

Building Relationships in Selling

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Relationships have always been important to me. When I was growing up I had to continually make new friends. My parents were Salvation Army Officers so we moved to a new town and new church at least every two years and on one occasion after only seven months. So I got to be pretty good at making new friends.

I remember when I was about thirteen years old deciding that I was not going to move with them this time... I had made very close friends and was sure that I would be able to board with my best friend's parents. I was sick of moving on and losing friends.

Of course my wishes were ignored and within a few months I had a whole new set of friends, a new best friend and life was just fine.

Although I was quite used to having to establish new relationships I still felt quite shy internally and certainly did not see myself as good at relating to people. If anyone had told me back then that one-day I would be successful in selling, I would have thought they were crazy. Yet now I travel all around Australia and to various parts of the world selling and delivering my training programs.

So how does a shy kid get involved in selling?

Quite by accident in my case. My first job out of school was a clerical role with a large insurance company, while I studied accounting part time at university. My job was to calculate how much commission the salespeople made on each policy they sold, so I became aware of how much money could be made in selling, especially on commission. I also saw how little some people made and of course they did not last very long. But being an optimist, I remembered the bigger cheques that were paid out... and compared to my salary at the time the top guys were making a fortune.

I did not see myself as having any chance of emulating their success at that time, but I also found out fairly quickly that I did not want to be an accountant... so I joined the Royal Australian Air Force as a navigator. I loved flying and travel and saw lots of the world over the next seven years.

It was my desire to get out of the Airforce that led to my considering a sales career and, you guessed it, I went back to that same insurance company and started selling on commission only. No I did not make a fortune, but I was paying the bills and by that time had a wife, a couple of children and a mortgage.

The real turning point for me as a salesperson was meeting Dave McNally, the founder of Integro (my company) in Australia, and subsequently author of "Even Eagles Need a Push". I met him at a sales conference and when he told me he was in the business of management and sales training, I pricked up my ears... always interested in something that could help me be more successful.

Two months later I attended a Perceptive Selling program led by Dave where I learned all about different behavioural styles and how to adapt my sales approach to the type of person I was dealing with. The next month I sold more life insurance than I had in any previous quarter, then resigned and joined Integro as a sales consultant.

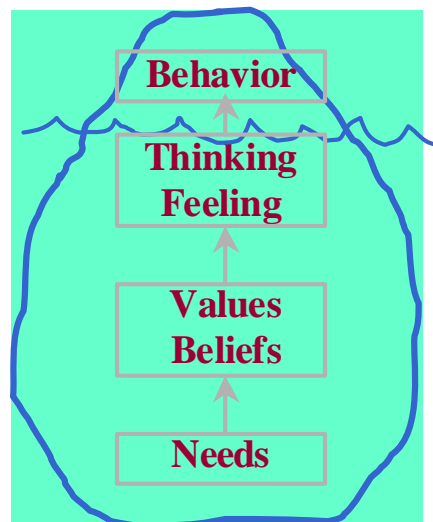
Understanding People

There were three things that I learned in that program that made a significant difference to my ability to sell and to be more confident in dealing with people at all levels of an organisation.

The first was a very simple model that explains why people behave the way they do, the “Whole Person Concept”. The second thing was a behavioural model that makes sense of behaviour and will help you to understand those people who are a mystery to you right now. Finally the program taught four basic people skills that are necessary for success in dealing with people... I’ll share these with you a little later.

Firstly the *Whole Person Concept*. There are four aspects to people that we can learn to understand quite quickly... but the most obvious thing is their *behaviour*. When you meet someone for the first time that is all you can see... how they behave and how they communicate. Some people are quite active in their behaviour, lively perhaps, and are comfortable communicating with you. At the other end of the spectrum there are people who are very inactive in their behaviour, more laid back and less communicative. And if on top of that they show no facial expressions, you may wonder what’s going on in there.

The Whole Person Concept



The first thing to understand about behaviour is that there is a reason for it... all behaviour has some motivation behind it. Interesting thought isn't it, that all people are motivated. Some are motivated to do nothing, but there is motivation behind doing nothing.

The other useful analogy in the *Whole Person Concept* is that people are somewhat like an iceberg... our behaviour is above the water line for everyone to see, but there is so much more to us that others can't see, below the surface. If you are going to understand people, and you can, then you need to understand the three aspects that are below the surface.

