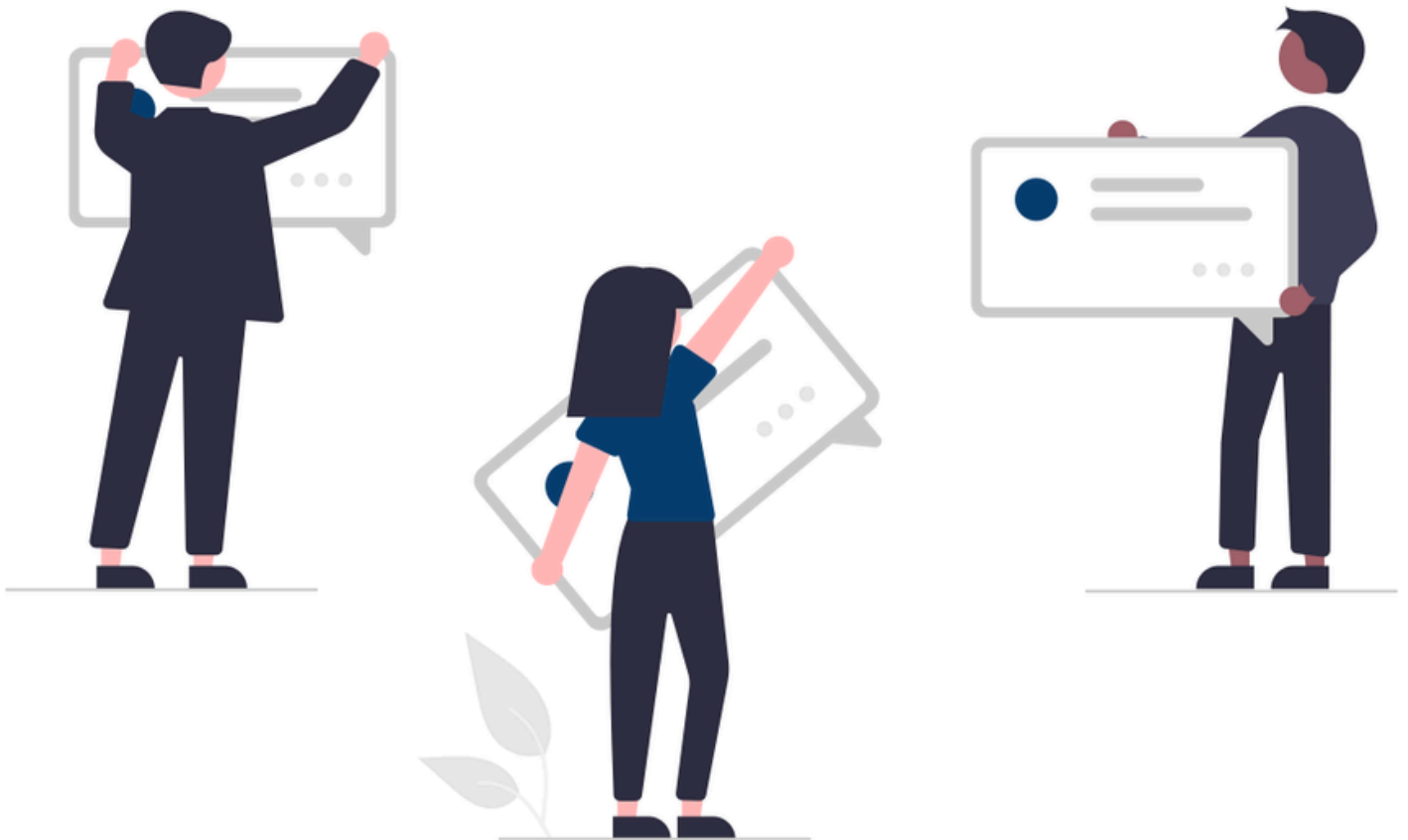


# COMMUNICATION FLEXIBILITY

ENHANCE YOUR ABILITY TO  
CONNECT AND COLLABORATE



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MODULE 1

# **WHAT IS A COMMUNICATION STYLE?**

## WHAT IS A COMMUNICATION STYLE?

A coworker approaches you for design assistance on a project related to auditing procedures. They provide a brief overview of the project, and you, being detail-oriented, press for more information:

- "What's the timeline for completing this project?"
- "Where will the design be implemented within our auditing process?"
- "What specific message or information should the design convey to stakeholders?"

