

Achieving Higher Versatility



RESOURCE GUIDE

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Introduction

In your SOCIAL STYLE training program you learned about four distinct behavioral Styles: Driving, Expressive, Amiable, and Analytical.

People of each Style approach work, and life in general, in different ways. As you learn more about Versatility, you will see how Style plays a significant role in how people interpret the behaviors underlying Versatility.

Versatility is not a set of behaviors that stand completely apart from Style. People view Versatility through the lenses of their Styles. This is why it is important for you to learn about Versatility, along with your knowledge of Style.

There are two key steps to understanding the relationship between Style and Versatility.

First, you need to understand your own Style and the Style of those you work with. You may have learned this in your training as “know yourself” and “know others.”

Second, equipped with this knowledge about Style, you learn how to meet other people’s needs, as well as your own. At this stage you adjust your behavior to work more effectively with others. In training this is called “control yourself” and “do something for others.”

When you’ve done these things, the people you work with will give you some sort of feedback on your behavior. It might not be immediate, since it sometimes takes time for people’s perceptions to catch up with behavioral change. It might not even be spoken, at least not initially. But somehow they will give you their opinions on your behavior. This is an indication of your Versatility.

As you will see, Versatility goes beyond this general definition. But essentially, this is what it is. Acting in certain ways towards others leads them to show respect and support for you, and this is what we refer to as Versatility. How you respond to that respect and support is also an aspect of Versatility. Versatility is ongoing.

The purpose of this guide is to show you how others evaluate your behavior, and how you can adjust your approach to improve your effectiveness with others. In the pages that follow, we will dig much deeper into Versatility and how it interacts with Style. The goal is for you to learn more about yourself and others, and most importantly to be more fulfilled and work more effectively with others.



What Is Versatility and Why Is it Important?

Why Is Versatility Important?

Do people enjoy working with you? Are they comfortable talking with you and exchanging information? Can they rely on you? Do you have valuable ideas or input? Do you present yourself well? The answers to these questions are some indicators of your Versatility — a measure of how effectively you work with others, leading to their respect and support.

You are probably technically skilled at your job, thanks to your education and on-the-job experiences. However, your technical job skills have little to do with how well you communicate and interact with others. These interpersonal skills depend on how you choose to behave when interacting with your co-workers, and they are critical for working effectively with others.

In fact, research has shown that interpersonal skills are highly predictive of success, particularly as one progresses through a career. A study of emotional intelligence (behavioral skills that parallel Versatility), found that managers high in emotional intelligence develop more attachment to their organizations, are more committed to their careers, and have greater job satisfaction.¹

TRACOM's own research has shown that managers with high Versatility perform significantly better than their peers in critical business areas.² For example, they are 27% better at leading teams, 25% better at coaching others, and 19% more likely to be promoted.

We also found that Versatility is a strong predictor of job performance, comparable to other measures such as intelligence, education, and personality.

In short, the behaviors that lead to high Versatility are highly valued in the workplace.

Exactly What Is Versatility?

Versatility is a measure of how well you work with others, regardless of your Style or their Style. Many years ago, Dr. David Merrill and Roger Reid, creators of the SOCIAL STYLE Model™, determined that Versatility can be measured along four dimensions: Image, Presentation, Competence and Feedback. These four sources of Versatility form the basis for adjusting your behavior to increase your interpersonal effectiveness with others. These will be described in detail later in this guide, but before discussing specific behaviors, there are several important things to keep in mind about Versatility.

- **First, working to increase Versatility is a choice.** Unlike your Style, the behaviors that lead to high Versatility are within your control. People of all Styles have a range of Versatility. Once you learn about Versatility, you will be able to consciously think about your behavior and work on skills that lead to higher Versatility. For some people, just learning about these behaviors is an eye-opener, since they have simply never thought about such things. By applying the new behaviors, people can often see immediate results.

¹ Carnelli, A. (2003). The relationship between emotional intelligence and work attitudes, behavior and outcomes: An examination among senior managers. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 18 (8), 788-813.

² Versatility and managerial effectiveness. TRACOM Group, Centennial, CO. Available for download at www.tracomcorp.com

- **Second, people’s perceptions of your Versatility often remain unspoken.** For example, when giving a presentation to a potential new customer, if you included slides that were cluttered, illegible and unclear, the customer would instantly form an impression about you. You would likely be perceived as unprepared, confusing and unprofessional. However, the customer might not actually tell you what she is thinking. She could keep it to herself, but this first impression could affect her opinion of you and your abilities in the future.
- **Third, perceptions of your Versatility fluctuate with different groups of people.** For example, imagine a person who leads two teams. At his job he supervises a team of software engineers. During his off hours he coaches a grade school basketball team. With both teams, he is very communicative about goals and priorities. However, the engineers are given a great deal of freedom to work in ways that are most effective for them as individuals and to offer creative solutions to problems. On the other hand, the basketball team members are told very specifically what they need to do and how best to accomplish their goals. The coach is not making any adjustments for this team or their individual preferences. This man is likely to score higher on Versatility by his team of engineers than he would from his basketball team.
- **Fourth, it is not always possible to display high Versatility consistently.** Even people with very high Versatility occasionally slip up. This is expected and normal. The goal is to try to act with high Versatility as often as possible, though this is not always possible.
- **Fifth, Versatility is perceived differently by people of different Styles.** For example, people with Expressive and Analytical Styles sometimes approach priorities differently. An Expressive Style person might judge dependability by placing emphasis on getting information quickly, whereas an Analytical Style person might emphasize accuracy over speed. It is important to pay attention to people’s Styles when applying Versatility.
- **Finally, Versatility is different from likeability.** A person can be well liked by others, but not necessarily display high Versatility. The opposite can also be true. It is important to distinguish people’s intentions from their behavior. We sometimes have very good intentions in mind when working and interacting with others, but our behavior can be interpreted as derogatory or unconstructive.

You are probably starting to get the idea that Versatility is all about working well with people of all Styles. In fact, high Versatility is the result of applying appropriate behaviors effectively in different scenarios.

This guide includes specific suggestions for improving your Versatility in a variety of situations. It also provides specific Style-related tips for interacting effectively with people of each Style. It is intended to be a helpful reference when you need advice about working productively with others.

The Four Sources of Versatility

People consciously and subconsciously observe and evaluate each other’s behavior as they interact with one another. Four key categories of behavior often evaluated by others are Image, Presentation, Competence and Feedback. Taken together, these behaviors form the sources of Versatility.



When learning about Versatility, it is helpful to think of these four components as part of a timeline, beginning with Image.

Imagine that you are meeting a new person at work, a recently hired woman. When you first meet someone, the only indication you have about her as a person is what you see. You see the way she dresses, her hairstyle and demeanor. You will almost always form some sort of impression about this person based on these things, consciously or not.

After you have met this person and performed your quick assessment, she would speak to you (or a group you're in). What are the things you notice at this point? You will probably pay attention to her voice, its inflection and volume. You will observe the type of language she uses, how clear she is, and whether she asks you questions. You will evaluate how effective she is at helping you understand her viewpoints. This is Presentation.

So far you have already gotten through Image and Presentation. Pretty quick and easy, right? Once again, the evaluations you have made about this fictional person may be largely unconscious, or at least unspoken.

As time passes, you work more closely with this new colleague. You observe her in a variety of situations. You see the work she produces, how efficient she is, and how effective she is at meeting priorities and deadlines. You see how she responds to change and unexpected events. You begin to get an understanding of how she is going to react in most situations. This is Competence.

Imagine now that you have worked with this person for awhile. You have gotten to know her better, and have achieved a level of comfort with her. You are now able to pay closer attention to how she interacts with a variety of people, especially on a personal basis. How does she interact with her co-workers? You notice how well she listens to people in team meetings, and how she responds to them. You notice whether she is attuned to the needs and behavior of different people. You see how well she gets along with the rest of the company, and whether she forms friendships with anybody. You also notice subtleties of her behavior, such as the way she lets people know that she understands their needs. This is Feedback.

As you can see from this example, Versatility continues throughout time. As you work with people, some aspects of Versatility become less important over time while others become more important. Depending on the circumstances, they all work in conjunction, as some are more necessary in specific situations.



Versatility In Depth



Image

Image is a measure of the appropriateness of your dress, the organization of your work area, and your general demeanor. Image indicates whether you dress and present yourself in ways that are appropriate to the situation.

Of the four sources of Versatility, Image is the first that people notice. It is not a major contributor to your overall Versatility profile score; however, it is still important, especially early in a relationship. It is important because it is the first aspect of your behavior that people notice, and therefore, helps them form an initial impression of you. Even on an ongoing basis, the people you work with regularly will make judgments about your Image.

Do you dress appropriately for your role and responsibilities?

Part of understanding your impact on others is determining if you dress appropriately for your work situation. Taste in dress and grooming is very personal, but you should be aware of the impact it has. Does your dress meet the general expectations of co-workers, customers, and others? You may dress in ways that you feel are appropriate to your role or you may prefer to dress in a way that is most comfortable for you—even when it goes against the norms.