Just below the surface is the *Thinking/Feeling* aspect. Although *thinking* and *feeling* are separate and very different, I call them one aspect of us because it is this aspect that directly drives behaviour. You do either what you *think* you should do or what you *feel* like doing, *all the time!* When the alarm goes off in the morning to wake you up on a workday, do you *feel* like getting out of bed, or do you get up because you *think* you should? In most cases of course the answer is that you *feel* like staying in bed, but you *think* you should get ready for work. *Thinking* and *feeling* are often in conflict... you have to make choices between what you would like to do or *feel* like doing and what you *think* you should do. Life is full of *should's* isn't it?

So where does thinking and feeling come from? The next layer down in our iceberg is *Values* or *Beliefs*. If you believe in something strongly, that is it is of high *value* to you then you will *feel* strongly about it and *think* about it a lot.

When I joined the Airforce I spent a year at Navigator School, not only learning to navigate, but also learning to be an *Officer*. As part of our etiquette training we were told that there were three subjects that were forbidden in the Officer's Mess bar... *sex*, *religion* and *politics*. The obvious reason was that these are areas where people can have strong values and therefore strong feelings, which after a few drinks could result in an argument developing into a fight.

As I later learned, sex and politics were quite popular subjects in the bar area, if not religion.

The important thing to understand here is that people do have different values about many things, just as we do about religion and politics. Now you may believe that your opinions about these topics are right... and you may privately believe that people who believe in views different to yours are maybe even crazy, if not just plain wrong!

At the same time, there are other people who no doubt think that you are wrong also... and that is the point to understand about values. If you are going to successfully relate to other people, and to do that you have to understand them to some degree, then you need to operate on the basis that different values are just different, rather than that different values are wrong!

You don't have to agree with the other person, but you do need to try to understand what is important to them, show an interest in them and in fact ask questions to determine what their values and beliefs are that may effect their decision-making.

At the bottom of the *iceberg* we have *Needs*... the more instinctive motivator. Our *needs* are things that we would like to do, not necessarily what we believe we should do. It's things like staying in bed that little bit longer in the morning, the things that we find most satisfying or give us greatest pleasure. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is a good descriptive model for understanding the different types of needs people have at different levels: physiological, security, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualizing needs.

I want to focus most on the needs around the self-esteem area... things that people strive for in order to feel good about themselves, because these are the underlying psychological needs that are the more *invisible motivators* that trigger the buying decision. We will be focusing on the needs for *achievement, recognition, security, acceptance etc.*

The value in using the *Whole Person Concept* in selling is in understanding that people buy products and services that satisfy their needs, but their needs are buried deep below the surface. But what we know is that a person's *needs* influence their *values*, which affects their *thinking* and *feeling*, which drives their *behaviour*... so needs are reflected in their behaviour.

We know that because we use behaviour to satisfy needs. If you have a strong *achievement* need, you will do things to satisfy that need... set goals, develop plans and follow-through to achieve them. If you have a need for *affection* you will behave towards someone in a way that would encourage them to give you some *affection*.

The **DiSC® Behavioural Model** (described in detail below) is based on that assumption and is therefore a very practical model to use in a sales environment.

The other benefit in understanding the *Whole Person Concept* is knowing that when you are selling to someone, you are selling to the whole person. You won't get them to sign on the dotted line (*behaviour*) until they *think* it is a good decision, *feel* good about buying from you, *value* the product or service you are offering more than what they are presently using and can see that it satisfies their *needs*.

The DiSC® Behavioural Model

Since behaviour is all that we can see when we first meet people, it makes sense to understand more about behaviour... but it is important to ensure that the model we use is simple to understand and easy to remember. The **DiSC® Behavioural Model** is all of that, and more.

It is one of the most widely used measures of behaviour in the workplace because it is jargon free and therefore easy to understand and use. Since it measures behaviour not personality, it is particularly useful for helping salespeople to have a better understanding of their behaviour and how it may impact on their relationships with their customers. Also, because it is describing behaviour, it is a practical tool for *people reading*...

developing the ability to identify the behavioural style of the customer or prospect and to adapt your approach accordingly. More on adaptability later.

