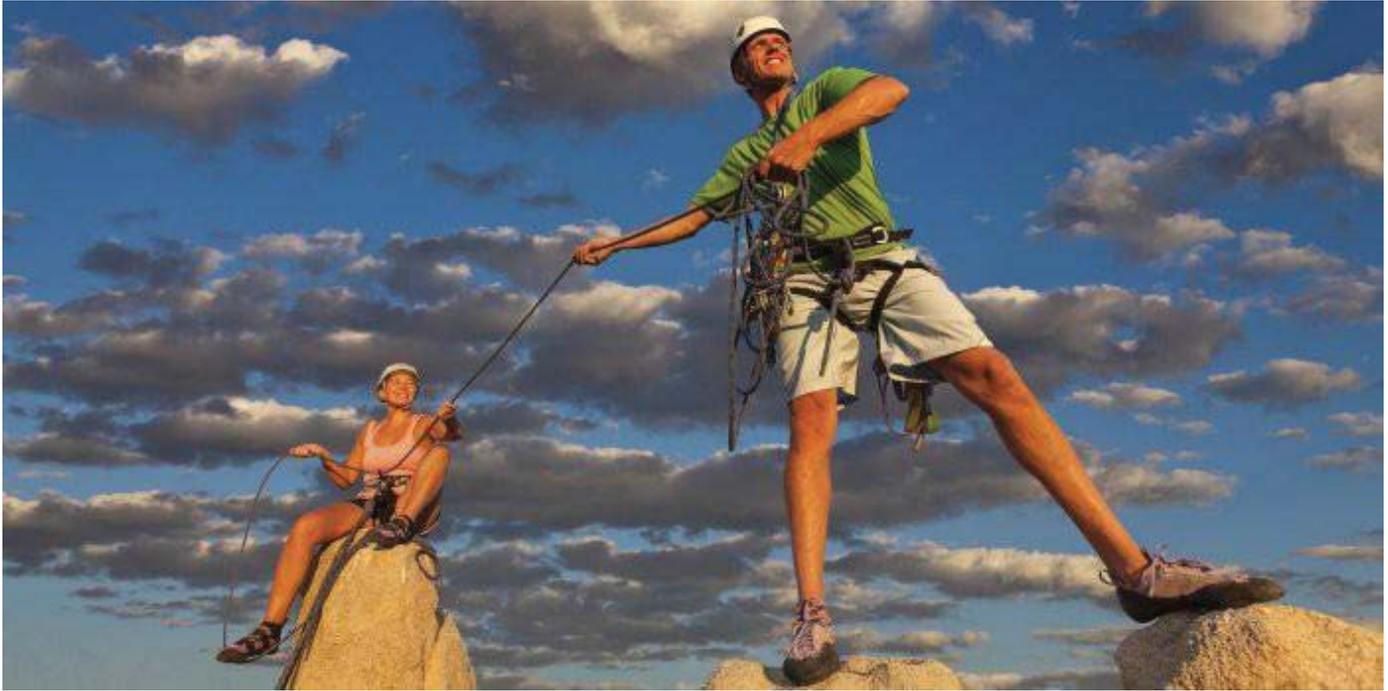


The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid

Source: MindTools.com- June, 2016

Leading People and Producing Results



When you recruit a new member to your team, what's your priority? Is it to run through the company's mission with him or her, and to explain the first year's objectives? Or, is it more important for you to understand his strengths and interests, and give him tasks that best suit those strengths?

Both approaches are important, but how you prioritize them can reveal a great deal about your style of leadership. Some leaders simply want to get things done. Others prioritize their people's happiness. And some will try to combine the two. If you prefer to set and enforce tight schedules, then you'll likely be more production-oriented (or task-oriented).

If you try to accommodate your team members' needs, then you're more people-oriented.

No one leadership style is best for all situations, but it's useful to understand what your natural approach is, so you can develop skills that you may be missing. It's unwise to neglect either tasks or people. But, equally, a compromise between the two approaches will likely result in only average team performance, because you neither meet people's needs nor inspire excellent performance.

The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid

Source: MindTools.com- June, 2016

In this article, we look at the Blake Mouton Managerial Grid, a popular framework for thinking about a leader's "task versus person" orientation. Also known as the Managerial Grid, or Leadership Grid, it was developed in the early 1960s by management theorists Robert Blake and Jane Mouton. It plots a manager's or leader's degree of task-centeredness versus her person-centeredness, and identifies five different combinations of the two and the leadership styles they produce.

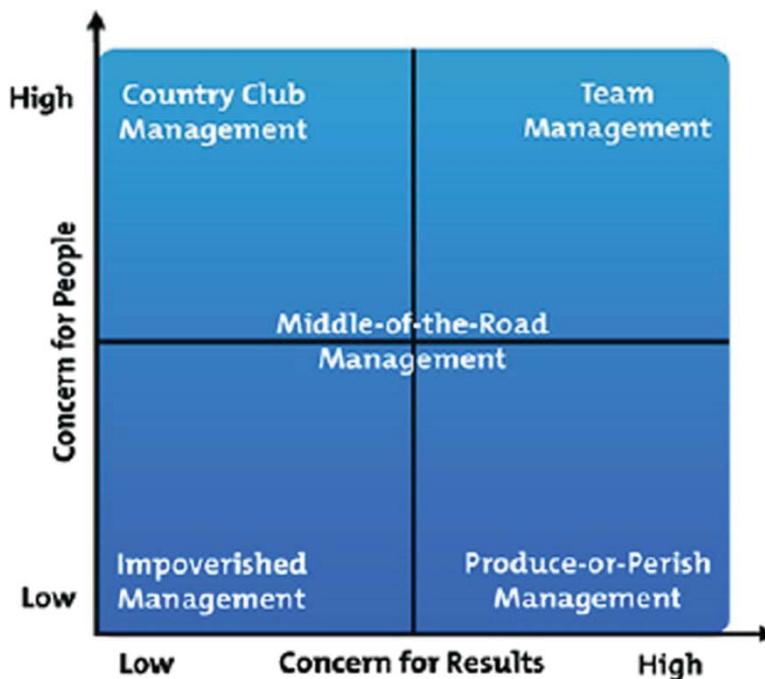
Understanding the Model

The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid is based on two behavioral dimensions:

- **Concern for People:** this is the degree to which a leader considers team members' needs, interests and areas of personal development when deciding how best to accomplish a task.
- **Concern for Results:** this is the degree to which a leader emphasizes concrete objectives, organizational efficiency and high productivity when deciding how best to accomplish a task.

Blake and Mouton defined five leadership styles based on these, as illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 1 - The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid



The Leadership Grid® figure from Leadership Dilemmas - Grid Solutions by Robert R. Blake and Anne Adams McCanse (formerly the Managerial Grid by Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton). Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, Copyright 1991 by Grid International, Inc.

The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid

Source: MindTools.com- June, 2016

Impoverished Management - Low Results/Low People

The Impoverished or “indifferent” manager is mostly ineffective. With a low regard for creating systems that get the job done, and with little interest in creating a satisfying or **motivating team environment**, his results are inevitably disorganization, dissatisfaction and disharmony.

Produce-or-Perish Management - High Results/Low People

Also known as “authoritarian” or “authority-compliance” managers, people in this category believe that their team members are simply a means to an end. The team’s needs are always secondary to its productivity.

This type of manager is autocratic, has strict work rules, policies and procedures, and can view punishment as an effective way of motivating team members. This approach can drive impressive production results at first, but low team morale and motivation will ultimately affect people’s performance, and this type of leader will struggle to retain high performers.

She probably adheres to the Theory X approach to motivation, which assumes that employees are naturally unmotivated and dislike working. A manager who believes people are self-motivated and happy to work is said to follow Theory Y. You can learn more about these theories in our article, Theory X and Theory Y.

Middle-of-the-Road Management - Medium Results/Medium People

A Middle-of-the-Road or “status quo” manager tries to balance results and people, but this strategy is not as effective as it may sound. Through continual compromise, he fails to inspire high performance and also fails to meet people’s needs fully. The result is that his team will likely deliver only mediocre performance.

Country Club Management - High People/Low Results

The Country Club or “accommodating” style of manager is most concerned about her team members’ needs and feelings. She assumes that, as long as they are **happy** and secure, they will work hard.

What tends to be the result is a work environment that is very relaxed and fun, but where productivity suffers because there is a lack of direction and control.

The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid

Source: MindTools.com- June, 2016

Team Management - High Production/High People

According to the Blake Mouton model, Team management is the most effective leadership style. It reflects a leader who is passionate about his work and who does the best he can for the people he works with.

Team or "sound" managers commit to their organization's goals and mission, motivate the people who report to them, and work hard to get people to stretch themselves to deliver great results. But, at the same time, they're inspiring figures who look after their teams. Someone led by a Team manager feels respected and empowered, and is committed to achieving her goals.

Team managers prioritize both the organization's production needs and their people's needs. They do this by making sure that their team members understand the **organization's purpose**, and by involving them in determining production needs. When

people are committed to, and have a stake in, the organization's success, their needs and production needs coincide. This creates an environment based on trust and respect, which leads to high satisfaction, motivation and excellent results. Team managers likely adopt the Theory Y approach to motivation, as we mentioned above.

Note:

Blake and his colleagues added two more leadership styles after Mouton's death in 1987, although neither appears on the grid itself, for the reasons explained below.

- **Paternalistic Management.** A Paternalistic manager will jump between the Country Club and Produce-or-Perish styles. This type of leader can be supportive and encouraging, but will also guard his own position - he won't appreciate anyone questioning the way he thinks.
- **Opportunistic Management.** This doesn't appear on the grid because this style can show up anywhere within it. An Opportunistic manager places her own needs first, shifting around the grid to adopt whichever style will benefit her. She will manipulate and take advantage of others to get what she wants.

The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid

Source: MindTools.com- June, 2016

Applying the Blake Mouton Managerial Grid

It is important to understand your management or leadership style, so that you can then identify ways of reaching the target position of Team manager.

Step One: Identify Your Managerial Style

- List five or six recent situations where you were the leader.
- For each situation, place yourself on the grid according to where you believe you fit.
- Use our self-assessment leadership quiz to help you spot your traits.

Step Two: Identify Areas Where You Can Improve and Develop Your Leadership Skills

- Look at your current approach. Are you settling for "Middle-of-the-Road" because it's easier than reaching for more? Think about whether your style suits the situation you are in.
- If you feel that you are too task-oriented, then you can try to involve your team members in creative problem solving, improve how you communicate with them, or work on your mentoring skills. Or, if you tend to focus too much on people, it may mean becoming clearer about scheduling and **monitoring project progress**, or improving your decision making.
- Continually monitor your performance and watch for situations where you slip back into bad old **habits**.

Step Three: Put the Grid in Context

The Team management style is often the most effective approach, but there are situations that call for more attention to one area than the other. For example, if your company is in the middle of a merger or some other significant change, then it can be acceptable to place a higher emphasis on people than on production, to guide them and reassure them through a potentially difficult time. Likewise, when faced with an emergency, an economic hardship, or a physical risk, concerns about people may be put to one side, for the short term at least, to achieve good results and efficiency.

The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid

Source: MindTools.com- June, 2016

Note:

Theories of leadership have moved on a certain amount since Blake and Mouton proposed their model half a century ago. In particular, the context in which leadership occurs is seen as an important driver of **leadership style**. And in many situations, the Team manager as an ideal has shifted towards the **"Transformational Leader."** So use the Managerial Grid as a helpful model for identifying your basic leadership style, but don't treat it as an "eternal truth."

Key Points

The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid helps you to think about your leadership style and its effects on your team's productivity and motivation.

By plotting "concern for results" against "concern for people," the grid highlights how placing too much

emphasis on one area at the expense of the other leads to poor results.

It also discourages a vague Middle-of-the-Road compromise.

The model proposes that, when concern for both people and results are high, employee engagement and productivity will likely be excellent.

While the grid does not entirely address the complexity of "which leadership style is best?," it certainly provides an excellent starting point for thinking about your own performance and for improving your general leadership skills.