SOCIAL STYLE®

FOR SALES

Improving Sales Effectiveness with Versatility™

TRACOM®GROUP

THE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY®

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Introduction

Why is it Important to Learn About SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility?

> This workbook is designed to teach you about SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility and how they can help you develop skills to become a more effective salesperson. By applying the SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts in this workbook, you can develop better relationships with your customers and get more done, faster, with less effort. Plus, your customers will most likely increase this levels of support and respect for you.

Simply stated, here's how it works. You have preferred ways to act and interact with your customers. For example, when you begin the sales process you may prefer to move fast, gather just the necessary facts, contact people, and get things going right away; or, you may prefer to take things slower as you sort out the details, consider alternatives, and contemplate the consequences of taking one course of action versus another. These behavioral preferences and patterns of behavior are a part of your SOCIAL STYLE.

Your customers also have this own behavioral preferences or SOCIAL STYLE. As you know from past interactions this SOCIAL STYLE can be quite different than your own. How effective you are with your customers depends on how you take this preferences into account, and how well you control your own. Your impact and effectiveness on your customers is a result of another key concept, Versatility.

Consider the variety of people you call on. Perhaps, one speaks loudly and prefers to dominate the sales conversation; another is highly focused on making the purchase and getting the deal done; another goes out of this way to be friendly and often ends up talking about matters unrelated to the sale. These and many other characteristic ways of acting and interacting with people are expressions of a person's SOCIAL STYLE.

Your success in selling to a range of customers depends on: your technical skills as a salesperson; specialized knowledge about your products or services; and, your ability to make your relationships mutually productive. The essence of Improving Sales Effectiveness with Versatility, is how you increase the interpersonal effectiveness and productivity between you and your customers and how you earn this support and respect.

Improving Sales Effectiveness with Versatility can also help you effectively plan and prepare for customer interactions, approach customers and analyze this needs, present results, handle objections and gain this commitment.[1] You can learn to resolve, or even head off, unnecessary conflict caused by interpersonal friction that may arise during the give-and-take of the sales process.

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[1] "Commitment" refers to any significant decision you ask a customer to make, such as making a decision to purchase the product or service you sell, or entering into an agreement with you or your organization.

These SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts apply regardless of what product or service you sell and regardless of what industries or markets you serve. The common element to every sale involves interacting with other people. Selling was once thought of as a one-on-one activity; however, the sales process is more likely to involve multiple sales calls and meetings with groups, committees, and multiple decision makers.

What remains the same for all prospects is your critical need to increase your sales effectiveness, which is achieved by managing your behavior and responding appropriately to the behavioral differences in others. When you focus on meeting others' needs over your own, positive interpersonal relationships develop that provide opportunities for you to offer solutions and solve problems.

How the SOCIAL STYLE Model™ is Unique

The SOCIAL STYLE Model is not complex. Its strength is that it is easy to comprehend because it is based on two scales of observable behaviors that form four basic SOCIAL STYLEs. Once you understand SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts and principles, you can immediately employ them for real results.

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Identifying the SOCIAL STYLE of your Customers

Sales Survey

A TRACOM study surveyed recent SOCIAL STYLE training participants, who worked in sales, to determine how effective SOCIAL STYLE had been in this daily sales activities.

The survey questions focused on tasks specific to salespeople including developing relationships with customers, gaining customer trust, and closing sales.

Because the sales profession relies heavily on solid relationships, TRACOM wanted to research how SOCIAL STYLE training could contribute to better relationships and, ultimately, more sales.

Summary of Findings

TRACOM's study found that SOCIAL STYLE training could dramatically impact a salesperson's ability to create more positive relationships with current and potential customers.

A majority of the surveyed salespeople felt that SOCIAL STYLE training helped them establish better relationships and gain trust with customers and prospects.

Over half of the survey participants felt that as a direct result of SOCIAL STYLE training, they were able to close sales they otherwise might not have. The chart below illustrates the key findings.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL STYLE FOR SALESPEOPLE

key findings*	percentage
More conscious about how this behavior impacts this customers	94%
Applied SOCIAL STYLE to this sales job	93%
Developed more positive relationships with customers	92%
Increased ability to influence or persuade customers or prospects	87%
Believe that this customers now have a greater sense of confidence and trust in them	87%
Improved ability to gain ongoing sales	78%
Build relationships with prospects more quickly	76%
Customers now more willing to disclose relevant information	75%
Convert prospects to customers more quickly	69%
Closed sales they otherwise might not have	58%

*TRACOM Group, Centennial, CO. The percentage reflects salespeople who either strongly agreed or agreed to the statements. Visit tracom.com for research reports.

Overview

This workbook helps you understand your own behavioral Style, the behavioral Style of your customers, and how Styles interact to affect interpersonal relationships and productivity in the sales process. You will progress through the steps of understanding, observing and learning how to deal with human behavior. In the process you will see how others perceive your behavior and what you can do to have a more productive, professional relationship with them.

After a brief overview, the workbook examines observable behaviors that help define a person's SOCIAL STYLE. Next, the workbook shows how those behaviors fit together to form four distinct SOCIAL STYLEs and the key characteristics of each Style. Then, the workbook examines how each SOCIAL STYLE's characteristics provide clues to best interact with individuals with that Style. Finally, the workbook provides methods to improve how you help your customers accomplish tasks and reach goals related to interacting with and making commitments to you.

SOCIAL STYLE Fundamentals

Dimensions of Behavior

As an individual, you have a unique personality made up of a collection of emotional patterns, mental processes and thought patterns, values, and behavior patterns which are all influenced by genetics and personal experience. Accurately describing and explaining your entire personality would be very difficult.

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

SOCIAL STYLE deals with just 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 term 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 give 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 usual behavior.

PERSONALITY PIE

Observable behavior
Say/Do
Personality
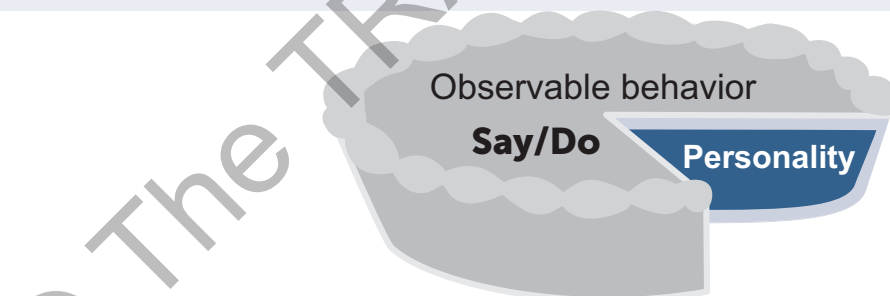
Behavior
What you say (verbal) and do (non-verbal)

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

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

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

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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 your customer or between you and a prospective buyer. Notice that the **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 direct eye contact.

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

Predicting Behaviors

Your SOCIAL STYLE, as well as the SOCIAL STYLE of your customer, 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 for interacting with other people. Once you know how a person typically prefers to behave, you can predict how that individual will probably behave in a future circumstance.

Being able to anticipate a behavior pattern enables you to build relationships more effectively by playing to 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.

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Behaving with Style

SOCIAL STYLE is measured on two basic dimensions of observable human behavior. These dimensions are "Assertiveness" and "Responsiveness."

Assertiveness

Assertiveness is a dimension of observable behavior that measures the degree to which others perceive you as tending to "ask" or "tell" in interactions with others. "Assertiveness" as used in SOCIAL STYLE is not an indicator of your comfort in standing up for yourself, but rather the way in which you initiate action with others. In SOCIAL STYLE, Assertiveness is considered neither positive nor negative; it is neutral. That means there is no good or bad place on the **Assertiveness Scale.**

Using the various verbal and non-verbal clues shown in the **Behaviors on the Assertiveness Scale**, you can identify a pattern in a person's behaviors, based on what you observe a person actually saying or doing over time. Some of these behaviors are verbal "say" and some are non-verbal "do."

When you talk louder than others, speak at a faster pace, lean forward, and make more statements, you are exhibiting TELL Assertive behaviors.

When you speak quietly, at a slower pace, use fewer statements, and do not look directly at the person you are talking to, you are exhibiting ASK Assertive behaviors.

Based on this observations, people can see you on the Assertiveness Scale as either more Asking or more Telling, or as a mix of both Asking and Telling.

ASSERTIVENESS SCALE

More **Asking**   **Asking** with some **Telling**   **Telling** with some **Asking**   More **Telling**

BEHAVIORS ON THE ASSERTIVENESS SCALE

SAY	verbal behaviors

Slower	◄	Pace of Speech	►	Faster
Less	◄	Quantity of Speech	►	More
Quieter	◄	Volume of Speech	►	Louder

ASKS ◄ ████ ► TELLS

Relaxed	◄	Use of Hands	►	Directive
Lean Back	◄	Body Posture	►	Lean Forward
Less Direct	◄	Eye Contact	►	More Direct

DO	non-verbal behaviors
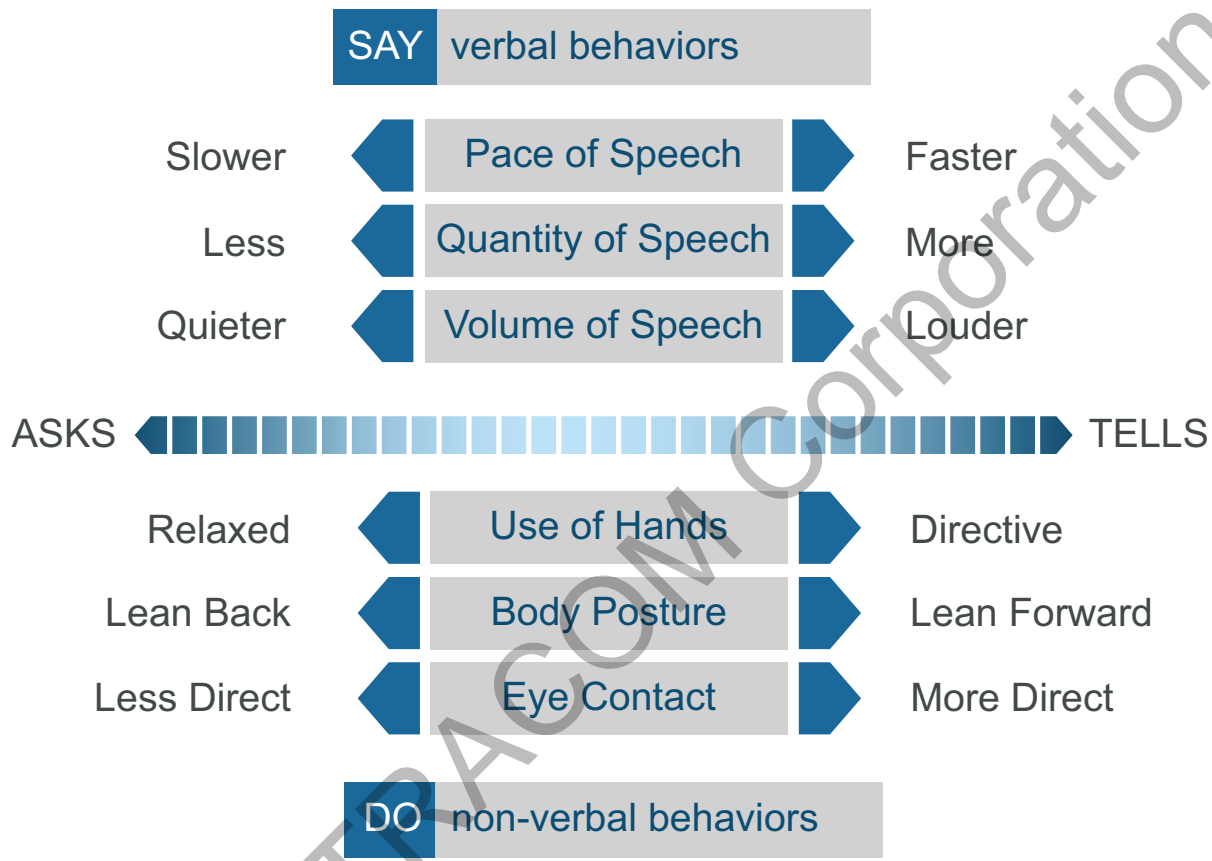
Responsiveness

Responsiveness is a dimension of observable behavior that measures the degree to which others see you as tending to "control" or "emote" when interacting. In other words, it is the degree to which you display, or don't display, your feelings and emotions. Note that, as used here, "control" does not mean that the person controls the situation and "emote" does not mean that the person's emotions are dramatic or out of control. Instead, they are descriptions for the degree of emotion that is outwardly displayed.
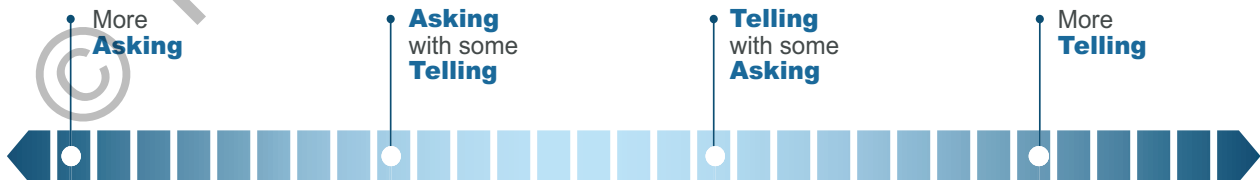
As with the Assertiveness Scale, you can use the various verbal and non-verbal clues shown in the **Behaviors on the Responsiveness Scale** to identify a pattern in a person's behaviors, based on what you observe a person actually saying or doing over time.
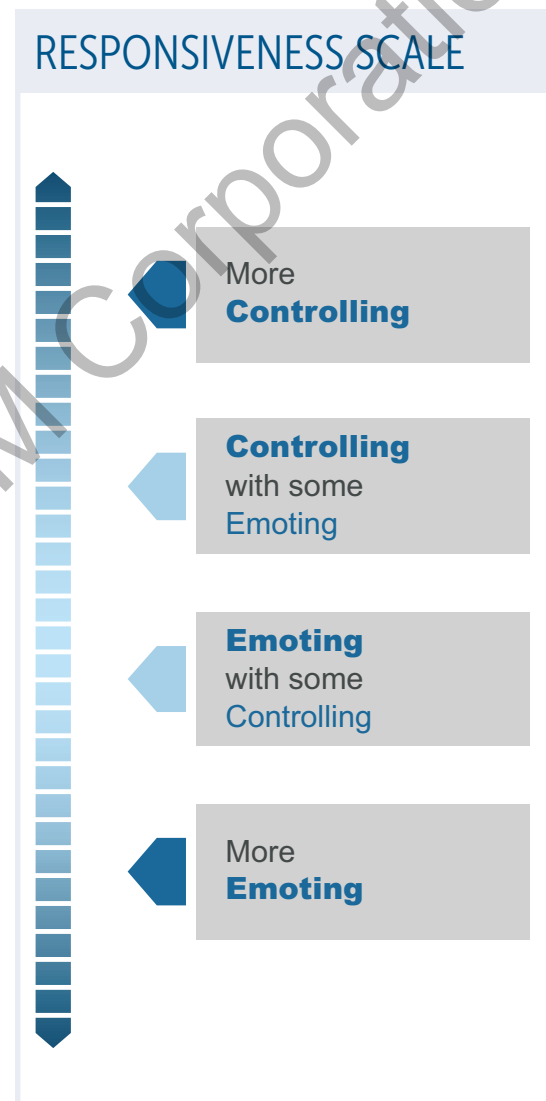
Behaviors on the **Responsiveness Scale** show that when you speak in a more monotone voice, use few hand movements, or control your facial expressions, you are exhibiting CONTROL Responsive behaviors (viewed toward the top of the arrow). When you speak with more inflection, use animated hand movements, or show animated facial expressions, you are exhibiting EMOTE Responsive behaviors (viewed toward the bottom of the arrow).

After numerous observations, a person can be seen on the **Responsiveness Scale** as either more Controlling or more Emoting, or as a mix favoring either Controlling or Emoting.

Think about some of your customers' behaviors. Chances are, you can readily associate particular people with behaviors on each end of the Assertiveness and Responsiveness scales. Remember, people have patterns of behavior, not set ways of behaving under all circumstances. This means that anyone can exhibit behaviors from either end of the Assertiveness and

Responsiveness scales given the right circumstances; but, over time, a pattern emerges that helps to identify how a person will tend to behave.

RESPONSIVENESS SCALE

More
Controlling

Controlling
with some
Emoting

Emoting
with some
Controlling

More
Emoting

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BEHAVIORS ON THE RESPONSIVENESS SCALE

SAY verbal behaviors

Less Inflection	Task	Facts / Data
Emotion in Voice	Subjects of Speech	Form of Descriptives
More Inflection	People	Opinions / Stories

Controls

Emotes

DO non-verbal behaviors

Less	Rigid	Controlled
Use of Hands	Body Posture	Facial Expression
More	Casual	Animated
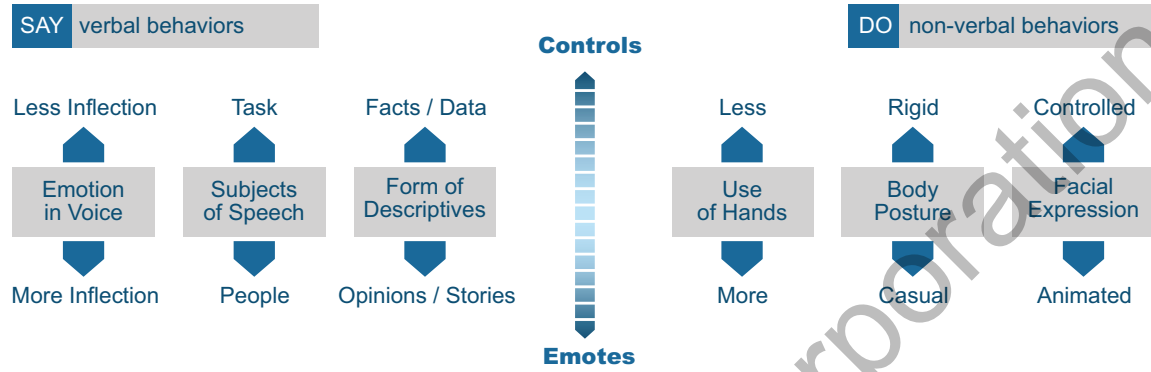
The SOCIAL STYLE Model™

The beauty of the SOCIAL STYLE Model is not in the Assertiveness and Responsiveness scales by themselves, but in what they reveal about behavior when the scales are intersected. Overlapping the scales forms four quadrants, which identify the four Styles of behavior that make up the SOCIAL STYLE Model.

Each quadrant represents a particular pattern of Assertiveness and Responsiveness behaviors that others can observe and agree upon for describing what a person says and does. (Keep in mind that these quadrants identify behavioral tendencies, not personalities, which are unique to the individual).

With this basic understanding of the **SOCIAL STYLE Model,** you are ready to learn more about the types of behavior you can expect from each SOCIAL STYLE, the needs of each SOCIAL STYLE, and how each SOCIAL STYLE is oriented to behave under a variety of circumstances.

Showing Your Own Style

You display your SOCIAL STYLE in ways that result in others (such as your customers) perceiving and describing you in a particular way.

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
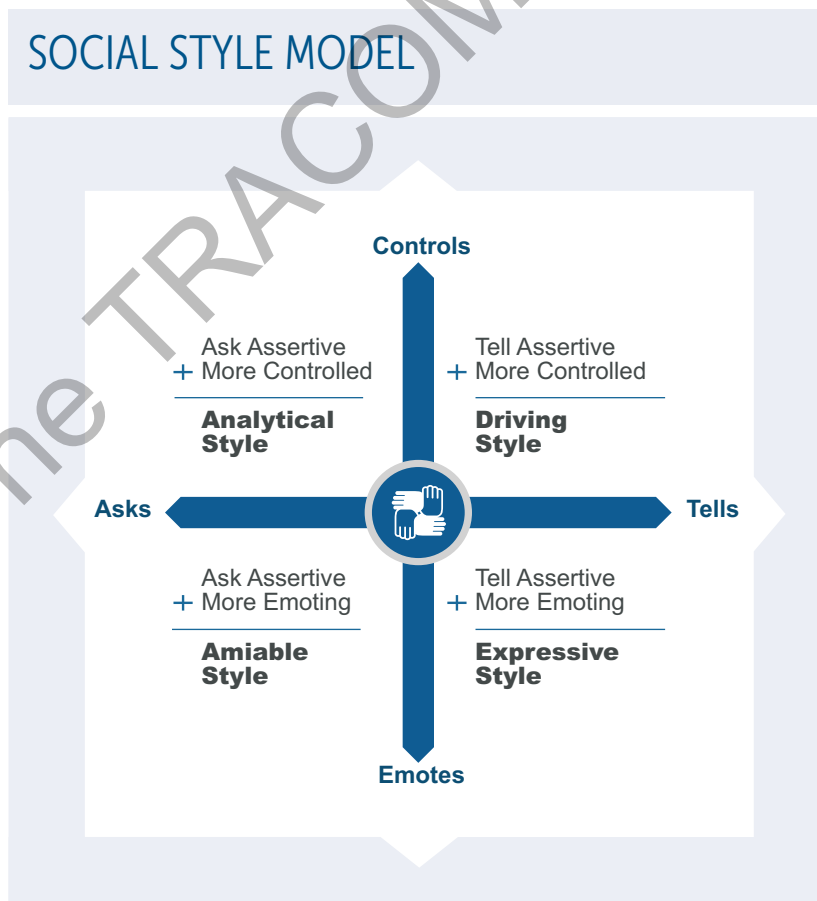
DRIVING STYLE

"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 this 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 this feelings or reveal the depth of this emotions.

People with a **Driving Style**:

- Know what they want
- Directly state this opinions
- Focus on the immediate time frame with less 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 this 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
- Seem less concerned with relationships
- Work in the present time frame
- Direct the actions of others whether or not they are the leader
- Avoid inaction

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EXPRESSIVE STYLE

"I have an idea!"

People with an **Expressive Style** tend to be much more willing to make this 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 this 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 this use of time

Expressive Style Highlights

- Faster paced
- Make efforts to get involved
- Show less concern for routine
- Work in the future time frame
- Act impulsively
- Avoid isolation

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AMIABLE STYLE

"Let's Get Along!"

People with an **Amiable Style** openly display this feelings to others. They appear less demanding of others and generally more agreeable. They seem more interested in achieving a rapport with others, who often describe them as informal, casual, and easy going. These individuals 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 this use of time

Amiable Style Highlights

- Slower paced
- Make efforts to relate
- Show less concern for affecting change
- Work in the present time frame
- Show supportive action
- Avoid conflict

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ANALYTICAL STYLE

"Just the facts."

People with an **Analytical Style** are typically described by others as quiet, logical, and 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 usually 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 this overall theory about the world
- Are often good organizers and problem solvers who work on tasks systematically
- Can appear to lack enthusiasm or seem detached
- Are often reluctant to declare a point of view
- Show confidence in this research and conclusions
- Focus on processes and procedures
- Are slow to change
- Are often disciplined in this use of time

Analytical Style Highlights

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

Creatures of Habit

These are the four SOCIAL STYLE positions that describe a person's observable behavior: the Driving Style, the Expressive Style, the Amiable Style, and the Analytical Style. Of course, neither you nor your customers display one Style exclusively. But, as creatures of habit, over time everyone tends to have behavioral preferences that reveal this SOCIAL STYLE position.

As you think about the SOCIAL STYLE positions, undoubtedly reflecting on where you fit and the types of behavior that characterize your Style, keep in mind that there is no "best" Style. TRACOM's research shows that each SOCIAL STYLE position has its strengths and weaknesses depending on many circumstances and considerations. And, the way you react to, or get along with, your customers does not depend so much on your SOCIAL STYLE as it does the interplay of your Style, this Style, the environment or circumstances surrounding each encounter, and your willingness and efforts to have a productive relationship.
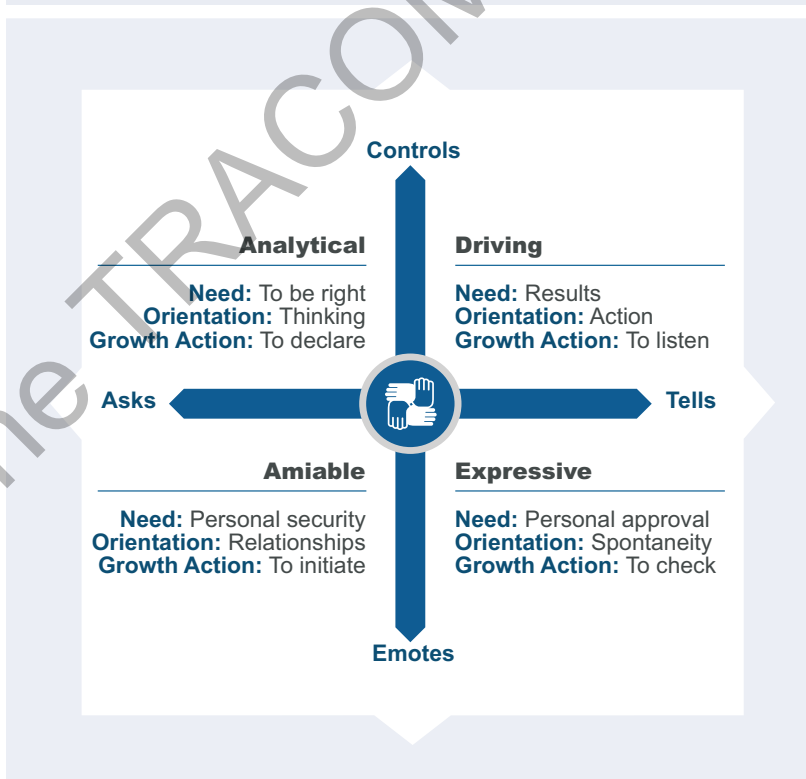
Unlocking the Keys to SOCIAL STYLE

From the pattern of behaviors associated with each Style, we can make certain inferences about the key characteristics of each Style. These are referred to as the SOCIAL STYLE Need, Orientation, and Growth Action.

The Need is a primary motivating force for this person. The Orientation is how a person with this Style typically goes about achieving the Need. The Growth Action is what a person of this Style tends to overlook, ignore, or avoid in this interactions with others. Growth Action behaviors tend to be infrequently used in favor of the preferred behaviors of each Style and they are viewed by others as the greatest weakness of that particular Style.

- The **Driving Style's** Growth Action is to "listen," which may get overlooked in favor of charging ahead to get this results.

- The **Expressive Style's** Growth Action is to stop and think about how this need for recognition may be getting in the way of a productive relationship.

- The **Amiable Style's** Growth Action is to "initiate," that is, to take action that may involve personal risk or cause temporary tension in a relationship.

- The **Analytical Style's** Growth Action is to "declare," that is to deliberately stop analyzing and make a decision or share this opinions.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL STYLE

Controls

Analytical
Need: To be right
Orientation: Thinking
Growth Action: To declare

Driving
Need: Results
Orientation: Action
Growth Action: To listen

Asks — **Tells**

Amiable
Need: Personal security
Orientation: Relationships
Growth Action: To initiate

Expressive
Need: Personal approval
Orientation: Spontaneity
Growth Action: To check

Emotes

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Tension Management

The SOCIAL STYLE Model can be especially useful for understanding and managing tension that can arise during the sales process. Two of the truest indicators of a salesperson's interpersonal effectiveness in dealing with customers is the ability to recognize when customers are being negatively impacted by tension, and the ability to harness that tension and turn it into a positive experience that helps move the customer toward making a commitment to you.

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Tension and Productivity

By applying SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility, you can manage the tension levels between yourself and your customers. This can be critical since tension affects customers' motivation to act.
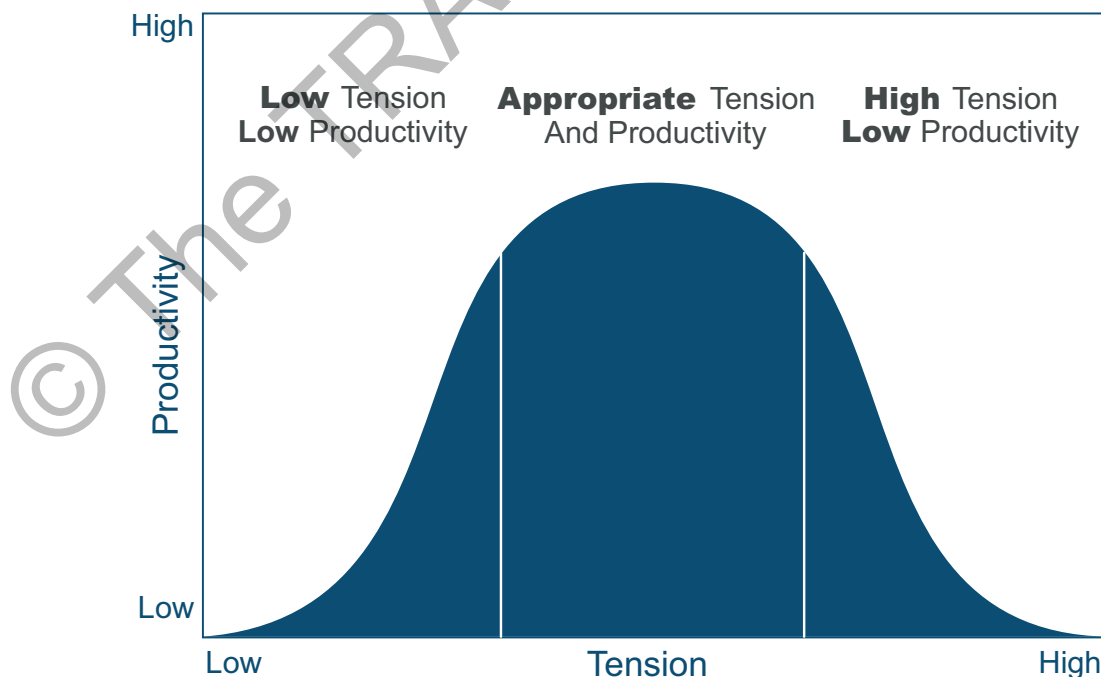
For example, if you inform a customer that you're making minor upgrades to your product, they won't feel much motivation to buy the newer product. But if you make the upgraded product available at the same price, for a limited time, this increases this motivation to buy. If you want to increase this tension to unproductive levels, tell them the price will increase effective immediately!

The **Tension Productivity Model** illustrates how tension can be either a motivating or a destructive force in the workplace.

When tension is low, productivity is usually low. When tension is at appropriate levels (which varies from person to person), people tend to be motivated to get more done. When tension is high, however, people typically find ways to relieve the excess tension before they can become productive again.

Sometimes tension is released in harmful and unproductive ways. For example, lecturing a client about reasons why they should buy from you instead of a competitor might make you feel smart and relieve your stress, but it would probably be offensive to the customer. Each Style has a unique way of releasing excess tension when feeling overwhelmed, and this is called Backup Behavior.

TENSION PRODUCTIVITY MODEL

Low Tension
Low Productivity

Appropriate Tension
And Productivity

High Tension
Low Productivity

High

Productivity

Low

Low   Tension   High
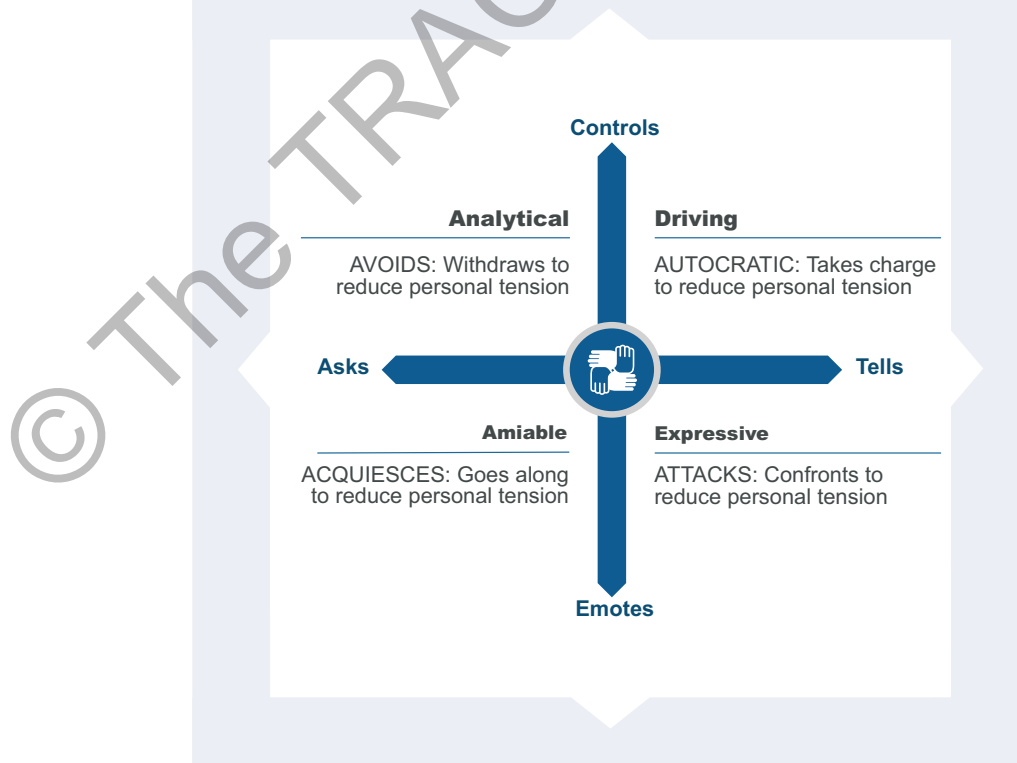
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Backup Behavior

Backup Behavior is what happens when you or your customers are unable to cope with high tension. It is an exaggerated form of Style behavior used by a person to reduce tension. Backup Behavior becomes a self-serving way to achieve a Style Need because it is done without regard for interpersonal relationships. Here is how each Style tends to exhibit its Backup Behavior:

- The **Driving Style** often tries to take charge of the situation and force others to act in order to accomplish a task or reach a goal

- The **Expressive Style** often becomes angry, and vents this feelings about the situation

- The **Amiable Style** often complies, or acquiesces, typically without commitment one way or the other, because they don't want to risk damaging the relationship

- The **Analytical Style** often avoids the whole situation by retreating from people and situations to think things over

When a customer vents their tension on you, there is typically a strong temptation to return the favor. However, meeting hostility with hostility, or aggression with aggression, can only increase the level of tension. The best way to deal with Backup Behavior is to recognize when tension is mounting and then quickly develop ways to constructively channel the tension into productive avenues that takes advantage of a person's Style strengths.

BACKUP BEHAVIOR

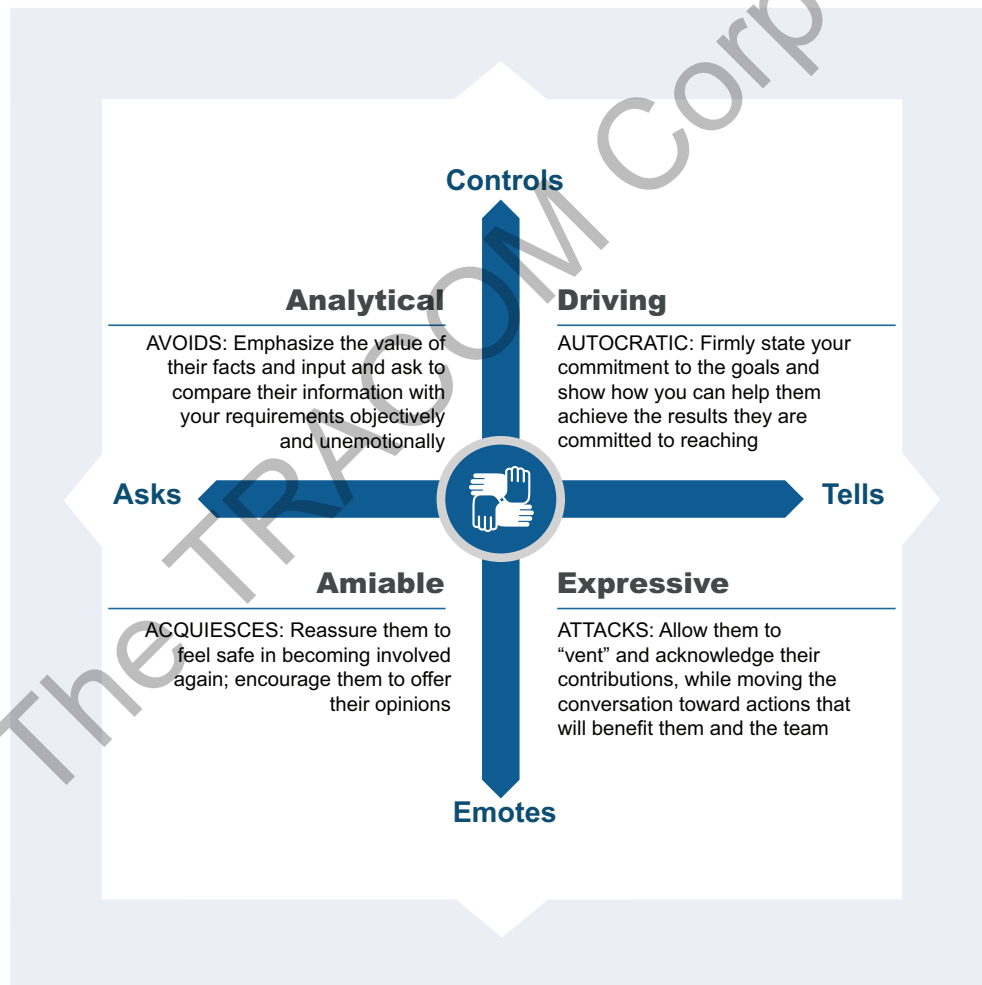|	Controls	
Analytical		**Driving**
AVOIDS: Withdraws to reduce personal tension		AUTOCRATIC: Takes charge to reduce personal tension
Asks ←		→ Tells
Amiable		**Expressive**
ACQUIESCES: Goes along to reduce personal tension		ATTACKS: Confronts to reduce personal tension
	Emotes	

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Potentially Toxic Relationships

While some people do well at accommodating the SOCIAL STYLEs of others, some are more "Style-bound" and seldom stray outside this Style behaviors. As a salesperson, you can help your customer avoid conflict, get along better and achieve higher levels of productivity, by being aware how Style-bound behaviors can be annoying to some people and, if left unchecked, can contribute to a relationship becoming toxic.

A **toxic relationship** occurs when Style-bound behaviors jeopardize the productivity of the relationship. This kind of relationship can occur between you and a customer. Typically, opposite Styles hold the greatest potential for turning into toxic relationships. But even two people of the same Style can develop a toxic relationship if strong displays of this Style behaviors go unrestrained.

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Whether a toxic relationship exists or not, when people go into Backup Behavior the situation can be tense. The strategies in this illustration can help you manage backup behavior for each Style. The key is to recognize the person's Style Need and try to help them meet that Need.

MANAGING BACKUP BEHAVIOR

Controls

Analytical
AVOIDS: Emphasize the value of their facts and input and ask to compare their information with your requirements objectively and unemotionally

Driving
AUTOCRATIC: Firmly state your commitment to the goals and show how you can help them achieve the results they are committed to reaching

Asks ← → **Tells**

Amiable
ACQUIESCES: Reassure them to feel safe in becoming involved again; encourage them to offer their opinions

Expressive
ATTACKS: Allow them to "vent" and acknowledge their contributions, while moving the conversation toward actions that will benefit them and the team

Emotes

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Versatility

Meeting Others' Style Needs

With an understanding of the two dimensions of behavior, Assertiveness and Responsiveness that form the SOCIAL STYLE positions, you should now have a much better understanding of the behavioral tendencies of your customers in any given situation, and you should be able to take actions to work with them more effectively. However, there is one more dimension to the SOCIAL STYLE Model. This dimension, Versatility, is critical to creating productive and successful interpersonal interactions.

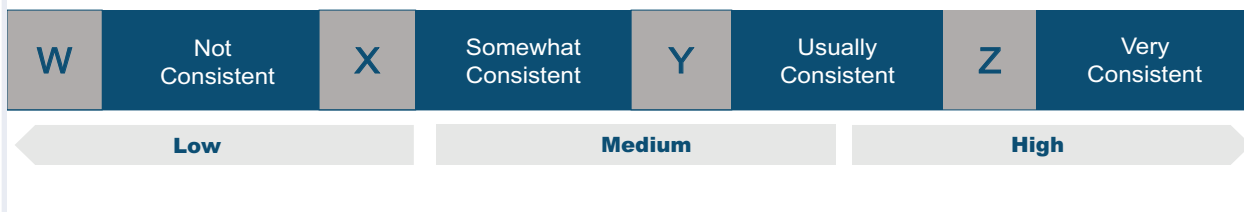**Versatility** measures your ability to meet others' Style needs.

Unlike Assertiveness and Responsiveness, which are relatively stable and consistent over time, your Versatility can increase or decrease depending on your willingness to work toward mutually productive interactions.

To increase your sales effectiveness, you must have the support and respect of your customers. Your Style matters less than how you use your behavior to gain that support and respect. In fact, simply being seen as genuinely trying to help them succeed in the purchase process can increase your Versatility.

A critical aspect of Versatility in the sales process is whether your customers see you as focusing on reducing your own tension or on reducing this tension. Sales people who are not overly focused on meeting this own Style Need and are versatile enough to adapt this behaviors to helping customers meet this Style Needs are seen as having higher Versatility.

The greater your willingness to accommodate others and adapt to situations, the greater likelihood of achieving higher Versatility. TRACOM's research shows that higher Versatility is related to interpersonal effectiveness and higher performance.

VERSATILITY DIMENSION

W	Not Consistent	X	Somewhat Consistent	Y	Usually Consistent	Z	Very Consistent
	Low			Medium		High	

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The Four Sources of Versatility

You show Versatility in four areas: Image, Presentation, Competence, and Feedback. Using these sources appropriately in dealing with others leads to higher Versatility.

Versatility is independent from Style. People of any Style can have either high or low Versatility. While this is true, people often display Versatility in Style-specific ways. For example, the ways in which a Driving Style person displays Versatility can be distinguished from the ways in which an Amiable Style person shows Versatility. Further, our perceptions of other people's Versatility is often filtered through our own Styles. Analytical Style people will interpret and define Versatile behavior somewhat differently from Expressive Style people. This is related to our different behavioral preferences and expectations. As you read about the four sources of Versatility, consider how you behave in each area, and also how people of different Styles might interpret and respond to your behavior.

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

   Do you dress appropriately for your work environment and the expectations of your customers? You may challenge expressed or implicit 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 your customers may feel is not totally appropriate to your role or title may not be a problem, unless it adversely affects your ability to communicate effectively or affects your customers' impressions of you.

Experiment with developing a range of attire, from informal to formal, or from individualistic to conventional, for different situations.

2. **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.

   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 naturally comes more easily to some people than to others, keep in mind that if you are confident in your topic and material, your confidence will come across to the group and make it easier for you to speak.

   Are you organized in your presentation of information to groups? Providing a clear focus and an organized presentation of information helps others follow your ideas and aids in the perception that you care about the topic.

   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. As you present information, continually assess the group for signs of confusion or boredom, and periodically ask whether they have any questions. This will keep them engaged and lead to discussion of different ideas and issues.

When speaking about a topic that is familiar to you but may be unfamiliar to others in the audience, do you use language and examples that they can understand? Using acronyms or highly technical language can leave people confused and frustrated, lowering your desired impact and creating a poor impression. It is critical to use language and examples that are clear and understandable to your audience, including appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and enunciation. When you present information during meetings or formal presentations, be sure to determine the knowledge levels and SOCIAL STYLE characteristics of your audience and tailor your presentation to this needs.

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

Do you complete tasks and assignments late or below expected standards? Your dependability heavily influences your customers' perceptions of your Competence, particularly since it might affect this 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. Your customers may feel that they can't 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 particularly to 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 Competence. Make an effort to take an active role in generating creative ideas and displaying openness to new methods.

Do you have a tendency to come across as unenthusiastic? While it's 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 that difficult tasks will be accomplished successfully. Maintaining an awareness of your behavior and demonstrating your confidence in the likelihood of positive outcomes can help increase your Versatility.

4. **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.

When communicating with your customers, 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 are

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on the same page can lessen this type of misunderstanding.

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

Do you see yourself as approachable and working well with your customers? You may need little social interaction, and cultivating relationships might not be a priority for you. However, you should be aware that such behavior might at times cause your customers to believe that you are somewhat indifferent.

This perceived indifference can cause others to communicate less with you. This can make it difficult for you to accurately read and understand important relationships. To increase the quantity and quality of Feedback from your customers, you might take steps to develop stronger interpersonal relationships.

Keep in mind that Feedback is a two-way process. You 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 your customers is key in developing good Feedback skills.

Being a Versatile salesperson is not just a matter of getting along with customers of different Styles. Rather, a Versatile salesperson increases the effectiveness and productivity of both parties. Also, Versatility is not a matter of how much your customers likes you. Being liked can be nice, but it is no indicator of such things as your Image, Presentation, Competence, or Feedback. And, ultimately, it is no indicator of your sales effectiveness.

FOUR SOURCES OF VERSATILITY

The Appropriate Use of

| Image | Presentation | Competence | Feedback |

Leads to

Higher Versatility

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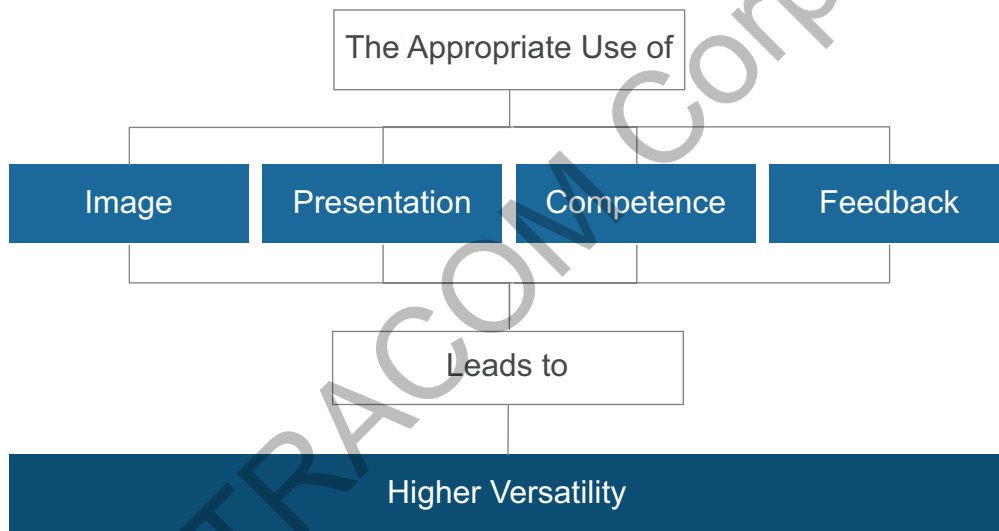
Steps for Increasing Interpersonal Effectiveness

Versatility is a choice. By paying attention to each of the sources that impact Versatility and by taking appropriate action to improve in each of these areas, you can increase your Versatility. Salespeople who know themselves well can determine when to use specific skills in order to gain the support and respect of this customers which will result in gaining the customer's commitment.

1. **Know Yourself** by recognizing the impact your actions have on others. Know the impression you make on customers. Be aware that your unchecked behavioral preferences might cause tension for some customers.

2. **Control Yourself** by not allowing your behavioral preference to cause the tension of others to rise unnecessarily. For example, if your preferred approach is to get to the point and you sometimes listen inattentively or even interrupt customers, restrain these usual approaches. Stop and make a sincere effort to attend to your customer's comments and questions even if your first thought is that you've already addressed this concern or have something more important to point out.

3. **Know Others** by observing your customers more objectively. By conscientiously observing this "say and do" behaviors, you can learn about this SOCIAL STYLE, this tension levels, this hot buttons, how they respond to what you say and do, and what you can do to make them more comfortable when interacting with you. Remember, excessively high levels of tension can bring the sales process to a virtual standstill, or worse, motivate the customer to seek solutions that don't involve interacting with you.

4. **Do Something for Others** by taking into consideration the behavioral tendencies of your Style and the Style of your customers. This consideration will help lower tension levels and create more productive relationships. For example, if you prefer to be informal and more comfortable with generalities (a tendency of a person with an **Expressive Style**), you might take the time to slow down and pay more attention to details when interacting with a customer with an **Analytical Style**. You can also "do something for others" by helping your customers take this Growth Action. For example, you might look for opportunities to help a customer with an **Amiable Style** initiate actions and take personal risks, especially when it moves them toward making a commitment to do business with you.

Next Step

Applying Versatility to Improve Your Sales Effectiveness

Now that you have a solid grounding in the fundamental concepts of SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility, the next step is to identify the SOCIAL STYLE of each of your customers.

Once that is done, you can begin applying the SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts to increase your sales effectiveness.

techniques and statistical analysis to ensure the reliability and validity of its measurement instruments (questionnaires and profiles) and the SOCIAL STYLE Model.

Don't Stop Here… There's More to Discover

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