

# Just Ask Leadership Assessment



Report for: Chris Sample

December 3, 20XX

Surveys completed for you: Self = 1 Others = 4

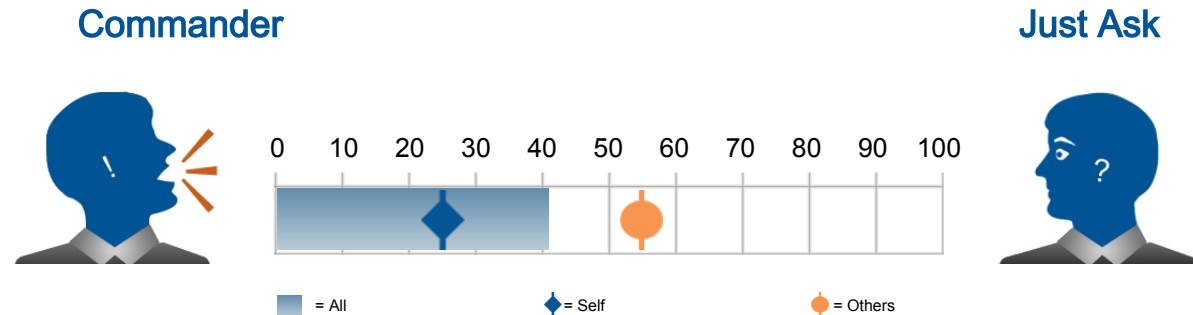
Requires 2 Other surveys for the Other score to be reported

“If you want a wise answer, ask  
a reasonable question.”

- Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

## Your Just Ask Number™: 41

Based on your behavior you are seen as a Commander leader.



### Interpretation

Your Just Ask Number indicates you tend to command rather than ask. You rank in the bottom half of leaders surveyed, in terms of Just Ask Leadership skills.

Your approach works best when problems are simple and you have time to answer all the questions asked of you. You run into difficulty, though, when it comes to motivating others, maximizing productivity, and creating a unified team of accountable coworkers. Your coworkers aren't fully engaged because you make too many decisions for them. While you garner accomplishments and accolades, and learn from failures, your team members are under-utilized and under-challenged.

As your responsibilities grow, you won't be able to continue to do others' work as effectively as you have historically. Technology and processes change so frequently that you will struggle to keep pace. There are only so many jobs one person can do well, and for so long. You likely rose through the ranks by relying on your problem-solving skills and haven't needed to trust others, but it's time to start. Otherwise, your best and brightest coworkers may leave for more challenging and rewarding work elsewhere.

Take a close look at the graph above. If the diamond ♦ (indicating your self-assessment) and the circle ● (indicating the collective responses of your coworkers) are more than ten points apart, you ought to reconcile this discrepancy. Either you judged yourself too harshly or too lightly. Ask yourself:

- Why is my perception different than others'?
- What can I do to bridge the gap?

It's important to reach clarity here—sooner rather than later—so that you can uproot faulty assumptions and so your coworkers know that you are working to address their

concerns. Just Ask coaching and training can help you align your perception with others' if you're unable to on your own or in discussions with your team.

If your perceptions are already in sync, it's a good sign that you and your team feel similarly about your current approach, but you've got work to do to improve your question-asking skills. Start by employing the Just Ask strategies and PEAK Leadership results in this report.

Your Just Ask Number indicates that you may benefit from the coaching and training options offered by Just Ask Leadership. With our help, you can turn coworkers into devoted followers—grateful for the results you helped them achieve!

Encourage your coworkers to obtain their own Just Ask 360° assessments. Then watch as their question-asking improves and your organization's direction becomes sharper.

## Just Ask Leadership: A Primer

“Would you rather be asked for your input or told what to do?”

Good questions generate thought, focus, and action from the listener. They also convey respect. Maybe that’s why 95% of leaders prefer to be asked questions, rather than told what to do. And yet, according to a survey I conducted, these same leaders give instructions 58% of the time, rather than asking coworkers for their input!

It’s time for leaders to practice the type of leadership they most prefer themselves. If you want to lead and motivate others, questions are the answer.

Most leaders understand the value of questions in the abstract. They can’t always distinguish between a good and great question, however. And sometimes they ask bad questions—ones that are really just commands in disguise.

Just Ask leaders ask open-ended questions and adopt a not-knowing approach. There’s an important gap between assuming to know and actually knowing the best answer. Assumptions are often flawed—due to emotional bias, incomplete information, and outdated knowledge. Just Ask leaders don’t let their assumptions inhibit their coworkers’ discovery processes. They entrust decisions to their coworkers completely, then hold them accountable for the results. This accountability and ownership of decisions builds employee engagement.

Commanders may arrive at equally good decisions, but they rarely get full buy-in from their coworkers, who don’t have an ownership stake.

“There are no foolish questions and no one becomes a fool until they have stopped asking questions.”

Which of the following best describes your leadership approach—Group A or Group B?

### Group A

- Have the answers and act on them
- Individually produce results
- Take responsibility for the key goals of their organization
- Rely on their strong knowledge base to derive decisions
- Encourage conformity
- Trust their own judgments
- Show commitment to positive business results
- Spend time directing actions
- Use others' skills to accomplish own aims
- Tell more than Ask

### Group B

- Suspend belief so that the best, unbiased answers rise to the top
- Leverage others' expertise to generate results
- Trust others to succeed at achieving critical goals within their areas of expertise
- Ask the right question at the right time to derive decisions
- Encourage others to share differing options
- Trust the judgment of their team
- Show genuine positive regard for their team
- Spend time developing team members to succeed
- Fully engage others
- Ask more than Tell

Just Ask leaders fall into Group B. They have positive regard for their team members' professional expertise. They listen and act on team suggestions, even putting their own success at risk by empowering others to accomplish important tasks. This risk is offset by the amazing rewards of a fully engaged team. Just Ask leaders are significantly more likely than commanders to ensure accountability in ways that maximizes productivity, build a unified work environment, and motivate others to maximize results.

In fact, in a recent survey, 100% of people working for Just Ask Leaders indicated that the leader was "extremely strong" or "outstanding" at "motivating others to maximize results," whereas only 45% of people working for a Commander said the same thing.\*

Those are amazing rewards you soon could be enjoying—once you learn your specific PEAK questioning style and the nuances of Just Ask Leadership!

\* Research conducted by 4ROI on 98 organizational leaders and HR professionals that volunteered to use the Just Ask Leadership Assessment from a wide cross-section of industries and geographical locations. Participants were asked to complete an assessment and ask up to five people that they lead to do the same. The assessment measured Just Ask skills, which classifies approximately 50% of leaders as Just Ask and includes a separate independent measure of leadership effectiveness.

# Just Ask Leadership Dimensions

Questions can be process-focused or outcome-focused, or a mixture of both. While leaders don't always ask the same kind of question, they do display preferences—whether they're aware of it or not. The questions they ask drive their leadership behavior, establish their preferences, and guide their coworkers' reactions.

## Process Dimension

Process questions encourage team members to gain broader **perspective** or to **evaluate** against performance criteria. While some leaders tend to look for more, new, and creative alternatives, others narrow the selection by comparing and contrasting against predetermined standards.

Perspective-focused leaders tend to value divergent thinking while Evaluative-oriented leaders place more value on convergent thinking.

Are your questions geared toward developing perspective or evaluating performance?

Perspective	
Direction	Divergent
Focus	To Explore Possibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To generate new ideas</li> <li>• To identify alternatives                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Key Word	Options
Motivation	Exploring Alternatives
Personal Skill	Brainstorming
Evaluative	
Direction	Convergent
Focus	To Form Conclusions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assess alternatives</li> <li>• To prioritize alternatives                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Key Word	Conclusions
Motivation	Creating Focus
Personal Skill	Evaluating



## Outcome Dimension

Outcome questions encourage team members to take **action** or gain **knowledge**. While both are critical to success, some leaders place a greater emphasis on moving people to action and achievement, while others focus on gathering knowledge to make sound decisions.

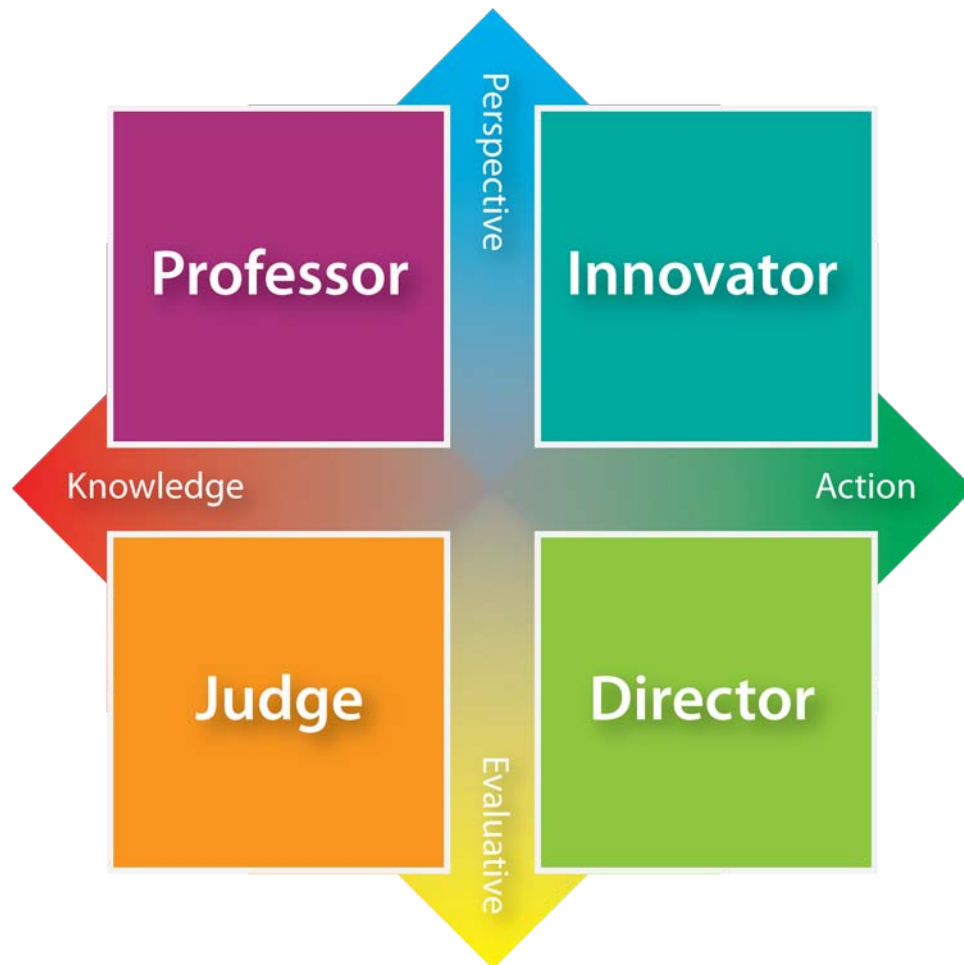
Do your questions motivate others to take future action or gain current knowledge?



Knowledge		Action
Current	Direction	Future
To Gather Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand current capabilities and agreed facts</li> <li>• To learn from past experiences</li> <li>• To build comprehension</li> </ul>	Focus	To Move to Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inspire</li> <li>• To generate experience</li> <li>• To build accountability</li> </ul>
Thinking	Key Word	Driving
Gathering Understanding	Motivation	Motivating Behavior
Discovering	Personal Skill	Motivating

# Just Ask Leadership

By combining the Outcome and Process Dimensions, four leadership styles emerge.



# Just Ask Leadership Orientation

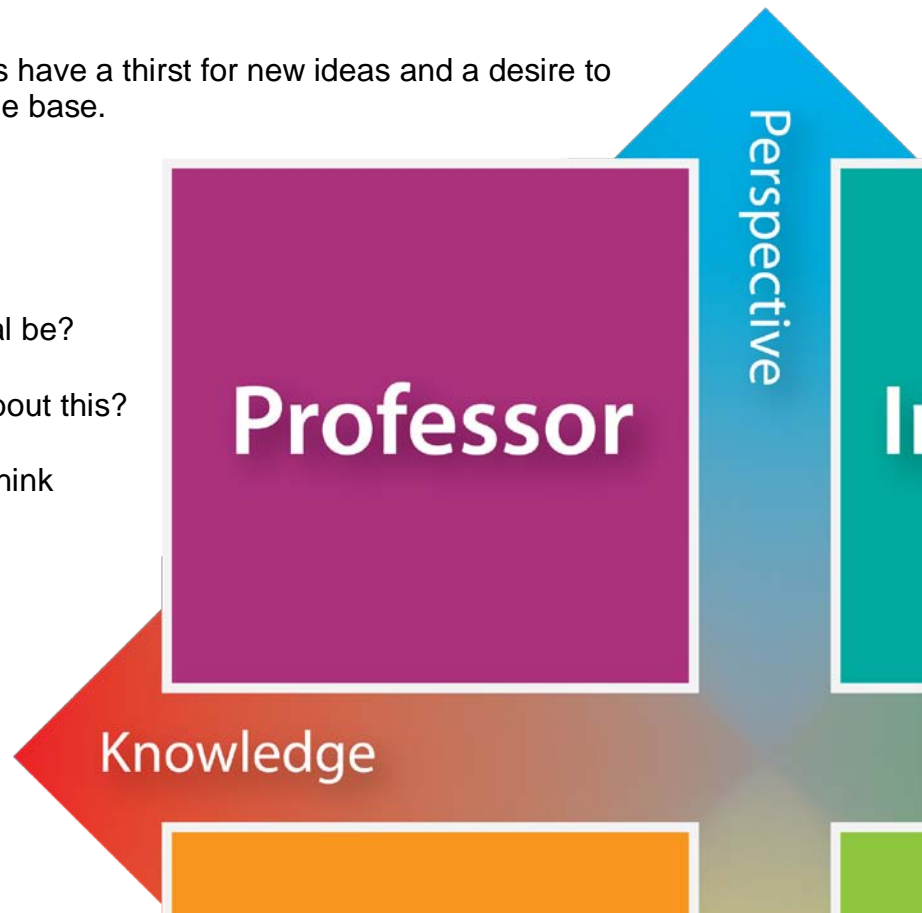
## Professor Style

- Seeks **Current Knowledge** and gathers information
- Takes a **Divergent Perspective** to explore possibilities

Professor-style leaders have a thirst for new ideas and a desire to expand their knowledge base.

