

4 Dominant Communication Styles

Although there are many different personalities, communication styles can be broken into four major profiles. If you take into consideration the needs of each style when communicating with others, you have the greatest chance of establishing rapport and trust. Ignore the styles and you risk rubbing people the wrong way, possibly shutting down the possibility of gaining the results you want.

In addition, when you acknowledge your own dominant style, you can build on your strengths and set goals to adapt or ask for help in areas you avoid.

The styles are based the most important needs when communicating, whether it be on achievement or on relationship, on idea creation or on action.

The two styles most focused on task:

DOERS

Doers like to be in control. They like quick action and they like to see results. They like to get to the point with little formalities. They don't care for details and love finding shortcuts. Otherwise, they get bored easily. They like autonomy, freedom and taking risks. They are self-starters, innovators and love to expend physical energy. They like public recognition, especially for putting what they most value into action and for creating results that make a difference in the world (or at least in world they see and act in every day).

THINKERS

Thinkers love to gather information. They enjoy reading and presenting their findings in detail. However, they need to mentally rehearse before they present, and take time to evaluate and wind down after the show. They take their time making decisions, but stand by what they decide once they do. They don't care to talk about personal issues, but enjoy discussing hobbies and issues. They desire clear expectations, specific goals, deadlines and structure. They live by a sense of order, methodologies and personal responsibility. Thinkers love to win, and will compete with themselves if no one is available. They will jump into the game with no coaxing if they perceive they have a fighting chance. They are proud of their good work. They like acknowledgment but won't ask for it.

The two styles most focused on relationship:

INFLUENCERS

Influencers like to verbally process their thoughts so they welcome situations where they can “think out loud” with others. They like to interrupt others, especially when they are excited about the topic. They view this as conversation, not a disruption. They enjoy people, desire approval and tend to be friendly, creative and persuasive. However, they may need some help staying on track and following through on tasks. They desire social interaction, acknowledgment and chances to be creative and have fun. They often see the bright side and can be very amusing, dramatic and passionate about work. They help others get through difficult times and can build rapport and support. They genuinely like people. However, they might find themselves caught up in a lot of drama since they are quick to want to help fix things and people. Teasing is one of their favorite pastimes.

CONNECTORS

Connectors count on others to set the tone and determine direction. They are consistent and reliable once given their responsibilities. They like to work with others instead of alone but take their time trusting and allowing new people to join their established groups. They do not readily give opinions, but this does not mean they don't have any. Because they are diligent and dependable, they often know the most about how work is getting done. They like to be asked what they know and they appreciate personal recognition (done privately, not in front of others). They desire consistency, social bonds and acknowledgment for effort as well as results. Although they may appear stubborn, they can be very flexible and adaptable if they understand why the changes are being made and how they will benefit themselves and others. They seek to reduce stress and promote harmony.

Rate Your Dominant Communication Style

When under pressure, do you tend to be (circle the adjective that most fits you):

Write the item number here:

Humorous 3	Regimental 2	Concise 1	Concerned 4	_____
Focused on outcome 1	Focused on steps 2	Excited 3	Apprehensive 4	_____
Aggressive 1	Talkative 3	Disciplined 2	Nurturing 4	_____
Non-confrontational 4	Schmoozer 3	Resistant 2	Assertive 1	_____
Innovative 1	Talented 2	Creative 3	Productive 4	_____
Driven 1	Enthusiastic 3	Absorbed 2	Seeking the peace 4	_____
Scattered 3	Structured 2	Multi-tasking 1	Helpful 4	_____
Analytical 2	Clear 1	Tolerant 4	Imaginative 2	_____
Prophetic 1	Logical 2	Resourceful 3	Practical 4	_____
Consistent 4	Heroic 1	Critical 2	Empathic 3	_____
Competitive 2	Directing 1	Enrolling 3	Reliable 4	_____
Charismatic 3	Forceful 1	Friendly 4	Technical 2	_____
Encouraging 4	Independent 1	Intellectual 2	Light-hearted 3	_____
Likes short-term goals 2	Socializer 3	Likes long-term goals 4	Risk-taker 1	_____
Rule-breaker 1	Tests Rules 3	Abides by Rules 4	Upholds Rules 2	_____
Explaining 2	Expecting 1	Supporting 4	Mediating 3	_____
Leading teams 1	Avoiding teams 2	Motivating teams 3	Seeking teams 4	_____
Leading by example 1	Sharing leadership 3	Avoiding leadership 4	Leading by necessity 2	_____
Overlooking others 1	Criticizing others 2	Understanding Others 3	Promoting others 4	_____
Shy from drama 4	Ignore drama 1	Hate drama 2	Manage drama 3	_____
Tough 1	Contained 4	Questioning 2	Curious 3	_____
Likes physical challenge 1	Avoids conflict 3	Likes mental challenge 2	Avoids stress 4	_____
Avoids confrontation 4	Diffuses confrontation 3	Angered by confrontation 1	Energized by confrontation 2	_____