Do you dress mostly to please yourself?

If you dress as you please this might project an Image to others that is not totally appropriate to your role or title. This is not necessarily a problem unless it adversely affects your ability to communicate effectively, or negatively impacts people's impressions of you. Just be aware that this might cause tension for some people. For example, showing up to an important client meeting wearing jeans and a tee-shirt would be inappropriate in most workplaces, and would likely cause your clients to immediately form an unfavorable impression of you. Similarly, wearing a suit to the company picnic might also be considered equally inappropriate, if not bizarre.

If you're not sure about what Image to project, pay attention to what others with a similar role and responsibility are wearing. If necessary, experiment with a range of attire, from informal to formal, or from individualistic to conventional, for different situations.

What does your work area say about you?

Take a look around your work area and ask yourself, "Is my work area organized in a way that distracts others from their attempts to communicate with me?" Although you may have everything organized for your own efficiency, an excessively cluttered area might impact a person's ability to work effectively with you. You can "do something for others" by considering how to arrange your work area to maintain your own needs, while also making others comfortable.

In a similar way, your habits can impact others even if you are in sales or some other function where others, such as customers, don't actually see your work area. Do they get the idea that you are organized based on how long it takes to pull things out of your briefcase or whether you remember to bring a sufficient number of business cards or samples to pass around at sales meetings?

What is your general demeanor?

In addition to dress and work area, there are other factors that can influence your Image. For instance, how you carry yourself and your physical presence affects how others perceive you. Your physical demeanor and attentiveness during one-on-one interactions and meetings, and even the tone of your voice, can have an impact on others' impressions of you. When interacting with others, particularly during first encounters, consider these aspects of Image and the effect they might have on initial impressions and any follow-up exchanges.

How Does Style Impact Image?

Appropriately dressing and presenting yourself for different circumstances is the heart of Image. However, people of different Styles sometimes have different expectations, and this can impact perceptions of your Image. For example, a Driving Style supervisor might expect you to dress conservatively, whereas an Expressive Style supervisor might be more tolerant of non-traditional attire. When it is necessary to project a good Image for a specific individual, awareness of the person's Style can help you to plan accordingly.



Presentation

Presentation is a measure of how well you deliver information in business settings. It includes your comfort level when presenting to groups, the organization of your delivery, and how comfortable you make your audience feel.

Presentation skills are important because they help you communicate effectively with groups. In addition to formal presentations, these skills are used on a more frequent basis during any sort of meeting.

Are you comfortable when presenting to groups?

Think about meetings and presentations you have made in the past. Did you appear to be somewhat uncomfortable, particularly if you were unfamiliar with members of your audience? If so, your discomfort might have been affecting your ability to present yourself and your information effectively. Most people, even professional speakers, get the jitters before speaking in front of groups. One bit of advice for these situations is that having a firm grasp of your topic and having confidence in your ability to present it will come across to the group and make it easier for you to speak.

Style can impact this aspect of Presentation. Driving Style people are typically quick to judge individuals based on their performance in front of a group. They will want you to quickly get to the point and show your abilities. On the other hand, Amiable Style people will be more comfortable if you spend some time informally getting to know the audience before making your points. As you can see, it can be difficult to try to meet the needs of all Styles!

Is your presentation organized?

Providing your audience with a clear focus, well-organized information, and speaking with assurance will help them follow your ideas. It also aids in the perception that you know and care about the topic.

Just as you are perceived differently by people of different Styles, your own Style often influences how you organize your presentations. For example, Amiable Style people might prefer to establish rapport with the group before diving into the details, whereas people with an Analytical Style might be prone to giving more details than the audience needs or can handle. Expressive Style people are more likely to be dramatic, while Driving Style people may quickly make their points without bothering to engage or seek feedback from the audience.

Do you seek input from your audience by occasionally asking if they have questions or comments?

Involving audience members in meetings or presentations helps them become engaged and interested. It also helps you understand their Styles and needs (“know others”) so you can make appropriate adjustments to your presentation. As you present information, regularly assess the group for signs of confusion or boredom. Periodically ask whether they have questions or for their opinions about what you are saying. This will help to keep them engaged and can lead to discussion of different ideas and issues.

Do you use language and examples your audience can understand?

Using appropriate language and examples is especially important when speaking about a topic that is familiar to you but unfamiliar to others in the audience. Using obscure acronyms or highly technical language can leave people feeling confused and frustrated. This can lower your desired impact and cause others to develop a poor impression of you.

For example, a salesperson that unnecessarily uses technical language when presenting information on a new product would leave potential customers confused and unclear about the product. A salesperson who clearly defines any acronyms and describes the product without cluttering the presentation with unnecessary technical terms would be described by others as having high Versatility.

To increase your effectiveness, you can “control yourself” by using language and examples that are clear and understandable, including appropriate grammar, vocabulary and enunciation.

Do you tailor your presentations based on the knowledge level and Style characteristics of your audience?

When you present information during meetings or formal presentations, you can “do something for others” by determining the knowledge levels and Style characteristics of your audience in order to tailor your presentation to their needs. Failure to do so can diminish your effectiveness. For example, if you speak quickly and move rapidly through your materials, you risk frustrating members of your audience with Analytical or Amiable Styles. If you speak slowly and provide a lot of detail, you risk annoying Driving and Expressive Style audience members. If you are unsure of the Style make-up of your audience, it is often best to present a balanced presentation and then make adjustments based on your assessment of the audience’s reactions during the actual presentation.

How Does Style Impact Presentation?

Like all other aspects of Versatility, Presentation can be impacted by a person’s Style.

Driving Style individuals are usually very businesslike, getting to the point quickly. They speak forcefully, but are rather muted in their facial expressions.

Expressive Style people are generally the most outgoing of the Styles during meetings and presentations. They tend to speak loudly and often, especially if they are the ones running the meeting, and will use hand gestures and display a great deal of facial animation.

Amiable Style people usually like to be conversational, bringing others into the discussion. Their voices will be more inflected than a Driving Style person’s, and they will speak in a relatively quiet tone.

Finally, Analytical Style people will usually want to cover all aspects of a topic in detail, often in a linear or time-bound way. They tend to speak slowly and in a subdued voice, displaying few obvious hand or body gestures.



Competence

Competence is an evaluation of how well you help others achieve their work-related goals. It includes such factors as your dependability, flexibility, optimism, ability to help solve problems, and perseverance in challenging circumstances. Along with Feedback, Competence is a major contributor to your Versatility profile, both in terms of its contribution to the score and in its relative importance.

Competence is consistently important in one's work life. In the long-term, people will form opinions about your abilities that lead to high Competence. They will evaluate whether you are reliable, how flexible you are to changing needs and circumstances, your tenacity in achieving goals, and how creative you are in terms of solving problems and offering unique ideas. They will also form an impression of your general outlook, either as an optimistic person or as someone who comes across as somewhat pessimistic.

Are you aware of how others might see you?

In part, how a person judges your Competence depends on his or her Style. For example, a Driving Style boss might get frustrated with her Amiable Style employee's undisciplined use of time. Likewise, an Expressive Style manager might judge dependability by emphasizing speed of production, whereas someone with an Analytical Style might be less concerned with speed and more concerned with quality. Such differences can create tension when people of different Styles are working together. Regardless of your Style, the aspects of Competence described below can help increase your effectiveness.

Are you reliable?

Do you get things done on time and to expected standards? Your dependability heavily influences others' perceptions of your Competence, particularly since it might affect their own work and priorities. If you consistently complete assignments late or below standard, others' faith in this aspect of your Competence will plummet.

Are you flexible?

When situations change, do you adjust? If there's one thing that seems to be consistent in the modern workplace, it's change. Altering a course of action to adjust for new priorities is important. In addition, your general flexibility in helping co-workers impacts their perceptions of you. Rigid individuals are generally not seen as having high Competence.

Are you optimistic?

Do you come across to your co-workers as unenthusiastic? While you don't have to be constantly upbeat and lively, an optimistic attitude can be important. Optimism conveys to others that difficult tasks can be accomplished successfully. Maintaining positive energy and demonstrating your confidence in the likelihood of positive outcomes can help to increase the respect and support you receive from others.

Are you creative?

Are you open to new ideas and to offering ideas of your own? Your ability to develop original ideas and be open to different methods of accomplishing objectives can be critical in the workplace. Your flexibility and motivation for solving problems can affect others' perceptions of your Competence. To be most effective in this area, make an effort to take an active role in generating creative ideas and in displaying openness to new methods of getting things done.

Do you persevere through challenging circumstances?

When difficult or challenging situations arise, do you become frustrated and find it difficult to persist? Getting frustrated and sometimes feeling worn down by it all might be a natural immediate reaction. However, in the long-term this behavior can undermine others' perceptions of your Competence. If challenging circumstances or shifting priorities consistently discourage you, others may come to feel that they cannot rely on you.

Do you find ways to establish common ground in a variety of situations?

