SOCIAL STYLE®

Improving Personal Effectiveness with Versatility™

TRACOM® GROUP

THE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY®

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Introduction

The SOCIAL STYLE Model

This guide is designed to teach you about SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility and how they can help you develop skills that will make you more effective in the workplace. So, what does this mean and why should you care? The short answer is, by applying the SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts you will learn throughout this guide, you can get more done, faster and with less effort.

TRACOM's SOCIAL STYLE Model is an easy-to-use tool for learning about your behavioral preferences. It will help you understand why you find some relationships more productive than others. It will help you develop insight to your behavioral strengths and weaknesses. It will help you develop a way of communicating with others, knowing that behavioral Styles are not good or bad, just different. The Model stresses the value of diversity as a way to build upon your strengths and the strengths of others to develop productive relationships.

The SOCIAL STYLE Model, which you will use as a reference for looking at how you see yourself, is one of the most widely used and highly regarded behavioral models in use today. Originally developed in the 1960s by TRACOM Founder and Industrial Psychologist David W. Merrill, Ph.D., the SOCIAL STYLE Model is studied and used in corporations, governments, school systems and by individuals like yourself, not only in the United States, but also around the world. Millions of people have experienced some

form of SOCIAL STYLE training or exposure. With just a little effort, you will be able to readily apply the SOCIAL STYLE concepts to any relationship. The results should prove rewarding.

Where Did Your Style Come From?

If several of your friends or colleagues were to follow you around for a couple of days and record your behavior, you would see some interesting results. First of all, they would say that you engage in a wide range of different behaviors. Next, they would notice that you use some behaviors more than others; some a lot more. Why do you suppose this is the case?

Simply put, you use some behaviors more than others because they are the ones which make you most comfortable in relating to people. These behaviors became comfortable for you early in life. As you used them more often, they became your behavioral habits. It's unlikely you will dramatically change these ways of responding to others.

SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility Work

TRACOM's SOCIAL STYLE Profiles have been administered to millions of people. The SOCIAL STYLE Model undergoes continuous refinement and enhancement. It has been researched and developed for global applications, validating both SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts worldwide. TRACOM's research also includes surveying participants on their perception of the effectiveness of the SOCIAL STYLE training that they received.

STAFF MEMBERS SAY SOCIAL STYLE WORKS

As a result of SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility training, staff member program participants said[1] that by applying SOCIAL STYLE:

- They will be more effective when working with others — 88%
- Conflict in workplace situations would improve — 74%
- Workplace performance would improve — 71%
- Difficult working relationships would improve — 75%

MANAGERS SAY SOCIAL STYLE WORKS

As a result of SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility training, managerial program participants said[1] that by applying SOCIAL STYLE:

- Workplace morale would improve — 76%
- Communication breakdowns at work would improve — 79%
- Conflict in workplace situations would improve — 76%
- Workplace performance would improve — 76%

SALESPEOPLE SAY SOCIAL STYLE WORKS

As a result of SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility training, salespeople reported[2] that they:

- Developed more positive relationships with customers — 92%
- Increased the ability to gain ongoing sales — 79%
- Have closed sales they otherwise might not have — 58%
- Improved difficult working relationships — 75%

IMPORTANCE OF VERSATILITY: PROVEN

Managers with higher levels of Versatility perform better on the job. A research study, "Documenting the Relationship Between Versatility and Job Performance,[3]" scientifically reaffirms that Versatility is a powerful indicator of workplace effectiveness.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE[3]	percent increase from low versatility to high versatility
Ability to establish effective relationships with direct reports	27%
Effectiveness as a team leader	27%
Ability to effectively coach others	25%
Ability to effectively manage conflict	22%
Ability to effectively communicate with others	20%

[1] TRACOM End User Survey [2] TRACOM Salespeople Survey [3] TRACOM Study: "Documenting the Relationship Between Versatility and Job Performance."

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SOCIAL STYLE Fundamentals
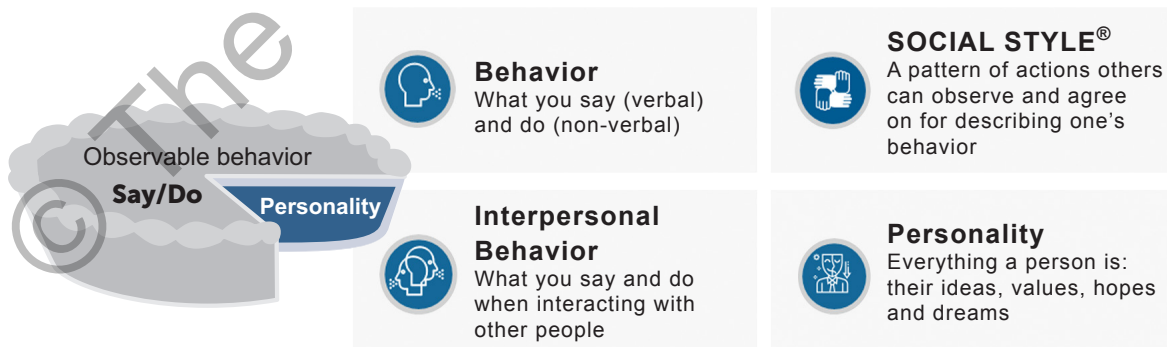
Behavior vs. Personality

As an individual, you have a unique personality made up of a collection of emotional patterns, mental processes, thought patterns, values and behavior patterns, which are all influenced by genetics and personal experience. Accurately describing and explaining your personality would not just be difficult, it would be impossible.

