"In the 1930s, Kurt Lewin developed a leadership framework based on a leader's decision-making behaviour. Lewin argued that there are three types of leaders:

Autocratic leaders make decisions on their own - without consulting the team. This works well where something needs to be done quickly and the team consent is not required, as teams can take longer to reach decisions. The problem with this approach is that the team do not have any ownership over the decision and therefore may not be willing to be just 'told' what to do if they do not understand the reasons.

Democratic leaders allow contributions from the team before a decision is reached. Usually the leader will still make the final decision but this will have been done when all parties have had a chance to contribute. Although this can vary from leader to leader. I have worked for some democratic leaders who have allowed consultation but then still gone a different way, and, in fact, had made a decision before consulting the team - but wanted to be seen as doing the right thing.

Laissez-faire leaders do not make decisions but allow the team to do that. I always thought that this meant that they were lazy and just sat about all day drinking coffee and eating doughnuts. However, a good laissez-faire leader has given the team the confidence and trust to make its own decisions so they have ownership over the problem and its solution and this is a more effective working solution in many cases. Can you think of any leaders you have had who have been any of these styles?"