



Understanding Your Communication Style

Level 2 Project



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Understanding Your Communication Style

About Understanding Your Communication Style

Communication is a two-way process for reaching mutual understanding through verbal, non-verbal, and written messages. Communication style is defined as the way in which individuals interact with one another and the messages they send, intentionally or not, through their behaviors.

In this project, you will learn how to identify different communication styles, understand your preferred communication style, and recognize how your communication style may impact your interactions with others. You will determine how to improve your relationships by mastering and adapting your communication styles and tailor your message to match situational expectations.

Resources

The following is a list of resources available in your digital project on Base Camp. Some of these resources, such as evaluations, are also available on the Resources section on Base Camp.

Project Checklist

Evaluation Resource

Introduction and Assignment

Introduction

Determining your own communication style can help you improve how you share information with others. Learning how to effectively communicate with styles different from your own will enable you to establish effective relationships and create better understanding.

Your Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to learn about different communication styles and identify your primary style.

Overview: Complete the Discover Your Communication Style questionnaire to help you identify your style. Deliver a 5- to 7-minute speech at a club meeting about your communication style and its impact on your professional and/or personal relationships. If you are uncomfortable discussing your communication style, you may speak about the communication styles you have encountered and how they impact you. Your speech should not be a report of the content of this project.

Your speech can be persuasive, humorous, informational, or crafted in any style that appeals to you and supports your speech content.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.



Weblink: Return to your digital project when you see this icon to link to a website or Base Camp location.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist.

Learning in Understanding Your Communication Style



Assess and Reflect

To assess and track your knowledge, complete the activity below by listing what you already know and what you wonder about the topic today. Add up to five items to each list. After you complete your project, you will have an opportunity to review your answers and add what you have learned.

Know

For example: I know I can select or adjust my communication style to fit any situation or relationship.

Wonder

For example: I wonder how my behavior and chosen communication style(s) may impact my interactions with others.

Competencies

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Understand different communication styles.
- Identify your preferred communication style.
- Recognize how your communication style may impact your interactions.
- Determine how to improve your relationships by mastering and adapting your application of communication styles based on the situation.
- Tailor your style to match situational expectations.

Discover Your Communication Style



Complete the Discover Your Communication Style questionnaire to identify your communication style. The goal of understanding your communication style preferences is to communicate with others in a way that is comfortable and effective.

Most people will find they produce a score in multiple categories. Each communication style has value and there is no best overall style. Having a higher score in one communication style indicates you are comfortable using that style in many situations, but it is not necessarily what you choose in all your communications.

Directions: Complete the questionnaire to determine your primary communication style. For each statement, choose the word that is **most** descriptive of you. While you may change your style based on a situation, answer based on what is true for you most of the time.

1. I like to be seen as

Sociable	Cautious
Decisive	Patient

2. When collaborating with others, I am

Competitive	Cooperative
Spontaneous	Precise

3. When it comes to sharing feelings with others, I am

Reserved	Private
Sympathetic	Self-assured

4. Others would describe me as

Gentle	Results-oriented
Fun-loving	Disciplined

5. I like my appearance to be

Formal	Stylish
Casual	Business-like

6. I want support for my

Goals	Feelings
Ideas	Thoughts

7. When working on a project, I am

Enthusiastic	Purposeful
Ambitious	Persistent

8. Some may perceive me negatively as

Indecisive	Impulsive
A perfectionist	Strong-willed

9. As a leader, I would be perceived as

Focused	Dependable
A risk-taker	A problem-solver

10. When placed in a new situation, I am

Conscientious	Optimistic
Fearless	Friendly

11. My perfect occupation would give me a sense of

Accomplishment	Acceptance
Enjoyment	Accuracy

12. My favorite way to work is by

Networking	Delegating
Brainstorming	Working independently

After reviewing your results, use the space below to note your dominant style. You may have high scores in more than one area. Spend a few minutes writing about how those attributes are manifested in your day-to-day life.

