

Personal Style

Realize 75% of the people you relate to are very different from you. They use time differently, make decisions differently, prefer to relate in different ways, and have different styles of communicating.

Analyzing Your Own Style

Understanding personal styles is also an important management skill because personality directly influences working relationships.

Better results can be realized when both managers and employees are aware of how reactions of others may differ depending on their personal styles.

Here are some examples:

- A “bottom line” person often finds it frustrating to work with someone who spends a lot of time explaining details and alternatives before giving instructions. Conversely, someone who likes details can find it difficult to work with a person who sums up everything in a single sentence.
- Individuals who like to consider a number of alternatives before acting may find it annoying to work with people who just start a job as quickly as possible, and then figure out things as they go. On the other hand, an individual who likes to start right in on a job may find a lot of planning very trying.

Managers who can tune into these differences and modify their approach will get better results from their staff.

A number of different methods have been developed to explore differences in personal style. The idea of different personality types is not new - over 2,000 years ago, Hippocrates described four types. Since his time, we have changed the names and added some to the description, but the basics remain the same.

Hippocrates named the personality types after various fluids in the body: “choleric” for hard-driving and impatient individuals; “sanguine” for happy-go-lucky types; “phlegmatic” for slow moving, steady souls; and “melancholy” for those who are sensitive and introspective.

The method we use in this book to distinguish personal styles is one developed by The Consulting Resource Group International, Inc. Their Personal Style Indicator is a self-quiz which helps you determine your predominant personal style. (See Reference section for address and phone number if you wish to order the Indicator).

Which of the following profiles best describes how you react to situations?

<p style="text-align: center;">Behavioral Style Action</p> <p><i>(Also called choleric, driver, or dominant)</i></p> <p>You are goal oriented, disciplined, independent, decisive, and efficient. You favor "bottom-line" thinking and push for results and accomplishments.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cognitive Style Analysis</p> <p><i>(Also called phlegmatic, analytical or steady)</i></p> <p>You are task-oriented, thorough, logical, precise, serious, and systematic. You prefer working with facts in a methodical and careful manner.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Affective Style Expression</p> <p><i>(Also called melancholy, compliant or amiable)</i></p> <p>You are people-oriented, cooperative, friendly, supportive, patient, and loyal. You like to be liked and are motivated to work with others in a joint effort. You try to influence others through creative use of speaking, dancing, art or music.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Interpersonal Style Harmony</p> <p><i>(Also called sanguine, inspirational or influencing)</i></p> <p>You are idea-oriented, outgoing, enthusiastic, cooperative, and persuasive. You like to initiate relationships and motivate others towards goals.</p>

Adapting Your Style

Self-knowledge + flexibility = change

Knowing your personal style is an important start. Reacting in a way compatible only with your own style will not necessarily lead to an effective management style. To be truly effective, you need also to determine what kind of style each person you work with reacts to best.

As you classify yourself and others, remember that people's personal styles are often a mix of the types described and that the same person may react in a different way in different situations. It is not possible nor desirable to pigeonhole people. The best we can get is an indication of our preferred personal style and that of others.

Think of the people you work with and try classifying them under the style that best describes them. Then think about what might be the most effective way to interact with them, using the chart on the next page.

Interacting with Different Personality Styles

Behavioral Styles	Action	Cognitive Styles	Analysis
<p>Want others to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give them summarized facts Respect their judgements Support them to reach goals Cope with unwanted details Cooperate with them <p>Get most upset when others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are too slow Get in their way Talk too much Try to be in control Waste time <p>Respond best to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct, honest confrontations Logical, rational arguments Fair, open competition An impersonal approach Getting results quickly 		<p>Want others to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give them detailed information Ask for their opinions Not interrupt their work Treat them with respect Do quality work the first time <p>Get most upset when others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move ahead too quickly Don't give them enough time Are vague in their communications Don't appreciate their efforts Are too personal or emotional <p>Respond best to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diplomatic, factual challenges Arguments based on known facts Freedom from competitive strain Friendliness, not personal contact Doing tasks well and completely 	
Affective Styles	Expression	Interpersonal Styles	Harmony
<p>Want others to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give them opportunity to speak Admire their achievements Be influenced in some ways Take care of details for them Value their opinions <p>Get most upset when others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are too task oriented Confine them to one place Are not interested in them Compete for and win attention Seem judgmental of them <p>Respond best to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being challenged in a kind way An influencing, sales approach Enjoyable competition Affection and personal contact Having a good time 		<p>Want others to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make them feel they belong Appreciate them for their efforts Be kind, considerate, thoughtful Trust them with important tasks Value them as persons <p>Get most upset when others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get angry, blow up, or are mean Demand that they be too mobile Take advantage of their goodness Are manipulative or unfair Are judgmental of others <p>Respond best to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A gradual approach to challenging A factual, practical approach Comfortable, friendly times Respecting their boundaries Conventional, established ways 	

Putting Theory into Action: An Example

Saying “Thank you”

Showing appreciation for what your employees do is an essential leadership task. Farm managers should take some time to consider what is important to each employee and think about how best to show appreciation. Raises, bonuses, time off, training, new activities and promotions are all concrete ways of backing up a “thank you”. How best to say “thank you” will depend on the individual involved and the situation.

Consider the case of the following four employees.

Mark is a steady, patient, reliable worker. He arrives, leaves and gets things done on time. He does things “by the book”, following routine and standard operating procedures. He values hard work, loyalty, belonging, tradition and thinks of long-term results. Recognition that Mark would find meaningful would include traditional activities such as summer picnics and family Christmas parties. As well, special efforts and accomplishments are important to him.

Susan thrives on change and excitement. She interacts well with colleagues and quickly gets people to co-operate. She focuses on short-term results and easily solves problems of a practical nature. Routine can be difficult for her. As you think of ways to show Susan appreciation, remember that she enjoys celebrating in informal get-togethers with friends and co-workers and likes being noticed for getting results quickly and for taking some risks.

Steve is the analytical one of the group. He likes to take extra time to produce quality work the first time. He’s innovative - turn him loose with your accounting system and he’ll come up with a better way to handle it. To say “thank you” to Steve, realize that he appreciates recognition for his ideas and efforts. He likes new, challenging projects, detailed information and opportunities to offer his opinion on matters that affect him. He also values learning opportunities.

Miriam is a great people person. Just when things are getting a little tense, Miriam can step in and smooth things over. She is aware of the feelings of others and approaches issues with sensitivity. Despite her strong commitment to co-operative work relationships, she does not want to be seen as a cog in a wheel. The best way to compliment Miriam is to recognize her unique contributions to the group. She appreciates others being kind, considerate and valuing her as a person.

Farm managers can show their appreciation for their employees in concrete ways, such as a bonus or raise, and by giving employees recognition that is important and meaningful to them.