In addition to working on your Competence in work-related situations, you can also display your Competence through your knowledge of various subjects and ability to discuss a variety of topics in social settings. Remember, part of knowing others and doing something for them is being able to engage others in casual conversation in topics outside of your normal business or personal focus. This can help you establish common ground with them and impacts their perceptions of you.

How Does Style Impact Competence?

Style influences the way people display Competence behaviors in a number of important ways.

Because Driving Style people achieve their need for results through taking action, some of the behaviors that lead to Competence might seem like a natural for them. For example, they might often be perceived as dependable since they like to get things done quickly, and as persistent since they drive toward goals. These individuals usually don't show optimism through exciting speeches or a cheerful presence. Rather, their optimism comes across as confidence that things will turn out all right and that positive outcomes will happen through taking a course of action. In terms of flexibility, some Driving Style people tend to see changes as challenges that should be met head on. They may actually be faster to respond to changes than is comfortable for people of other Styles. As natural risk-takers, these people generally are not afraid of new ideas. They may generate their own ideas and solutions or, if practicing their listening skills, will take the time to solicit others' ideas and work with them.

Expressive Style people have a natural orientation toward spontaneity, so they might display flexibility to new circumstances and adaptability to change more readily than some others. Their creativity will sometimes show itself through generating ideas, especially since they are generally big-picture thinkers. When feeling optimistic, these individuals will show it through their enthusiasm and outward energy. Expressive Style people are not as influenced by time constraints as some of the other Styles, so they may display dependability somewhat differently. This is not to say that they are incapable of taking responsibility for their work or for meeting deadlines; people of all Styles do these things. They may have different understandings of time frames and what others' expectations are.

Amiable Style individuals are focused on relationships, and this can often come across in how they display Competence behaviors. For example, they might persevere through problems by involving others and focusing on working as a team, rather than trying to tackle every problem on their own. When feeling hopeful about things, they will generally be cheerful toward co-workers and display energy around work activities. Their personal creativity is also often most apparent when it involves some form of group activity. For example, an Amiable Style person might develop a new process that eases the workloads of fellow team members, as well as herself. The desire to please others is strong for these people, and to the extent that they agree with decisions and processes, they will display their reliability by meeting their responsibilities and deadlines.

Analytical Style individuals tend to be somewhat reserved, and this can come across in their Competence behaviors. Rather than being very vocal and obvious in their actions, they will sometimes show their perseverance by quietly moving forward and working through problems, often by themselves. When change occurs, they will generally want to find some assurance that the change is positive before committing themselves. Rapid transitions from one situation to another can be challenging for them. When coming up with new ideas or solutions to problems, they will often want time alone to think before offering their input to the larger group. Because they tend to be emotionally controlled, their displays of optimism might not be as forthright as they are for people of other Styles. In fact, their enthusiasm might be so subdued that others don't realize that they are actually excited.



Feedback

Feedback consists of verbal and non-verbal communication skills that affect how well you understand others and make yourself clear to them. This includes how well you listen and attempt to understand other people's points of view, respond accordingly, and develop mutually beneficial relationships.

Keep in mind that Feedback is a two-way process. You both send and receive verbal and non-verbal signals when interacting with others. Though some tension is inevitable and even desirable, dealing with it appropriately and successfully as you communicate with others is key to developing good Feedback skills.

Effective communication is clearly important, not only in the workplace but in all aspects of life. Good Feedback skills help people to truly understand what is being communicated by another person, often going beyond what is verbally said to non-verbal cues in the speaker's behavior. Just as important is the ability to make oneself clear and well understood. Finally, the ability to form good relationships and networks of people is vital for effective performance in most organizations.

Are you an active listener?

Feedback is crucial for "knowing others." Do you truly listen to what others are saying? And if you are listening, do you make sure that you accurately understand what the other person is saying? Taking the time and effort to accurately understand others in a meaningful way is essential for developing better and more effective relationships.

When communicating with others, do you foster mutual understanding by asking questions and summarizing conversations? Oftentimes, after a conversation or other form of communication, two people might assume that there is mutual understanding when, in fact, perceptions can vary greatly. Asking clarifying questions and summarizing conversations to ensure that you and the other person are on the same page can lessen this type of misunderstanding.

Do you adapt your communications for other Styles?

Your ability to communicate effectively with others can be more or less challenging depending on your Style. For example, Driving Style people's growth action is "to listen." They may need to pay particular attention to this aspect of their behavior during interactions with others. On the other hand, Amiable Style people are naturally attuned to relationships and are more likely to already be good listeners.

Your Style preferences influence how you communicate, and this can cause tension for a person with a different Style. For example, Expressive Style people often prefer to tell others how something makes them feel, while Driving Style individuals think that sharing personal feelings is somewhat irrelevant and possibly irritating. To ensure that you are fully understood, keep in mind the Style of the other person when communicating.

You can think of your Feedback skills as a personal radar system that you use to monitor the communications that you give and receive. By accurately assessing the impact you are having on others based on the verbal and non-verbal feedback others give you, you can adjust your communications as needed.

Do you attempt to see things from other people's points of view?

Recognizing the needs, wants, and concerns of others is important. Understanding how others feel does not necessarily mean that you agree with them. However, making the effort to understand others' perspectives can contribute to building better working relationships.

Your ability to empathize impacts your skill to fully understand and appreciate the needs of others. For example, when a salesperson understands a client's or customer's need, that salesperson is more likely to offer ideas or services to help meet that need.

Do you have good interpersonal relationships with co-workers?

Your desire to associate with others and to cultivate relationships may be quite different from the next person's. If your desire to be approachable is a low priority for you, consider how such behavior might cause others to believe that you are somewhat indifferent toward them. This can cause others to give less Feedback to you, and this can make it difficult for you to accurately read and understand important relationships. Making an effort to build stronger interpersonal relationships will help you increase the quantity and quality of Feedback from others.

How Does Style Impact Feedback?

Each Style of person approaches Feedback in unique ways.

As mentioned earlier, listening is the growth action for Driving Style people, so they are going to have a natural challenge in this regard. When they are listening and understanding another person, they will usually state that they have heard what was said, or give some other indication that they understand. These people are often brief in their interactions (and patience), so they tend to communicate using as few words as possible. This can sometimes make it difficult for other people to decipher exactly what the person wants or is really saying. The relationships they form with others tend to be formal and professional, yet they can be open to more personal involvement. Their primary need is to get results, so once a person has established his or her competence and abilities, a Driving Style person is more open to forming a personal bond or friendship. This need for results also often drives the skilled use of professional networks for these individuals, since they understand that they can get things done by knowing key people.

Expressive Style people are oriented toward personal relationships, so in some regard they are naturally advantaged in their use of Feedback skills. Because they have behaviors that are more Emote Responsive, in combination with Tell Assertiveness, these individuals may be able to communicate their intentions in ways that are apparent to others. In other words, they talk a lot and they are physically animated, which makes their feelings clear. Likewise, these individuals tend to be very outgoing, which may aid them in developing relationships at work. They seek personal approval, so these individuals might use their networking skills to their advantage by getting to know important people within the organization. While their natural tendencies might assist them in these areas, the degree to which they actively listen and understand others might be less apparent. For example, during a conversation an Expressive Style person might do the majority of talking, and this can leave the other person feeling a bit overwhelmed and uncertain as to whether he was heard or understood.

Like Expressive Style people, Amiable Style individuals also display their emotions more than other Styles, and this can naturally help them in their use of Feedback skills. They tend to be good listeners who are attuned to others' feelings and well-being, so during interactions they will often leave the other person feeling like she has been heard and understood. Since they are naturally friendly, they will usually go out of their way to maintain good relationships with their co-workers. However, they might not always develop deep and personal relationships with a large number of people. Instead, they reserve their more personal sides for a select group of people, while maintaining cordial relationships with most other people.

Displaying Feedback skills can be more challenging for Analytical Style people, since they tend to be reserved and somewhat hesitant to engage with other people. They tend to be good listeners, so others will often feel that they have been heard after an interaction. However, because they are emotionally controlled, it might be difficult for others to determine whether the Analytical Style person truly understands or cares about them or their issues. This does not necessarily mean that the person does not care; it is simply that he may not communicate his concern in a way that is obvious to others. These individuals might form personal relationships with only a small number of people within the organization. Being socially cautious and reserved by nature, they might not be inclined to form networks that could inevitably help them in their work and careers.



What Do Low and High Versatility Look Like?

The previous section described the behaviors that lead to Versatility: Image, Presentation, Competence and Feedback. But how do you know when someone is displaying low Versatility? Sometimes it's like bad art, we know it when we see it but we can't quite describe it. Even high Versatility can be difficult to put into words, but we certainly feel better when we're working with people who practice it.

Some aspects of low Versatility will be common across Styles. For example, a person who consistently submits low quality work will be described by co-workers as "unreliable" no matter what his Style. This is a reflection of Competence. But low Versatility often takes on Style-related characteristics. You'll find that this behavior is often characterized by acting in Style-bound ways—rigidly adhering to Style behaviors without displaying any behaviors of other Styles.

Likewise, high Versatility behaviors are often the polar opposites of what are found among people acting with low Versatility. People who act with high Versatility are aware of how they impact others, and they consciously behave in a way that minimizes stress or tension for others.

This section describes common examples of low and high Versatility for each Style. The behaviors are not broken out by the four sources of Versatility. Rather, the goal is to give examples that display common behaviors that are associated with the four Versatility components, but in Style-specific ways.



Driving Style

Low Versatility

Driving Style people's growth action is to listen, and this deficiency is a key characteristic among those who are behaving with low Versatility. They often listen only at a superficial level, without understanding the underlying messages that others are communicating.

Related to their poor listening skills, these individuals often come across as insensitive or uncaring. They do not display interest in matters that are important to others, such as personal issues, career goals, or feelings about work. Though it may not be their intent, they are perceived as discounting what other people say or want. They often will not remember personal information about their co-workers, or at least will not bring it up in conversation. It is as if this personal information goes in and out of them. Personal details about others tend to get pushed aside, since they consider it less important than other information. In the short-term, the Driving Style person might get what she needs, but this focus on short-term needs will often result in long-term consequences. For example, remembering and caring about other people's personal interests and lives is critical for building relationships.

These people are often highly impatient. They are constantly trying to move things along, without waiting for others or for information they might need. For example, when leading a new group a Driving Style person will not allow time for the group to get to know one another or develop rapport before launching into the work. They consider their own priorities to be the most important, and will push to achieve their agendas. Of course, this often backfires because they don't have buy-in or commitment from others. They also might rush into a decision, only to realize later that the decision was faulty because they didn't have all the information they needed.

One of the key characteristics of Driving Style people who are displaying low Versatility is their extreme need to control. They will try to control processes, outcomes and people. For example, during meetings they will dominate discussion, trying to control the conversation so it goes in the direction they desire. They will freely interrupt others without apology. This can have both short- and long-term consequences. In the short-term, people will feel run over and disregarded, while in the long-term they might not support the Driving Style person's agenda or expend any effort to help the person.

These individuals are often very secretive. They keep information to themselves, and this frustrates other people because they may need this information in order to succeed at their jobs. Related to this, they don't disclose their feelings. This makes it difficult for other people to form meaningful relationships with them. Some Driving Style people struggle to understand their feelings, so in a very real sense they are unable to reveal their emotions to others.

Driving Style people tend to be formal, and this can make others uncomfortable. This is especially true when the person is in a position of power or authority. Their formality makes them hard to read, and since they are reluctant communicators, other people are left feeling as though they don't understand what the person is thinking.

Similar to Analytical Style people, these individuals tend to be very rational, to the point where they discount other ways of approaching issues. They inherently see the logical approach as the most valuable. This can result in two problems. First, the person does not take into account other approaches that are equally valuable to their own. Second, it leaves others feeling as though their input is not valued.

These individuals sometimes put others through trials in order to evaluate their competence. For example, during a meeting a Driving Style person might ask an individual to respond to very difficult questions, or to otherwise prove his or her abilities. This Style will often use public settings to put others on the hot seat. Of course, this can cause resentment among the people who are being put through this treatment.

There are other more subtle ways that Driving Style people will show low Versatility. For example, when on the phone with someone, the person might read e-mails or attempt to do some other task that distracts him from paying attention to the conversation. This is another form of impatience. Like some of the other behaviors described above, this can leave other people feeling like they are not important or that their time is not as valuable as the Driving Style person's time.

High Versatility

When behaving with high Versatility, Driving Style people are real assets to organizations and are helpful to their co-workers. They are able to keep projects moving ahead, but instead of taking all control they get input and buy-in from others. In particular, they display good Feedback skills by actively listening to others, understanding their viewpoints and why they have them, and responding to them. The skilled use of Feedback is particularly noteworthy among Driving Style individuals because it involves a high degree of listening, which is their growth action.

Like all people who are using high Versatility, these individuals are aware of the impact they have on others and consciously monitor their behavior. They make an effort to work on their listening skills, as well as getting to know others on a personal level. This benefits them by helping others to be more comfortable, which in turn affects their working relationships and ability to get things done.

Instead of being secretive, these people are upfront in sharing their knowledge and opinions. This is not done in an aggressive manner. Rather, they provide their opinions directly but not bluntly. They let others know where they stand, and by displaying their openness, they allow others to express themselves and to trust them. Further, they make sure to gather input from people prior to making decisions. This helps not only the other people who are involved, but almost always results in more informed decisions.

While Driving Style people are always oriented toward taking action, when displaying high Versatility they are able to maintain patience. They keep things moving along without unnecessarily rushing others. They understand the different skills and value that their co-workers bring to projects, and they allow them the time and focus they may need to succeed at their tasks.

Versatility Challenges and Benefits for the Driving Style

In order for Driving Style people to act in ways that lead to high Versatility, they have to diminish many of their natural tendencies. They want to dominate discussions, but they have to make sure to involve others. They want to control things, but they have to give up some of that control. They want to move quickly, but they have to slow down. Inevitably, all of these behaviors help them achieve their need for results, so it can be difficult for them to moderate these tendencies.

Acting in ways that lead to high Versatility has two primary benefits for Driving Style people. First, relationships with co-workers will be much stronger, and this in turn will have ongoing benefits. People will trust the individual and will be more willing to actively collaborate with him. Second, the person's decisions and work effectiveness will be improved. This happens by taking into account other viewpoints and information, resulting in more informed decisions and higher quality work.



Expressive Style

Low Versatility

The growth action for Expressive Style people is to check their behavior. This casual lack of control is a hallmark of low Versatility behavior among these individuals. They do not take the time to consider what is appropriate for situations and audiences, and this comes across in their mannerisms, dress, the types of stories they tell, and other behaviors.

A characteristic of these people is their habit for improvisation. They are often unprepared for a given situation and will respond with an impromptu display that relies on charm or humor. They will often display charisma rather than substance. They never hesitate to speak up or share their opinions, but they will often skirt real issues by relying on their personality to cover up their lack of insight or knowledge. They quickly move from smooth to slick. There are both immediate and long-term consequences of this behavior. In the immediate moment it can leave people feeling frustrated, since they might be relying on the person for meaningful input. If this behavior occurs often, others will simply come to believe that the person lacks competence and ability.

Low Versatility often shows itself through exaggerated Style behaviors. Expressive Style people seek recognition, and this often comes across as a strong need to be the center of attention. This can display itself in a number of ways including publicly pointing out their achievements or efforts, acting as the office clown, and self-aggrandizement. They are especially prone to disclosing personal information about themselves that is inappropriate or even offensive to others. In moderation, some of these behaviors can be appropriate and even helpful to a given situation. However, when this behavior becomes frequent it is distracting, unproductive, and is used as a cover for inadequacies.

The backup behavior of Expressive Style people is to attack, and this will sometimes be displayed in combination with low Versatility behaviors. The attack can come as a full frontal assault or can be less aggressive. They will sometimes bring up issues that are unrelated to the matter at hand, and will criticize others on a personal level. In more subtle forms, they might publicly call attention to an issue that is meant to embarrass a co-worker or put her in a difficult spot, even when not actively in confrontation with the person. On occasion, the person is not even aware that he is attacking someone. This is an example of a person who is not checking his behavior, since he seems to have no awareness of the consequences he has on others. Of course, the major consequence is that people will not trust him and may be very hesitant to work closely with him.

These individuals typically approach time in a very undisciplined way, and it is difficult to get them to commit to specifics. Related to this, they often do not follow through on others' expectations. For example, when discussing outcomes and next steps after a meeting, such a person will be ambiguous about his commitments even though others in the meeting will have clear definitions of what needs to happen. When the next meeting comes around, this person will show up but will be unprepared. His tendency is to show up late to events, and not prepare ahead of time. This can result in feelings of resentment among others, who may feel that they are carrying an unfair share of the workload.

When displaying low Versatility, Expressive Style people will sometimes discount the logic of a course of action. Others may have a real need and rationale for being precise about something, but

because these people approach situations in a very loose and free way, they will disregard the more logical approach. This can leave others feeling discounted and frustrated.

High Versatility

A key feature of behaviors that lead to high Versatility for Expressive Style people is their ability to take their growth action—checking their behavior. Like all people who act with high Versatility, they are aware of their own behavior and they actively monitor their impact on others. This is especially important for Expressive Style individuals because their expansive behavior can easily become overwhelming and lead to tension for others. When acting with high Versatility, they recognize this and rein in (or restrain) their tendencies in order to meet the needs of others and different situations. This allows them to become more attuned to how others respond to their behavior. Where appropriate, their contribution of emotions or humor to situations is valuable because it helps to build or solidify relationships. This can help make workgroups more cohesive and productive.

When these people display high Versatility, they are showing substance in addition to charisma. Their natural sociability endears them to others; however, they do not rely only on this. They are prepared and actively contribute to projects. This leaves others feeling not only good about the interaction, but confident in the person's abilities.

