

ALESSANDRA ON ...



THE DISC PLATINUM[★] RULE

Do Unto Others As They'd Like Done Unto Them

eWORKBOOK

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San Diego, California
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PH: 1-619-610-9933 • FAX: 1-706-603-8010.

<http://www.alessandra.com> • <http://www.assessments24x7.com>

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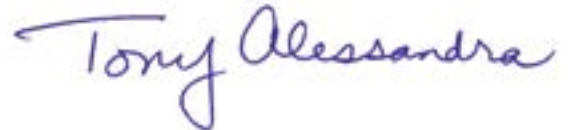
I offer my thanks:

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Finally, thanks goes to **William Moulton Marston, PhD** for his seminal work in his 1928 book, *Emotions of Normal People*, and to **John Geier** and others for their work on the DISC assessment based on Marston’s 1928 work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Alessandra". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

INTRODUCTION

Would you like to increase—substantially increase—your compatibility with other people? Can you imagine the ways this might benefit you in your career, your day-to-day dealings with people, and in your closest personal relationships?

Our characteristic Styles or patterns of relating to others determine the ease with which we build relationships. Most of our behavioral patterns are established early in life through the influence of peers, education, parents, authority figures, and our environment. Throughout our lives, a variety of behavioral patterns are reinforced and become habits. While our habits make us fairly predictable, everyone has different habits. That's what keeps relationships interesting and challenging!

The DISC Platinum Rule assembles a number of simple tools that can easily be applied to improve both business and interpersonal relationships. This handbook is not intended to provide an in-depth psychological examination of human behavior; instead, it offers guidelines for understanding and adjusting to the differences in people, through observation of their behaviors. The tools presented here will enable you to see yourself and your world through someone else's eyes and ears, and that can go a long way toward building compatibility!

The DISC Platinum Rule will show you how to “Do unto others the way they **want** and **need** you to do unto them” by teaching you to:

- **UNDERSTAND** that although each individual's personality is as unique as his or her thumbprint, many behaviors can be positioned within a systematic, predictable framework.
- **IDENTIFY** how a person's behavioral patterns influence what that person wants, needs, and expects from you and others, as well as how that person communicates those wants, needs, and expectations. People will actually tell you how to deal with them if you know what to listen and look for.
- **ADAPT** to people in a way that will reduce tension and increase cooperation and trust in all varieties of relationships.

It is my belief that people will show you—actually teach you—how they prefer to be treated if you will listen to what they have to say, watch what they do, and be willing to accommodate possible differences between their Styles and your own. It's not hard! And the rewards in terms of productive, trusting relationships can be substantial in many areas of your life.

A DAY AT THE OFFICE

INTRODUCTION

“A Day at the Office” provides you with a method of evaluating your understanding of behavioral Styles and behavioral flexibility, the central concepts of The DISC Platinum Rule.

Your day at the office includes meetings with one prospect and one customer, lunch with a friend, and a planning session with a co-worker on an important new project.

DIRECTIONS:

Read the following four characterizations of the key personalities you encounter during your day. Following the characterizations are questions. Each question contains four statements. For each statement, select the character from your day who, in your judgment, best meets the condition described. Indicate your choice by writing one of the following in the blank before the statement:

“P” to indicate The Prospect

“C” to indicate The Customer

“CW” to indicate The Co-Worker

“F” to indicate The Friend

SAMPLE QUESTION:

In a team or group situation, it’s likely that others would perceive this person as:

 C Decisive, efficient, goal-oriented

 CW Creative, stimulating, quick

 F Involved, agreeable, supportive

 P Orderly, accurate, detail-oriented

THE PROSPECT

Your prospect’s office is neat and functional. Her desk is bare except for a laptop, a few reference books, a desk phone and a charger for her mobile phone. Her clothing is businesslike and conservative, yet feminine.

Her office walls bear charts, exhibits, and photographs pertaining to her job. The seating arrangement suggests formality and non-contact.

During the conversation, you get the impression that your prospect likes things compartmentalized, organized, precise, factual, and carefully planned. She wants to know the structure of your game plan and notes a number of times in the conversation that all players will be expected to follow the “rules.” She seems interested and skilled in problem solving, and looks forward to the process of gathering and sorting out the data regarding your organization’s services and processes.

You hear phrases like, “I’d like the facts—pro and con—the solid evidence about this application,” and “Let’s document these details in writing.” You’re impressed by her seemingly encyclopedic store of facts.

During your meeting, she inquires about the nitty-gritty details involving your personnel and your operating equipment: previous experience, credentials, detailed specifications, capacities, tolerances, maintenance, and security measures. You know she’s not about to rush into a decision; in fact, her last words to you emphasize her determination to carefully weigh the buying decision.

As she says goodbye, her handshake is formal, her eye contact intermittent, her manner proper. You get the feeling your prospect is a logical, cautious, well disciplined, steady, conscientious, efficient, independent person who takes pride in maintaining high personal and professional standards.

THE CUSTOMER

Your customer’s office is lean and impressive: decorated to express the power and prestige of the occupant. On one wall hangs an oil painting; on another, a large planning calendar. Floor-to-ceiling cases contain books, magazines, and reference volumes. Your customer stands up from behind a massive contemporary desk, grasps your hand firmly, and says, “How are you?” Without waiting for an answer, he adds, “Please sit down. I’ve got thirty minutes set aside for our meeting.” He fixes a steady, intense, expectant gaze on you as if to say, “Two of our thirty minutes are already gone, so let’s get down to the business at hand.”

As you talk with him, he asks questions about how your new product can lower costs, raise income, streamline production for optimal efficiency, and help achieve a quick return on investment. Obviously output-oriented, he expresses his goals in terms of achieving superior results in the shortest possible time frame.

His pace is fast, his manner straightforward and controlled. During your conversation, you hear phrases like, “Let’s cut through to the core of this issue,” “What’s the bottom line?” and “Where’s all this leading?”

You’re struck by your customer’s forceful, emphatic, impatient, decisive, serious style. At one point, when he disagrees with what you were saying, he leans back in his chair, crosses his arms, shakes his head, and says, “Wrong!” But even when he disagrees, he quickly grasps the content of your communication, and clearly explains his objections in a cool, businesslike, concise manner.

True to his word, he terminates the meeting exactly thirty minutes from the time you walked in. As you leave, he repeats that he’d like a written proposal containing details on dates, terms, prices, delivery, service, and all options, by the end of the week—all on one page. Everything about this customer challenges you and your resources.

THE CO-WORKER

Your co-worker’s office is decorated in an open, friendly, airy manner. Her desk looks cluttered and disorganized. The chairs are placed in front of it, inviting openness and contact. Numerous award plaques and certificates grace the walls. If the office could speak, it would say, “Notice me.” Your co-worker’s style of dress is fashionable, yet casual. Her handshake is firm and warm, her eye contact friendly, her smile broad and spontaneous. She touches your sleeve and motions for you to take a seat.

This is your first assignment with this individual. You ask her to tell you a little about her experience. Fifteen minutes later, you know her complete family, financial, and professional history. Her delivery is entertaining: lively, stimulating, upbeat. She laughs, gestures, and exaggerates a lot. Her manner is extremely persuasive, and you suspect she could easily sell you a thing or two.

As the project discussion progresses, you hear expressions like, “We’ll develop the specifics of the resource allocation plan later,” and “I just know this approach will win them over,” and

“Rules are made to be broken.” Her pace is fast and lively. She sees sophisticated equipment as a means to impress the project team and provide status and recognition for both of you in the eyes of the company’s top management. She seems intrigued by new processes and systems, and would like to be the first in the company to try an exciting, state-of-the-art technology in an important project application.

Throughout the meeting, her energy, enthusiasm, and vitality never slow down. As she walks you to the door, laughing and joking, she urges you to help her make things start happening right away.

THE FRIEND

Your friend has selected a favorite, cozy restaurant. The walls hold autographed photographs of patron families (celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and weddings), baseball teams, and local clubs.

The head waiter knows your friend well. Upon your late arrival, he shows you to your comfortable table in the middle of the restaurant. “Sorry to be late,” you offer. “Don’t worry,” responds your friend. “I’ve just been writing a few letters. Are you having a tough day?”

Your friend surrenders to indecision over the menu selections, and asks you to order one more of whatever you were planning to have. As you launch into the gory details of your morning, you are reminded that your friend is a wonderful listener. As lunch arrives, the topic of your now lively discussion is travel plans to your upcoming twentieth high school reunion. High school holds fond memories for you both. It was where you first met. He was a varsity athlete and has been looking forward to reminiscing with the old team members and meeting their families. When the main course arrives, you both notice the meal could use warming, but he hesitates to say anything to the waiter: “I hate to trouble him. He’s so busy.”

You finish your meal well before your friend does. Before the check arrives, there is time to share your concerns about an upcoming project meeting. He continues to listen, quietly and supportively responding, placing more attention on you than the meal. He offers a number of helpful suggestions concerning “team building,” and how it might benefit your project. His lunch never does get finished. As you walk from the restaurant your friend remarks, “I’m so glad you could get away. Let’s do this again next week!”

1. Which of the day's personalities would benefit most from each of these psychological environments?

_____ An outgoing, friendly, enthusiastic environment that gives recognition and approval to the person's ideas and goals.

_____ An open, quiet, friendly, environment that demonstrates personal attention and an interest in cooperation.

_____ A businesslike, deliberately paced, detail-oriented environment that presents evidence and documentation.

_____ A businesslike, fast-paced, bottom-line atmosphere that reflects competence.

2. Which person would most appreciate each type of information from you?

_____ Results-oriented: Your qualifications and experience, the benefits of your products and services.

_____ Relationship-oriented: Are you trustworthy, non-threatening, cooperative, and friendly?

_____ Activity-oriented: Who else is using the system and what can it do for me personally?

_____ Process-oriented: What are the facts, are they well documented, and are you aware of the details involved?

3. Which person would probably dislike a business associate who tended to be:

_____ Impatient, autocratic, demanding

_____ Cool, impersonal, rigid

_____ Personal, indecisive, security conscious

_____ Spontaneous, unstructured, dramatic

4. During a problem-solving interaction, which person would appreciate each of the following types of support:

_____ Support that maximizes the chances for the "right" decision to be made: documentation.

_____ Support of their ideas, opinions, dreams, intuitions: enthusiasm.

_____ Support of their feelings and interests: interpersonal concerns.

_____ Support of their authority, eagerness, decisions: simplification and verification.

5. Which person is most likely to exhibit strength in the following areas?

_____ Motivation, Enthusiasm, Persuasion

_____ Systems, Organization, Planning

_____ Administration, Leadership, Decision-making

_____ Listening, Teamwork, Follow-through

6. If you were selling a product or service, to which person would each of the following be most important?

_____ How it works: What exactly does and doesn't it do?

_____ Who else is using it: What personal benefits might accrue to the purchaser?

_____ Will it do the job: Does it need minimal supervision and maintenance?

_____ How will his people react to it? Is it safe?

7. Which person would need to practice each of these skills for his or her continued professional growth?

_____ Sensitivity to the feelings of others

_____ Self-discipline with regard to details

_____ Making timely decisions without all the data

_____ Facility in initiating action and taking risk

8. On the golf course, which person could you most see:

_____ Playing through groups of other golfers and betting on the outcome of the game?

_____ Spending more time in the clubhouse relating with people than on the course?

_____ Always golfing on the same day, at the same time, in the same place, with the same people?

_____ Acting as “social director” with designer golf clothing, monogrammed golf bag, “top of the line” clubs, and personalized golf balls?

9. With regard to keeping appointments, which personality from your day is most likely to be:

_____ Punctual and very upset if you’re late?

_____ Late and won’t be concerned if you’re late?

_____ Punctual but won’t be angry if you’re late?

_____ Late but very upset if you’re late?

10. Which statement is most likely to be spoken by which person?

_____ “I have done some amazing things in my life, some of which actually happened!”

_____ “Everything in its place and a place for everything.”

_____ “I couldn’t wait for success, so I just went ahead without it!”

_____ “To get the full value of joy, you must have someone to share it with.”

11. With this person, focus on:

_____ The task/the results

_____ The relationship/the communication

_____ The task/the process

_____ The relationship/the interaction

12. At play with this person:

_____ Play by the rules

_____ Be spontaneous and playful

_____ Be casual and cooperative

_____ Be competitive and aggressive

13. With this person, create an environment that is:

_____ Enthusiastic

_____ Orderly

_____ Personal

_____ Businesslike

14. To facilitate this person’s decision-making, you provide:

_____ Testimonials and incentives

_____ Options with open analysis

_____ Data and documentation

_____ Personal service and assurance

15. With this person, you do it with:

_____ Conviction

_____ Warmth

_____ Accuracy

_____ Flair

[Answers on Page 79]

CHEMISTRY AND THE DISC PLATINUM RULE

In our professional and social dealings with people, most of us experience personality conflicts from time to time. We may not be able to put our fingers on the cause, but something about the interaction is uncomfortable. Then too, there are those times when we first meet someone and after fifteen minutes feel as if we have known them for many years.

When we “click” like this with people, we often call it “chemistry,” or say that we get good “vibes” from that person. Our ability to develop and maintain chemistry with many different kinds of people is crucial to social and professional success.

Many people have been taught to help relationship chemistry along by practicing The Golden Rule: **Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.** When you interpret The Golden Rule literally, you are basing your actions on the assumption that others wish to be treated the same way as you like to be treated: That you should speak to people the way you like to be spoken to; manage people the way you would like to be managed; sell to others the way you would like to be sold.

Surprisingly, this assumption rarely holds true. In fact, if you dutifully follow The Golden Rule, the odds of effectively relating to others can be significantly against you.

Let’s take my mother as an example. My mother is the type of person who walks into a restaurant and, on the way to her table, stops to introduce herself to total strangers. She’ll approach seated diners and say, “Hi, I’m Margie Alessandra. What’s your name? Betty. Nice to meet you, Betty. Say, are you Italian? No? Too bad. What are you eating? Would you recommend it?”

She means well, but not everyone appreciates having a meal interrupted by someone they’ve never seen before. Other people think she is the greatest and wish their mothers were more like her.

The point: She imposes her way of doing things on other people. She doesn’t do this maliciously or selfishly. She actually believes people like to be treated the same way she does.

Experts in behavioral strategy suggest replacing The Golden Rule with The DISC Platinum Rule. This is simply: **Do unto others as they would have you do unto them, or: Treat others as they wish to be treated.**

We believe The DISC Platinum Rule expresses the intent of The Golden Rule and is far more useful in everyday situations that require interactions with many different kinds of people. And what day doesn’t?

THE GOLDEN RULE

**Do unto others as you would
have them do unto you.**

THE DISC PLATINUM RULE

**Do unto others as they would have
you do unto them,**

or

**Treat others as they wish to be
treated.**

CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIORS

To practice The DISC Platinum Rule effectively, you need to be able to “read” people. Reading people involves observing their behavior, being aware of their tone of voice, and actively listening to their words. It requires that you tune into them. Find their wavelength and communicate with them on their channel, rather than expecting and waiting for them to communicate on yours. That creates chemistry!

The DISC Platinum Rule is based on the fact that human beings are often predictable; they develop habitual ways of dealing with other people in their environments.

The DISC Platinum Rule recognizes that people are different, that others may not wish to be treated the same way you do. Patterns that work for you may not work for them. In short, The DISC Platinum Rule allows for individual differences and preferences, and serves as a useful guide for many relationship situations.

The behavioral Styles you will learn in the following sections are based on personality theories that classify behavior patterns.

When a knowledge of behavioral Styles is combined with the application of The DISC Platinum Rule, you have an invaluable tool for creating better chemistry faster, more of the time, in more of your relationships. These are *People Smarts*.

When people act and react in social situations, they exhibit behaviors that help define their behavioral Styles. We can identify behavioral Styles by watching for the observable patterns in people’s behavior—those verbal, vocal, and visual traits that people display when relating to others.

Without some kind of classification system, you could observe and try to catalog thousands of behaviors in any single individual: a futile exercise. But identifying a person’s behavioral style is possible. You begin by classifying a person’s behavior on two dimensions: OPENNESS and DIRECTNESS.

The ways and degrees to which openness and directness are demonstrated vary from individual to individual. Someone may be high in one dimension and low in the other—or somewhere in-between. In other words, we all express some level of openness and some level of directness.

For our purposes in discussing The DISC Platinum Rule, we define each dimension as follows:

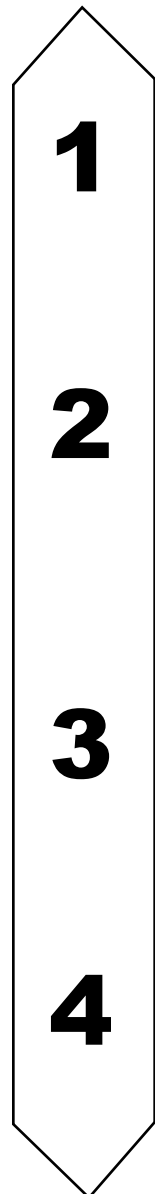
OPENNESS: The readiness and willingness with which a person outwardly shows emotions or feelings and develops interpersonal relationships.

DIRECTNESS: The amount of control and forcefulness a person attempts to exercise over situations or others’ thoughts and emotions.

SUMMARY OF OPEN AND GUARDED BEHAVIORS

Openness shows in the degree of self-disclosure: a person's readiness and willingness to outwardly show thoughts and feelings and accept openness from others.

GUARDED



1

Very
Guarded

GUARDED BEHAVIORS

- Keeps feelings private: shares only on a “need-to-know” basis
- Makes most decisions based on evidence (objective)
- Focuses conversation on issues and tasks; stays on subject
- More formal and proper
- Goes with the agenda
- Fact- and task-oriented
- Takes time to get to know in business or unfamiliar social situations
- Disciplined about how their time is used by others
- Prefers to work independently
- Avoids/minimizes physical contact
- Tells, or enjoys listening to, goal-related stories and anecdotes
- Limited range of facial expressions during speaking and listening
- Shows less enthusiasm than the average person
- Formal handshake
- Less likely to give nonverbal feedback, if given at all
- Responsive to realities/actual experiences/facts

2

Somewhat
Guarded

OPEN BEHAVIORS

- Self-disclosing
- Shows and shares feelings freely
- Makes most decisions based on feelings (subjective)
- Conversation includes digressions; strays from subject
- More relaxed and warm
- Goes with the flow
- Opinion- and feeling-oriented
- Easy to get to know in business or unfamiliar social situations
- Flexible about how their time is used by others
- Prefers to work with others
- Initiates/accepts physical contact
- Shares, or enjoys listening to, personal feelings, especially if positive
- Animated facial expressions during speaking and listening
- Shows more enthusiasm than the average person
- Friendly handshake
- More likely to give nonverbal feedback
- Responsive to dreams/visions/concepts

3

Somewhat
Open

4

Very
Open

OPEN

OPENNESS IN PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Now we will use your own relationships and experiences to practice classifying your observations of behavioral characteristics. Think about two people you know well. One should represent the “model” of open, and the other, the “model” of guarded behaviors.

In the space provided on this page, write a few descriptive words that represent their behaviors, their personality traits that ease your relationship with them, and those characteristics that can make your interaction with them challenging or difficult at times.

AN OPEN PERSON YOU KNOW

Name of person

Characteristics (descriptive words):

Behaviors that help your relationship:

Behaviors that hinder your relationship:

A GUARDED PERSON YOU KNOW

Name of person

Characteristics (descriptive words):

Behaviors that help your relationship:

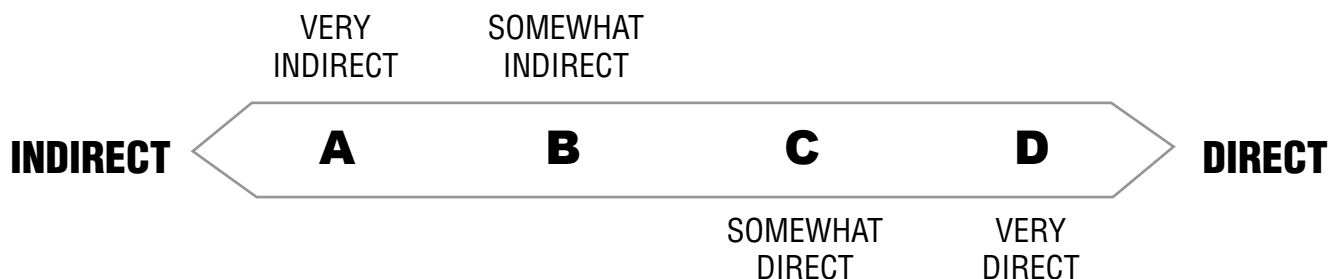
Behaviors that hinder your relationship:

SUMMARY OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT BEHAVIORS

Directness is the way one deals with information and situations. It is also the amount of control and forcefulness a person attempts to exercise over situations or other people's thoughts and emotions.

INDIRECT BEHAVIORS

- Approaches risk, decision, or change slowly/cautiously
- Infrequent contributor to group conversations
- Infrequent use of gestures and voice intonation to emphasize points
- Often makes qualified statements: "According to my sources," or "I think so."
- Emphasizes points through explanations of the content of the message
- Questions tend to be for clarification/support/information
- Reserves expression of opinions
- More patient and cooperative
- Diplomatic
- When not in agreement (if it's no big deal), most likely to go along
- Understated; reserved
- Initial eye contact is intermittent
- At social gathering, more likely to wait for others to introduce themselves
- Gentle handshake
- Tends to follow established rules and policies



DIRECT BEHAVIORS

- Approaches risk, decisions, or change quickly/spontaneously
- Frequent contributor to group conversations
- Frequently uses gestures and voice intonation to emphasize points
- Often makes emphatic statements: "This is so!" or "I'm positive!"
- Emphasizes points through confident vocal intonation and assertive body language
- Questions tend to be rhetorical, to emphasize points, or to challenge information
- Expresses opinions readily
- Less patient; competitive
- Confronting
- More likely to maintain his or her position when not in agreement (argue)
- Intense; assertive
- Initial eye contact is sustained
- More likely to introduce self to others at social gathering
- Firm handshake
- Tends to bend/break established rules and policies

DIRECTNESS IN PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Now, think about two people you know well. One should represent the “model” of directness, and the other, the “model” of indirectness.

