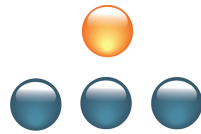




Shownotes

The “D” in DiSC®



[Blog Post]

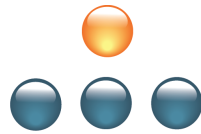
This is the first of 4 shows giving a high level overview of how to communicate with different behavioral styles at work. We recently used the DiSC® profile system to supplement the way we give feedback. This is a broader application of the four major styles of behavior in the workplace, and how to modify OUR behavior to be more effective with them.

[Cast]

In a previous podcast, we talked about the DISC model particularly in regards to giving people feedback. We got a lot of great response about how people have found that to be effective and they wanted to learn more about DISC. We covered it at a very, very high level and so we thought we'd deal on this special member-only podcast as we covered DISC in a little bit more detail.

Specifically today, we're going to talk about the D or the dominant part of the DISC model.

What we're talking about here is communication. The primary skill that a manager uses is not decision making, but rather communication. It's the thing he or she does most frequently. Fact is, we should be using our natural way of communicating with only about 25 percent of people. We all have our own habits of communicating, whether we're outgoing or reserved or whether we're people-focused or task-focused or whatever. The DISC model basically says, "Look, there are four different styles of behavior/communication. You should know what those four are. And if you know what they are, if you're able to spot them and then able to modify your behavior slightly, you're going to be a great deal more effective."



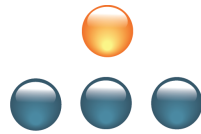
Basically the DISC model recognizes that there are different natural styles in the workplace. Regardless of what style you are, your effectiveness can be significantly enhanced by recognizing other people's styles and modifying the way you communicate. As we've talked about before, communication is what the listener does. So we've got to understand what the listener is thinking and feeling and so on and then modify our communication to make it effective for them.

We're talking about D today. We're going to talk about how to spot people that are high on the D-axis. The three are verbal clues – what they say, vocal clues – how they say it, and visual clues -things that they do or things that you'll see that will tip you off.

Now, some of these four styles, they share. There are high D's and high C's tend to make steady eye contact. But it's the combination of five or six of these that will help enormously to give you a way of characterizing someone's habitual behaviors. If you ask these questions, if you're constantly looking as you meet new people or as you interact with people you already know, if you use these how-to-spot-them clues, it will help you decide what their habits are. Then based on their habits, we'll tell you, "OK, with that kind of person, here are the ways they would want to be communicated to."

If you communicate to them in a way that makes sense to them, you're more likely to be effective. In fact, a high D wouldn't say this, but they'll like... People will like you more. Like it or not, as a couple of people have mentioned on the website recently, politics is a fact of life in large organizations. While it may not be your goal to be liked, a high D doesn't really care whether he or she is liked at all. If other people respect you more because they get along with you better because you communicate with them better, your career and, therefore, your results and your likelihood of being successful are going to be greatly improved.

1. How To Spot A High D



a. Verbal Clues

b. Vocal Clues

c. Visual Clues

2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High D

a. Delegating

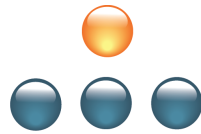
b. Feedback

c. Coaching

d. Reporting To A High D

1. How To Spot A High D. These are the Vince Lombardis, the George Pattons, the Norman Schwarzkopfs, the Donald Trumps of the world. They're forceful. They're direct. They're perceived as aggressive. Sometimes they're blunt. They're no-nonsense. They tend to do better in terms of climbing a corporate ladder, quite frankly, because they push for their ideas and they're willing to push maybe a little bit of a Machiavellian way in order to make things happen. They like power and authority. They like to get promoted. They're not the most warm and fussy people, but it always seems that, as many people say, when the big projects come down, they go to high D's because the bosses think the high D can get it done.

a. Verbal Clues. These are things that they'll say or how they talk that'll be helpful. First of all, when they're asking questions, they tend to ask what questions. "What's the status of? What have you done? What remains to be done?" As opposed to a high I who asks, "Who's working on that? Who's responsible for that? How is that going? Who are we relying on for that information? Who do I need to talk to, to help you?" The I's tend to focus on who. D's want to focus on the facts. What's done? What's not done? What needs to be done? What's our weakness? What's our strength? Those kinds of things.



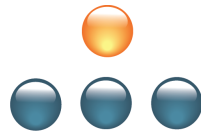
On the other hand, a lot of times high D's rather than asking questions, they tend to tell. Rather than saying, "Where are we?" they'll say, "Tell me where we are" or "Tell me what our weaknesses are." They essentially make demands rather than asking questions.

