



Understanding Communication Styles

Skills to help you know
yourself, know your team
and know your patients

Communication Styles

According to David W. Merrill, PH.D., and Roger H. Reid, M.A., "We all say and do things as a result of certain habit patterns, and people make predictions about us because they come to expect us to behave in a particular way – the fact is that even though each of us is unique, we tend to act in fairly consistent, describable ways. All of us use habits that have worked well for us, habits that make us comfortable, and these habits become the social style that others can observe."

Better communication can be achieved when we understand other person and treat them the way that they want to be treated.

The American population is divided among four social styles: driver, analytic, amiable, and expressive. Each person has a dominant social style, and the style influences the way he works. People will tend to seek out social situations that reinforce their behavior and avoid situations that cause discomfort.

The Four Communication Styles

TASK

* Independent *Uses facts *Disciplined

<p>Analytical Thinking oriented</p>	<p>Driver Action oriented</p>
<p>Amiable Relationship oriented</p>	<p>Expressive Intuition oriented</p>

ASK

- Slow actions
- Avoids risk
- Cooperative

TELL

- Fast Action
- Takes Risks
- Competitive

RELATIONSHIP

*Communicative *Uses opinions *Approachable



The Analytical

The Analytical is polite but reserved, logical, fact and task oriented. This person's focus is on precision and perfection. Other strengths include persistence, diligence, caution, and developing a systematic approach. They live life with consistency according to facts, principles, and logic.

Their weakness is that they often seem to be cool, withdrawn, doting, quiet, reclusive, and even sullen or lacking enthusiasm at times. They tend to be cautious about extending friendship or showing personal warmth and, initially, will be more concerned with how things get done without need for personal involvement. They seem to act slowly and use time in a deliberate and disciplined manner. They focus on the past to give them direction for the future and prefer to work on a predictable time schedule. They look for solid, tangible, practical evidence to support the validity of their decisions. They also require assurance that their decisions will be valid for the future. They appear to be overly concerned with details and organization. If he or she seems indecisive, it's because of a need to assess all of the data. Perfectionism can be a fault if the Analytical pushes it too far. This person is definitely not a risk taker.

The Analytical needs to be right and usually won't openly discuss ideas until they are confident in a decision. His/her pleasure is accuracy. They are very uncomfortable with being wrong and being criticized.

When communicating with an Analytical focus on:

- Be systematic, thorough, deliberate and precise.
- Focus on the task.
- Be prepared to answer many "how" questions.
- Provide analysis and facts.
- Don't get too personal.
- Recognize and acknowledge the need to be accurate and logical.
- Don't rush unnecessarily.
- Expect to repeat yourself.
- Allow time for evaluation.
- Use lots of evidence.
- Compliment the precision and accuracy of their (fill in the blank) work, research, preparedness, etc.

When communicating with an Analytical consider avoiding:

- Being disorganized or messy.
- Being casual, informal, loud.
- Rushing the decision making process.
- Being vague about what is expected of either of you; don't fail to follow through.
- Using testimonies of others or unreliable sources.
- Using someone's opinion as evidence of ability.
- Being clever or appearing manipulative.
- Pushing too hard or being unrealistic with deadlines.

TYPE	STRENGTHS	POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES
Analytical	Thinking Thorough Disciplined	Excludes feelings from decisions Perfectionist Too rigid or demanding of self/others



The Amiable

The Amiable is devoted, consistent, dependable and loyal, a hard worker, and will persevere long after others have given up. He/she is a team player, cooperative, and easy to get along with, trustful, sensitive, and a good listener. Working in groups with cooperative individuals, the Amiable tries to avoid confrontation. He/she enjoys company, performs best in a stable environment, and often has a stabilizing effect on others. They place a high priority on friendships, cooperative behavior, and being accepted by others. They like to achieve objectives with people using understanding and mutual respect and will accept authority from another person, if the person is friendly and understanding.

Weaknesses include indecision and inability to take risks. Amiables are often too focused on others, conforming, quiet, and passive. They often won't speak up for themselves, are too compliant and nice, and often painstakingly slow to make decisions. The Amiable is most desirable of stability and cooperation. They are most uncomfortable with change and chaos. Talking and socializing is sometimes more important than getting on with the work at hand. They tend to use personal opinions in arriving at decisions and want guarantees of minimal risk; therefore, they frequently stay with the comfortable and known and especially avoid risks that involve personal relationship.

