

Assertiveness



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1.1 COMMUNICATION STYLES: A SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Instructions: Please select from each pair of attributes the one which is most typical of your personality. No pair is an either-or proposal. Make your choice as spontaneously as possible. There is no wrong answer.

1. I like action.
2. I deal with problems in a systematic way.
3. I believe that teams are more effective than individuals.
4. I enjoy innovation very much.
5. I am more interested in the future than in the past.
6. I enjoy working with people.
7. I like to attend well-organized group meetings.
8. Deadlines are important for me.
9. I cannot stand procrastination.
10. I believe that new ideas have to be tested before being used.
11. I enjoy the stimulation of interaction with others.
12. I am always looking for new possibilities.
13. I want to set up my own objectives.
14. When I start something, I go through until the end.
15. I basically try to understand other people's emotions.
16. I do challenge people around me.
17. I look forward to receiving feedback on my performance.
18. I find the step-by-step approach very effective.
19. I think I am good at reading people.
20. I like creative problem solving.
21. I extrapolate and project all the time.
22. I am sensitive to others' needs.
23. Planning is the key to success.
24. I become impatient with long deliberations.
25. I am cool under pressure.
26. I value experience very much.
27. I listen to people.
28. People say that I am a fast thinker.
29. Cooperation is a key word for me.
30. I use logical methods to test alternatives.
31. I like to handle several projects at the same time.
32. I always question myself.
33. I learn by doing.
34. I believe that my head rules my heart.
35. I can predict how others may react to a certain action.
36. I do not like details.
37. Analysis should always precede action.
38. I am able to assess the climate of a group.

39. I have a tendency to start things and not finish them up
40. I perceive myself as decisive.
41. I search for challenging tasks.
42. I rely on observation and data.
43. I can express my feelings openly.
44. I like to design new projects.
45. I enjoy reading very much.
46. I perceive myself as a facilitator.
47. I like to focus on one issue at a time.
48. I like to achieve.
49. I enjoy learning about others.
50. I like variety.
51. Facts speak for themselves.
52. I use my imagination as much as possible.
53. I am impatient with long, slow assignments.
54. My mind never stops working.
55. Key decisions have to be made in a cautious way.
56. I strongly believe that people need each other to get work done.
57. I usually make decisions without thinking too much.
58. Emotions create problems.
59. I like to be liked by others.
60. I can put two and two together very quickly.
61. I try out my new ideas on people.
62. I believe in the scientific approach.
63. I like to get things done
64. Good relationships are essential.
65. I am impulsive.
66. I accept differences in people.
67. Communicating with people is an end in itself.
68. I like to be intellectually stimulated.
69. I like to organize.
70. I usually jump from one task to another.
71. Talking and working with people is a creative art.
72. Self-actualization is a key word for me.
73. I enjoy playing with ideas.
74. I dislike wasting my time.
75. I enjoy doing what I am good at.
76. I learn by interacting with others.
77. I find abstractions interesting and enjoyable.
78. I am patient with details.
79. I like brief, to the point statements.
80. I feel confident in myself.

SCORING SHEET FOR THE COMMUNICATION STYLES ASSESSMENT

Instructions: Circle the items you have selected and add up the totals for each style (one point per answer). The maximum is 20 per style and your total for the four styles should be 40.

<u>Style</u>	<u>Circle your answer here</u>	<u>Total Score</u> (max. 20)
Style 1	1 - 8 - 9 - 13 - 17 - 24 - 26 - 31 - 33 - 40 - 41 - 48 - 50 - 53 - 57 - 63 - 65 - 70 - 74 - 79	_____
Style 2	2 - 7 - 10 - 14 - 18 - 23 - 25 - 30 - 34 - 37 - 42 - 47 - 51 - 55 - 58 - 62 - 66 - 69 - 75 - 78	_____
Style 3	3 - 6 - 11 - 15 - 19 - 22 - 27 - 29 - 35 - 38 - 43 - 46 - 49 - 56 - 59 - 64 - 67 - 71 - 76 - 80	_____
Style 4	4 - 5 - 12 - 16 - 20 - 21 - 28 - 32 - 36 - 39 - 44 - 45 - 52 - 54 - 60 - 61 - 68 - 72 - 73 - 77	_____

