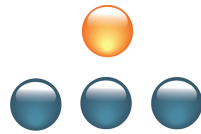




Shownotes

The “C” in DiSC®



[Blog Post]

Today's show is the fourth of our shows on the DiSC® model, a highly effective model for improving our ability to communicate with different behavioral styles at work. Over the last three months, Mark covered both the "D" (Dominance), the "I" (Influence), and the "S" (Steadiness) in DiSC; in this show he'll walk us through the "C" (Conscientious) profile in detail.

It isn't necessary that you have listened to all the previous detailed DiSC shows, but you **should** listen to the "[Improve Your Feedback](#)" show from February 17, 2006 where we first introduced the DiSC model. This will give you a high-level overview of the DiSC model that will make this particular cast more effective.

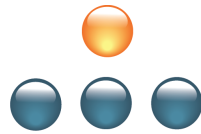
[Cast]

We know a whole lot of high C's. In fact, we suspect that the DiSC distribution of our listeners is skewed high D, high C, probably more high C's than the typical population sample.

High D/high C is a classic IT behavioral profile because D's and C's are both focused on tasks. The IT world is not a people-focused world. When IT people meet consultants, they are like, "Gees, what a schmoozer. What a sales person. I know they drive that big BMW and apparently corporate America really appreciates their skills, but I have no respect for their intellect, and intellect's what it's all about."

It's kind of a sad note we're doing the last of four monthly casts that have been very well received. This one is on the high C's.

1. How To Spot A High C



a. Verbal Clues

b. Vocal Clues

c. Visual Clues

2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High C

a. Delegating

b. Feedback

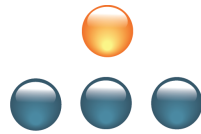
c. Coaching

d. Reporting To A High C

1. How To Spot A High C. First, we'll go through some high C examples. If you've got pointed ears ala Mr. Spock of Star Trek, you're a high C. He truly is the classic. Another perfect example is Joe Friday of Dragnet, "Just the facts ma'am, just the facts," no smile, just work. Meryl Streep. Gil Grissom, the CSI Las Vegas male lead played by the actor William Petersen, that kind of never smiling, focused on work detail. In fact, we would argue that there are a lot of high C's in crime scene investigations all over the country, the analytical, the perfectionist, the logical ones, the accountants, the engineers, the research scientists. They are methodical, they are cautious. They like to take their time to think things through to keep people like me from going off half-cocked. The more data they have, the happier they are.

Some people would say that high C's practice something called analysis paralysis. Unlike high D's who are famous for saying, "Ready, fire, aim." High C's like to say, "Ready, aim, aim, aim, aim, aim..." And standing next the high D's head explodes, and the high I says, "Well, if that guy head's going to explode, let's go have a drink," and the high S says, "How's everybody feeling?" And here's the high C saying, "Aim, aim, aim, more data please."

High C's like working within well-defined processes and systems, and they will be the person who makes suggestions to improve the system and the process that they're



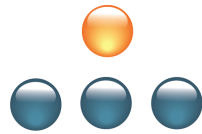
working within. When things go wrong, high C's are classically the ones to say a rule was violated. If you'd just follow the rules, everything would be OK. Or a process was ignored or a high I played fast and loose and had no data to support their wild idea.

High C's think everything without data is a wild idea. On the other hand, with data that supports it, that makes it logical, that makes it rational, that makes it reasonable, the craziest thing in the world seems normal to them. High C's generally do not like, in many cases they absolutely hate, uncontrolled or emotional acts. We suspect that high C's would never watch a show like Fear Factor. They probably like shows like Jeopardy.

Here is a story about the daughter of Mark's former partner. His daughter's name is Elora and Elora is a CPA, a very bright person, a really keen analytical mind Elora has. She is the CFO of a pharmaceutical company in San Diego. Elora is a classic high C, off the charts. Now, when you get to know her, she is very personable. She cares about the people in her family, in her life. She is a good person, but when you first meet her, you get that kind of neutral facial expression that makes you wonder, "Gosh, is this a friendly person?" You're not really sure.

Here is a typical day in Elora's work life. Elora got to work at about 7:45 and that gave her a chance to go to the break room and get a cup of tea and heat the tea up in the microwave and then go to her office and turn on her computer. And at eight o'clock, her computer was on, she was behind the desk, the door was closed and she would work until about 10:00 or 10:15 when there was company sponsored break. She would take a 15-minute break by going to the break room and getting a cup of tea or cup of coffee, coming back to her office, closing the door and working until noon when it was lunch hour and, of course, she was working on financial analysis and reports and so on.

When she sat at meetings, she would essentially take notes and provide reports. When she went to lunch, she walked across the street to Balboa Park, sat in a bench, ate lunch

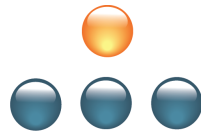


outside in a wonderful San Diego weather, usually by herself, took a walk sometimes, came back to the office and was ready to work at one o'clock. She'd work until about 2:30 when there was a company sponsored break and she'd go get her cup of tea and spent 10-15 minutes out of the office, get back to the office, close the door and continue working.

And at five o'clock when it was time to go home, Elora turned off her computer and went home. And so could the rest of those crazy people who worked there if they wouldn't spend all their time jacking their jaws with their buddies and talking at the water cooler and emailing crazy stuff back and forth of jokes and silly video tapes and going to look on the Internet for funny stuff and checking out urban legends and telling everybody about how their weekend was.

And life was good for Elora until her pharmaceutical company decided to go public. Well, if you know anything about going public, it's a financial analytical nightmare in a way in terms of reporting. And for a period of a couple of months, Elora's role as the CFO was to talk the company up financially speaking in a series of cocktail parties and dinners with a roving band of analysts that would come in from Wall Street and analyze the company to determine whether or not it was a good investment for their institutional investors. So Elora would go home and get ready to go to a cocktail party and get dressed up a little bit and then go and have a lovely time and chat and have a glass of wine and chat people up and be friendly and outgoing and warm and personable and then go home and throw up.

That's the ultimate story of adaptability. When Elora decided to be personable, she was wonderful. It was not her natural way, but she is a perfect example of someone who found a job, found a career, found a profession, a lifestyle, a work professional lifestyle that was perfectly fitted for her and she was very good at it. And then when her work threw a curve ball and it required different set of skills, she could adapt. She might not

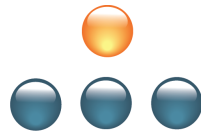


have been as naturally schmoozy and gifted networking as some high I's in the world or a sales person, but, nevertheless, she was very effective at what she did. It was just terribly uncomfortable. It was like chewing glass for her and she figured out a way to make it work and she did it.

a. Verbal Clues. When you start interacting with somebody who might be a high C, what are you going to hear verbally? First of all, they're going to tend to ask questions versus making statements. Remember, a high C is a task-focused and reserved person. They are reserved like the high S and they're task-focused like the high D. They're opposite the high I who is assertive and people-focused.

Whereas, the high I opposite them loves to make statements bold, brash, big statements, the high C tends to ask questions versus making statements. They want to gather more data, that's why they ask questions. They tend to listen more than they talk. They are a reserved person in general. They love to absorb data. When they are interrupted, they tend to stop talking. Because again, that's their natural reserve showing through, they tend to have a slower pace of speech. It comes across as measured or methodical or formal or even logical or step-by-step in its delivery.

When you ask them for elaboration, they'll go back a couple of steps and build a compelling case rather than telling you the one thing they need to tell you. The feeling that the high I has when the high C starts answering their question is they hear the start of a long winded answer and what it translates into the high I's brain is "When I was born..." and the high I is thinking, "I really don't need to know that much. Is the answer 7 or 5?" And the high C's answer is, "Well, that depends." And when the high I says, "What does it depend on?" the high C says, "Well, that too depends."

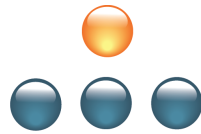


The high C asks why questions. We mentioned that they ask questions. They like to ask why questions and the reason why is they want a system or process to inform behavior. They want to know why you're doing it that way and try to infer from what you're doing, what the underlying construct is that you're using to approach this particular problem, this particular situation at work. And if they can understand that, if they can infer that from your behaviors, it will help them understand why you're doing what you're doing, make suggestions, make corrections and so on. Very powerful, high C's ask lots of why questions.

They're not big on small talk at all as you might imagine. They tend to be reserved. Remember they're like high S's, they're reserved and they're like high D's in terms of being task-focused and if you're reserved and task-focused, the last thing you want to do is engage in chitchat.

They generally are fairly precise and detailed in their speech. They'll pause. They won't start a sentence and go, "Wait, I'll go back, say it again. This is really exciting." They don't ever come to you and say, "I can't wait to tell you..." They don't blurt things out and they find when other people blurt things out, they don't appreciate it. They believe that when they're talking that the process is or the ground rule is they're supposed to be talking, so when other people interrupt that's a breaking of the ground rules. So they're very precise when they talk, they don't blurt things out. They're not going to interrupt when you're talking. You're going to find that they pause and listen and reflect on what you've said for a full second sometimes before they respond to you.

b. Vocal Clues. First of all, there is very little inflection. Of all four styles, the high C gives you very little vocal clues. If you're interacting with somebody and you think, "Boy, I just can't get any sense of them from the vocal tone, inflection, pitch, speed, pace, change and that kind of stuff," you're probably talking to a



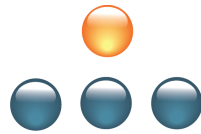
high C. Fairly monotone actually, they don't feel a need to be too inflection-oriented. A little bit lower, a little bit quieter, a little bit slower, more measured and considered. Generally, just not a lot of clues here because again, they don't want to jump into the realm of a high I and become salesy and pitchy because that would then imply that emotions might rule the day and they don't want emotions to rule the day. They want you to look at their pile of data and say, "Your pile of data Mr. high C is better than mine, and we shouldn't get excited about data, we should simply analyze the data and know that it's the right data. It's the right information we need. It's the logical choice that we're making."

High C's can be very good at learning if we provide them information that will help them understand why a different approach would be better.

c. Visual Clues. Not a lot of facial expressions again. High C's tend to be not contact-oriented terribly much. Often, they are not the one to stick out their hand first although they will stick out their hand and shake hands of course. A lot of times, the reason they don't shake hands at work is because their hands are full of stuff. They are carrying around binders and Excel spreadsheets, data, and notebooks and books and so on. So they are busy.

They don't tend to make a lot of eye contact when they move to the office going from office to office. They tend to have a less animated face as we suggested. Not a lot of eye contact because the reserved folks, the S's and C's, tend to see eye contact as a little bit assertive and even aggressive in some cases.

Slower body language, smaller gestures. The D's and I's of the world tend to make gestures above their shoulders and outside of their body and below their



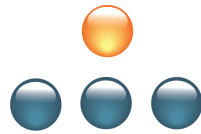
waist. The S's and C's of the world tend to gesture above the waist below the neck and inside the outlines of the torso.

If you look at their workplace, they tend to be somewhat sterile perhaps, not as warm and fuzzy as some other people's and often the desk is exceptionally clean or there are a lot of piles of work because high C's love a lot of stuff around them, a lot of piles of work on the desk, but they're neat.

2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High C. High C's don't like aggression, so we want to approach them indirectly. We want to send them an email first positioning an idea and then follow up with a data. By the way, high C's are the ones that send you high D's and high I's the attachments that you never open. So send them your data in advance. Don't ask for a decision right away. The idea of walking into a high C's office and saying, "Hey, real quick, I need something from you," the high-C, the first response to that is, "I don't think so." You may be saying what's important to you when you say real quick, but the high C's first response to that is actually negative. Now, if you say, "I need your input," they're all ears.

On the other hand, subtle difference, if you say to a high C, "I need your opinion," high C's are not big on opinions, they are big on facts so what you want is, "I need your input" or "Can you give me some insight?" or "Can you make a recommendation?" Those are analytical words. Those are professional words. Those are words they respect.

They're not big on aggression. They like to think logically, show them your logic and data upfront, and they like to review the data, so don't summarize. Give them written reports first, they love accuracy and completeness. Don't be surprised if they say you're missing something. Don't fight them, agree, and go get the data that they want.



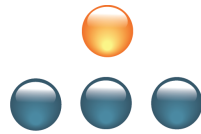
Now, the third time they ask for more data say, "Look, I'm sorry. We have to go with the data we've gotten." And quite frankly, if we're dealing with managers or directors or executives, they know that they can't really aim, aim, aim all the time, although sometimes high C bosses of high I's, high S's, high D's tend to want more and more and more data, which just so happens that they will get to the point where they have enough data, but it's always longer than the high D, high I or high S wants it to take.

They're proud of their accuracy. If you want to complement a high C, complement them on the thoroughness and correctness. Not the fact that their suit looks good. Yes or great presentation last week. The only reason their presentation is great is if their recommendations are followed

a. Delegating. When delegating to high C's that work for us, we want to take our time. They're going to ask a lot of questions. So go into the meeting knowing this would take longer than you thought. In fact, tell them you have a half hour, but schedule a half hour but leave an hour open on your calendar.

Be willing in advance to go over everything twice because they'll ask questions and that's OK. If you prepare for that, it makes it less irritating. You don't want to be irritated while you're delegating. It just doesn't come across well. Show them all the steps you expect, but expect them to add some steps as well. They want to show you that they are smart by sharp shooting a little bit the approach that you've taken.

They're going to want to gather more data and that takes time. On the other hand though, they may need help reaching out to others and a lot of times, if you want to delegate and use delegation as a developmental opportunity for a high C, then you want to choose a project that requires them to reach out.

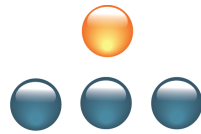


What they'll do is they'll do a lot of the data gathering that doesn't require them to reach out first and so you need to be explicit about reporting standards and deadlines because they will say, "Look, I know it was supposed to be two weeks but there's more data I need," and you're going to have to be willing as a boss of a high C to say, "I don't care how much more data you want, I want a report by Wednesday based on the data you have." And when the high C says, "You know I really think that if you can just give me until Friday, then I will get that last piece of data." You'll probably find that you have to be very direct with them and say, "Look, don't ask for an extension, it's Wednesday. Do what you need to do to get the data you need by Wednesday."

b. Feedback. When you give feedback to a high C, you want to be quiet. You don't want to be forceful. You don't want to try to make him feel better because they're not in touch with their feelings right now. You want to be direct, it's OK to be direct.

When you get to step three, here's what happens, talk about what they're doing either doesn't make sense or doesn't help in terms of cost-benefit analysis or bottom line or results that are aligned with the organization. Talking about how it affects the team negatively, talking about how it makes other people feel, those are not effective. Here's what happens step three statements in the feedback model. You certainly want to do it privately and you don't want to do it in a way that they perceive as cavalier.

One way when you get to step four for adjusting feedback, you can ask them if they can "think" of "more effective" way. In other words, rather than saying, "How could you do this differently?" say, "Hey, can we brainstorm or can you think of a way to do this more effectively, more efficiently, more rationally?"



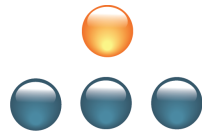
Those are the kinds of phrases you want to use when delivering feedback to a high C.

You could expect quiet acceptance from them and then they came back in a couple of days and say, "I've got some questions about that feedback you gave me," and the high I says, "All I did was say you're five minutes late to work. Why would you have questions about that?"

c. Coaching. Allow yourself some long lead times. Expect your meetings to take a little bit longer. There's nothing wrong with that inherently, just don't go into it expecting it to get it done in 15 minutes and then be ticked off when it takes 30 minutes, that's not effective. Expect them to do tons of research on the resources. When you get your brainstorming step, when you sit down and talk with them about the possible resources they can avail themselves of, don't be surprised if they have 20 more than you ever expected and notebooks or printouts from the web and so on.

This is again really critical that you're holding the time lines. If they say, "In week three, I'm going to be here," in week three, if they're not there, don't give them another week because everything starts getting pushed back and if in week three they push it back by a week, that means we're now on week four and for the week five stuff, they're going to push back another week and now you're two weeks behind and it's just a never ending rotating deadline hell. You're going to have to hold on to those timelines you agreed to upfront.

d. Reporting To A High C. You sure as heck better be on time and be accurate with every report. You need to definitely show them the bottom line. Do cost-benefit analysis of any recommendation you make. If you make recommendation and say, "Our folks will love it," that doesn't excite them.

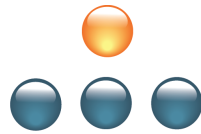


Improved retention, reduced personnel hiring and training cost, that's exciting to them.

