



learningmaterials
KWC Social Styles

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1. WHAT IS “SOCIAL STYLE”?

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1.1 Behaviours not Personality

- A model for understanding your own and other people’s behavioural styles
- Your Social Style is determined by your observable external verbal (“say”) and non-verbal (“do”) behaviours
- These represent a theme or pattern of the behaviours that you typically exhibit in your interaction with others
- The Social Style model focusses on behaviour, not personality
- “Personality” is a set of characteristics that influence thoughts, motivations and behaviours. It’s made up of a collection of emotional patterns, mental processes, thought patterns and values and behaviours. These are all influenced by a combination of genetics and personal experience
- Social Style deals only with observable behaviours – the part of your personality that can be objectively seen and heard by others
- Pie analogy: think of personality like a pie – much of the pie (the filling) is out of sight – like our personality. And the filling, like our personality, contains a mix of ingredients that gives the pie a unique flavour and texture. But our behaviours, like the outer crust of the pie, are on display to everyone and other people are likely to describe this crust in more or less the same way.

1.2 “Tension”

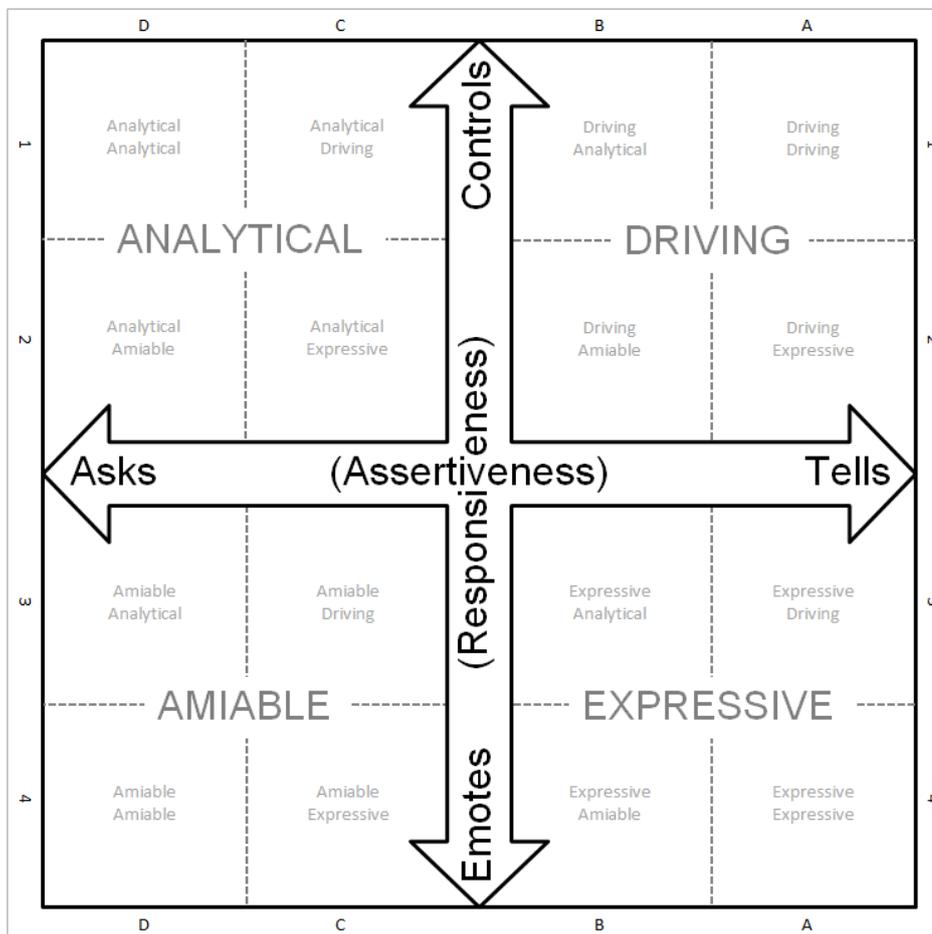
- “Tension” is an important component in the background of the development of Style. Over time we tend to engage in behaviours that help to reduce the degree of “tension” that we feel in situations.
- A degree of tension can be beneficial (eg in approaching an exam, if you have no degree of tension you might not bother to study enough, if you have too much then you might panic).
- Tension exists in interpersonal relationships and learning about how your reported Style tends to behave to reduce tension is helpful

1.3 The Four Social Styles

The Social Style model describes four primary behavioural styles:

- Driving
- Analytical
- Amiable
- Expressive

iii>Your own particular Style is determined by your behaviour along two continuums: “assertiveness” and “responsiveness”



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¹ <http://www.tracomcorp.com/solutions/by-element/social-style/model/>

1.4 Assertiveness

- “Assertiveness” in this context is about whether you tend more to “tell” or to “ask” when interacting with others
- So in Social Styles, the word “assertiveness” is being used in a different way than would be used in training on how to be assertive, where it would mean - standing up for your personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways
- Tell Assert people tend to state their opinions with assurance, confidence and force. They make positive statements and declarations and attempt to direct the actions of others.
- Ask Assert people tend to be more cautious and reserved about sharing their opinions. They seek to influence others in a quieter low-key manner through the questions they ask and the points they make.