SCORING:

Count up how many 1s, 2s, 3s and 4s you had and put the total below:

Total 1s _____ Total 2s _____ Total 3s _____ Total 4s _____

SCORING INTERPRETATION

1 = Doer

2 = Thinker

3 = Influencer

4 = Connector

Your score:

_____ Doer

_____ Thinker

_____ Influencer

_____ Connector

Your high score demonstrates your strongest communication style, especially under pressure. Your secondary score indicates your fall-back or adaptive style or styles. There are strengths associated with each style as well as limitations.

Doers tend to be high achievers and leaders and drive necessary results. They also tend to be impatient and insensitive to others.

Thinkers tend to excel when they like their work and can think through all angles and contingencies. They can appear to be combative, critical and sarcastic.

Influencers can lighten up even the darkest of moments. They can be inspirational, understanding and encouraging. They can also be wishy-washy in their decision-making and seem impractical. They are often late on assignments they do not like.

Connectors are reliable team players who look after everyone in their “tribe.” They are consistent and caring. They can also be stubborn and non-supportive of pushy people and what they judge to be impulsive ideas.

If you scored below a five on any style, be aware of how you treat others who demonstrate this style. You may have little patience or tolerance for people who tend toward these styles. Yet these are people you need around you to support your efforts. Do not alienate them. Instead, find ways to collaborate with them.

In the end, all the styles need to develop more tolerance for the other styles, and develop an appreciative point of view for what each style brings to the table. Diversity is the key to innovation and success.

COMMUNICATION TIPS

When communicating with a DOER style:

- ~ Be clear, specific, brief and to the point.
- ~ Stick to business.
- ~ Be prepared to support your ideas and work.

Factors that will create tension or dissatisfaction:

- ~ Talking about things that are not relevant to the task or issue.
- ~ Being unprepared or incomplete. Avoiding or beating around the bush.
- ~ Appearing unsure or disorganized, but not asking for help.

When communicating with a THINKER style:

- ~ Prepare your “case” in advance. Be prepared for a debate.
- ~ Stick to business.
- ~ Be accurate and realistic.

Factors that will create tension or dissatisfaction:

- ~ Being giddy, casual, informal, emotional or loud.
- ~ Pushing too hard for results or being unrealistic with deadlines.
- ~ Being disorganized or messy.

When communicating with an INFLUENCER style:

- ~ Provide a warm and friendly environment. Do little things to show your care.
- ~ Don't deal with a lot of details (put them in writing).
- ~ Ask “feeling” questions to draw their opinions or comments.

Factors that will create tension or dissatisfaction:

- ~ Being curt or cold. Cutting them off if they have something to say.
- ~ Controlling the conversation. Not allowing them to talk and express.
- ~ Focusing on facts and figures.

When communicating with a CONNECTOR style:

- ~ Begin with a personal comment--break the ice.
- ~ Present your case smoothly, non-threateningly.
- ~ Ask "how?" questions to draw their opinions.

Factors that will create tension or dissatisfaction:

- ~ Rushing headlong into business. Creating tension.
- ~ Being domineering or demanding.
- ~ Forcing them to respond quickly to your ideas. Demanding change.

LIST YOUR COMMUNICATION STRENGTHS:

WRITE TWO COMMUNICATION GOALS FOR YOURSELF TO BETTER RELATE WITH OTHER STYLES: