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Understanding the Merrill - Reid Social Styles Model

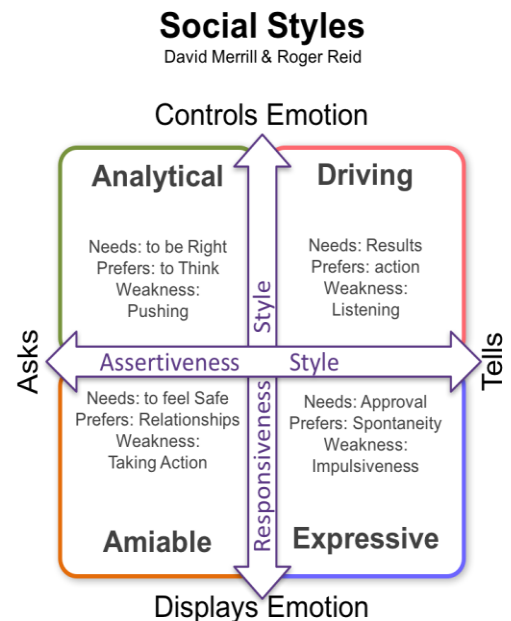
Communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, and feelings with others. One of the most valuable communication skills is the ability to 'read' people. Learning what to look and listen for, and understanding how different communication styles like to be interacted with.

In the early 1960s, two industrial psychologists, explored **how** people behave in social situations. Their model 'Social Styles' focuses on our outer behaviour. They found that people's behaviour follows two continua, which they labelled: **Assertiveness** and **Responsiveness**.

Assertiveness Style - The degree to which a person's behaviours are seen by others as forceful or directive.

Responsiveness Style - The degree to which a person's behaviours are seen by others as emotional or emotionally controlled.

The four quadrants that the two dimensions of **Assertiveness** and **Responsiveness** create, form the Social Styles model.



Definitions & Characteristics of the Four Social Style

Analytical

Polite but reserved, logical, and fact/task oriented. Focus is on precision and perfection. Other strengths include persistence, diligence, caution, and a systematic approach. Weaknesses include being withdrawn, quiet, and reserved. If they seem indecisive, it is because they need to assess all data. The Analytical needs to be right and will not openly discuss ideas until they are confident in a decision. Perfectionism can be a fault. They are definitely not risk-takers.

Key Descriptors: Diplomatic - Accurate - Conscientious - A fact finder - Systematic - Logical - Conventional - Analytical - Sensitive - Controlled - Orderly - Precise - Disciplined -Deliberate - Cautious

Key Wants: High standards - Details - Perfection - Traditional procedures

Amiable

Devoted, consistent, dependable, and loyal. A hard worker who will persevere long after others have given up. A team player, cooperative, and easy to get along with, trusting, sensitive, and a good listener. They try to avoid confrontation and may work in groups and with cooperative individuals. Performs best in a stable environment, and often has a stabilizing effect on others. Weaknesses include indecision and an inability to take risks. Often too focused on others and may be conforming, quiet, and passive. They often will not speak up for themselves, are too compliant and nice, and can be slow to make decisions.

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References: <https://www.pocketbook.co.uk/blog/2017/04/18/david-merrill-roger-reid-social-styles/>

<https://www.studocu.com/en-us/document/western-governors-university/financial-resource-management-in-healthcare/communication-style-self-assessment-2/66278461>

Key Descriptors - Patient - Loyal - Sympathetic - A team player - Relaxed - Mature - Organized - Questioning - Supportive - Stable - Considerate - Empathetic - Persevering - Trusting - Congenial
Key Wants - Guarantees - Security - Appreciation - Quality control - Specialization

Driver

A high achiever who is not averse to risk. Extroverted, strong-willed, direct, practical, organized, persuasive, and even forceful. A driver is task-oriented, rather than relationship-oriented, and wants immediate results. This individual is less concerned with how something is done and more concerned about what is being done, and what results can be expected. "What" is the Driver's battle cry. The Driver can be stubborn, domineering, impatient, insensitive, and short-tempered, with little time for formalities or niceties. Drivers can also be demanding, opinionated, controlling, and uncompromising or even overbearing, cold, and harsh.

Key Descriptors - Action oriented - Decisive - A problem solver - Direct - Assertive - Demanding - Risk taker - Forceful - Adventurous - Competitive - Self-reliant - Independent - Determined - An agitator - Results oriented
Key Wants - Challenges - Authority - Power - Freedom from controls - Options

Expressive

A verbally adept personality who is engaging, accommodating, supportive of others, persuasive, socially proficient, and relationship-oriented rather than task-oriented. Expressives love being included and are always ready for something new and exciting. They readily exchange information and life experiences. Additional strengths include enthusiasm, diplomacy, and the ability to inspire others. A main need for the Expressive is to be appreciated and accepted. Weaknesses include impatience, a tendency to generalize, verbal assaults, and sometimes irrational behavior. Can also be egotistical, manipulative, undisciplined, reactive, unorganized, and abrasive.

Key Descriptors - Verbal - Motivating - Enthusiastic - Gregarious - Convincing - Emotional - Impulsive - Generous - Influential - Charming - Confident - Inspiring - Dramatic - Optimistic - Animated
Key Wants - Social recognition - Freedom from details - To be with people - Provide service - Group activities

To identify your own communication style, you can take a self-assessment or ask for feedback from others. You can also observe how you communicate in different situations, and the types of responses you receive.

To begin to understand Social Styles, and the communication preference of others, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do they prefer facts or feelings? (You can often hear this in their language.)
- Do they focus on details or the big picture?
- Do they like to plan in detail or improvise?
- Is their expression animated or subdued?
- Do they use words or gestures?

Once you have a better understanding of your social style, and the style of others you can learn how to adapt to different situations and audiences to help avoid misunderstandings, build better relationships, and achieve your goals. Always remember that this is not about changing who you are or compromising your values. Rather it is about being flexible and respectful of other people's perspectives and preferences.

Now that you have a good understanding of key characteristics of the Merrill - Reid Social Style model, refer to the tool, **"Maximizing Communication Effectiveness Leveraging the Social Styles Model"** and learn how to leverage the model leveraging a third dimension: Versatility.

Always keep in mind that with this, and all similar models, to ensure you use it as a guide. It is not intended to "pigeonhole" or stereo type you are anyone else. Understanding the model will increase your effectiveness but always remember that no model is perfect.

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