Because they show an awareness of other people's strengths, these individuals will often show respect for co-workers who contribute in a more logical manner than themselves. This is very valuable for them because by first showing their understanding of a logical approach, they win credibility from their co-workers. This allows them the opportunity to bring emotions and humor into the situation without risking alienating others.

Expressive Style individuals can be excellent for relieving group tension. Their use of humor helps put others at ease and allows for fun within work settings. When attuned to people and situations, they are better than any other Style at using humor and personal feelings to make others comfortable.

Versatility Challenges and Benefits for the Expressive Style

Expressive Style people like to be outgoing, which can sometimes come across as verbose and offensive. They run into difficulty because to behave in ways that lead to higher Versatility, they need to apply their Style "brakes." Remember that their growth action is to check their behavior. They want to be outgoing and fun, but they need to understand that not everyone responds well to these behaviors, so they have to moderate these tendencies. They want to be spontaneous and funny, but they need to realize that blatant humor is not always appropriate or appreciated. They want to be the center of attention, but they need to allow other people to have the spotlight sometimes.

As with all Styles, acting in ways that leads to high Versatility will benefit Expressive Style people by improving their working relationships and personal effectiveness. Relationships will be improved as people will be able to interact with them without feeling overwhelmed. Instead of constantly walking on pins, wondering when the person is going to go on the attack, others can interact with the person without being overly cautious or fearful of retribution. Their personal effectiveness will be improved as people will see substance behind the dramatic displays. Instead of relying solely on their ability to network with others, they will garner recognition through their skills and competence.



Amiable Style

Low Versatility

Low Versatility is sometimes harder to recognize with Amiable Style people because their behaviors are not as active as some of the other Styles. As with other Styles, much of their low Versatility behavior contains elements of their backup behavior (acquiescing) and growth action (to initiate). The phrase “going along to get along” applies to these individuals.

These people have such a strong need to maintain relationships that they will go along with others solely because they want to minimize interpersonal conflict. They will not express their opinions or say what they want or need. For example, when asked their preference for a course of action, they’ll say “whatever is easiest for you” or “I’m fine with whatever you want.” Paradoxically, this habit of not meeting their own needs actually makes it harder for others to interact with them. Their efforts to make things convenient for others can be an inconvenience for both parties. This can result in frustration for others.

These people’s acquiescence can be a disservice to others who are relying on them to be active contributors, and who want them to state their opinions. Like many people who are behaving with low Versatility, it may not be their intent to cause tension for others. They may think their behavior is acceptable because they are not disagreeing with anyone. However, not only does this behavior not contribute to productivity and effectiveness, but it can make others feel that the Amiable Style person is not open to them. By constantly focusing on the other person and what they think will make him or her happy, these individuals send a message that their true selves are closed off. This can make other people feel like they aren’t worthy of a meaningful relationship, resulting in others feeling closed off from the person.

In a more extreme form of this behavior, an Amiable Style person will actively disagree with a point-of-view, but will not share his disagreement or opinion, instead choosing to go along with the crowd. However, while on the surface he has agreed to something, in reality he has not agreed to a course of action. This is a problem because the lack of agreement will continue to surface in this person’s behavior. For example, he may be abrupt toward others and respond with brief critical remarks. Also, he might share his critical opinions with others at work who are part of his inner circle, but will not directly confront the source of his disagreement. This results in the conflict continuing indefinitely, without any meaningful resolution. In the long-term this hurts the Amiable Style person because his grievances are never put forth. It also is unhelpful to others, who should hear and respond to the issues.

These individuals are sometimes seen as fickle in their relationships and opinions. This might seem surprising since maintaining relationships is such a strong need for them. But it is just this need that creates the tendency to be erratic with others. For example, an Amiable Style person will support and agree with a person who is being critical of something or someone, but will then turn around and criticize this same individual when talking with someone else. In this sense, these individuals tend to love the ones they’re with. This can result in feelings of betrayal among their associates, and also a loss of trust.

Amiable Style people who are displaying low Versatility often have problems with change, especially when it impacts their working relationships. They may show resistance to change, especially if they were not involved in making the decision. This type of inflexibility is a part of the Competence component of Versatility. The consequences for this behavior are that the change might occur in spite of their resistance, without allowing them the opportunity to have meaningful input. It also has longer-term consequences in that the person will continue to feel resentment about the decision.

These people are rather undisciplined in their use of time. They generally are not in a rush to complete tasks, even when the situation requires them to be. They tend to waste quite a bit of time talking with others instead of focusing on what needs to be accomplished. For example, during a meeting they can quickly get off topic and talk about other matters. It can be difficult for people of other Styles to refocus the meeting, especially if there are many Amiable Style people in the group. This can result in people feeling like their own time is being wasted.

These individuals have a propensity to act based on their emotions, even if something has already been agreed to. They will want to change course mid-stream if someone or something has appealed to their emotions. For example, if criteria have been set that excludes people from a certain department from participating in a developmental activity, an Amiable Style person who is in charge of the activity might accept some individuals from that department just because they asked him if they could participate. In these situations their intent is usually to do good, but they often push the boundaries of limits that have already been established. This can result in people not trusting them to maintain agreements, or not having confidence in them to make tough decisions.

High Versatility

When behaving with high Versatility, Amiable Style people are very skilled at getting people to work together in a productive way. They create a calm and friendly environment, while also staying industrious. They are consummate at networking, and build relationships with a variety of people. This benefits themselves as well as the people they put into contact with one another. They often know who to turn to for a variety of circumstances.

Since they are naturally focused on relationships, these individuals are skilled mediators. When conflicts arise, Amiable Style people show high Versatility by working through the issues with both parties, including themselves if they are part of the conflict. They remain optimistic during difficult times, and this optimism helps their co-workers persevere and remain focused. These individuals display their optimism in very forward and obvious ways. They are cheerful with others and verbally express their favorable opinions about topics. For example, during meetings they will show their enthusiasm about projects or about good news that is being delivered. This kind of outward cheerfulness is often contagious, and results in a work environment that is friendly and productive.

An aspect of Versatility that is particularly noticeable among these individuals is their use of Feedback skills. They are very good listeners and are able to communicate meaningfully with a variety of people. Further, they are truly concerned with other people's well-being, and this empathy helps others to trust them. In the long-term, this can result in people having a high degree of trust in the person and his intentions.

Versatility Challenges and Benefits for the Amiable Style

Their focus on maintaining friendly relationships is often what keeps Amiable Style people from behaving in ways that lead to higher Versatility. They want to get along well with everyone, but they need to realize that professional disagreements are acceptable and are not taken personally by everyone. They may prefer to maintain the status quo, but sometimes change is necessary, and it is better to have some influence on the matter than to go along unwillingly. They want to be helpful to others, but there are times when this is not possible. Taking these actions is difficult because they are contrary to some of the fundamental behaviors that are common for Amiable Style people.

Acting in ways that lead to high Versatility is beneficial for relationships and overall effectiveness. Relationships can be improved because people will actually have greater trust in the Amiable Style person. If Amiable Style people are forthright in their opinions, others will be clear about where they stand and will have a better understanding of how to approach and interact with them. Likewise, their personal effectiveness will increase for many of the same reasons. By appropriately asserting themselves, they will have greater influence within the team or organization. Inevitably this can increase not only their effectiveness, but also their own personal satisfaction.



Analytical Style

Low Versatility

Analytical Style people have a need to be “right.” This need is often expressed in how they approach time, processes and principles. Problems occur when these individuals do not share what is on their minds regarding these things. This behavior leaves other people frustrated and without an understanding of what these people need. As a consequence, the person not only might not get what she needs immediately, but might not have a voice in longer-term or more substantial matters.

When displaying low Versatility behaviors, Analytical Style people are often very slow. They are slow to act, but are also slow in conversation, often drawing out explanations or conversations beyond what other people want or need. Their slow pace is often a mechanism for ensuring that things are done according to their own definition of what is right. This is ultimately self-serving and over time becomes very frustrating for their co-workers and others. This can result in people becoming impatient with them, and in trying to work around them rather than with them.

These individuals will often engage in a variety of behaviors that are indicative of their backup behavior, avoidance. In extreme circumstances they might actually try to walk away from a situation or physically isolate themselves. More commonly, they will disengage by remaining silent and withdrawing in subtle ways. When behaving this way, they will not meaningfully contribute to conversations and can be non-committal regarding decisions or outcomes. When trying to communicate with them, they might not give timely responses to e-mails or calls. This mechanism of “going dark” highlights particularly poor use of Feedback skills, and is a passive-aggressive form of avoidance. The short-term consequence of these activities is that others will not be able to respond to them because they have been unclear about their opinions. If they behave this way over a period of time, they risk becoming completely disengaged from others and from important decisions or events that they might otherwise have some influence on.

Another expression of low Versatility with Analytical Style people is stubbornness. They will cling to their position without appropriately responding to others’ ideas or alternatives. Although people of all Styles can be stubborn, Analytical Style people can be especially rigid once they have established a position on something. As a consequence, they can alienate others or make them feel that their opinions are unworthy.