Now, contrast that with somebody who would be the exact opposite of a high D, which would be a high S. If I were a high S, Mike, and you worked for me, I might say something like, "Boy, Mike, I'd really appreciate it if you could tell me how things are going and how you're feeling about this project. So, can you tell me how are you feeling about it?" Well, the high D says, "Tell me what's up. Tell me where we are. Tell me what we've messed up."

They tend to talk more than they listen. In other words, they'll just keep talking and ask you questions and as soon as they get what... If you give them five sentences and they get what they wanted in the first two sentences, they don't hear your next three and they start talking.

They go right to the issue. You're not going to get hardly any small talk. In fact, if you were to come in into a high D, if you report to a high D and say, "Hey, how was your weekend, boss?" they'd say, "Great. Now, where are we on project X? Tell me where we are." Or better yet, they'll say, "Yeah, mine was fine. Yours? Good. OK, let's go." People, high S particularly or high I, are going to say, "These people are pushy, they're rude. They tend to interrupt me." They tend to talk a little bit louder. They tend to use acronyms. They use very short sentences. They don't really talk about how they feel and they don't really care how you feel.

They're very direct with opinions. If there is a group of people sitting around the room and there are some high D's and you say, "Hey, what do you all think?" the high D's will say, "Well, I think this or I think that." They don't mind being wrong



sometimes, quite frankly. But if you ask them their opinion, they'll tell you. And they assume when they ask you your opinion, they'll want to know it.

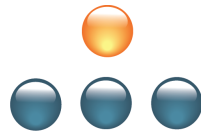
b. Vocal Clues. High D's have a lot of vocal variety up and down. They very often can be very loud with a very authoritative tone of control. "Look, we're going to do this, any questions? Good. Bye." "Bob, I expect you to do this by Tuesday. Any questions? Good. Thank you, Bob. Next?"

They tend to speak very quickly. "Hey, listen, try to keep up. I want you to make some notes, get back to you on, at the end of the day, one two three four, got it? OK, bye."

They often have a challenging intonation. They're comfortable saying, "Are you getting this? Do I need to repeat myself?"

c. Visual Clues. These are the things you should be looking for that will help you characterize how another person tends to habitually communicate. This is not who they are. This is not their personality. It's their habits of communication. By knowing someone's habits, you can modify your communication style to be more like them. People who communicate more like someone else tend to be better liked, tend to be more respected, tend to get more of what they want from the other person, which in most organizations you have to rely on other people to get certain things done.

In terms of things that you could see a high D do. They are classic for firm fast handshakes. They make direct eye contact. They love to cross their arms. They love to lean back in chairs in meetings and sort of spread out. They'll even be comfortable looking a little bit sloppy. They'll rest their chin in their hand on the arm of a chair. On the other hand, they'll definitely lean forward, put their



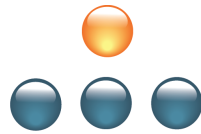
elbows in the table and say, "Look, here's what we're going to do. Does anybody have any questions?" That's not a socializer. We're talking about a dominant person.

They love to make big gestures. A small gesture is something that's made above the waist, below the neck and inside the shoulders. Big gestures are outside their body, above their head, down at their knees or what have you. They also make gestures in your direction, which S's and C's don't tend to do. They'll also be very comfortable getting close to you. D's aren't huggers. They're not going to hug you, but they don't have any problem getting very, very close to you and putting their hand into your physical space.

They tend to make gestures that are made more quickly. They don't make big slow gestures. They make fast gestures. They make chopping actions with their hands. They point with one index finger rather than with their whole hand. When they point, their finger is extended in a straight, straight line. You can almost see the tension in their hand. You can see their knuckles turning white.

They tend to roll their eyes when they're impatient. High D's are famous for sitting in a meeting and when somebody says, "Let's take five more minutes and drag this problem to the ground." The high D leans back, sighs, and rolls his eyes. High D's look at their watches. They'll look at their watches twice in 30 seconds as if suddenly, time warped into, really fast or really slow. They're also famous for walking away from people while the conversation is still going on, but they got what they needed and so they're moving along.

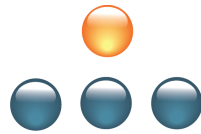
High D's are famous for doing email and answering the phone when you're in their cube talking to them even during the One-on-One they scheduled with you.



They're just focused on results, and right now you're not in the category of results, you're in the category of talking.