It's little wonder that the great minds of those like Albert Einstein stuck to simpler tasks like figuring out the nature of matter and energy in the universe. The SOCIAL STYLE Model, following this wise example, doesn't try to figure out your personality either.

SOCIAL STYLE only deals with your behaviors, that part of your personality that can be objectively observed. The word *personality* comes from the Latin word "persona," which means "mask." This is appropriate, since personality comprises both visible and hidden qualities. In a simple analogy, personality can be compared to a pie. The inside of the pie, like much of your personality, is out of direct view and contains a mix of ingredients that gives the pie a unique texture and flavor. Behavior is like the crust, the outer part of the pie that everyone can see and describe in more or less the same way.

Like the crust of the **Personality Pie**, SOCIAL STYLE behaviors are particular patterns of action that people can observe and agree upon for describing a person's behavior.

PERSONALITY PIE

Observable behavior
Say/Do

Personality

Behavior
What you say (verbal) and do (non-verbal)

Interpersonal Behavior
What you say and do when interacting with other people

SOCIAL STYLE®
A pattern of actions others can observe and agree on for describing one's behavior

Personality
Everything a person is: their ideas, values, hopes and dreams

The Say and Do Standard

Observable behaviors are what you say (verbal behaviors) and do (non-verbal behaviors) with no judgments by the observer as to why. Observable behaviors are interactions between two people whose behaviors can be observed and verified by others. The interaction could be between you and a co-worker or between two of your co-workers. Notice the **Observable Say and Do Behaviors** listed below are not "either-or" propositions. Rather, they represent continuums, for example, from quieter to louder or from less to more eye contact.

Predicting Behaviors

Your SOCIAL STYLE is determined by say and do behaviors that represent a theme or pattern of typical behaviors. These behaviors are habits we develop over our lifetime to deal with other people. Once you know how a person typically behaves, such as a co-worker, you can predict how that individual will probably behave in future circumstances.

Being able to anticipate a behavior pattern enables you to build relationships more effectively by playing to the strengths of that pattern and avoiding the weaknesses. Before learning to predict behavior, however, you need to understand the types of behavior that help make up a person's SOCIAL STYLE.

OBSERVABLE SAY AND DO BEHAVIORS

Traits	Observable Behavior		Judgments
Honest	Quiet	Loud	I like him
Intelligent	Slower-paced	Faster-paced	He annoys me
Arrogant	Facially controlled	Facially animated	She interests me
Motivated	Less-inflected voice	More-inflected voice	He irritates me
Self-centered	Less eye contact	More eye contact	I distrust her
Sincere	Casual posture	Rigid posture	I hate him
Critical	Leans back	Leans forward	I trust him

SAY
DO

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Dimensions of Behavior

Your SOCIAL STYLE Self-Perception Profile is a summary of how you see yourself interacting with others along two dimensions of behavior: Assertiveness and Responsiveness.

ASSERTIVENESS* is a measure of the degree to which you see yourself as tending to ask or as tending to tell as you interact with others. It is a reflection of how you see yourself influencing others. If you see yourself as more tell assertive, you make positive statements and declarations and attempt to direct the actions of others. If you see yourself as more ask assertive, you tend to be more cautious and reserved about sharing your opinions. You attempt to influence the thinking and actions of others in a more quiet, low-key, questioning manner.

*NOTE: This definition is different from the one found in assertiveness training. Here, we are measuring the different degrees to which you see yourself as tell assertive or ask assertive.

RESPONSIVENESS is a measure of the degree to which you see yourself as tending to control (i.e., keeping your feelings and emotions inside of you). Or, it is the degree to which you emote (i.e., outwardly display your feelings and emotions with others). It is also, in part, a measure of the extent to which you react to emotional influences, appeals or displays. If you see yourself as one who controls your feelings, you tend not to react readily to these emotional appeals and are more likely to focus on ideas, things, data and tasks. You are also less likely to share your feelings publicly. If you see yourself as more emoting, you tend to share your emotions and readily express anger, joy, and feelings. You are also more likely to respond to emotional appeals and influences.

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The Four SOCIAL STYLE Positions

You will notice in the illustration below that we measure Assertiveness on the horizontal axis with more ask-assertive behaviors to the left, and more tell-assertive behaviors to the right. Responsiveness is measured on the vertical axis with more controlled behaviors at the top and more emoting behaviors at the bottom. By combining behavioral characteristics from each of these two behavioral dimensions, we arrive at the four SOCIAL STYLE positions: Driving, Expressive, Amiable, and Analytical.