Communication Styles

Direct

This style is decisive, competitive, independent, and confident. Because the person with a Direct communication style is focused, results-oriented, ambitious, goal-oriented, and driven, others may perceive them as strong-willed or demanding. They can be seen as impatient when bored.

They like to feel in control and may become frustrated if dependent on others. They measure progress by achievements and successes and are motivated by challenges. At work they display more concern for results than relationships and do not easily share feelings. Their pace is fast and decisive, and they like a busy, efficient, structured, and formal environment.

Supportive

This style is calm, steady, approachable, sincere, and gentle. Because the person with a Supportive communication style dislikes change, they may appear indecisive. More often they are perceived as careful, patient, and amiable. Due to their active listening skills, others see them as cooperative, dependable, and loyal.

They are often modest and prefer praise be given privately. Patient and slow-paced, they like a personal, relaxed, no-tension environment. They put high priority on close relationships and do not like conflict but may mediate if necessary.

Initiating

This style is sociable, enthusiastic, energetic, spontaneous, and fun-loving. Due to the gregarious nature of the person with an Initiating communication style, they may be perceived as someone who talks more than listens. They are often perceived as self-assured, innovative, and persuasive.

They like to feel accepted and are motivated by relationships. They respond strongly to praise and approval. Their pace is fast and they may appear impulsive at times. They prefer a stimulating, personal, and friendly work environment.

Analytical

This style is precise, exact, analytical, and logical. Because the person with an Analytical communication style is systematic and task-oriented, they are sometimes perceived as a perfectionist. They are organized, self-reliant, purposeful, and diplomatic.

They are motivated by certainty and will rarely give an opinion unless asked. They are slow and cautious in their pace and like a structured, ordered, and functional environment. Because they need to feel sure of their position and others' expectations, they are often private with personal information and do not easily express emotions.

Understanding Your Primary Communication Style

Direct

If you score highest in the direct communicator style you are results-oriented, focused, and competitive. Motivated to get things accomplished, you are quick and decisive. Because you are independent and confident, you prefer a busy, efficient, and structured environment.

Others may sometimes perceive you as impatient and demanding. Allowing others to share feelings and explain details can encourage dialogue.

Supportive

As a supportive communicator, you are seen as patient, cooperative, and sympathetic. You are an active listener and anticipate the needs of others. Calm and steady, you desire a personal and relaxed environment.

Because of your dislike of change, you may appear indecisive at times. Do not hesitate to ask for more detail or information if needed.

Initiating

The initiating communicator is sociable, enthusiastic, and persuasive. You communicate easily and fluently with others and have a spontaneous and fun-loving nature. Relationships are important and you respond strongly to praise and approval.

Due to your energetic and expressive nature, others may feel you talk more than listen. Remember to allow others to share their opinions and thoughts.

Analytical

The analytical communicator is cautious, precise, and disciplined. You are a deliberate and methodical problem-solver. Conscientious and careful, you are often diplomatic in your interactions.

You may be perceived as a perfectionist. Socializing with others will allow them to realize you are also diplomatic.

Effective Use of Communication Styles

Impact

It is important to recognize how effective communication can impact your interactions with others. It can lead to higher efficiency and good morale in the workplace, increased innovation and creative potential in groups, and satisfactory personal and familial relationships.

Situation

Communication styles are often situational. Be sure to monitor your application of communication styles. Decide if your current style is effective based on feedback and outcomes. If necessary, adjust your behavior and adopt new styles to fit a situation, team, or person.

Research

There is much research and many theories about communication styles and their impacts. To develop a deeper understanding, you may choose to do your own research.

Adapting to Other Communication Styles

Direct Communicators

Direct communicators prefer when you get to the point quickly and in a succinct manner. When dealing with these communicators, be specific and avoid over-explaining or repeating yourself. Focus on solutions and only provide details when asked.

Initiating Communicators

Initiating communicators value interacting with others and sharing stories. Allow time for socializing at the beginning of meetings and create a friendly, non-threatening environment. Provide time for them to express their feelings and opinions.