2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High D. It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what your natural style is, you can behave anyway you want to if you think about it first. If all you have in your kit bag is, "I present the same way every time I talk to any group of people," you're destined to fail. The higher you go in an organization, the more you rely on the relationships and the strength of your relationships with other people. It is not the purity of your ideas or the clarity of your thought that gets you ahead. It is the strength of your relationship with other people. Now, your strengths and your relationships do depend on the clarity of your thought and the uniqueness of your ideas. That's part of getting to the table. But if you don't have relationships you can leverage and people you can count on and votes you can trade, you're not going to be successful at senior levels of an organization.

With a High D, the most important thing you can do is be brief and to the point. In fact, a high D would say, "Mark, if you really want to communicate with me, don't say be brief and to the point, just say be brief." Here's a good example. The high D does not ask, "How are we doing on a project?" he asks, "Are we on track?" There are only two correct answers, yes and no. If you say yes, nothing more needs to be said. If you say no, there better be a period at the end of it followed by why it's not. "No, Mike, we're not. Here's why. Here's what I'm doing about it." It's three or four sentences and it's 30 seconds. Mike doesn't care how you feel. He doesn't care how somebody jerked us around. He doesn't care that the budget got changed or, you know, there was an earthquake in Somalia. To a degree, it's like, "OK, are we or are we not on track? Because I have 17 of these projects to track and I can't listen to every single person tell me every single thing in their personal life that might have kept us off track."



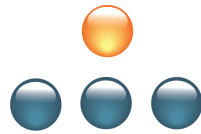
So for high D, don't give all the reasons and save the answer to the end. Give the answer. Yes, no, and then if you have to talk about it in the details, do so. The marines call this BLUF. B-L-U-F, bottom, line, up, front. So if we ask, "Are you on track?" don't say, "Well, we're looking at this and this and this and because of this and because of this the answer is no." Be brief, to the point, no nonsense.

Also, D's do not like to partner with other people. If you were to go in and say, "Look, I need your help," they're not terribly excited about that. If you say, "I'd like to partner with you on something," they don't really get excited about that. You can tell them what you need from them, "I need you to do X, Y and Z." What they care about is, "Tell me what you want me to do and when you want me to do it."

Also in general, let them take the lead. If you want to help a D give you their point of view and say, "What do you think?" Be very specific. If you go in to talk to a D, talk specifically about whatever topic you want to talk about. If you say to them, "Hey, I'd like to chat," a D rolls his eyes and say, "OK, about what?" If you give them two topics, they are going to want to talk about those two topics and nothing else.

They care about you. They do. But they care about you within a framework of work and they very much want to know how they can get ready. If they can spend five minutes in preparation of a 30-minute meeting so that the 30-minute meeting becomes 10 minutes, they're willing to do it, but they can't do that if they don't know what it is you wanted to talk about. So tell them what you want to tell them or what you want to talk to him about and then stick to that topic. When you get the answer, don't expect a lot of chit chat afterwards.

a. Delegating. They are the easiest people to delegate to in the world. All you need to do is tell them what results you want and let him go. "Hey, I need this project done by Friday. Here are the standards. Knock yourself out." You don't

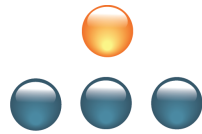


need to give them a great deal of guidance, unless you perceive that they're going to be way off base which they may very well be, it's up to you to decide that. You don't need to coach them through certain steps. They don't really want the coaching before they've started. You absolutely must tell them how often you want to hear from them, but don't expect half hour briefing on everything that's happened. They're going to want to give you a very high-level briefing.

High D's don't like to fail. They don't like to not achieve the objective they set out for. But if you want to show them respect by giving them very little guidance and saying, "Look, here's the results I want. I'm not going to tell you which way to go. I trust you to choose the right way to go. You're somebody who achieves results, go and report to me weekly and here are the things I want weekly." If they don't do it, high D's expect details and negative feedback.

b. Feedback. When you give positive feedback to a high D, you want to focus on what happened statements. Step three of the feedback model should be on promotion, status, their profile, getting a raise, more influence, special projects. So, "Mike, can I give you some feedback? When you do this, this and this, this is what happens. You look good for promotion, it makes me more impressed by you, makes me want to rely on you more and give you bigger projects and give you more influence on things. It'll give you better visibility throughout the organization, and that means you'll be creating bigger results with bigger bottom line impact for the entire company."

On the other hand, if you're going to give negative feedback, just the opposite. Loss of respect, loss of influence, loss of promotability. If you really want to get to the heart of a high D say, "Boy, I really question whether or not you can handle the workload you've got right now." That will get their attention.