SOCIAL STYLE MODEL

Controls

Ask Assertive
+ More Controlled

Analytical Style

Tell Assertive
+ More Controlled

Driving Style

Asks

Tells

Ask Assertive
+ More Emoting

Amiable Style

Tell Assertive
+ More Emoting

Expressive Style

Emotes

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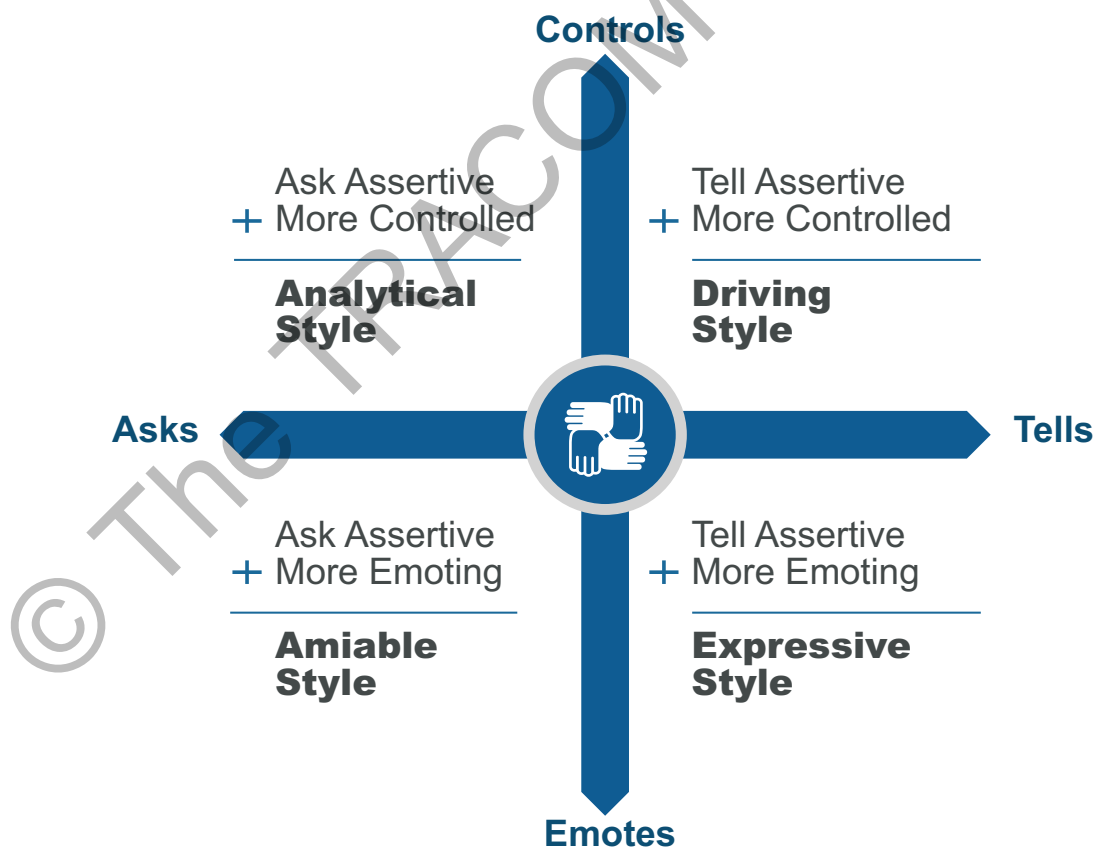
Your SOCIAL STYLE Self-Perception Profile

SOCIAL STYLE POSITION
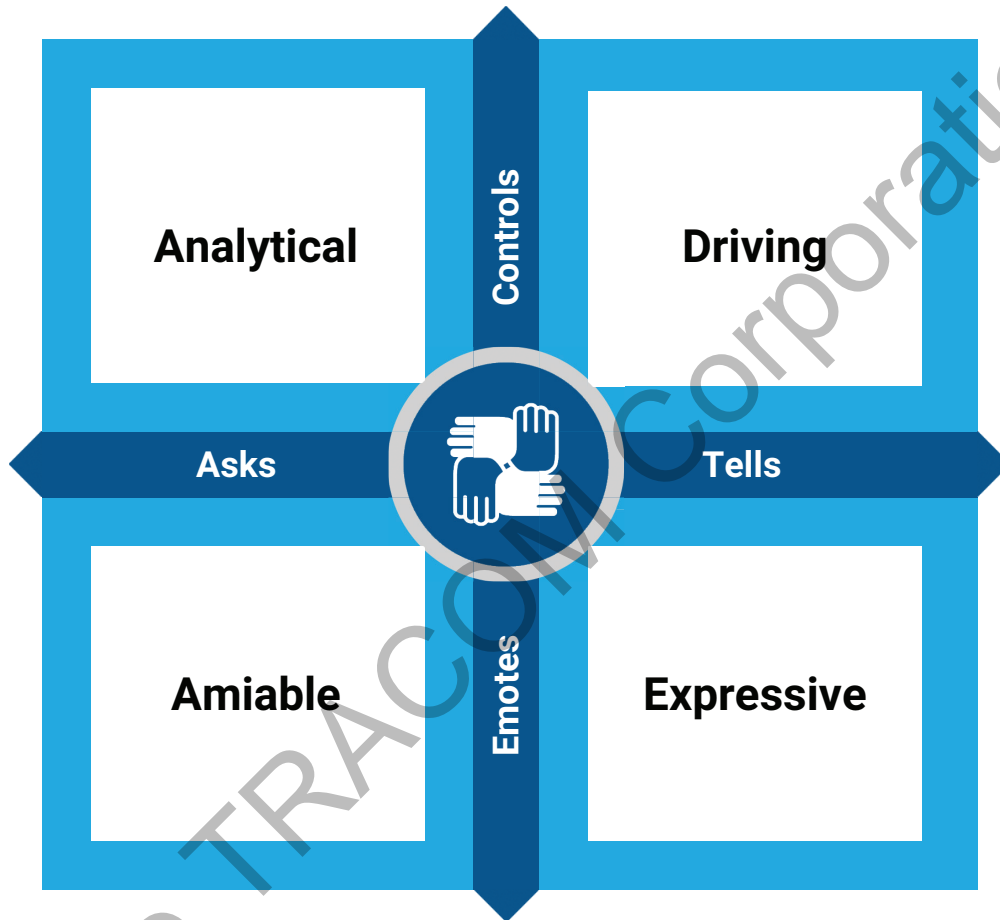
DRIVING STYLE

"Let's get it done."

People with a **Driving Style** are seen by others as active, forceful, and determined. They are direct, they initiate interaction, and they focus their efforts and the efforts of others on the goals they want accomplished. These individuals are typically described by others as cool, less personable, guarded, and sometimes aloof, as they typically do not openly show their feelings or reveal the depth of their emotions.

People with a **Driving Style**:

- Know what they want
- Focus on the immediate timeframe with relatively little concern for the past or future
- Are efficient and to the point
- Are impatient with delays
- Show less concern for the feelings of others or for personal relationships
- Can be severe or critical due to their limited attention to relationships
- Are efficient and decisive
- Seek control through the use of power
- Use time in a disciplined manner

Driving Style Highlights

- Faster paced
- Make efforts to set the pace
- Less concerned for the value in relationships
- Work in the present timeframe
- Tend to direct the actions of others whether or not they are the leader
- Tend to avoid inaction

Ask-Tell Behavior

Your self-description indicates that you see yourself as more telling and less asking. This involves your being quick to interact with others, eager to get your ideas on the table, and energetic in the action you take with them. You see yourself as forceful in your relationships with others, willing to deal with competition, and steadfast in the positions you take.

Control-Emote Behavior

You describe yourself as being less emoting and more controlling. You also see yourself as disciplined in the time you spend working with others and deliberately businesslike. You are independent, controlled, reserved, and prefer to work alone if necessary rather than have to deal with others who are not as time- and task-oriented as you are. You see yourself as factual, stern, and straightforward. You tend to avoid emotional involvement with others, particularly in business settings.

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Getting the Job Done

When working with others to complete a task, you see yourself taking the lead to establish direction and pace. Your attention to the task frequently places you in control of the situation. You find that your willingness to make decisions is accepted by others who fall in line with your approach. You may take the "I'd rather do it myself" approach to completing a task instead of waiting for someone else to take responsibility to get the job done.

You are likely to experience tension when others cannot reach what you see as a timely decision to set a goal and decide on an action. You may find it very frustrating when a course of action is subjected to endless debate and detailed analysis. Individuals may irritate you when they do not take a serious approach to the achievement of the objectives you have established.

At times, people might see you as telling others what to do without listening to their points of view. This can make it difficult for you to get the cooperation and support of others. You can give others the impression that you are willing to run over them in an impatient drive for results. You may also come across as arbitrary and critical.

Build on Your Assets

You can be very effective with others by properly using your telling behavior. Others may wait for you to express yourself so they can take the lead from you. Be sure you have your thoughts collected. Also, your Driving Style can help others keep their focus. So, find the best manner for expressing yourself and be a pacesetter. Your manner must not create interpersonal tension, which will cause others to spend their energy resisting you instead of supporting goal achievement.

To improve interpersonal effectiveness, accept the value of others' opinions. Listen to the ideas expressed by others even when the ideas seem to be based on subjective feelings. Be sure to really hear what they say . . . don't just listen to know when they are finished talking. Incorporate the data they provide into a mutual problem-solving process. Accommodate your pace to the slower pace of others. Make them more comfortable and gain their voluntary cooperation.

Things to Remember about Your SOCIAL STYLE Behavior

You have just read your narrative report. There are probably some things you agree with and a few you are not too sure about. Take a few minutes to think about and answer the following questions:

1. As I reflect on my narrative report, what are the strengths I can build upon in dealing with other people?

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. To be more effective with those around me, it would be helpful if I changed the following things about the way I deal with people:

    _____

    _____

    _____

EXPRESSIVE STYLE

"I have an idea!"

People with an **Expressive Style** tend to be much more willing to make their inner feelings known to others. They sometimes appear impulsive and openly show both positive and negative feelings. They are described by others as personable, talkative, and opinionated.

People with an **Expressive Style**:

- Focus their attention on the future with intuitive visions and outspoken spontaneity
- Focus on imagination and creativity
- Make decisions quickly, based on feelings and opinions
- Are warm and approachable, yet competitive for recognition and involvement in relationships
- Generate enthusiasm
- Like excitement and fun
- Can be impractical
- Can lose focus and frequently change direction
- Can be undisciplined in their use of time

Expressive Style Highlights

- Faster paced
- Make efforts to get involved
- Show less concern for routine
- Work in the future timeframe
- Tend to act impulsively
- Tend to avoid isolation

Ask-Tell Behavior

Your self-description indicates that you see yourself as more telling and less asking. This will result in your having a tendency to interact with others in a spontaneous manner. This interpersonal behavior can be a form of competition wherein you quite frequently become the center of attention. This choice of behavior can be an effective manner to control the way others react to you.

Control-Emote Behavior

You describe yourself as being more emoting and less controlled. You view yourself as a warm and open person whom others will applaud as the source of a light-hearted and friendly atmosphere. You find you gain more of a following from this approach than you would if you were cold and demanding of others. You see dealing with details as a burden to be avoided. It is more pleasant to encourage interactions in which others will assume that responsibility.

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Getting the Job Done

Some of your decisions are based on gut feelings that do not require a lot of outside validation. Your spontaneity often influences others to act without delay. You see this as a creative approach that stimulates the willing cooperation of others who may look to you for some form of inspiration. You take pride in your ability to persuade others to accept you and your point of view and work hard at obtaining this acceptance.

In working with others, you are frustrated when they cause delay by taking time to assure themselves that a course of action is comfortable. To you, their data gathering is largely unnecessary. A good choice will validate itself as you go along … a bad choice can be discarded. You also find it difficult to tolerate situations where there is little positive response to, or recognition for, an exciting idea.

Alternatively, your need for personal recognition can give people the impression that you put your own goals ahead of everyone and everything else. You can seem so carried away with your own ideas that you pay little attention to the thoughts of others. You offer opinions readily, but can give the feeling you are expressing ideas and attitudes "off the top of your head." Thus, you can appear disorganized and ill-prepared in situations calling for a systematic approach.

Build on Your Assets

Your behavior pattern can be a source of excitement and stimulation to others. Seek to use it well by keeping it properly tuned to the audience to whom you are playing. Remember, not everything is as exciting to others as it is to you. Constant cheerleading can be viewed as overwhelming if not insincere. Also, your expressive approach can be seen as either refreshingly carefree

or careless. Be sure to pay appropriate attention to the facts of a situation even though they are dull and uninteresting.

You can improve your interpersonal effectiveness by being careful about your spontaneous comments. Your cheers and approval of others will be appreciated and will motivate cooperation; but jeers and "zingers" can turn fun-intended comments into a cause for others to downgrade your participation.

Things to Remember about Your SOCIAL STYLE Behavior

You have just read your narrative report. There are probably some things you agree with and a few you are not too sure about. Take a few minutes to think about and answer the following questions:

1. As I reflect on my narrative report, what are the strengths I can build upon in dealing with other people?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. To be more effective with those around me, it would be helpful if I changed the following things about the way I deal with people:

   _____

   _____

   _____

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AMIABLE STYLE

"Let's Get Along!"

People with an **Amiable Style** openly display their feelings to others. However, they appear less demanding and generally more agreeable. They seem more interested in achieving a rapport with others who often describe them as informal, casual, and easy going. People with an Amiable Style tend to be sensitive to keeping relationships with others on a friendly, personal basis.

People with an **Amiable Style**:

- Are focused on the present and interpret the world on a personal basis by getting involved in the feelings and relationships between people
- Prefer to get things done with and through others
- Look for personal motives in the actions of others
- Have difficulty understanding that some people react to the information available, or the practicality of the situation, rather than relationships
- Are good team players
- Develop extensive social networks
- Are easy to communicate with
- Stick with the comfortable and the known
- Avoid decisions that might involve personal risks and conflict in relationships
- Add warmth and personableness to situations
- Can be undisciplined in their use of time

Amiable Style Highlights

- Slower paced
- Make efforts to relate
- Show less concern for effecting change
- Work in the present timeframe
- Show supportive action
- Tend to avoid conflict

Ask-Tell Behavior

Your self-description shows that you see yourself as more asking and less telling. This probably relates to your being willing to let others have their say before you express your own ideas. You are careful in what you say, making an extra effort to support group efforts rather than take a controversial stand and be disruptive. You take time to make sure your participation is in accordance with the existing agenda, and you can be helpful to anyone who needs support in that same cause.

Control-Emote Behavior

You describe yourself as being more emoting and less controlling. You see yourself as being sensitive to the feelings and emotions expressed by others. It is part of your approach to encourage them to be as open in revealing their feelings as you are. You prefer to work with others where there are good feelings. You seek to foster working closely with people and are stimulated by the discoveries you make about them personally.

Getting the Job Done

Your method of working with others is largely based upon cooperation. You are skilled in gaining this cooperation through building relationships. Your commitment to others is strong, and you will expend a great deal of energy in meeting your obligations to them. You are willing to take quite a lot of responsibility for helping others get along in working together.

You likely experience considerable discomfort when pushed to participate in an interaction you feel may be destructive to the basic relationship involved. You may prefer to go with the flow rather than deal with the tension such action will bring about. When others are upset, you prefer to deal with that problem rather than moving on and ignoring it.

You might have difficulty taking an independent or personal stand when the job demands it. More aggressive people may, therefore, feel they can easily override you because you appear to accept their ideas readily. Others also feel you will avoid or overlook conflict and such seeming acquiescence may make it possible for people to ignore you. You seem to have difficulty taking the initiative to build recognition for yourself and are often seen as preferring to work in the background.

Build on Your Assets

Your friendly and supportive manner can earn you the support of others in return. Use your sensitivity to others as a gauge with which you can determine the need to be aware of negative feelings which might be developing. Avoid being overly sensitive to feelings that are not significant to the situation. People will enjoy your warmth and friendliness and it can open doors for you, if you are willing to capitalize on it.

It will be important to your credibility to develop a willingness to be open in stating what you think on a given issue without so much concern for the tension this openness might create. You might find this easier to do if you learn to use a questioning, or "devil's advocate," approach to depersonalize the process. Develop ways to help yourself move into an interaction more forcefully. Perhaps, at first, just speaking up sooner is more important than seeking to speak with force.

Things to Remember about Your SOCIAL STYLE Behavior

You have just read your narrative report. There are probably some things you agree with and a few you are not too sure about. Take a few minutes to think about and answer the following questions:

1. As I reflect on my narrative report, what are the strengths I can build upon in dealing with other people?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. To be more effective with those around me, it would be helpful if I changed the following things about the way I deal with people:

   _____

   _____

   _____

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ANALYTICAL STYLE

"Just the facts."

People with an **Analytical Style** are typically described by others as quiet, logical and sometimes, reserved. These people tend to be distant from others and may not communicate with them unless there is a specific need to do so. They tend to make decisions thoughtfully and act deliberately. Other people usually see them as cautious, careful, and thorough.

People with an **Analytical Style**:

- Focus on lessons from the past, and want to be logical and consistent
- Behave in ways that fit into their overall theory about the world
- Are often good organizers and problem solvers
- Can appear to lack enthusiasm or seem detached
- Are often reluctant to declare a point of view
- Show confidence in their research and conclusions
- Focus on processes and procedures
- Are slow to change
- Are often very disciplined in their use of time

Analytical Style Highlights

- Slower paced
- Make efforts to organize
- Show less concern for relationships
- Work in a historical timeframe
- Take action cautiously
- Tend to avoid personal involvement

Ask-Tell Behavior

Your self-description indicates that you see yourself as more asking and less telling. This is because you sometimes delay participation until you have the information you need to be comfortable with it. This tendency for slow response is highlighted by your asking detailed questions about the subject at hand. Taking the time to be sure of your stance is more important to you than getting off to a fast start.

Control-Emote Behavior

You describe yourself as being less emoting and more controlling. You view yourself as being under control and fact-oriented. You are comfortable in situations where the task is the focus of your activity and you do not require a great deal of personal interaction. You view a cautious and precise approach as essential to a conscientious work effort and take pride in keeping to a schedule and course of action.

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Getting the Job Done

Planning and organizing your thoughts before jumping into a situation is where your behavior is an asset to a cooperative effort with others. Taking time to avoid the potential for error and wasted energy is the way you like to proceed with a job, and others tend to look to you for working in that manner. Others may seek your counsel with regard to an in-depth analysis of a situation.

In working with others, your tension level is raised when they rush into action without thinking things out. It challenges you to be cooperative when there is an early demand for commitment to decisions made with minimal data. You are uncomfortable if much time is given to working through problems which are created by the feelings people have, rather than dealing with more factual content.

You can appear overly cautious to many people because of your reluctance to take initiative or declare your point of view. Others may become frustrated by what they perceive as indecisiveness on your part. You can appear so intent on reviewing all of the alternatives to a decision that you may postpone a decision longer than others feel is desirable.

Build on Your Assets

You can be very helpful by providing a stabilizing influence. Keeping your eye on the problem when others are impulsively jumping to solutions is an example of this. In this role, be sure to appreciate the creative efforts of others, even if off target at the moment. Others will possibly come to expect you to have details on hand. Expect this and come prepared to supply information.

Be willing to share what information you have, even if in your own mind it is incomplete. You can maintain credibility by expressing your discomfort and making your tentative conclusions available. A better relationship with others may be obtained by letting some of your feelings show in your everyday reactions.

Things to Remember about Your SOCIAL STYLE Behavior

You have just read your narrative report. There are probably some things you agree with and a few you are not too sure about. Take a few minutes to think about and answer the following questions:

1. As I reflect on my narrative report, what are the strengths I can build upon in dealing with other people?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. To be more effective with those around me, it would be helpful if I changed the following things about the way I deal with people:

   _____

   _____

   _____

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Congratulations on taking the first step toward understanding your behavior and improving your performance! The knowledge you gain from the Self-Perception Profile will help you understand your impact on others. In order to more fully understand your behavior, consider how others might view you. It is likely that others see you behaving somewhat differently. TRACOM Group's research has shown that over 50% of the time, self-perception is different from others' perception of your SOCIAL STYLE.

Critically consider your interactions with others and whether they are likely to view your behavior the same as you do.

Key Reminders

There is no best SOCIAL STYLE position

The purpose for learning about your Style is to know more about yourself. With new knowledge, you can grow and develop into a more productive and effective individual.

Your behavioral Style is not your whole personality

Some people like to refer to behavioral Style as personality Style. Your personality encompasses more than just your behavioral Style. It includes your hopes, dreams, intelligence, values and all of those other things that make you uniquely you! Said another way, your behavioral Style is only a part of your total personality, although a very important part.

Your behavioral Style profile represents a theme in your performance

All of us have, at one time or another, displayed behaviors that fall all along the assertiveness and responsiveness dimension. But, Style is the way we see ourselves behaving, or preferring to behave, most of the time. It is your behavioral comfort zone. It is the theme in your performance.

Your behavioral Style has growth actions

Each of us has behavioral weaknesses. Driving Styles tend to rush into action and dictate activities without listening to others. Amiable Styles tend to acquiesce and go along with others, even though they might not agree with a course of action. Those with Expressive Styles can be very impulsive, not thinking through all the implications of their actions. Analytical Style individuals get bogged down in details and options, without taking a definitive stand on issues. All of these Style-related tendencies can cause tension for others.

Your challenge: Take the initiative to establish and build effective relationships with others

Don't expect the other person to go out of his or her way to accommodate you. You must decide what you are going to do to meet the needs of others and make the relationship mutually productive.

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Improve Your Effectiveness with Others

You can use your knowledge of Style to work more effectively with others by following these four key steps: know yourself, control yourself, know others, and do something for others.

Four Key Steps

Know Yourself

Self-understanding is the foundation for interacting more effectively with others. Many of the behaviors described in your profile might be accurate for you, while others may not fit exact descriptions of your Style. It is important to view your behavior objectively and to consider how others might perceive you. How do you present yourself to others on a day-to-day basis? What are the specific strengths that you bring to the workplace, and that your co-workers would agree are strengths? How about your weaknesses? Everybody has limitations in certain areas, and accepting those limitations is important, even if you are actively working to improve in those areas. Accurately assessing your own Style and the way you present yourself to co-workers will help you understand the effect you have on them, and how you can influence those impressions to improve your relationships and effectiveness.

Control Yourself

Flowing naturally from self-awareness is behavior management, or the ability to control your behavior. Part of controlling yourself involves de-emphasizing your own Style behaviors during an interaction, especially initially (even if just for a few minutes). Giving others time to become comfortable with you before they react to your behavior can help you learn more about their preferred Style of behavior. When you don't control your Style behaviors, others might respond in a way they think you desire, masking their usual behavior. This can leave you with a misunderstanding of their Style.

Another part of controlling yourself involves self-control of extreme Style tendencies. Over the course of our careers we work with many different people and often have to adjust our behavior to work effectively with them. An important aspect of behavior management is knowing when to apply your "Style brakes." For example, those with Expressive Styles need to understand when to cease dominating a conversation and allow others to have the floor, while those with Analytical Styles need to reach a point where they've considered enough options and make a decision. People of every Style have aspects of their behavior – preferences and needs – that can get in the way of effective relationships with others. Understanding when to control these behavioral tendencies is critical to maintaining productive relationships.

Know Others

Understanding other people is the next step toward working more effectively with others. Carefully observe others' behavior to assess their Style. This will give you a foundation for understanding them and how they prefer to work. Awareness of your co-workers' needs, priorities and preferences leads to an ability to work with them in such a way that all of you can achieve objectives. Now would be a good time to go back and read the profiles of the other three SOCIAL STYLEs.

Do Something for Others

The final key is to do something for others—treat others the way they wish to be treated. Each Style is different, and making appropriate accommodations for people's Style-related preferences makes them comfortable and more efficient. Based on your awareness of different SOCIAL STYLEs, you should be able to determine ways to help others, thus influencing the productivity of the team.

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The Four Sources of Versatility

So, how do you know if the things you are "doing for others" are meeting their needs while also helping you achieve yours? When people interact with one another, they consciously and subconsciously observe and evaluate each other's behaviors. TRACOM's research has shown that the behaviors others often evaluate can be categorized into four areas: Image, Presentation, Competence, and Feedback. The impact of your behavior on others in these four areas is called Versatility.

DOING SOMETHING FOR OTHERS

The Appropriate Use of

| Image | Presentation | Competence | Feedback |

Leads to

Higher Versatility

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Image

Image is simply an indication of how appropriately you dress for specific situations.

Part of knowing yourself is determining if you dress appropriately for your work environment and the expectations of your co–workers. You may have a tendency to challenge expressed or implied dress codes and dress in a way that is most comfortable for you even when the norms may suggest otherwise. Dressing as you please and projecting an Image that others may feel is not totally appropriate to your role or title is not necessarily a problem, unless it adversely affects your ability to communicate effectively or affects others' impressions of you. For example, showing up to an important client meeting wearing jeans and a t-shirt would be inappropriate in most workplaces, and could cause your clients to immediately form an unfavorable impression of you. Alternatively, attending a company picnic wearing a wool suit would be equally inappropriate. Experiment with a range of attire, from informal to formal, or from individualistic to conventional, for different situations.

Consider ways that you can improve your Image and list them here:

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Presentation

Presentation measures how well you deliver information to others during meetings or other group interactions. It includes how clear and organized your thoughts are when you communicate them, and your ability to adjust to the needs of your audience.

Get to know yourself. Are you somewhat uncomfortable when required to speak in front of groups, particularly when you are unfamiliar with them? If so, this might affect your ability to present yourself, and your information, effectively. While speaking in front of groups comes more easily to some people than others, keep in mind that if you are confident in your topic and material, this will come across to the group and make it easier for you to speak.

Is your Presentation organized? Providing a clear focus and organized Presentation of information helps others follow your ideas and aids in the perception that you care about the topic. Keep in mind that people of different Styles will have different perspectives on what makes an effective Presentation. Those with Driving Styles will want you to quickly get to your main points, while those with Amiable Styles might prefer more personal interaction before diving into the details. Try to assess the Styles of your audience members to be most effective in your Presentations.

Do you seek input from the audience by occasionally asking if they have questions or comments? Involving others, as participants in meetings or Presentations, helps them become engaged and interested and also helps you to understand their Styles and needs ("know others"). As you present information, continually assess the group for signs of confusion or boredom, and periodically ask whether they have questions, since this will keep them engaged and lead to the discussion of different ideas and issues.