In the space provided on this page, write a few descriptive words that represent their behaviors. Include their personality traits that both ease your relationship with them and that can make your interaction with them challenging or difficult.

AN INDIRECT PERSON YOU KNOW

Name of person

Characteristics (descriptive words):

Behaviors that help your relationship:

Behaviors that hinder your relationship:

A DIRECT PERSON YOU KNOW

Name of person

Characteristics (descriptive words):

Behaviors that help your relationship:

Behaviors that hinder your relationship:



THE FOUR BEHAVIORAL STYLES

As we have seen, each of the quadrants created by combining the openness and directness axes represents a unique combination of open or guarded and indirect or direct behaviors. Each combination has its own needs and preferences in terms of how an individual relates to people and situations.

The quadrants are used to represent four distinct, identifiable, predictable behavioral patterns or Styles. We will refer to these Styles throughout this workbook as the Dominant Style (D's), the Influencing Style (I's), the Steady Style (S's) and the Conscientious Style (C's).

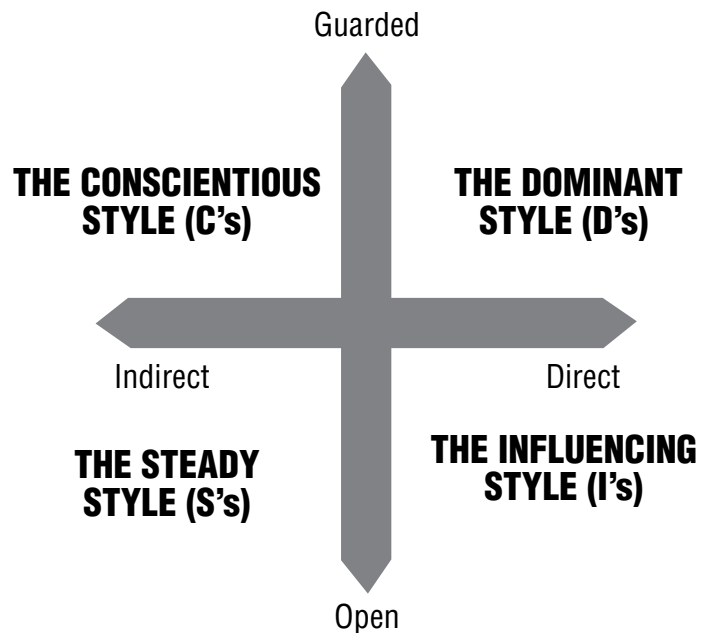
The name given to each style reflects a generalized character type, rather than a complete or accurate description of any individual.

By now, you have probably identified with some of the characteristics of all four behavioral patterns. That's natural! People possess traits from all four Styles to varying degrees. Yet most people display a dominant pattern. It's like a theme in a musical composition: it does not describe all the parts, but it is a recurring and predictable element. Like variations on a theme, people also possess traits which vary from their dominant patterns. The most hard-driving, self-reliant Dominant Style will also have, if ever so subtly expressed, parts of the needing-to-be-part-of-the-team Steady Style.

There is no "best" behavioral style. Each style has its own unique needs and wants, strengths and weaknesses. Much of a Style's effectiveness in a particular situation depends on its "owner's" ability to apply his strengths flexibly and compensate for his weaknesses in that particular situation.

Although behavioral style is only a partial description of personality, it is highly useful in describing how a person is perceived in social and business situations.

As you better understand why people behave the way they do, and come to understand your own patterns better, your communication will become more open and effective in ways that maintain comfort (reduce tension) and heighten productivity. With an awareness of the four basic Styles, you can learn to apply the spirit of the Golden Rule to create better chemistry more of the time and in more of your relationships.





THE DOMINANT STYLE (D's)

Dominant Styles are guarded and direct. They exhibit firmness in their relationships with others, are oriented toward productivity and goals, and are concerned with bottom line results.

Dominant Styles accept challenges, take authority, and go headfirst into solving problems. They tend to exhibit great administrative and operational skills and work quickly and impressively by themselves. They tend to come on cool, independent, and competitive with others, especially in a business environment. Dominant Styles try to shape their environment to overcome obstacles en route to their accomplishments. They demand maximum freedom to manage themselves and others and use their leadership skills to become winners.

Closely allied to their positive traits are the negative ones of stubbornness, impatience, and toughness. Dominant Styles tend to take control of other people and can have a low tolerance for the feelings, attitudes, and inadequacies of co-workers and subordinates. They like to move at a fast pace and are impatient with delays. It is not unusual for a Dominant Style to call you and, without saying hello, launch right into the conversation, "You've got to be kidding; the shipment from Hong Kong will kill us... by the way, this is Jack." When other people cannot keep up with their speed, they view them as incompetent.

The Dominant Style's motto might be: "I want it done right and I want it done now" or "I want it done yesterday!" They get things done and make things happen. They are like jugglers who like to do many things at the same time. They start juggling three things at once and when they feel comfortable with those three things, they pick up a fourth. They keep adding more until the pressure builds to the point where they let everything drop, then immediately start the whole process over again. The Dominant Style's theme seems to be, "Notice my accomplishments." Their high-achievement motivation gives Dominant Styles a tendency toward workaholism.

The primary strengths of the Dominant Styles are their ability to get things done, their leadership, and their decision-making ability. Their weaknesses tend to be inflexibility, impatience, poor listening habits, and failure to take time to "smell the flowers." In fact, they are so competitive that when they do finally go out to "smell the flowers," they return and say to others, "I smelled twelve today. How many did you smell?"

A Dominant Style's ideal occupation might be a hard-driving newspaper reporter, stockbroker, independent consultant, corporate CEO, drill sergeant, or monarch. In a business environment, they like others to be decisive, efficient, receptive, and intelligent. In a social environment, they want others to be quick, assertive, and witty.

A Dominant Style's desk will be busy with paperwork, projects, and material separated into piles. Their offices are decorated to suggest power. Dominant Styles are formal and keep their distance physically and psychologically.

A Dominant Style's office is arranged so that seating is formal; that is, face-to-face with a big power desk separating him from his visitors. They don't appreciate people talking three inches from their noses, so becoming your friend is not a prerequisite to doing business with you.

To achieve more balance, Dominant Styles need to practice active listening, pace themselves to project a more relaxed image, and develop patience, humility, and sensitivity. They need to show a concern for others, use more caution, verbalize the reasons for their conclusions, and participate more as team players.



THE INFLUENCING STYLE (I's)

Influencing Styles have high directness and openness, exhibiting characteristics such as animation, intuitiveness, and liveliness. But they can also be viewed as manipulative, impetuous, and excitable when displaying behavior inappropriate to the situation.

Influencing Styles keep a fast pace. Their actions and decisions are spontaneous. They are seldom concerned about facts and details and try to avoid them as much as possible. Their motto is “Don’t confuse me with the facts.” This disregard for details sometimes prompts them to exaggerate and generalize facts and figures. It also gives them a built-in excuse when they are wrong: “I didn’t have all the facts!” They are more comfortable with “best guesstimates” than with exact, empirical data.

The Influencing Style’s primary strengths are their enthusiasm, persuasiveness, and delightful sociability. Their primary weaknesses are getting involved in too many things, impatience, and their short attention spans, which cause them to become bored easily.

Influencing Styles are “idea people.” They have the ability to get others caught up in their dreams because of their good persuasive skills. They influence others and shape their environment by bringing others into an alliance to accomplish results. They seek approval and recognition for their accomplishments and achievements. They have that dynamic ability to think quickly on their feet.

Influencing Styles are true entertainers. They love an audience and thrive on involvement with people. They tend to work quickly and enthusiastically with others. If they had a motto that would aptly describe their behavior, it might be: “Ain’t we got fun!”

Influencing Styles are stimulating, talkative, and gregarious. They tend to operate on intuition and like to take risks. Their greatest irritations are boring tasks, being alone, and not having access to a telephone.

Many Influencing Styles are in occupations such as sales, entertainment, public relations, professional hosts, trial attorneys, social directors on cruise ships, the hotel business, and other glamorous, high-profile careers. In the business environment, they like other people to be risk-takers and to act quickly. In a social environment they like others to be uninhibited, spontaneous and entertaining.

Influencing Styles design and use their space in a disorganized and cluttered manner; however, they know if something is missing. Their walls may contain awards, stimulating posters or notes, and motivational, personal slogans. The seating arrangement indicates warmth, openness, and a willingness to make contact. Since Influencing Styles are touchers and don’t mind a slap on the back or a warm handshake, they often move to an alternative seating arrangement when talking with visitors. There is little danger of alienating Influencing Styles by standing too close or playing with something on their desks.

To achieve more balance and behavioral flexibility, Influencing Styles need to: control their time and emotions; develop a more objective mind-set; spend more time checking, verifying, specifying and organizing; develop more of a task-focus; and take a more logical approach to projects and issues.



THE STEADY STYLE (S's)

Steady Styles are open and indirect, relatively unassertive, warm, and reliable. Steady Styles are sometimes seen by others as compliant, soft-hearted, and acquiescent.

Steady Styles seek security. They take action and make decisions slowly. This pace stems from their desire to avoid risky or unknown situations. Before they take action or make a decision, they have to know how other people feel about their decision.

Steady Styles tend to be the most people-oriented of all the four Styles. Having close, friendly, personal, first-name relationships with others is one of their most important objectives. They dislike interpersonal conflict so much that they sometimes say what they think other people want to hear. They have natural counseling skills and are extremely supportive. Their theme is, "Notice how well-liked I am."

Steady Styles tend to be good, active listeners and generally develop relationships with people who are also good listeners. As a result, Steady Styles have strong networks of people who are willing to be mutually supportive. You often feel good just being with a Steady Style.

Steady Styles focus on getting acquainted and building trust. They are irritated by pushy, aggressive behavior. They ask the question, "How will it affect my personal circumstances and the camaraderie of the group?" They are cooperative, steady workers and excellent team players.

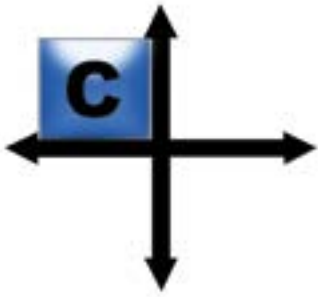
The primary strengths of Steady Styles are relating to, caring for, and loving others. Their primary weaknesses are that they are somewhat unassertive, overly sensitive, and easily bullied.

Ideal occupations for the Steady Style cluster around the helping professions such as counseling, teaching, social work, the clergy, psychology, nursing, parenting and human resource development.

In the business environment, Steady Styles like others to be courteous, friendly and accepting of their share of the responsibility. In a social environment, they like others to be genuine and friendly.

Steady Style's desks contain family pictures and other personal items. Their office walls have personal slogans, family or group photos, serene pictures, or mementos. Steady Styles are high-touch in a high-tech world. They give their offices a friendly, warm ambience and arrange seating in a side-by-side, cooperative way.

To achieve more balance and to develop behavioral flexibility, Steady Styles need to say "no" occasionally, attend to the completion of tasks without over-sensitivity to the feelings of others, be willing to reach beyond their comfort zone to set goals that require some stretch and risk, and delegate to others.



THE CONSCIENTIOUS STYLE (C's)

Conscientious Styles are both indirect and guarded. They are concerned with analytical processes and are persistent, systematic problem-solvers. They can also be seen as aloof, picky, and critical. Conscientious Styles are very security-conscious and have a high need to be right, leading them to an overreliance on data collection. In their quest for data, they tend to ask many questions about specifics. Their actions and decisions tend to be slow and extremely cautious, but they rarely miss a deadline. Although they are great problem-solvers, Conscientious Styles could be better decision-makers.

Conscientious Styles tend to be perfectionistic, serious, and orderly. They focus on the details and the process of work and become irritated by surprises and “glitches.” Their theme is, “Notice my efficiency,” and their emphasis is on compliance and working within existing guidelines to promote quality in products or service.

Conscientious Styles like organization and structure and dislike too much involvement with other people. They work slowly and precisely by themselves, are time-disciplined, and prefer an intellectual work environment. Conscientious Styles tend to be critical of their own performance. They tend to be skeptical and like to see things in writing.

The Conscientious Style's primary strengths are their accuracy, dependability, independence, follow-through, and organization. Their primary weaknesses are their procrastination and conservative natures, which promote their tendency to be picky and over-cautious. Occupations that they tend to gravitate toward are accounting, engineering, computer programming, the hard sciences (chemistry, physics, math), systems analysis and architecture.

The greatest irritation for Conscientious Styles is disorganized, illogical people. In business environments, they want others to be credible, professional, and courteous. In social environments, they like others to be pleasant and sincere.

Environmental clues include highly organized desks with clear tops. Their office walls contain their favorite types of artwork: charts, graphs, exhibits, or pictures pertaining to the job. Conscientious Styles are non-contact people who prefer the formality of distance. This preference is reflected in the functional but uninviting arrangement of their desks and chairs. They are not fond of “huggers” and “touchers” and prefer a cool handshake or a brief phone call.

To improve their balance and behavioral flexibility, Conscientious Styles need to: openly show concern and appreciation of others; try shortcuts and time-savers occasionally, adjust more readily to change and disorganization, improve timely decision-making and initiation of new projects, compromise with the opposition, state unpopular decisions, and use policies more as guidelines than hard and fast laws.

A SELF-PORTRAIT OF MY DISC BEHAVIORAL STYLE

Directions: Use your understanding of your own personality to briefly respond to these questions.

1. My primary strength is:

2. My primary weakness is:

3. Famous people/television characters who have a style similar to mine are:

Male:

Female:

4. My personality is ideally suited for this occupation:

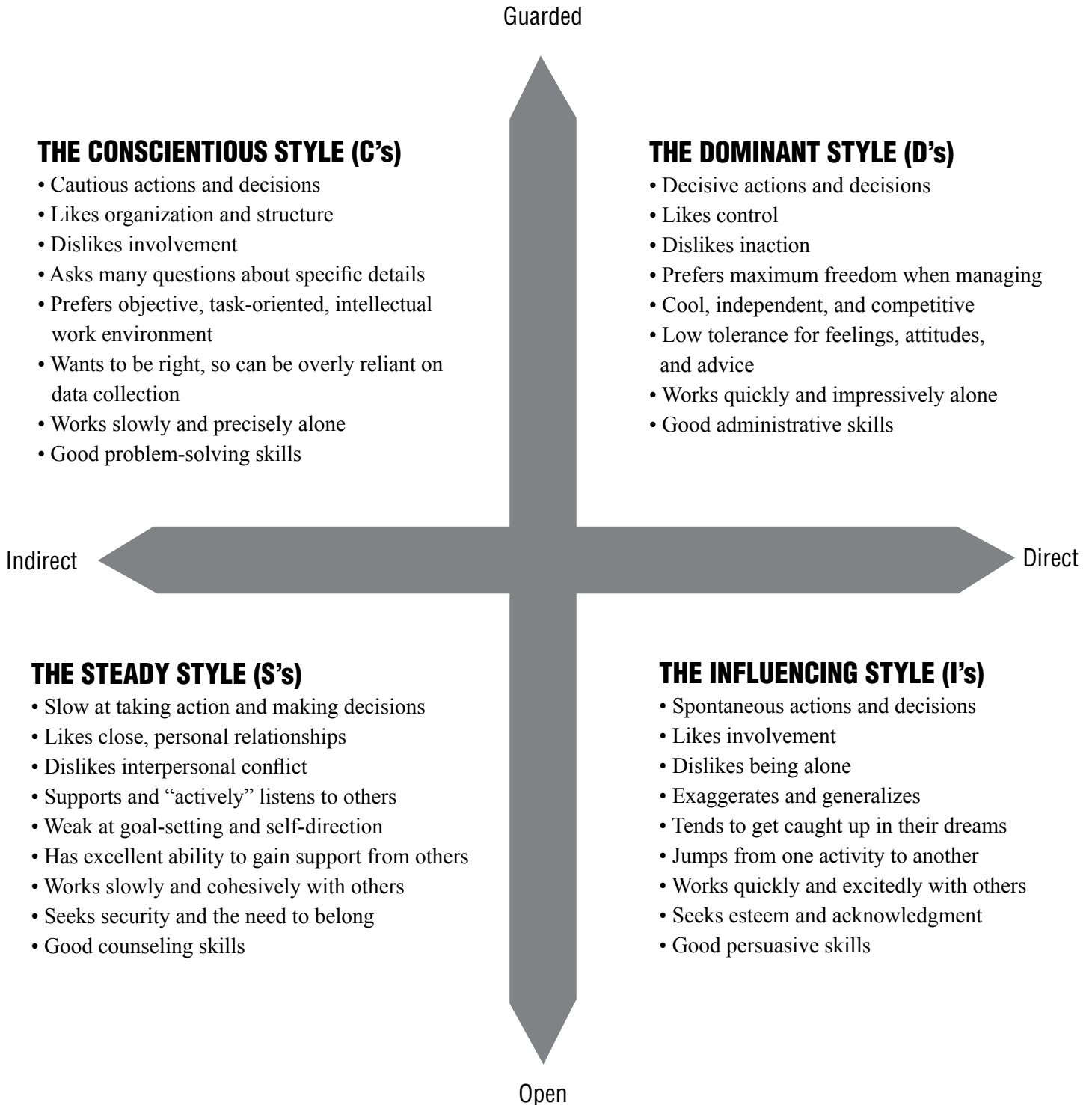
5. The automobile that best reflects my personality is a (make/model/color):

6. The song that best reflects my personality is:

7. What irritates me most about the way other people treat me is:

8. If other people want to get along better with me (my style), they should treat me:

SUMMARY OF STYLES

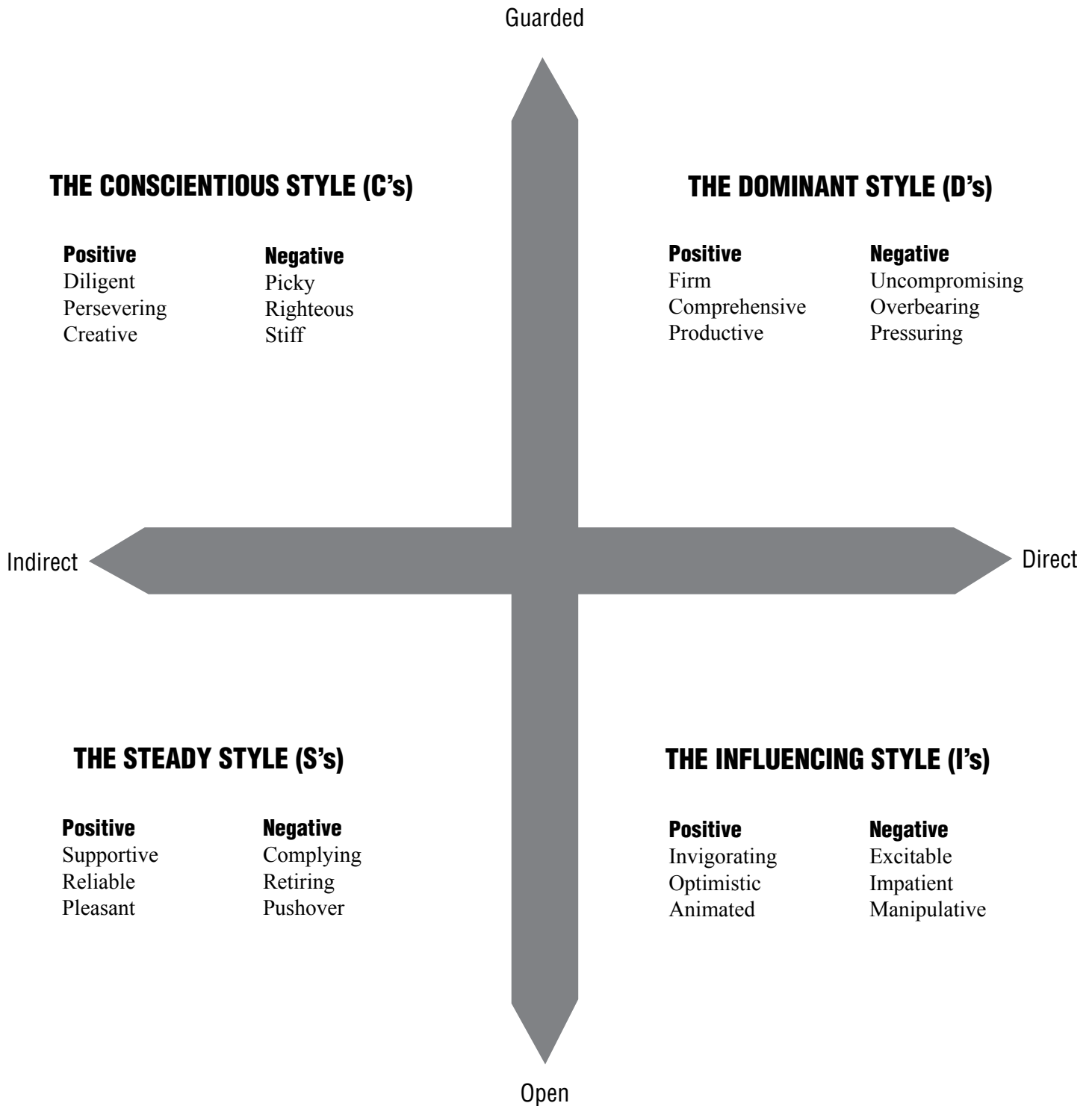


STYLE DESCRIPTORS

	D's	I's	S's	C's
STRENGTHS	Administration Leadership Juggling	Persuading Brainstorming Motivating	Listening Teamwork Follow-through	Planning Problem-Solving Systematizing
WEAKNESSES	Impatient Insensitive to others Poor listener	Disorganized Careless Poor follow-through	Oversensitive Slow to begin action Poor at goal-setting	Perfectionist Critical Unresponsive
OCCUPATIONS	Top executive Military leader	Sales Performing artist	Social worker Teacher	Engineer Accountant
PACE	Fast/Decisive	Fast/Spontaneous	Slow/Relaxed	Slow/Systematic
MOTIVATOR	Winning	The Chase	Involvement	The Process
IRRITATIONS	Indecision Inefficiency	Routine Perfectionism	Insensitivity Impatience	Unpredictability Disorganization
UNDER STRESS	Dictatorial	Superficial	Submissive	Withdrawn
DECISIONS ARE	Decisive	Spontaneous	Consultative	Deliberate
SEEKS	Productivity	Applause	Acceptance	Precision
PRIORITY	Results	Interaction	Communication	The Process
WORKPLACE	Efficient Busy	Stimulating Cluttered	Personal Relaxed	Functional Formal
APPEARANCE	Businesslike	Stylish	Casual	Conservative
GAINS SECURITY THROUGH	Control Leadership	Others' approval Playfulness	Friendships Cooperation	Thoroughness Preparation
FEARS	Being hustled	Loss of prestige	Sudden changes	Criticism

BOTH SIDES OF THE STYLES

Positive and Negative Characteristics



IDENTIFYING THE STYLES

You now have a basic understanding of the four types of behavioral Styles. You may begin to suspect at this point that relationships depend, in part, on our appropriate interaction with each style. The next question—the million dollar question—is, “How do I quickly identify someone’s behavioral style?”