These individuals are very cautious. They will hesitate to take action on something, many times losing an opportunity because of their lack of haste. Another way they express caution is by keeping information to themselves. They will not disclose information unless they absolutely have to, or will delay disclosing for too long. This can result not only in lost opportunities, but it can frustrate other people who are expecting them to provide information in a timely way.

Sarcasm is one of the more subtle expressions of low Versatility that is common with Analytical Style people. The person uses biting humor to send a critical message without being overtly hostile. In a similar way, they can be perceived as judgmental, critical or moralistic in their attitudes. These are often outward manifestations of what, in their minds, they believe is right. The consequence is that they leave people feeling offended and alienated.

High Versatility

When acting in ways that lead to high Versatility, Analytical Style people use their organizational skills to influence processes, but without being rigid. They listen with an open mind and are willing to change their opinions. They actively contribute and will support group decisions. Along with this openness, they display a less critical mindset and are not as picky or judgmental about other people or situations. This results in much easier working relationships, as well as better decisions.

These individuals are forthright in expressing their opinions. Instead of holding back, they actively state their ideas and are vocal members of group discussions. When situations call for it, they will make decisions in a timely way. Though they tend to act cautiously, they will resist this urge when it is unnecessary and will act decisively. This helps others to achieve their goals without having to wait for the Analytical Style person to take action.

Analytical Style people will sometimes use subtle or dry humor to break tension or bring levity to a situation. In such situations their humor is not mocking, but is more of a way to communicate with others their less serious side. In fact, these people often show a personal part of themselves as a way of opening up to others. In Style terms, they add more Emote Responsiveness behaviors to their repertoire to counteract their normally controlled exteriors. This helps others to see a more animated side of them, which is often helpful for developing personal relationships.

Versatility Challenges and Benefits for the Analytical Style

In order to act in ways that lead to high Versatility, Analytical Style people have to temper their need to be right. They want to act cautiously and slowly, but they need to take more risks and be quicker to act. They want to take a methodical approach to problems and tasks, but they sometimes need to be less systematic. They prefer to stay in the background, but they need to be more upfront in stating their opinions. These behaviors are all contrary to the behaviors that are most comfortable for Analytical Style people, and this is why it can be difficult for them to act in ways that lead to high Versatility.

The benefits of enacting high Versatility behaviors are improved relationships and greater effectiveness. These individuals can improve their relationships by allowing others to experience them on a more personal level. By showing the more human side of themselves, others will feel closer to them and have a greater understanding of their needs. This can lead to the many benefits of trusting relationships, both personal and professional. These individuals can increase their personal effectiveness because using more directive behaviors provides others with information they need, and also opens up resources that can help Analytical Style people succeed in their jobs. For example, by providing their input directly and making quicker decisions, work can be accomplished more efficiently. This is particularly true if the person involves other people in the process, instead of trying to do things alone.



Doing Something for Others: How to Achieve Higher Versatility

Based on what you've just read, you have a pretty good idea of what Versatility looks like; how it is similar in some ways across all Styles, and how it is displayed in Style-specific ways. Perhaps you recognize some of these behaviors within yourself or those you work with. Now, the most important thing for you to discover is how you can improve your Versatility.

This section offers advice for improving your Versatility with people of each Style. This advice is given in the context of each of the four sources of Versatility: Image, Presentation, Competence and Feedback. This section describes how people of each Style view the four sources of Versatility, and how you can increase your effectiveness in those areas.



Doing Something for the Driving Style

Anticipate This Behavior:	This Person Wants To Be:	To Strengthen This Relationship Support:	Use Time To:	To Get Action Provide:
<i>Impersonal Secretive Organized Demanding Factual</i>	<i>In Control</i>	<i>Conclusion and Actions</i>	<i>Be Efficient</i>	<i>Options with Probable Outcomes</i>



Image

Driving Style people tend to be formal in their dress and appearance. They are not usually the type of people who will be flamboyant in appearance. Depending on the circumstances of your workplace, they might expect you to dress in a similar way, especially if you have interactions with customers. However, they place high value on professional competence, so if you have proven your abilities to them, they may be more open to your own personal tastes in clothing and appearance.

These individuals prefer a formal and action-oriented appearance. They typically have a work area that is organized to help them get things done. They may display only a few personal effects but prominently display plaques or credentials—not for self-promotion but to announce their accomplishments. They may look for the same in your work area, however they are likely to be more interested in how well you get work done rather than how you decorate your work area.



Presentation

When appealing to Driving Style audience members, remember to clearly state the goal of your presentation and focus on achieving that goal throughout the presentation. Stating your desired outcome early in the presentation can help them buy into what you are saying. Consider providing a written agenda or slide that contains the key goal or outcome of the presentation, and then at conclusion refer back to it to help give them a needed sense of purpose or accomplishment.

If appropriate, consider engaging Driving Style people by asking which alternative they would like to see achieved as a result of the presentation. This will help them meet their need for results. Be efficient and brief in your presentation. Including extraneous information will likely be unwelcome and could contribute to a perception that your presentation is ineffective or a waste of their time.

Deliver your message in a firm and straightforward manner, using results- and action-oriented language. Directly seek Driving Style individuals' commitment to the actions or outcomes you desire. To do this, conclude your presentation with next steps or a closing remark that solicits their commitment to future action.

Take a business-like approach, focusing on key tasks and outcomes. These individuals don't need you to build rapport before learning what your objectives are. State your purpose upfront and build your presentation's content with facts and a sufficient amount of clearly described detail to make your point. This will help maintain their attention, and they will appreciate your efficiency.

Because their growth action is to listen, help them pay attention to your message by asking them pointed questions about their opinions or experiences related to your presentation topic. Thank them for their contributions by expressing how those contributions will ultimately support the goals discussed in your presentation.



Competence

Driving Style people are always in a hurry, so it is important to establish your reliability and credibility early. Until they see this, they may be hesitant to trust you. Follow through on your commitments, and show that you can adapt to changing needs.

Explicitly state your opinions without automatically deferring to their opinions or demands. When offering solutions, make firm statements rather than posing your views as questions or suggestions. This will help to instill greater confidence in your ideas and respect in your competence.

Because Driving Style people don't usually focus on relationships, when priorities shift you should show a greater focus on the outcome to be achieved rather than on the interpersonal repercussions of the situation. These individuals will appreciate your efforts to articulate bottom-line results or benefits of your decisions or actions.

When suggesting new approaches to business problems, provide them with alternatives. Remember to give priority to outcomes and results.



Feedback

When communicating with Driving Style people, keep the key components of Feedback in mind: active listening, empathy, and adaptive communication.

Listen for deadlines, specific requests, and actions to be taken. They want you to notice their quick responses to requests and initiatives. Avoid seeming to compete. Don't talk too slowly and don't interrupt. Clarify things as needed, to show and ensure that you understand what they plan to achieve. To do this, ask questions and make observations that show you've been listening.

Show empathy by reflecting the person's need for results and requests for action. Respond promptly to messages and requests. Help them use their time efficiently by sending short documents (or e-mails) in summarized or bulleted form. Show that you understand their frustration when things aren't moving fast enough for them or in the way they desired. Ask direct questions to better understand their motivations, which they may not reveal unless they feel revealing them is necessary for achieving the goal.

When communicating with them, be direct and concise, making down-to-earth comments. Use direct eye contact and a deliberate voice, without being demanding or domineering. Commend them on their discipline on meeting deadlines and on their drive for getting things done.

When they are communicating with you, respond directly and get to the point quickly. If you do not respond in ways that are meeting their needs, they may show some discomfort. They might ask you pointed questions in order to get back on track. If this happens, you can improve the situation by quickly returning to the key points of the discussion, and responding to the need for results.



Doing Something for the Expressive Style

Anticipate This Behavior:	This Person Wants To Be:	To Strengthen This Relationship Support:	Use Time To:	To Get Action Provide:
<i>Stimulating Unstructured Enthusiastic Outgoing Personal</i>	<i>Recognized</i>	<i>Dreams and Intuitions</i>	<i>Be Stimulating</i>	<i>Recognition with Motivation</i>



Image

Expressive Style people look for freedom of personal expression in their work and appearance. They may dress in a highly personalized, colorful or even flamboyant way. They appreciate attention, so their dress may express another way to achieve this need. They will generally be open to your own individual preferences in this regard. They might even appreciate it when you wear less formal attire or can create opportunities to do so.

These individuals often display achievements and inspirational items—along with humorous ones. To do their best work, they prefer space for individuality, playfulness and expression. They want you to be energetic, and if possible, relax time constraints when you enter their work environment.



Presentation

Directly seek an Expressive Style individual's input to your ideas and plans. Show excitement about what you are presenting, since this will appeal to their affinity for stimulation. Use emotion, humor and stories to stimulate their attention. Poll the audience on their opinions and it is likely that Expressive Style audience members will respond by offering their experiences and input. Consider that at times these individuals might have a shorter attention span than other Styles. Don't move too slowly through your presentation and use good voice inflection. Include attention-grabbing content with some rapport-building activities to keep them engaged with your presentation.