*Only when people are **conscious** of their behaviour and its impact on others are they free to **choose** other behaviours that are more effective or appropriate.*

What is the DiSC[®] Behavioural Model?

Dr William Marston developed the DiSC[®] Model during the 1920's... I'll explain a little more about the background to his theory later. To start with, let's look at a few of the key descriptions of the four **DiSC[®] Dimensions of Behaviour** and how they might influence the behaviour of a salesperson:

Dominance, or High D Behavioural Tendencies

Salespeople who use this dimension will tend to demonstrate:

- High self-confidence, be direct in their communication, make quick decisions
- Goal orientation... be focused on results
- Outstanding need for *achievement*
- Fear losing control
- Under pressure will have a tendency to be impatient, & show a lack of concern for others' views, and feelings.

Salespeople who are high on **Dominance** therefore will tend to be very focused on achieving sales results, and will be most effective in dealing with High "D" customers. They may lose out on sales however if they are unable to adapt to deal with the other styles and particularly those who are high on "S" or "C", where more patience is needed to accommodate their slower decision making style.

Influence, or High i Behavioural Tendencies

People who use this dimension will tend to demonstrate:

- Optimism, enthusiasm, a high level of energy, and spontaneous decision making
- People orientation... focused on interacting with others, being popular and getting applause
- Outstanding need is for *social recognition*... being highly regarded by others
- Basic fear is social rejection or being ignored
- Under pressure, they can become disorganised and be late for meetings

This is the profile of the so-called *natural salesperson*. Salespeople who are high in the **Influence** dimension like interacting with people and persuading them to their ideas. Their optimism, enthusiasm and outgoing nature... some might call it *charisma* are a definite strength when it comes to building relationships. But they too need to watch out for their tendency to over commit themselves, which can result in losing business with customers who see them as unreliable.

Steadiness or High S Behavioural Tendencies

People who use this dimension will tend to demonstrate:

- Consistent performance, procedure oriented, friendly
- Team oriented, focused on maintaining good relationships, producing the end result
- Outstanding need is for *acceptance* and *stability*
- Basic fears are personal rejection and a loss of stability or sudden change
- Under pressure they can be too willing to give in

Salespeople who are high on **Steadiness** will tend to be more attracted to selling roles where the customer comes to them... a retail selling environment for example, or where they are calling on established customers in a particular territory. Their strengths in selling are building and maintaining relationships, being genuinely interested in the customer's needs and providing follow-up service after the sale. If they are working in a sales situation where they need to make appointments and go out to see people, beware of the tendency to find excuses to put off making the phone calls... their fear of rejection can be a big hurdle to overcome.

Conscientiousness or High C Behavioural Tendencies

People who use this dimension will tend to demonstrate:

- Analytical attention to details, high personal standards, self-discipline
- Task oriented... focused on quality and doing things right the first time
- Outstanding need is for correctness
- Basic fear is of criticism of what they do
- Under pressure they can be overly critical of themselves and others because of their very high standards

I have not found a lot of salespeople who are high in the **Conscientiousness** dimension who do not also have another dimension high. **Conscientiousness** is required in selling where there is a need for technical knowledge, for example in the computer and software arena, but there is also a need to build relationships and manage a long sales cycle in that industry as well. The strengths of the high "C" in

selling are in their knowledge of the product and its applications and their thoroughness in gathering information to determine the customer's need. They too may procrastinate over making the phone calls... I need to do a bit more research and have a tendency to overwhelm the prospect with details when presenting proposals. If the prospect is high "D" or "I" that may blow them away.

A Brief Overview of DiSC® Theory

A basic understanding of DiSC® Theory will be helpful for you when we look at *people-reading* a little later in this chapter.

