

Personal Style

Different people approach life differently. Each of us develops our own personal style and for the most part, we stick with it. As a result, change comes slowly and affecting change and growth in our lives requires significant effort.

Understanding your own personal style can be enormously helpful in how you navigate customer relationships.

More importantly, understanding yourself allows you to function within your comfort zone while learning to interact more effectively with others, who may not share your personal style.

The DiSC Personal Profile System

The DiSC Personal Profile System is based on William Moulton Marston's two-axis, four-dimensional model. Presented in his 1920s book *Emotions of Normal People*. Marston divided human behavior into four main dimensions:

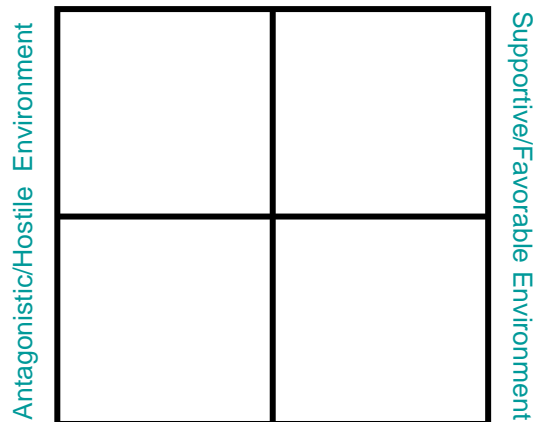
Dominance
Influence
Conscientiousness
Steadiness

It is assumed that most people show all four of these dimensions at times, however, it is also assumed that an individual develops a style of behavior that puts particular emphasis on certain aspects and less on others. This is a gradual learning process that is dependent in large measure upon the reactions of others to an individual's efforts to establish his/her own characteristic mode.

Marston's model defines behavior as a series of responses based on the perception an individual has of:

- his/her environment
- his/her personal power in relationship to conditions of the environment.

How we perceive the conditions of our environment



One of the elements describes the perception a person has of the favorableness or unfavorableness of his/her environment.

How we perceive our power in relationship to the conditions of our environment

More Powerful Than Environment

Less Powerful Than Environment

The other significant element that determines behavioral style is how much power a person perceives him/herself to have in an environment.

DiSC Personal Profile

More Powerful Than Environment

Antagonistic/Hostile Environment	D <i>Dominance</i>	i <i>Influence</i>	Supportive/Favorable Environment
	C <i>Conscientiousness</i>	S <i>Steadiness</i>	

Less Powerful Than Environment

Marston said the two behavioral tendencies of Dominance and Conscientiousness were related behaviors because of a shared perception of the environment as antagonistic or unfavorable. As a result of perceiving the environment as unfavorable, people with Dominance and/or Conscientiousness tend to see the environment as requiring either aggressive or defensive responses.

The other two behavioral tendencies, Influence and Steadiness, are similar because they share a perception of their environment as being favorable and supportive rather than antagonistic. As a result of their shared perception of the environment as favorable, people with Influence or Steadiness behavioral tendencies tend to behave in an open and accepting manner.

People with a Dominance and/or Influence style share a perception of being more powerful than the conditions in their environment, so their behavioral strategies have to do with shaping their environment to meet their needs. This means that people with Dominance and/or Influence behavioral tendencies will try to shape or change people and situations to meet their needs.

The basic strategy of a person with a Dominance style is “shaping the environment by overcoming opposition to accomplish results.” People with a Dominance style tend to take a very direct approach to getting results even in the face of resistance. People with an Influence style also attempt to shape their environment, not by direct action, but by influencing or persuading others.

On the other hand, people with a Steadiness and/or Conscientiousness behavioral style tend not to perceive themselves as being more powerful than the environment, so their strategies are based on working with existing conditions within the environment.

The basic strategy for a person with a Steadiness style is “to cooperate with others to carry out the task” while working within the existing limits of the environment. The basic strategy of a person with a Conscientiousness behavioral style is to “work conscientiously within existing circumstances to ensure quality and accuracy”.

It is the combination of a person’s perception of the favorableness or unfavorableness of the environment and the perception of his/her personal power in relation to the environment that determines a person’s behavioral style.

