

DISC & VAK

Two 'Power Tools' for your People Skills

1. DISC

The DISC profile is an accurate personality analysis that can be used to predict the behavior of individuals, whether they are on their own and or with others.

It helps with a variety of key areas in your Business, including Recruitment, Customer Service, Marketing and Sales - in fact, anything that involves interaction with PEOPLE. *If you haven't completed your own DISC profile, there are various ways you can do this online, many of them completely free.*

DISC is a simple concept, yet uncannily accurate! However, it is not infallible. It has its limitations.

First of all it is SITUATIONAL - and of course people are often in different situations and are never just one personality. They are all a combination of the four modalities of DISC, just in different ratios.

Most people have one strong modality (D,I,S or C), closely followed by another. The one that you score the highest in will be your dominant trait, which is what people will normally identify you with.

Where DISC isn't considered accurate is normally when you're aware of your "eccentricities" and are trying to manipulate them.

A Simple Test to Determining the DISC Profile

Ask yourself - is this person normally more outgoing or reserved?

The answer will help you identify a High D/High I (outgoing) or High S/High C (reserved).

Then ask yourself if this person is more people-orientated or task-orientated?

If a person is happier working on things than hanging around with people then they will be task orientated (High D/High C)

If they're happier being with people or they have a friendly nature and are likeable, then they are probably people orientated (High S/High I).

This simple rule of thumb is surprisingly accurate in many cases, although remember DISC is "situational" and roles and environments change people, so you need to keep this in mind. A person in a work environment will quite often be different to a person at home.

DISC is easy to understand and use. It is not a full 'personality test'. It's more an insight into an individual style that helps predict trends in behaviour. The DISC test itself takes just 7 minutes to complete.

It is based on us all being a unique blend of four key factors of behavior, made relatively easy to identify by the day to day "language" of DISC

What can DISC tell me?

At its most basic level, DISC measures four factors of an individual's behaviour: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Compliance. These four styles can also be characterised (in the same order) as assertiveness, communication, patience and structure.

The real power of DISC, though, comes from its ability to interpret the unique blend of an individual. For example where a highly Dominant person has an equally high level of Influence, they will behave quite differently to an equally Dominant individual without that Influence.

Using this information, DISC can be used to describe a person's general approach, including their motivations and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, and some of the basic assumptions they make about other people. It also helps predict how a person will react.

DISC PROFILES

There are literally hundreds of possible DISC profiles, and it is of course impractical to describe each one in detail. This section looks at the four factors, and provides some general notes about each.



The first of the four DISC factors is Dominance, or simply 'D' - the 'Driver'. This is appropriate because, as its name suggests, Dominance is the factor of directness, assertiveness and control. The ancient Greeks would have associated Dominance with blood and fire, a fitting combination for this tempestuous factor.

Like all the factors, D is a blend of positive and negative traits. On the positive side, highly Dominant individuals are independently-minded, motivated to succeed, and generally very effective at getting their own way. However, they can also be hot-tempered and even aggressive under certain conditions.

Dominance can be summarized as the factor of Control.

People with a “high D” need to achieve and maintain authority and power over other people and, more generally, the environment in which they live and work. Competitiveness and ambition are also associated with the D factor, as well as determination to achieve their aims in life against great odds.

They enjoy a challenge, and rarely back away from a difficult or risky situation.

Dominant individuals are not naturally trusting of others - they will often rely on their own talents, without asking for or expecting help or support from those around them. Should a situation arise where the assistance of others is an unavoidable necessity, they will tend to issue orders directly, rather than asking for co-operation.

Dealing with a High D ...

High D's like to be leaders and pioneers. They do what no one else is doing. They will be interested in you if they can see you will make them more productive, profitable, successful and a leader of others.

Respect them and never make them feel inferior. They need to respect you. Most importantly, they need to know you can deliver what you say. They want the headline facts and reasons. If you're a High-I, avoid your natural inclination to chit-chat with them.

They will want the short version on any features. Going over details bores them and even annoys them. Give a brief outline of different things showing the logic of it all. All they need to know is that it works. Give them better solutions or ways to do things. Be blunt if you have to!



The 'I' influence is friendly, people-focused and extrovert. Warm and open to other people, sociable and gregarious they will be seen as a great communicator. 'High-I's' are gregarious and sociable, and often possess well-developed social skills and an urge to meet and talk with other people.

Their communicative and socially confident style tends to be balanced by a rather impulsive and sometimes irrational approach to life. The urge to relate to and impress those around them can lead such a person to act in ways that other less socially-oriented types find very difficult to understand.

