

YOUR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION STYLE

Star-achieving professionals strive to effectively communicate with others. They realize one way to accomplish that is to tap into another person's preferred communication style. If you want to give the best internal and external customer service, persuade, negotiate, and get support from others, you will want to learn about various styles of communication.

What do we mean by “communication styles”? It's not the mode, i.e., email, video call, or Instant Messaging that we use to convey a message. Instead, it is adapting your communication characteristics so your listener can best receive the message you intend to convey. This is done by understanding how they like to be communicated to.

Do you think about how you are communicating while you communicate? Do you just speak to get a point across/completion? Do you ponder how you may be perceived and how you might strengthen your communication skill? Do you plan how you'll approach someone or do you “shoot from the hip”?

To effectively communicate with others, you must first know yourself and understand your innate communication style. (For example, do you like to hear lots of details or “just the facts”? Do you like informal social catch up before proceeding or do you like to get right down to business?) If you communicate with others the way you want to be communicated to, without considering theirs style, you may “clash.”

By learning about your own communication style, you can also learn to adapt, or at least adjust, when working with colleagues who have other communication styles. Remember, there are no “right” or “wrong” communication styles. They are just different. Adapting communication styles so the recipient “gets” the message isn't wrong, either. It could be the difference between clarity and confusion.



Star in Action: “One of the most valuable lessons I learned in Star class is to ‘see’ how people communicate. In the past, I didn't adjust my communication style, thinking that it was appropriate that they see “me” and they will get to know my style.

Post-Star, I'm more thoughtful when reaching out to team members by creating affinity with each person I am communicating with. For example, I have a very social team member. I used to dive into what deliverables I was following up on. I didn't realize it at the time, but my style of communicating was affecting him.

I now begin our conversations by catching up on his art exhibits. It only takes a few minutes and then we begin our dialog about action items. This new approach has really built a good relationship between us, and he takes my calls every single time.” —Becky (CEAP)



ACTIVITY

Below are a series of pairs of descriptors. Make a choice between A or B. Circle whichever best describes how you see yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, but you must answer each question. (Note: There are more sophisticated assessments on the market. This will give you initial insight.)

THIS IS NOT A TEST. There are no correct or incorrect answers. This is simply a tool identifying various characteristics of different communication styles. Keep in mind that we all possess the characteristics of the various colors but to different degrees.

Characteristics	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
1 A. outgoing and sociable B. strong and forceful	B	A		
2 A. physically active B. mentally active	A			B
3 A. realistic and down-to-earth B. influential and convincing	A	B		
4 A. casual and friendly B. conventional and scrupulous		A	B	
5 A. creative and artistic B. precise and systematic			B	A
6 A. adaptable and cooperative B. respectful and thoughtful		A		B
7 A. orderly and consistent B. assertive and strong	B		A	
8 A. active and busy B. knowledgeable and discriminating	A			B
9 A. accurate and detail-minded B. imaginative and inventive			A	B
10 A. non-conformist and inward B. group-oriented and outward		B		A
11 A. open and straightforward B. particular and exact	A		B	
12 A. risk-taker and open-minded B. careful, concerned about security		A	B	
13 A. efficient and sound B. easy-going and considerate	A			B
14 A. congenial, talkative B. action oriented, goal-directed	B	A		
15 A. cheerful and warm B. deep and feeling		A	B	
16 A. truthful and open b. pleasant and mild-mannered	A	B		
17 A. likable and good-natured B. independent and self-reliant		A		B
18 A. caring and kind B. well-balanced, organized			B	A

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Characteristics	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
19 A. cautious and restrained B. active and energetic	B		A	
20 A. firm and courageous B. aware and alert	B		A	
21 A. gentle and considerate B. concerned and involved		B		A
22 A. hard-working, task-oriented B. fair, well-balanced	A		B	
23 A. sociable and well-meaning B. traditional and correct		A	B	
24 A. decisive, leader B. calm, reflective	A			B
25 A. reliable and stable B. positive and cheerful		B	A	
26 A. giving and self-sacrificing B. orderly and precise			B	A
27 A. factual and accurate B. quick and straightforward	B		A	
28 A. energetic and outgoing B. quiet and imaginative	A			B
29 A. concrete and real B. congenial and sociable	A	B		
30 A. logical and unemotional B. sensitive and intuitive			A	B
31 A. plan ahead, detail-oriented B. enjoy meeting new people		B	A	
32 A. enjoy one-to-one relationship B. enjoy group gathering		B		A

