological astuteness (cunning), critical thinking, and common sense. These three intellectual happenings in the behavior of an Administrative Leader are known as The Three Amigos. They are actively required to determine effective intellectual leadership behaviors.

As an Administrative Leader, carefully consider choosing a leadership style according to the IT ALL DEPENDS criteria to manage and solve an organization’s situation or problem. Choosing an administrative leadership style according to the concept of IT ALL DEPENDS is carefully determined and can be altered to another style during each group process as appropriate. The Administrative Leader’s intellect is evident when appropriate uses/choices of a leadership style(s) are determined by intellectual ability and thinking. The ability to choose a suitable leadership style using the IT ALL DEPENDS concept supports the assumption that the more intellectual an Administrative Leader is, the more varied use and appropriately accurate leadership style using IT ALL DEPENDS will occur.

UNDERSTANDING “IT ALL DEPENDS” STYLES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEADER

URGENT LEADERSHIP STYLE: This approach is like “the house is burning down, and the occupants are at risk.” The Administrative Leader’s communication is immediate, firm, direct, specific, time-oriented, and with no opportunity for further explanation or discussion.

AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE: This approach gives firm direction(s) by the Administrative Leader as to the expected required behavior of employees. The autocratic expectations are anticipated to be persistent, ongoing, and not open to employee deliberation. It provides minimal opportunities for behavioral choices and sets standards of required behavior and expectations of immediate and continuous performance. The context of this leadership behavior means that decisions are administratively leadership-determined, and performance expectations relative to those decisions are and will be required. This style is often used by Administrative Leaders who rely on structure and authoritarian behavior to control employees.

DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP: This approach allows group discussions, directions, and appropriate decisions made by all organization participants. It requires the Administrative Leader to listen carefully to organizational participants’ and group input and clarify participant contributions—perhaps by listing options for visualization and group voting. Despite participant democratic participation, a democratic leadership approach retains control of the democratic process to maintain the group’s long-term goal(s) or short-term objectives. Democratic leadership often involves more group participation and results in compliance regarding the final decision(s).

LAISSE FAIRE LEADERSHIP: This approach is evidence of no true administrative leadership. The “La-de-da” attitude, behavior, and choices say clearly that no true leadership exists. Organizational goals and objectives flounder, and employees are in disarray regarding expected behavior. There is no administrative leadership attempt to curtail the progressive movement toward Entropy—a thermodynamic physics principle that everything in the universe moves toward randomness unless its stability is controlled. An uncontrolled movement toward Entropy (randomness) always increases with time without administrative control. This lack of order or predictability causes a gradual decline in organizational order. It is wise to remember that employees might love their uncontrolled “freedom,” but the outcome of unrestrained Entropy results in organizational disaster and disarray wherein the random disorganization results in organizational chaos that, once allowed to happen, is almost impossible to regain administrative control.

HYBRID LEADERSHIP: This approach combines (as required and needed) the Urgent, Autocratic, and Democratic Leadership behaviors in a combination as required and in a timely fashion that holds Entropy (a natural universal movement of all things toward randomness) at bay and uses any of the leadership styles individually or in combination to appropriately result in the meeting of the organizational goals, objectives, and processes.

Using this approach usually requires an Organizational Leader to make clear to the organizational employees the intended timely and variable use of leadership approaches to meet the organization’s goals and objectives. The hybrid choice allows for timely leadership style flexibility determined by the current situation and intended outcome(s). It frees administrative leadership behaviors to be more intellectual and flexible in determining a leadership style and expectations. The Three Amigos (psychological astuteness, critical thinking, and common sense) add to the philosophical and flexible use of leadership styles because the choice of leadership style(s) is/are determined by IT ALL DEPENDS.

The hybrid approach provides the most leadership freedom in leadership behaviors as there is an attempt to have the leadership process fit the most accurate (and possibly most successful) approach for promoting compliance to cognitive requirements, psychomotor expectations, and positive attitudes related to job performance. Whatever leadership choice(s) of behavior is/are selected, the Administrative Leader determines the hybrid decisions and their use to promote the most effective outcome.

The Administrative Leader’s situation determines the leadership style outcome---and IT ALL DEPENDS. However, a confident Administrative Leader announces the expectations firmly and confidently regardless of the choice of a leadership style. The intellectual way an Administrative Leader chooses to lead to accomplishing the goals and objectives of the organization is varied and determined carefully to produce a desirable outcome(s).

Therefore, be reminded that the Administrative Leader choices of leadership behavior in the important role of Administrative Leader needs to be varied according to IT ALL DEPENDS and requires awareness of the chosen leadership style that can be substantiated when a leader is called upon to explain the final decision of a selected leadership style. Selection of an appropriate leadership style, according to IT ALL DEPENDS, informs all who observe such changes in an Administrative Leader’s behavior that psychological astuteness, critical thinking, and common sense have determined the observed leadership behaviors---and because of this difference (according to the concept of IT ALL DEPENDS on a leadership

style), negative organizational circumstances are eradicated, and the positive organizational circumstances are improved.

HIRING OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE LEADER

If an organization is directed to select an Administrative Leader to prevent “the fall of their Rome” (so the saying goes), they need to be very alert about the personality, past behaviors, and intellectual abilities of the Administrative Leader who is allowed to acquire such a powerful role as an Organization Leader! Establish criteria that will help assess potential leadership flexibility in IT ALL DEPENDS Administrative Leadership behaviors according to a situation and the natural ability to comply with the intellectual requirements of THE THREE AMIGOS (See above).

Perhaps the interviewing committee of a potential Administrative Leader could provide likely scenarios wherein the potential Administrative Leader must choose from the IT ALL DEPENDS list and, without coercive intervention, what administrative leadership style BEST suits the presented specific scenario(s) provided by the interviewing committee.

Listen carefully for the desired flexibility of the potential Administrative Leader regarding the philosophical use of an Administrative Leader style (Urgent, Democratic, Autocratic, Laissez-faire, or Hybrid). Note the flexibility and reasonable explanation by the potential Administrative Leader for their intellectual choice of administrative behavior(s) and leadership rationale for their choice of administrative behavior(s). Determine the degree and understanding of “IT ALL DEPENDS” in performing Administrative Leadership styles. Listen for the verbal evidence of the intended use of psychological astuteness, critical thinking, and common sense (The Three Amigos) as the type of leadership style is determined.

Leadership—true leadership—is more than just doing! It is thinking clearly and choosing the accurate style of leadership behaviors, attitudes, and desirable outcomes. Intellectual smartness in the administrative leadership role clearly says that the chosen, outstanding, and most effective leadership style occurs according to the concept that IT ALL DEPENDS!

Carolyn R. Taylor, Ed.D. MN RN.