

About the DISC language

Grounded in the academic research of Dr. William Moulton Marston at Harvard, DISC is a language of behavior and emotion. In this brief paper we will describe how to identify and influence individuals who are strong in each of the four different styles. The four styles are these:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Dominance (challenge) | How you approach and respond to problems and challenges and how you exercise power |
| Influencing (contacts) | How you interact with and attempt to influence others to your point of view |
| Steadiness (consistency) | How you respond to change, variation and pace of your environment |
| Compliance (constraints) | How you respond to rules and procedures set by others and to authority |

From Bonstetter & Suiter; The Universal Language DISC; A Reference Manual



ignite. involve. inspire.

Identifying the High **D**

High D Descriptors:

- Ambitious
- Forceful
- Decisive
- Direct
- Independent
- Challenging

Quick High D Observable Indicators

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| ● Extroverted/Introverted? | Extroverted |
| ● People or Task oriented? | Task |
| ● More direct or indirect? | Direct |
| ● Overextensions? | Impatient |
| ● Looking for? | Results / Efficiency |
| ● Emotion, High C? | Anger / Short fuse |
| ● Emotion, Low C? | Slow to anger / Long fuse |

Observable Behaviors

How the High D's Act

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| ● Buy | Quick decision makers; new and unique products. |
| ● Change | Love change. |
| ● Conflict response | Fight back. |
| ● Drive | Fast - always somewhere to get in a hurry. |
| ● Decorate an office | Status conscious, large desk, efficiency. |
| ● Gesture | Lots of hand movement when talking, big gestures. |
| ● Goal setting | Sets many goals, usually high risk and not written down. |
| ● Letter writing | Direct, to the point. Results oriented. |
| ● Organization | Efficient, not neat. |
| ● Read | Cliff notes, executive book summaries. |
| ● Risk factor | High risk-taker. |
| ● Rules | May tend to break the rules. The ends justify the means. |
| ● Stand | Forward leaning, hand in pocket. |
| ● Stress Relief | Physical activity, preferably competitive. |
| ● Talk on Phone | Little chit-chat. To the point. Results. |
| ● Talk to others | Direct. While others are talking may do other activities. May interrupt or jump to their next response. |
| ● Walk | Fast. Always going somewhere. |
| ● Magazines | Fortune, Forbes, Money. |

Influencing the High **D**

The High D wants:

- To control their own destiny and the destiny of others
- Power and authority to achieve results
- Prestige, position and titles
- A way to obtain money and material things that indicate success
- Opportunity for rapid advancement
- A focus on the bottom line
- Freedom from controls, supervision and details
- Efficiency with people and equipment
- New and varied experiences
- Challenges with each task
- A forum for verbalizing

Communicating with the High D

Do's

Be clear, specific and to the point.

Stick to business.

Come prepared with all requirements, objectives and support materials in a well-organized package.

Present the facts logically; plan your presentation efficiently.

Provide alternatives and choices for making their own decisions.

Ask specific (preferably "What?") questions.

Provide the facts and figures about probability of success or the effectiveness of an option.

If you disagree, take issue with the facts.

Provide a win/win opportunity.

Motivate and persuade by referring to results. Support and maintain.

Don't's

Don't ramble on, or waste their time.

Don't try to build personal relationships or chit-chat.

Don't forget or lose things, be unprepared, disorganized or messy.

Don't leave loopholes or cloudy issues if you don't want to be zapped!

Don't come with the decision made, or make it for them.

Don't ask rhetorical questions, or useless ones.

Don't speculate wildly or offer guarantees or assurances where there is a risk in meeting them.

Don't take issue with the High D personally.

Don't force the High D into a losing situation.

Don't try to convince by personal means.

Don't direct or order.

Identifying the High

High I Descriptors:

- Expressive
- Enthusiastic
- Friendly
- Demonstrative
- Talkative
- Stimulating

Quick High I Observable Indicators

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| ● Extroverted/Introverted? | Extroverted |
| ● People or Task oriented? | People |
| ● More direct or indirect? | Indirect |
| ● Overextensions? | Disorganization |
| ● Looking for? | Fun / the experience |
| ● Emotion, High C? | Optimism |
| ● Emotion, Low C? | Pessimism |

Observable Behaviors

How the High I's Act

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| ● Buy | Quick decision makers; showy products; impulse buyer. |
| ● Change | May not notice change. |
| ● Conflict response | Flight, run. |
| ● Drive | Visual, looking around, radio on. |
| ● Decorate an office | Contemporary, memorabilia of experiences. |
| ● Gesture | A lot of big gestures and facial expressions while talking. |
| ● Goal setting | Not good at setting goals, Intention is present, planning is not. |
| ● Letter writing | More wordy letters, warm people focus. |
| ● Organization | Disorganized. Lots of piles. |
| ● Read | Fiction, self-improvement books. |
| ● Rules | May not be aware of rules and may break them unintentionally. |
| ● Stand | Feet spread, two hands in pockets. |
| ● Stress Relief | Interaction with people. |
| ● Talk on Phone | Long conversations. Lots of tone variation in voice. |
| ● Talk to others | Verbal, at length. Personal with others. |
| ● Walk | Weave, focus on people. May run into things. |
| ● Magazines | People, Psychology Today |

Influencing the High

The High I wants:

- An environment free from control and data
- Popularity and social recognition
- Freedom of speech, people to talk to
- Favorable working conditions
- Group activities outside the job
- Identification with the team
- Public recognition of their ability
- Monetary rewards

Communicating with the High I

Do's

Plan interaction that supports their dreams and intentions.

Allow time for relating and socializing.

Talk about people and their goals.

Focus on people and on action items. Put details in writing.

Ask for their opinion.

Provide ideas for implementing action.

Use enough time to be stimulating, fun, fast-moving.

