Identifying Different Communication Styles

Curious about how you really communicate with others? How do you come across to your colleagues? Are you a planner, thinker, or doer? Are you a risk-taker or someone who always tries to fit in with everyone else?

Communication styles tests like the one you’re about to see can help you assess your current style. Complete this exercise by yourself or with a friend.

Some questions to think about after you assess your style:

- To what extent did the test validate what you already knew about yourself?
- Did the tests reveal any surprising characteristics? Any characteristics that you would not previously have ascribed to yourself?
- What else did you learn about yourself?
- How might these characteristics affect how you interact with your mentees, mentors, or colleagues?
- Did you uncover any characteristics that you’d like to alter? Anything you would like to emphasize more in the future? Or anything you’d like to de-emphasize?

If you completed this exercise with a friend or colleague, share your results with each other. Do the results verify how you viewed each other’s communication style? Any surprises?

Directions

Print and complete this document to determine your communication style.

1. Reflect on your personal characteristics as you read across each of the 15 lines below. On each line, circle two descriptive words that best describe you. This is a forced choice, so sometimes all four words will describe you, but you must select only two. Sometimes none of the four words “best” describes you, however, you must select two words on each line.

2. After completing line 15, verify the number of words circled on each line, (as you read across from left to right) there must only be two words circled on each line.

3. For each column (x, z, w, and y), count the number of words circled and indicate the total circled in the box provided at the bottom.

4. Your “total” scores for each column represent four “points” (w, x, y, z), take these four points and graph them on the scoring grid which follows. When plotting your points, remember zero is in the middle of the graph no matter which direction you are plotting (left, right, up, or down).
5. Draw a four-sided figure to connect the four points (in other words when you connect your four points they must make a square or rectangle: that is, a four-sided figure. **DO NOT DRAW A KITE.** The largest area (length times width) of the four-sided figure drawn represents your dominant communication style as indicated by the words you selected. If you disagree about your style, go back and review the words you selected.

6. Read the summary page for information about your style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. disputes the issue</td>
<td>unruffled</td>
<td>focused</td>
<td>sociable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. will take a chance</td>
<td>flexible</td>
<td>rational</td>
<td>sympathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. spur-of-the-moment</td>
<td>prudent</td>
<td>composed</td>
<td>extraverted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. directs others</td>
<td>asks</td>
<td>pensive</td>
<td>lively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. decisive</td>
<td>ponders</td>
<td>diligent</td>
<td>gregarious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. takes control</td>
<td>collaborates</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>amicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. self-assured</td>
<td>noncommittal</td>
<td>orderly</td>
<td>demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. convincing</td>
<td>open-minded</td>
<td>thorough</td>
<td>free-thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. will fight for</td>
<td>will defend</td>
<td>effective</td>
<td>good-hearted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. wants to win</td>
<td>hopeful</td>
<td>pragmatic</td>
<td>young-at-heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. eager</td>
<td>diplomatic</td>
<td>systematic</td>
<td>innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. confident</td>
<td>accepting</td>
<td>pains taking</td>
<td>high-strung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. dominant</td>
<td>mild</td>
<td>plans</td>
<td>talkative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. insistent</td>
<td>sensible</td>
<td>exact</td>
<td>helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. urgent</td>
<td>constant</td>
<td>conventional</td>
<td>good-natured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>=30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effective Communication Styles Scoring Grid
## Effective Communication Styles Inventory Summary

### Thinking/Planning

**Ask For:**
- data
- information
- facts

**Focused On:**
- process
- task
- goal
- doing things the right way

**Under Stress:**
- avoid

**Need/Like:**
- logical thinking
- documentation
- rational approach
- careful planning

### Doing/Directing

**Tell About:**
- progress to goals
- actions required
- solutions to problems

**Focused On:**
- task
- goal
- winning/being successful
- making things happen

**Under Stress:**
- become autocratic and tell

**Need/Like:**
- options
- directness
- flexibility
- conciseness

### Supporting/Collaborating

**Ask For:**
- information re: others’ skills/interests
- input
- feedback

**Focused On:**
- people
- relationships
- collaborations
- how situations “feel”

**Under Stress:**
- acquiesce or yield

**Need/Like:**
- friendliness
- participation
- inclusion
- involvement

### Visioning/Creating

**Tell:**
- visions
- ideas
- stories, analogies

**Focused On:**
- big picture
- models/theories/concepts
- bringing visions into reality

**Under Stress:**
- blame others

**Need/Like:**
- to understand how the details fit their picture
- innovation and creativity
- others to handle the details