



# The Strategic Advantage

## Dynamic Communication – Commitment to Understanding

*“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”*

*-George Bernard Shaw, Critic, Playwright and Essayist*

How you communicate and interact is at the heart of your success; but do you understand how people can best communicate with you and how best you can communicate with each of your employees?

Good communication skills require a high level of self-awareness. By becoming more aware of how others perceive you, you can adapt more readily to their styles of communicating. Adapting does not mean you have to be a chameleon, changing with every personality you meet. Instead, you can make another person more comfortable by selecting and emphasizing certain behaviors that fit within your personality and resonate with another.

Understanding, coordinating and employing different communication styles can reduce conflict and misunderstanding in the workplace, clarify expectations, enhance employee satisfaction and create productive teams.

Behavior patterns determine communication styles. While individuals may think they know how they communicate, experience has shown they do not.

Discovering your style can be done in a number of ways-- including assessments. No matter what study you read or assessment you take, communication styles fall into four basic categories.

### **Decisive** Styles Prefer:

- Being clear, specific and to the point
- Staying on topic and be prepared with predetermined answers or concepts
- Being efficient and not wasting time with small talk

### **Interactive** Styles Prefer:

- Connecting with their emotions, feelings, thoughts.
- Being sociable
- Providing ample feedback

### **Stabilizing** Styles Prefer:

- Being agreeable
- Being patient and not pushing too hard at first
- Being non-threatening, open and respectful at all times.

### **Cautious** Styles Prefer:

- Preparing in advance with sufficient data and facts.
- Being straightforward, direct and factual
- Organizing the discussion in an orderly manner.

See explanation of DISC Index on next page.



**Ann Rosser**, CEO of Finding Resolution, is a certified business coach, facilitator and mediator. Ms. Rosser has over 20 years of experience as a senior executive with a non-profit association and a Fortune 500 company. She is a certified DISC and Values trainer. Ms. Rosser is a member of the Arlington, VA Chamber of Commerce and D.C. Chamber of Commerce. She is on the board of the Northern Virginia Mediation Service and the Women Alliance for Financial Education. She is a graduate of Leadership Arlington.

Finding Resolution works with individuals and organizations on better performance through strategic planning, targeted leadership development and executive coaching.

There are various assessments that profile communication styles. The DISC Index (DI) (shown on first page) is the one with which I am most familiar and certified to interpret so I will use that as the example. The DISC Index identifies the following four distinct styles of behavior affecting how you communicate:

- Decisive
- Interactive
- Stabilizing
- Cautious

Individuals with a **Decisive** style have a clear picture in their mind of what results they want. Their actions or messages are designed to promote that idea and get others to capitulate or support those results. They are attentive to actions or communication that will speed up those results. Questions about the correct action are not as important as questions about what the end result should be.

People with an **Interactive** style want to shape and mold events and have an active voice in that process. Their actions or messages are also designed to promote that idea and get others to support those results, but they tend to do so by working with or through people. They are interested in people and like to interact with others, understand others, and be understood by others.

Persons with a **Stabilizing** style like to maintain stability within themselves and the situation. Messages that don't address the specifics or champion radical change without considered thought are not well received. They like harmonious environments and don't like to rock the boat.

Individuals with a **Cautious** style ask for specific reasons behind changes and supporting data to backup any

***The art of communication is "the language of leadership."***

*- James Humes, Author, Professor, Presidential Speechwriter*

***You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere.***

*- Lee Iacocca, American businessman, Former CEO of Chrysler*

decision to change. Why is a favorite question. They are very concerned with doing things accurately. They are receptive to messages that reassure them they are correct.

The secret to success is to be flexible enough to understand and appreciate others' styles. Before you can do this, you will have to determine what your own style is and how that style might come across to others.

When you understand how you and others communicate, amazing things can begin to happen. Workplace mistakes, strained feelings, and inefficiencies can often be traced back to one source – different communication styles.

Getting to know your own and your staff's communication style is important. Don't guess. Contact me, Ann Rosser, for details on how to determine your communication style through assessment.

## Take Strategic Action

- What is your style of communication?
- How do you know?
- Do you adjust your communication style depending on employee?
- Do you always convey the message you want?
- How do you know?



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