When communicating with an Amiable focus on:

- Be relaxed and agreeable.
- Be a good listener.
- Maintain the status quo.
- Be logical and systematic.
- Create a plan and written guidelines.
- Be prepared to answer "why" questions.
- Be predictable.
- Agree clearly and often.
- Use the word "we".
- Don't push.
- Don't rush.
- Compliment him/her as a team player.
-

When communicating with an Amiable consider avoiding:

- Rushing them; yet, do not lose sight of the goals by being too personal.
- Pressuring them to respond quickly to your objectives; don't say, "Here's how I see it."
- Being domineering or demanding; and, reduce your position power.
- Forcing agreement because they probably will not risk the discomfort of confrontation.
- Patronizing or demeaning them by using subtlety or invective.
- Being abrupt and rapid.
- Being vague; minimizing options and probabilities.
- Offering assurances and guarantees you cannot fulfill.
- Deciding for them or they will lose initiative; do not leave them without backup support, as important, prominent.

TYPE	STRENGTHS	POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES
Amiable	Supportive Patient Diplomatic	Tends to conform to wishes of others No time boundaries; things don't get done Not assertive or directive



The Driver

The Driver is a high achiever - a mover and a shaker who is definitely not adverse to risk. The individual is extroverted, strong-willed, direct, practical, organized, forceful, and decisive. They know what they want, where they are going, and are more oriented toward getting results than pleasing people. They base their decisions on facts and data, will take risks, and prefer to be given options from which they can choose.

They are "tell oriented" and voice may sound forceful without speaking loudly. They often speak rapidly. They are fact oriented and do not need feelings or opinions from others. They prefer brief reading materials, prefer working alone or directing others. Conversations tend to be brief and even abrupt. They prefer to make their own decisions. They seek power and do not like to be told what to do. They are decisive, pragmatic, and efficient. Look for someone who tells it the way it is and is very persuasive. Watch out or you will be worn down and bowled over. A Driver is task rather than relationship oriented and wants immediate results.

This individual is not concerned with how something is done, but what is being done, and what results can be expected. "What" is his/her battle cry - "What is going on? What is being done about it? What needs to be done next is...!"

The Driver can be stubborn, domineering, impatient, insensitive, and short-tempered, with little time for formalities or niceties. He/she can also be perceived to be demanding, opinionated, controlling, and uncompromising - or even overbearing, cold, or harsh. The Driver is very comfortable with power, control, and respect. He/she is uncomfortable with the lack of results, respect, or the feeling that he/she is being taken advantage of.

When communicating with a Driver focus on:

- Focus on the task.
- Talk about the expected results.
- Be businesslike and factual.
- Provide precise, concise, and organized information.
- Discuss and answer "what" questions.
- Argue facts, not feelings.
- Don't waste time.
- Don't argue details.
- Provide options.

When communicating with a Driver consider avoiding:

- Rambling conversations and/or non-essential information; i.e., don't waste their time.
- Trying to build personal relations.
- Disorganized presentation of facts.
- Open-ended issues or asking rhetorical questions.
- Appearing to have made the decision for them; i.e., autocratic advice or opinion.
- Extending the appointment with folksy chatter

TYPE	STRENGTHS	POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES
Driver	Independent Decisive Determined	Has trouble working with others Does not take time to consider others perspectives Domineering; too focused on doing it their way



The Expressive

The Expressive, a verbally adept communication style, is engaging, accommodating, supportive of others, persuasive, socially adept and relationship rather than task oriented. Usually full of energy, they have quick gestures, speaking more rapidly and louder than others. They make decisions quickly, express opinions strongly, and dislike routine. They appear to have more imagination and creative ideas than other people. They are undisciplined in the use of time. They are people and feeling oriented and rely on the opinions of others whom they consider important or successful for decision making rather than facts.

He/she loves to be one of the gang, and is always ready for something new and exciting, especially if the gang is ready to participate. They wear colorful and sometimes flamboyant clothes and are playful and fun loving. They are outgoing, enthusiastic, persuasive, and spontaneous. Additional strengths include enthusiasm, diplomatic skills, and the ability to inspire others.

Weaknesses involve impatience, a tendency to generalize, verbal assaults and sometimes irrational behavior. The Expressive can also be perceived as egotistical, manipulative, undisciplined, reactive, unorganized, and abrasive.

The Expressive readily exchanges information and life experiences. His/her main need is to be appreciated and accepted. He/she enjoys recognition and approval, and they are uncomfortable if they are isolated or are not getting attention.

When communicating with an Expressive focus on:

- Focus on developing a relationship.
- Try to show how your ideas will improve his/her image.
- Be enthusiastic, open, and responsive.
- Relate to the need to share information, stories, and experiences.
- Be forthcoming and willing to talk.
- Ask and answer "who" questions.
- Be warm and approachable at all times.
- Work to minimize his/her direct involvement with details or personal conflicts.