THE FOUR COMMUNICATION STYLES

<p style="text-align: center;">Style 1</p> <p>WHAT</p> <p>Results Objectives Achieving Doing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ACTION (A)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Style 2</p> <p style="text-align: right;">HOW</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Strategies Organization Facts</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PROCESS (PR)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">IDEA (I)</p> <p>WHY</p> <p>Concepts Theories Innovation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Style 4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PEOPLE (PE)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">WHO</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Communication Relationships Teamwork</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Style 3</p>

ACTION	PROCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefers spoken word • "Be brief and be gone" • Focus on results and objectives • Stick to the point • Let them feel in control • Emphasise the practicalities • If they seem impatient, it may be a signal that they want you to cut to the chase • Not often good listeners so advisable to follow up with a <u>short</u> email for clarity • Provide feedback regularly and often <p><i>What do you want and when do you need it?</i></p> <p><i>I need this done by...</i></p> <p><i>This is the problem that you need to address.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefers written word - so put things in writing for them • Be well prepared and thorough • Provide all of the details and facts • Be very precise in your use of language • Be organised and structured • Expect loads of probing questions - it's not an interrogation it's just their style • Allow them plenty of time to consider the details • Sticks to the plan <p><i>List the key points for me, please</i></p> <p><i>The facts are that...</i></p> <p><i>Please consider this and let me know your comments.</i></p>
IDEA	PEOPLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes variety and working on a number of different things • Be friendly with them • Allow time to explore and discuss • Start with big picture and move towards the detail • Allow flexibility • Prefers pictures and images • When speaking, may go off on tangents <p><i>I want to discuss some options with you.</i></p> <p><i>I would like your opinion on how we should...</i></p> <p><i>We have a new opportunity I'd like to put to you.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes the personal touch • Great listeners • Be patient with them • Ask for their opinion and allow plenty of time for reflection • Mix verbal (personalise)with written (time to reflect) • Prefer scheduled work • May appear unenthusiastic <p><i>How do you feel this should be done?</i></p> <p><i>Who else needs to be involved?</i></p> <p><i>I need to review this with you. When will you be free?</i></p>

APPLICATION

	My Boss	A Colleague
Communication behaviours I've noticed		
What I've noticed works well for them		
What I've noticed that irritates or frustrates them		
Likely preference		
What I need to do to communicate more effectively with him/her		

2 FEEDBACK SKILLS

2.1 CEDAR model

C	CONTEXT
E	EXAMPLES
D	DIAGNOSE
A	ACTIONS
R	REVIEW

Illustration of using CEDAR for positive feedback

C	CONTEXT. Say straight away that you'd like to discuss something they've done well recently, and what this is. Explain the impact
E	EXAMPLES. Explain exactly what they did well and use specific examples to illustrate the point
D	DIAGNOSE. Ask for their view of the situation. Jointly explore the reasons why it went well and how it was achieved
A	ACTIONS. Ask the individual what actions they might take in the future to leverage strengths
R	REVIEW. If there are actions they'd like to take in future to leverage strengths, set a date for review. Support

Illustration of using CEDAR for developmental feedback

C	CONTEXT. Explain how it compares to their usual performance and the level of impact that it has had
E	EXAMPLES. Use specific examples to illustrate the point
D	DIAGNOSE. Jointly explore the reasons for the underperformance. Why did it not go well? What might be the underlying cause?
A	ACTIONS. Ask the individual what actions they might take in the future to develop performance. <i>Do not give your own suggestions too early</i>
R	REVIEW. Set a date for review, follow up and support progress

Steps to explore CONTEXT

Reduce uncertainty by indicating that the purpose of the feedback is to explore a development area. State what this is.