Assertiveness “Say” and “Do” Behaviours

More Ask Assert	Verbal (“say”) behaviours	More Tell Assert
Slower	Pace of speech	Faster
Less	Quantity of speech	More
Quieter	Volume of speech	Louder
More Ask Assert	Non-verbal (“do”) behaviours	More Tell Assert
Relaxed	Use of hands	Directive
Lean back	Body posture	Lean forward
Less	Eye contact	More

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1.5 Responsiveness

- “Responsiveness” measures the degree to which others see you as tending to “emote” or “control”
- Those who “emote” outwardly display their emotions and express their feelings. They also tend to respond more to emotional appeals and influences from others.
- Those who “control” tend to keep their emotions hidden from others. They also tend to react less to emotional appeals and focus more on ideas, things, data and tasks.

Responsiveness “Say” and “Do” Behaviours

Verbal (“say” Behaviours			Non-verbal (“do”) Behaviours		
Monotone	Task	Facts/data	Less	Rigid	Controlled
Emotion in voice	Subjects of speech	Form of Descriptives	Use of Hands	Body posture	Facial expression
Inflection	People	Opinions/stories	More	Casual	Animated

2. SO WHAT?

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The whole point about learning about Social Style is to help increase your personal effectiveness in your interaction and relationships with others

You can do that by better understanding your own Social Style, making an effort to read others’ Social Styles and then by choosing to adapt your communication style and behaviours. The four key stages are:

- Know yourself
- Control yourself
- Know others
- Do something for others

3. THE FOUR STYLES IN MORE DETAIL

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3.1 Driving Style

“Fire, ready, aim!” “Just do it!”

- Task, action and results orientated
- Decisive
- Persistent; tenacious
- Thrive on challenges
- Focus on immediate goals and objectives (rather than the past or future)
- Willing to take calculated risks
- More interested in “what” and “when” than “who”, “why” or “how”
- More likely to be persuaded by arguments based on facts and logic
- Make decisions quickly; impatient with delays
- Tend not to display their emotions openly
- Can appear cool, aloof, formal, independent in relationships with others
- Will challenge others’ ideas and views
- Can be argumentative and overbearing
- Tend to be poor listeners

3.2 Analytical Style

“Don’t rush me, I’m thinking!” “Just the facts!”

- Have a strong need to be right
- Tend to focus on processes and procedures
- Typically speak slowly and deliberately
- Quiet, reserved, can seem cool, distant, detached and unenthusiastic
- Formal, stiff, proper

- Precise, specific
- Slow to make decisions
- Cautious, careful, thorough
- Base decisions on logic and reasoning
- Disciplined in their use of time
- Cautious about personal involvement with others
- Likely to live according to facts, principles, processes, logic and consistency
- Dependable, thorough, persistent
- Not competitive; dislike conflict
- Can be hesitant for fear of being wrong
- Focus on the past

3.3 Amiable Style

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“Hey, remember there are people here!”

- Strong need for personal security
- The most people-orientated of the four Styles
- Focus on relationships
- Like to be secure in their relationships with others
- Avoids decisions that could involve conflict in relationships
- Informal, casual, easy-going
- Approachable, friendly
- Open with their feelings, emotions and personal information
- Loyal and trustworthy
- Effective social networkers
- Slow to decide; base decisions on impact on relationships
- Likes to work with others

- Considers others' needs and feelings (more than facts or data)
- Forgiving of others
- Undisciplined in use of time
- Focus on the present

3.4 Expressive Style

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“It’s show time! Let me entertain you!”

- Stimulated by positive response from others: acknowledgement; compliments; laughter; applause
- Like involvement, brainstorming, interacting with others; team players
- Dislike being alone
- Spontaneous, fast-paced, reactive, impulsive
- Enthusiastic, optimistic, fun
- Persuasive,
- Open with feelings, communicative, warm
- Like to build relationships with others
- Likely to be trusting of other people
- Tend to be perceptive of situations and others' feelings
- Exaggerate; dramatic
- Generalise, dream, focus on the future
- Short attention span; jump from one activity to another; start projects, let others finish
- Dislike control, details, complexity
- Uncomfortable with conflict, aggression and anger

3.5 Needs, Orientations, Backup Behaviours and Growth Actions

Style Need: the general goal of each style, indicated by the observed behaviours associated with the particular Style

Style Orientation: the typical behaviours of each Style, used to obtain the Style need

Backup Behaviour: the behaviours that people of each Style tend to exhibit in situations of stress or high tension, where their Style typical behaviours are not achieving their Style needs

Style Growth Action: the behaviours that are used less frequently by each Style; an area for potential work and growth.

