

PERSONALITY

# INSIGHT Inventory®

*... identifying your personality strengths and using them in teamwork*

TEAM



# INSIGHT Inventory®

... identifying your unique personality strengths

Your personality is as unique as your fingerprint. The INSIGHT Inventory will help you better understand yourself and others and use this "insight" to improve communications, trust, and effectiveness with your team members.

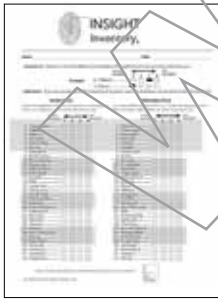
You'll learn:

- your personality strengths,
- how to flex your style to communicate better,
- work more productively on teams, and
- increase your personal effectiveness.

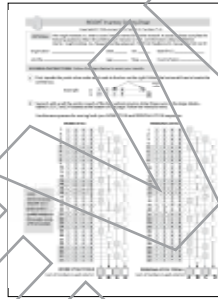
Part  
1

## Completing the INSIGHT Inventory.

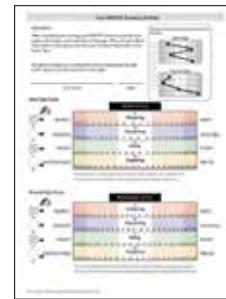
Begin by completing and scoring the INSIGHT Inventory—the form on the left. Then, chart your scores on the inside cover. Your results will provide a positive, strengths-focused profile of your personality preferences.



1st: Complete the Inventory  
(form to the left)



2nd: Score your results.  
(second carbonless sheet)



3rd: Plot your profiles.  
(inside front cover)

### Key Feature

If you've ever taken a personality assessment before and said, "But I'm not that way all the time," then you'll appreciate that the INSIGHT Inventory takes into consideration that your behavior may change from one team or work group to another.

### Strengths and Flexing

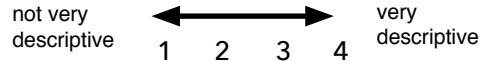
Receiving two profiles, describing your style in different settings, gives you a broader view of your strengths and occasional reactions to stress. Understanding how you and others may change from one setting to another helps you focus on ways to flex your style and avoid labeling or stereotyping yourself and others.



# INSIGHT Inventory®

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Shade in one of the blanks immediately to the right of each term as it best describes you.

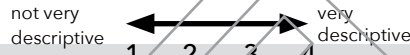


**Example:** 2. Talkative .....      
3. Patient .....

**Definitions:** If you are unsure about the meaning of any term, read the definitions on the back of the scoring sheet.

## WORK STYLE

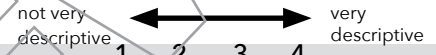
Check the degree to which the words below are descriptive of how you believe you are most of the time at work.



- 1. Competitive .....
- 2. Talkative .....
- 3. Patient .....
- 4. Accurate .....
- 5. Demanding .....
- 6. Serene .....
- 7. Animated .....
- 8. Perfectionist .....
- 9. Domineering .....
- 10. Easygoing .....
- 11. High-spirited .....
- 12. Structured .....
- 13. Forceful .....
- 14. Mild .....
- 15. Systematic .....
- 16. Convincing .....
- 17. Good mixer .....
- 18. Strong-willed .....
- 19. Exacting .....
- 20. Even-tempered .....
- 21. Enthusiastic .....
- 22. Decisive .....
- 23. Detailed .....
- 24. Tolerant .....
- 25. Intense .....
- 26. Life of the party .....
- 27. Daring .....
- 28. Restrained .....
- 29. Particular .....
- 30. Charming .....
- 31. Laid-back .....
- 32. Organized .....

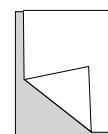
## PERSONAL STYLE

You behave differently away from work. Check the degree to which the words below describe the "at home" or personal you.



- 1. Decisive .....
- 2. Enthusiastic .....
- 3. Restrained .....
- 4. Particular .....
- 5. Intense .....
- 6. Detailed .....
- 7. Good mixer .....
- 8. Serene .....
- 9. Accurate .....
- 10. Competitive .....
- 11. Animated .....
- 12. Organized .....
- 13. High-spirited .....
- 14. Exacting .....
- 15. Patient .....
- 16. Talkative .....
- 17. Easygoing .....
- 18. Forceful .....
- 19. Structured .....
- 20. Life of the party .....
- 21. Mild .....
- 22. Domineering .....
- 23. Systematic .....
- 24. Charming .....
- 25. Even-tempered .....
- 26. Strong-willed .....
- 27. Perfectionist .....
- 28. Convincing .....
- 29. Laid-back .....
- 30. Demanding .....
- 31. Tolerant .....
- 32. Daring .....

When finished, tear off this cover sheet and follow scoring instructions.





# INSIGHT Inventory Scoring Sheet

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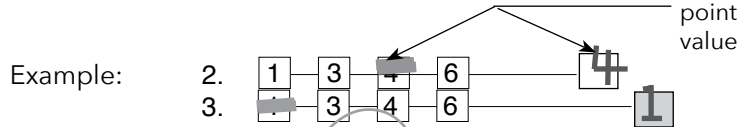
### OPTIONAL

The Insight Institute, Inc. retains scores (without names) for further research. To assist us please complete the following questions. Return this sheet to your instructor or mail. All information is kept confidential. Mail to: Insight Institute, Inc., Research and Development, 7205 N.W. Waukomis Dr., Kansas City, MO 64151

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ State (Prov) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job title \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ Country/Nation \_\_\_\_\_

### SCORING INSTRUCTIONS: Follow the steps below to score your results.

- First, transfer the point value under each mark to the box on the right. Follow the horizontal lines to locate the correct box.



- Second, add up all the points in each of the four vertical columns. Enter these sums in the large blocks labeled A, B, C, and D—located at the bottom of the page. Follow the vertical arrows.

Use the same process for scoring both your WORK STYLE and PERSONAL STYLE responses.

### WORK STYLE

1.	1	3	4	6	
2.	1	3	4	6	
3.	1	3	4	6	
4.	1	3	4	6	
5.	1	3	4	6	
6.	1	3	4	6	
7.	1	3	4	6	
8.	1	3	4	6	
9.	1	3	4	6	
10.	1	3	4	6	
11.	1	3	4	6	
12.	1	3	4	6	
13.	1	3	4	6	
14.	1	3	4	6	
15.	1	3	4	6	
16.	1	3	4	6	
17.	1	3	4	6	
18.	1	3	4	6	
19.	1	3	4	6	
20.	1	3	4	6	
21.	1	3	4	6	
22.	1	3	4	6	
23.	1	3	4	6	
24.	1	3	4	6	
25.	1	3	4	6	
26.	1	3	4	6	
27.	1	3	4	6	
28.	1	3	4	6	
29.	1	3	4	6	
30.	1	3	4	6	
31.	1	3	4	6	
32.	1	3	4	6	

### PERSONAL STYLE

1.	1	3	4	6	
2.	1	3	4	6	
3.	1	3	4	6	
4.	1	3	4	6	
5.	1	3	4	6	
6.	1	3	4	6	
7.	1	3	4	6	
8.	1	3	4	6	
9.	1	3	4	6	
10.	1	3	4	6	
11.	1	3	4	6	
12.	1	3	4	6	
13.	1	3	4	6	
14.	1	3	4	6	
15.	1	3	4	6	
16.	1	3	4	6	
17.	1	3	4	6	
18.	1	3	4	6	
19.	1	3	4	6	
20.	1	3	4	6	
21.	1	3	4	6	
22.	1	3	4	6	
23.	1	3	4	6	
24.	1	3	4	6	
25.	1	3	4	6	
26.	1	3	4	6	
27.	1	3	4	6	
28.	1	3	4	6	
29.	1	3	4	6	
30.	1	3	4	6	
31.	1	3	4	6	
32.	1	3	4	6	

Note: When finished, transfer your totals to the profile charts on the inside cover of this booklet.

### WORK STYLE TOTALS

(sum of numbers in each column)

A	B	C	D
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### PERSONAL STYLE TOTALS

(sum of numbers in each column)

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

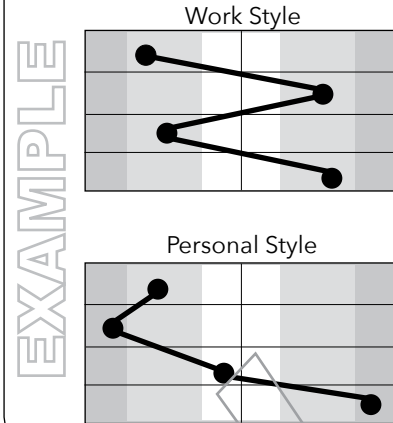
# Your INSIGHT Inventory Profiles

## Instructions

After completing and scoring your INSIGHT Inventory, transfer your totals to the boxes on the left side of this page. Then, plot your Work Style totals on the upper chart and your Personal Style totals on the lower chart.

Be sure to connect your scores with a line to create easy-to-read profile shapes. See the examples to the right.

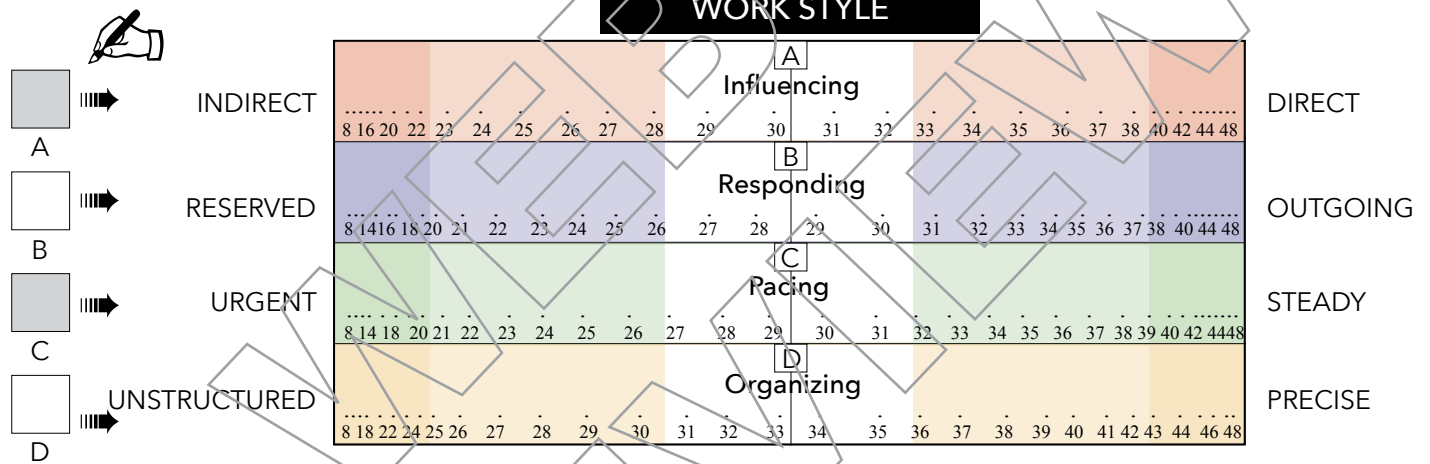
Plot your scores and connect them with lines. Example:



(your name)

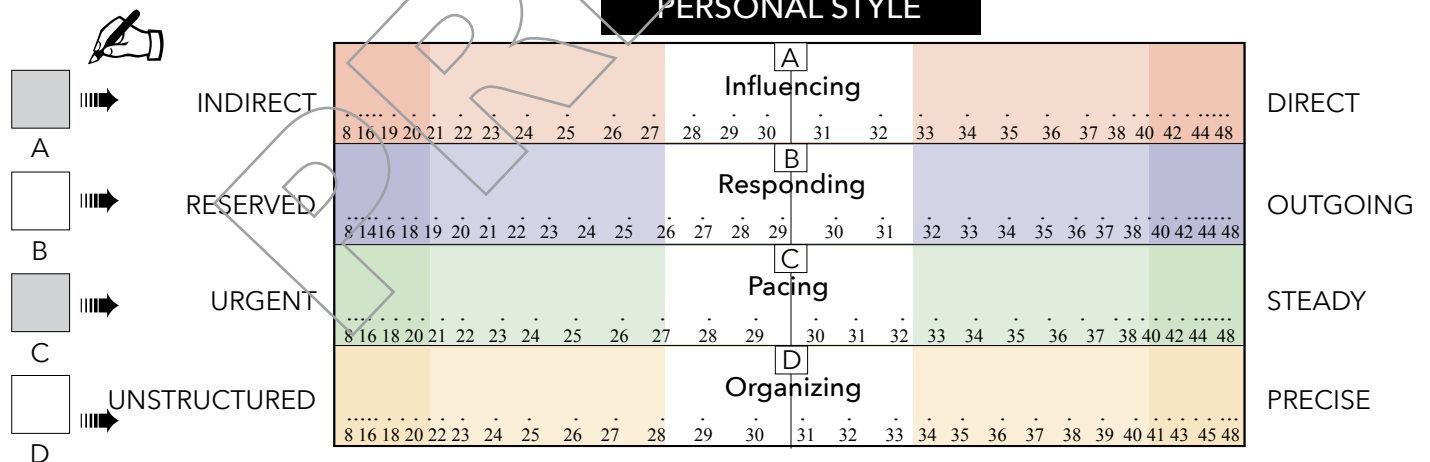
(date)

## Work Style Scores



Your behavior at work is influenced by the nature of your job, interpersonal relationships with coworkers, the management style of your leader, etc.

## Personal Style Scores



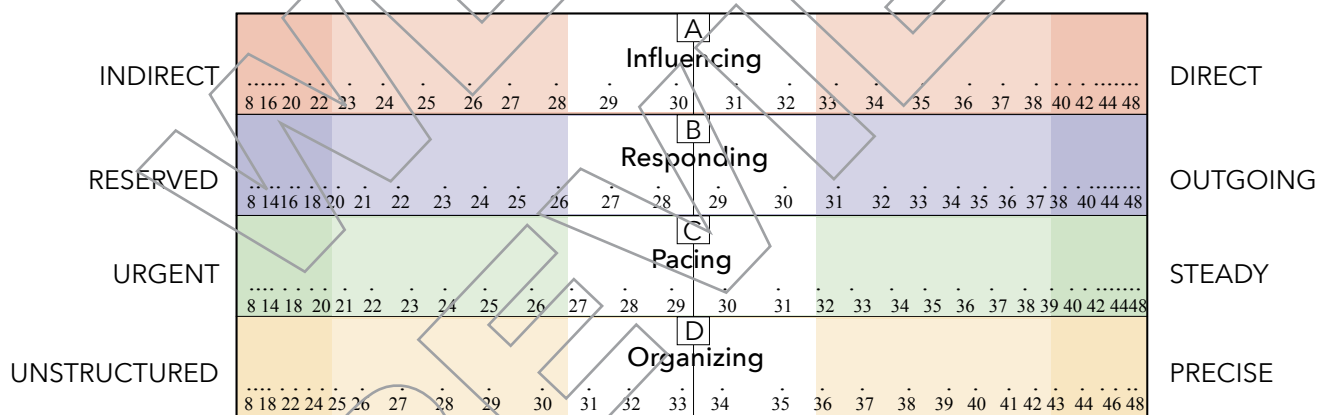
Your Personal Style profile indicates how you tend to behave around your partner, family, and friends when communicating and dealing with responsibilities at home.

The INSIGHT Inventory measures four personality traits. Each trait has two opposite extremes or preferences. A score in either direction is fine—just as using either your right or left hand is acceptable. Your scores indicate ways of behaving you prefer to use most of the time.

### The Four Traits and Their Opposite Preferences

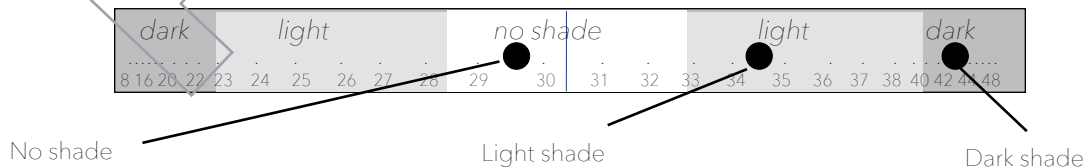
- A) **Influencing**      How you express your thoughts, present ideas, and assert yourself. The opposite preferences are INDIRECT and DIRECT.
- B) **Responding**      How you approach and respond to others, particularly groups of people. The opposite preferences are RESERVED and OUTGOING.
- C) **Pacing**            How quickly you take action and make decisions. The opposite preferences are URGENT and STEADY.
- D) **Organizing**        How you structure your time, carry out projects, and handle details. The opposite preferences are UNSTRUCTURED and PRECISE.

Although point locations differ slightly, both the Work and Personal Style charts are laid out in the following manner.



### Trait Intensity

The general meaning of your scores is related to the degree of shading that surrounds them. Review the three paragraphs below to understand why some of the descriptions for each of the preferences fit you more closely than others.



If your score falls in the middle area with no shade, some of the characteristics from both sides of the center line on that scale may describe you.

If your score falls in the light shaded area, many characteristics of that preference will probably describe you. A few characteristics on the other side may also fit.

If your score falls in the dark shaded area, most of the characteristics of the preference on that side will describe you.

Examine any differences between your Work Style and Personal Style profiles. Changes may be due to intentional style flexing or in response to certain pressures and stresses.

Ask yourself if differences in your profiles reflect:

- changes due to long-term stressful demands either at work or home.
- temporary style changes due to immediate pressures or short-term stresses.
- learned skills, healthy ways of intentionally flexing your style. These may be changes you make to help you communicate and work more effectively with others.

**Example:**

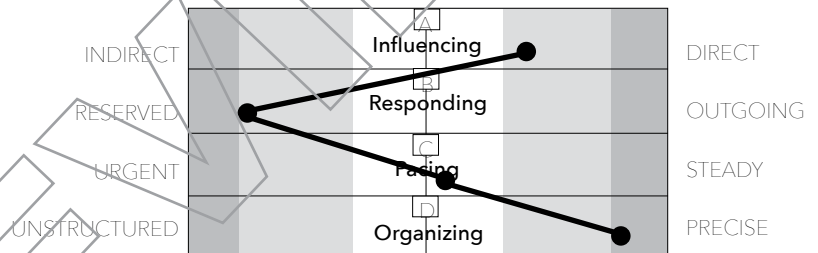
**Bob Jones**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Bob's Work Style**

Bob's INSIGHT profile at work suggests he is assertive, forceful, and candid (Direct); quiet and private (Reserved); has an average pace of activity (Steady); and is very ordered and systematic (Precise).

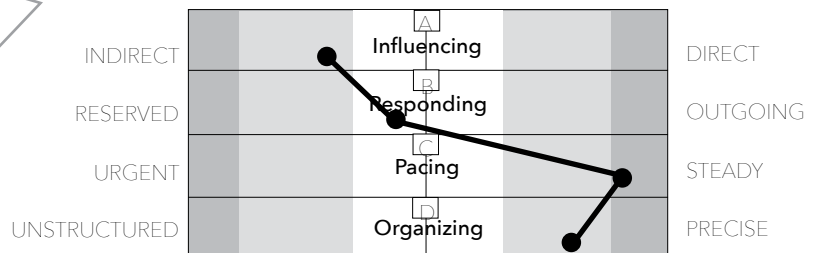
**Work Style**



**Bob's Personal Style**

At home Bob becomes more soft spoken and tactful (Indirect); is slightly more talkative but still rather quiet and Reserved; is even tempered and patient (Steady); and remains ordered and systematic (Precise).

**Personal Style**



Bob reports that work is quite stressful for him. He recently was promoted to supervisor and feels he has to be very forceful, authoritative, and direct, much like the previous supervisor. However, his natural style is to be Indirect. He has been trying to flex his style so much—perhaps for the wrong reasons—that this has caused him to feel stressed at work.

The following two pages explain the four traits in detail. Review the lists of descriptions under each trait and pay particular attention to the preferences that best describe you.

Identifying your preferences on each trait.

Review the trait preferences listed below and their opposites on the facing page. The characteristics listed reflect each trait's extremes. If you scored midway or near the center on a trait, all the phrases on one side may not fit you and some on the opposite preference may apply. To customize the list, check (✓) the phrases on each scale that best describe your Work Style.

**INDIRECT**

**Influe**

How you express thoughts,

You influence others using strategy and diplomacy and,

- State your position on issues carefully and diplomatically.
- Persuade others with a supportive and tactful approach.
- Come across as approachable and unassuming.
- Prefer to negotiate rather than argue or debate differences.
- Tend to "ask" rather than "tell."
- Present new ideas modestly, sometimes understating them.

Your strengths include:

- Mediating and facilitating discussions by keeping your own issues in the background.
- Phrasing comments carefully so you don't offend others or create conflict.

**RESERVED**

**Respo**

How you approach and respond

You respond to others in a quiet, reserved manner and,

- Are most at ease interacting with others one on one.
- Keep your emotions rather private and self-contained.
- Get energized when alone and away from activity.
- Prefer to think problems through alone to clarify feelings.
- Use few gestures and facial expressions when you talk.
- Contact friends and acquaintances occasionally.

Your strengths include:

- Listening well and feeling comfortable letting others talk more than you do.
- Holding information confidential and not divulging it through observable expressions.

**URGENT**

**Pac**

The speed at which you make

You take action and make decisions quickly and,

- Consider a few important options before deciding.
- Get things done by initiating changes and moving forward.
- Prefer short-term projects requiring quick responses.
- Work with a fast-paced, urgent style.
- React quickly when frustrated and angered.
- Believe in seizing the moment "opportunity knocks but once."

Your strengths include:

- Taking fast action when opportunities arise that require immediate decisions.
- Quickly eliminating options that seem to confuse an issue or delay action.

**UNSTRUCTURED**

**Organ**

How you structure time, organize

You strive to keep time unstructured and plans flexible, and

- Tend to postpone organizing and attending to details.
- Use unconventional procedures to accomplish tasks.
- Like plans open and somewhat unpredictable.
- Proceed on projects before reading all the directions.
- Take pride in doing things in new and different ways.
- Get frustrated by too many guidelines and rules.

Your strengths include:

- Discovering and following innovative ways to reach goals.
- Working around disorganization and getting work done in situations that might bother other people.



**Optional Activity:**

As an additional activity, you may want to repeat the previous exercise and identify the descriptions that best fit your Personal Style. Place an **X** beside the descriptions that fit your Personal Style. When finished, compare these to your Work Style.

**ncing**  
present ideas, and assert yourself.

**DIRECT**

- You express yourself with assertiveness and conviction and,
- \_\_\_ State your position on issues candidly and frankly.
  - \_\_\_ Influence others with an assertive, direct approach.
  - \_\_\_ Come across as self-assured and forceful.
  - \_\_\_ Prefer to confront conflicts and openly debate differences.
  - \_\_\_ Tend to "tell" rather than "ask."
  - \_\_\_ Present ideas with confidence, sometimes overstating them.

- Your strengths include:
- \_\_\_ Taking charge, especially in situations that need control and clear direction.
  - \_\_\_ Getting vague or hidden issues out on the table and restated in a straightforward way.

**nding**  
to others, particularly groups.

**OUTGOING**

- You respond to others in a talkative, expressive manner and,
- \_\_\_ Interact easily with many people and groups.
  - \_\_\_ Share emotions openly and freely.
  - \_\_\_ Get energized by people contact and lots of activity.
  - \_\_\_ Prefer to talk problems out with others to clarify feelings.
  - \_\_\_ Use many gestures and expressions when talking.
  - \_\_\_ Contact friends and acquaintances frequently.

- Your strengths include:
- \_\_\_ Meeting and greeting others, putting people at ease, and making them feel important.
  - \_\_\_ Staying connected and up to date on personal issues that friends and business associates may be going through.

**ing**  
decisions and take action.

**STEADY**

- You take action and make decisions after much deliberation and,
- \_\_\_ Consider many options and alternatives before deciding.
  - \_\_\_ Get things done by "sticking with it" and persisting.
  - \_\_\_ Prefer long-term projects requiring calculated responses.
  - \_\_\_ Work with an even-paced, consistent style.
  - \_\_\_ React slowly when frustrated and angered.
  - \_\_\_ Make most decisions cautiously—"Timing is everything."

- Your strengths include:
- \_\_\_ Holding back on decisions until better opportunities and deals have time to surface.
  - \_\_\_ Patiently staying open to alternatives and possibilities that show promise and that others may have closed their minds to.

**izing**  
tasks, and handle details.

**PRECISE**

- You strive to have your time structured and plans defined and,
- \_\_\_ Tend to organize details in a timely and thorough fashion.
  - \_\_\_ Use established procedures to accomplish tasks.
  - \_\_\_ Like plans clearly set and somewhat predictable.
  - \_\_\_ Proceed on projects only after reading all the directions.
  - \_\_\_ Take pride in doing things in established, proven ways.
  - \_\_\_ Get frustrated by ambiguity and lack of specific guidelines.

- Your strengths include:
- \_\_\_ Bringing order and structure to disorganized situations.
  - \_\_\_ Seeing ways to improve systems and policies that help make work flow smoothly.

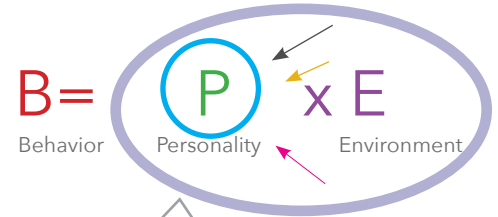
If your Work Style and Personal Style profiles are different, you are probably adapting to certain responsibilities, pressures, or stressors in one or the other of these two settings.

If your work and personal profiles stay the same, this indicates that you behave consistently in these two environments. However, you may think of other settings where your behavior does shift, e.g., when making a speech, driving in rush-hour traffic, or getting a performance appraisal!

FIELD THEORY

Behavior is a function of the Personality within an Environment.

$B = P \times E$



To fully understand behavior its important to consider both personality traits and the environment that brings them out.

Key Point

Over time you have probably developed a fairly predictable style, yet you may alter your behavior somewhat from one setting to another. Exploring the differences between your profiles will help you understand how you react to certain situations or pressures and identify "flexing" skills you have developed.

Work Style

List some factors at work that may affect your style and note whether any behavior changes are intentional or are reactions to stress.

Example:

At work there are many deadlines and I'm very Urgent. But, I'm naturally more Steady and take my time making decisions. Therefore, I'm often stressed at work.

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Personal Style

List some ways your Personal Style differs from your Work Style and jot down what factors (people, pressures, etc.) at home influence this.

Example:

I am more Direct at home than at work because being more forceful and controlling seems necessary when parenting my two rather strong-minded teenagers.

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Identifying situations that stress you and increasing your awareness of how your reactions relate to your personality style will help you develop strategies to cope with stress in more positive ways.

**Stress**

Situations preventing you from using your preferred style are likely to be stressful. For example, if you are Direct, you probably like being in control. When you are in situations where you have little authority or power to change things, you'll probably feel stressed.

**Key Point**

If you're like most people, when you're under stress you'll tend to overuse your strongest traits. You'll do more of what you find comfortable; however, you may overdo it and forget to flex your style. When this happens, your strengths can become weaknesses.

**Stress Reactions**

Be aware of your responses to stress when communicating with others, particularly when there is tension or conflict. Avoid moving into your "stress reaction" which usually has a negative effect and decreases communication.

FIGHT  
Flight  
Freeze  
Refuse

*Be aware of your stress reactions!*

**STRESS REACTIONS**

The grid below lists situations each trait finds stressful and typical reactions. Review these and identify which ones are most descriptive of you. You'll probably find that you overreact on one or two of your strongest traits, not on all four. Draw a circle around your hottest triggers. Discuss your "stress" reactions with others.

<b>INDIRECT</b>	Influencing	<b>DIRECT</b>
<p><b>Stressful situations:</b> being confronted and drawn into arguments; having your tactfulness taken advantage of.</p> <p><b>Reactions:</b> may avoid conflicts and disagreements, or give in when not really in agreement.</p>		<p><b>Stressful situations:</b> not being able to voice opinions; not knowing where you stand; loss of authority or influence.</p> <p><b>Reactions:</b> may get demanding or become argumentative or overly forceful as a way of regaining control.</p>
<b>RESERVED</b>	Responding	<b>OUTGOING</b>
<p><b>Stressful situations:</b> dealing with too many people; pressure to talk more and be entertaining.</p> <p><b>Reactions:</b> may withdraw, become excessively quiet, or withhold input when it's needed.</p>		<p><b>Stressful situations:</b> lack of people contact; loss of affirmation and group support.</p> <p><b>Reactions:</b> may talk excessively, try too hard to gain approval, or come on overly friendly.</p>
<b>URGENT</b>	Pacing	<b>STEADY</b>
<p><b>Stressful situations:</b> lack of action, slow decision making; changes in decisions that cause delays.</p> <p><b>Reactions:</b> may get frustrated and impatient, or make decisions impulsively.</p>		<p><b>Stressful situations:</b> pressure to make fast decisions, last minute deadlines; frequent interruptions.</p> <p><b>Reactions:</b> may find ways to postpone decisions or delay taking action.</p>
<b>UNSTRUCTURED</b>	Organizing	<b>PRECISE</b>
<p><b>Stressful situations:</b> too many policies and procedures to work around; lack of flexibility or support for doing things differently.</p> <p><b>Reactions:</b> may work around rules and not attend to details and schedules that are important to others.</p>		<p><b>Stressful situations:</b> ambiguity and lack of organization; poor planning; unpredictable change.</p> <p><b>Reactions:</b> may get more organized than needed or overwhelm others with details and lists.</p>

When team members have opposite styles, misunderstandings and conflicts may arise, not necessarily over what is said but, how it is said. Learn to flex your style so you communicate in a manner that keeps others receptive to you.

### What does “Flexing” mean?

Flexing means to temporarily change or modify your behavior to more closely match the behavioral style of the team member you are communicating with. This helps reduce misunderstandings that are caused by style differences.

Pages 8 & 9 provides guidelines for flexing your style to communicate more effectively with team members having opposite styles.

On pages 10 & 11 you’ll find guidelines for flexing your style to communicate more effectively with team members having similar styles.

Each combination, flexing with people having opposite styles and flexing to communicate with people having similar styles, presents special challenges.

### Skill-Building Activity

### Flexing to communicate with opposite style team members.

You may have a team member who has opposite preferences from you on all four traits. In this case you will want to do some flexing on each trait. More typically, you will become aware of differences on only one or two traits. For this activity, assume you are different on all four traits.

#### Instructions:

- 1) On the chart to the right, draw the profile that is the exact opposite of your Work Style profile.
- 2) Locate the guidelines on the next page that describe the matches between each of your traits and your team member’s opposite preferences.

**Team Member with Opposite Traits**

INDIRECT	[A]	Influencing	[A]	DIRECT
RESERVED	[B]	Responding	[B]	OUTGOING
URGENT	[C]	Pacing	[C]	STEADY
UNSTRUCTURED	[D]	Organizing	[D]	PRECISE

For example, if you’re Indirect on Scale A and your team member is Direct, then the guideline grid for you to read regarding Scale A is titled, “For an Indirect to communicate better with a Direct.”

- 3) Check (✓) the guidelines on each trait that you believe would be particularly helpful for you to use when communicating with this team member.

Review the guidelines below and place a check (✓) beside those you would like to practice more often when communicating with a team member having an opposite style.

### Influencing

For an **INDIRECT** to communicate better with a **DIRECT**:

- \_\_\_ Present your ideas and opinions more assertively and forcefully. Directs respect conviction and confidence.
- \_\_\_ Stand your ground and be prepared to debate your position. Directs like to challenge and confront differences.
- \_\_\_ Don't use hesitant eye contact, tentative body language, or too soft a voice. Directs may read this as insecurity or deceptiveness.

A

For a **DIRECT** to communicate better with an **INDIRECT**:

- \_\_\_ Avoid coming on too forcefully. Indirects may perceive this as pressure and find ways to avoid or end discussions.
- \_\_\_ Try not to come across too self-assured and overly confident; Indirects may perceive this as arrogance.
- \_\_\_ Watch your body language; don't overpower Indirects with excessive eye contact, a loud voice, or close body space.

### Responding

For a **RESERVED** to communicate better with an **OUTGOING**:

- \_\_\_ Display more animation and enthusiasm than you normally might. Outgoing people like energy and excitement.
- \_\_\_ Spend time getting to know Outgoing individuals personally. Open up and share more about yourself.
- \_\_\_ Use expressive mannerisms, smiling, and gestures. Outgoing people trust openness and look for body language to read.

B

For an **OUTGOING** to communicate better with a **RESERVED**:

- \_\_\_ Listen carefully and encourage Reserved people to talk. Don't talk too much or take their quiet style personally.
- \_\_\_ Draw Reserveds out using open-ended questions. If you ask a yes or no question, you'll get a one-word answer.
- \_\_\_ Don't come across overly friendly, particularly if a relationship isn't established; this may be read as superficial.

### Pacing

For an **URGENT** to communicate better with a **STEADY**:

- \_\_\_ Hold back some of your snap decisions; Steady people may read your decisiveness as impulsiveness or recklessness.
- \_\_\_ Don't pressure Steady individuals into making quick decisions; give them plenty of time to think things over.
- \_\_\_ Try not to react too emotionally to setbacks and mistakes or say critical things when delayed. Words can hurt.

C

For a **STEADY** to communicate better with an **URGENT**:

- \_\_\_ Present your ideas succinctly. Use fast speech and quick gestures. Urgent people like to get to key points quickly.
- \_\_\_ Be ready to change topics and move ahead when Urgents show signs of restlessness. Don't go on and on.
- \_\_\_ Offer to take on aspects of joint projects that make use of your patience, cooperation, and concentration.

### Organizing

For an **UNSTRUCTURED** to communicate better with a **PRECISE**:

- \_\_\_ Be on time and be as organized as possible. Precise individuals value timeliness and order.
- \_\_\_ Get the facts and details together before trying to persuade Precise people; use notes and refer to them if necessary.
- \_\_\_ Don't let follow-up and details fall between the cracks. Precises see this as being unreliable.

D

For a **PRECISE** to communicate better with an **UNSTRUCTURED**:

- \_\_\_ Stick to the big picture and don't bring up too many small points; Unstructured people often tune out the details.
- \_\_\_ Stay open to unproven, vague, and innovative ideas; otherwise, you'll be seen as closed minded or set in your ways.
- \_\_\_ Avoid being a perfectionist. Don't try to enforce too many rules. Unstructureds often see this as being nitpicky.

Team members with similar styles usually get along great initially; they act and talk alike. Problems can arise when they both overuse the same traits at the same time and draw out each other's weaknesses rather than building on their shared strengths.

If you've ever worked on a team with someone having the same style, you may have noticed:

- From the start you got along great; you seemed to think and behave almost identically.
- The other person communicated in a manner that felt comfortable to you and you were both at ease.
- You were able to establish a good relationship and rapport almost from the beginning.

Over time, however, you may have found your shared similarities getting in the way. To avoid this, you will need to occasionally flex—just slightly—in the opposite direction.

Flexing to offset too much similarity is less difficult than flexing to communicate with a team member who has the opposite style. On the other hand, it is more challenging to notice when similarities are causing problems and decide when you should flex. The task is easier; the timing is more difficult!

### Skill-Building Activity

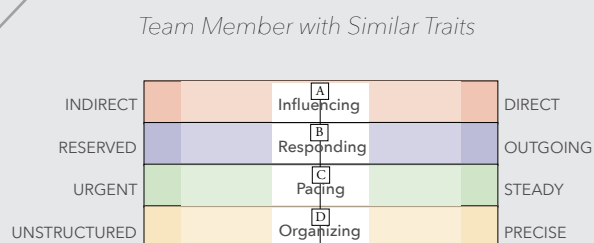
### Flexing to communicate with a team members having similar traits.

You may have a team member who is similar to you on all four traits; if this is the case, you may need to do some flexing. Typically you will become aware of similarities on only one or two traits and you'll want to consciously flex your style just on those traits.

For the purpose of this activity, assume you have a team member who has the same preferences as you on all four traits.

#### Instructions:

- 1) On the chart to the right, draw a team member's profile that is the same as your Work Style profile.



- 2) On page 11, locate the guidelines for each trait that describe the match between your preference on each trait and your team member's similar preferences.

*For example, if you're Indirect on Scale A, your team member would also be Indirect, so you would read the box with guidelines titled, "For an Indirect to communicate better with another Indirect."*

- 3) Check (✓) the guidelines for each trait that you believe would be particularly helpful for you to use when communicating with this team member.

Review the guidelines below and place a check (✓) in the blank beside those behaviors you would like to practice more often when communicating with team members having similar styles.

### Influencing

For two **INDIRECT** people to better communicate:

- Use your shared tactfulness to find points of agreement, but take a firm stand on issues when needed.
- Don't avoid conflict when important things need to be discussed and dealt with.
- Encourage each other to be more candid and straightforward when giving each other feedback.

A

For two **DIRECT** people to better communicate:

- Use your shared candor to get right to the point, but be ready to negotiate whose agenda gets addressed first.
- Share control of conversations. You both like to be in charge, so find ways to trade off who has the floor.
- Avoid getting into heated debates. Since you're both Direct, these can turn into confrontations.

### Responding

For two **RESERVED** people to better communicate:

- Draw out the other Reserved person's needs and concerns by asking more personal questions than you usually do.
- Take the initiative in speaking, introducing yourself, and greeting other Reserved people; don't wait too long.
- Let each other know if anything is on your mind, otherwise important issues may not be discussed.

B

For two **OUTGOING** people to better communicate:

- Remind yourself to listen more and talk less; otherwise, unnecessary competition for attention may occur.
- Focus conversations on important issues so you don't find yourselves talking about everything but the agenda.
- Avoid always being the center of attention; instead, arrange it so the other Outgoing person can be noticed and heard.

### Pacing

For two **URGENT** people to better communicate:

- Slow down the decision-making process occasionally to avoid taking action in situations where you're both not quite ready.
- Avoid saying something abrupt when you get impatient; you both can fire back quickly and hurt feelings.
- Stay open to additional options so you don't influence each other to make premature or snap decisions.

C

For two **STEADY** people to better communicate:

- Push each other to move quickly and take advantage of opportunities.
- Express your frustrations more often otherwise, there may be times when neither of you knows what's irritating the other.
- Encourage each other to be more decisive so you can avoid getting stuck and lose your momentum.

### Organizing

For two **UNSTRUCTURED** people to better communicate:

- Get organized before meeting so you have productive discussions and don't overlook important details.
- Avoid operating too loosely and frustrating each other since neither of you likes dealing with rules and structure.
- Assign each other very specific items to do, otherwise you'll both tend to work without structure or order.

D

For two **PRECISE** people to better communicate:

- Restate the big picture once in a while to keep you both from getting lost in the details.
- Don't get into disagreements over whose rules are best; you both like your own version of order and structure.
- Provide each other with lists and procedures to help you be more efficient together; you'll both appreciate this.

Your working relationship with your team leader is one of the key components to your success. One of the most important skills successful team members develop is the ability to flex their styles in ways that complement their leaders' styles. That means learning to zig when your leader zags.

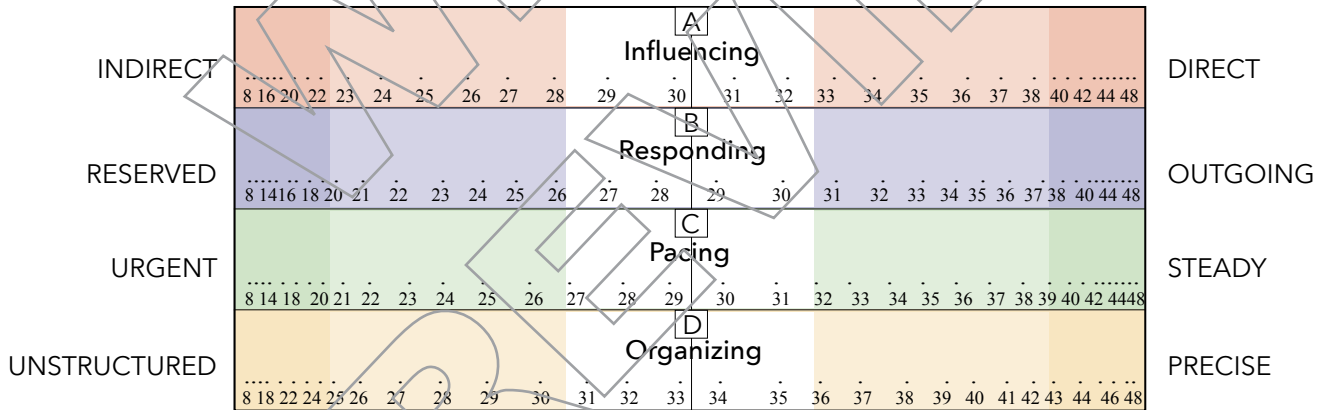
**Keep these points in mind:**

- Leaders can't read your mind. Tell them what behaviors you respond best to. Don't set them up to fail by withholding information.
- Leaders have their own pressures from the level above them—learn how stress affects their behaviors and don't take these personally.
- Fair or not—it's up to you to learn to work with leaders. Don't wait for them to change or you may be waiting forever!

**Chart Your Team Leader's Work Style**

**Instructions:** If your leader has taken the INSIGHT Inventory, ask for his/her scores and plot these on the chart below. If not, then plot what you believe his/her results might be. Then, write your responses to the four questions below.

Leader's name: \_\_\_\_\_



- 1) What is the best way to express your ideas and opinions or approach your leader with problems? (Scale A)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How expressive, warm, and friendly or quiet and reserved is your leader? How best should you respond? (Scale B)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) How should you set up a good decision-making process with your leader? Is it important to provide time for deliberation and exploration of options or summarize the choices and anticipate a quick decision? (Scale C)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Is your leader a "reader" or "listener?" Should ideas be presented in writing with lots of detailed supporting facts or discussed face to face in general terms? (Scale D)  
\_\_\_\_\_



Teams move through various stages as they progress from initial startup to fully functioning groups. Different personality types navigate certain team stages more easily than others. That's a good reason for having a diverse mix of different personalities among team members.

As you evaluate the stage your team is in and your contribution:

**DO:** Develop skill at flexing your style to best match the team stage or specific challenges the team faces.

Learn to read other team members' styles and how they react to problems and opportunities. This will be different depending on the stage the team is in.

**DON'T:** Expect team members to flex their styles if you don't do it first. You can be the example others model, especially when you are the leader.

Different team stages require different leadership and membership behaviors. Leaders and members need to flex their styles as team stages change.

**Team Stages**

**Tuckman Team Stage Model**

**Forming**

Newly established or reformed teams begin in this stage. They need clear direction, structure, and decisiveness from their leaders. Members must be willing to follow this direction.

**Storming**

As team roles and responsibilities develop, conflict occurs. Leaders need to be patient conflict mediators and good listeners. Members need to be willing to open up and discuss issues and personal grievances.

**Norming**

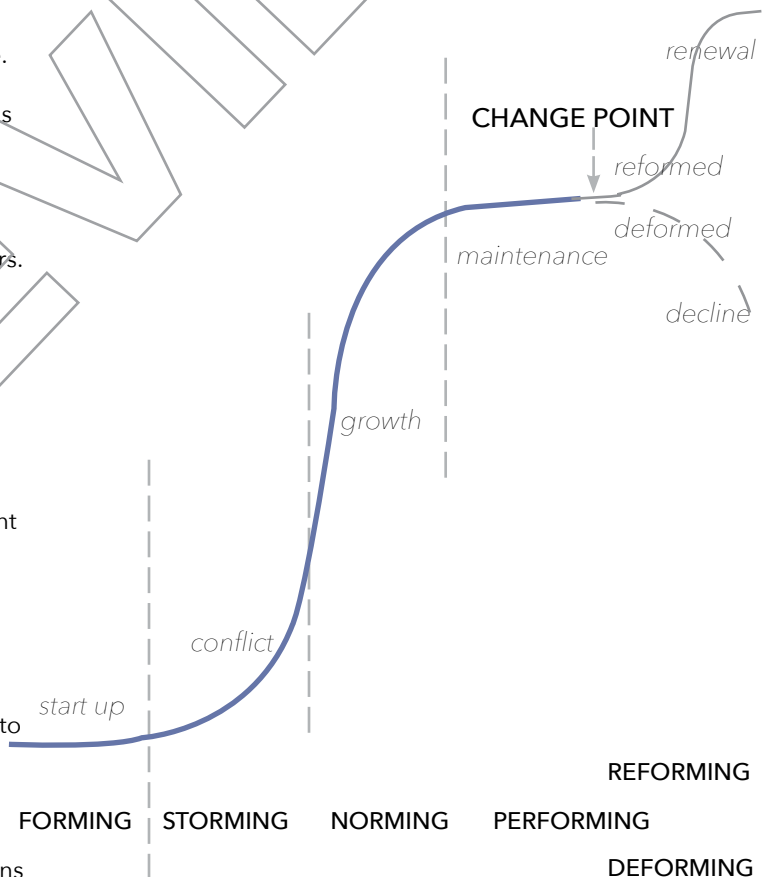
The team grows in its ability to achieve goals. Norms for doing things develop and conflict diminishes. In this stage leaders must shift to more democratic management practices. Members need to take on more responsibility.

**Performing**

Teams peak at a level of effectiveness where members work well together and do high quality work. Leaders should use a participative, indirect style. Members need to become more self-directed and confident in their roles.

**Change Point**

Teams eventually reach a point where performance begins to decline. Together, leaders and members must set new goals, take on new projects, and find added inspiration. Leaders are encouraged to shift back to a more Direct style and take charge of the shift to a new vision and purpose.



**Exercise:** Place an X at your team's present team stage and then discuss the reasoning for this positioning.

Effective team members learn to: 1) ask for help, 2) balance the tendency to overuse their strongest traits, 3) team up with others to overcome weaknesses, and 4) use their strengths to help achieve team goals. Work through the four activities below to identify strategies for increasing your effectiveness in each of these areas.

### 1) ASK FOR HELP

Let team members know how they can assist you.

- Be open about activities that don't fit your personality preferences and skills very well and ask for help.
- Discuss how others can assist you and how you can, in turn, help them.

What should team members know about your style in order to work better with you?

What specific areas could others help you with? (Answering this takes openness and trust.)

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### 2) BALANCE

Balance out your most extreme preferences by flexing your style.

- Don't overuse your strengths to the point they become weaknesses.
- Lower the intensity of the preferences you use a lot.

How does overusing one of your preferences diminish your effectiveness at times?

What actions can you take to balance some of your strongest preferences when they are working against you?

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### 3) TEAM UP

Team up with others so their opposite styles will complement your style.

- Identify who can partner with you to gain synergy and impact.
- Pair up with other team members who have strengths you don't have.

Which team members have traits opposite to yours?

What tasks might be done more efficiently if you pair up with team members who have opposite strengths?

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### 4) USE YOUR STRENGTHS

Find opportunities to use the personality strengths you have.

- Seek situations and team needs that fit your strengths.
- Volunteer for team projects where you can use strengths others may not be aware of.

What team projects or roles can you identify that would make good use of your strengths?

Which team members are similar to you and are using their strengths well?

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Chart the profiles of your work associates, friends, or family members.

Then, discuss each person's personality strengths and identify ways you can communicate better with them.

Profiles of your work associates, friends, or family members.

The diagram consists of five identical profile charts arranged in a circle, connected by curved lines. Each chart is designed for charting a person's personality profile and identifying communication strategies. The central grid of each chart is as follows:

INDIRECT	[A] Influencing	DIRECT
RESERVED	[B] Responding	OUTGOING
URGENT	[C] Pacing	STEADY
UNSTRUCTURED	[D] Organizing	PRECISE

Below each grid, there are two bullet points for notes:

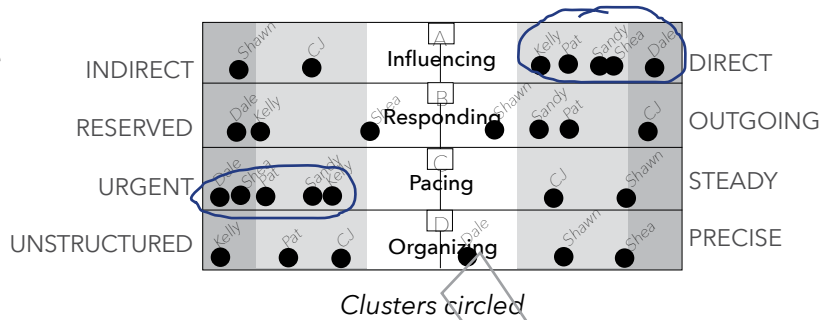
- This person's personality strengths include:
- Ways I can communicate better with this person:

Creating a cluster profile allows team members to see, at a glance, which traits they have in common and where they are different. Clustering on traits is neither bad nor good and depends on a team's goals and needs.

**Trait Clustering and Diversity**

Those members clustered closely together will use similar behaviors. This can be helpful for focused problem solving and shared approaches to accomplishing goals.

A wide range of style diversity on a trait indicates that members will use very different behaviors. This is helpful when differing perspectives and approaches are needed to achieve complex goals.



Teams may have diverse scores on some traits and clustering on other traits.

**Instructions:**

Plot the scores of each team member on the chart below. Add their names or initials above these scores. Draw a circle around any obvious clusters. Then, discuss which clusters are advantageous and which may be problematic.

Team name:

