

LEADERSHIP STYLES FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

Systems are all around us. They shape our world in ways both subtle and profound. But we can also change them. To do so, we need to understand the strategies that can help us lead in a way that creates this change. These strategies can be understood as a function of two key variables: the scale of change, and the approach to leadership. Read on to learn more.

The first variable to consider is the degree to which leaders collaborate to create change. Leaders can be:

Individualistic



These leaders are the do-it-yourselfers. They believe they're the experts in the room, and lead in a way that reflects that.

OR

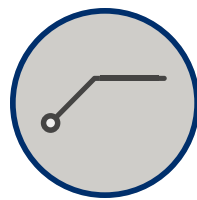
Collaborative



These leaders acknowledge that they can't possibly be the authority on every single issue that matters to their project. They lead in a participatory way and activate the collective to realize change.

Leaders may also choose to pursue change to different degrees. In Systems Change, there are two types:

Incremental Change

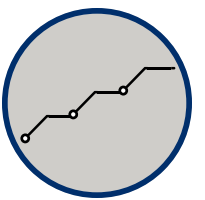


The everyday change we're familiar with. It occurs when things are added, removed, adapted within a system. It is:

- Predictable
- Linear
- Visible within a project timeline

AND

Transformational Change



Large-scale change that happens when lots of incremental changes add up or co-evolve. At this scale, change defies prediction, particularly when it occurs within complex systems.

The matrix below shows how the combination of the degree of collaboration and pursuit of change manifest in 4 distinct leadership styles.

LEADERSHIP STYLE MATRIX

