

What's your communication style?

You might have noticed you connect instantly with some people but not others. Chances are you share the same communication style with those you easily connect with. We can increase our rapport with people by adapting our communication style to theirs. However, before you can adapt your communication style, you have to know what it is. Take the quick quiz below for an insight into your personal communication style.

Read the groups of statements below. Choose the one which is most like you, most of the time.

1. At work it is important to me to:

- Put things in writing so that I can go back and check what was agreed.
- Win awards or have my achievements recognized in some other concrete way.
- Get on well with the people I work with.
- Be able to use my imagination to come up with new ideas about how to do things differently.

2. When I go out with workmates:

- I am interested in getting to know other people but don't usually talk much about myself.
- I usually take the initiative in a conversation and I like talking about myself.
- I don't usually socialize with workmates. Gossip and social chit-chat are a waste of time.
- I tend not to talk about my own life outside work.

3. When I am making a major purchase like a car, I:

- Make decisions quickly if I have all the necessary information
- Often rely on gut instinct when making a decision
- Dislike being asked to make a decision on the spot.
- Usually make decisions based on what feels right

4. When I have an important task to do, I:

- Find it difficult to work to the deadline unless the task is something I am particularly interested in.
- Prefer to stick to tried and tested methods to achieve the result I want.
- Concentrate on achieving the desired end result
- Like to know exactly what I have to do, why and how I am expected to achieve it.

5. When I am talking to other people at work:

- I can always think of a variety of ways of expressing the idea.

- ▲ I tell people what I think even if they might not like it. I always speak my mind.
- I am careful to think through what I plan to say before saying it.
- I listen carefully and always check I have understood what they mean.

5. When I am talking to my friends:

- I am good at empathizing
- I sometimes make other people impatient because I like to go over things several times.
- ▲ I often interrupt when they are talking
- ◆ Other people sometimes find it hard to get a word in edgeways.

7. I feel uncomfortable or frustrated when:

- Things don't go as I expect them to.
- ◆ People take what I say literally when I use stories to illustrate my point.
- I have to take risks.
- ▲ People discuss things endlessly instead of just getting on with doing it.

8. In any situation:

- ◆ I get bored easily.
- I find it difficult to bring up things in discussion that I am worried about.
- ▲ I am comfortable voicing a contrary opinion and people usually listen to me.
- I try to be sure I have thought of everything.

9. I don't agree with other people all the time but:

- ◆ What other people think about something is important to me.
- I can usually see things from other people's point of view.
- I am good at persuading people to see my point of view.
- ▲ I am good at winning arguments.

When you have answered all the questions, count how many you have in total corresponding to each shape. If you have a clear majority of answers corresponding to one particular shape, then that is your preferred style. If you have fairly even numbers of two or more styles, read through all the descriptions that apply and consider which characteristics apply to you most frequently.



Quick communication quiz

Your preferred communication style revealed

If your answers were mainly

You are a pragmatic, confident and assertive person who focuses on objectives. You expect to get results and you appreciate other people being equally as frank and forthright as you are. You focus on efficiency so prefer short conversations which are to the point. Other people expect you to take charge in a crisis because you are decisive and business-like. You need to watch out for your tendency to interrupt other people – try to hear them out before you jump in with your own views. Otherwise you risk being seen by others as impatient, even aggressive.

If your answers were mainly

You are a thorough, analytical and objective person. When you make decisions you focus on getting the process right which will lead to the appropriate outcome. You expect detailed information and take a very systematic approach to tasks. Accuracy and logic are important to you. You sometimes feel annoyed if other people make careless mistakes. Other people may see you as someone who is reserved, considered, deliberate, and asks lots of questions. You are more comfortable with written communication which others may view as impersonal. To get around that use face-to-face communication when you can. Also work on increasing your eye contact and using more open gestures.

If your answers were mainly

You are a persuasive, loyal and empathetic person. You are concerned with other people's feelings so you tend to avoid confrontations whenever possible. You are a thoughtful person who is always polite and a good listener. You like to illustrate what you mean using stories about your own and other people's experiences. You place great importance on trust and loyalty and value strong relationships. You tend to use open gestures although your eye contact is not always strong. This may lead others to see you as reserved but friendly. Others can see you as overly sensitive so spend time learning how to handle conflicts to bring more assertiveness to your communication style.

If your answers were mainly

You are an ideas person. You love to think up new ways of doing things and are usually the most enthusiastic supporter of new ideas. You are imaginative, creative and enthusiastic. You tend to talk more than you listen and are a very spontaneous communicator. You are a master of the quick-fire come-back and the witty off-the-cuff remark. Your fondness for stories, anecdotes and jokes makes you entertaining company and you come over to others as a friendly person. However, sometimes your love of all things new and exciting means you are not very practical and you can be disorganized. The single most effective thing you can do to improve the effectiveness of your communication is to spend more time listening.