However, your coworker seems less focused on these specifics and more concerned with the overarching project goals. Despite your efforts to extract detailed information, they struggle to provide the level of detail you're seeking. As a result, both of you leave the discussion feeling frustrated and unsure about how to proceed effectively.

### **So, what went wrong?**

The problem might be a difference in communication styles.

A communication style is the specific ways people behave and express their preferences when they communicate with others.

A communication style focuses on the unique ways individuals approach and engage in communication.

Communication styles vary among individuals due to factors such as personality, culture, interpersonal abilities, and occupation. Challenges may arise when collaborating with someone whose communication style differs from yours.

**Operating with different communication styles can feel like speaking different languages—and messages can get lost in translation.**

### NOTES

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MODULE 2

# **UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT STYLES**

## MODULE 2

### **COMMUNICATION STYLES A SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

**Instructions:**

- Please select one from each pair of attributes by circling the number of the one that you prefer most at this time.
  - Make your choice as spontaneously as possible recognizing that at times you might have chosen either one.
  - You must make a choice from each of the pairs; no pairs should be left unanswered.
  - There is no wrong answer.
- 

SOURCE: Casse, Pierre "Training for the Cross-Cultural Mind," Washington, DC:SIETAR International, 1979, pp. 125-132.

## MODULE 2

### **COMMUNICATION STYLES A SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

1. I like action.
2. I deal with problems in a systematic way.
3. I believe that teams are more effective than individuals.
4. I enjoy motivation very much.
5. I am more interested in the future than in the past.
6. I enjoy working with people.
7. I like to attend well organized group meetings.
8. Deadlines are very important for me.
9. I cannot stand procrastination.
10. I believe that new ideas have to be tested before being used.
11. I enjoy the stimulation of interaction with others.
12. I am always looking for new possibilities.
13. I want to set up my own objectives.
14. When I start something, I go through until the end.
15. I basically try to understand other people's emotions.
16. I do challenge people around me.
17. I look forward to receiving feedback on my performance.
18. I find the step-by-step approach very effective.
19. I think I am good at reading people.
20. I like creative problem-solving.

## MODULE 2

### **COMMUNICATION STYLES A SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

21. I extrapolate and project all the time.
22. I am sensitive to others' needs.
  
23. Planning is the key to success.
24. I become impatient with long deliberations.
  
25. I am cool under pressure.
26. I value experience very much.
  
27. I listen to people.
28. People say that I am a fast thinker.
  
29. Cooperation is a key word for me.
30. I use logical methods to test alternatives.
  
31. I like to handle several projects at the same time.
32. I always question myself.
  
33. I learn by doing.
34. I believe that my head rules my heart.
  
35. I can predict how others may react to a certain action.
36. I do not like details.
  
37. Analysis should always precede action.
38. I am able to assess the climate of a group.
  
39. I have a tendency to start things and not finish them.
40. I perceive myself as decisive.



## MODULE 2

### **COMMUNICATION STYLES A SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

41. I search for challenging tasks.

42. I rely on observation and data.

43. I can express my feelings openly.

44. I like to design new projects.

45. I enjoy reading very much.

46. I perceive myself as a facilitator.

47. I like to focus on one issue at a time.

48. I like to achieve.

49. I enjoy learning about others.

50. I like variety.

51. Facts speak for themselves.

52. I use my imagination as much as possible.

53. I am impatient with long, slow assignments.

54. My mind never stops working.

55. Key decisions have to be made in a cautious way.

56. I strongly believe that people need each other to get work done.

57. I usually make decisions without thinking too much.

58. Emotions create problems.

59. I like to be liked by others.

60. I can put two and two together very quickly.

## MODULE 2

### **COMMUNICATION STYLES A SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

61. I try out my new ideas on people.
62. I believe in the scientific approach.
  
63. I like to get things done.
64. Good relationships are essential.
  
65. I am impulsive.
66. I accept differences in people.
  
67. Communicating with people is an end in itself.
68. I like to be intellectually stimulated.
  
69. I like to organize.
70. I usually jump from one task to another.
  
71. Talking and working with people is a creative act.
72. Self-actualization is a key word for me.
  
73. I enjoy playing with ideas.
74. I dislike to waste time.
  
75. I enjoy doing what I am good at.
76. I learn by interacting with others
  
77. I find abstractions interesting and enjoyable.
78. I am patient with details.
  
79. I like brief, to the point statements.
80. I feel confident in myself.

MODULE 2

## COMMUNICATION STYLES A SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- **Scoring:**
- In each of the 80 pairs, you circled the one response you most preferred.
- Now, circle the number below that corresponds to each of the answers you selected (from the previous 80 pairs) – that means that if you circled #2 on the survey form, you find where the #2 is located (in this case, it is in “STYLE 2” and circle it.
- Continue doing the same with each of the numbers you circled on the form. Then add up the total number of items you circled in each of the four different STYLE categories and write it in the space provided at the right for each style.
- NOTE: The maximum total number of circled items is "20" per style and your grand total for the four styles should add up to 40.