Supportive Communicators

Supportive communicators appreciate a calm, steady approach. Earn their trust by providing them with plenty of reassurance. When seeking their opinions and ideas, encourage them to express their concerns and allow them time to make decisions.

Analytical Communicators

Analytical communicators like facts and figures. Present information to them in an organized manner and be prepared to answer questions. Be patient while they think through and process new information.

Communication Style Scoring Guide

Use this scoring sheet to determine your communication style.

- Using your completed questionnaire, circle the corresponding letters in the twelve sections below. For example, if you chose a for item 1 on the questionnaire, circle a in the item 1 section below.
- Count the number of times you selected each communication style and note the totals in the Results box below.
- The style with the highest value in the Results box indicates your preferred communication style.

There is no right or wrong communication style, and each has value. A higher score in one communication style indicates you are comfortable using that style in many situations. If you score equally in two or more categories, you are likely to feel comfortable adapting your communication style. Read descriptions of each style on page 9.

1.	a. Initiating b. Direct c. Analytical d. Supportive	5.	a. Analytical b. Supportive c. Initiating d. Direct	9.	a. Direct b. Initiating c. Supportive d. Analytical
2.	a. Direct b. Initiating c. Supportive d. Analytical	6.	a. Direct b. Initiating c. Supportive d. Analytical	10.	a. Analytical b. Direct c. Initiating d. Supportive
3.	a. Direct b. Supportive c. Analytical d. Initiating	7.	a. Initiating b. Direct c. Supportive d. Analytical	11.	a. Direct b. Initiating c. Supportive d. Analytical
4.	a. Supportive b. Initiating c. Direct d. Analytical	8.	a. Supportive b. Analytical c. Initiating d. Direct	12.	a. Initiating b. Supportive c. Direct d. Analytical

Results	_____ Direct	_____ Initiating	_____ Supportive	_____ Analytical
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Review and Apply

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- When might you want to adjust your communication style?
- How can an understanding of your communication style improve your interactions with others?
- How does your preferred communication style impact you as a listener?
- How can you tailor your communication style to match situational expectations?

Complete Your Assignment



Project Checklist

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report. First, review your assignment.

This project includes:

- The Discover Your Communication Style questionnaire
- A 5- to 7-minute speech

The following list includes tasks for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You can use the checklist here or complete the digital version in your project on Base Camp.

Complete the Discover Your Communication Style questionnaire.

Schedule your speech with the Vice President Education.

Write your speech. Include information about your current communication style and how you can effectively adapt your communication to connect with other styles. If you are uncomfortable discussing your communication style, you may speak about styles you have encountered and how they impact you.

Rehearse your speech.

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Evaluation Criteria



Review the criteria for the evaluation in this project. Your evaluator will use the following scale:

5 – Exemplary 4 – Excels 3 – Accomplished 2 – Emerging 1 – Developing

Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Topic

- 5 – Delivers an exemplary speech about their communication style and the impact of that style on self or others
- 4 – Delivers an excellent speech about their communication style and the impact of that style on self or others
- 3 – Shares some aspect of their communication style and the impact of that style on self or others
- 2 – Mentions some aspect of their communication style and the impact of that style on self or others but does not fully address
- 1 – Delivers a speech on a topic other than some aspect of communication styles

Complete Your Project



Once you have delivered your speech and received your evaluation, take a minute to review what you recorded under “Know” and “Wonder” in the Assess and Reflect section at the start of this project. Then add what you have learned while working through this project. Add up to five items.

Learned

For example: I learned my preferred communication style.

Before You Move On

Review Your Learning

Review all the material in this project.

Deliver Your Speech

Plan, practice, and deliver your speech.

Receive Your Evaluation

Receive your evaluation and complete any other tasks required by your club.

Assess and Reflect

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Congratulations!

If you have completed every task, CONGRATULATIONS! You have completed your Understanding Your Communication Style project and you are ready to move on to your next project.



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