The hardest thing for a High-I to accept is rejection. They need to interact positively with those around them, and their friendly, open style usually helps them to maintain relations of this kind. Their friendly nature is often an important factor in bringing other less gregarious styles together.

High-I's are extremely trusting and disingenuous. They are open with other people and can reveal information or express feelings that more staid types might prefer to keep hidden. For this reason, they are sometimes accused of being tactless. Nonetheless, their natural communicative abilities often permit them to talk themselves out of any difficult situation resulting from their lack of diplomacy.

Dealing with a High I

You need to win them over and be their friend. Otherwise, they just won't want to associate with you. Show them you have a sense of humour and that you are having fun talking to them right now.

High I's want to do what seems popular. They avoid details and if it seems boring to them they won't want it. They want to have fun!

They will buy from people who they can associate with, so in business, talk about other things apart from what you do. Be chatty and allow them to go off on a tangent.

Let them do most of the talking. They love to talk about anything, especially other people. Be their friend and advise them on what you think and feel is the best for them. Be sincere, like them and they will like you!

If you're a high D, avoid the temptation to dominate them. You'll need to be friendlier than usual – and always sincere. They have good people skills and will see through any phoney pretence.

High I's are prone to exaggerate. They like to listen to (true) stories about others.



The “High-S” take a measured, steady approach to life. They are patient and undemanding of others, often showing sympathy for and loyalty to those around them. They are good Planners.

This factor is less easy to identify immediately and in the Western World at least, a “High-S” is less common than the other three factors. While Dominance, Influence and Compliance are evenly spread throughout the population, Steadiness tends to appear less frequently. They are unassuming and friendly in a more passive way and when Steadiness does appear in a profile, it is more common to find it accompanied by “High-C” (Compliance) than on its own.

The High-S is patient and a good listener, with a real interest in the problems and feelings of others, and are particularly capable of fulfilling support rôles. They are persistent, with powers of concentration that allow them to work steadily at a task. While other profile types might become bored or distracted, the High-S will continue to work until they complete an assignment.

High-S's are resistant to change, and will prefer to settle into a predictable and consistent environment. They work best when given clear instructions and a high level of support. Because of this, they avoid conflict or confrontation if at all possible, and will instead seek to adopt the rôle of peacemaker if a dispute should break out.

Dealing with a High S ...

They are harder to do business with than the high D or I and like to take their time in making a decision. They don't like pressure or being pushed. Become their friend and build genuine rapport with them. Be reserved like they are. Outline what you want them to buy then give details as well. Give them data to make a decision - don't expect quick decisions though!

Get their agreement at the start of discussions with regards to the outcome, so they know in advance what is expected of them. A High-S often won't make a decision on the day but will give a commitment about WHEN they will make their decision.

Be reserved like they are. The High S doesn't like change so and wants to know their choices will suit their needs for a long, long time. They're looking for a reliable steady solution. Give them plenty of eye contact. Build rapport, be their friend.



C for Compliance

'C' is perhaps the most complex of the four factors. Traditionally, High-C's were categorised simply as 'rule-orientated', with High attention to detail. Nowadays, they are considered far more sophisticated, with the combination of Control and Passivity leading to an important 'Analyst' type.

They focus on structure, detail and fact and a High-C is interested in precision and accuracy. Because they are naturally passive and reticent to speak out unless called on by others, it is often imagined that High-C's are lacking in ambition. In fact, this is not the case. In fact, they are similar to highly Dominant individuals in their desire for control over their environment. Because of their passive style, however, they will try to achieve this control through the use of structure and procedure, insisting on rules and defined codes of conduct to achieve their ends. This is the root of the 'rule-orientation' mentioned above.

High-Cs dislike pressure and will adopt an evasive style when confronted with difficult circumstances. In extremely difficult situations, they are prone to disregard problems or delay actions until they become completely unavoidable.

High-Cs tend to regard etiquette and tradition as important and based on an inherent desire for fact and detail and therefore “know their stuff”. This interest in the way things work means that Compliant individuals are often drawn to technical work, or jobs involving the organization of information, situations in which their personal talents can come to the fore.

Dealing with a High C

Business relationships with a high C can be challenging, as they’re naturally skeptical. They often feel that what they already have is good and they often resist change because they have their own way of doing things. They won’t consider making a buying decision unless the facts are known, shown and plentiful!

Be prepared to spend a lot of time with them. They will ask a hundred questions and procrastinate. They’re thinking of all the details they may have overlooked. They are wary of sales people as new tools and systems mean they’ll need to relearn - and they’re much happier doing what they already know how to do.

They aren’t overly friendly like the high I and high S. You can’t just tell them that they need your services like the high D. They only want one thing, data. So give them as much data as you can. In graph form, table form, written form, essay form. You can’t give a high C too much data to consider. They like to justify by logic.

