pollak learning alliance
learning to make a difference

Communication Styles Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help you discover your preferred communication style(s). Over the years you have probably developed communication 'habits' that help you benefit more from some experiences than from others. Since you are probably unaware of this, this questionnaire will help you pinpoint the experiences that suit your communication style.

The key benefits of understanding your own and others' communication styles include:

- The ability to encourage individuals to develop their potential

- Being able to identify your own and others' learning and communication strengths and thereby learn how to make better use of them

- Communication styles are widely understood and used by many blue chip companies to promote a communication culture at work

- Developing a personal development plan on how to achieve your communication potential

- By understanding the way in which you like to communicate, you gain a better understanding of how your methods of interacting with, and leading, others reflect this. You are therefore more able to alter those methods, if necessary, to adapt to the styles of fellow team members. This dampens the tendency to use your communication style as an excuse: "I'm an activist so I work best with learners who are also activists. That's just the way I am."

Instructions

This questionnaire will probably take you 10-15 minutes, however there is no time limit for completion. The accuracy of the results depends on how honest you can be - there are no right or wrong answers.

- If you agree more than you disagree with a statement, put a tick in the box beside it ☑.

- If you disagree more than you agree, put a cross in the box beside it ☒.

- Be sure to mark each statement with either a tick ☑ or cross ☒.

☐ 1. I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad.

☐ 2. I often act without considering the possible consequences.

☐ 3. I tend to solve problems using a step-by-step approach.

☐ 4. I believe that formal procedures and policies restrict people.

☐ 5. I have a reputation for saying what I think, simply and directly.

☐ 6. I often find that actions based on feelings are as sound as those based on careful thought and analysis.

☐ 7. I like the sort of work where I have time for thorough preparation and implementation.

- [ ] 8. I regularly question people about their basic assumptions.

- [ ] 9. What matters most is whether something works in practice.

- [ ] 10. I actively seek out new experiences.

- [ ] 11. When I hear about a new idea or approach I immediately start working out how to apply it in practice.

- [ ] 12. I am keen on self discipline such as watching my diet, taking regular exercise, sticking to a fixed routine, etc.

- [ ] 13. I take pride in doing a thorough job.

- [ ] 14. I get on best with logical, analytical people and less well with spontaneous 'irrational' people.

- [ ] 15. I take care over the interpretation of data available to me and avoid jumping to conclusions.

- [ ] 16. I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives.

- [ ] 17. I'm attracted more to novel, unusual ideas than to practical ones.

- [ ] 18. I don't like disorganised things and prefer to fit things into a coherent pattern.

- [ ] 19. I accept and stick to laid down procedures and policies as long as I regard them as an efficient way of getting the job done.

- [ ] 20. I like to relate my actions to a general principle.

- [ ] 21. In discussions I like to get straight to the point.

- [ ] 22. I tend to have distant, rather formal, relationships with people at work.

- [ ] 23. I thrive on the challenge of tackling something new and different.

- [ ] 24. I enjoy fun-loving, spontaneous people.

- [ ] 25. I pay meticulous attention to detail before coming to a conclusion.

- [ ] 26. I find it difficult to produce ideas on impulse.

- [ ] 27. I believe in coming to the point immediately.

- [ ] 28. I am careful not to jump to conclusions too quickly.

- [ ] 29. I prefer to have as many sources of information as possible – the more data to think over the better.

- [ ] 30. Flippant people who don't take things seriously enough usually irritate me.

- [ ] 31. I listen to other people's points of view before putting my own forward.

☐ 32. I tend to be open about how I'm feeling.

☐ 33. In discussions I enjoy watching the manoeuvrings of the other participants.

☐ 34. I prefer to respond to events on a spontaneous, flexible basis rather than plan things out in advance.

☐ 35. I tend to be attracted to techniques such as network analysis, flow charts, branching programs, contingency planning, etc.

☐ 36. It worries me if I have to rush a piece of work to meet a tight deadline.

☐ 37. I tend to judge people's ideas on their practical merits.

☐ 38. Quite, thoughtful people tend to make me feel uneasy.

☐ 39. I often get irritated by people who want to rush things.

☐ 40. It is more important to enjoy the present moment than to think about the past or future.

☐ 41. I think that decisions based on a thorough analysis of all the information are sounder than those based on intuition.

☐ 42. I tend to be a perfectionist.

☐ 43. In discussions I usually produce lots of spontaneous ideas.

☐ 44. In meetings I put forward practical, realistic ideas.

☐ 45. More often than not, rules are there to be broken.

☐ 46. I prefer to stand back from a situation and consider all the perspectives.

☐ 47. I can often see inconsistencies and weaknesses in other people's arguments.

☐ 48. On balance, I talk more than I listen.

☐ 49. I can often see better, more practical ways to get things done.

☐ 50. I think written reports should be short and to the point.

☐ 51. I believe that rational, logical thinking should win the day.

☐ 52. I tend to discuss specific things with people rather than engaging in social discussion.

☐ 53. I like people who approach things realistically rather than theoretically.

☐ 54. In discussions I get impatient with irrelevancies and digressions.

☐ 55. If I have a report to write, I tend to produce lots of drafts before settling on the final version.

☐ 56. I am keen to try things out to see if they work in practice.

☐ 57. I am keen to reach answers via a logical approach.

☐ 58. I enjoy being the one that talks a lot.