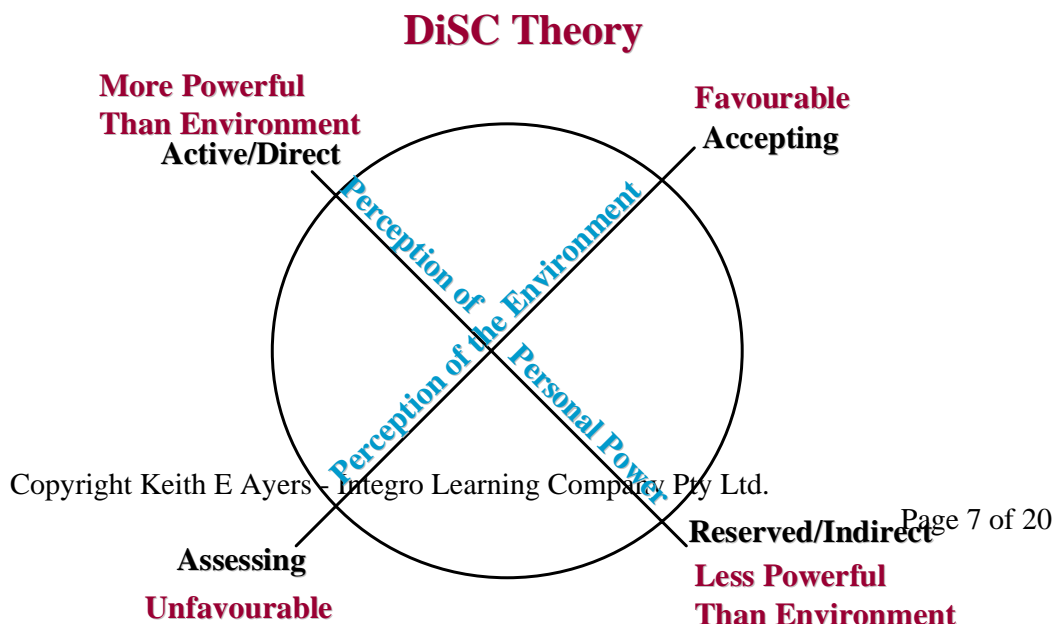
Dr William Marston, who developed the **DiSC® Model** in the 1920's, determined that people's behaviour was shaped by their perception of the environment in two dimensions.

The first dimension is whether you perceive the environment as *favourable* or *unfavourable*. If you perceive the environment you are in to be *favourable* or safe, you are likely to be more relaxed, trusting and open. There is nothing to fear, so your behaviour will be more *accepting*.

If on the other hand you perceive the environment to be *unfavourable* or antagonistic, you will naturally be more on guard, more sceptical or defensive. Your behaviour would be more *assessing*, looking for potential threats or problems.

If you look at this in relationship to your role in selling, it does not take much thinking to realise that in different environments, you will behave differently. When you are going in to see a customer you have a good relationship with, someone who you know is happy with your products and the service you provide, you are likely to be much more open and friendly with them. Contrast that with a difficult, moody customer or prospect... how do you behave when you go in to see them. You will no doubt be assessing their every move from the moment you meet with them... checking for signs of whether you are getting through or not.

What is important is not *who you are* but how you are behaving... is your behaviour appropriate to the environment (or person).



The same logic applies to the second dimension that Marston identified as determining behaviour... the person's perception of their *personal power in relation to the environment*. If you perceive yourself as *more powerful than the environment*, you will change the environment or shape it to satisfy your needs. You will use more *active* and *direct* behaviours.

On the other hand, if you perceive yourself as *less powerful than the environment*, you will not attempt to change it, and will seek to get your needs met within that environment. Your behaviour will therefore be more *reserved* or *indirect*.

Again, we can readily see that a salesperson may see themselves as *more powerful* in one environment and *less powerful* in another environment... because they are! There are some things we can change, and others that we can't... at least at this point in time.

You know that with some customers you have to let them dictate conversation... they tell you what they want, what they are happy with, what they're not... and what they want. You just need to be *reserved*, *indirect* and take good notes. With other customers, especially those who do not know what they want, you need to take the lead and ask questions that steer them in the direction of determining what they want.

Let me give you a personal example of an environment where I have had to adapt my behaviour... you may be able to relate to it yourself.

For the past ten years I have made numerous trips to Canberra to conduct seminars or visit with our Federal Government clients there. I learned very early on that there is always at least one *radar trap* on the road, especially around the Goulburn area. I also learned that I was not more powerful than the environment, or in this case system... after being booked a couple of times. I now have *cruise control* fitted, and drive in a more *reserved* way... as much over the speed limit as I know they won't bother me.