They won’t make a quick decision. They like time to think. So give it to them.

They are confident in their own abilities and will talk with confidence based on their knowledge. If they can see that you can help them do things better and more efficiently you will get their attention.

Despite their initial reluctance, they’ll love anything that improves their standards or efficiency.

How DISC works in a Team

D = Dominance. People with a high 'D' factor naturally want to take control and be the leader. They are confident, solve problems and make the decisions. Too many people trying to take command will be counter-productive to the team.

I = Influence. This governs the social aspect of the team. When people have a lot of 'I' they are forever optimistic, demonstrative and make work fun although others may undervalue them because of their talkativeness. However this friendliness is important, as it gels the team together. They make good representatives expressing the ideas and views of the team.

S = Steadiness. A high 'S' factor provides the buffer for the emotions of the other styles.....it tones down the optimism of the high 'I', doesn't get too excited about the hasty decisions of the high 'D' and doesn't get bogged down with high 'C's detailed rules. The high 'S' provides the stability and balance necessary in a team, but remember to provide the opportunity and a safe environment for them to express their views.

C = Compliance. To achieve results this factor is vital. The high 'C's tend to be the ones who generate logical procedures, have the specialist skills and knowledge and produce the reports. They have an eye for detail and finish what they start. However they need the other assertive types (D & I) to help them get started and encourage them along the way.

The importance of having a DISC balance in your Team

A productive and effective team needs the following:

- D - direction, drive and the ability to motivate its members
- I - openness in communication and feedback
- S - steadiness and determination
- C - structure for productivity and quality.

Creating the right balance of DISC plays an important role in team-building.

Over to you for the DISC!

The Top 3 Things I've got from this overview of DISC

(either from the information itself...or from thoughts triggered by reading it)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

MOST IMPORTANT of all, what are the top 3 ACTION POINTS for you to complete in the next 48 hours, to move things forward.

My Top 3 Action Points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

‘V.A.K’

The three ‘Senses’ used to help build rapport and relationship with others are often used to describe the type of person who displays certain characteristics

VISUAL AUDITORY KINESTHETIC

The Typical “Visual”

People who rely on their Visual senses appear to run pictures or movies in their heads when remembering or storing information. Their principal values are dynamism and perfection. Visual people have a taste for action, speed and fun. They dislike ugly or unfinished things.

Visual people dress well in bright colors. Their facial expressions and gestures will attract you to them. They tend to stand face to face, making direct eye contact. They also tend to be humorous or funny and even risk making fun of others.

In contrast, they are not comfortable talking about highly emotional subjects or become involved with conversations which are too serious. Some may speak and act quickly and be impatient.

They often access their visual “mode” by looking up when they are thinking and talking.

To build rapport with a visual, use the same language that they use – visual words like ‘look’, ‘see’, ‘picture’ etc

The Typical “Auditory”

The Auditory person accesses information and experiences through sounds, as if they’re playing an audio track in their head. Their principal values are strength and hard work, even in spite of adversity. They tend to have a strong personality and great will power.

They speak well and allow others to finish their thoughts, They’ll rarely interrupt because they want to listen to what you say.

They are easy conversationalists and will organise group activities. They access their auditory senses by looking side to side when speaking or thinking about things. They respond to audio words like ‘listen’, ‘hear’ and ‘sound’.

The Typical “Kinesthetic”

People who are primarily Kinesthetic respond to emotions and tactile sense and they remember how they “felt” about situations and experiences.

The principal value held by kinesthetics is comfort and pleasure, regardless of appearance. It has to feel good to them and they rely on their “gut feel” about people and things. They’ll be more personal and more intimate towards you, through their tendency towards physical contact and their use of predominantly “feeling” words.

Their pace is slower and more deliberate and they will dress for comfort, not show. They often speak less than others and communicate by innuendo which can lead to great camaraderie with similar people...and great misunderstanding with others! They’ll ask and enjoy responding to questions like ‘How do you feel’?

How to use ‘VAK’

Firstly, understand your own primary modality and identify the way you communicate with people. Then identify the primary modality in other people – and adapt accordingly to build stronger rapport and relationships. Learn the different ‘language’ of each modality.

The Top Thing I’ve taken from this brief overview of VAK

(either from the information itself...or from thoughts triggered by reading it)

✓

MOST IMPORTANT of all, what is the top ACTION POINT for you to complete in the next 48 hours, to move things forward.

My Top Action Point

✓

*Congratulations on completing the DISC and VAK exercise!
Your real Success will come from... what you do from now on.*

Here’s to that Success...