Style	Driving	Expressive	Amiable	Analytical
Need	Results; Control	Personal approval; Recognition	Personal security	To be right
Orientation	Taking action	Spontaneity	Maintain relationships	Thinking
Backup Behaviour	Autocratic	Attack: verbally confrontational	Acquiesce	Withdraw
Growth Action	Listen	Check behaviour	Initiate; take the lead	Declare

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4. VERSATILITY

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4.1 What is “versatility”?

- It’s a measure of your interpersonal effectiveness when working with others
- So it’s about choosing to adjust your behaviours to work more effectively with others
- In Social Style speak it’s about: “controlling yourself”; and “doing something for others”
- It’s about how you choose to interact with other people (taking account of their own Social Style, which may be different from yours) in a variety of situations
- Considering, taking into account and having concern for the degree of tension others may be feeling in interpersonal situations
- Having good Style awareness and an appropriate focus on other people’s needs
- It’s about employing appropriate behaviours in different situations
- Being more empathetic
- Treating others as they would like to be treated
- Being a chameleon
- Becoming more emotionally intelligent (in tune with your emotions and behaviours and their impact on others and good at reading and adjusting to accommodate others’ emotions and behaviours)

4.2 Why Seek to Enhance Your Versatility?

Loads of research about people who act with higher versatility being more effective, e.g. TRACOM’s research that found that managers with high versatility were regarded as 27% better at leading teams, 25% better at coaching others and 19% more likely to be promoted.

4.3 How is Versatility Measured?

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Versatility is assessed in four broad areas, each of which accounts for a certain percentage of your Versatility assessment:

Image (8%)	Presentation (9%)	Competence (48%)	Feedback (35%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriateness of dress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effectiveness of Group communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conscientiousness• Flexibility• Innovation• Perseverance• Optimism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active listening• Adaptive communication• Empathy• Interpersonal relations

Image:

- Appropriateness of dress and demeanour
- Do you dress purely to please yourself or do you take account of the situation, your role, the people you are interacting with?
- Is your work area clear or cluttered?
- What about your general demeanour, body language, comportment

Presentation:

- How well do you deliver information in a business setting – informal meetings and formal presentations?
- How good are you at organising and delivering information?
- How comfortable do you feel in delivering?
- Do you “read” the audience well and make sure that they are comfortable with the way you’re delivering information to them?
- Do you use appropriate examples and language for the particular audience?

Competence:

- How good are you at achieving your own personal goals?
- How well do you help others to achieve their work-related goals?
- “Competence” includes your: dependability; optimism; problem-solving abilities; perseverance in the face of challenges

Feedback:

- Assessing the impact of your behaviours on others
- Having concern for the degree of tension others may be feeling in interpersonal situations
- The range of verbal and no-verbal communication skills that demonstrate how well you understand others and make yourself clear to them
- How good you are at listening to others?
- How empathetic are you? Attempting to see their points of view and then respond accordingly?
- *“Seek first to understand and then to be understood”* (Steven Covey)

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5. INCREASING YOUR PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS² [Go To Contents](#)

5.1 Know Yourself

Self-awareness is the key so make an effort to be more aware of your own behaviours and to consider how they might be impacting on others. Ask colleagues and friends for feedback.

5.2 Control Yourself

This is hard. And you need not to try to be something that you're not. But consider how you might control some of the more extreme behaviours of your particular Style, especially when interacting with someone else for the first time or when interacting with someone who you think probably has a different Style to your own.

5.3 Know Others

This is about observing the behaviour of others with whom you interact and trying to determine their Style. Some tips:

- Try not to jump to conclusions; it takes multiple observations over a period of time in a variety of situations to accurately determine someone's Style
- Don't stereotype: not all IT people are Analytical; not all senior managers are Driving
- Try to separate how you feel about their behaviours - making judgments about whether you like or dislike what they say or do
- Preferably observe their behaviours when they are interacting with people other than yourself
- Concentrate on what they actually "say" and "do"
- Consider the verbal and non-verbal behaviours you observe against the Assertiveness and Responsiveness scales and think about where most of them would plot

² 'People Styles at Work', 2009, Robert Bolton, Amacom Publishing

5.4 Do something for others

Adjust your behaviours when interacting with people who have a different Style to your own – so that it fits in better with their Style. In other words...treat others as they would like to be treated.

5.5 Further information

Please visit the TRACOM website – www.tracom.com – for additional information on the Social Styles questionnaire. Information in this document taken from the “Social Style and Versatility” Facilitator Handbook.

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