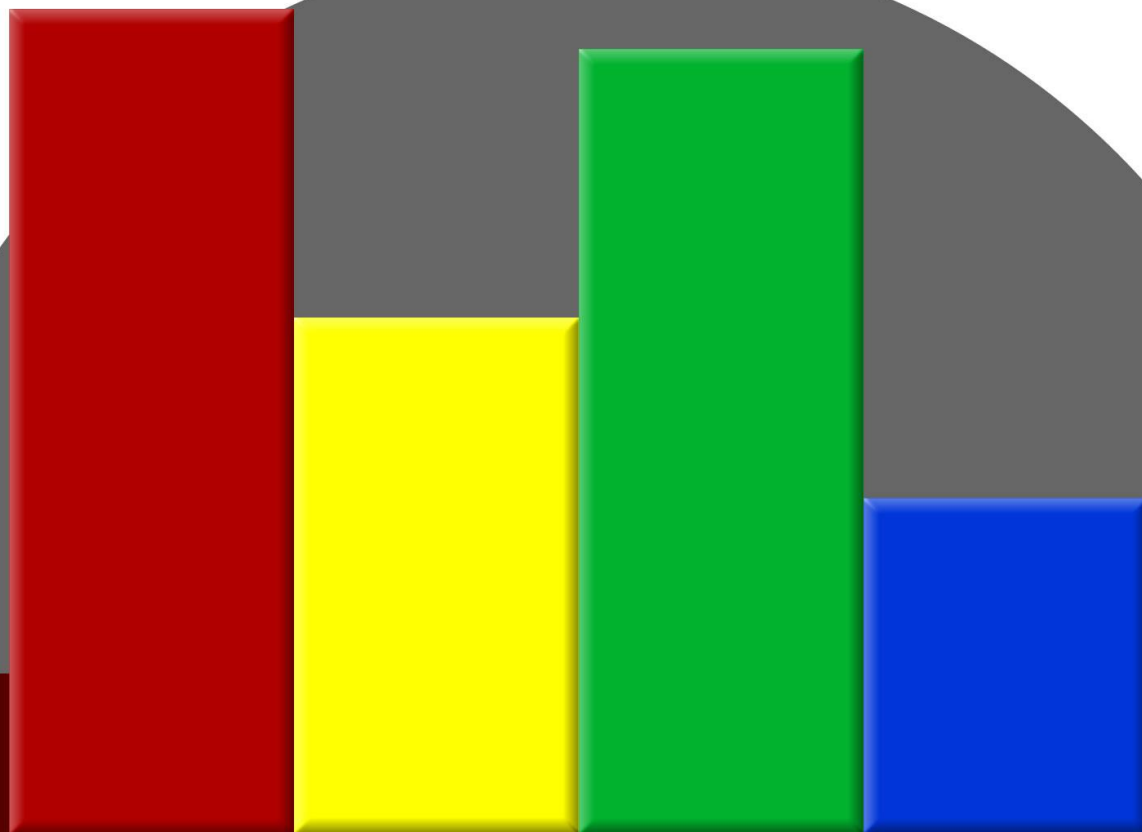


3 Killer Ways to Use



D I S C

Profiles

...and 3 Huge
Mistakes to Avoid

The DISC assessment is an invaluable tool that has helped millions of people communicate better.

But you must use it with caution.

In this free report I list 3 ways to use DISC profiles and three giant mistakes to avoid...all of which I have made myself.

3 ways to use DISC profiles:

1. Learning how to communicate with others.

I made the mistake when I first got into business of thinking that everyone communicated just like me. Boy, was I in for a surprise. Not everyone is an in-your-face, blunt (read: jerkish), fast-talking, let's get this over with and move on to the next topic, go-getter. Shocking.

In fact, only about 10% of the population is a High D like me. That sucks for me.

So I had to learn how to communicate with others (and play nice). DISC helped me do that. There is more to it than just DISC, so keep reading for more on communication.

DISC gives a framework to generally understand how other personality types communicate. It helps *you* to communicate in a way that works for the other person, not yourself. That is the essence of effective communication. Everything else is just noise.