Professors might ask:

- What should our goal be?
- What do we know about this?
- How else could we think about this?

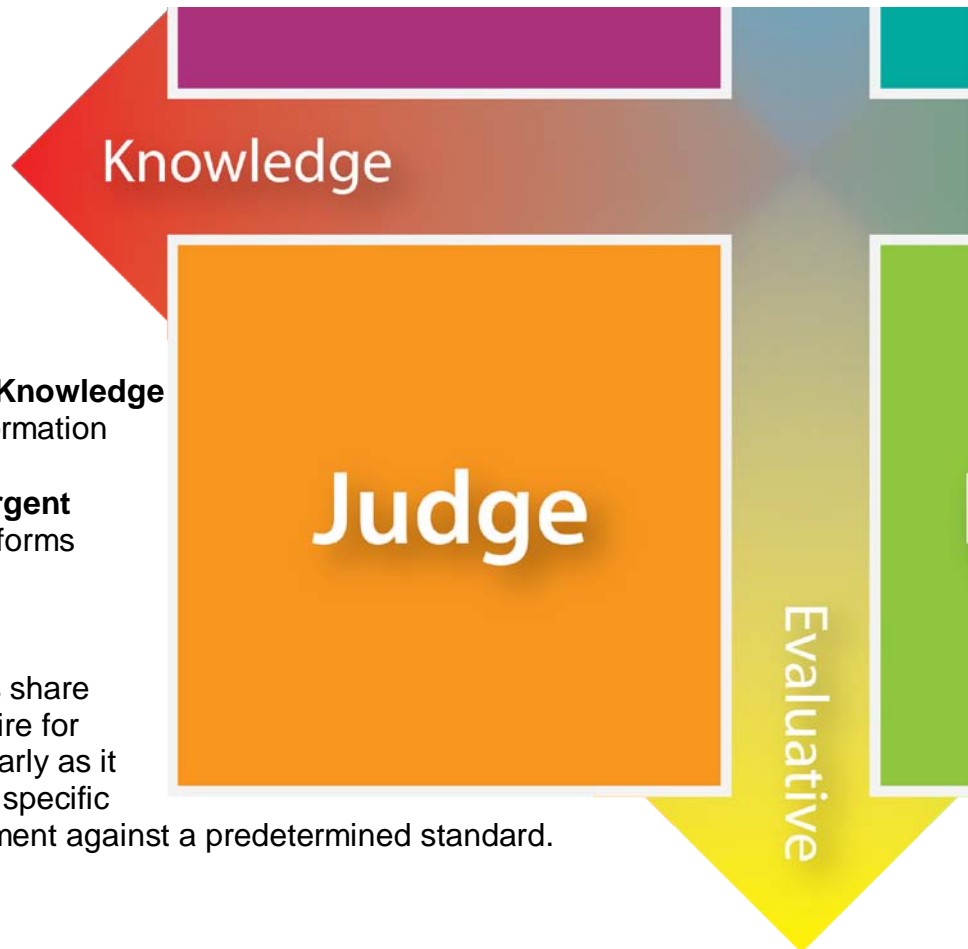


"Some men see things as they are and say, Why?"

I dream of things that never were and say, Why not?"

- *George Bernard Shaw*

## Judge Style



- Seeks **Current Knowledge** and gathers information
- Takes a **Convergent Perspective** to form conclusions

Judge-style leaders share the Professor's desire for knowledge, particularly as it relates to making a specific decision or assessment against a predetermined standard.

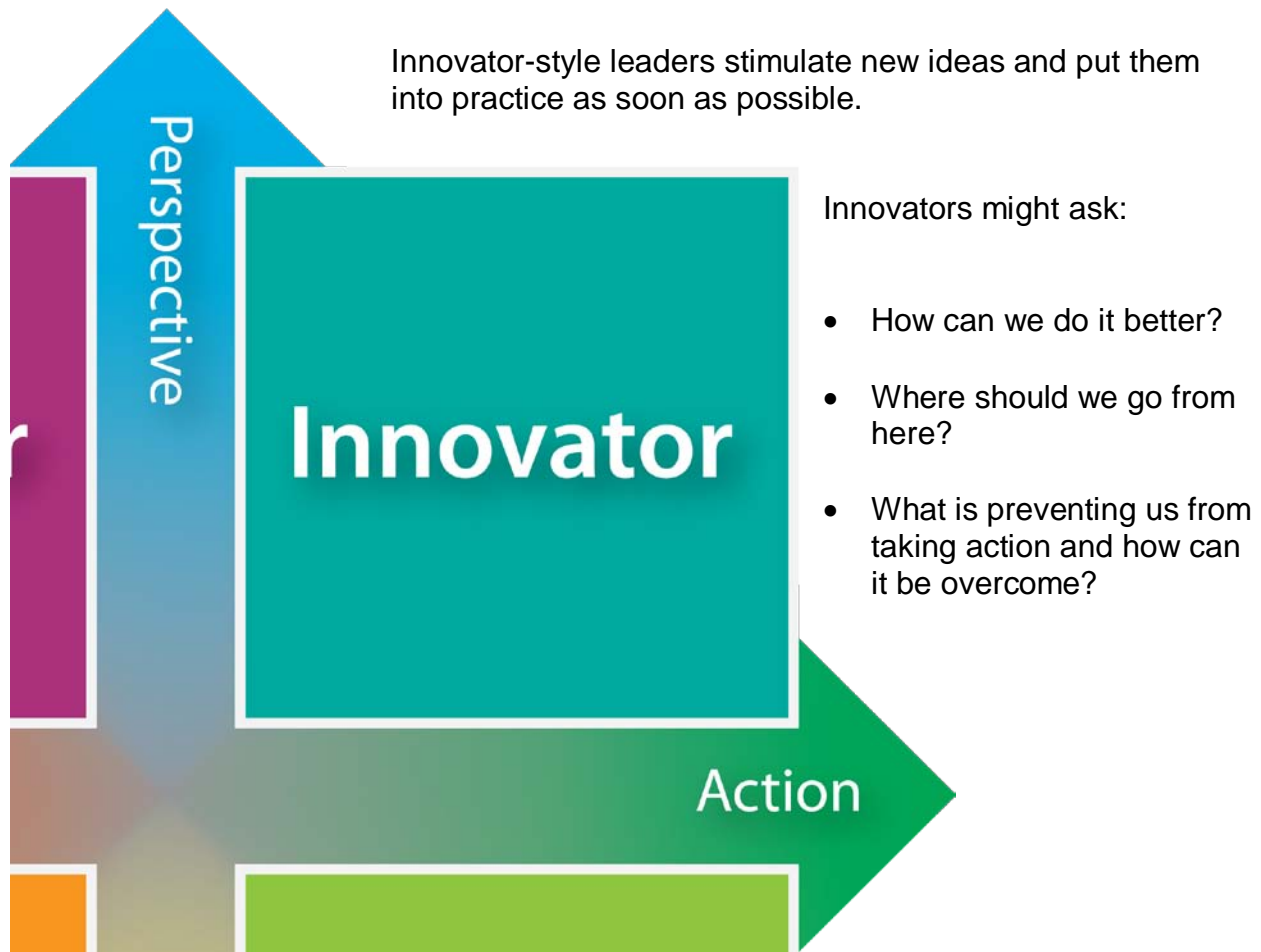
Judges might ask:

- How will this ensure strategic control of our channel and market?
- What is the best option?
- Is this in alignment with our values, strategy, and goals?

“Millions saw the apple fall, but  
Newton asked why.”  
- Bernard Baruch

## Innovator Style

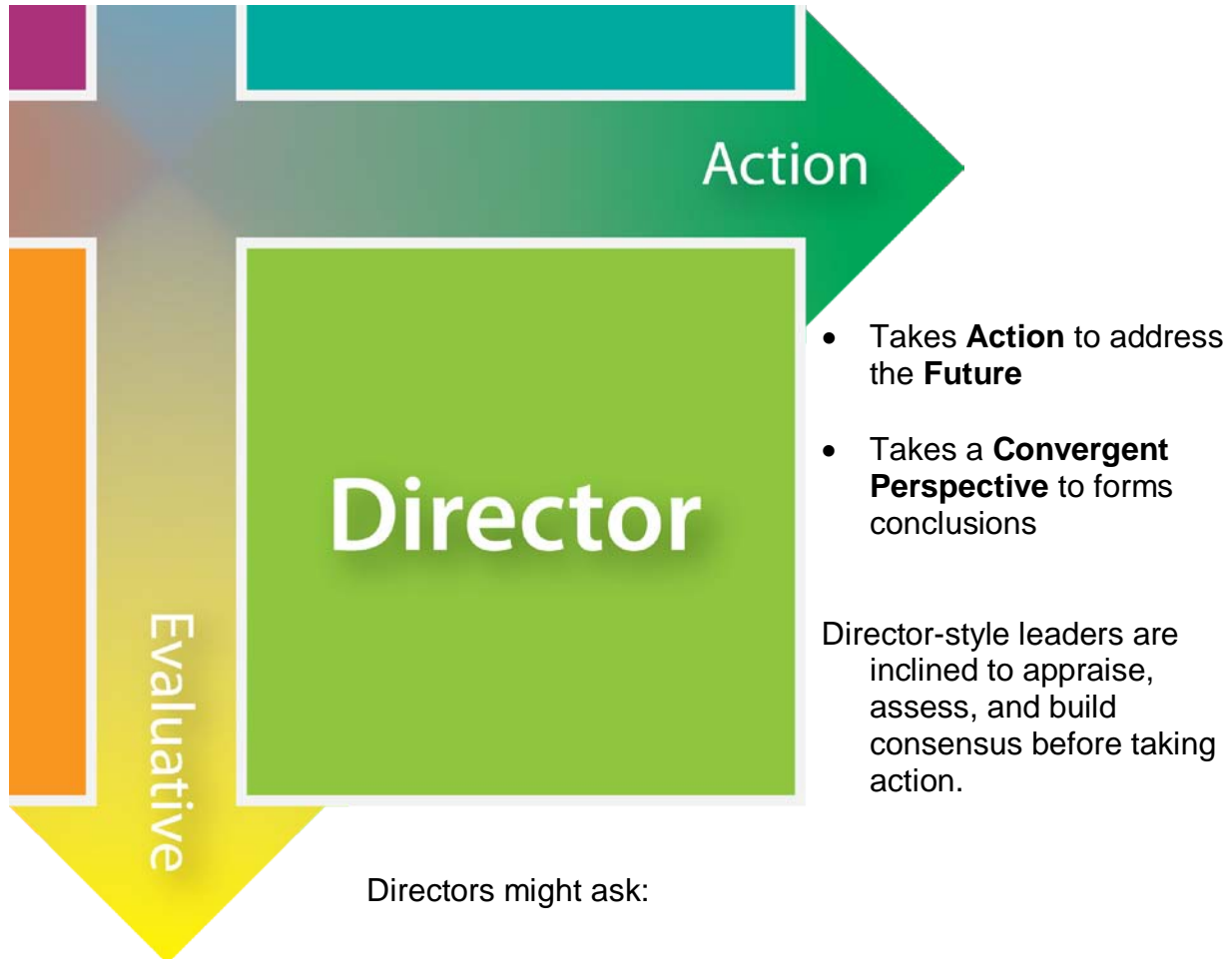
- Takes **Action** to address the **Future**
- Takes a **Divergent Perspective** to explore possibilities



“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”