When you make a recommendation to them, be aware of what processes, systems, procedures and policies you might be in conflict with, disagreeing with or suggesting that you change. You want to know the full effect of what you're suggesting because they're going to go look at the processes and procedures and make a recommendation back to you, "Hey, Lino, you're violating these three or four things, what are we going to do about that?" They may be OK with violating if the way you're suggesting is better, but you ought to know that you're violating them when you're presenting or when you're delivering.

You definitely want to provide everything in writing first, don't just pop your head in and say, "Hey real quick, I had a great idea and I wanted to share it with you." Definitely send emails in advance, and they're famous for sending long emails with attachments that they absolutely expect you to have read. They're going to explain to me what they want from me. They're going to explain in detail, that's good.

And then don't be surprised if in one of their long weekly emails they send you when they're writing at night because they're not as comfortable interacting with you. So two nights a week, they stay a couple of hours and draft the long email to you telling you what they want done and what the teams should be working on for the next three or four days. They'll be surprised if you just kind of scan it and they say, "Hey, where's my report?" and you go back and reread their email and there's a deliverable buried in the middle of their email and they don't break it out and make it easy to see necessarily. You've got to read their emails.



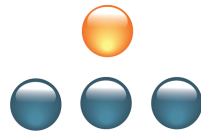
They seem to be reading all the details. They're detail-oriented, they're going to assume that you're doing the same thing.

Some things to look out for if you're a High C. High C's can sabotage themselves in terms of career advancement if they stick to their comfortable communication style.

They close their door when they're in the office or they send emails to people that sit five feet away from them. That's rude to 25 to 50 percent of your audience. Believe me, executives, lots of high D's, lots of high C's and plenty of high I's in executive roles, and high S's, because executive roles are about leveraging people to accomplish things. Unless you're in a purely IT organization, you've got to embrace the high I.

They sit at their computer and send emails rather than reaching out. They don't build their network. They don't know the names of the kids of people around them. They don't make eye contact when conflict is inevitable with a high D boss who says, "Anybody who doesn't make eye contact with me is a wimp and doesn't deserve to get promoted to the next level where the decisions are really big and you can get fired if you make a big enough mistake." They don't create relationships on a personal level with many executives. Whether you think that's the right thing or not, executive relationships at a personal level are how organizations are run and if you don't have them, you won't succeed, period, end of story.

High C's are so used to writing emails to their team and they just engage their natural style because I'm the boss and I get to talk the way I want to and they send long emails to their team that their team probably doesn't have time to read and probably gets frustrated by them. Then they turn around and send long emails to their peers and bosses. Peers and bosses don't have to read it and they don't read it and then the high C wonders why everybody else doesn't see things the way they see it.



They tend to underestimate other people's emotions and when people get their feelings hurt, they're going to be less effective and the high C's classically say, it's the old army phrase, "If the army wanted you to have feelings, they'd issued you some." Well, unfortunately, people do have feelings and if you hurt somebody's feelings by saying something very direct and very logical and very rational, but it's disagreeing with their emotions in a meeting, that person is going to be less effective going forward. You must be willing to embrace some personal nature of work and relationships.

And if you are alone in your cubicle as an executive, you are by definition less effective than when you're with other executives, and high C executives love being alone and they wonder why they get passed over for promotions. It's because they're not playing golf (and golf is definitely overrated), because they're not going for drinks at the end of the day with the right people, because they're not in the place where those discussions are happening.

We want to know what our weaknesses are and catch ourselves before we step in the puddle, but we don't want to make it our life's work to improve on our weakness because all that does is take time away from developing our strengths which is really the way you get ahead. The way you make a bigger difference in the world is by leveraging your strengths.

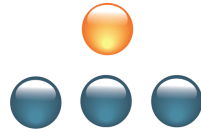
Wrap Up

1. How To Spot A High C

- a. Verbal Clues**
- b. Vocal Clues**
- c. Visual Clues**

2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High C

- a. Delegating**



- b. Feedback**
- c. Coaching**
- d. Reporting To A High C**

Now that you have this knowledge on the DISC model, go use it, start simply focusing on noticing other's behavior as well as your own then go back and review this podcast and try altering your communication style just a bit to improve your effectiveness. You'll be simply amazed at the difference it can make.

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