2. Sharing with others to help them communicate with you.

When I first shared my profile with the rest of my leadership team, the room lit up with the multitude of lightbulbs going off.

Finally, they understood me. They began to speak in a way that worked for me (hint: it's in bullets and gets to the point). As a result, I was hearing what they were saying and they understood that when I gave them a "drive-by" comment, I wasn't necessarily being a jerk. That was just my style.

3. Determining the right hires.

If you're hiring customer service reps, hire I's and S's. The High I personality loves people and the High S is calm under pressure (like dealing with angry customers). High D's like me have no tolerance for rambling old ladies trying to figure out how to use "The Facebook" (that was kind of mean, I realize that). And High C's will give the customer a dissertation on the history of the internet.

DISC isn't the end-all-be-all of hiring, but it's a great place to start.

Additionally, if you are a High D, you probably don't want to hire many High S's and C's to work directly for you. You will drive each other nuts. The same goes in reverse.

Yes, you need a diverse team, but you also need one that works well together.

3 Mistakes to Avoid with DISC:

Here are three giant mistakes that I've made:

1. Brushing it off.

DISC isn't perfect, but that doesn't mean you should brush it off.

I've heard people say things like, "a test can never give the full picture of a person." Well, duh. No kidding. I don't know anyone who says that. It's a piece to the puzzle. Even if my profile is 20% wrong, it's not hard to tell what kind of person I am from my profile. (Ironically, my wife is a hard read...her's is almost equal all the way across...pray for me.)

2. Ignoring it.

When you do take it, use it.

Share it with others. Read it often. Review how to communicate well with others. Read through others' profiles. Work through it *as a team*.

3. Making it everything.

The opposite of brushing it off entirely is making it the king of everything.

It's not.

Many people are high in 3 or even all 4 like my wife. And even with other people who have the same scores as me, we still have our individualities. As I said earlier, it's one piece to the puzzle.

Bonus: The grandest mistake of them all

The worst mistake of all is *letting DISC define you*.

Do you know what happened the first time I took the DISC assessment? It looked just like the profile above. That was twelve years ago.

And I let it define me.

My score meant that I was who it said I was. I was hard-charging, in-your-face, arrogant, and...well, you get the idea.

My natural and adaptive styles were identical. I thought that meant I was true to who I am. I stuck out my chest in pride at the notion that I, the great Matt McWilliams, didn't change who I am for no one (bad grammar, but that's how my inner jerk talks).

And then I got married. To an incredibly bright woman who pointed out that, actually, it just meant I was unwilling to change. It actually meant that I was not adaptable. And that hit me right in the face.

So, don't make the same mistakes I did. Don't brush off DISC or ignore the results, but also don't make it everything. And, above all, don't let it define you or anyone else.

Learning How Team Members Communicate

For most of my life I assumed that everyone communicated in the same way I did.

Turns out they don't.

I assumed they were motivated by the same things I was. I assumed they were motivated in the same way that I was. I also assumed that everyone else instinctively understood me. In retrospect I guess it was a little self-centered to surmise that the Creator of the universe implanted a special “*you will know what Matt is thinking at all times*” gene in the entire human population when I have yet to fully comprehend my wife even when she is actually speaking to me.

That would have been awesome though...unicorns and lollipops for everyone!

When I first became a leader it was a magical time of peace, understanding, and campfires with s'mores and ghost stories.

Except that it wasn't. Dang. Apparently not everyone was motivated by money and not everyone reacted to a crisis (like a server crashing) by going into full panic mode. What a pity.

I remember one direct report in particular who was a senior-level programmer, which is code for “uses a lot of big words around me that I don't understand.” He was as cool as the proverbial cucumber or other side of the pillow. (Side note: I have left plenty of cucumbers on my kitchen counter and they are neither cool nor tasty).

When things went haywire, when servers crashed and code was broke, he remained calm. My arms flailed, my voice rose, and my heart was pounding. The situation called for *immediate and all out panic*. And panic meant frantic

pacing and rolling heads. But he remained perfectly calm...and rational. It was downright annoying.