For example, while both D and C perceive the environment as antagonistic, the person with the Dominance style perceives him/herself as being more powerful than his/her environment. So, the strategies of a person with a Dominance style are based on changing people and situations in the face of antagonism to meet the needs of the D.

However, a person with a Conscientiousness behavioral style, while he/she also perceives the environment to be antagonistic, doesn't perceive him/herself as being more powerful than the environment. The strategies of the person with the Conscientiousness style are based on working within existing conditions to meet the Cs needs.

Both Dominance and Conscientiousness styles can tend to be aggressive and defensive. However, the person with the Conscientiousness style will tend to be more indirect or subtle in their expression of aggression or defensiveness. This difference in how aggression is displayed makes sense based on the difference in perceived personal power between the two styles.

While Influence and Steadiness styles share a perception of their environment as being favorable, people with an Influence style perceive themselves to be more powerful than the environment. The strategies of people with an Influence style, like people with a Dominance style, are based on changing people, places and situations to meet their needs. However, instead of using direct action as people with a Dominance style would tend to do, people with an Influence style tend to use persuasion because they see their environment as favorable rather than antagonistic.

People with a Steadiness behavioral style also see the environment as being favorable, yet they do not perceive themselves as being more powerful than the environment. The strategies of a person with a Steadiness style have to do with cooperating with others to meet their needs within the limits of the environment. Cooperating with other makes sense as a strategy when a person sees the environment as favorable and has less power than the environment conditions.

The dynamic nature of the two elements – perception of favorableness of the environment and perception of personal power – explain how an individual may behave differently from one environment to another. The difference in behavior represents a flexible or adaptable response based on differences in a person's perception of the degree of favorableness of the environment and his/her power in that environment.

Over time, the cumulative responses of an individual become characterized as a "pattern" of behavior that remains relatively predictable, unless there is a significant shift in either of these two perceptions.

D (Dominance) – Behavioral Profile Tendencies

Key Characteristics

- Knows what he/she wants and goes after it
- Is motivated to get immediate results
- Tendency to make decisions quickly
- Often is adventurous, even daring
- Is actively competitive, “on the move”
- May openly question the way things are done

Personal Preferences

- Enjoys taking charge of situations
- Likes to take on new challenges in areas of interest that are a real ‘test’
- Prefers opportunities for their own personal accomplishment or advancement
- Likes varied and new activities.

Personal Development Opportunities

- Learning to pace yourself better and knowing when and how to relax
- Awareness of the type and immediacy of needs that other people also must have satisfied in addition to your own
- Understanding that everyone needs other people at times
- Accepting the importance of existing limits and ways of doing things

D (Dominance) – Profile Patterns

Developer

Motivated by basically one drive, the Dominance need.

Theme: “Full steam ahead”.

Result-Oriented

Motivated by a Dominance need and a lesser Influence need.

Theme: “It’s only the results that count”.

Inspirational

Motivated by equally strong Dominance and Influence drives.

Theme: “I’m always here to help you”.

Creative

Motivated by a strong Dominance need and relatively equal Conscientiousness need.

Theme: “Tell me your ideas, then I’ll tell you mind”.

i (Influence) – Behavioral Profile Tendencies

Key Characteristics

- Makes new friends easily, even with strangers
- Tendency to be warm, trusting of others
- Is open about their own feelings
- Motivated to impress others, be included
- Enthusiastic, talkative, interacting

Personal Preferences

- Likes to be recognized by others
- Enjoys entertaining people
- Likes the freedom to express self – including being free of entanglements, complications
- Prefers more favorable, casual relationships and working conditions.

Personal Development Opportunities

- Learning to develop more organized, systematic approaches to doing things – including following through with consistency in using these methods
- Awareness about others in ways that involve more realistic expectations and objective views of others
- Understanding how and when to be more firm and direct in dealing with less favorable situations
- Accepting the importance of completing work task/agreements with people according to priority commitments and deadlines for them

i (Influence) – Profile Patterns

Promoter

Motivated by the single Influence drive.

Theme: “Hey! Isn’t this fantastic?”

Persuader

Motivated by the Influence drive and a lesser drive for Dominance.

