

THE POWER OF ADAPTING YOUR APPROACH

“The ability to connect with people is a key sales trait.”

Kelley Robertson

Every person you interact with is different. That means you need to adapt your approach if you want to maximize your results. You cannot deal with a multitude of people, using the same style all the time, and hope to achieve the best results. Adapting your approach means you need to be aware of different personality styles.

In 1928, Dr. William Moulton Marston created the foundation for what is now known as the DiSC profile, one of the best known and most widely used behavioral styles assessment tools. The DiSC profile represents four distinct styles—dominant (driver), influencer (expressive), steadiness (amiable), and compliant (analytical). Here is a summary of each style, how to recognize each, and the most effective way to approach each style.

The Dominant or Driver: A problem and goal-oriented person who is focused on achieving results. These individuals tend to be forceful,

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bottom-line people who hate to waste time. They want straight talk and direct answers. You can recognize Drivers by their directness and sometimes bluntness, their tendency to use “I” in their conversation, and their body language. Drivers will often sit forward, point with their forefinger as they speak to take control or emphasize. They will interrupt the conversation while maintaining very direct eye contact. They will have a strong handshake, and their workspace will likely be disorganized. Their voice mail message will be curt and brief: *“This is Joanne. Leave a message and I’ll call you back.”*

SALES TIP

Focus on showing them how they will get results and achieve their goals. Use the word “you” several times in your conversation. Allow them to dominate the sales discussion, ask for their opinion, and let them express their ideas and thoughts. This will help you gain their buy-in. Limit the amount of small talk during your meeting because these individuals want to get down to business quickly. Maintain a high level of confidence and do not be intimidated by their directness.

The Influencer or Expressive: A people-focused, fast-paced person with lots of energy. Their key strength is to promote ideas and persuade others to agree with them. They have a tendency to “tell” people versus “asking.” Expressive individuals are very concerned with rejection. Their workspace will often be covered with pictures, awards, or letters. They usually demonstrate a friendly but firm handshake. These individuals are the easiest to spot because they are optimistic and friendly. Their voice mail message will likely be long and friendly: *“This is Robert. I’m out meeting clients right now so I can’t take your call. Please leave me a message and I’ll call you back. Thanks for calling and have a great day!”*

SALES TIP

Image is very important to Expressives so praise them and show how your product will make them look good in front of their peers, co-workers, business partners, and customers. Use third-party testimonials and endorsements and tell stories during your sales presentation.

The Steadiness or Amiable—An Amiable is most concerned about helping other people and works at a steady pace. They will be much more quiet and reserved than a Driver or an Expressive, which makes them more difficult to read. They may not say anything if they disagree with you so as not to create conflict. They are excellent listeners and prefer discussions with one or two people versus group conversations. Their workspace is typically well-organized and clean. They are also hesitant to make changes because they enjoy consistency and routine. Their voice mail message will be soft and possibly apologetic: *“Hi, this is Cheryl. I’m very sorry I missed your call. Please leave me a message and I will make sure I call you back.”*

SALES TIP

Demonstrate how easy the change will be to incorporate into their work environment and how it will help the other people on the team. Use the word “team” in your presentation. Soften your tone of voice and slow down your rate of speech.

The Compliant or Analytical: These people are critical thinkers and draw conclusions based on facts, figures, accuracy, and the rules. They focus on procedures. Perfection is very important to them. They are not necessarily shy but they can be difficult to read because they do not show their feelings. Their workspace will be very precise and neat; in some cases, everything will be organized alphabetically and labeled. Analytical individuals prefer information in writing, so send them an agenda prior to a meeting. Use bullet points in your correspondence, and make sure your spelling and punctuation are 100 percent accurate. Their voice mail message will ask you to leave a detailed message: *“This is Geoff. Please leave your name, phone number, time of your call, the reason for your call, and the best time to contact you.”*

SALES TIP

Give this person time to make a decision and back up your information with lots of facts, figures, and statistics. Be precise and avoid using generalities or discussing feelings. Above all, avoid trying to push this person into making a quick decision. Highlight referrals and satisfied customers to help reduce the risk factor.

When you adapt your natural style to more closely match the style of your customer you will gain rapport more quickly. This means you will experience less resistance and you will increase the likelihood of moving the sales process forward, providing of course, that your product or service is of value to your customer's company or organization.