**STYLE 1: ACTION**

1 - 8 - 9 - 13 - 17 - 24 - 26 - 31 - 33 - 40 - 41 - 48 - 50 - 53 - 57 - 63 - 65 - 70 - 74 - 79  
TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS CIRCLED FOR STYLE 1 (A) =

\_\_\_\_\_

**STYLE 2: PROCESS OR FACT**

2 - 7 - 10 - 14 - 18 - 23 - 25 - 30 - 34 - 37 - 42 - 47 - 51 - 55 - 58 - 62 - 66 - 69 - 75 - 78  
TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS CIRCLED FOR STYLE 2 (PR) =

\_\_\_\_\_

**STYLE 3: RELATIONSHIPS OR PEOPLE**

3 - 6 - 11 - 15 - 19 - 22 - 27 - 29 - 35 - 38 - 43 - 46 - 49 - 56 - 59 - 64 - 67 - 71 - 76 - 80  
TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS CIRCLED FOR STYLE 3 (PE) =

\_\_\_\_\_

**STYLE 4: IDEA**

4 - 5 - 12 - 16 - 20 - 21 - 28 - 32 - 36 - 39 - 44 - 45 - 52 - 54 - 60 - 61 - 68 - 72 - 73 - 77  
TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS CIRCLED FOR STYLE 4 (I) =

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## ACTION BASED COMMUNICATION STYLE

An action-based communication style is characterized by a focus on tangible steps and strategies to achieve desired outcomes. Individuals with this style prioritize discussing actionable steps and methods for achieving results. They are proactive in assigning roles and responsibilities and delegating tasks to ensure efficient progress toward goals. They prefer straightforward and concise communication that emphasizes practical solutions and measurable results.

### The What

#### Content

##### *Communication Focus*

- Results
- Responsibility
- Objectives
- Feedback
- Productivity
- Challenges
- Efficiency
- Achievements
- Change
- Decisions

#### Process

##### *Communication Behavior*

- Pragmatic (down to earth)
- Direct (to the point)
- Impatient
- Decisive
- Quick Analysis (moves from one idea to another)
- Energetic / confrontational

Common phrases of this communication style include:

- "I need you to ..."
- "Here's our plan."
- "The deadline is ..."
- "What's our implementation strategy?"

## MODULE 2

### **ACTION BASED COMMUNICATION STYLE**

**Characteristics:**

Action-oriented communicators focus on getting things done. They are direct, results-driven, and prefer concise communication. They prioritize efficiency and practicality.

**Preferences:**

They value clear instructions, concrete examples, and tangible outcomes. They may become impatient with lengthy discussions or theoretical debates.

**Communication Traits:**

They tend to use assertive language, make quick decisions, and emphasize practical solutions. They may prefer face-to-face communication or concise written messages.

**Strengths:**

Action-oriented individuals excel in fast-paced environments where decisiveness and efficiency are valued. They are effective at driving projects forward and overcoming obstacles.

**Potential Challenges:**

They may come across as blunt or impatient, and they might overlook the need for thorough analysis or consideration of alternatives.

### **NOTES**

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## MODULE 2

### PROCESS(FACT) BASED COMMUNICATION STYLE

A process or fact-based communication style places a high value on precision, details, and logical reasoning. Individuals who adopt this style approach information in a pragmatic, systematic, or even scientific manner. They prioritize accuracy and reliability, often delving into meticulous analysis to ensure that their communication is grounded in factual evidence. These individuals tend to exhibit a serious or cautious demeanor in their work, as they are deeply committed to ensuring the accuracy and validity of the information they convey. They are inclined to ask probing questions and critically evaluate information to ascertain its credibility and relevance.

## The How

### Content

#### *Communication Focus*

- Facts
- Procedures
- Analysis
- Planning
- Observations
- Factual
- Organizing
- Details
- Testing

### Process

#### *Communication Behavior*

- Systematic
- Logical
- Factual
- Cautious
- Patient
- Unemotional

Common phrases of this communication style include:

- "What does the data say?"
- "How did you reach that conclusion?"
- "Let's review the strengths and weaknesses of each."

## MODULE 2

### PROCESS BASED COMMUNICATION STYLE

**Characteristics:**

Process-oriented communicators are systematic, detail-oriented, and organized. They focus on structure, procedures, and efficiency in communication and decision-making.

**Preferences:**

They value clarity, accuracy, and adherence to established processes or protocols. They prefer well-defined roles, clear expectations, and systematic approaches.

**Communication Traits:**

They use language that is precise, logical, and structured. They emphasize step-by-step explanations, detailed plans, and adherence to deadlines.

**Strengths:**

Process-oriented individuals excel in roles that require attention to detail, planning, and implementation of systematic approaches. They ensure tasks are executed efficiently and accurately.

**Potential Challenges:**

They may resist change or spontaneity, preferring familiar routines and established procedures. They might also become overly focused on process compliance at the expense of flexibility or innovation.

### NOTES

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## MODULE 2

### IDEA BASED COMMUNICATION STYLE

Individuals who embrace an idea-focused communication style gravitate towards discussing concepts, visions, and overarching themes rather than getting bogged down in details. They thrive in brainstorming sessions, where they can freely explore possibilities, make connections between concepts, and cultivate innovative ideas. Their communication tends to be characterized by a focus on the "big picture" rather than the nitty-gritty of implementation. These individuals excel at articulating abstract concepts and envisioning future possibilities. They are adept at generating creative solutions and inspiring others with their visionary thinking.

## The Why

### Content

#### *Communication Focus*

- Concepts
- Innovation
- Creativity
- Opportunities
- Possibilities
- Issues
- Improvement
- Alternatives
- Potential
- Problems

### Process

#### *Communication Behavior*

- Charismatic
- Creative
- Imaginative
- Unrealistic
- Focus on self not team

Common phrases of this communication style include:

- "I've developed an overview/outline of ..."
- "The big picture is ..."
- "Here's the vision."
- "Imagine ..."



## IDEA BASED COMMUNICATION STYLE

### **Characteristics:**

Idea-oriented communicators are creative, visionary, and abstract thinkers. They enjoy exploring concepts, generating new ideas, and discussing possibilities.

### **Preferences:**

They thrive on intellectual stimulation, brainstorming sessions, and open-ended discussions. They value innovative thinking and intellectual exchange.

### **Communication Traits:**

They use language that is imaginative, exploratory, and conceptual. They enjoy debating ideas and may appreciate philosophical or theoretical discussions.

### **Strengths:**

Idea-oriented individuals are adept at thinking outside the box, envisioning future possibilities, and fostering innovation. They bring fresh perspectives to problem-solving.

### **Potential Challenges:**

They may struggle with practical implementation or focusing on concrete details. They might also get lost in abstract thinking, leading to difficulties in decision-making.

### **NOTES**

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## RELATIONSHIP OR PEOPLE BASED COMMUNICATION STYLE

Individuals who embody a relationship or people-focused communication style prioritize building and nurturing relationships, providing support, and empathizing with the thoughts and emotions of others. They are inherently social, personable, and deeply attuned to the human aspect of interactions. In their communication, they take a collaborative approach, valuing open dialogue and the exchange of ideas. They thrive in environments where teamwork is encouraged, relishing opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations and work through challenges together.

### The Who

#### Content

##### *Communication Focus*

- People
- Needs
- Motivations
- Feelings
- Understanding
- Team spirit
- Teamwork
- Harmony
- Connection

#### Process

##### *Communication Behavior*

- Spontaneous
- Empathetic
- Warm
- Perceptive
- Sensitive
- Subjective
- Emotional

Common phrases of this communication style include:

- “How do you feel about ...”
- “I really appreciate your ...”
- “I’d love to get your thoughts on ...”
- “From a customer’s perspective ...”

## PEOPLE BASED COMMUNICATION STYLE

### **Characteristics:**

People-oriented communicators are empathetic, sociable, and relationship-focused. They prioritize building connections, understanding others' emotions, and fostering harmony.

### **Preferences:**

They value interpersonal relationships, collaboration, and emotional support. They prefer open communication, active listening, and consensus-building.

### **Communication Traits:**

They use language that is empathetic, supportive, and inclusive. They focus on building rapport, seeking common ground, and addressing emotional needs.

### **Strengths:**

People-oriented individuals excel in team environments, where collaboration and interpersonal dynamics are crucial. They are skilled at mediating conflicts and building strong relationships.

### **Potential Challenges:**

They may avoid confrontation or difficult conversations to maintain harmony, which could hinder progress or resolution of issues. They might also prioritize relationships over task completion.

### **NOTES**

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MODULE 3

# **ADAPTING TO DIFFERENT STYLES**

## ADAPTING YOUR STYLE

### **Adapting to Different Communication Styles:**

Flexibility is key when interacting with colleagues who have differing communication preferences. Whether someone prefers direct and assertive communication or values a more diplomatic and collaborative approach, adapting our communication style accordingly can help bridge any gaps and facilitate smoother interactions.

### **Tailoring Communication to Specific Work Situations:**

Different work contexts may require varying communication strategies. Whether it's communicating with clients, collaborating within cross-functional teams, or leading presentations, understanding the demands of each situation enables us to tailor our communication style for optimal effectiveness.

By embracing the diversity of communication styles and equipping ourselves with the knowledge and skills to adapt to different work situations, we can foster stronger relationships, enhance teamwork, and drive greater success in achieving our collective goals.

On the next few pages let's take a look at some practical tips for adapting to each communication style.

### NOTES

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## ADAPTING YOUR STYLE

### ADAPTING TO AN ACTION-BASED STYLE COMMUNICATOR OR SITUATION

- **Do: Communicate action items and how they will produce results.**
- **Don't: Take blunt feedback personally or waffle on decisions.**

- Focus on the result first; state the conclusion at the outset.
- State your best recommendation; do not offer many alternatives.
- Be as brief as possible.
- Emphasize the practicality of your ideas.
- Use visual aids.
- Make your communications task-based and action-oriented.
- Approach communications from the perspective of the practical steps of who, what, when, where, and how to achieve set objectives.

### ADAPTING TO AN PROCESS-BASED STYLE COMMUNICATOR OR SITUATION

- **Do: Provide concrete examples, evidence, and explanations.**
- **Don't: Ask for an opinion or recommendation without giving them time to research. Don't be idealistic or emotional.**

- Analyze ideas critically and from all angles.
- Build in extra time for reflection.
- Allow them to gather their thoughts, or develop a plan.
- They may prefer to work on a problem independently.
- Break down recommendations.

## ADAPTING YOUR STYLE

### ADAPTING TO AN IDEA-BASED STYLE COMMUNICATOR OR SITUATION

- **Do: Spend more time discussing what and why.**
  - **Don't: Weigh down communications with the small details; a simple outline or summary is ideal.**
- 
- Don't hesitate to dream big and think out-of-the-box.
  - Focus your communications on the vision, mission, overall picture, or big ideas.
  - Communicate information through summaries, outlines, and high-level overviews, and share how tasks fit into the greater objectives of the team or company.
  - Motivate someone with an idea-based communication style by focusing on the big idea and letting them run with it from there.

### ADAPTING TO AN PEOPLE-BASED STYLE COMMUNICATOR OR SITUATION

- **Do: Set up meetings to share progress, work together, or discuss ideas.**
  - **Don't: Be too blunt, curt, or aggressive. Don't confine their ability to express themselves.**
- 
- Plan plenty of meetings to collaborate and discuss ideas, feelings, and opinions with relevant members of the team.
  - Frame projects by their impact on people.
  - Allow time for small talk.
  - Check in often to see how this person is feeling and learn how to better support one another.
  - Allow emotional expression as long as it is not to the detriment of the team.

## APPLICATION EXERCISE

**Instructions:**

1. For each situation, select the communication style(s) that you believe would be most effective for each situation: action, process(fact), idea, or relationship(people).

**Situations**

**Communication Style(s)**

**Action, Process, Idea, or Relationship**

**Situation 1:**

The audit team is conducting a review of financial records to identify discrepancies in the university's budget allocation.

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**Situation 2:**

The audit team needs to present findings from a recent audit to university administrators in a formal meeting.

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**Situation 3:**

The audit team is collaborating with various departments to streamline internal processes and improve efficiency.

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**Situation 4:**

During an audit, the team encounters resistance from faculty members who are reluctant to provide requested documentation.

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**Situation 5:**

The audit team is tasked with assessing compliance with government regulations regarding campus safety protocols.

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**Situation 6:**

The audit team is conducting interviews with university staff to gather information about potential areas of concern.

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**Situation 7:**

The audit team is tasked with developing a comprehensive report summarizing findings and recommendations for improvement.

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