Explain how it compares to his/her usual performance, e.g.,

- Is this feedback just a small point, or a major one that has had a significant effect on his/her performance overall?
- What is the individual's overall level of performance; exceptional, strong or "needs improvement?"

Also explain, if necessary, the level of impact it has had on the team, member firm and/or client.

Steps to explore EXAMPLES

Use specific examples to illustrate your feedback. These need to be clear enough for the staff member to see what you mean.

Collect specific examples before the discussion, and also ask him/her for examples.

Steps to explore DIAGNOSIS

Ask for his/her view of the situation. Jointly explore the reasons for the performance. Why did it not go well? Listen carefully. Ask further questions to clarify.

Explore both viewpoints fully before jumping to any conclusions. What other factors were involved? What might be the underlying cause? What was beyond his/her control? What could he/she do?

This is where it is really important to understand the cause of underperformance:

- Gaps in skills or knowledge
- Problems with his/her levels of motivation (this may be due to overstress, lack of challenge/stress, boring work, no sense of progression, etc.)
- Worries at home, etc.

All of the above would need to be explored further so that the right actions can be taken to address the real issues.

Steps to explore ACTIONS

- Ask the individual what actions he/she might take in the future to develop performance. *Do not give your own suggestions too early.* Let the individual have control as far as possible. Be specific: what needs to be done, by when, etc.?
- The staff member is more likely to carry out developmental actions if they have decided what these should be for themselves. This promotes a sense of ownership.
- Performance managers often leap in too early with solutions (as it provides quick guidance and saves time). It is important to avoid doing this *too soon*.
- As with goal-setting, your team member needs to be completely clear about what is required. Again, make the development goal SMART.

- It's not the feedback itself that is motivating, but having an **agreed and achievable action plan**. Once an action plan is in place, and the individual feels he/she has the support needed to achieve it, he or she will feel motivated by the sense of progress.

Steps to explore REVIEW

Set a date for review; follow up and support progress where appropriate.

- Actions need to have review dates on them (ideally set by the staff member, provided that these are realistic and appropriate).
- Follow up is always important, but especially for more serious performance issues.

The performance manager's support may be important in ensuring that this development goal is achieved.

Example

Context	Paul, I would like to have a chat about the accuracy of material that you are passing me to review. Normally, there is minimal rework needed in what you send me but in the last week, most of the documents needed significant rework by me.
Examples	For example, you sent me a section on valuation of debtors for inclusion in the audit highlights report but the tables you included didn't match the trial balance and there were inaccuracies about which customer accounts remained unpaid.
Diagnosis	"I am wondering what your perspective is?" OR "I'm wondering what is leading to this happening"
Actions	Finish by agreeing what the individual will do differently in future. You can ask for ideas or if the issue is about clarifying your expectations for future work.
Review	Finish by agreeing when you will meet next to review progress or have an informal catch up if this is more appropriate.

3 ASSERTIVENESS

“The practice of assertiveness:

being authentic in our dealings with others; treating our values and persons with decent respect in social contexts; refusing to fake the reality of who we are or what we esteem in order to avoid disapproval; the willingness to stand up for ourselves and our ideas in appropriate ways in appropriate contexts”.

Nathaniel Branden



3.1 ASSERTIVENESS IS A CHOICE

Consider each of the scenarios below. What would be a possible response for each of the 3 communication styles?

1. A friend has borrowed a book from you. She returns it with the cover stained with coffee and many of the pages have come away from the spine. She seems not to care or notice.

Aggressive	Passive	Assertive

2. You're waiting in a shop to be served and someone jumps ahead of you to be served first.

Aggressive	Passive	Assertive

3. Your friend asked for a loan of €50 when you were out together last month. Pay day has come and gone and he still hasn't paid you back.