When communicating with an Expressive consider avoiding:

- Being perceived as curt, cold, or autocratic.
- Leaving decisions hanging in the air.
- Impersonal, judgmental, task-oriented behavior when possible.
- "Dreaming" with them or you will lose time.
- Talking down to them or being dogmatic.

TYPE	STRENGTHS	POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES
Expressive	Communicative Enthusiastic Imaginative	Talks too much Comes on too strong Dreamer/unrealistic



A SHORTHAND DESCRIPTION OF THE BASIC COMMUNICATION STYLES

	<u>HOW OTHERS VIEW THEM</u>	<u>HOW THEY VIEW THEMSELVES</u>
<u>DRIVING:</u>		
CONTROL SPECIALIST	Pushy Severe Tough-minded Dominating Harsh	Determined Requiring Thorough Decisive Efficient
<u>EXPRESSIVE:</u>		
SOCIAL SPECIALIST	Manipulative Excitable Undisciplined Reacting Promotional	Personable Stimulating Enthusiastic Dramatic Gregarious
<u>AMIABLE:</u>		
SUPPORT SPECIALIST	Conforming Retiring Ingratiating Dependent Emotional	Supportive Respectful Willing Dependable Agreeable
<u>ANALYTICAL:</u>		
TECHNICAL SPECIALIST	Critical Indecisive Stuffy Exacting Moralistic	Industrious Persistent Serious Vigilant Orderly



	ANALYTICAL	AMIABLE	DRIVER	EXPRESSIVE
PRIMARY ASSET	Systematic	Supportive	Controlling	Energizing
BACK-UP BEHAVIOR	Avoiding	Acquiescing	Autocratic	Attacking
FOR GROWTH NEEDS TO	Decide	Initiate	Listen	Check
MEASURE OF PERSONAL VALUE	Respect	Approval	Power	Recognition
NEEDS CLIMATE THAT	Describes	Processes	Responds	Collaborates
LET THEM SAVE	Face	Relationships	Time	Effort
MAKE EFFORT TO BE	Accurate	Cooperative	Efficient	Effort
SUPPORT THEIR	Principles and Thinking	Relationships and Feelings	Conclusions and Actions	Visions and Intuitions
STRESS BENEFITS THAT ANSWER	HOW problem is solved	WHY solution is best	WHAT solution will do	WHO else has used
FOR DECISIONS GIVE THEM	Evidence and Service	Assurances and Guarantees	Options and Probabilities	Testimony and Incentives
FOLLOW-UP WITH	Service	Support	Results	Attention



Communication Styles Assessment

1. A. Everyone knows I'm a mover and a shaker
B. Everyone knows I'm mild-mannered and easy to get along with
C. Everyone knows I'm a steady worker
D. Everyone knows I'm a motivator
2. A. When I work I tend to be very precise
B. When I work I tend to be playful and fool around
C. When I work I tend to be very productive
D. When I work I tend to be quiet
3. A. My friends see me as fun to be around
B. My friends see me as very considerate
C. My friends see me as very convincing
D. My friends see me as very consistent
4. A. People say I'm shy
B. People say I'm stimulating and exciting
C. People say I'm sensitive
D. People say I'm independent and self-reliant
5. A. In a conversation I tend to be animated
B. In a conversation I tend to be quiet and thoughtful
C. In a conversation I tend to be bold and dominant
D. In a conversation I tend to adjust to others
6. A. Employees tend to see me as a leader
B. Employees tend to see me as very interested in the details
C. Employees tend to see me as very loyal
D. Employees tend to see me as fun and lively
7. A. I am behaved
B. I am a natural booster and promoter
C. I am balanced and well-adjusted
D. I am brave and willing to go it alone
8. A. I can be impulsive
B. I can be very insistent
C. I can be impartial and go either way
D. I can be creative and inventive
9. A. Clients would say I'm very opinionated
B. Clients would say I'm very orderly
C. Clients would say I'm very optimistic
D. Clients would say I'm very relaxed
10. A. In a team situation I can be very accommodating
B. In a team situation I can be fun and amusing
C. In a team situation I can make the right choice
D. In a team situation I want more information
11. A. I am fascinating
B. I am faithful
C. I am forceful
D. I am friendly
12. A. I like charts and graphs
B. I like competition
C. I like quiet situations
D. I like things cheery and fun
13. A. Employees would say I am strong-willed
B. Employees would say I am very social
C. Employees would say I like schedules and numbers
D. Employees would say I am very satisfied with life
14. A. I like to cuddle
B. I like to be confident
C. I like to be comfortable
D. I like to be informed
15. A. I like new things
B. I like to do it well
C. I like to promote what I do
D. I like to bring others along
16. A. People say I'm patient
B. People say I'm popular
C. People say I plan
D. People say I'm always very positive
17. A. I'm energetic
B. I'm empathetic
C. I'm clever
D. I'm satisfied
18. A. Employees would rate me as persuasive
B. Employees would rate me as easy-going
C. Employees would rate me as philosophical
D. Employees would rate me as a party animal
19. A. In a group I am conversational
B. In a group I can bring things together
C. In a group I want to think about it
D. In a group I am hesitant to give my opinion
20. A. The management team sees me as logical
B. The management team sees me as direct
C. The management team sees me as a good listener
D. The management team sees me as loose and relaxed
21. A. People say I am too hard to deal with
B. People say I am anxious to retaliate
C. People say I am too restless
D. People say I am reluctant to act
22. A. I am often too busy
B. I am often too slow
C. I am often too stubborn
D. I am often too suspicious
23. A. Employees say I am indecisive
B. Employees say I am inconsistent
C. Employees say I am impatient