☐ 59. In discussions I often find I am the realist, keeping people to the point and avoiding wild speculations.

☐ 60. I like to ponder many alternatives before making up my mind.

☐ 61. In discussions with people I often find I am the most dispassionate and objective.

☐ 62. In discussions I'm more likely to adopt a 'low profile' than to take the lead and do most of the talking.

☐ 63. I like to be able to relate current actions to a longer term bigger picture.

☐ 64. When things go wrong I am happy to shrug it off and 'put it down to experience'.

☐ 65. I tend to reject wild, spontaneous ideas as being impractical.

☐ 66. It's best to think carefully before taking action.

☐ 67. On balance I do the listening rather than the talking.

☐ 68. I tend to be tough on people who find it difficult to adopt a logical approach.

☐ 69. Most times I believe the end justifies the means.

☐ 70. I don't mind hurting people's feelings so long as the job gets done.

☐ 71. I find the formality of having specific objectives and plans stifling.

☐ 72. I'm usually one of the people who puts life into a party.

☐ 73. I do whatever is expedient to get the job done.

☐ 74. I quickly get bored with methodical, detailed work.

☐ 75. I am keen on exploring the basic assumptions, principles and theories underpinning things and events.

☐ 76. I'm always interested to find out what people think.

☐ 77. I like meetings to be run on methodical lines, sticking to a set agenda, etc.

☐ 78. I steer clear of subjective or ambiguous topics.

☐ 79. I enjoy the drama and excitement of a crisis situation.

☐ 80. People often find me insensitive to their feelings.

Questionnaire Scoring

Step 1:

- Indicate the questions you ticked on the lists below. For example, if you ticked Question 1, circle the number 1 in the first row.

- Add up the total number of circles you have in each column. (Each statement you ticked ☑ is worth 1 point - there are no points for items you crossed ☒.)

2	7	1	5
4	13	3	9
6	15	8	11
10	16	12	19
17	25	14	21
23	28	18	27
24	29	20	35
32	31	22	37
34	33	26	44
38	36	30	49
40	39	42	50
43	41	47	53
45	46	51	54
48	52	57	56
58	55	61	59
64	60	63	65
71	62	68	69
72	66	75	70
74	67	77	73
79	76	78	80

Total Number of Circles

Activist	Reflector	Theorist	Pragmatist

Step 2

- Circle the total scores for each of your columns above on the chart below.

- Draw a line to join the scores together.

- Review the descriptions for each communication style in Step 3.

Activist	Reflector	Theorist	Pragmatist	
20	20	20	20	
19				
18		19	19	
17	19	18		Very strong preference
16			18	
15		17		
14				
13	18	16	17	
12	17	15	16	Strong preference
	16			
11	15	14	15	
10	14	13	14	
9	13	12	13	Moderate preference
8				
7	12	11	12	
6	11	10	11	
5	10	9	10	Low preference
4	9	8	9	
3	8	7	8	
	7	6	7	
	6	5	6	
2	5	4	5	
	4	4	4	
1	3	3	3	Very low preference
	2	2	2	
	1	1	1	
0	0	0	0	

Step 3: Analysis of Communication Styles

General Indicators and Descriptions

Activists	Pragmatists	Theorists	Reflectors
Like to roll their sleeves up, get 'stuck in' and learn as they go.	Want to know how to apply what they are learning in the real world.	Learn well from concepts and models.	Prefer to observe others doing something before trying it themselves.
Prefer to learn by doing, to work things out on the fly.	Interested in what works, what gives results.	Prefer to have a conceptual framework to make sense of new information.	Like to absorb information and think about it.
Enjoy trying new things, welcome new experiences.		Think about what they are learning in abstract terms.	Like to think about what they're learning.

Activists

Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is: "I'll try anything once".

They tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards. Their days are filled with activity. They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down they are busy looking for the next.

They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and longer term consolidation. They are gregarious people, constantly involving themselves with others but, in doing so, they seek to centre all activities around themselves.

Pragmatists

Pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications.

They are the sort of people who return from courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them.

They tend to be impatient with ruminating and open-ended discussions. They are essentially practical, down-to-earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities as 'a challenge'. Their philosophy is: "There is always a better way" and "If it works, it's good".

Theorists

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step-by-step logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories.

They tend to be perfectionists who won't rest easy until things are tidy and fit into a rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesise. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models and systems thinking. Their philosophy prizes rationality and logic. "If it's logical, it's good". Questions they frequently ask are: "Does it make sense?", "How does this fit with that?" and "What are the basic assumptions?"

They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical. This is their 'mental set' and they rigidly reject anything that doesn't fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgements, lateral thinking and anything flippant.

Reflectors

Reflectors like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first hand and from others, and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to any conclusion.

The thorough collection and analysis of data about experiences and events is what counts, so they tend to postpone reaching definitive conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious. They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action.

They listen to others and get the drift of the discussion before making their own points. They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant unruffled air about them. When they act it is part of a wider picture which includes the past as well as the present and others' observations as well as their own.

Source: Honey and Mumford (1996)

Those who are best equipped to work with diverse communicators:

- Know their own communication style and how this affects their interaction with, and leadership of, others.

- Are aware of, and sensitive to, the learning and communication styles of their fellow team members.

- Adjust their style to cater to a range of different learning styles, personality styles and communication preferences.