Aggressive	Passive	Assertive

4. Your mother or father calls you late at night for a chat. It's been a long day. You are tired and have another really early start in the morning.

Aggressive	Passive	Assertive

5. You went to a party with some people but the person who was driving had too much to drink and refuses to let anyone else drive.

Aggressive	Passive	Assertive

5. You bring your car to a garage for service. You ask the mechanic to call and let you know how much it will cost before doing the work. He doesn't call and when you call him he tells you he has already done the work and your bill is €350.

Aggressive	Passive	Assertive

3.2 OUR THINKING SHAPES OUR BEHAVIOUR

Below are listed a number of typical unassertive thoughts. Do any of them apply to you?
When do you find yourself thinking or feeling this way?

Unassertive Thinking	
I shouldn't say how I'm really feeling or thinking because I don't want to burden others with my problems.	
If I assert myself I will upset the other person and ruin our relationship	
It will be terribly embarrassing if I say what I think	
If someone says "no" to my request it is because they don't like	
I shouldn't have to say what I need or how I feel: people close to me should already know	
It is uncaring, rude and selfish to say what you want	
I have no right to change my mind; neither has anyone else	
It will all work out in the end, and anyway it's not my fault	
People should keep their feelings to themselves	
If I express that I am feeling anxious people will think I am weak and ridicule me or take advantage of me.	
If I accept compliments from someone it will mean I am big headed	

Top Tips on Increasing Assertiveness

Assertive Behaviours	How to Apply Them	Personal Notes on Practice and Experience
<p>EXPRESS YOURSELF Your opinions, needs and concerns</p> 	<p>Use "I" statements with confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think/feel... • I want you to know that... • I would prefer... • As I see it... • When I see/hear X I... • I'm concerned about/that... • I need... • I want... 	
<p>BE FIRM AND BE UNDERSTOOD Assert empathy as well as consequences</p> 	<p>Use Empathic Assertion "I appreciate that you don't like the new procedure, however, until it's changed, I need you to keep working on this."</p> <p>Use Consequence Assertion "If this occurs again, I will escalate the matter. I'd prefer not to. However, you need to understand what will happen should this continue."</p>	
<p>FEEDBACK Benefit from the positive give and take of sharing feedback</p> 	<p>Ask for it: welcome feedback from others as an opportunity to see things from a different perspective</p> <p>Give it: communicate your views in a positive and structured way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event • Feelings • Needs • Consequences 	
<p>SAY 'NO' - when you need to Saying 'no' doesn't mean you're not a team player</p> 	<p>Remember you have the right to say "no":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be direct, straightforward, brief and to the point • If it's difficult to say no, tell the other person that • Always be polite, managing your tone so that it is a positive one • Take responsibility for your decision - don't make excuses 	
<p>PERSIST Stick with it: your confidence will increase, relationships will be better</p> 	<p>Use the Broken Record Technique to address insistence from others: It's simple yet effective: repeat your statement with firmness, a number of times if necessary, so that what you say is finally accepted.</p>	

3.4 ASSERTIVENESS PLAN

1. Write down 5 situations in which you want to be more assertive.

	Situation	Rating (0-10)	Order
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

2. Rate how difficult you think the task would be. In other words, how anxious do you feel about being assertive in this situation? Rate the difficulty from 0 to 10, with 10 being most difficult.

3. Now, rank order them alphabetically based on level of difficulty, with 'A' being the least difficult.

4. Your 'A' situation is the first one you will work on. For this situation, identify the unassertive thinking, the unhelpful beliefs that you associate with it. Write it down in the space provided below. Then identify an alternative, more helpful and assertive belief that you can replace it with.

	Current unhelpful thinking /beliefs	More helpful thinking/beliefs
A		

5. What non-assertive behaviours am I using now?

6. What more assertive behaviours would I prefer to use when this situation arises? What, specifically, do I want to do and say to increase my assertiveness in this situation?