“Excuse me, Mr. Jones, I need to analyze your style. Do you have a moment to discuss your openness and directness with me?” That just won’t do. Guesswork is not advisable, and rarely necessary because there are so many clues available, if you know how to look for them. To identify someone’s style, you must *observe what that person does*.

This simple procedure should help you quickly and accurately identify a person’s behavioral style:

1. Note the person’s **ENVIRONMENT**.
2. **ANALYZE THE BEHAVIORS** with respect to openness and directness to arrive at the likely **BEHAVIORAL STYLE**.
3. **CONFIRM** your observations.

STEP ONE: NOTE THE ENVIRONMENT

Note the environment in which your subject works, lives, or otherwise spends time. That may give you a number of immediate clues. How (if you should have the opportunity to see it) is the person’s office decorated and arranged? What is on the desk, walls, and bookshelves? What is the seating arrangement between you and this person?

The “Environmental Clues” chart on the next page summarizes a number of indicators that relate to the office environment. For instance, if you entered a client’s office and noticed family pictures on the desk and walls, nature posters with personal relationship motifs, a round desk, and

a separate seating area with four comfortable chairs, what would be your first impression of that client’s behavioral style? If your client then stood to greet you personally and sat with you in the easy chairs in order to discuss the purpose of your visit, would that confirm or change your initial impression? By comparing these clues against those presented in the “Environmental Clues” chart, you can get a fairly good initial indication that (in this case) you are indeed dealing with a Steady Style.

Try another: This time you enter the office and notice on the walls: diploma, an achievement plaque, and a poster that says, “Why not?” On the desk: several jumbled stacks of papers in piles, a chaotic appearance. For seating: two overstuffed chairs and a small table close to the open side of the desk where two people can join in a discussion.

You also notice a bookcase with books and stacks of folders intermixed and a plant on the file cabinet. Check the information in the “Environmental Clues” chart. From the environment, what kind of style does the person in that office appear to be? (The disorganization, wall decorations of achievements, stimulating personal comments that go beyond specific projects, and the comfortable and accessible seating mark this as the office of an Influencing Style. Get the idea?)

These environmental indicators are only one kind of clue to behavioral style. Caution: Do **NOT** use this as the sole determinant. The person may have had little control over the environment you see or may have changed the environment in order to meet other needs (e.g., an intense workload and a special visitor). Of course, many times your first contact with someone, and your first opportunity to get a feeling for their behavioral style, will not be a face-to-face encounter. It may be over the telephone, or through a letter or an e-mail.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLUES

THE CONSCIENTIOUS STYLE (C's)

- Desk may appear structured and organized with clear top
- Walls may contain charts, graphs, exhibits, or photos pertaining to job
- Decorated functionally for working
- Seating arrangement suggests formality and non-contact
- Desk between you and the individual

THE DOMINANT STYLE (D's)

- Desk may appear busy: lots of work and material separated into piles
- Walls may contain achievement awards or large planning sheet/calendar
- Decorated to suggest power and control
- Seating arrangement is closed, formal, non-contact, and positioned for power
- Desk may be large to show success and to separate you from the individual

THE STEADY STYLE (S's)

- Desk may contain family photos and personal items
- Walls may contain personal slogans, family or group pictures, serene art, or mementos
- Decorated in relaxed, airy, friendly, soothing manner
- Seating arrangement is open and informal
- No desk between you and the individual

THE INFLUENCER STYLE (I's)

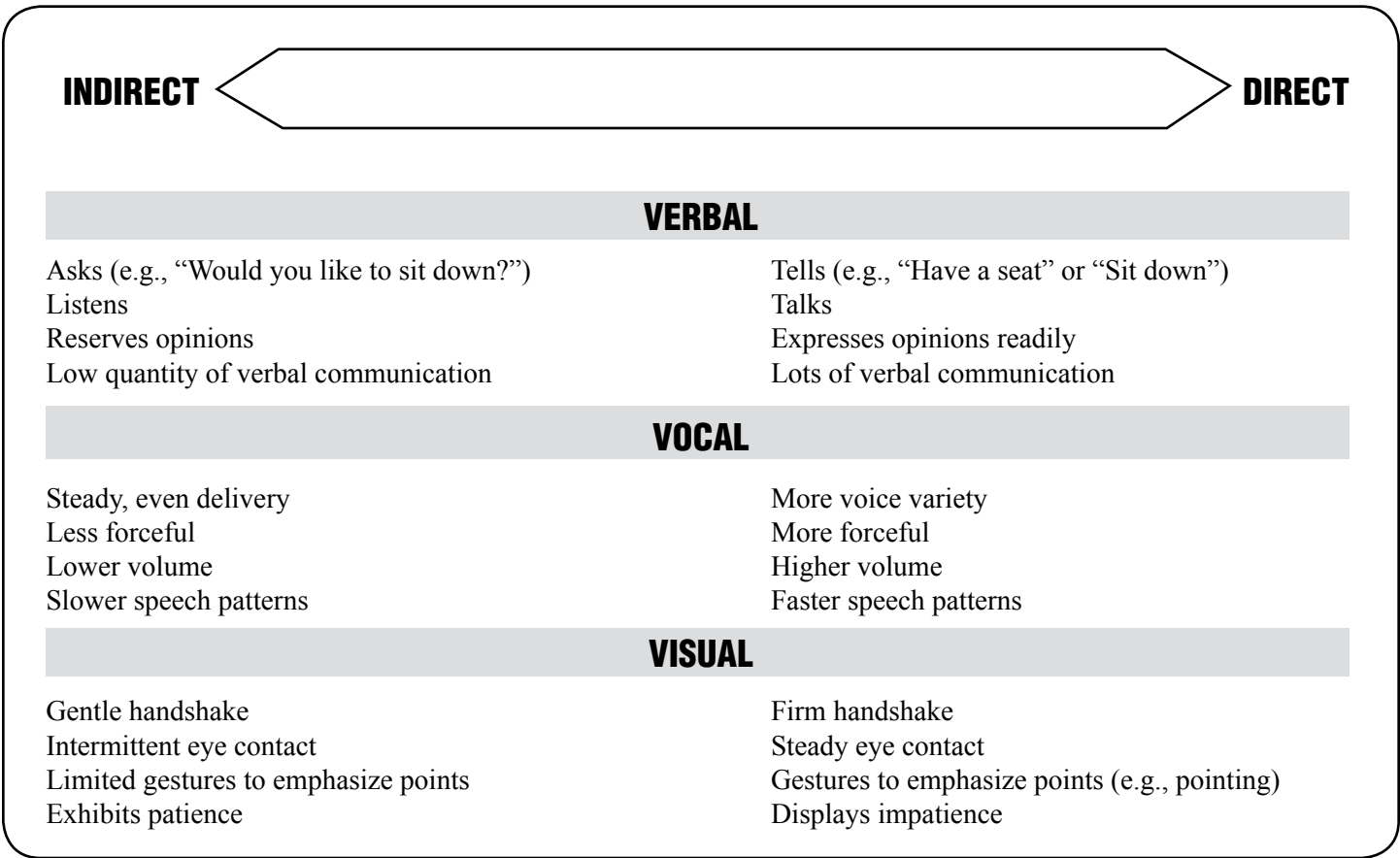
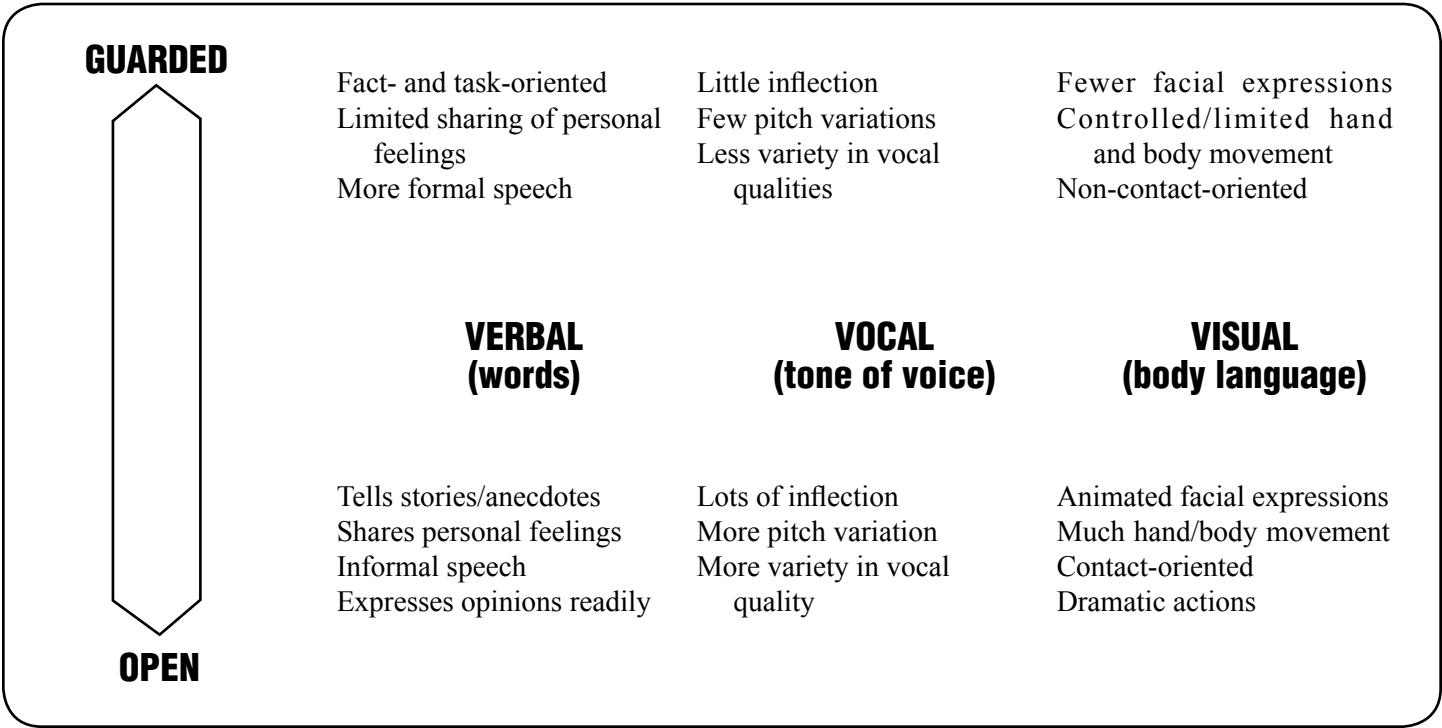
- Desk may look disorganized and cluttered, but they know if something's missing
- Walls may contain awards, motivational slogans, stimulating posters, or "pat-on-the-back" notes
- Decorated in open, airy, friendly manner
- Seating arrangement indicates warmth, openness, contacts, and activity
- Likes contact: may move to alternate seating arrangement when talking to you

STEP TWO: OBSERVE BEHAVIORS

The second step, the crucial step, in identifying a person's behavioral style is to observe it in action. Steps One and Three enhance and corroborate Step Two's observations. In order to observe someone's behavioral style, you need to be aware of and observe a range of verbal and nonverbal behaviors. This may require you to stimulate more behaviors by asking questions (probing) and by "actively" listening. You will find a number of good ideas and skills for probing and listening in the communication sections that follow.

We have assembled and classified a range of verbal, visual, and vocal characteristics into a list of observable behaviors (shown on the next page). These behaviors refer to actions you can see, not judgments you may be tempted to make about them. For example, if you were to see a person hopping up and down, is he doing so because he: is hop-stomping mad, just stepped on a nail, has a foot that's asleep, or is extremely happy and excited? You can't tell by looking. All you can say is he is jumping up and down. Remember – observable behaviors!

USING VERBAL, VOCAL and VISUAL INDICATORS TO IDENTIFY OPENNESS AND DIRECTNESS



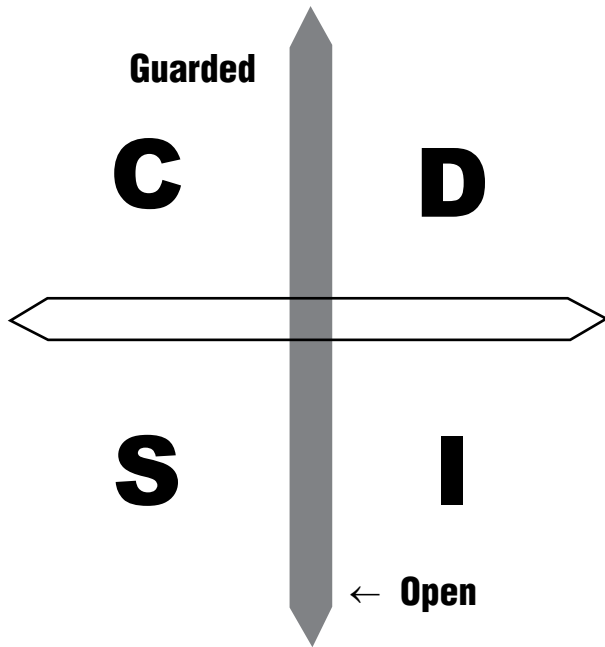
OBSERVABLE CHARACTERISTICS IN THE FOUR STYLES

	VERBAL (words)	VOCAL (tone of voice)	VISUAL (body language)
THE DOMINANT STYLE (D'S)	Tells more than asks Talks more than listens Lots of verbal communication Makes emphatic statements Blunt and to the point	More vocal variety More forceful tone Communicates readily High volume, faster speech Challenging voice intonation	Firm handshake Steady eye contact Gestures to emphasize points Displays impatience Fast-moving
THE INFLUENCING STYLE (I'S)	Tells stories, anecdotes Shares personal feelings Informal speech Expresses opinions readily Flexible time perspective Digresses from conversation	Lots of inflection More pitch variation More variety in vocal quality Dramatic High volume Fast speech	Animated facial expressions Much hand/body movement Contact oriented Spontaneous actions
THE STEADY STYLE (S's)	Asks more than tells Listens more than talks Reserves opinions Less verbal communication	Steady, warm delivery Less forceful tone Lower volume Slower speech	Intermittent eye contact Gentle handshake Exhibits patience Slower moving
THE CONSCIENTIOUS STYLE (C's)	Fact- and task-oriented Limited sharing of feelings More formal and proper Focused conversation	Little inflection Few pitch variations Less variety in vocal quality Steady, monotone delivery Low volume, slow speech	Few facial expressions Non-contact-oriented Few gestures

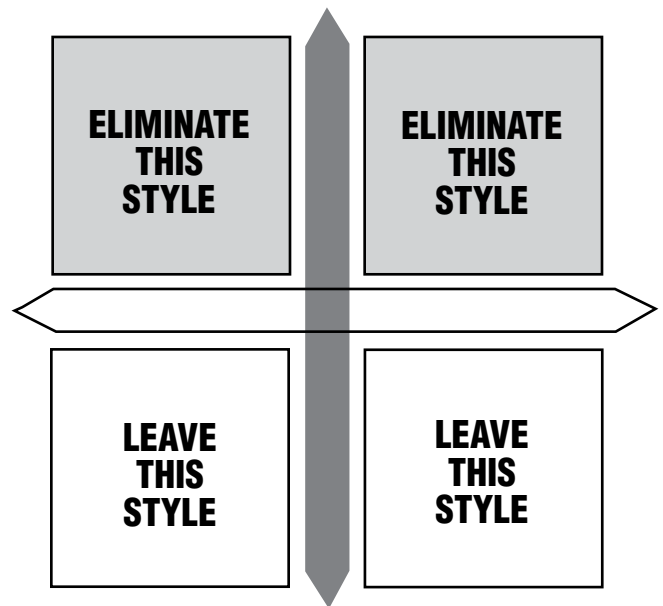
IDENTIFYING A PERSON'S BEHAVIORAL STYLE

To identify the person's behavioral style using the openness and directness scales, first locate the person's position on the openness dimension. It is easier to quickly classify open or guarded behaviors because they are more readily visible. Then determine the level of directness the person is demonstrating. The result is a placement of the person into one of the four behavioral style quadrants through a simple process of elimination.

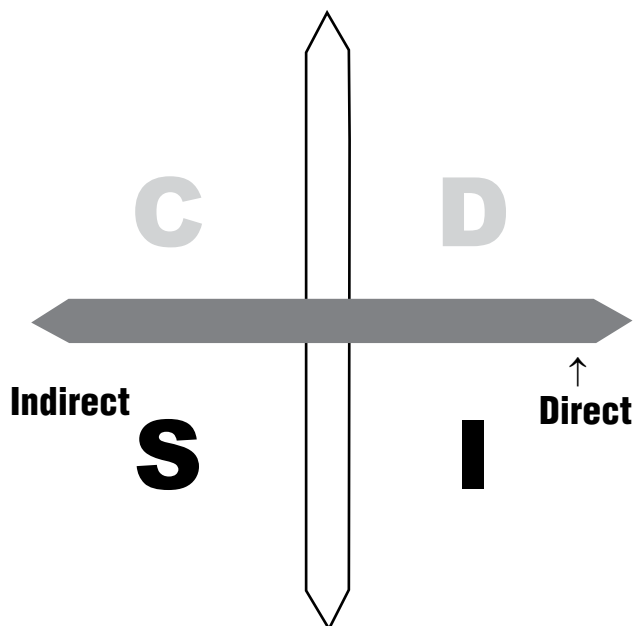
For instance, if you determine that someone is exhibiting higher than average openness, you are automatically eliminating the Styles with guarded behavior – the **D** and **C**. Likewise, if you determine that the person is also quite direct, you automatically eliminate the remaining indirect style – the **S**. By the process of elimination, you conclude that this individual is probably an **I—Influencing Style**.



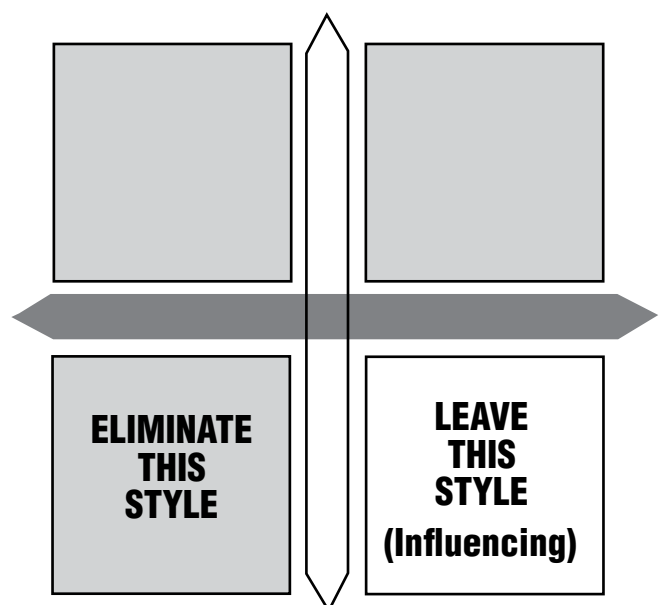
IF: The person being observed appears very Open...



THEN: Eliminate the **Dominant Style (D)** and the **Conscientious Style (C)** (the two Guarded Styles).



THEN IF: The person being observed appears very direct, rather than indirect...



THEN: Eliminate the **Steady Style (S)** (the more indirect of the two remaining Styles). The person is probably an **I—Influencing Style**.

THE SEMINAR

A sales seminar I once conducted began at 8:30 a.m. after an 8:00 coffee and doughnut session. When I arrived at 7:45, the first participant was already in the room, pad and pencils neatly laid out in front of where she sat at the table. She said nothing until I approached, and we politely shook hands. She was totally noncommittal. I asked a few questions for which I received polite, short answers.

Around 8:15, with several other people in the room, a person stopped hesitantly at the door and softly asked, “Excuse me. Am I at the training seminar for salespeople?” When he was told “Yes,” the person breathed a sigh, walked in, took a cup of coffee, and mentioned how interesting the seminar would be – really helpful both in business and at home. He asked a few questions and listened intently to my remarks. He expressed some concern for role-playing in front of the group.

At this moment, another participant strode in, loudly asking, “Hey, is this the sales seminar?” Upon hearing “Yes,” this person dramatized fake relief and started asking where the coffee was, explaining that he couldn’t function without his “black poison.” He had overheard our role-playing comments and leaped in on the conversation to say how he liked doing those things. He followed this with a tale of how he embarrassed himself in the last role-play situation in which he participated.

What would you call the style of the first person described?

The second?

The third?

The first participant is clearly guarded. That means she is either a Dominant Style or a Conscientious Style. Her lack of interest in conversation and restrained gestures identify her as indirect as well—the classic Conscientious Style. The second participant volunteered information about personal feelings and gave rapid feedback with his sigh and his comments. These are relatively open characteristics (Steady Style or Influencing Style). The soft voice, request for clarification, and hesitation all suggest an indirect behavior pattern: this person shows a Steady Style.

