

Communicate effectively leveraging DISC profiles

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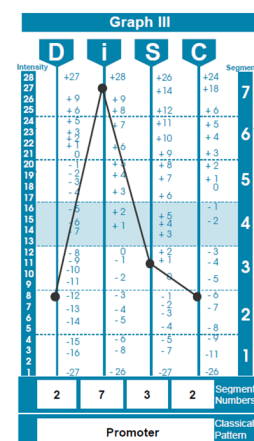
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Effective communication – where the listener receives the exact message you intended to send, is affected by a number of things. We all have “filters” based on our personalities, our experiences and our current mood. To be successful communicating it’s important to decipher the listener’s “filter”. Without knowing a person closely, you will rarely know about a listener’s previous experiences. It’s easier to pick up on a listener’s mood by looking at their body language, facial expression and listening to their tone of voice. Understanding someone’s personality can be greatly helped by leveraging DISC profiles. In this blog post I’ll give you an overview of the DISC behavioral styles and share how to be successful in communicating with people based on their style.

What is DISC?

DISC is an abbreviation of the four behavioral types **D**ominance, **I**nfluence, **S**teadiness (originally Submission) and **C**onscientiousness (originally Compliance). The DISC assessment is based on the early work done by [William Moulton Marston](#), lawyer, psychologist and inventor (he created a component of the lie detector). A DISC assessment analyzes behavioral style and provides you with a report that maps your results on the 4 style dimensions. In addition to the four main styles (D, I, S and C), the DISC system measures the level of interaction between the styles, resulting in one of 15 profile patterns. To learn more about DISC assessments please refer to this [sample report](#).



The four DISC styles

There are four different behavioral styles in DISC. Below is a short summary of each style, click on the link for a more detailed description. Some people fall into one style, others fall into two and some may fall into three.



Dominance – People who fall into this behavioral style are described as direct, demanding and strong-willed. A D-style person is motivated by competing and winning. Things that are valued by people with this style include competency, concrete results, challenges and independence.

A person with this behavioral style can be recognized by often being in a hurry with many projects going in the air. He or she often interrupts you and might not always seem very polite.



Influence - People who fall into this behavioral style are described as warm, enthusiastic and trusting. An I-style person is motivated by social recognition, group activities and relationships. Things that are valued by people with this style include coaching, freedom of expression, friendship and happiness.

A person with this behavioral style can be recognized by often being open and friendly, eager to talk, jumping from subject to subject.



Steadiness - People who fall into this behavioral style are described as calm, patient and consistent. An S-style person is motivated by cooperation, opportunities to help and sincere appreciation. Things that are valued by people with this style include loyalty, helping others and security.

A person with this behavioral style can be recognized by the calm appearance and easy going mentality. He or she listens carefully and is supportive and does not get excited easily.



Conscientiousness - People who fall into this behavioral style are described as careful, cautious, accurate and tactful. A C-style person is motivated by gaining knowledge, showing expertise and high quality work. Things that are valued by people with this style include quality, accuracy and personal growth.

A person with this behavioral style can be recognized by the many questions they ask and their focus to detail. He or she loves to follow rules and likes things to be in the right order.

How to adapt your communication based on DISC-style

In order to communicate effectively it's important that you consider the behavioral style of your listener. Say for instance that you are trying to sell a solution to a person who is a high C (meaning scored high in this behavioral style). If you haven't prepared your pitch with enough facts and data, he or she might consider you insincere and ill-prepared. If on the other hand you are trying to pitch to a high D and you go in with facts and figures, that person might be bored and walk out of the room.

Communicating effectively with High-D's: Try to be brief and to the point. Instead of getting into a lot of details, paint "the big picture". Demonstrate your competence and stick to the topic. If possible let them take the lead.

Communicating effectively with High-I's: Try to approach this person informally being relaxed and sociable. Listen to how they feel and keep the conversation light and add some humor. Give them praise. Don't go into lots of detail during your conversation, but feel free to provide them with written details.

Communicating effectively with High-S's: To communicate effectively with a high S, arrange for a secure environment (their office or some other familiar place). Be logical and systematic in your approach and if your message involves any type of change, tell them about it early on and let them adapt to it slowly. Emphasize their importance and show sincere appreciation.

Communicating effectively with High-C's: To communicate effectively with a high C try to be precise and focused in your message. Give clear expectations and be prepared to answer many questions. Be tactful and reserved, refrain from getting emotional. Demonstrate loyalty and value for high standards.

Easy in theory - harder in real life

Wouldn't it be great if every person had the letter written in their forehead so that you knew which communication style to use with that person? In some cases, it is quite easy to tell what DISC profile someone has (people who meet me can rather quickly tell that I'm a high I.) In other cases it's not so easy to figure out. Even though you aren't sure of the behavioral style of your listener, it's important to know about these different styles and how they affect how your message gets interpreted. The first thing I would recommend you to do is a DISC assessment of your own to understand your own behavior. Once you've done that, it will be easier for you to understand others.