When these individuals voice disagreement over your presentation's key points, don't take their comments personally even if they sound like they are attacking you. Keep in mind that these individuals are not likely to be directing negative comments to you, but rather attempting to make the topic more interesting or compelling by inserting controversy or differing viewpoints. Defend your positions and take a firm stand to secure their respect and support. Avoid appearing uncommitted or wishy-washy about your presentation goals, or these individuals may reject what you have to say.

If you are presenting new ideas, gain support by appealing to the Expressive Style person's sense of creativity. Consider including them in brainstorming or other idea-generating sessions if this supports the purpose of your presentation.

When these individuals share opinions, ask questions, or otherwise participate in your presentations, reward them by giving sincere compliments and thanking them for their contributions. This appeals to their need for personal approval and helps them engage even further in your presentation.

Recall that these individuals typically have a need for big-picture thinking and strategic approaches. To appeal to these people, provide a broad, visual depiction of the goal of your presentation.

Consider providing a road map of your presentation, including your overall goal, agenda items, and a summary at your presentation's conclusion. This will help them stay on track and gain an overall grasp of both the purpose and the desired outcome of your presentation.



Competence

When working with Expressive Style individuals, initially it is important to show enthusiasm. They appreciate working closely with people, and you can use this as an opportunity to display your abilities. These people can move quickly from topic to topic, or priority to priority. You can show your flexibility by keeping pace with them, but also helping them to refocus when necessary.

When giving ideas, avoid over-emphasizing details, and frame your solutions in big picture terms using descriptive language where possible. If you describe ideas, problems or solutions at length, these individuals might lose interest or become impatient. Shorten your interactions and quickly make your points to build their perception of your competence.

Show self-confidence with these individuals to inspire their confidence in you. Emphasize an enthusiastic and positive attitude when interacting with them and, where possible, collaborate to build mutually acceptable solutions.



Feedback

When communicating with Expressive Style individuals, keep these things in mind:

Listen for their feelings, enthusiasm and ideas. They want you to see their spontaneity and ability to explore possibilities. Avoid appearing to be aloof or too task-focused, and allow time to build a relationship. Create a pleasant atmosphere for your conversation. Show patience when they digress with stories or humor and let the discussion flow between being playful and focused.

Show empathy by being attentive. Touch base on a personal level, and avoid starting discussions with work issues or action items. Acknowledge their feelings and share some of yours. Take time to explore hopes and dreams for the future. Understand their frustration when others don't seem to appreciate their input or when they are frustrated by details, routines and standard procedures. Show that you feel they're important by giving them your undivided attention. For example, for important meetings don't allow yourself to be interrupted by calls or e-mails. Encourage them by focusing on one task or idea at a time, rather than on many.

When communicating with Expressive Style individuals, allow time for conversation, and for processing their feelings. Don't concentrate just on specifics and avoid overwhelming them with facts. Show your concern for the human side of issues by expressing warmth and interest. Avoid looking too critical. Vary your voice, keep an open posture and relax your facial expressions. Publicly spotlight their contributions, and regularly show that you appreciate their efforts.

When they are communicating with you, try to respond in a positive and upbeat way. You may need to help them narrow down options, and plan to follow up with them. If you do not respond in ways that meet their needs, they might react by becoming visibly impatient and vocal. Listen to their input without becoming defensive. This will meet their need to express themselves and be heard. Then try to refocus the conversation by returning to the key issues.

Doing Something for the Amiable Style

Anticipate This Behavior:	This Person Wants To Be:	To Strengthen This Relationship Support:	Use Time To:	To Get Action Provide:
<i>Warm</i> <i>Agreeable</i> <i>Cooperative</i> <i>Careful</i> <i>Quiet</i>	<i>Sure</i>	<i>Feelings and Relationships</i>	<i>Be Agreeable</i>	<i>Security with Assurances</i>

Image

Amiable Style people prefer a personable and friendly image. They generally prefer appropriate attire that is casual and comfortable. To build rapport with them, especially during an initial encounter, it may be helpful if you dress less formally. It also might be appreciated if you can create occasions that allow for casual attire.

These individuals often create an inviting and homey environment, which may include pictures of family and friends, or significant events with work teams. They are less likely to display awards, degrees, or other items that self-promote their personal accomplishments. When you are in their environment, it will usually be appreciated if you recognize these personal touches and comment on them. Of course, you should not do this merely because you think it's important. These individuals will recognize your lack of sincerity.

Presentation

At the beginning of a presentation, address the Amiable Style audience member's need for connection on a personal level by briefly describing some bit of personal information that helps these individuals get to know and relate to you.

Personalize your presentations by involving them. By involving them in the discussion, and in particular in any actions that result from the discussion, you will help them feel comfortable and nurture their sense of being valued.

Ask them their opinions about the topic at hand, and demonstrate active listening. Be alert to any non-verbal signals that they are experiencing doubt or insecurity about the information you are presenting. Because they most likely will not be willing to come right out and disagree with your points, you might have to ask them questions to get the concerns out in the open.

When stating your goals or desired outcomes for the presentation, include a statement about how you anticipate the outcome to affect the audience or other employees. In addition to any facts you need to relate about the outcomes, be sure to also mention the positive benefits for people in relation to their work lives.

If appropriate, ask for the Amiable Style person's personal commitment to the outcomes you are trying to achieve from the presentation. Openly state your own actions and future commitments and make assurances of your intent to follow through. This will enhance their sense of security.

If disagreement arises among audience members during the presentation, avoid arguing or personalizing the conflict. Keep the discussion cordial to appeal to these people's need for harmony and accord. Stress that the disagreement can be resolved in a mutually satisfactory way, even if you feel that doing so might be difficult.



Competence

With Amiable Style co-workers, emphasize your relationship and how you will work together toward common goals. Instead of emphasizing tasks and your process for accomplishing them, underscore the positive impacts your approach will have on people and the organization.

While you may be used to approaching situations and solving problems as an individual, with Amiable Style people you should adapt more of a group approach. They will think more highly of you when you offer ideas to them, rather than working out everything on your own. This allows them to be a part of the process, which is an important need for them.

Get to know their perspectives on work issues. Use personal, friendly language that conveys your desire to collaborate, and stress that you want all members of the team to succeed. Reassure these individuals that issues will be resolved and work will be completed with the best interests of the organization and group in mind.

Invite these individuals to share their personal opinions on projects, tasks and problems. To the extent that you agree with them, verbally support those opinions. It is very important to follow up on your commitments, particularly since this builds trust. Be aware that failure to follow up on your commitments in a timely manner can cause a great deal of tension in your relationship with these people.

Finally, show enthusiasm when working with Amiable Style people. They are very personable and group-oriented, so let them know that you're a part of the team and want to work with them. They appreciate sincerity and optimism, and perform best when working with people who display these.



Feedback

When communicating with Amiable Style people, do three things: listen actively, show empathy, and adapt your communication style.

Listen for their feelings, sensitivity and awareness. They want you to see their helpfulness and cooperation. Avoid behaviors that could be seen as unfeeling, tough-minded, or unnecessarily competitive. Allow time to build a relationship. Slow down, talk less, and show concern for them, colleagues or other personal relationships that they reveal to you. Ask about their interests and concerns. Don't interrupt and avoid completing their sentences. They sometimes need time for reflection so be patient during long pauses or silence.

Show empathy by giving Amiable Style individuals sincere and genuine personal attention. Always starting discussions with work issues or action items can suggest that you don't care about them personally, so be sure to take a moment to touch base with them on a personal level. Acknowledge their feelings, and share your own. Give them time and create a relaxed atmosphere. Notice when they might be feeling conflict. Encourage them to express it directly—even though they may be uncomfortable doing so. Show that they're important by giving them your undivided attention. Give

them a feeling of security by providing sufficient details and specifics about what is expected and by discussing how to accomplish objectives.

When communicating with Amiable Style individuals, give them time to take their concerns and feelings into consideration before they respond. Show that you see the human side of things, and not just the bottom line—especially when making a decision or implementing a change. Avoid coming on too strong and overwhelming them. Make suggestions rather than bold statements. Show that you're open for input and negotiation. Recognize their helpful efforts and concern for others. When you request changes, show that you're aware of the personal impact on them and others. Show support, be available, and reduce uncertainty. Amiable Style individuals are sometimes uncomfortable with conflict so don't expect them to spontaneously give you constructive criticism or corrective feedback.

When they are communicating with you, be open to their input. Remember that one of their goals is to work harmoniously with others, so they are not generally going to be harsh in tone. If you respond in ways that make them uncomfortable, they may become more tense and less talkative. Try to re-engage them by making it safe for them to continue the dialogue. Ask them questions to draw out their opinions, and allow them time to talk.