The third participant demonstrated openness in telling stories and responding quickly. His directness was also apparent through his speed of responding, fast movements, and high quantity of conversation. These are traits of the Influencing Style.

STEP THREE: CONFIRMATION

After identifying the other person’s style based on environment and behavior, you should use behavioral confirmation to corroborate your choice. Behavioral confirmation simply means looking for additional behaviors that are characteristic of the style you believe (based on your preliminary observations) a person represents. You have observed someone and made a preliminary classification; now check this against the characteristics of the various Styles as you receive further information.

If you have determined that the individual is a Dominant Style, look for specific characteristics that you expect from a Dominant Style—competitiveness, impatience, efficiency, decisiveness, fact-orientation, goal concerns, and so on. If you find that the person exhibits these types of characteristics, you have verified your choice. You can now feel comfortable interacting with him/her as a Dominant Style. Use the same behavioral confirmation process with the other three Styles. **Always test and validate your initial style choice.** The price for being wrong is much greater (if nothing else an embarrassment) than the time involved in confirming an initial assessment.

EXAMPLE 1

X is a businessman who exudes warmth even over the phone. He likes restaurant meetings and usually arrives early. When I met him for the first time, he immediately stood up and smiled. He called me by my first name, extended his hand to shake mine, and wrapped his left arm about my shoulders. He asked if I liked rum, then ordered a drink he was certain I'd like and related the story of his first encounter with the drink in New Orleans. The lunch lasted two and a half hours. Fifteen minutes of this time was spent on business, twenty minutes on new jokes, and the remaining time spent on X's accomplishments and interests. During the lunch, he made friends with the manager and three waitresses, including the one who bumped into him as he was gesturing broadly.

EXAMPLE 2

When I called a vice president of training, she answered her own phone in a notably quiet voice. Upon hearing who recommended that I call, she spent a good minute talking about her friendship with the person. When I asked for an appointment, she said that her schedule was flexible. At our meeting, she greeted me by my first name in a warm voice. We sat in a comfortable seating area away from the desk. She brought in two coffees and we talked about the training program. She was most concerned about the training's potential effect on the communications between management and employees. Though I felt that she had really listened, we had not made a great deal of progress in terms of identifying training needs. Nonetheless, we had developed a strong personal trust and parted our first meeting as friends.

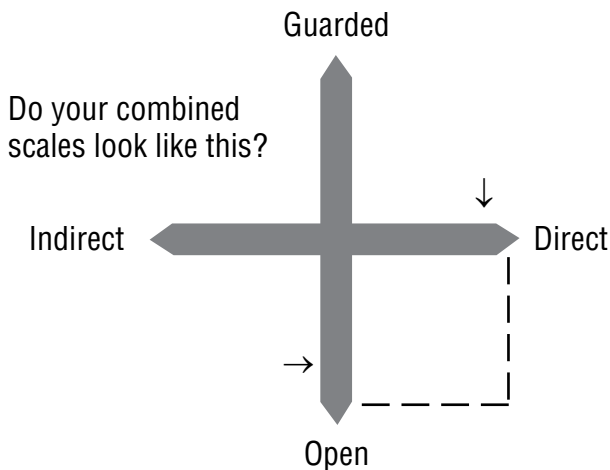
How would you rate his openness?



How would you rate his directness?



The Businessman's Characteristics



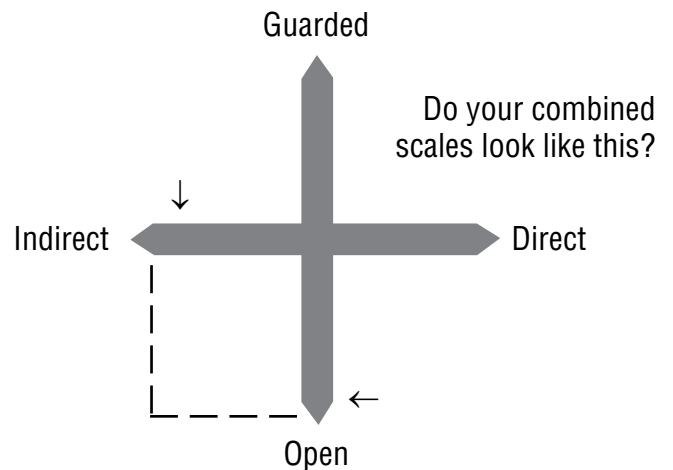
How would you rate her openness?



How would you rate her directness?



The Vice President's Characteristics



RELATIONSHIP STRESS

You have been introduced to a generalized method of classifying a large number of behavioral characteristics into four basic behavioral Styles. Besides differences in openness and directness, the Styles tend to differ in preferences for *pace* (a person's natural rate-of-speed) and *priority* (what a person sees as most important toward accomplishing a goal).

Each style demonstrates their internal motivators through a combination of priority and pace. Open types place a priority on relationships, whereas Guarded people place the priority on tasks. Direct types demonstrate a desire for a faster pace through impatience, whereby Indirect people come across as more cooperative and patient. You can almost visualize an automobile dashboard with only two gauges: Speed and temperature! Direct people go fast; Indirect prefer a slower, steady speed. Open people are warm; Guarded are more cool.

An open behavioral style tends to correspond with a relationship priority; guarded Styles with task-orientation. Indirect behaviors tend to be slower-paced than the direct-style types, which tend to be faster-paced.

An awareness of behavioral-style preferences becomes especially important when people of different Styles meet. When that occurs, and if each person behaves according to the preferences of his or her own style, tension often results.

PACE AND PRIORITY

The "Tension Among the Styles" graphic on the next page relates pace and priority characteristics to behavioral Styles. Notice that the Steady Style and Conscientious Style both tend to prefer a slower pace; the Influencing Style and the Dominant Styles prefer a faster pace. These style combinations will get along well as far as pace is concerned, but watch out for their priorities!

Take the Dominant Style-Influencing Style relationship. Both the Dominant Styles and the Influencing Styles are relatively fast-paced behavioral types. Yet the Influencing Styles place more emphasis on personal relationships than on tasks, while the Dominant Styles tend to pursue tasks with less concern for relationships or feelings. Some degree of tension is likely to result during their interaction due to their differences in priority.

Where priorities are concerned, the Influencing Styles do better with the Steady Styles. These two will still be getting to know each other while the Conscientious Styles and the Dominant Styles are headlong into the task. However, without some awareness and accommodation for their differences in pace, tension may build as well in the Steady Style-Influencing Style interaction when these two finally do get around to the tasks at hand—the Influencing Styles usually want it yesterday whereas the Steady Styles want to take the slow and steady approach.

Consider the task-oriented team of Dominant Styles and Conscientious Styles, another example of pace-based tension. The fast-paced Dominant Styles like to make quick decisions. The slower-paced Conscientious Styles get uptight when having to make decisions without an opportunity to fully analyze all the alternatives.

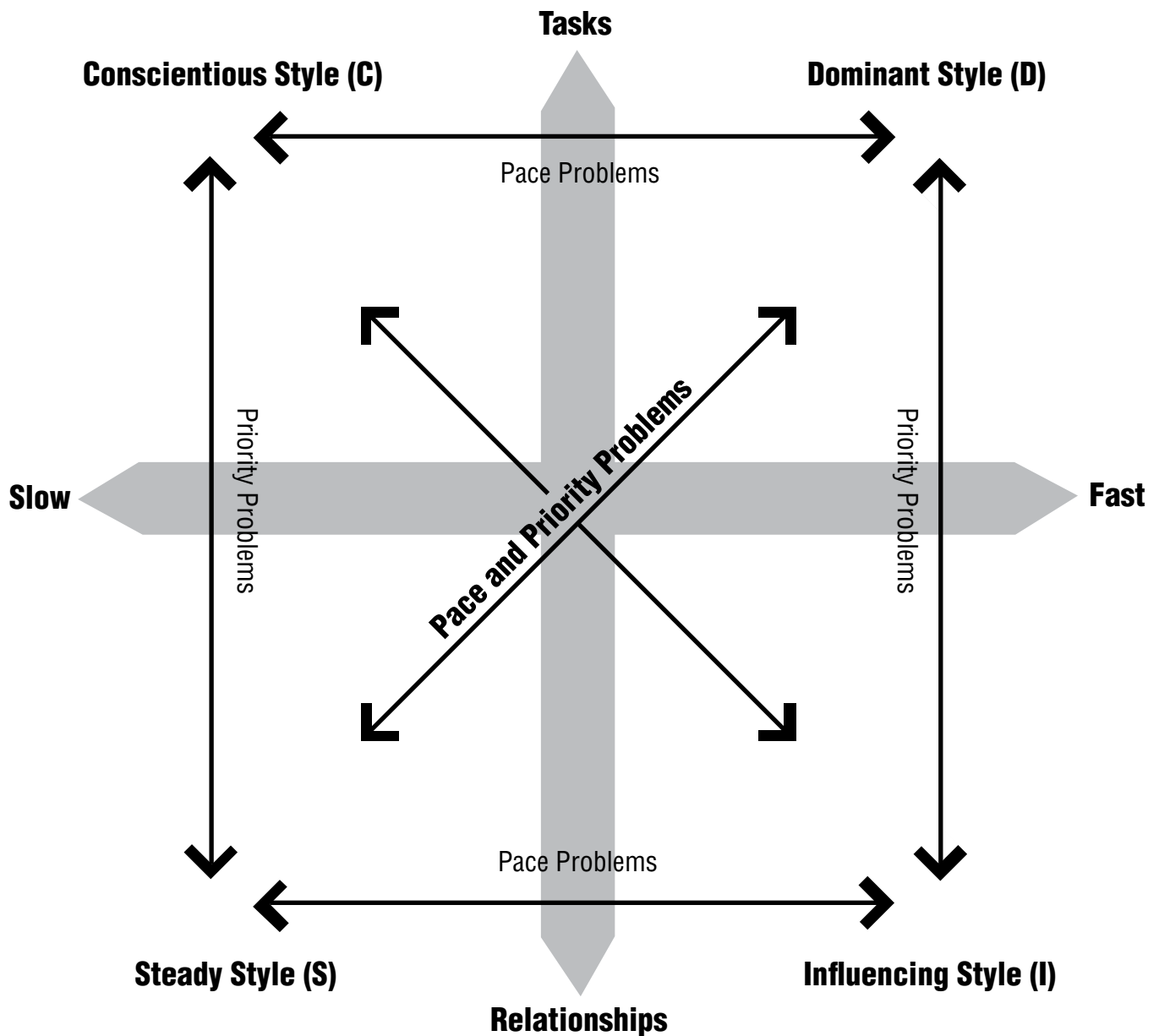
When dissimilar pairings occur, as they often do in many business and social encounters, one or the other of the individuals must make adjustments in style to avoid increasing tension in the other person. This does not mean you must sacrifice your personality or become something you're not. Ideally, both people would demonstrate some adaptability and move part of the way. Depending on the circumstances, however, only one of the individuals may recognize the potential problem, or be sufficiently motivated to do something about it.

When interactions join Styles that differ in **both** their pace and priority preferences, things really get interesting! Here the probability of relationship tension is even greater. This occurs in Steady Style-Dominant Style relationships, as well as Conscientious Style-Influencing Style relationships.

Take the case of the Dominant Style-Steady Style interaction: the Dominant Styles should try to show some concern for people rather than appearing to treat them only as a resource toward task accomplishment. The Steady Styles should try to show more concern for task completion, even if it means putting the personal relationships aside temporarily. When the Dominant Styles meet Steady Styles (a diagonal

relationship), both individuals should attempt adjustments in both pace and priority. The same applies to the Influencing Style-Conscientious Style relationship. The key to managing tension is to know when to expect pace and priority problems, and have a strategy to prevent or deal with these differences in preference.

TENSION AMONG THE STYLES



THE COMMITTEE

Imagine what would happen if you put together a committee consisting of a Dominant Style, an Influencing Style, a Steady Style and a Conscientious Style, and they all fervently practiced The Golden Rule. I can see it all now: As they enter the conference room for the first meeting and the door closes, the Dominant Style says, “All right, everybody, let’s get this act together! Here’s my plan.”

No sooner does the Dominant Style get the words out than the Influencing Style chimes in: “Who died and left you boss? We’ve got tons of time. Did you see what that manager was doing outside the room? It reminds me of a good joke I heard recently...” The Conscientious Style, who is patiently awaiting a turn in the conversation, says, “As I see it, there are three specific tasks we must accomplish in order to reach our ultimate objective. First ...” The ever-patient Steady Style is likely the last one to speak, with, “Please, let’s not argue. Let’s try to get along and work as a team.”

Some people might think that the committee would be much better off if all four members were of the same behavioral style. But, the best committee that anyone could choose would be a combination of all four Styles, as described above. Each particular style has strengths that complement the weaknesses of the others.

They would make an excellent team if they would all practice *The Spirit of the Golden Rule*. They should focus on each other’s strengths rather than criticize each other’s weaknesses or differences. These differences in style actually bring new perspectives to problem-solving, creativity, and team-building that cannot be accomplished with a homogeneous group of Styles or a heterogeneous group of Styles that’s critical of each other’s style.

BREAKDOWN BEHAVIOR—A STORY

What happens to others when you do not practice *The Spirit of the Golden Rule*—when you do not adjust your behavior to meet the style needs, including the communication needs—of the other person? Two sides of the same story emphasize this very issue.

A salesman I knew complained of the narrow-mindedness and difficulty of a particular prospect he was trying to see. I didn’t tell him I had already heard the prospect’s side, but I could guess the problem.

The salesperson is an Influencing Style, complete with warm, open handshakes, first names and questions about his client’s personal interests. The prospect is clearly a Conscientious Style. I have already observed his quiet, somewhat remote, stone-faced, and fact-oriented behaviors. You can almost imagine the encounter these two had. As the salesman was involved in building a friendly relationship and dealing in general opinions and feelings, the prospect wanted to get down to business and was pressing for details. A communications nightmare!

As a result of the disastrous initial contact, the salesman thought the prospect was picky, aloof and uninterested in him or his product. The prospect thought the salesman was uncertain of his points and intrusive in concerns that had no bearing on the business. The tension between the two was obvious, and both the prospect and the salesman had justifiable reasons for their lack of ease. Note that none of these reasons had anything to do with the product involved. Such an increase in tension generally results in distrust, low credibility and, eventually, an unproductive business or social relationship.

BACK-UP BEHAVIORS

Within each individual there is a point where tension increases until it results in stress. People in stress seek to reduce it any way possible, frequently by verbally or psychologically dumping it on the person “responsible” for the tension. Most dumping behaviors are unproductive, and can be destructive to the relationship at hand.

When tension increases, each behavioral style tends to manifest symptoms and respond to tension in ways (sometimes immature ways) that characterize that behavioral style. Each style has its own unproductive but characteristic manner of “dumping” stress on another.

The Steady Style who resorts to back-up behavior generally **gives in** or “**submits.**” The purpose is to avoid conflict at all cost. Although the Steady Style’s back-up behavior on the surface may appear to be a “go-along” attitude, it is not. Resentment builds due to the high tension level, and the subsequent interactions are likely to be filled with distrust and tension.

The Conscientious Styles back-up behavior takes the form of **withdrawal** from the other person or the situation. Being less assertive in nature, a Conscientious Style would rather flee from the unpleasant relationship than deal with it outright. Thus, the Conscientious Style typically seeks more and more information and wants to think it over as a means of avoiding the other person and the stressful situation.

Under stress, the Dominant Styles tends to become **overbearing, pushy, uncompromising, and dictatorial.** It’s an outgrowth of the Dominant Style. When the Dominant Style is in back-up behavior, he or she tries to control anyone or anything that gets in his or her way.

As a rule, an Influencing Style (like the salesperson in our example) resorts to back-up behavior by **verbally attacking the person who causes the stress.** And if you have an Influencing Style on the attack, what tends to be your reaction? Most people react with increased tension of their own which, at some point, can push them into stress too. At this point, the relationship has all but ended.

THE GOOD NEWS

Fortunately, our understanding of behavioral Styles and communications lets us recognize back-up behavior for what it is. Rather than *reacting* to that behavior in ways that might make matters worse, we can **respond** to the behaviors with appropriate strategies that will reduce relationship tension before it has a chance to become significant stress.

If you are dealing with a style that moves fast, you move fast. If an individual is more comfortable taking time to get to know people, allow more time for the appointment and avoid looking at your watch. Move at **his** or **her** pace and priority, not yours. When you understand someone’s behavioral style needs, you can help create a climate of good chemistry and mutual trust. As the trust develops and strengthens, the other person—a co-worker, a client or a friend—will begin to tell you what he or she really needs from the relationship. There will be no contests or testing one another. The relationship will become more productive. As you develop better personal interaction, you will also feel more confident.

For our purposes, **tension management** involves meeting the behavioral needs of the people in a relationship—specifically those needs dictated by their behavioral Styles. In short, you must treat them the way they want to be treated; exercise **The DISC Platinum Rule.**

BEHAVIOR UNDER STRESS

When tension is high, each style tends to manifest symptoms of behavioral stress, often called “back-up” behavior. Often immature, this behavior results from a need to reduce tension immediately. In dealing with people under stress, you can reduce tension by providing what they most need.

THE CONSCIENTIOUS STYLE: WILL WITHDRAW

EXAMPLE of typical response to stressful situation:

“I can’t help you any further. Do what you want.”

MAY APPEAR

- Over-reliant on data and documentation
- Resistant to change
- Slow to act
- Slow to begin work
- Unable to meet deadlines
- Unimaginative
- Withdrawn
- Resentful

NEEDS

- Guarantees that they’re right
- Understanding of principles and details
- Slow pace for “processing” information
- Accuracy

THE DOMINANT STYLE: WILL DICTATE

EXAMPLE of typical response to stressful situation:

“If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.”

MAY APPEAR

- Restless
- Critical
- Blunt
- Intrusive
- Uncooperative
- Irritable
- Aggressive
- Pushy

NEEDS

- Control of situation and self
- Tangible evidence of progress
- Fast pace for moving toward goals
- Accomplishments

THE STEADY STYLE: WILL SUBMIT

EXAMPLE of typical response to stressful situation:

“Okay, if that’s the way you must have it, we’ll try it.”

MAY APPEAR

- Wishy-Washy
- Submissive
- Passive
- Dependent
- Hesitant
- Defensive
- Indecisive

NEEDS

- Reassurances that they’re liked
- Personal assurance
- Slow pace for comfort and security
- Relationships

THE INFLUENCING STYLE: WILL DISREGARD

EXAMPLE of typical response to stressful situation:

“Hey, let’s move on to something more positive!”

MAY APPEAR

- Manipulative
- Overeager
- Impulsive
- Inconsistent
- Superficial
- Unrealistic
- Wasteful of time

NEEDS

- To get credit
- Action and interaction
- Quick pace for stimulation and excitement
- Prestige

DEMYSTIFYING COMPATIBILITY

Compatibility, or lack of it, is not such a mystery. Both rapport and tension are rather predictable, once you know what to look for. Here's the basic principle: In social situations, like behavioral Styles attract. People with similar interests and habits are drawn to one another as friends and acquaintances. There's a sense of satisfaction in knowing you're among people who prize what you prize, enjoy what you enjoy, play by roughly the same rules as you do.

If you're a Steady Style or a Conscientious Style, you're a more structured person who's not fond of surprises. Thus, you find stable, predictable relationships more satisfying. Your needs are met by being around those who won't embarrass you by, say, showing up in a magenta sport-coat or asking deeply personal questions upon first meeting you.

Or maybe you're a faster-paced, more outgoing person, a Dominant Style or Influencing Style who thinks life's too short to worry about whether your tires are properly inflated or your socks match your tie. Who the heck's going to know or care a hundred years from now, right?

THE BIG TEN — AND HOW THEY PERFORM SOCIALLY

So what happens when these sometimes contradictory types get together? Well, the four basic behavioral Styles mix and match into ten combinations. Behavioral science research shows clearly which combinations—prior to use of The DISC Platinum Rule—mesh or clash naturally.

For starters, people with similar tendencies are most compatible with one another socially. That's because those with common interests, habits, and approaches help reinforce each others' self-esteem.

So it won't surprise you to learn that the most **naturally compatible** combinations in social situations are:

- Conscientious-Conscientious
- Steady-Steady
- Influencing-Influencing

Where, you ask, are the Dominants? Well, they also tend to flock to one another—at least for awhile. But

they possess such strong competitiveness that even the Dominant-Dominant relationship isn't quite as naturally harmonious as the others.

That pairing does, however, show up under the **moderately compatible** category:

- Dominant-Dominant
- Steady-Conscientious
- Dominant-Influencing
- Influencing-Steady

Compatibility doesn't come quite as naturally in these cases. But with effort, progress is possible and, in fact, success in working with less compatible individuals can be an esteem-builder in each case.

Dominant Styles and Influencing Styles share an outward focus and often similar interests. Steady Styles and Conscientious Styles, on the other hand, are both inward-oriented and may like the same kinds of activities.

Both Influencing Styles and Steady Styles aspire to be in a supportive relationship. Usually, though, it's the Steady Style who's in the giving role and the Influencing Style who's the receiver.

Meanwhile, the fast-paced, extroverted Dominant Styles and Influencing Styles commonly find it hard to develop rapport with the easygoing, quieter Steady Styles and Conscientious Styles, who are less decisive and enthusiastic. And the Steady Styles and Conscientious Styles, in turn, find the Dominant Styles less desirable because they're too pushy, too loud, and often demand too much of them.

Therefore, of all ten combinations, these three pairs are often the **least naturally compatible** socially:

- Dominant-Steady
- Influencing-Conscientious
- Dominant-Conscientious

To the Dominant Styles, who just wants to get things done, and to the Influencing Styles, who just wants to have fun, the cautious Conscientious Styles and steady Steady Styles can be drags. While Steady Styles often resign themselves

to tolerate the forwardness of Dominant Styles and Influencing Styles, the Conscientious Styles frequently just prefers to be alone.

What's more, even when relaxing, the Conscientious Styles want to do all things right. Whether it's just grilling hot dogs, chatting about politics, or setting up the croquet wickets, the Conscientious Styles set standards and judges themselves and others by how they meet them. The Conscientious Style, in the eyes of the Dominant Style or Influencing Styles, is not living as much as he is just serving time. By and large, never the twain shall meet—at least unless and until The DISC Platinum Rule is practiced.

On the positive side, though, there is a fascination factor in these three pairings, and bridges can be built. Given positive energy, the natural differences can fuel attraction, particularly when one style sees what it can learn from another. A Dominant Style, for example, may see how he can become more patient and responsive to others by taking a cue from a Steady Style. A Steady Style, meanwhile, may be able to draw on the Dominant Style's strengths for taking charge and accepting risk.

Similarly, a sensitive Influencing Style can see how she can learn discretion from the Conscientious Style, and the Conscientious Style perceives that she can become more relaxed and sociable by being around the Influencing Style.

Perhaps the most difficult hurdles socially are posed by the Dominant-Conscientious relationship. For it to work, both must yield their personal control needs, with the Dominant Styles deciding to give the type of space the Conscientious Style needs, and the Conscientious Style learning to be much more direct and open about his concerns with the Dominant Style.

IT'S DIFFERENT TASK-WISE

When it comes to tasks—whether it's doing a project at work, purchasing a family car, or just balancing the checkbook—the dynamics differ dramatically. Here, the “likes” who are drawn to one another socially don't necessarily attract as much as they compete or even conflict.

Now their similarities can get in the way because they have the same needs. After all, to complete a task, one must have resources, rewards, time, space, and attention. But there's only so much of those to go around.

So when those needs aren't met, tension and conflict can result. When one partner feels a need to win, for instance, the other one may sense he or she has been shortchanged. The frequent outcome: resentment.

But, before getting into which pairs clash, let's look at the **most naturally compatible** combinations task-wise:

- Conscientious-Steady
- Dominant-Steady
- Influencing-Steady

See a pattern here? You bet! The Steady Style gets along with everybody in a task situation. He or she's the universal antidote for disharmony. It's the Steady Styles most distinctive trait. They're supportive workers who exert a calming, stabilizing influence. Naturally interested in others and in making a contribution, they enjoy being productive partners. No wonder they're everybody's favorite.

The **moderately compatible** combinations, as far as working on tasks together, are:

- Conscientious-Conscientious
- Steady-Steady
- Influencing-Conscientious

The Conscientious Style looms large in this second grouping. While not as easygoing as the Steady Style, they are sensitive to others' feelings and have a passion for excellence that others usually recognize.

Interestingly, Conscientious Styles figure in many of the **least compatible** combinations socially, but among the highest in tasks. This suggests that others appreciate the quality and thoroughness of their work, even if the Conscientious Styles aren't always viewed as being a lot of laughs.

Last come those combinations that are **least compatible** because they tend to see one another as competitors:

- Dominant-Dominant
- Dominant-Conscientious
- Dominant-Influencing
- Influencing-Influencing

The Dominant-Dominant combination works fairly well socially but when it comes to tasks, a Dominant Style's competitive nature and need for control can stymie cooperation, especially with like-minded Dominant Styles.

As for the Dominant-Conscientious, there's a fundamental clash in the Dominant Style's need for speed and control versus the Conscientious Styles penchant for being slower-paced and systematic.

Notice that while the Influencing-Influencing pair was ranked as among the most socially compatible, they are likely to be the least productive as far as working together on tasks. That's because neither is motivated to deal with task details.

Similarly, Dominant Styles and Influencing Styles also have moderately high social rapport but plummet to the lowest rungs of compatibility when tasks are involved. That's because they both tend to want to delegate.

But don't give up yet on those whose personal style may not be a perfect fit with the situation. With some effort at understanding and applying The DISC Platinum Rule, you can adapt your compatibility so that you can work successfully with anyone.

BEHAVIORAL ADAPTABILITY

The willingness to exercise behaviors not necessarily characteristic of your own style, for the benefit of the relationship, is called **behavioral adaptability**. Behavioral adaptability is something applied more to yourself (to your patterns, attitudes, and habits) than to others. Behavioral adaptability involves making strategic adjustments to your methods of communicating and behaving, based on the particular needs of the relationship at a particular time.

No one style is naturally more adaptable than another.

For a given situation, the strategic adjustments that each behavioral style needs to make will vary. The decision to employ specific techniques of behavioral adaptability is made on a case-by-case basis: you can choose to be adaptable with one person and unadaptable with others. You can choose to be quite adaptable with one person today and less adaptable with that same individual tomorrow. Behavioral adaptability concerns the way you manage your own communication and behaviors.

For example, when an Influencing Style meets with a Conscientious Style, one of the ways the Influencing Style can practice behavioral adaptability is by talking less, listening more, and focusing on the facts. Behavioral adaptability means adjusting your own behavior to make other people feel more at ease with you and the situation.

You practice adaptability each time you slow down somewhat for a Conscientious Style or a Steady Style; or when you move a bit faster for an Influencing Style or a Dominant Style. It occurs when the Dominant Style or the Conscientious Style takes the time to listen to a human interest or family story told by an Influencing Style or a Steady Style.

Adaptability does **not** mean “imitation” of the other person’s behavioral style. It **does** mean adjusting your openness, directness, pace, and priority in the direction of the other person’s preference while maintaining your own identity and good business sense.

Adaptability is important to successful relationships of all kinds. People often adopt a different style in their professional lives than they do in their social and personal lives. It is interesting that we tend to be more adaptable at work with people we know less and we tend to be less adaptable at home with people we know better.

Of course, adaptability at its extreme could make you appear wishy-washy and two-faced. Maintaining high adaptability in all situations may create stress and inefficiency for you. There is also the danger of developing tension from the stress of behaving in a “foreign” style. Usually, this is temporary and may in fact be worth it if you gain rapport with the other person. At the other end of the continuum, **no** behavioral adaptability would cause others to view you as rigid and uncompromising because you are insisting on behaving according to your own natural pace and priority.

The effectively adaptable person meets the other person’s needs **and** his own. Through attention and practice, he is able to achieve a balance: strategically managing his adaptability by recognizing when a modest compromise is appropriate, or, when the nature of the situation calls for it, totally adapting to the other person’s behavioral style. He knows how to negotiate relationships in a way that allows everyone to win. He is tactful, reasonable, understanding, and non-judgmental.

Your adaptability level influences how others judge their relationship with you. Raise your adaptability level—trust and credibility go up; lower your adaptability level—trust and credibility go down. Adaptability enables you to interact more productively with difficult people and helps you to avoid or manage tense situations. With adaptability you are practicing **The DISC Platinum Rule**, and can treat the other person the way he wants to be treated.

For more information, including tips on how to become more adaptable, you may be interested in *Maximizing Your Adaptability*. This eReport is the ultimate guide to adjusting your behavior Styles so that you can get along with absolutely anyone. To purchase *Maximizing Your Adaptability*, please visit my online store: <http://www.alessandra.com/products/productdetails.asp?productid=31>

TO INCREASE BEHAVIORAL ADAPTABILITY:

THE CONSCIENTIOUS STYLE (C'S) NEEDS TO...

- Openly show concern and appreciation of others
- Occasionally try short cuts and timesavers
- Adjust more readily to change and disorganization
- Work on timely decision-making
- Initiate new projects
- Compromise with the opposition
- Use policies as guidelines, rather than laws

THE DOMINANT STYLE (D'S) NEEDS TO...

- Practice “active” listening
- Project a more relaxed image by pacing themselves
- Develop patience, humility, sensitivity, and empathy
- Use more caution
- Verbalize the reasons for conclusions
- Identify with a group
- Be aware of existing sanctions
- Verbalize compliments to others

THE STEADY STYLE (S'S) NEEDS TO...

- Say “No” occasionally
- Attend to completion of tasks without over-sensitivity to others' feelings
- Take risks by stretching beyond their comfort zone
- Delegate to others
- Accept necessary changes in procedure or routine
- Verbalize their feelings and thoughts to the appropriate people

THE INFLUENCING STYLE (I'S) NEEDS TO...

- Control time and emotions
- Develop a more objective mindset
- Spend more time checking, verifying, specifying, and organizing
- Follow through on agreements
- Concentrate on the task at hand
- Take a more logical approach
- Try to complete more of what they start

GENERAL STRATEGIES BY BEHAVIORAL TYPE

In Relationships With C's:

- Support their organized, thoughtful approach
- Demonstrate through actions rather than words
- Be systematic, exact, organized, and prepared
- List advantages and disadvantages of any plan
- Provide solid, tangible, factual evidence
- Provide guarantees that actions can't backfire

ABOVE ALL BE: Thorough and well prepared.

In Relationships With S's:

- Support their feelings by showing personal interest
- When you disagree, discuss personal feelings
- Allow them time to trust you
- Move along in an informal, slow manner
- Provide guarantees and personal assurances that any actions will involve minimum risk

ABOVE ALL BE: Warm and sincere.

In Relationships With D's:

- Support their goals and objectives
- Keep your relationship businesslike
- If you disagree, argue facts – not personal feelings
- Recognize their ideas – not them personally
- To influence decisions, provide alternative actions with brief supporting analysis
- Be precise, efficient, and well organized

ABOVE ALL BE: Efficient and competent.

In Relationships With I's:

- Support their opinions, ideas, and dreams
- Don't hurry the discussion
- Try not to argue – you usually won't win
- Agree on the specifics and put everything in writing
- Be entertaining and fast moving
- Use testimonials and incentives to positively affect decisions

ABOVE ALL BE: Interested in them.

ACTION PLANS . . .

CONSCIENTIOUS CHARACTERISTICS

They are...	So you...
Concerned with aggressive approaches	– Approach them in a indirect, non-threatening way
Think logically	– Show your reasoning
Seek data	– Give it to them in writing
Need to know the process	– Provide explanations and rationale
Utilize caution	– Allow them to think, inquire, and check before they make decisions
Prefer to do things themselves	– When delegating, let them check on others' progress and performance
Want others to notice their accuracy	– Compliment them on their thoroughness and correctness when appropriate
Gravitate toward quality control	– Let them assess and be involved in the process when possible
Avoid conflict	– Tactfully ask for clarification and assistance that you may need
Need to be right	– Allow them time to find the best or "correct" answer, within available limits
Like to contemplate	– Tell them "why" and "how"

DOMINANT CHARACTERISTICS

They are...	So you...
Concerned with being #1	– Show them how to win, and new opportunities
Think logically	– Display reasoning
Want facts and highlights	– Provide concise data
Strive for results	– Agree on goal and boundaries, then support them or get out of their way
Like personal choices	– Allow them to "do their thing," within limits
Like changes	– Vary routine
Prefer to delegate	– Look for opportunities to modify their work load focus
Want others to notice their accomplishments	– Compliment them on what they've done
Need to be in charge	– Let them take the lead, when appropriate, but give them parameters
Tendency towards conflict	– If necessary, argue with conviction on points of disagreement, backed up with facts; don't argue on "personality" basis

STEADY CHARACTERISTICS

They are...	So you...
Concerned with stability	– Show how your idea minimizes risk
Think logically	– Show reasoning
Want documentation and facts	– Provide data/ proof
Like personal involvement	– Demonstrate your interest in them
Need to know in a step-by-step sequence	– Provide an outline and/or one-two-three instructions as you personally "walk them through"
Want others to notice their patient perseverance	– Compliment them for their steady follow-through
Avoid risks/changes	– Give them personal assurances
Dislike conflict	– Act non-aggressively, focus on common interest or needed support
Accommodate others	– Allow them to provide service or support for others
Look for calmness and peace	– Provide a relaxing, friendly atmosphere
Enjoy teamwork	– Provide them with a cooperative group
Want sincere feedback that they're appreciated	– Acknowledge their easygoing manner and helpful efforts, when appropriate

INFLUENCING CHARACTERISTICS

They are...	So you...
Concerned with approval and appearances	– Show them that you admire and like them
Seek enthusiastic people and situations	– Behave optimistically and provide an upbeat setting
Think emotionally	– Support their feelings when possible
Want to know the general expectations	– Avoid involved details, focus on the "big picture"
Need involvement and people contact	– Interact and participate with them
Like changes and innovations	– Vary the routine; avoid requiring long-term repetition by them
Want others to notice <i>them</i>	– Compliment them personally and often
Often need help getting organized	– Do it together
Dislike conflict	– Act non-aggressively and avoid arguing directly on a personal basis
Look for action and stimulation	– Keep up a fast, lively pace
Surround themselves with optimism	– Support their ideas and don't poke holes in their dreams; show them your positive side
Want feedback that they "look good"	– Mention their accomplishments, progress, and your other genuine appreciation

BOARDROOM VIGNETTE

Tom: Okay everybody, we've got a big problem that requires immediate attention. According to the memos we received this morning, one of our top five clients has a customer service gripe and we need to fix it ASAP. Now here's my plan...

Judy: Wait a second. Who died and left you boss? I've got to tell you, my gut feeling on this whole thing is that it's not a big deal. One of their people is just trying to make a mountain out of a molehill. Two weeks ago, I had lunch with Jerry Stiller and he gave me absolutely no indication that they were unhappy. In fact, we had a great lunch and he said they were looking forward to a terrific year with us. Look, I'll call Jerry and a few other people, take 'em to dinner, and schmooze a bit. You'll see, this whole thing will blow over in no time at all.

John: I'm not sure about that. You have to be careful here in case there's more to this than meets the eye. Obviously some things have gotten out of control here. The most hassle-free way to solve this might be to clearly identify where the service breakdown occurred. We could conduct a survey of our client's employees, analyze the data, then pinpoint precisely where the problem is. Implement a recovery program with some tight controls, then follow up with another survey to make sure we achieved our goals. That's the only way we'll be able to offer them some solid guarantees that the problem or problems have been solved and aren't likely to happen again.

Mary: A survey? We don't have time for a survey. This thing has got to be nipped in the bud right now. I have a

bonus riding on this account. In fact, we all have bonuses riding on this account. Look, you guys find out what went wrong and come up with a bottom line solution, one that takes into consideration the costs and the benefits of the remedy. Then I'll carry the ball into a conference call with their top guy and straighten this thing out, but I need to be able to make that call in a couple of days. So let's get moving, right now.

Liz: This doesn't seem to be just a financial situation. We let a lot of people down on their side and ours. We created expectations and didn't live up to them. We caused a moment of misery for our clients. We could meet with their people one-on-one and prove to them that our commitment to this relationship is as strong as ever. We've got to pull together now and work as a team. It may be a lot of work, but that's okay. I for one will volunteer to put in the extra time needed if that's what it takes to make things right.

Paul: Maybe we're just not showing enough appreciation for their business. Here's what we do. We take some of their people out for a fishing trip, maybe throw 'em a big party. I'm gonna tell you, you'd be amazed how fast things like this can blow over with a little positive attitude adjustment.

Judy: That works for me. I know a great reggae band.

Tom: Umph. You people are hopeless.

Exercise

Using the above dialogue, which style would you attribute to each person?

Tom - _____
Judy - _____
John - _____

Mary - _____
Liz - _____
Paul - _____

[Answers on Page 79]

MIX AND MATCH

The purpose of this activity is to talk with as many people as possible within a 15-minute period and gather as many clues as you can in order to determine their Styles.

Directions:

1. Quickly review the categories listed below.
2. Circulate—meet people—talk with them and find out about them; see if they can fit any of the categories below.
3. When you find a match during your conversation, have that person sign the category on your sheet and then move on to another person to talk with.
4. Do *not* use any signature for more than one category.

MEET SOMEONE WHO:

1.... has blond or red hair and shake that person's hand.

Person's signature: _____

2.... can touch their toes without bending at the knee.

Person's signature: _____

3.... visited a very unusual vacation spot within the last year.

Person's signature: _____

4.... is wearing a shoe size less than size seven.

Person's signature: _____

5.... is wearing a shoe size greater than size twelve.

Person's signature: _____

6.... plays a stringed instrument.

Person's signature: _____

7.... has green eyes.

Person's signature: _____

8.... drives a red sports car.

Person's signature: _____

9. ... has been up in a hot air balloon.

Person's signature: _____

10. ... speaks French.

Person's signature: _____

11.... has worked for the same company for more than ten years.

Person's signature: _____

12.... has traveled the farthest to be in this class.

Person's signature: _____

13.... knows what an "ichthyologist" does.

Person's signature: _____

14.... loves their job and can tell you about it in twenty-five words or less.

Person's signature: _____

15.... plays bridge – well!

Person's signature: _____

16.... was born in a foreign country.

Person's signature: _____

17.... plays a racket sport.

Person's signature: _____

18.... has an unusual pet.

Person's signature: _____

19.... has a very unusual hobby.

Person's signature: _____

20.... has five or more children or grandchildren.

Person's signature: _____

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR ADAPTABILITY

	D's	I's	S's	C's
Needs To Know:	What it does/ By when/ What it costs	How it enhances their status and visibility	How it will affect their personal circumstances	How they can justify it logically/ How it works
Do It:	Rapidly	Dynamically	Friendly	Precisely
Save Them:	Time	Effort	Conflict	Embarrassment
To Facilitate Decision Making Provide:	Options with supporting analysis	Testimonials and incentives	Personal service and assurances	Data and documentation
Likes You To Be:	To the point	Stimulating	Pleasant	Precise
Support Their:	Goals	Ideas	Feelings	Procedures
Create This Environment:	Businesslike	Enthusiastic	Personal	Serious
Maintain This Pace:	Fast/decisive	Fast/spontaneous	Slow/relaxed	Slow/systematic
Focus On This Priority:	The Task/ The Results	The Relationship/ Interaction	The Relationship/ Communication	The Task/ The Process
At Play Be:	Competitive and aggressive	Spontaneous and playful	Casual and cooperative	Structured/play by the rules
Use Time To:	Act efficiently	Enjoy the interaction	Develop the relationship	Ensure accuracy
Write This Way:	Short and to the point	Informal and dramatic	Warm and friendly	Detailed and precise
On The Telephone Be:	Short and to the point	Conversational and playful	Warm and pleasant	Businesslike and precise

You have to learn to be flexible in your ways before becoming truly adaptable. *Flexibility* is an eWorkbook with exercises that will provide you with the knowledge to know when to bend and how much to bend. To purchase *Flexibility*, please visit my online store: <http://www.alessandra.com/products/productdetails.asp?productid=61>

HIGH PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP

If, as someone once said, tact is the radar of the mind, then practicing The DISC Platinum Rule can be a valuable tune-up of your antenna.

The DISC Platinum Rule—treating others the way they want to be treated by adapting to their personality style—can quickly make you a more sensitive, effective leader. Indeed, The DISC Platinum Rule can have a positive effect on almost every aspect of managing. With each of the four personality types, there's a different way to communicate and delegate tasks, compliment and correct, and motivate and counsel.

That's more than we can get into in this section. But I do want to explain how to generally increase your compatibility and effectiveness with all your employees.

WHERE DOES YOUR POWER COME FROM?

First, recognize that your power to influence employees springs from two sources: "position power" and "personal power." Position power is just what it sounds like—you're the CEO, the department head, the regional sales manager, and a certain amount of power comes from being anointed by the hierarchy.

Position power is a starting point for influencing someone. But it's personal power that turns mere compliance into real cooperation. Personal power comes from earning it, from developing it.

Employees have gained added clout in recent decades. Court decisions combined with more enlightened theories of management have had the effect of giving more say to the rank-and-file. In fact, it's now generally believed that a leader can't really lead until he or she is genuinely accepted.

Thus, personal power—in essence, your skill in dealing with people—is increasingly crucial to you and your organization.

In short, if you honor your employees' individuality, their essential difference, they'll feel like they're on a winning team and will work harder, better for you. But you must empower them.

You can do that by learning to listen, observe, and talk to them. And then adapting so they'll feel important and wanted. That's The DISC Platinum Rule put into action. Do that, and you'll see less tension and fewer conflicts and have a more effective, motivated workforce.

THE "BEST" LEADERSHIP STYLE

Remember, the best leader isn't someone with a particular behavioral style, or even some ideal blend of Styles. Instead, the best leader is someone who realizes what a job or task requires—and then does it! That means working well with all of the personality Styles in all sorts of situations.

In fact, as firms restructure and put new emphasis on teamwork, leaders who understand behavioral Styles will have a leg up. Sometimes they may wish to act in their natural style, using their intrinsic strengths. At other times, they may choose to adapt to others, using The DISC Platinum Rule principles. Or, when they sense a serious clash of Styles, they may wish to pick a third person to handle a certain situation.

Yet another option open to the manager is to change the work environment—say, realign a worker's duties, alter deadlines, or revamp priorities—to allow employees to play to their strengths. Most managers today agree that you can't mandate productivity.

A friend of ours, for example, employed a strong Conscientious Style as bookkeeper/office manager. She was terrific at that job, but when the boss had to leave the office, the Conscientious Style also had to answer the phone, and that's where the trouble began. Complaint after complaint piled up about the bookkeeper's brusqueness. Finally, her boss phoned in, pretending to be a customer, and was shocked at how abruptly she was treated.

"I just hate it when customers call," the bookkeeper later conceded. "They interrupt what I'm doing." Though a good worker, she wasn't cut out to deal with the phone. Needless to say, the boss got somebody else to answer the phone, and everybody was happier—the boss, bookkeeper and the customers!

For any organization to run its best, it probably requires all four Styles. You can't just say "We're a sales organization, so we need all Influencing Styles." Or "We're an engineering outfit, so we just need results-oriented Dominant Styles and Conscientious Styles." You need all four types, but you need them in the right spots.

In all cases, though, you, the manager, should be very aware of your style and how it can affect others. Being conscious of the extremes of your style will allow you to become a better boss. Often, supervisors who make a study of their style in the workplace also see improved relationships at home and in social settings. "Wow!" they'll say as they see for the first time how others view them, "that's what my spouse has been telling me all these years."

Whatever your primary style, you can choose to make it more palatable. Here are some ways a manager can round off some of the sharper edges of his or her personal style:

IF YOU'RE A DOMINANT STYLE (D)...