TOTAL (number of circles under each color; it doesn't matter if it is an **A** or **B**)

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Count the total circles in each of the four columns and record them. Transfer your findings below.

	Number	Color
Predominant	_____	_____
Backup	_____	_____
Stretch	_____	_____
Stretch	_____	_____

WEAK 1-4
MODERATE 5-8
STRONG 9-12
VERY STRONG 13-16

Note:
 This is the degree of emphasis for a specific style preference.

COLOR CHARACTERISTICS

What do the colors mean? The colors are just a way of identifying characteristics as related to how different types of people like to be communicated to. This information is not meant to offend anyone. It should be used to better understand people.

Red

Some characteristics:

Concrete, impulsive, risk taker. Likes to get things done and is very action oriented. Wants to know the short-term objectives of a project. Doesn't like indecision and vagueness in others. Take charge type, self-assured. Quick to act; spontaneous; likes to be in control; doesn't like advice; uninterested in personal feeling.

How to communicate with Red:

Be supportive of their goals and objectives; be business like. Avoid trying to get personal. If you disagree, argue the facts, not feelings. Be short and to the point. To influence the decisions Reds make, emphasize the practical. Give facts and documentation where possible. Be precise, efficient, and time disciplined.

Use Reds for:

Implementing a plan; getting work done quickly; quick decision making; finding simple, practical solutions to a problem; determining realistic parameters of a problem.

Yellow

Some characteristics:

Empathetic, personal, intuitive. Emphasis on human relationships and feeling when communicating. Likes to be involved in decision-making process. Enjoys friendly, informal relationships with everyone. Doesn't like rigid, bureaucratic, unfeeling management. Full of ideas; dislikes telling people unpleasant things; seeks harmony.

How to communicate with Yellow:

Be supportive of their opinions, ideas, and dreams. Don't hurry the discussion. Emphasize feelings. Try to avoid arguments but look for alternative solutions you can both agree on. Be friendly and personable with Yellows, but don't let them stray from the subject.

Use Yellows for:

Assessing the emotional tone of a situation; getting

others involved; generating alternative possibilities and ideas; making people feel at ease; stimulating enthusiasm and support.

Blue

Some characteristics:

Introspective, creative, conceptual. Makes associations, has insights. Needs personal freedom. Enjoys expressing ideas. Ask questions for understanding. Responds poorly to authoritative management. Can take small pieces of information and form a whole. Bored by routine work. Good listener; need to be unique; often unrealistic.

How to communicate with Blue:

Be supportive of Blue's feelings and idealism. Try to show that you are interested in him/her as a person. Make certain that you find out what he/she really wants. Be informal, casual. Allow Blue a great deal of personal freedom. Avoid dictating to Blue.

Use Blues for:

Creative thinking; projects involving inductive reasoning, long range planning generating alternatives; projects involving independence.

Green

Some characteristics:

Precise, analytical, impersonal. Likes consistency and logic. Prefers clear procedures, rules, and regulations. Wants guidelines and structure. Needs to know deadlines. Likes objective, task-oriented work. Not concerned about personal feelings of others. Principled, cautious, prefers working alone; likes problem solving; unemotional.

How to communicate with Green:

Be supportive of Green's organized, thoughtful approach. Be systematic, exact, organized, and prepared with the Green. Give Green time to make a decision. Don't push for quick action. Provide solid, tangible evidence to support your ideas. Stress principles, logic, theoretical, proven ideas.

Use Greens for:

Interpreting large amounts of data; designing complex projects or experiments; setting priorities; impartial decision-making; detailed projects.