4 TIME MANAGEMENT

"Time management is an oxymoron. Time is beyond our control, and the clock keeps ticking regardless of how we lead our lives. Priority management is the answer to maximizing the time we have."

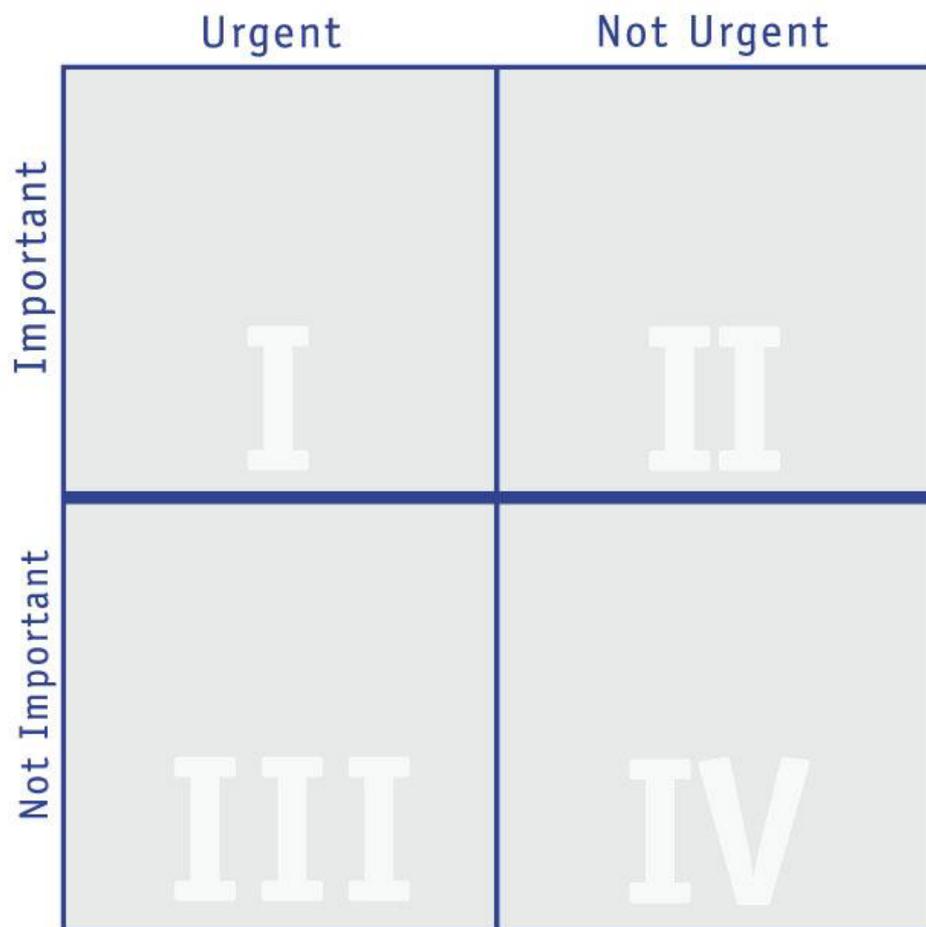
John C. Maxwell



"The key is in not spending time, but in investing it."

Stephen R. Covey

4.1 THE PRIORITY MATRIX



4.2 PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS PRINCIPLES

P.P.I.E.



4.3 APPLYING THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

1. What are my core priorities - the activities that are most essential and critical to my success and on which I should invest most of my time?
2. When and where will I do my planning?
How can I use my calendar more effectively?
3. What are the key interactions I need to manage to use my time more effectively?
What specifically will I do to?
4. What 1 thing could I do to keep my energy levels more consistently high?
5. Who can I ask for support in applying new habits in terms of how I invest my time?

5 PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Master List

Personal Action Plan

The key things I want to remember from this booklet are:

The specific behaviours and actions I want to focus on first are to:

The impact of my success will be:

I plan to monitor my progress by:

I will seek support and feedback from:

