

## DISC WORK STYLES

Behaviors can be classified into four general styles commonly known as D-I-S-C, D for Direct, I for Influential, S for Steady and C for Cautious. Work styles can be described as follows:

A "D" person is direct and tends to take charge of situations, is very productive, finding no need to waste time on relationships or talking.

An "I" person accomplishes tasks through influencing others by persuasion and enjoys developing relationships with many people. This person has a difficult time staying focused on tasks for any length of time.

An "S" person is a steady worker, quiet, and unobtrusive.

A "C" person is cautious in his approach to work and has a great need to do things "right." This person works from lists and gathers all the facts before proceeding.

## DISC COMMUNICATION STYLES

Each person has a different style of communicating.

A "D" person speaks in a forceful voice. She tells even when asking a question. This person can be blunt and wants the bottom line.

An "I" person is warm and friendly to everyone. "She never met a stranger." Expressions are animated. This person talks about feelings, is bubbly by nature and likes to tell stories.

An "S" person is normally very calm. However when under stress, she worries about everything. She is friendly but only speaks when directly asked. This person has a steady, even voice. An "S" person speaks and thinks slowly. She is a good listener.

A "C" person never discusses feelings. S/he relates well to facts and tends to analyze information. A desire to be understood may cause this person to over-explain.

## DISC LEADERSHIP STYLES

Once you understand the behavioral style of the person, the next step is to consider willingness and ability. For best results, lead each personality style differently.

It's important to know the ability of your Associate to perform, and assess her awareness of that ability. It is also your responsibility to make her aware of areas in which she is lacking, helping her move from 1, unconscious inability to 3, conscious ability.

The first step is to recognize the Associate's unconscious inability. Since it is unconscious to her, this needs to come from you. Once you understand the unconscious inability, consider how you will train this person to help him/her move from 2, conscious inability to 3, conscious ability. It may not be necessary to move to 4, unconscious ability to be productive on the job.

Is your Associate trainable and willing to learn? How will you help your Associate increase that ability and awareness? Assessment tools and performance appraisals are useful to help you determine training needs and approaches.

What about the actual training? Considerable thought must be given to the mechanics of the training program. Will you delegate it to another? Will training from an outside professional be more effective to ensure the intended message is understood and well-received?

Once you answer these questions and have determined the personality style of your Associate, you are ready to implement a plan of action. Each behavior requires a different leadership style. There are four leadership approaches that must be taken into consideration. See *Figure 2*.

**DIRECTING APPROACH**  
***Unwilling and Unable***

**LEADERSHIP APPROACHES**

Lead a "D" person by showing her how to be productive in the fastest, simplest, most practical way.

Be firm. Tell her in a direct way how you want the task done. Explain her boundaries clearly.

Lead an "I" person by giving her as few details as possible, speaking in a descriptive, fast paced manner. Get clear and specific feedback for complete understanding of how she will do the task.

Lead an "S" person by walking her through the process in a step-by-step procedure. Train one-on-one and submit all instructions in writing. Give feedback in an informal, relaxed manner on a regular, consistent basis.

<p><b>Directing Approach</b> Unwilling, Unable</p>	<p><b>Supporting Approach</b> Unwilling, Able</p>
<p><b>Motivating Approach</b> Moderately willing, Moderately able</p>	<p><b>Empowering Approach</b> Willing, Able</p>

Lead a "C" person by speaking with precise, factual, formal statements and tell this employee the level of perfection required. Ask for feedback on important information and give her time to process and to perfect the information.

**SUPPORTING APPROACH**  
***Willing, and Unable***

Lead a "D" person by complimenting her on her results and ability to lead others. Speak briefly and directly. Offer challenges and show how she can win and give options for ways to accomplish goals.

Lead an "I" person by helping her with details. This employee also thrives on enthusiastic compliments given in front of others. Give him/her opportunities and time for interaction with others. Let her talk about feelings and ideas.

Lead an "S" person by asking informally about concerns she might have. Notice and give friendly, informal, sincere compliments on strengths such as being a reliable team member, completing the task, being good with co-workers and clients, creating friendly relationships, listening, etc.

Lead a C person by providing opportunities for her to use facts, logic and analysis to get quality results. Create opportunities for others to see him/her as an expert in her field. Speak to her with precise, factual, formal statements complimenting her on work well done.

**MOTIVATING APPROACH**  
***Moderately Willing and Moderately Able***

Lead the "D" by helping her eliminate problems that are slowing or stopping the desired results. Ask for solutions to problems in a positive way.

Lead the "I" person by showing her how she will get approval from others by improving their job performance.

Lead the "S" person by creating a step-by-step plan of action for new situations and setting time limits. Coach this Associate in areas in which she is uncomfortable.

Lead the "C" person by helping her work on problem-solving techniques focusing on faster responses.

## **EMPOWERING APPROACH** ***Willing and Able***

Lead the "D" person by allowing her to have control over the job as long as you approve of the results. Offer opportunities for her to supervise others. Allow her to have control over the task as long as the results are approved by you and set clear boundaries of authority but allow freedom within those boundaries.

Lead the "I" person by giving her freedom to complete the job after you are sure your expectations are understood, including the deadline date, setting dates to monitor whether or not the task is on schedule and giving her opportunities and time to talk to other people.

Lead the "S" person by putting your expected results in writing, informing him/her of available resources, and checking in on a regular basis and ask if she has any questions.

Lead the "C" person by creating a clear description of results and quality expected, by explaining the positive impact on the team because she is completing her task and showing her any risks, explaining what responsibilities are and are not her responsibilities.

Effective mentoring is an attitude. It requires a determination to understand and direct the Associate. An effective Mentor coaches her Associate. She works with the Associate to improve performance and complete the job in the most productive way.