Ratchet down a notch or two! Keep in mind that others have feelings and that your hard-charging, know-it-all style can make your subordinates feel inadequate and often resentful.

Accept that mistakes will occur, and try to temper justice with mercy. You might even joke about errors you make, rather than trying to always project a super-human image.

Dominant Styles can encourage growth in others in at least two ways. First, by praising them when they do something well. And second, by giving them some authority and then staying out of their way so they can use it. Whatever you lose in control, you're likely to gain in commitment and improved staff competency.

Try not to be quite so bossy! Ask others' opinions and maybe—though this is radical for a Dominant Style—even plan some collaborative actions.

IF YOU'RE AN INFLUENCING STYLE (I)...

Your people depend on you not just for ideas, but for coordination too. So anything you can do to become more organized—making lists, keeping your calendar current, prioritizing goals—will pay big dividends for you and them.

Nothing's so dispiriting as to see the boss drop the ball on important matters. So, remember: If you fail to follow-up,

procrastinate on tough decisions, or make pledges you don't keep, your employees will lose faith. Even though you don't do those things purposely, they'll see you as letting them down. Your charm and warmth can't fully compensate for unreliability.

Also, come to grips with the fact that conflicts are going to occur. Try to deal with them up front, not sweep them under the rug. In addition, organize your time better and keep your socializing in balance with your tasks.

IF YOU'RE A STEADY STYLE (S)...

You're probably a well-liked boss. Your goal should be to become a more effective, well-liked boss.

Learn to stretch a little, take on more, or different, duties and try to accomplish them more quickly. You may want to be more assertive as well as more open about your thoughts and feelings. Experiment with a little risk, a little change.

Being sensitive to your employees' feelings is one of your greatest strengths. But you must seek a middle ground between that and being knocked off balance by the first negative comment or action that comes your way.

IF YOU'RE A CONSCIENTIOUS STYLE (C)...

Your high standards are a double-edged sword. Your employees are inspired by your quest for excellence, but often they feel frustrated because they can never quite seem to please you.

One of the best things you can do is lessen and soften your criticism, spoken or unspoken. You can seem so stern sometimes!

Ease up on your need to control. Walk around and spend more time with the troops, chatting up people at the water cooler or in the lunchroom.

Wake up to the fact that you can have high standards without requiring perfection in each instance. That will take a load off your shoulders—and off your employees, too.

Whatever your style, being adaptable can help you to build bridges to your employees and make them feel valued. By learning to best respond to their interests and concerns, their strengths and weaknesses, you can get the most from your people as well as leave them more satisfied.

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RAPPORT AND PRODUCTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP PROCESS

The Platinum Rule (*Do Unto Others as They Would Have You Do Unto Them*) can have a positive effect on almost every aspect of managing/leading others. With each of the four DISC behavioral types, for example, there's a different way to communicate and delegate tasks to them; compliment and correct them; and motivate and counsel them.

Learning these methods can quickly make you a more sensitive, effective leader of people. Sensitivity and tact are constantly demanded of leaders. If, as someone once said, tact is the radar of the mind, The Platinum Rule can be a valuable tune-up of your antenna.

By now, you know your primary DISC behavioral style along with growth opportunities to help you deal better with tasks and people. Keep those thoughts in mind.

Meanwhile, recognize that your power to influence employees springs from two sources. First, there's "position power." That's just what it sounds like, you're the CEO, the department head, and a certain amount of power comes with that title.

But ask any CEO what happens when he tries to get a brand of ketchup changed in the employee cafeteria. Ask the department head what happens when she decides to cut back on overtime. Ask the regional manager what happens when he asks all the store managers to upgrade the signs in their windows. Sometimes the bosses get their way and sometimes they don't.

So even if you have a title, you can't rely on position power alone to get you what you want. You also need "personal power." In fact, it's now generally believed that a leader can't really lead until he or she is genuinely accepted by those who are to be led.

If the CEO, department head, or regional manager gets the cooperation he or she asks for, it's not just because that person has a title. It's because he or she has also gained the confidence and trust of the average employee. It's because he or she has attained personal power.

So position power comes from being anointed by the hierarchy. But personal power comes from earning it, from developing it. Position power is a starting point for influencing people. But it's personal power that turns mere compliance into real cooperation.

The Platinum Rule provides that extra ingredient that leaders and managers can use in endless ways for their firm and for themselves. Being adaptable can help supervisors, managers and leaders build bridges to their employees and make them feel valued. By learning how best to respond to their interests and concerns, their strengths and weaknesses, you can get the most from your people as well as leave them more personally satisfied.

DEVELOPING YOUR PEOPLE

Developing C's:

- Point out the most important things to remember first
- Demonstrate in an efficient, logical manner, stressing the purpose of each step
- Proceed slowly, stopping at key places to check for their understanding
- Ask for possible input, especially regarding potential refinements
- Build up to the big picture

Developing D's:

- Focus on the big picture
- Cover basic steps/ high points quickly
- Show them the simplest, fastest route to get them to their stated destination
- Tell them what is to be done by when
- Help them find shortcuts
- Connect concept with their highest value

Developing S's:

- Use one-on-one, hands-on instruction
- Start at the beginning & end at the end
- Let them observe others before trying
- Provide a step-by-step list of procedures or a working timetable/ schedule
- Allow plenty of repetition for their actions to become second nature and more routine
- Use a pleasant and patient approach in small group settings

Developing I's:

- Release information in chunks
- Skip details and boring material
- Get them involved kinesthetically
- Let them show you what they are learning
- Be slow to criticize and quick to praise
- Let them teach concept to others

ADAPTING YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLE

Communicating with C's:

- Be well organized and clear in your communications
- They search for logical conclusions
- Ask your questions in a more discreet, non-judgmental manner to elicit the points, objectives, or assurances C's want: "Lenny, I'm not trying to pressure you, but are you not interested in the auditor's position, or in any position?"

Communicating with D's:

- Listen to their suggestions, their course of action and the results they are considering
- Find areas where you already agree
- Work backwards toward gaining agreement on the results you both want—and are willing to either mutually or independently allow the other to achieve: "Sarah, this format will give you the freedom to develop your branch your way and still allow Vern and Ellen to structure theirs another way... without sacrificing time or morale"

Communicating with S's:

- Be ready to do more talking than listening; they don't feel comfortable when the limelight is focused on them.
- Clarify any key agenda items with them.
- Stay organized and move forward steadily (but slowly) as you check to make sure they understand and accept what is being said: "Did you want me to stick around the office at a particular time each day in case you need to telephone me for emergency questions on this account, or do you want me to call you?"

Communicating with I's:

- Listen to their personal feelings and experiences
- Their style requires open and responsive interaction with others, preferably in a manner of congenial and unhurried conversation (like that between long-time friends): "Just between you and me, Chris, I feel very uneasy about Jill and Howard handling this account by themselves."

HELPING PEOPLE REACH DECISIONS

Helping C's Decide:

- Confirm they are open to discussing the problem or decision
- If they aren't ready, either set a definite time that's better for both of you or explore their concern in even pursuing this subject
- Give them time and space to think clearly
- When the situation is being explored, review your impression of the process: "My understanding is you'd like to think it over and figure out what time commitment you'd be able to make to the group. When may I call you about your decision?"

Helping D's Decide:

- D's tend to make autonomous, no-nonsense decisions
- If the decision will help them meet their goals, they go for it; if not, they say no
- One of the few times they put off reaching a conclusion is when it takes too much time/effort doing the homework to determine the best alternative
- Prevent this procrastination by simply providing a brief analysis for each option.

Helping S's Decide:

- Deal with only one subject or situation at a time, one step at a time
- Before moving on to other items, make sure they are ready, willing, and able to do so
- Remain calm and relaxed
- Encourage them to share their suggestions as to how the decision might be made in a way that is likely to add even more stability to the current conditions: "Would you mind writing down a schedule of your office's activities so I can write my proposal without missing anything?"

Helping I's Decide:

- They want to avoid discussions of complex, negative-sounding, messy problems
- Frame suggestions in a positive light
- They are open to your suggestions—as long as they allow them to look and feel good—and not require a lot of difficult, follow-up, detail work or long-term commitments. "You know just about everybody, George. Since we need to get \$350 in pledges by the end of February, why not go ahead and wrap up all your calls by Friday? Then you can relax a lot more next week."

MOTIVATING YOUR PEOPLE

Motivating C's:

- Appeal to their need for accuracy and logic
- Keep your approach clear, clean and procedural
- Better yet, provide illustration and documentation
- Avoid exaggeration and vagueness
- Show them how this is the best available current option

Motivating D's:

- Lead with the big picture
- Provide them with options and clearly describe the probabilities of success in achieving goals
- Allow them the opportunity to make choices
- Set boundaries, but let them take charge

Motivating S's:

- Show how their work benefits others
- Show how the outcome will provide security for their family
- Connect their individual work to the benefit of the whole team
- Get them to see how their follow-through links to a greater good
- Show how it can strengthen their relationships with others

Motivating I's:

- Provide “special” incentives to inspire them to go the whole nine yards
- Show them how they can look good in the eyes of others
- Create short-term contests that don't require long-term commitment
- Reward them in front of others
- Let them speak about their achievements

COMPLIMENTING YOUR PEOPLE

Complimenting C's:

- Mention their efficiency, thought processes, organization, persistence and accuracy
- Don't mix personal and professional comments unless you know them very well
- One C told us: "Compliments don't mean much to me. But I do like genuine, heartfelt appreciation once in awhile."
- Keep praise simple and concise

Complimenting D's:

- Mention their achievements, upward mobility and leadership potential
- Omit personal comments and focus on their track record: "Jones, you've exceeded our company goals every month for the past year and have put in more hours than anybody but the top officials here. The CEO has his eye on you for an upcoming VP slot."

Complimenting S's:

- Mention their teamwork and dependability
- Remark about how others regard them, how well they get along with co-workers, and how important their relationship-building efforts have been to the company
- Effusiveness can arouse their suspicions, so stick to praising what they've done rather than personal attributes

Complimenting I's:

- Pay direct personal compliments to them when legitimately deserved
- Mention their charm, friendliness, creative ideas, persuasiveness, and/or appearance (or better yet, all of the above)
- They willingly accept "general praise": "We are so lucky to have you with us, Dee. You're a real gem."

COUNSELING YOUR PEOPLE

Counseling C's:

- Draw them out by asking, “How would you...?” questions about problems
- They express thoughts indirectly, so persist in your attempts to get them to talk
- They need to plan for change so they can identify and bring under control any key considerations that have to be addressed
- When possible, allow them to investigate possible repercussions, especially at the beginning stages. That way they'll become more comfortable with possible change

Counseling D's:

- Stick to the facts
- Draw them out by talking about the desired results; then discuss their concerns
- Focus on tasks more than feelings
- Ask them how they would solve problems: “Anne, we've heard comments that need to be addressed. It seems some of your employees don't feel appreciated for the extra hours they've been putting in for you. They've worked 14-hour days to beat your deadline. How do you think we can bolster their morale?”

Counseling S's:

- Understand the emotional side of their situation by drawing them out through questioning and listening
- They are disrupted by change the unknown
- Reduce their fears by showing how specific changes will benefit them and others: “Barbara, moving to Dallas will be an adjustment for all of us at first, but 80% of our staff has agreed to go. The company will move you and your family, sell your house, and give you a 10% bonus for loyal service.”

Counseling I's:

- Give them ample opportunity to talk about whatever may be bothering them
- Pay attention to both facts and feelings, but put your primary emphasis on their feelings
- Involve them by asking how they could solve a challenge or problem
- Sometimes, just airing their feelings and thoughts relieves tension for I's
- Talking allows them to get something off their chests and can even become an end in itself, since their energy is largely influenced by the quality of their relationships

CORRECTING YOUR PEOPLE

Correcting C's:

- Show them how to get a job done and they'll master and modify it to suit their needs
- Specify the exact behavior that is indicated and how you would like to see it changed
- Mutually agree on checkpoints and timeframes
- Allow them to save face, as they fear being wrong: "Nelson, your work here is typically done neatly and on time. Now that we're switching to computers, you'll be able to turn out the same quality of work faster. I'd like you to take this computer class..."

Correcting D's:

- Describe what results are desired
- Show the gap between actual and desired.
- Clearly suggest the needed improvement and establish a time to get back to you: "We need to streamline communication so that one hand knows what the other is doing. Last month, we had two separate divisions calling on the same CEO for corporate donations. I want you to work up a plan to keep everybody informed of who's working on what so we don't duplicate our efforts. Get back to me by the end of the week."

Correcting S's:

- Reassure them that you only want to correct a specific behavior, not them personally
- They tend to take things personally, so remove the something is wrong with you barrier as quickly as possible
- Point out in a non-threatening way what they're already doing right while also emphasizing what needs changing: "Norma, I admire your persistence, but we have to add more details to the proposal before we send it out. For example..."

Correcting I's:

- They avoid facing problems and if pressure persists, may walk away from the problem
- Sometimes stress manifests itself in animated panic. "I can't talk now, Hal. It's really hit the fan this time!"
- Let them specifically know the challenge and define the behaviors to solve the problem
- Confirm the mutually agreeable action plan (in writing) to prevent future problems
- Use positive, optimistic questions and phrases: "How'd you like to increase your leadership to your normal range and beyond?"

DELEGATING TO YOUR PEOPLE

Delegating to C's:

- Take time to answer their most critical questions about structure and/or guidance they require in a specific situation. The more they understand the details, the more likely they will be to complete the task properly
- Be sure to establish deadlines: “Angela, the court date on the Mortimer case has been moved up to Monday, so we have to respond by speeding things up a bit. It will proceed almost as efficiently as if you researched everything by yourself if we enlist two associates to help you work, under your direction, on tasks you delegate to them and then review. Before getting started, do you have any preferences on the who's or how to's of this process that you think are essential to check with me at this time?”

Delegating to S's:

- S's may be reluctant to ask others to do their own share of the work, so make a personal appeal to their loyalty and sense of sportsmanship
- “Al, you're an example for this company of genuine cooperative spirit. Your staff wants to please you, so by giving everyone in your department just 10 of those names to call, you can all reach the goal together by noon tomorrow. Otherwise, you'll probably have a lot more difficulty reaching all those people by the target date.” Give them the task, state the deadlines that need to be met, and explain why it's important to do it that way. “I'll need 500 copies of these summaries typed and collated by 5 p.m. today. Mr. Jeffries is getting back from New York two days early and he wants them by tomorrow morning.”

Delegating to D's:

- Give them the bottom line and then let them do their thing
- So that they can be more efficient, give them parameters, guidelines and deadlines
- “We need to get that mall built a month sooner or we'll lose our shirts. Fourteen tenants are threatening to bail out of their contracts if we don't open in time for the holidays. Don't spend more than another \$30,000, keep everything legal and out of the newspapers and get back to me by Monday morning.”

Delegating to I's:

- Receive clear agreements; set up check points/times to avoid long stretches with no progress reports
- I's are often concept people who come up with plenty of ideas, but not necessarily the means of carrying them out, so steer them toward ways of assuring the implementation of those ideas: “Olivia, this proposal for the King Company looks good so far, but how about including more direct benefits for each employee. Marian has surveys filled out by each employee. Get together with her, bounce some ideas around, and then include more essential information about the eight or so key people in your proposal. Add some extra plus points on the others... 12 pages in all. In this manner, you should do the job very well. And, Olivia, thanks for making the extra effort on this project. It's really important to all of us.”

ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR PEOPLE

Acknowledging C's:

- Focus on your realization of how difficult it can be for them to attempt to meet the high personal standards they set for themselves
- Cite specific and appropriate examples which prove this point

Acknowledging D's:

- When it's appropriate to reward or reinforce their behavior, focus on how pleased you are with their results
- Mention how glad you are to be a part of the process working with them to make things better for both of you through cooperation

Acknowledging S's:

- Focus on how you sincerely appreciate their willingness to make things good for everyone
- Approach matters in a systematic, low-keyed, and understanding manner, and reinforce the importance of them sharing their ideas

Acknowledging I's:

- Focus on how glad you are they have succeeded in finding a pleasant solution to their concern or objective
- Show you appreciate them for their openness and willingness to respond to you in a way that allows everyone to end up feeling good about the results

ADAPTING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE WHEN YOU ARE...

A “C”:

- Modify criticism (whether spoken or unspoken) of others’ work
- Check less often, or only check the critical things (as opposed to everything), allowing the flow of the process to continue
- Ease up on controlling emotions; engage in more water cooler interaction
- Accept the fact that you can have high standards without expecting perfection
- Occasionally confront a colleague (or boss) with whom you disagree, instead of avoiding or ignoring them (and doing what you want to do, anyway)
- Tone down the tendency to OVER-prepare

A “D”:

- Allow others to do things without excessive or untimely interference
- Participate in the group without expecting always to be in command
- Modify your tendency to give orders
- Enlist others’ input and support through participative, collaborative actions
- Praise and give credit for jobs well done
- Let colleagues and employees know that you realize it’s only natural that you and others will make mistakes
- When delegating, give some authority along with the responsibility

An “S”:

- Stretch by taking on a bit more (or different) duties beyond your comfort level
- Increase verbalization of your thoughts and feelings
- Speed up your actions by getting into some projects more quickly
- Desensitize yourselves somewhat, so that you aren’t negatively affected by your colleagues’ feelings to the point of affecting your own performance
- Learn to adapt more quickly to either changes or refinements of existing practices
- Bolster your assertiveness techniques

An “I”:

- Attend to key details, when appropriate
- Improve your follow-through efforts
- Monitor socializing to keep it in balance with other aspects of business and life
- Write things down and work from a list, so you’ll know what to do and when to do it
- Prioritize activities and focus on tasks in their order of importance
- Become more organized and orderly in the way you do things
- Get the less appealing tasks of the day over with early in the day
- Pay attention to your time management
- Check to make sure you’re on course with known tasks or goals

ADAPTING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE WHEN THEY ARE...

C's, Help Them...

- Share their knowledge and expertise
- Stand up for themselves with the people they prefer to avoid
- Shoot for realistic deadlines
- View people and tasks less seriously and critically
- Balance their lives with both interaction and tasks
- Keep on course with tasks, with less checking
- Maintain high expectations for high priority items, not necessarily everything

D's, Help Them...

- More realistically gauge risks
- Exercise more caution and deliberation before making decisions and coming to conclusions
- Follow pertinent rules, regulations and expectations
- Recognize and solicit others' contributions, both as individuals and within a group
- Tell others the reasons for decisions
- Cultivate more attention and responsiveness to emotions

S's, Help Them...

- Utilize shortcuts; discard unnecessary steps
- Track their growth
- Avoid doing things the same way
- Focus on the goal without attending to other thoughts or feelings
- Realize tasks have more than one approach
- Become more open to risks and changes
- Feel sincerely appreciated
- Speak up; voice their thoughts and feelings
- Modify the tendency to do what others tell them
- Get and accept credit and praise, when appropriate

I's, Help Them...

- Prioritize and organize
- See tasks through to completion
- View people and tasks more objectively
- Avoid overuse of giving and taking advice (which can result in lack of focus on tasks)
- Write things down
- Do the unpleasant, as well as the fun things
- Focus on what's important now
- Avoid procrastination and/or hoping others will do things for them
- Practice and perfect, when appropriate

MANAGING BY STYLE

	D's	I's	S's	C's
MOTIVATING:	Provide them with options and clearly describe the probabilities of success in achieving goals.	Offer them incentives and testimonials. Show them how they can look good in the eyes of others.	Show how something will benefit their relationships and strengthen their position with others.	Appeal to their need to be accurate and to their logical approach to things.
COMPLIMENT:	Their achievements, upward mobility, and leadership potential.	Their appearance, creative ideas, persuasiveness, and charisma.	Their teamwork, the way they are regarded by other people, their relationship skills, and their ability to “get along” with others.	Their efficiency, thought processes, organization, persistence, and accuracy.
COUNSELING:	Stick to the facts. Draw them out by talking about the desired results. Then discuss their concerns. Focus on tasks more than feelings. Ask them how they would solve the problem.	Allow them plenty of opportunity to talk about things that are bothering them. Listen for facts and feelings. Many times they merely need to “get something off their chest” and talking may solve the problem.	Allow plenty of time to explore their feelings and understand the emotional side of the situation. They express their feelings, but indirectly. Draw them out through questioning and listening techniques. Create a non-threatening environment.	Describe the process that you plan to follow. Outline how that process will produce the results they seek. Ask questions to help them give you the right information. Let them show you how much they know.
CORRECTING:	Describe what results are desired. Show them the gap between actual and desired. Suggest clearly the improvement that is needed, and establish a time when they will get back to you.	Specify exactly what the problem happens to be and what behavior is required to eliminate the problem. Be sure you confirm in writing the agreed-upon behavior changes.	Reassure them that what you are seeking to correct is the behavior only. Don't blame or judge the person; keep things focused on the behavior and its appropriateness.	Specify the exact behavior that is indicated, and outline how you would like to see it changed. Establish checkpoints and times.
DELEGATING:	Give them the bottom line and then get out of their way. So that they can be more efficient, give them parameters, guidelines, and deadlines.	Make sure you get clear agreement. Establish checkpoints so that there is not a long period of time between progress reports.	Make a personal appeal to their loyalty. Give them the task, state the deadlines that need to be met, and explain why it's important to do it in that specific way.	Take time to answer all of their questions about structure and guidance. The more they understand the details, the more likely they will be to complete the task properly. Be sure to establish deadlines.

If you would like to know your leadership style and get specific suggestions on how to adjust your leadership style with each of the four behavioral types, consider taking the online DISC Leadership Assessment. Visit <https://leadership.DISC360.com/assessmentorder.asp>

MAKING TEAMS WORK

At work, how much time do you spend in meetings with at least two other people? If you're like many of us, you've got planning meetings, staff meetings, project meetings, budget meetings... the list seems nearly endless. No wonder one office joker described meetings as "the practical alternative to work."

Organizations love such groups—call them teams, committees, task forces, boards, panels, whatever. And why shouldn't they? When they work, they can improve coordination, help employees feel more involved, and maybe even spur innovation.

