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Leading Up in the Organization: A Model for Increased Effectiveness

ABSTRACT

The primary focus in the leadership and management literature is on the process of the downward influence in organizations. In fact, it is only recently that the process of leading up or managing up within the organizational setting has been addressed to any great extent in the literature. This article addresses the use of the behavioral style paradigm as a tool for effective upward leadership for the benefit of individuals and their organizations. An actual case is used, involving a leadership interface between a vice president for sales and her president. The concept of behavioral style, with its various interactive dimensions and four basic styles, is introduced and analyzed. The strengths, weaknesses and communication orientations of each of the four styles are also analyzed and applied to the case situation. Finally, the importance of understanding the primary backup styles of individuals and the key role of Style Flex in leading one's supervisor are thoroughly discussed and analyzed.

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