Doing Something for the Analytical Style

Anticipate This Behavior:	This Person Wants To Be:	To Strengthen This Relationship Support:	Use Time To:	To Get Action Provide:
<i>Cool Distant Formal Conservative Logical</i>	<i>Right</i>	<i>Principles and Thinking</i>	<i>Be Accurate</i>	<i>Evidence with Support</i>



Image

Analytical Style people often project a formal, conventional and punctual image. They usually are most comfortable dressing in a neat, proper or conservative style and color. Depending on their position of authority and the norms of your workplace, they might be somewhat judgmental of non-traditional garb.

These individuals seek accuracy and thoroughness. They typically prefer work environments that support solitary and deliberate pursuits for doing their work. They might display some photographs and other personal memorabilia, but their areas are usually organized to support their work.



Presentation

Consider providing a detailed agenda for meetings with people with an Analytical Style and, if possible, provide it in advance. This will enable them to better prepare for the presentation and will help them know what to expect. By helping them avoid surprises, you will enhance their comfort level and reduce possible tension.

To support their thinking orientation, use an organized and detailed delivery approach, including relevant facts and conclusions. Providing charts and graphs on slides or handouts will also help them process information and fully understand your message. Provide a clear explanation of your ideas, assumptions and desired outcomes.

Focus on rational arguments rather than on interpersonal needs and social interaction with Analytical Style audience members. Emphasizing reasoning, process, and facts will help you increase support and respect for your presentation from these individuals. Also, be sure to stay on topic and minimize impromptu or extraneous audience discussion that takes you off the agenda.

Ask these individuals whether they have questions and allow them time to make sure they understand you. Avoid asking questions of a personal nature or ones that aren't related to the business at hand. Consider asking rhetorical questions to the Analytical Style members of your audience, which will get them thinking and contributing.

Provide logical conclusions and step-by-step action plans at the presentation's conclusion to help them understand what will occur next. Doing so will help them be more willing to participate in future efforts.

 **Competence**

With Analytical Style people, it is important to show your focus and abilities. Let them know that you can be trusted, and you have meaningful contributions to offer. Tell them how you plan to approach a task or situation. This meets their desire for influencing processes and their need for information.

Provide them with objective information rather than speculation, and commit to your action items in writing. This will provide reassurance that the job will be done correctly.

When you have ideas, present them in a logical way. Explain the benefits of your idea and how it can be implemented. Instead of rushing to them with your innovative plans as soon as you've thought of them, take some time to think it through so you're able to cover enough detail to meet their needs. Acknowledge and encourage their need to ask questions, and invite them to share their insights.

Because Analytical Style individuals might be uncomfortable with emotional situations or conflicts, maintain a calm and rational demeanor even when crises arise. You can show your optimism by staying positive during these times and letting them know that you'll support them where possible.

It can sometimes take awhile to get to know these people on a personal basis. Once you have worked with them for awhile and proven your abilities, they will usually become more personable and open.

 **Feedback**

When communicating with Analytical Style people, keep in mind the key components of Feedback: active listening, empathy, and adaptive communication.

Listen to their details and plans. They want you to see their logical organization and thoroughness. Slow down, talk less, and put things in writing for them to review. Give them time to think. Be patient with their long pauses. Break silent periods by asking what they think rather than by saying what you think. Show that you're interested in their thoughts, and don't rush or pressure them for a response.

Show empathy by giving them time to be thorough and thoughtful. Understand that they need time to think, to review plans and to check for accuracy. You'll get the best from them by not imposing tight deadlines or demanding quick decisions. They respond better if you write things down and offer support materials. Build credibility by doing your homework rather than trying to be spontaneous or taking shortcuts.

When communicating with them, allow Analytical Style people to respond thoughtfully. Give them enough time to consider your viewpoints. Show your interest in making thoughtful decisions and thorough planning. Avoid coming across as pushy or pressuring. Lower the intensity of your voice and don't talk too fast or too much. Compliment them on their attention to detail, concern for accuracy, and measured approach. When you request changes, provide a sound rationale to justify your request. Examine and discuss advantages and disadvantages of options. Because they tend to be uncomfortable with conflict, don't take it personally if they withdraw and withhold feedback.

When they are communicating with you, take the time to listen carefully to them and allow them to make all their points before you respond. Approach their input in a rational way. If they are uncomfortable with how you are responding to them, they may become quiet and withdrawn. Try to re-engage them by focusing on important details. They will want to know that you have understood them and the reasons behind their feedback.



Conclusion

How far you have to go to make significant improvements in your interpersonal effectiveness depends, of course, on your current level of Versatility.

If you currently show high Versatility, you have probably been doing well at adjusting your behaviors related to Image, Presentation, Competence, and Feedback to accommodate the Style needs of others. Your main challenges will be in maintaining your high level of interpersonal effectiveness and avoiding arbitrarily holding others to your high standards.

If you currently show low Versatility, you can conscientiously adopt new behaviors that will help you improve your effectiveness with others. Be persistent; it sometimes takes others awhile to notice new behaviors.

If you have medium Versatility, you too can benefit from adopting behaviors that help you meet the needs of others. The bottom line is, your Versatility can be improved by changing what you say and do in the areas of Image, Presentation, Competence, and Feedback.



Appendix: Frequently Asked Questions

1. If I have high Versatility, do I still need to work on these skills?

Yes. The reason you have high Versatility is because you put effort into your interpersonal abilities, and it's paying off. Remember that your Versatility can change from situation to situation, so even though you are perceived well by one group this does not guarantee the same will be true in different circumstances. Versatility requires constant thoughtfulness about one's own behavior and how it impacts others.

2. Is the fact that I see my Style differently from how others see me related to Versatility in any way?

Interestingly, the answer is no. TRACOM's research has shown that there is no meaningful difference between self-perception of Style and co-workers' perceptions of Style, as categorized by Versatility. People with low Versatility are just as likely to perceive their Style differently as are people with high Versatility.

Self-awareness is a cornerstone of the Versatility concept, so people who have a good understanding of their own behavior are likely to perceive their Versatility more accurately than people who do not have high self-awareness. However, even people with high Versatility will not always see their own Style-related behaviors the same as those they work with.

3. What percent of people see themselves differently from others on Versatility?

The most recent research shows that 65% of people see their Versatility differently from others. More specifically, about $\frac{3}{4}$ (72%) of people with low Versatility ("W") rated themselves as having higher Versatility. In contrast, barely over 50% of people with high Versatility ("Z") rated themselves lower. The other 50% had accurate self-appraisals.

4. Are there different levels of Versatility between job levels (individual contributor, manager, and executive)?

Yes, this is partly true. TRACOM's research has found small but meaningful differences across job levels. On average, Versatility rises from individual contributors to managers and from managers to executives.

5. Is it harder to identify the Style of a person with high Versatility?

In some circumstances this can be true. Some people with high Versatility are extremely adaptable to different situations and people, and therefore, it can be more difficult to pinpoint their Style. However, with enough observations, people's Styles will become apparent.

6. Do people in the inner four quadrants (B2, B3, C2, and C3) receive higher levels of Versatility?

No. The variability of their Versatility scores is the same as for the other Styles. This question arises because these four Style sub-quadrants have close to average Assertiveness and close to average Responsiveness. Thus, their behavior patterns appear to be more like other Styles than the 12 Styles bordering the outside of the Model. Further, the four styles in the center of the Model are less opposite than the extremely opposite Styles (e.g., A1 Driving and D4 Amiable).

7. Can a person have too much Versatility or adaptability (chameleon effect)?

Versatility is clearly a strength. Higher Versatility has been shown to be related to more successful job performance. People often confuse adaptability with Versatility. These are different sets of behaviors. A person who is too adaptable to situations or people can sometimes come across as fake and insincere. Versatility, on the other hand, is virtually always a strength.

8. What cultural differences are there between countries?

TRACOM regularly analyzes data from countries throughout the world to examine the differences. We then develop country- or region-specific norms, as well as translated materials (e.g., China, French-speaking Canada). In general, there are always differences in the levels of Assertiveness, Responsiveness, and Versatility across cultures. For example, the average Assertiveness score in China is more Tell Assertive than the average score in the U.S.

The model itself has been shown to be valid across cultures. This means that no matter what the country, Style and Versatility behaviors exist.

9. What is the relationship between Versatility and Emotional Intelligence?

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) became popular in the 1990s after Daniel Goleman and his associates published a series of books, articles, and research reports related to the importance of EI. However, this concept has existed under different names, Versatility included, for many years.

When TRACOM updated and enhanced its Versatility model in the early 2000s, we utilized research on EI and incorporated some of these concepts into the existing model. The enhanced Versatility model measures those EI components that are especially important for success in the workplace (e.g., perseverance, optimism, flexibility, conscientiousness). Other parallels are obvious, notably the Versatility concepts of “know yourself, know others, control yourself, and do something for others” are mirrored by the more recent EI abilities: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management.

Recent research conducted at Colorado State University shows that Versatility is strongly related to EI. For further information about this research and to download whitepapers, refer to the TRACOM website: www.tracomcorp.com.

Notes