But when they flop—or, more commonly, just deteriorate into mediocrity—they can drain an organization of its vitality and leave a legacy of frustration. Posturing, power struggles, and misunderstandings are so rife that you've probably wondered more than once if more would get done if your group never met again.

SPOTTY TRACK RECORD

One of the reasons for the spotty track record of work groups is that we're generally naïve about them. Too often, we assume a group can automatically be a team. We act as if we can just order a good one from Purchasing, and so we opt for an off-the-rack model instead of designing a group that will best do the job.

"Round up the usual suspects," the gendarme ordered in the famous line from the movie *Casablanca*. And frequently that's what bosses seem to be thinking when they create committees or task forces.

But, in truth, making those choices is not as simple as it sounds. And whom you choose will very likely affect the outcome. The key is to analyze the objective before you recruit a group and then create a team that best matches the desired results.

One of the single biggest reasons that teams misfire is that personality differences are ignored. That can be the fault of the group's creator, the team members themselves, or both. In either event, that's where The DISC Platinum Rule comes in. As we've learned, all people are not created equal—at least, not so far as their behavior patterns are concerned.

Knowing and taking into account those differences is what can help make the best possible use of the strengths of each team member. Dominant Styles can do some things a whole lot better than an Influencing Style. A Conscientious Style might easily handle something that would drive a Steady Style nuts.

If you're armed with The DISC Platinum Rule, you'll be more likely to:

- Assign projects to those able to do them well,
- Sustain a cooperative climate in which each person can gain genuine respect, and
- Customize work groups to get the best results in the most efficient, satisfying manner.

HOW THE FOUR STYLES ACT IN GROUPS

The four Styles each bring different perspectives to a group. And different ways of doing things too. First, let's take a look at some of the basic characteristics of the four Styles in group situations: how they communicate, influence, involve others and make decisions.

COMMUNICATING

Each behavioral style communicates in ways so different that it's no wonder misunderstandings occur. Dominant Styles, for example, tend to communicate with short, task-oriented comments, particularly at the start of a meeting when they like to assume control and set the meeting in motion. More than the other Styles, they're concerned about having a clear agenda and setting the tone. They like to keep the discussion on track and on time.

Influencing Styles, by contrast, communicate more frequently and more evenly throughout a meeting. Their comments are more likely to include jokes and cover a range of topics so wide that the Influencing Styles may appear to be hopping all over the place.

Steady Styles seem generally interested in discussions throughout the whole meeting. They may ask many questions, trying to understand others' points of view or what follow-through will be expected. They naturally act as synthesizers, go-betweens, or translators, by saying things like, "Now, if I understand what Jane and Tom meant, it's that the next step is to...."

On the other hand, Conscientious Styles usually just quietly observe until they grasp an issue fully and have figured out in some detail what they want to say and if they'll feel comfortable saying it. They often begin by asking a few well-chosen questions. Then, if the climate seems receptive, they'll build up to a longer statement on what they believe is the answer.

USING INFLUENCE

The different Styles also try to sway, or influence, the group in different ways. This can become critical because every group at an early stage wrestles with the issue of who's going to wield power.

Dominant Styles like to influence others by structuring agendas, tasks, and assignments and, if relevant, by using their formal position as leverage.

Influencing Styles are more inclined to use flattery or compliments to win over the group and get its members to feel good as a team. They'll often use humor to defuse tension or conflict. They try to avoid a hard line that will lose them acceptance or recognition by the group.

Steady Styles, whether they're anointed leaders or not, often take on the role of keeping the process moving along. They'll elaborate on what others say and encourage everyone to speak. They seek to exert influence indirectly by keeping things mellow and moving.

Information and logic are the tools of the Conscientious Styles. They like to furnish information that, directly or indirectly, suggests their expertise and experience. They're the most likely to focus on the "rightness," or logic, of a solution, rather than spend a lot of time debating who's personally helped or hindered by it.

INVOLVING OTHERS

Working in a group, by definition, means involving others. But the four Styles vary in why and how enthusiastically they embrace others.

Generally, groups put together by Dominant Styles will be smaller and have shorter meetings than those set up by people with other Styles. Often, the Dominant Style will want the group to make some key decisions on key issues, and then delegate the rest of the work to individuals or subcommittees.

Influencing Styles are more inclined to favor a group for the group's sake. They like others to be involved in the give-and-take. Not everyone who's put on a committee by an Influencing Style will have a logical role there but, in the Influencing Style's mind, that person is further seasoning for the soup, if not necessarily a main ingredient.

Steady Styles also are innately attracted to groups. However, instead of using meetings for presentation of reports, they prefer to work toward consensus as they collect information from many sources.

Conscientious Styles, too, involve others in groups to get information from a wide variety of sources. However, the Conscientious Styles are just less comfortable operating in groups. So they prefer to have much of the group work done behind the scenes by sub-groups or individuals. The Conscientious Style especially likes to be the only one who knows how all of the parts of the group's task puzzle fit together.

DECISION-MAKING

The four Styles differ in their approach to group work because they tend to make decisions differently.

In a meeting run by a Dominant Style, decisions are more likely to be made unilaterally by the Dominant Style, or he or she will call for a vote. Dominant Styles like voting because it's clean, quick, and decisive. It keeps debating to a minimum. Also, it's harder to argue that a vote is unfair. And closure is clearly attained. Next topic!

A problem with voting—though Dominant Styles rarely see it as a problem—is that there are winners and losers. Influencing Styles, being more people-oriented, try to work out compromises that reduce resentment and maybe even fudge over differences. Influencing Styles want to downplay group divisions. They're not big on voting.

Steady Styles also prefer decisions by consensus. They'd like to see the vast majority of the group be on the bus. So actions tend to be worked and reworked until almost all are in agreement.

Conscientious Styles crave "rational" decisions. Optimally, the decision won't be made as much as it will be dictated by the facts and logic of the situation, including the key players required to make it work. Conscientious Styles like to list pros and cons of issues—sometimes even weighing the options numerically—to reach the "correct" decision. The process, they believe, will make obvious the best course of action.

Love 'em or hate 'em, work groups are here to stay. But while they can be high-performance vehicles, they can also be high-maintenance, especially in the early stages. Only a team that fully understands and savors its members' Styles is likely to be genuinely productive.

If the teams are assigned tasks that fit their particular Styles—and if members practice The DISC Platinum Rule—the advantages of stylistic diversity can quickly outweigh the group's liabilities. The result, despite the differences, can be a wonderful synergy.

THE SECRET OF SALES

Contrary to what passes for age-old wisdom, customers don't buy because they're made to understand the product or service. They buy when they feel understood. They buy when they get what they expect—and more.

But more what? That's where the salesperson's knowledge of the personality, or behavioral, Styles comes in. The savvy salesperson knows the Dominant Style customer, for example, wants more control. But the Influencing Style cries out for more recognition and excitement. The Steady Style wants more support, and the Conscientious Style more logic. The most successful salespeople customize their approach and follow-through for each type.

In addition, the best salespeople also reject the traditional concept of a sale. Yesterday's selling systems won't work today because they were designed for an adversarial environment. When your customers are your partners – and you want them as lifetime partners—you can't sell using commando tactics.

A COOPERATIVE TRIUMPH

A case in point is a guy I know who started selling Toyotas in the early 1980s. He was so laid back, so people-oriented, so lacking in the customary intensity that his peers in the showroom actually made fun of him. For one thing, they thought he was off the wall with his emphasis on getting customers whatever fact they wanted, no matter how long it took or how difficult it was to get. And he absolutely refused to pressure people. “The coconut will drop from the tree when, and if, it's ready,” he sometimes said. The others tittered.

But, before long, unusual things started happening in that showroom. Some of his customers began coming by just to chat and say how they were enjoying their car. New prospects would ask for him by name because of referrals. He was named “Best Salesperson of the Month” so many times that he ran out of wall space to hold all his plaques. As his more competitive colleagues looked on in amazement, he was named sales manager of the dealership.

Then one day he was gone. Recruited by corporate headquarters to teach others about effective selling. Not bad for the guy the others used to poke fun at!

The point is, the modern, collaborative salesperson helps the customer solve a problem, fill a need, or reach a goal. He or she doesn't see the sale as just a one-time event in which persuasiveness triumphs over resistance. Rather, it's viewed as a cooperative triumph that paves the way for a long-term partnership.

Because today's customers are looking for such long-term relationships, your ability to collaborate with your customers will make or break your career. So the question becomes: How can you best cement that relationship, regardless of the customer's style?

A MATCHING PROCESS

Sales is a matching process. You match the right product or service to your customer's needs, and your selling style must also match the customer's buying style. To do so, you must learn to adapt your style to that of your customer.

Of the four Styles, the two most outgoing ones—the Dominant Styles and Influencing Styles—are often grouped together because they're both fast-paced and assertive. Conscientious Styles and Steady Styles, by contrast, are generally quieter, slower to decide, and less assertive.

But it's not quite that simple. For example, Dominant Styles and Conscientious Styles also are alike in that they both tend to emphasize the need to accomplish tasks and get results. Influencing Styles and Steady Styles put a higher priority on personal relationships.

So, where does that leave you as a salesperson? Well, first try to determine which type you're dealing with, then adjust your pace and your priority. You'll find you can get rid of much of the tension in a relationship if you start by simply altering your speed of doing things. Then adjust, if need be, your priority—that is—whether you emphasize task or relationship.

ADJUSTING PACE AND PRIORITY

If you are a Dominant Style or Influencing Style salesperson, and you want to deal better with Steady Style or Conscientious Style customers or clients, remember that they make decisions more slowly and more privately. So, first, try to be more relaxed. Ask their opinions and find ways to acknowledge and incorporate their opinion in the dialogue. Follow their lead rather than try to take control.

Make it a point to listen more than you speak, and when you do speak, don't interrupt, challenge, or push the process along faster than they want it to go. Be tactful about any disagreement.

If you're a Steady Style or Conscientious Style selling to a Dominant Style or Influencing Style, you need to pick up the pace. Initiate conversations, give recommendations, and avoid beating around the bush. Maintain eye contact, use your firmest handshake, speak strongly and confidently.

As for priority, if you're a Steady Style or Influencing Style, you naturally emphasize relationships and feelings in your sales pitches. But to deal best with Dominant Styles or Conscientious Styles, you'll want to stress the task more. So get right to it: talk about the bottom line, and use lots of facts and logic. If possible, prepare an agenda and stick to it. Keep your meeting focused and short.

Downplay your natural ebullience; Dominant Styles and Conscientious Styles view excessive enthusiasm as "hype." They also don't like to be touched by strangers or have their physical space invaded. So don't make further physical contact—beyond a handshake—until you're sure it's likely to be well received. Dress conservatively.

Conversely, if you're a Dominant Style or Conscientious Style salesperson, put the relationship first when dealing with Influencing Styles or Steady Styles. Share your feelings, and let them know who you are. Show an interest in them: their job, family, and hobbies, for example. And then use that knowledge in the future to personalize your dealings with them.

Slow down and talk more. Try to speak in a friendly, informal way. Be flexible with your time, tolerating digressions, such as stories and anecdotes.

Influencing Styles and Steady Styles are more comfortable with closer proximity. So stand closer than you normally would. Try to use a few relaxed gestures, such as leaning back, smiling, or gently patting the customer on the back or shoulder.

The point is: Everybody is easy to please, if you know how. With Dominant Styles, be efficient and competent. With Influencing Styles, listen and support their ideas or dreams and flatter them. With Steady Styles, stress your warmth and sincerity, and for Conscientious Styles, take care to be especially thorough and well-prepared.

WORKING TOWARD A WIN-WIN

Treating your customers or clients the way they want to be treated, selling to them in the way they want to buy, is a strategy that can change your life. Thousands of salespeople have successfully applied these techniques. They've experienced dramatic increases in sales as well as greater awareness of their own personal strengths and weaknesses.

What I've described may be a fundamental change in the way you've been selling. If you start paying attention to your customers' personality Styles, and begin viewing sales as a collaboration, not a conquest, you may, in effect, be changing jobs. You may be changing from a person who "sells" things, who sees a sale as a one-shot event, who sees your customers merely as people who can help your career...to a person who "consults" and "solves problems" based on your knowledge of your customer's personal needs and desires.

As you work at developing a win-win solution with everyone, you'll find there's a side benefit. Not only will your business improve, but you'll also find you'll make many new friends along the way. You'll be building lifetime loyalty to your product or service...and to yourself as well.

If these Selling By Style tips are just what you've been looking for, there's more where they came from. *Collaborative Selling* is an eBook that teaches you how to partner with your customers and prospects instead of trying to sell without considering the other person's needs. To purchase *Collaborative Selling*, please visit my online store: <http://www.alessandra.com/products/productdetails.asp?productid=13>

If you would like to take the online Platinum Rule Sales Assessment, visit <https://sales.platinumrule.com/assessmentorder.asp>

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RAPPORT THROUGHOUT THE SELLING CYCLE

There are five definable stages to most every buying cycle. Successfully guiding prospects through each phase will lead to positive outcomes for both of you.

1. Connecting: Understanding DISC styles will have an impact on the impression you make in the first few minutes of a meeting. In that short, precious time, you make or break the sale. In that time, your prospect sizes you up and determines if you are the type of person he or she would like to do business with.

The purpose of making contact with your prospect is to begin opening up lines of communication. Great listeners make the best salespeople... period. Master the skill of effective listening and every other aspect of your relationships will improve.

2. Exploring: The purpose of Exploring is to get an accurate picture of the customer's needs and what it will take to provide an effective solution. To do so, you need to listen to what the customer says as well as know how to ask the right questions to get the information you need.

Asking intelligent questions is a critical sales skill. It does not require asking many questions - just the right ones. Asking questions is similar to painting a picture. You start with a blank canvas and begin to fill in the background and rough in the picture with broad-brush strokes. Then you fill in the details using finer and finer strokes.

3. Collaborating: During this phase, you and your prospect collaborate to find a solution that meets the prospect's needs. It is a process of taking your prospect's ideas and combining them with your own ideas to arrive at a solution that makes sense to both of you. The give-and-take exchange can be thought of as an opportunity to "switch heads" with your prospect. Imagine saying this to your customer: "If you and I could switch heads, that is, if you could know what I know about my product and if I could know what you know about your business, we would both know exactly how to give you the best possible solution for your needs."

That's your goal - to come as close as possible to the perfect knowledge that would allow you to develop the ideal solution for your prospect. To achieve that goal, you need to exchange enough information to fully understand your client's business, industry, trends and challenges; and they have to know as much as possible about your products and services and how they can help them. As you propose a solution, relate it to the prospect's needs discovered in the Explore phase and explain how it will work in your prospect's environment.

4. Confirming: Gaining commitment flows naturally out of the Exploring and Collaborating stages for the DISC salesperson. If you did a thorough job during the first three stages of selling: Contacting, Exploring and Collaborating, the prospect should close.

The Confirming stage is a critical point in building a customer partnership. DISC salespeople do not use fancy closing techniques. You cannot work through all the stages of the sale and then, at the end, try to use a manipulative closing technique to clinch the deal. It doesn't make sense... and it most certainly doesn't work when you're trying to build long-term customer relationships rather than simply closing one-shot sales.

5. Assuring: A great weakness of most salespeople is the way they handle the Assuring phase of the sales process. Most salespeople stop with getting the sales commitment; they disappear from the customer's life, leaving service, installation, training and follow-up to others.

One "old-school" method of selling has an adage that the sale begins when the customer says "no." In direct contrast, the real job of selling starts when the customer says "yes."

Assuring customer satisfaction is a secret ingredient of extraordinary sales success. You will benefit two ways by assuring each customer. First, this assures repeat business. Almost all products have a life cycle and will be replaced or upgraded. Customers have a tendency to return to the salesperson who previously matched them with a product that met their needs and then provided excellent service and follow-up.

Secondly, satisfied customers are excellent sources of referrals. Customers talk. They talk about poor service and they talk about extraordinary service. When they get super service, they refer others to the salesperson who delivered on his or her promises.

Without repeat business and referrals, a salesperson must constantly prospect and cold-call new accounts. That is not the way most salespeople want to spend their lives... and it certainly is not the best way to be successful!

When you start the sales process, you have a chance to begin building a good customer relationship. However, it is only after the sale, when you make sure your customer is satisfied (preferably delighted!), that you really cement the relationship.

PHASE 1: BUILDING RAPPORT DURING INITIAL CONTACT

Connecting with C's:

- “C’s” don’t care much about social interaction (beyond common courtesy and standard pleasantries), so get to the point.
- Avoid making small talk, except to initially establish your credibility.
- Speak slowly, calmly and economize on words.
- “C’s” are precision-oriented people who want to do their jobs in the best possible manner.
- Build your credibility by thinking with your head, not your emotions.
- Before meeting, provide them with a brief overview of the agenda and length of meeting, so they know what to expect.
- Show them logical proof from reliable sources that accurately document your quality, record of accomplishment, and value.
- “C’s” tend to be naturally suspicious of those who talk themselves up.

Connecting with D's:

- “D’s” want to know the bottom line.
- Just give them enough information to satisfy their need to know about overall performance.
- They do not want you to waste their time giving them a bolt-by-bolt description of your product, presenting a long list of testimonials from satisfied clients, or getting too chummy with them – always remember that they are Direct and Guarded.
- When you write, call, or meet a “D”, do it in a formal, businesslike manner. Get right to the point. Focus quickly on the task.
- Refer to bottom line results, increased efficiency, saved time, return on investment, profits, and so on. In other words, tell him what’s in it for him.
- If you plan to sell something or present a proposal to a “D”, take care to be well organized, time-conscious, efficient, and businesslike.
- They do not want to make friends with you; they want to get something out of you if they think you have something of value to offer.

Connecting with S's:

- “S’s” are Indirect and Open. However, keep the relationship businesslike until they warm up to you.
- They are concerned with maintaining stability; they want to know step-by-step procedures that are likely to meet their need for details and logical action plans.
- Organize your presentation: list specifics, show sequences, and provide data.
- Treat them with honesty, sincerity, and personal attentiveness.
- Listen patiently to their stories, ideas and answers.
- Express your appreciation for their steadiness, dependability, and cooperativeness.
- Present yourself to be non-threatening, pleasant, friendly, but still professional.
- Develop trust, credibility, and friendship at a relatively slow, informal pace.
- Communicate with them in a consistent manner on a regular basis... especially at the outset.

Connecting with I's:

- Remember that they are Direct and Open.
- When you meet an “I”, shake hands firmly, introduce yourself with confidence, and immediately show personal interest.
- Let him set the pace and direction of the conversation.
- Be an especially attentive listener with “I’s”.
- Give them positive feedback to let them know that you understand and can relate to their visions, ideas and feelings.
- Tell humorous or unusual stories about yourself, to win their heart.
- Allow them to feel comfortable by listening to their stories, even to the point of talking about topics that may stray from the subject.
- Since “I’s” typically enjoy talking about themselves, ask questions about them, but be prepared for lengthy answers. Plan to have as many meetings as necessary to build the relationship and gather information.

PHASE 2: MAINTAINING RAPPORT IN THE EXPLORING STAGE

Exploring with C's:

- “C’s” don’t care much about social interaction (beyond common courtesy and standard pleasantries), so get to the point.
- “C’s” often like to answer questions that reveal their expertise, so they can be very good interviewees.
- As long as you ask logical, fact-oriented, relevant questions, they will enjoy speaking with you.
- Phrase your questions to help them give you the right information.
- Ask open and closed questions that investigate their knowledge, systems, objectives and objections.
- Make your own answers short and crisp.
- If you do not know the answer to something, do not fake it. Tell them you’ll get the answer for them by a certain time, and then do it.

Exploring with D's:

- To head off the “D’s” impatience before it surfaces, keep your conversations interesting by alternately asking questions and offering relevant information.
- “D’s” need to view the meeting as purposeful, so they want to understand where your questions are leading.
- When asking a “D” question, make them as practical and logical as possible. Aim questions at the heart of the issue and ask them in a straightforward manner.
- Only request information that is unavailable elsewhere.
- When gathering information, ask questions showing you have done your homework about their desired results and current efforts.
- Be sure to make queries that allow him to talk about his business goals.
- Gear your exploring toward saving D’s time and energy.

Exploring with S's:

- “S’s” can be excellent interviewees, so talk warmly and informally and ask gentle, open questions that draw them out (especially around sensitive areas).
- Show tact and sincerity in exploring their needs.
- If they do not have a good feeling about your product, company, or even you, they are not likely to take the chance of hurting your feelings by telling you so.
- They want to avoid confrontations, even minor ones. So “S’s” may tell you what they think you want to hear, rather than what they really think.
- They may not you about their dissatisfaction with your competitors. Even though this is exactly what you want to hear, the “S” may be hesitant about saying anything negative about them.
- Allow for plenty of time (possibly multiple meetings) for “S’s” to open up to you and reveal their innermost desires and pains.
- The more time you spend with an “S” exploring, the higher the odds you’ll be landing them as a customer.

Exploring with I's:

- “I’s” get bored quickly when they’re not talking about themselves.
- Strike a balance between listening to their life’s stories and gathering the information you need to be an effective sales consultant.
- When asking business questions, keep them brief. If you can, work these exploratory questions in with social questions.
- The better your relationship with an “I” is, the more willing he’ll be to cooperate and talk about the task at hand.
- “I’s” can be so open they may tell you their fondest hopes and aspirations. If you can demonstrate how your product or service can get them closer to their dreams, they may become so excited about your product—and you—that they’re likely to sell you and your products and services to everyone else in their organization.

