

Communication Style

Our accomplishments in the workplace and with clients often depend on how well we can communicate our needs and objectives to others. Truly effective communication requires an understanding of other people's styles as well as our own.

What's in a style?

- The words we choose use and how we use them.
- How we say things – tone, pace, intensity, etc.
- Our body language, the way our body conveys the message – movement, gestures, etc.
- How we use our personal space – space you give others, workspace, personal appearance, etc.

Take this assessment from *How to Become a Better Negotiator* by James G. Patterson to determine your dominant communication style. There are four styles and we tend to have a preference for one over the others. *No style is better or worse than any other style and people can be successful in any style.* Read the list below and check the word that best describes you, one per row. Then count up the check marks in each of the four columns and put the total on the line below each column.

(Based on http://www.asme.org/Jobs/Manage/Whats_Communication_Style.cfm)

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Manner is basically | <input type="checkbox"/> accepting | <input type="checkbox"/> friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> controlling | <input type="checkbox"/> evaluative |
| 2. Decision making | <input type="checkbox"/> slow | <input type="checkbox"/> emotional | <input type="checkbox"/> impulsive | <input type="checkbox"/> fact-based |
| 3. I talk about | <input type="checkbox"/> personal things | <input type="checkbox"/> people | <input type="checkbox"/> achievements | <input type="checkbox"/> organization |
| 4. Using time | <input type="checkbox"/> not rushed | <input type="checkbox"/> socializer | <input type="checkbox"/> rushed | <input type="checkbox"/> runs late |
| 5. Relates to others | <input type="checkbox"/> accepting | <input type="checkbox"/> empathizer | <input type="checkbox"/> commands | <input type="checkbox"/> assessing |
| 6. Gestures | <input type="checkbox"/> sparse | <input type="checkbox"/> open | <input type="checkbox"/> impatient | <input type="checkbox"/> closed |
| 7. Clothing | <input type="checkbox"/> conforms | <input type="checkbox"/> very stylish | <input type="checkbox"/> formal | <input type="checkbox"/> conservative |
| 8. Work pace | <input type="checkbox"/> steady | <input type="checkbox"/> enthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> fast | <input type="checkbox"/> controlled |
| 9. Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> interested | <input type="checkbox"/> distracted | <input type="checkbox"/> impatient | <input type="checkbox"/> selective |
| 10. Work area has | <input type="checkbox"/> keepsakes | <input type="checkbox"/> pictures | <input type="checkbox"/> awards | <input type="checkbox"/> charts |
| 11. Oriented toward | <input type="checkbox"/> support | <input type="checkbox"/> people | <input type="checkbox"/> results | <input type="checkbox"/> facts |
| 12. Basic personality | <input type="checkbox"/> easygoing | <input type="checkbox"/> outgoing | <input type="checkbox"/> dominating | <input type="checkbox"/> no-nonsense |
| 13. Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> low-key | <input type="checkbox"/> animated | <input type="checkbox"/> direct | <input type="checkbox"/> reserved |
| 14. Responsive to others | <input type="checkbox"/> steady | <input type="checkbox"/> friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> restless | <input type="checkbox"/> distant |

Totals:

A

B

C

D

Transfer Your Totals To The Table Below:

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| (A) Stabilizer: | (B) Persuader: | (C) Controller: | (D) Analyzer: |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|

Very Brief Overview of the Four Communication Styles:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Controller Characteristics</p> <p>Seen as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pragmatic • Assertive • Results oriented • Competitive • Competent • Problem solver • Risk taker • Can be seen as arrogant and domineering • Can be viewed as poor listener and impatient <p>Conflict: Mainly with Stabilizers</p> <p>How to Flex: Slow down. Count to ten before responding. Learn to listen more. Work at showing feelings, being more interested in relationships and being more open. Take time to build relationships.</p> | <p>Persuader Characteristics</p> <p>Seen as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiastic, excitement driven • Like public speaking and attention • May be too talkative • Persuasive and optimistic • Creative • Good sense of humor • Can be seen as impulsive, • May have problems following through with an idea <p>Conflict: Mainly with Analyzers</p> <p>How to Flex: Slow down the volume of speech. Try to be less intense. Use fewer gestures. Focus more on facts and data than people and ideas. Try writing things down and giving the other person time to digest.</p> |
| <p>Analyzer Characteristics</p> <p>Seen as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail oriented • Can be slow seen as decision maker • May like rules and predictability • Least likely to take risk • Analytical • Conservative • May be send as rigid, overly serious and indecisive <p>Conflict: Mainly with Persuaders</p> <p>How to Flex: Try to gesture more, show less need for detail, and try to be less rigid about following policies. Take more risks. Show more personal concern for others. Make time for small talk. Engage in small talk before getting to business.</p> | <p>Stabilizer Characteristics</p> <p>Seen as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people oriented • Believe there is more than one method to achieve the same results • Place a high premium on relationships • Can be slow decision makers • Mat not delegate well • May seek security; • May be less likely to take risks <p>Conflict: Mainly with Controllers</p> <p>How to Flex: Try to be more assertive. Focus less on relationships and more on tasks. Learn to make observations based on facts, not subjective judgments. Speak a little faster. Argue facts not feelings.</p> |

“It doesn’t matter where you live (i.e. your preferred style) as long as you can travel”

The Four Styles and Behavior Associated with Each Dimension

More Assertive Behavior

- Louder volume of speech
- Faster pacing of speech
- More expression of opinions
- Body posture is forward
- More directive gesture
- Longer lasting eye contact

More Expressive Behavior

- More expressive facial expressions
- More use of hands & body
- More people oriented
- Less task oriented
- More varied pace of vocal delivery
- More voice inflection
- More use of describing things using feeling words

Less Expressive Behavior

- Fewer facial expressions
- Less use of hands & body
- Less oriented to people
- More task oriented
- More even pace of delivery
- Less voice inflection
- Less use of feeling words in describing things

Controller

Persuader

Analyzer

Stabilizer

Less Assertive Behavior

- Softer volume of speech
- Slower pace of speech
- Less expressing of opinions
- Body posture is more back
- Fewer directive gesture
- Less eye contact

Adjusting or “Flexing” our Styles

- Helps put them at ease
- May increase the effectiveness of our interaction

When Is It Important to Flex?

- To be influential in a request
- Making a critical presentation
- The first time you meet a person
- When there may be some stress or conflict
- Addressing a customer problem or complaint

Understanding others’ styles involves:

- Observing their behavior
- Noting their degree of assertiveness and expressiveness

How to Flex

- Recognize the other style
- Plan your flex (adjustment) both content and delivery
- Do the “flex” and then evaluate how you did