



# Leadership Styles featuring Servant Leadership

Credit Research Foundation- March Forum  
Yesinne Alvarez-Creditsafe US

Partnerships, Alliances & Trade Data Manager

March 18, 2025



# LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT STYLES



**1939 Kurt Lewis was the first to identify different leadership styles**



**We have since formalized leadership and management theories**



**The most common and studied ones are:**

Transformational Leadership- Inspiring & motivating  
Delegative- granting & fostering significant autonomy  
Transactional – clear structure & clearly defined roles  
Democratic- consensus building  
Authoritative-Visionary & clear direction  
Servant Leadership- prioritizing team members needs above their own

## TODAY'S FOCUS

Explore a deeper dive into Servant Leadership

While servant leadership is a timeless concept, the phrase “servant leadership” was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970.

A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the “top of the pyramid,” servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

Robert Greenleaf was a management executive at AT&T

Courtesy of [Greenleaf.org](http://Greenleaf.org), Greenleaf center for Servant Leadership, Seton Hall University

- Roots of this philosophy : Drawn from ancient philosophies, religious principles, and ethical frameworks emphasizing humility, service, and care.



# KEY PRINCIPALS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Listening: Leaders actively seek input and feedback.

Empathy: Understanding and addressing the needs of others.

Healing: Fostering emotional and mental well-being in the workplace.

Awareness: Being self-aware and understanding the impact of actions.

Persuasion: Influencing through dialogue rather than authority.

Conceptualization: Balancing day-to-day operations with big-picture thinking.

Foresight: Anticipating outcomes and planning accordingly.

Stewardship: Being accountable for the organization and its purpose.

Commitment to Growth: Investing in the personal and professional development of team members.

Building Community: Creating a sense of belonging and collaboration.

# THAT'S A LOT OF PRINCIPALS



How do you put it into action?



Encourage Collaboration  
Actively listen to your team members  
Lead with humility and integrity  
Promote work-life balance  
Offer mentorship and guidance  
Be accessible



Raghash G. Menon Blog: " Servant Leadership in Action" Jul. 6, 2024

## EXAMPLES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

### Chick-Fil-A

Every time an executive chooses to be last in line, or a restaurant staff member runs out in the rain to escort a mother and her children inside under an umbrella, Chick-fil-A founder Truett's example of servant leadership lives on.

### Fedex

FedEx has built a servant leadership culture. FedEx believes that engaged employees – individuals **who trust the organizational goals** and have a strong desire to contribute – will implement the organizational plan and ultimately ensure the **success of the organization**.

### SAS-Scandinavian Airlines

Jim Goodnight, founder and CEO of SAS says “Treat employees as if they make a difference and they will.”

### WD-40

Garry Ridge, the Chairman and CEO of WD-40, believes that “*Leadership is about learning and teaching*”. He co-authored a book called ‘Helping People Win at Work’ with Ken Blanchard.

# I AM NOT A CEO



How can YOU as a manager adopt and implement Servant Leadership strategies?



Meet one-on-one with team members and spend that time talking about skills, goals and challenges



Offer career guidance and promote upskilling and continuing education



Create feedback sessions to elicit management feedback and idea sharing on better ways to do things



Elicit buy-in for new ideas and changes that may be made by others but will impact the team



Get in the habit of using **WE** and **US** rather than **YOU** and **ME**

# APPLICATIONS FOR DAY TO DAY



---

## Change Management-

---

Listen to the concerns of those affected  
Show empathy toward their fears and anxiety  
Allow them to share ideas about the change ( form a change team)

---

## Team Dynamics-

---

Regular team meetings or feedback sessions  
Establish mentorship programs to encourage knowledge share  
Honest Self-Evaluation ( did I communicate clearly as a leader?)  
Encourage working together rather than competing ( breakdown silos)



# DAY TO DAY BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

## Examples of Change Management- Servant Leadership opportunities

New Credit or A/R Software

Implementing an Online Credit App

Applying Gen AI capabilities to collections

Changes in team reporting structure

Lay -offs-responsibility redistribution

All of these will test your Servant Leadership abilities to keep the team motivated and engages while allowing them to communicate their feelings.

## DAY TO DAY BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

Examples of Team Dynamics issues –Servant Leadership Opportunities

Personality clashes

Different work styles- individual contributor vs. Team player

Difficulty sharing information-Afraid to cross train

Focus on the Shared Goals not on Winning

*" How Servant Leaders Deal with Conflict" by Lyle Tard, Technical Sargeant US AirForce*

## FINAL THOUGHTS ON CONFLICT



When dealing with conflict,



The servant leader provides an impartial perspective to each party, and works together with both to build trust. The leader sifts through their bias, past experiences and existing track record to debunk unfounded assumptions and bring positiveness to the table. The leader encourages communication, and the celebration of small wins for both sides until there's enough trust between them.



"How to Resolve Conflict Like a Servant Leader" , published in The Startup,, Omar Rabbolini



## KEY TAKEAWAYS



Servant Leadership is another tool to help you as a manager and leader

You can apply some of principles to what you already do as part of your management style

Or you can apply all principles if you are engaging in a major change or leading a fairly new team that is still building trust

Share your Servant Leadership learnings and successes with your senior management team as part of your monthly or quarterly reporting

Remember to ask for continuous feedback from your team to encourage constant communication.

Continue to read blogs, articles ,or listen to podcasts on servant leadership examples for continued inspiration.

Thank you for your time.

Questions- [Yesinne.Alvarez@Creditsafe.com](mailto:Yesinne.Alvarez@Creditsafe.com)