When speaking about a topic that is familiar to you but unfamiliar to others in the audience, do you use language and examples they can understand? Using obscure acronyms or highly technical language can leave people feeling confused and frustrated, lowering your desired impact and creating a poor impression of you. For example, a salesperson who uses cryptic technical language while presenting information on a new high-tech product will leave the audience confused and unclear about the benefits of the product. In this case, a highly versatile salesperson would understand the need to clearly define any acronyms and describe the benefits of technology in simple terms. In similar situations, you can "control yourself" by using language and examples that are clear and understandable, including appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and enunciation.

When you present information during meetings or formal Presentations, you can "do something for others" by determining the knowledge levels and Style characteristics of your audience to tailor your Presentation to their needs. Those with Analytical and Amiable Styles will most likely be frustrated by someone who speaks too quickly and moves rapidly through materials, while Driving and Expressive audience members might be annoyed by a person who speaks too slowly.

Consider ways that you can improve your Presentation and list them here:

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Competence

Competence measures your conscientiousness and perseverance, flexibility, optimism, and creativity. It is important to overall effectiveness and helping teams achieve their goals. Note that Competence does not measure your technical skills or job knowledge.

To a certain degree, people of different Styles can view Competence differently. For example those with Expressive and Analytical Styles approach time and facts differently. Someone with an Expressive Style might judge dependability by placing emphasis on getting information quickly whereas someone with an Analytical Style might be less concerned with speed and more concerned with accuracy. This can create tension when people of these Styles are working together on a project. However, regardless of Style, the aspects of Competence described below will help increase effectiveness.

Do you complete tasks and assignments late or below expected standards? Your dependability heavily influences others' perceptions of your Competence, particularly since it might affect their own work and priorities.

When difficult or challenging situations arise, do you become frustrated and find it difficult to persevere? Although this might be a natural immediate reaction, in the long-term, this might lead to a persistent inability to complete tasks. Others may feel that they cannot rely on you if you are consistently discouraged by challenging circumstances or shifting priorities.

Are you open to new ideas or to offering ideas of your own? The ability to develop original ideas and be open to different methods of accomplishing objectives can be critical in the workplace. Your flexibility and motivation for solving problems can affect others' perceptions of your Competence.

Make an effort to take an active role in generating creative ideas and display openness to new methods.

Do you come across to your co-workers as unenthusiastic? While it is not necessary to be constantly upbeat and lively, an optimistic outlook is important. It makes the work environment more pleasant and conveys a positive tone to others indicating difficult tasks will be accomplished successfully. Maintaining an awareness of your behavior and demonstrating your confidence in the likelihood of positive outcomes can help to increase the respect and support you receive.

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Feedback

Feedback measures your ability to listen, communicate with people in ways they understand, show empathy toward others, and develop good relationships. When you can empathize and communicate in ways that appeal to others' Styles, you are more likely to develop good relationships. Feedback is very important for "knowing others." Do you truly listen to what others are saying? And if you are listening, do you accurately understand what they are communicating to you? Taking the time and effort to accurately understand others in a meaningful way is essential for developing better and more effective relationships.

Feedback can be related to an individual's Style, and depending on a particular Style, Feedback skills can be more or less challenging. For example, people with a Driving Style have a growth action "to listen." Therefore they may need to pay particular attention to this aspect of their behavior during interactions with others. Because Amiable Style individuals are naturally attuned to relationships, some may be more adept at receiving and accurately interpreting Feedback from others. Likewise, Feedback can be interpreted differently depending on Style. Those with an Analytical Style might react very differently to outward displays of emotion than those with an Expressive Style, and this can give you information about how to appropriately interact with each of these people.

You can think of your Feedback skills as a personal radar system that you use to monitor the communications that you give and receive. By accurately assessing the impact you are having on others, based on the verbal and non-verbal Feedback they give you, you can adjust your communication as needed.

When communicating with others, do you foster mutual understanding by asking questions and summarizing conversations? Oftentimes, after a conversation or other form of communication, two people might assume that there is mutual understanding when, in fact, perceptions can vary. Asking clarifying questions and summarizing conversations to ensure that both parties are on the same page can lessen this type of misunderstanding.

Do you attempt to see things from others' points of view? Recognizing the needs, wants, and concerns of others is important. Understanding how others feel does not necessarily mean that you agree with them. However, making the effort to understand others' perspectives can contribute to more skillful management and better working relationships. Likewise, your ability to empathize impacts your capacity to fully understand clients' or customers' needs and your willingness to offer them ideas or services that match those needs.

Do you see yourself as working well with others and as approachable? It could be that you have a low need to associate with others and, therefore, cultivating relationships might not be a priority for you. However, you should be aware that such behavior may cause others to believe that you are somewhat indifferent toward them. This can cause others to give less Feedback that, in turn, can make it difficult for you to accurately read and understand important relationships. To increase the quantity and quality of Feedback from others, you can do something for them by taking steps to develop stronger interpersonal relationships with them.

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It is important to keep in mind that Feedback is a two-way process. You both send and receive verbal and non-verbal signals when interacting with others, hopefully minimizing tension and maximizing understanding. Though some tension is desirable and inevitable, dealing with it appropriately and successfully as you communicate with others is key to developing good Feedback skills.

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