- John Kennedy

## Director

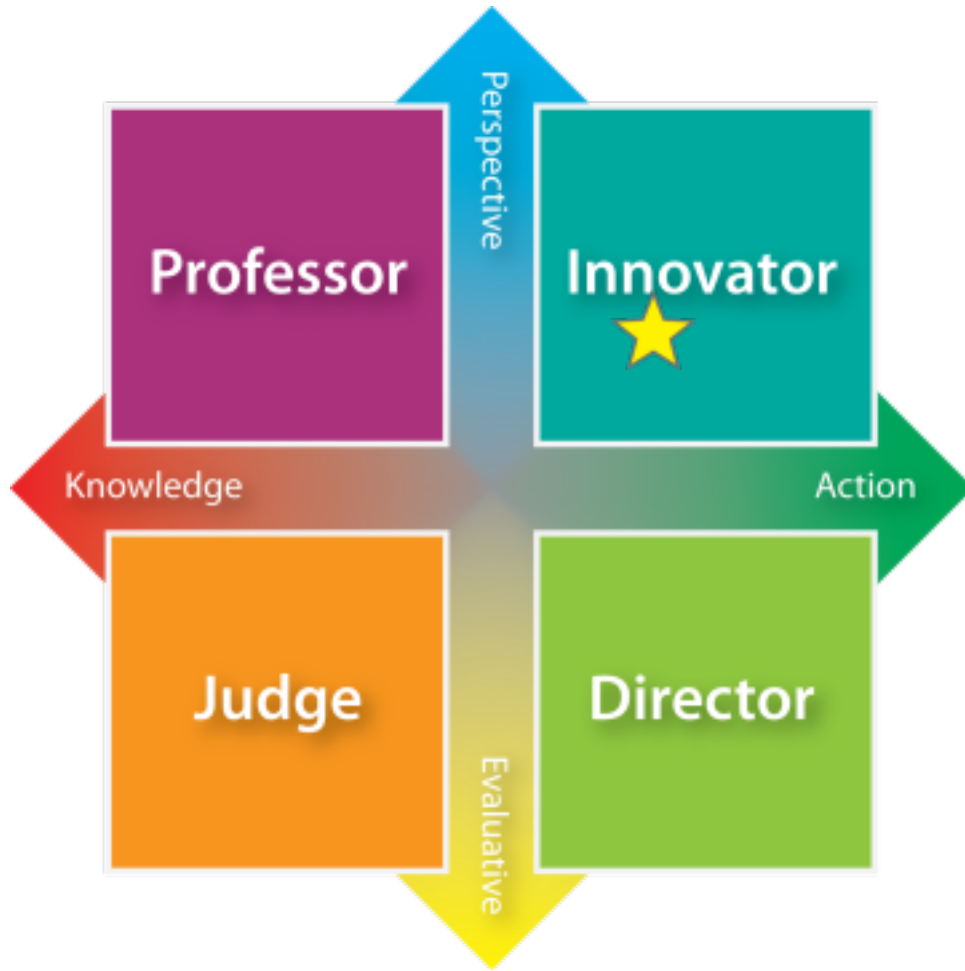


Directors might ask:

- Whose decision is it?
- What will we measure, how will we measure it, and what will we consider a success?
- How does this help us get to our goal?

“Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”  
- *Theodor Roosevelt*

# Your Just Ask Leadership Style



## Moderate Innovator

**Leadership Style:** Your leadership style is that of a moderate Innovator. Innovators welcome new ideas and perspectives, and are quick to implement them. Because you tend not to ask as many evaluative questions, you may see possibilities where others see barriers. These possibilities feed your imagination. They may lead not only to incremental growth, but to quantum leaps. Others gravitate to you in the hopes that they, too, can make such leaps and that your vision will rub off on them. They relish the horizon-expanding questions you ask, like, “What would you do if times and funds were unlimited?”

Innovators tend to be energetic and charismatic leaders—inspiring others, delegating key responsibilities, and cheerleading bold efforts and decisions. Your coworkers appreciate the fact that you don’t encroach on their territory. You leave it up to them how to get “there” from “here.” But you act as a resource and sounding board if they run into trouble. You might ask, “What is holding you back from making this decision?” or “What is your gut telling you to do?”

Others are envious of your energy. They wonder if you sleep at all, based on the number of ideas you generate, ideas you pursue, and the variety of conversations you have.

**Similar Styles:** Like Professors, you are open to new ideas and eager to explore possibilities. Professors seek to expand their knowledge, however. You seek to act on ideas immediately. You’re accustomed to success in these efforts, but failure is acceptable. Failure leads to new ideas and possibilities. While Directors are more focused and cautious than you about incorporating new ideas and processes, they share your preference for action over ideation.

**Uses:** You spark creative thinking and action, so you can help coworkers and the organization as a whole get out of a rut. You might ask, “What organizational assumptions need to be challenged, especially in light of environmental changes?” Extreme Innovators don’t hesitate to question anything or anyone, so coworkers learn to do the same of their decisions and processes. And, occasionally, you get a really, really BIG idea that moves everyone in a new and exciting direction.

**Drawbacks:** Innovators are sometimes guilty of being too risk-tolerant. With their ready-fire-aim mentality, they might discard a perfectly good wheel in favor of one that’s oval-shaped. Undoubtedly, you would learn from such an error, but your coworkers would be left to clean up the mess.

You prefer “leading” work to “doing” work, so you may overlook important details or hold others accountable for failing to achieve unrealistic expectations. Your coworkers may tire of not knowing how far to proceed after a brief conversation and little instruction. They may wonder: Is this one of your BIG ideas or will it die shortly after conception? Your lack of evaluation and reflection might also be seen as an abdication of control.

You're able to get and keep many plates spinning at the same time, but this may pose several problems. Your coworkers may be hesitant to suggest a new plate for you to spin. They may not want to overload you, or themselves, and they may have concerns over whether you will give it the time and energy it deserves. At the same time, you may get frustrated when others can't keep up with you. They sense this frustration and become defensive ("If only you knew how much work it is to implement these ideas! Without me, you'd be nothing!") or feel deflated and incapable of ever satisfying your expectations.

**Compensatory Strategies:** To avoid alienating your coworkers, embrace your inner Judge. Even though you are close to the Judge style, there is value in additional evaluation and consistency. Before dismantling a process, make certain the benefits outweigh the costs. Before embarking on "What if...?" flights, don't forget to ask, "What do we know about...?" And before starting a new venture, ask, "What are we *not* going to do?"