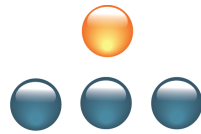


Something else very important for high D's. Rarely do you want to complement them. You want to complement their ideas, their actions, or their results. For instance, someone once said to Mark, "When you tell me I'm smart, that really doesn't impress me. I don't really care whether you think I'm smart or not, I care that I had a good idea." That's the difference complementing or giving feedback to their result or to their work, which is an idea, rather than to them personally. D's don't think of themselves as being separate from their work.

c. Coaching. Coaching should be handled in much the same way that we talked in delegating – by letting them run with it. Tell them clearly about what you expect, set very clear goals. Set high goals, don't give them softball goals. Expect them to do the research to come up with the resources that you're going to consider. Collaborate with them on the project list, on the task list, their action contract if you will. Expect them to write it up, and then expect them to give you weekly reports on how they're doing and expect them to tell you when they've achieved everything or when they haven't and when they're going to change resources because they're not achieving the results.

The clearer you are about results and the less interaction you have, the better. Because it will send a message that you trust them on their own improvement. Whether the improvement is to get to standard or whether it is to get them to a promotion, it doesn't matter.

You've got to hold them accountable. High D does not have any respect for a boss who says, "Hey listen, I totally understand, you want to slip that a couple of weeks, no problem." If they don't make a deadline, you give them negative feedback, you give them adjusting feedback. "Hey, Mark, you know what? Can I give you some feedback? When you don't meet a deadline, it really makes me wonder whether or not you're blowing me off. I don't like being blown off. So

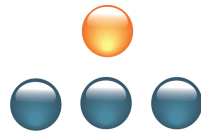


what are you going to do differently about that?" Now, to some of our listeners, that probably sounds like a punch in the nose. To be fair, sometimes to get the attention of a high D, you have to punch him in the nose. Metaphysically speaking.

d. Reporting To A High D. Many more bad bosses tend to be high D's, we think. Now, the workplace has gotten a lot softer in the last 20 or 30 years and so high D's that are over the top tend to be recognized pretty quickly. But in terms of really bad bosses, people tend to focus on the high D, the person who would berate somebody else or be loud or whatever while maybe perhaps achieving phenomenal results.

High D's working for high D's don't have any problem with them. They say, "That's fine, they're direct with me and that's OK, I've got a thick skin." If you work for a high D, here are a couple of things you can absolutely be certain that high D's expect.

Number one, **they expect you to be very quick with bad news.** If you know about bad news on Monday and you wait till Wednesday, they're going to perceive that you're hiding, that you're not being forthcoming, which they don't appreciate at all. They can tolerate somebody who misses deadlines as long as they understand why and what you're doing about it. This is the case of the bottom line up front. If the boss says, "Where are we on the project?" You can say, "We're yellow and we're going to be red in two weeks if we don't do this, this, and this. Here's my plan for doing this, this, and this. Here are the resources I need from you." It's not, "Gosh, boss, I'm really worried. You know, I'm thinking that we might be red in a couple of weeks and I'm hoping to get your input and see what you think and I'm not sure I know what to do."



High D's love people who meet deadlines. It's OK to be behind on a project as long as you let them know that there's a reporting responsibility. The danger is being behind and not reporting on it. As if to suggest that you can either handle it on your own or you're not willing to share information about where things are because these are all about results. If a project is behind or you're not doing what you're supposed to do or somebody's not doing what they're supposed to do who reports to you, the D expects to know about it. They also want you to be very clear about what their results and their responsibilities are.

Always communicate with a high D about what's important to them, which tends to be organizational results, team results, numbers, facts, figures. Those things that other people know about their work. That's going to be very powerful. So if you're talking about personnel issues, which don't necessarily get first priority with high D's all the time because they tend to be more task-focused, be clear about how the personnel issue that you need help on or that you're briefing them on affects their results

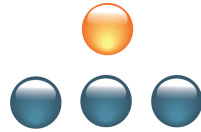
Hopefully, you will recognize which one of the four you are. If you think you might be a high D, recognize that when you talk to other high D's, you don't have to make any changes. It's only if you're an I, S, or a C where you need to think a little bit. Put a clutch in your communication style and say, "Wait a minute, Mark's different than me. How can I communicate differently with Mark in order to be more effective?" That's it.

Wrap Up

1. How To Spot A High D

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

2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High D



- a. Delegating**
- b. Feedback**
- c. Coaching**
- d. Reporting To A High D**

Communication is kind of like the connective tissue of the organization. You can make big strides without changing your knowledge of your work, without changing the amount of hours you work, or the projects you work on. You can be more effective simply by improving your system and communications skills internally.

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