- D. Employees say I am quiet
24. A. At a management meeting I can be unsympathetic
B. At a management meeting I can be unpredictable
C. At a management meeting I can be unpopular
D. At a management meeting I can be unenthusiastic
25. A. I find myself resenting others
B. I find myself acting too rash
C. I find myself going over things again and again
D. I find myself promoting my view a lot
26. A. Department managers might say I'm arrogant
B. Department managers might say I'm argumentative
C. Department managers might say I'm out of step at times
D. Department managers might say I'm too negative
27. A. I sometimes see myself as stubborn
B. I sometimes see myself as moody and brooding
C. I sometimes see myself as shy and bashful
D. I sometimes see myself as cocky and brassy
28. A. People sometimes feel I am too disorganized
B. People sometimes feel I am too skeptical
C. People sometimes feel I take charge too much
D. People sometimes feel I am depressed
29. A. Everyone knows I am short-tempered
B. Everyone knows I am slow to act
C. Everyone knows I am very skeptical
D. Everyone knows I show off
30. A. I tend to interrupt
B. I tend to be insecure
C. I tend to be intolerant
D. I tend to be indifferent
31. A. I am proud
B. I am a worrier
C. I am naïve
D. I am not serious
32. A. I can act like a child
B. I can act without purpose
C. I can act without regard for others
D. I can act very picky
33. A. People say I am too cynical
B. People say I switch around too much
C. People say I criticize too much
D. People say I compromise too much
34. A. I'm always changing directions
B. I'm always messy
C. I'm always pushing others
D. I'm always going it alone
35. A. I don't follow the rules
B. I don't forgive
C. I don't get involved
D. I don't easily give affection
36. A. I sometimes act superior
B. I sometimes snap at others
C. I sometimes don't show much spirit
D. I sometimes am too sensitive
37. A. At a meeting I can be forgetful
B. At a meeting I can wear others out
C. At a meeting I continue fussing about the same thing
D. At a meeting I can hold back and not follow the program
38. A. On a management team I can be very calculating
B. On a management team I can give up easily
C. On a management team I can keep bringing up the same stuff
D. On a management team I can talk a lot
39. A. When working with a group I like attention
B. When working with a group I often don't care about the feelings of others
C. When working with a group I can be very negative
D. When working with a group I'm not very forceful
40. A. On a management team I figure out how to get my way
B. On a management team I'm rather quiet
C. On a management team I don't make myself very clear
D. On a management team I want to spend too much time



Communication Styles Scoring Sheet

Transfer your answers by circling the matching letter in each row across. Then count the circled letters going down each column.

1	D	A	C	B
2	B	C	A	D
3	A	C	D	B
4	B	D	C	A
5	A	C	B	D
6	D	A	B	C
7	B	D	A	C
8	A	B	D	C
9	C	A	B	D
10	B	C	D	A
11	A	C	B	D
12	D	B	A	C
13	B	A	C	D
14	A	B	D	C
15	C	A	B	D
16	B	D	C	A
17	A	C	B	D
18	D	A	C	B
19	A	B	C	D
20	D	B	A	C
21	C	A	B	D
22	A	C	B	D
23	B	C	D	A
24	B	A	C	D
25	D	B	A	C
26	A	B	D	C
27	D	A	B	C
28	A	C	B	D
29	D	A	C	B
30	A	C	B	D
31	C	A	B	D
32	A	C	D	B
33	B	A	C	D
34	B	C	D	A
35	A	D	B	C
36	B	A	D	C
37	A	B	C	D
38	D	A	C	B
39	A	B	C	D
40	D	A	B	C

TOTAL _____



Score Sheet for Communication Styles

1st column -- Expressive (Socializer)

2nd column -- Driver (Director)

3rd column -- Analytical (Thinker)

4th column -- Amiable (Relater)