It's tempting to do it all—or at least whatever presents itself as an opportunity. The more you and your organization accomplish, the more you want to enter into and conquer new territory. Most organizations don't have unlimited resources, however. If you can see everything as a trade-off, you will do more of the right things and less of the exciting but unnecessary things. In the process, you will demonstrate control and direction, which will allay your coworkers' concerns.

Because of your leadership position, when you think out loud, others may view these ideas as instructions to take action on immediately. So at the end of every idea-generating conversation, recap what you expect done, which ideas need more incubation time, and what should be ignored or dismissed entirely. If you're speaking with someone who doesn't report to you directly, remind them that your suggestions need to be run by their direct reports so conflicts of authority don't occur.

## Increasing Your Leadership Effectiveness

Great questions get responders to consider both Process and Outcome. Since there are two types of processes (Evaluative or Perspective-building) and two outcomes you're striving for (Knowledge or Action), great questions fall into one of four categories: *Evaluative/Knowledge, Evaluative/Action, Perspective/Knowledge, or Perspective/Action.*

Each Just Ask Leadership Style favors one of these four categories. For instance, an Innovator often asks questions that expand Perspective and drive people to Action. These questions help people or organizations that are stalled and need to implement a new approach quickly, but they don't work as well during performance reviews or brainstorming sessions.

**Let the situation dictate the primary type of questions you ask.** If you're an Innovator, you're bound to ask somewhat more Perspective/Action questions, but they shouldn't be the *only* type you use. When the situation calls for Evaluation and Knowledge, employ Judge questions. You will be more likely to get the results you're looking for and less likely to confuse your coworkers about your intent.

**In any given situation, all types of questions may have value.** Judge questions work best for decision-making situations. They rely on firm evaluative criteria and thorough knowledge of relevant past and present information. But switching to a different type of question in a decision-making situation can result in new thinking. Here's a glimpse at how the four styles might be employed in the same problem-solving situation:

1. Have you ever had a challenge like this before? – Judge
2. How did you solve or resolve it the last time? – Professor
3. What will you do differently this time for a better outcome? – Innovator
4. How will you implement that solution now? – Director

**Pay attention to the results generated by each type of question.** Learn to recognize what types of questions your coworkers respond to best—and in which situations.

**Expand your repertoire.** Leaders who ask the same questions tend to get the same answers. Below are examples of how different types of questions can be used to address common leadership needs. Notice how all styles of questions can be useful for generating different outcomes. Start incorporating these questions into your arsenal and adjust based upon the results they achieve.

Great leaders customize their questions, taking into account coworker preferences, the process they hope to spark, and the outcome they hope to achieve. Great leaders are Innovators, Judges, Directors, and Professors—all in one!

## Building Strategy – Setting Direction

### Professor\*

- What are our current capabilities?
- What opportunities and risks do we face today?
- What other perspectives should we consider?

### Innovator

- What is the organization trying to achieve?
- What can we do to meet our customer needs?
- What are the potential directions we can take moving forward?

### Judge

- How does this idea align with our values? Strengths?
- What are the common themes?
- What beliefs do we have that propel us or hinder us?

### Director

- What actions should we take to support our vision?
- What are our next steps to demonstrate a commitment to our vision?
- What needs to happen for the vision to “come alive” in our organization?

## Motivating to Action

### Professor

- What other commitments are preventing us from reaching this goal?
- What are our potential motivators for action?
- How have others gained buy-in?

### Innovator\*

- What is preventing us from taking action?
- How can we better use what we have?
- Do we need to create a crisis to get the change we need?

### Judge

- What is the goal?
- What's in it for them?
- What are the consequences of failure?

### Director

- Who will do what? By when?
- Where do I need to increase/decrease tension in the system?
- When will you (initiate, announce, launch, develop, complete, ...)?

\* Favored style for the situation

## Decision Making - Problem Solving

### Professor

- What is our goal?
- What's going on?
- Who else should be included in this decision to make it successful?
- What organizational assumptions do we hold that may need to be challenged?
- What other options haven't been considered yet?

### Innovator

- What would you do if time and funds were unlimited?
- What do your instincts tell you to do?
- What is holding you back from making this decision?
- What other way can we approach this problem so we can solve it?
- How could I support you moving forward on that decision?

### Judge\*

- Whose decision is it?
- What's the most important consideration here?
- What are the pros and cons of each option?
- Are the risks manageable?
- What conclusions can we make based on what we know?
- What are the priorities based on our strategy and goals?

### Director

- When is the deadline for a decision?
- What needs to happen for us to succeed?
- Is this close to a 50 - 50 decision? If so, should we flip a coin?
- What actions should we take?
- How can we best leverage our resources?

\* Favored style for the situation