Provide testimonials from people they see as important or prominent.

Offer special immediate and extra incentives for their willingness to take risks.

Don't's

Don't legislate or muffle.

Don't be curt, cold, or tight-lipped.

Don't drive to facts, figures and alternatives.

Don't leave decisions up in the air.

Don't be impersonal or task oriented.

Don't waste time in "dreaming."

Don't cut the meeting short or be too business-like.

Don't talk down to them.

Don't take too much time. Get to action items.

Identifying the High S

High S Descriptors:

- Methodical
- Systematic
- Reliable
- Steady
- Relaxed
- Modest

Quick High S Observable Indicators

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| ● Extroverted/Introverted? | Introverted |
| ● People or Task oriented? | People |
| ● More direct or indirect? | Indirect |
| ● Overextensions? | Possessiveness |
| ● Looking for? | Trust |
| ● Emotion, High C? | Non-emotional |
| ● Emotion, Low C? | Emotional |

Observable Behaviors

How the High S's Act

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| ● Buy | Slow decision maker; traditional products. |
| ● Change | Does not like change. Needs much preparation. |
| ● Conflict response | Tolerates, puts up with it. |
| ● Drive | Relaxed pace, no hurry. |
| ● Decorate an office | Family snapshots. "Homey" atmosphere. |
| ● Gesture | Will gesture with hands, but not large sweeping gestures. |
| ● Goal setting | Goals are short-term, low risk. May use a "to do" list. |
| ● Letter writing | Long letters giving lots of information. |
| ● Organization | Usually some sort of system. A little on the sloppy side. |
| ● Read | People stories, fiction and non-fiction. |
| ● Rules | Will usually follow time-tested, proven rules. |
| ● Stand | Leaning back, hand in pocket. |
| ● Stress Relief | Rest time, sleep. Hot baths. |
| ● Talk on Phone | Warm conversationalist, friendly and concerned. |
| ● Talk to others | Warm, not pushy. Will listen before talking. |
| ● Walk | Steady, easy pace. |
| ● Magazines | Reader's Digest or National Geographic |

Influencing the High S

The High S wants:

- Logical reasons for change
- Identification with team members
- Harmony. A happy home and work life.
- Procedures that have been proven.
- A road map to follow.
- Closure on tasks.
- Time to adjust to change.
- Appreciation.
- Recognition for loyalty and service.
- To know you care.
- To work with a small group of people, develop relationships.

Communicating with the High S

Do's

Start with personal comments. Break the ice.

Show sincere interest in them as people.

Patiently draw out their personal goals and ideas. Listen and be responsive.

Present your case logically, softly, non-threateningly.

Ask specific (preferably "How?") questions.

Move casually, informally.

If the situation impacts them personally, look for hurt feelings.

Provide personal assurances and guarantees.

If a decision is required of them, allow them time to think.

Don't's

Don't rush headlong into business or the agenda.

Don't stick coldly or harshly to business.

Don't force a quick response to your objectives.

Don't threaten with positional power or be demanding.

Don't interrupt as they speak. Listen carefully.

Don't be abrupt and rapid.

Don't mistake their willingness to go along for satisfaction.

Don't promise something you can't deliver.

Don't force a quick decision; provide information.

Identifying the High **C**

High C Descriptors:

- Analytical
- Contemplative
- Conservative
- Exacting
- Careful
- Deliberative

Quick High C Observable Indicators

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| ● Extroverted/Introverted? | Introverted |
| ● People or Task oriented? | Task |
| ● More direct or indirect? | Direct |
| ● Overextensions? | Critical |
| ● Looking for? | Procedures / Information |
| ● Emotion, High C? | Fear |
| ● Emotion, Low C? | No fear |

Observable Behaviors

How High C's Act

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Buy | Very slow buyers; proven products. |
| ● Change | Concerned about the effects of change. |
| ● Conflict response | Avoidance. |
| ● Drive | Carefully, follow rules. Best drivers. |
| ● Decorate office | Graphs, charts, functional. |
| ● Gesture | Very reserved. Little or no gestures. |
| ● Goal setting | Good at setting safe goals in many areas.
Goals may be safe with little or no risk or reach. |
| ● Letter writing | Direct, to the point, with appropriate data. |
| ● Organization | Everything in its place. Perfectly organized. |
| ● Read | Non-fiction, technical journals. |
| ● Rules | "By the book." Knows and follows rules. |
| ● Stand | Arms folded; one hand on chin. |
| ● Stress Relief | Alone time. |
| ● Talk on Phone | Little chit chat. To the point. May be short or long. |
| ● Talk to others | Direct. Questioning, clarifying. |
| ● Walk | Straight line. |
| ● Magazines | Consumer Reports. |

Influencing the High C

The High C wants:

- Operating procedures in writing
- Safety Procedures
- To be part of a quality-oriented team
- No sudden or abrupt changes
- Reassurance that the job is being done correctly
- Information and data available
- Time to think
- Objective, tough problems to solve
- Manager who follows company policy

Communicating with the High C

Do's

Prepare your case in advance.

Approach them in a straightforward, direct way.

Use a thoughtful approach. Build credibility by looking at all sides of an issue.

Present specifics. Do what you say you can do.

Draw up an "action plan" with scheduled dates and milestones.

Take your time, but be persistent.

If you disagree, prove it with data and facts or testimonials from respected people.

Provide them with the information and the time they need to make a decision.

Allow them their space.

Don't's

Don't be disorganized or messy.

Don't be casual, informal, or personal.

Don't force a quick decision.

Don't be vague about expectations or follow through.

Don't overpromise results. Be conservative.

Don't be abrupt or rapid.

Don't appeal to opinion or feelings as evidence.

Don't use closes, use incentives to get the decision.

Don't touch them.