Theme: “I’m going to work with you to make sure you get what you want”.

Counselor

Motivated primarily by an Influence drive and a lesser drive for Steadiness.

Theme: “Everything’s going to be just fine; I’m with you all the way”.

Appraiser

Motivated by primary Influence drive and relatively equal Conscientiousness drive.

Theme: “If we all work together and follow the plan, we can make it happen”.

S (Steadiness) – Behavioral Profile Tendencies

Key Characteristics

- Most comfortable when he/she knows what is expected and how to do it
- Tends to be more low-keyed and easy-going
- Finds it easy to get along well and work with different types of people
- Motivated to concentrate on tasks, enjoys repeatedly doing similar kinds of things
- Is more comfortable as a listener and participator in a group rather than the talker or director

Personal Preferences

- Prefers when things go smoothly, especially when there is not a lot of change”
- Likes the satisfaction of working together with others on projects, by being a part of a collective effort to achieve specific results
- Prefers known procedures and the stability gained from a defined, proven way of doing things
- Likes sincere appreciation from others who are important, including more subtle or quiet recognition

Personal Development Opportunities

- Learning how to better handle the reality of unexpected and ongoing change
- Awareness about when to delegate to other people to achieve desired results
- Understanding how to be more assertive with people in taking charge of certain situations
- Accepting the opportunity to grow by learning to do new and different things, including a variety of ways other than your own standard approach

S (Steadiness) – Profile Patterns

Specialist

Motivated by basically one strong drive for Steadiness.

Theme: “Well, we got the job done on time”.

Agent

Motivated by a strong Steadiness drive and a lesser Influence drive.

Theme: “Just tell me what you would like me to do”.

Achiever

Motivated by a strong Steadiness drive and a lesser Dominance drive.

Theme: “It’s my project, I want the credit and I’ll take the blame”.

Investigator

Motivated by strong Steadiness drive, a secondary Conscientiousness drive and a third, lesser Dominance drive.

Theme: “I’m determined to find out what’s causing this”.

C (Conscientiousness) – Behavioral Profile Tendencies

Key Characteristics

- Has a need to do things more correctly because he/she is uncomfortable making mistakes
- Is motivated to be thorough, accurate
- Tends to be attentive to conditions around him/her, including clues about important expectations or standards
- Often demonstrates caution, curiosity
- May become critical of the quality of work performed – his/her own or others

Personal Preferences

- Prefers to be more careful, quiet and observant when around other people
- Likes situations where he/she has the freedom to concentrate on perfecting ideas and work on things that are important to him/her – without interruption
- Prefers assurances that identified and agreed upon standards or objectives will not be changed or sacrificed
- Likes personal responsiveness and support for efforts, especially those involving desired resources to achieve personal standards.

Personal Development Opportunities

- Learning to develop a greater tolerance for conflict and human imperfection, including realistic approaches to preventing and minimizing both
- Awareness of the importance of more direct communication with others
- Understanding of the different types of talents and interest levels of individuals, which can be helpful in achieving desired objectives
- Accepting with a greater sense of true self-esteem the importance of who you are as a worthwhile person in your own right, rather than only for what you do

C (Conscientiousness) – Profile Patterns

Objective Thinker

Motivated by basically one strong drive for Conscientiousness (to own standards).

Theme: “Just the facts, please”.

Perfectionist

Motivated by a strong drive for Conscientiousness and a relatively equal Steadiness drive.

Theme: “Let’s take time to do it right the first time”.

Practitioner

Motivated by strong Conscientiousness drive, a secondary Influence drive and a third, lesser Steadiness drive.

Theme: “Based on my experience, the most effective way to proceed would be ...”.

Personal Style Worksheet

Interesting information about your personal style is only useful if you apply it to:

1. Know yourself better
2. Use it to bring out your best by focusing on your strengths and finding others to help you manage your weaknesses.

What is your personal style (DiSC)?

Reflect on what you have learned about your personal style. Think of examples that illustrate characteristics of your style.

What kind of tasks or situations bring out your natural strengths?

What methods or people can you use to help you manage your weaknesses? (If you list people, be sure to list their styles and how the strengths of their style would compensate for the extremes of your weakness).