PHASE 3: MAINTAINING RAPPORT IN THE COLLABORATING STAGE

Collaborating with C's:

- Emphasize accuracy, value, quality and reliability.
- They dislike talk not backed up by evidence.
- Describe a process will produce the results they seek.
- Elicit specific feedback by asking, "So far, what are your reactions?" or "Do you have any questions that you'd like me to clear up?"
- Present your solution that shows them they'll be correct in making the purchase.
- Base your claims on facts, specifications and data that relate specifically to their needs.
- "C's" are cost-conscious; increase their perceived value with facts and ROI data.
- "C's" are the likely to see the drawbacks, so point out the obvious negatives before they do. Let them assess the relative trade-offs when choosing between competing (yet imperfect) products or services

Collaborating with D's:

- Your presentation must be geared toward the "D's" priorities.
- Gear your presentation toward how they can become more successful, save time, generate results, and make life easier and more efficient; you'll get their attention.
- Zero in on the bottom line with quick benefit statements.
- They want you to do the analysis and lay it out for them to approve or reject.
- "D's" like rapid, concise analyses of their needs and your solutions.
- "D's" like being in control, so give them choices backed with enough data and analysis to allow them to make an intelligent decision.
- Then, be quiet and let them make their decision. If you speak or interrupt while they are buying, you will dramatically decrease the odds of making this sale.

Collaborating with S's:

- Show how your product or service will stabilize, simplify, or support the "S's" procedures and relationships.
- Clearly define their roles and goals in your suggestions, and include specific expectations of them in your plan.
- Present new ideas in a non-threatening way.
- Provide them time to adjust to changes in operating procedures and relationships.
- When change becomes necessary, tell them why. Explain how long the changes will take and any interim alterations of the current conditions.
- Design your message to impart a sense of stability and security.
- "S's" like to be shown the appropriate steps to follow, so share those with them.
- Involve them by asking their opinions and encourage them to give you feedback.

Collaborating with I's:

- Show how your product would increase the "I's" prestige, image, or recognition.
- Talk about the favorable impact or consequences your suggestions will have in making their working relationships more enjoyable.
- Give them incentives for completing tasks by stressing how their contribution will benefit others and evoke positive responses from them.
- Presentations need impact for people with short attention spans, so involve as many senses as possible.
- Show them how your solution will save them effort and make them look good.
- Back up your claims with testimonials from well-known people or high-profile corporations.
- Name satisfied acquaintances they know and admire.
- Sprinkle in "visualizing future ownership" questions, such as: "If you were already running this software, how would you use it?"

PHASE 4: MAINTAINING RAPPORT IN THE CONFIRMING STAGE

Confirming with C's:

- Emphasize accuracy, value, quality and reliability.
- Provide logical options with appropriate documentation and time to analyze their options.
- They're uncomfortable with snap decisions and when they say they will think about it, they mean it!
- If pressured by people or excessive demands, they may use "I'll think about it," as a stalling tactic.
- "C's" are educated, logical, comparative "shoppers." Know your competition so you can point out your advantages relative to the competition in a factual, professional way. Mention your company's strengths as you suggest questions they may want to ask your competitors that allows them to do a comparative cost-benefit analysis of the options and solutions.
- Be willing to explore the subject of a conditional, "pilot program" as a way of reducing their risk.

Confirming with D's:

- With "D's", you come right out and ask if they are interested. A "D" will often tell you "yes" or "no".
- You can easily lose the attention and/or interest of a "D" by presenting your information too slowly or by spending too much time discussing minute details.
- When you draw up a commitment letter, don't spend too much time on points the "D" may not care about.
- Present them with options and probable outcomes. "D's" like to balance quality with cost considerations, so offer options with supporting evidence and leave the final decision to them.
- We have found that it is effective to present a "D" with two or three options. Provide a short summation of each option, along with your recommendation of each.
- While the "D" is reviewing your proposal, don't interrupt them. The odds are high that they will find an option that appeals to them and closing the deal themselves.

Confirming with S's:

- "S's" are slower, deductive decision makers who listen to the opinions of others and take the time to solicit those opinions before deciding. So, make a specific action plan and provide personal guidance, direction or assurance as required for pursuing the safest, most practical course to follow. Arm them with literature, case studies and any documentation available, because they'll be "selling" your proposal to others within their organization.
- When you do reach agreement, carefully explore any potential areas of misunderstanding or dissatisfaction.
- "S's" like guarantees that new actions will involve a minimum risk, so offer assurances and support.
- Try not to rush them, but do provide gentle, helpful nudges to help them decide (when needed).
- Involve them by personalizing the plan and showing how it will directly benefit them and others.
- When asking for a commitment, guide them toward a choice if they seem indecisive.

Confirming with I's:

- Show how your product would increase the "I's" prestige, image, or recognition.
- Be open and ask, "Where do we go from here?" or "What's our next step?"
- If they like something, they buy it on the spot (all other things being equal).
- You may have to slow them down because they also tend to overbuy and/or buy before weighing all the ramifications; behaviors that both of you may live to regret.
- "I's" dislike paperwork and details so they are likely to hesitate, and even procrastinate, when it comes to spending the time required on a contract.
- Have a written agreement prepared due to their tendency to be unclear about procedures, responsibilities and expectations.
- Make sure that you agree on the specifics in writing or, later on, you can almost bet on some degree of misunderstanding and/or disappointment.

PHASE 5: MAINTAINING RAPPORT IN THE ASSURING STAGE

Assuring C's:

- Set a specific timetable for when and how you will measure success with the “C”. Continue proving your reliability, quality and value.
- Make yourself available for follow-up on customer satisfaction and ask for specific feedback on the product or service performance record.
- If you have tips for improved usage or user shortcuts, email them to your “C” customers.
- You should also ask for their ideas and opinions for how to improve your products and/or services.
- When they offer you their suggestions, get back to them about how your company is incorporating their ideas into upgrades into future upgrades, revisions or new products.

Assuring D's:

- “D's” usually do not look for personal relationships at work due to their focus on accomplishing tasks.
- With “D's,” do not rely on past sales to ensure future purchases. Follow up to find out if they have any complaints or problems with your product. If they do have complaints, address them immediately.
- Impress upon your customer your intent to stand behind your product or service.
- Stress that you will follow-up without taking much of their time.
- You may also want to offer a money-back guarantee.
- Whatever the promise, make sure you deliver everything you offer!

Assuring S's:

- Follow-up consistently with an “S”.
- Give them your personal guarantee that you will remain in touch, keep things running smoothly, and be available on an “as needed” basis.
- “S's” like to think they have a special relationship with you; that you are more than just another business acquaintance; they prefer a continuing, predictable relationship.
- Give them your cell number, along with an invitation to call you any time with any concern. They will rarely use it, but will feel secure knowing it's available to them.
- They dislike one-time deals, so follow up to maintain your relationship.
- Impersonal, computerized follow-up is not very appealing to “S's”, so continue building your relationship with low-key, personalized attention and assistance.

Assuring I's:

- “I's” frequently buy before they're sold which may lead to buyers' remorse.
- “I's” can benefit from ongoing reminders that they have made the right decision.
- Reinforce their decision by giving plenty of assistance immediately after the sale.
- Be certain they actually use your product or they may get frustrated from incorrect usage and either put it away or return it for a refund.
- Since they mingle with so many people, you can even ask “I's” if they'd be willing to share their glowing testimonials about you and your product with others.
- If they are feeling smart for using your product or service, most “I's” will give you more referrals than the other three styles combined!

THE FIVE PHASES SUMMARY

Phase	With D's	With I's	With S's	With C's
Connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skip small talk • Lead with the main point • Show up fully prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for time and stories before turning focus to business at hand • Let them set the pace of the conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick to business until they warm up to you • Don't rush into agenda first • Take an active interest in them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skip small talk • Bring an agenda • Remain cool, calm and professional
Exploring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let him/her know where the questions are headed • Only ask for information that's unavailable elsewhere • Answer their questions directly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate questions between them personally and business • Gently guide them back to the topic • Keep the focus on their vision and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sincerely interested in their answers • Never interrupt them • Ask nonthreatening questions to draw them out over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions that reveal their expertise • Keep the questions focused on the topic • Alternate open and closed-ended questions
Collaborating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make any presentation brief • Focus on the bottom line and/or time savings • Provide concise analysis of needs along with your professional recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve as many senses as possible • Ask for their ideas often • Sprinkle in testimonials • Provide incentives for making decisions • Show how the solution enhances their image and/or saves them effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show how solution will simplify, add stability or support their goals • Present new ideas in a non-threatening way • Never rush them, but provide gentle, helpful nudges toward a decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize value, accuracy, precision, quality and reliability • Stick to facts and logic; attempt to reduce risks when possible • Never pressure for any decision • Remain cool and emotionally detached
Confirming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat out ask if they are interested • Present two or three options with recommendations and summaries • Be quiet while they review and decide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openly ask, "Where do you see us going next?" • Be ready to take their order • Slow them down if they're buying too quickly • Do the paperwork for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are slow decision makers and like to consult opinions of others • Don't press for a decision • Focus on a guarantee if relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide logical options with documentation • Give them both time and space to make their decisions • Point out any glaring downside to deal if one exists • Suggest a pilot program or warranty to reduce risk
Assuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up to ensure they're 100% satisfied with solution • Keep the relationship all business • Make certain you deliver on every small promise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce their decision by providing ample assistance after the sale • Make sure they don't get frustrated (they don't read instructions) • Help them use the product/service to reduce anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent follow-up along with personal assurances • Give them private phone number to reach you • Remind them that you also desire a long-term business relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your process and/or timetable for your follow-up • Double-check their method for measuring satisfaction • Email them ideas and shortcuts • Reinforce value, quality and reliability.

SELLING BY STYLE

	Selling to D's	Selling to I's	Selling to S's	Selling to C's
TARGET:	Show that you've done your homework on their industry or company, and on them personally.	Show how your product can increase their social recognition and excitement, while saving them effort.	Show how your product will stabilize, simplify, and support their existing practices and relationships.	Bring logical proof that accurately documents your quality, track record, and value.
CONTACT:	Talk fast and in a business-like manner. Focus on results, facts, and the bottom-line.	Speak with friendly enthusiasm about aspirations and dreams. Let them set the conversational pace.	Relax and talk warmly and informally. Focus on feelings, relationships and building trust.	Speak slowly and accurately. Explain why you are contacting them.
EXPLORE:	Ask open and closed questions that focus on desired results and time constraints. Provide information about yourself while gathering information about them.	Ask open questions that explore their motivations, dreams, and expectations. Work business-related questions in with social questions.	Ask open questions that draw them out, especially around sensitive areas. Show tact and sincerity in probing about their work and relationship needs.	Ask open and closed questions that investigate their knowledge, systems, objectives, and objections. Make your questions short and crisp.
COLLABORATE:	Emphasize efficiency, profits, and savings. Present quick, concise analysis of their needs and your solutions.	Emphasize uniqueness, innovativeness, excitement, visibility, and saving effort. Style of presentation is as important as substance.	Emphasize security, harmony, steadiness, and company benefits. Involve them by asking for feedback.	Emphasize logic, accuracy, value, quality, and reliability. Present obvious disadvantages.
CONFIRM:	Provide options with cost benefit summary of each. Acknowledge that the final decision is theirs.	Act assumptive and quick. Use testimonials and incentives.	Make a mutual action plan. Provide personal guidance, direction, and assurance.	Provide logical options with documentation. Give them enough time and data to analyze their options.
ASSURE:	Provide ongoing reminders of your track record. Show them that you stand behind your product to deliver their results.	Save them effort and complications while making them look good. Check for proper product usage.	Practice consistent and predictable follow-up. Continue building your business relationship with personal attention and assistance.	Set a specific timetable for when you'll measure success. Continue proving your reliability, quality, and value.

PROVIDING SERVICE WITH STYLE

Everywhere you turn today, you hear about the importance of customer satisfaction. You might think that service is getting better with each passing moment. Surveys, though, suggest otherwise. One customer in four is thinking about leaving the average business at any given time because of dissatisfaction.

What's wrong? Too many companies and employees view customer support as something that happens once and is then over. True service doesn't just focus on a one-time event, but on building a sustained, positive relationship.

Firms and people with a positive attitude toward service know that each contact is an opportunity that may never come again. Such encounters typically produce either a Moment of Magic: Positive experiences that make customers glad they do business there, or a Moment of Misery: negative experiences that irritate, frustrate, or annoy.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

The key to creating a "Moment of Magic" is exceeding a customer's expectations. But what works for one person may not work for another. So we're going to look at that process and how we can use knowledge of the behavioral Styles to create Moments of Magic.

DEALING WITH DOMINANT STYLES

Dominant Styles may appear uncooperative, trying to dictate terms and conditions. But ask yourself: what do they need? You can help defuse them by providing:

- Results, or at least tangible signs of progress;
- A fast pace;
- Evidence that they have control of the situation;
- A belief that time is being saved.

The last thing you should do is assert your authority and argue with the Dominant Style. They're not going to be listening, and they'll probably out-assert you. "Nobody ever won an argument with a customer" is an axiom of service. And that's doubly true with Dominant Styles.

DEALING WITH INFLUENCING STYLES

Influencing Styles with a complaint may seem overeager and impulsive. They may also come across as manipulative. Under stress, Influencing Style's primary response may be to disregard the facts and anything you say. But you can address their needs by giving them:

- Personal attention;
- Affirmation of their position;
- Lots of verbal give-and-take;
- Assurance that effort is being saved.

You'd be better off to give Influencing Styles a quick-paced, spirited explanation that shows you aren't just brushing them off.

DEALING WITH STEADY STYLES

Steady Styles may appear submissive, hesitant, wishy-washy, or even apologetic. You may need to draw them out. They just wish this whole problem would go away. Steady Styles will be made most comfortable if you:

- Make them feel they're personally "okay";
- Promise that the crisis will soon ebb;
- Guarantee the process will be relaxed and pleasant;
- Show you're committed to working with them to iron out the problem and save the relationship.

Remember, Steady Styles get just as upset as Dominant Styles; they just express it in a much more low-key way. And they'll quietly go elsewhere if their needs aren't met.

DEALING WITH CONSCIENTIOUS STYLES

Conscientious Styles tend to recite the chronology of events and the litany of errors they've had to endure. They'll provide copious data and documentation. Here's how you can lessen tension with a complaining Conscientious Style:

- Suggest that they're right;
- Explain the process and details;
- Show appreciation for their accuracy;
- Help them "save face".

You may see them as "compulsives" who are more hung up on the process and on showing they're right than getting the problem resolved. But if you want to retain their loyalty, you'll deal with them precisely and systematically, emphasizing your firm's interest in seeing justice done.

Be customer-oriented! When you're policy-oriented, you give off an attitude of not caring about what your customers want. When you focus on the customer and his or her needs, you'll be utilizing Customer Driven Service.

THE DISC PLATINUM RULE ACTION PLAN

ONE: My predominant behavioral style is: _____

TWO: Two people with whom I currently have a professional or social relationship are:

Person A: _____

Person B: _____

THREE: Based on my observations of each person's openness and directness, I would identify their behavioral Styles as (Dominant Style, Influencing Style, Steady Style or Conscientious Style):

Person A's Style: _____

Person B's Style: _____

FOUR: My sources of stress in my relationship with each person are:

Person A: _____

Person B: _____

FIVE: I would like to see my relationship with these two individuals improve in these specific ways:

Person A: _____

Benefits to be gained: _____

Person B: _____

Benefits to be gained: _____

SIX: These adjustments to my own behavioral style will demonstrate behavioral adaptability:

With Person A: _____

With Person B: _____

SEVEN: The strategy that I will use as a foundation for building my relationship with each person will be:

Person A: _____

Person B: _____

COMPARISON WITH OTHER “STYLES” CONCEPTS

The “four Styles” model is by no means a new concept. Starting with Hippocrates (who lived 400 years B.C.) sociologists, philosophers and researchers have noticed humans falling into four predictable behavioral patterns. Seeing as many people have been exposed to at least one other model, we are including below a chart to help you cross-reference our Styles terminology with many of the more popular models.

Comparison of the Styles

THE CONSCIENTIOUS STYLE (C's)	THE DOMINANT STYLE (D's)
Thinker (Alessandra, O'Connor, Cathcart, Zimmerman)	Director (Alessandra, O'Connor, Cathcart, Zimmerman)
Analytical (Merrill, Wilson, Alessandra, Hunsaker)	Driver (Merrill, Wilson, Alessandra, Hunsaker)
Intuitior (Jung)	Sensor (Jung)
Comprehender (De Ville)	Controller (De Ville)
Melancholy (Galen, Hippocrates)	Choleric (Galen, Hippocrates)
Conserving-Holding (Atkins)	Controlling-Taking (Atkins)
Q2 Submissive-Hostile (Lefton)	Q1 Dominant-Hostile (Lefton)
THE STEADY STYLE (S's)	THE INFLUENCING STYLE (I's)
Relater (Alessandra, O'Connor, Cathcart, Zimmerman)	Socializer (Alessandra, O'Connor, Cathcart, Zimmerman)
Amiable (Merrill, Wilson, Alessandra, Hunsaker)	Expressive (Merrill, Wilson, Alessandra, Hunsaker)
Thinker (Jung) *	Feeler (Jung)
Supporter (De Ville)	Entertainer (De Ville)
Phlegmatic (Galen, Hippocrates)	Sanguine (Galen, Hippocrates)
Supporting-Giving (Atkins)	Adapting-Dealing (Atkins)
Q3 Submissive-Warm (Lefton)	Q4 Dominant-Warm (Lefton)

* “THINKER”: While this was the title given by Carl Jung in his classical work *Psychological Types*, he meant something quite different by it than contemporary use. Jung defined this drive in people as one that involved “working with existing data” in a manner that allowed this “evidence” to be the basis for explaining the reality of their life experiences by naming and/or labeling facts, including what one is “feeling” (in the “introverted” types), and/or theories. This function, then, is directed essentially by an external system of knowledge or logic rather than one’s own inner, or more intuitional state meant by the term “THINKER” (The “C” pattern) in this program.

ANSWER KEY

A DAY AT THE OFFICE

P = The Prospect

C = The Customer

CW = The Co-Worker

F = The Friend

1. CW
F
P
C

2. C
F
CW
P

3. F
CW
C
P

4. P
CW
F
C

5. CW
P
C
F

6. P
CW
C
F

7. C
CW
P
F

8. C
F
P
CW

9. P
CW
F
C

10. CW
P
C
F

11. C
F
P
CW

12. P
CW
F
C

13. CW
P
F
C

14. CW
C
P
F

15. C
F
P
CW

BOARDROOM VIGNETTE

TOM - DOMINANT

JUDY - INFLUENCING

JOHN - CONSCIENTIOUS

MARY - DOMINANT

LIZ - STEADY

PAUL - INFLUENCING

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Tony Alessandra, PhD, CSP, CPAE

Building Customers, Relationships, and the Bottom Line

Dr. Tony Alessandra helps companies turn prospects into promoters. He is two speakers in one... a professor and a performer, or as one client put it – he delivers college-level lectures in a comedy store format. Dr. Tony offer audiences the opportunity to enjoy themselves while learning practical, immediately applicable skills that positively affect their relationships with prospects, customers and co-workers. His focus is on how to create instant rapport with prospects, employees & vendors; how to convert prospects and customers into business apostles who will “preach the gospel” about your company and products; and how to out-market, out-sell and out-service the competition.

Dr. Alessandra has a street-wise, college-smart perspective on business, having been raised in the housing projects of NYC to eventually realizing success as a graduate professor of marketing, Internet entrepreneur, business author, and hall-of-fame keynote speaker. He earned a **BBA** from Notre Dame, an **MBA** from the Univ. of Connecticut and his **PhD** in marketing in 1976 from Georgia State University.

Tony is CEO of **Assessments 24x7 LLC**, a company that offers a variety of online assessments, including the widely used **DISC profile**, the **Hartman HVP**, **Motivators (Values/PIAV)** assessment, and several 360° effectiveness assessments.

He is also a prolific author with **30 books** translated into over 50 foreign language editions, including the newly revised, best-selling *The NEW Art of Managing People*, *Charisma*, *The Platinum Rule*, *Collaborative Selling* and *Communicating at Work*.

He is featured in over **100 audio/video programs and films**, including **DISC Relationship Strategies**, **The Dynamics of Effective Listening** and **Gaining the EDGE in Competitive Selling**. He is also the originator of the internationally recognized behavioral style assessment tool - **The Platinum Rule®**.



Dr. Alessandra was inducted into the **NSA Speakers Hall of Fame** in 1985; inducted as one of the **Legends of the Speaking Profession** in 2009; selected 5 times as one of the **Speakers.com Top 5 Sales/ Marketing/ Customer Service Speakers** from 2010-2014; elected into the inaugural class of the **Top Sales World Sales Hall of Fame** in 2010; voted one of the **Top 50 Sales & Marketing Influencers** in 2012; and voted the **#1 World's Top Communication Guru** in 2012.

Recognized by *Meetings & Conventions Magazine* as “**one of America’s most electrifying speakers**,” Tony’s polished style, powerful message, and proven ability as a consummate business strategist consistently earn rave reviews and loyal clients.

Dr. Tony Alessandra
AJA@Alessandra.com
1-619-610-9933

www.Alessandra.com
www.Assessments24x7.com
www.DrTonyVirtualTraining.com
www.facebook.com/Assessments247
www.youtube.com/user/TonyAlessandra
<https://twitter.com/assessments24x7>
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DR. TONY ALESSANDRA

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Here is what some other experts say about The Platinum Rule...

“Dr. Tony Alessandra’s work brilliantly provides effective insights for improving communication in any and all situations.”

John Gray, Ph.D., Author, Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus

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“[This] is the priceless key to unlocking the door to empowerment, productivity and all business and personal relationships. It is simply the most important leadership concept I have learned in all of my life!”

Denis Waitley, Author, Empires of the Mind and The Psychology of Winning

The DISC Platinum Rule Workbook Helps You Unlock 3 Keys to Your Success:

- **Understand Your Own Style So You Can Leverage Your Strengths And Avoid Your Weaknesses.**
- **Identify Other People’s Styles.**
- **Adapt Your Own Behavior So You Can Treat People The Way THEY Want To Be Treated.**

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Keynote Speaking Engagements: DrTony@Assessments24x7.com • Ph: 1-619-610-9933

DISC Virtual Training Program: <http://www.DrTonyVirtualTraining.com>

5927 Balfour Court • Suite 103 • Carlsbad, CA 92008