

## Working Together: Interpersonal Styles

We often have different interpersonal styles which indicate our preferences in terms of how we get our needs met. Fortunately, there is no **one best style**. To work effectively, teams need members with different styles because each possesses different strengths to bring to a partnership. To provide a small glimpse of your preferred style, complete the following inventory by checking *one* item on each line that best describes you. When completed, total the number of checks in each column, enter that number in the box provided under each column, then read the information on the next three pages that describes your style and how you can begin to work successfully with colleagues who have different interpersonal styles.

		a		b		c		d
<b>1. My primary need is to:</b>	Have a position of influence.		Get recognition for my work.		Have my work appreciated.		Have predictability in my work.	
<b>2. I enjoy work that:</b>	Allows me independent decisions.		Has flexibility and variety.		Involves other colleagues.		Is technical and clearly defined.	
<b>3. I like to work with colleagues who are:</b>	Productive and decisive.		Intense and enthusiastic.		Committed and dependable,		Thorough and sensitive to details.	
<b>4. I prefer work that involves:</b>	Pragmatic & efficient results.		New approaches & different ideas.		A friendly work environment.		A search for the right solution.	
<b>5. If and when I can, I avoid:</b>	Long debates.		Detailed analysis of things.		Conflict with colleagues.		Disorganized environments.	
<b>6. My personal strengths are:</b>	Leading & decision making.		Motivating & Communicating.		Listening & acknowledging.		Reasoning & debating the facts.	
<b>7. When time is of the essence, I:</b>	Make a tentative plan & move on it.		Push timelines to the limit.		Am willing to work extra hours.		Set priorities & follow the plan.	
<b>8. In social settings, I:</b>	Initiate conversations.		Am gregarious & fun loving.		Am the listener in the group.		Appear to be serious & quiet.	
<b>9. The work I do allows me:</b>	The power to change people.		Freedom & flexibility.		Opportunities to work with people.		To be accurate & comprehensive.	
<b>10. Colleagues describe me as:</b>	Self-confident & determined.		Energetic & entertaining.		Facilitating & supporting		Disciplined, orderly, & pensive.	
<b>11. My decisions are generally:</b>	Realistic & decisive.		Creative & evolving.		Respectful of people's needs.		Systematic & abstract.	
<b>12. I dislike:</b>	Losing control.		Boring work.		Frequent change.		Guesswork.	
<b>Style Total:</b>								

*Adapted from Working Together: The Art of Consulting & Communicating (p.229) by A. DeBoer, 1995, Longmont, CO: Sopris West.*

## WHAT IS MY STYLE and WHAT IS YOUR STYLE?

Your highest score indicates your **primary** style, your second highest score indicates your **secondary** style, your third highest score indicates your tertiary style, and your lowest score indicates the style that you are least likely to use or understand in others.

If your highest score is in column a, you prefer an **Achiever** style.

If your highest score is in column b, you prefer a **Persuader** style.

If your highest score is in column c, you prefer a **Supporter** style.

If your highest score is in column d, you prefer an **Analyst** style.

If you are primarily an **Achiever** style, you are a high risk-taking, less people-oriented individual. You appear confident and decisive. You like to be in control of situations (and people if they are willing to acquiesce). You are generally forceful and direct when working with colleagues.

If you are primarily a **Persuader** style, you are a high risk-taking, more people-oriented individual. You appear high spirited and social. You love to inspire and be inspired. You generally are articulate and intense when working with colleagues.

If you are primarily a **Supporter** style, you are a lower risk-taking, more people-oriented individual. You have high ideals and standards. You love calm environments and hate conflicts. You generally need security and appreciation for your efforts.

If you are primarily an **Analyst** style, you are a lower risk-taking, less people-oriented individual. You are highly disciplined and persistent. You love to reason and need time to think things through before moving into projects. Accuracy and order are your trademarks.

While there are many interactive strategies that can be used successfully with most of your colleagues most of the time, there are style-specific strategies. Communication works best when we adapt our interpersonal strategies to the style of the person with whom we are working, rather than hope our preferred way of doing things works for every person. The following are some style-specific strategies.

### When working with Achievers

1. Be business-like and direct. Say it like it is.
2. Use factual, here-and-now questions that imply clear goals and specific objectives.
3. Propose logical and efficient action plans, but let Achievers have (or at least share) control over the final solution.
4. Anticipate possible objections they may have and be prepared to address them.

### **When working with Persuaders**

1. Acknowledge their strengths, importance, competence, humor and friendliness.
2. Present ideas in an enthusiastic, optimistic, and persuasive manner.
3. Encourage and present ideas that are innovative and adaptable. They love change.
4. Get plans in writing. It helps them stay focused.

### **When working with Supporters**

1. Be calm, casual, friendly, and informal.
2. Actively listen, reflect their feelings and concerns.
3. Appreciate their efforts.
4. Present ideas that are consistent with their values and high standards. They are the original idealists.

### **When working with Analysts**

1. Present information in a logical, step-by-step manner.
2. Pay close attention to details; if you do not, they will.
3. Appeal to logic, reason, order, and systematic approach to solving problems.
4. Do your homework (research) before meeting with them. Expect to be challenged on your assumptions, intuitions, ideas, and procedures.

Detailed information on interpersonal styles and how to work together are discussed in *Working Together: The Art of Consulting & Communication*, by Anita DeBoer.