What I took as apathy was actually a little known trait called calmness.

Not only did I not understand him, *I could not even relate to him.* He was not like me and we had a hard time communicating. (Thankfully, we are still close friends to this day).

Over time, I learned how to communicate with him. But how?

Here are the three steps I took to learn how to communicate with my team members:

1. **I had them each take the DISC assessment.** Know personality styles is a big help. I like to think of them as narrowing down a person's individuality and quirks to a limited range. High "DS" types have some general similarities as other "DS" types so I have a starting point on communicating with them. The same goes for any personality types, except for the oddball who is even on all four. Avoid these people at all costs, perhaps even shun and ridicule them. Just kidding, lovely wife of mine.
2. **I asked direct questions.** Ultimately it comes down to getting to know the person. I've found that directly asking them things like "how are you best motivated," "do you prefer public or private praise," or "how did you think through that situation just now?" helps a ton. Get inside their minds a little. Question everything. Don't save the questions for when things go wrong. Find out what makes them tick in their own unique way.
3. **I observed them with others.** Not only did I spend time with them to get to know them, I observed how they communicated with others. I observed whom they spent the most time with and whom they seemed to communicate best with. If they communicated best with Joe, and I knew Joe really well, I made some assumptions that they probably have similar communication styles.

I had a loose formula I followed in determining how to best communicate with people.

Personality styles: 50%

Direct questions: 25%

Experience (Time): 25%

The good news I do believe you can get 75% of the way there in less than a month with a person (with personality styles and a handful of direct questions). The bad news (or good news for the people who take advantage of it) is that the 25% (time) is what separates the average leaders from the great leaders.

Conflict and the High D

How do you handle disagreements or conflict with a High D?

I ask that question because High D types are the hardest to deal with and since most people aren't High D's, it makes it even harder for most of you.

I recently got an email from a friend, whom we will call Joe, which read:

I would like your advice.

We had a meeting to make sure everyone was on the same page with our new payroll process. Just my boss, his wife, and me. I had everything prepared for them in such a way they were both really happy. Problem for me: at one point my boss says, "we need to not make careless mistakes. Like putting vacation in sick, that was a careless mistake. We need to not be careless." I couldn't really respond because their three kids came in at that moment. I know my mistake was human error. Calling it careless says to me I didn't care enough. But I did care! My husband thinks I need to send my boss an email. But I want to make sure I'm interpreting things correctly, with the whole D spin 😊

I have other examples when he indicates something negative about me because of what I've done, not done, etc. And the times I've tried to explain the "why" behind what I've done he either looks at me blankly, gives a half smile, or just reiterates his original opinion. Please help, oh great D!

Thanks

Here was my advice to Joe.

First, don't send an email. Odds are you will be too lengthy and you will have no idea how he reacts (it's all in his face).

You will gain 10 times more respect (and build some confidence) by talking to him face to face.

With that in mind, here is how to approach him.

1. **Approach him on his turf.** This means his office. Go to him where he is most comfortable.
2. **Ask permission to speak with him.** “Is this a good time to talk?” There are only two answers. Yes and no. If yes, proceed. If no, ask “When is a better time for you?”
3. **Stand if possible.** But not if he is sitting. Don’t impose. Stay level with him. I would stand for 10 seconds and if he doesn’t stand, pull up a chair close to his desk. Make sure to show that you are moving close.
4. **Get right to the point.**
5. **Stay future focused.** No attacks. This does not mean you cannot reference a past event, but it should be in the context of the future.
6. **Practice ahead of time.**
7. **Stay calm.** (DO NOT tell yourself not to get emotional...the words in your head are important here). You have practiced, it will go great.
8. **Repeat the outcome you want as though it is happening.** As you practice, continually repeat a positive outcome in the present tense.

Remember, you cannot control him. He could thank you, smile, and get back to work. He could cuss you out. He could be blown away and change. It’s not up to you. Only your actions and emotions are up to you.

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