This is an important concept for salespeople to understand... that people do behave differently when they perceive the environment to be different. As salespeople we must learn that we cannot change people, we can only change the environment they operate in! The way you behave when with your customers creates an environment, so if you want them to behave differently, think about what kind of environment you would have to create to get the behaviour you want.

Of course other factors will influence their environment as well, such as what is happening at work that day, or the pervading culture within the organisation. But you still have the ability to influence their environment if you are willing to take on the challenge.

What William Marston's theory makes clear is that if we want people to behave in a certain way, we need to create the environment where we get the behaviour we want.

So if you want people to be accepting, open, receptive, trusting and optimistic, create an environment that they will perceive as favourable and supportive. It may take some time... in fact a lot of time with some people, but keep working at it and you will get the results.

A word of warning though... if you are going to gain their trust, make sure that you are selling a product or service that will deliver what you promise, and then make sure that it does.

We will come back to the **DiSC® Model** a little later to look at how to adapt your behaviour and communication when dealing with customers of different styles. But while we are on the subject of **trust**, I would like to introduce to you a model that I think is the most powerful tool you can put in your bag when you are selling...

The Trust Model

Trust is the foundation on which all lasting relationships are built. No trust... no relationship. One would think, then, that it would rate very high on the priority list of sales training. Yet few courses address the subject, let alone teach skills in trust building.

Trust building is a skill! Most people assume that by being trustworthy, they build trust. But that is not necessarily so. There are many trustworthy people in this world who are ineffective at building relationships, and therefore at selling, because they don't know how to build trust.

Unfortunately there are also people who are very skilful at building trust but who are not trustworthy. We usually refer to them as con men (or perhaps con-persons)! Building trust, in my experience, includes a three-step process that involves:

1. Understanding the Elements of Trust... the behaviours that build trust.
2. Identifying Your Own Strengths and Limitations in these elements, and...
3. Using Adaptability to Build Trust

The Elements of Trust

The four elements that combine to create trust are:

- **Reliability.** In the business world, reliability is the most obvious in building trust. Salespeople and their organisations are continually being assessed on their reliability. Do they do what they say they'll do? Can you count on them to keep agreements or commitments? Do they meet your expectations? Do the products and services sold deliver what was promised?
- **Acceptance.** Accepting people the way they are, being non-judgemental, is vital in building trust. Acceptance is the opposite of judging. Getting impatient with a customer or prospect is a sign of lack of acceptance... what I want to do or say is

more important. Not listening, or cutting in on someone speaking mid-sentence are signs of a lack of acceptance. People pick up on these clues very quickly. It gives them the impression that we are focused more on our own agenda, making the sale, than we are in really listening to their needs. Maybe that perception is accurate. The result... no sale!

- **Openness.** Openness is the willingness to give and receive feedback. Customers value openness. If there have been problems with your products or service in the past, don't be afraid to be open about them. Admitting to mistakes that have been made and demonstrating recovery steps have been taken will enhance the trust relationship, not destroy it. The salesperson who won't tell you the price of their product when the customer asks is giving the impression that they have something to hide. Another aspect of openness that is important is being receptive to feedback from the customer, especially about our products, services and the organisation. You need to know what they like and don't like if you are going to improve their level of satisfaction and therefore loyalty to you.
- **Congruence.** Congruence is saying what you mean and meaning what you say. Congruence also means, "practicing what you preach", or "walking your talk!" There is no point saying you can deliver in one week because that is what the client wants, when you know that there is no chance of getting it there on time. Or making claims about your product that can't be substantiated. Congruence is the behaviour that demonstrates your honesty and integrity. Sometimes it is difficult to deliver bad news, but sugar coating the pill to make it more pleasant can be costly in the long run.

If we are going to be successful at building and maintaining trust, we need to develop all four elements. However it seems that different behavioural styles have different strengths and weaknesses in the four elements of trust. Each of the four dimensions of DiSC tends to be naturally strong in two of these elements and weak in at least one. That means that to be effective at building trust you need to identify your strengths and limitations.

DiSC Strengths and Limitations

HIGH D – DOMINANCE STYLE

Strengths: Congruence and Openness

People who are high on "D" tend not to have any problem letting you know what they think. They say what they mean, and mean what they say. In fact, sometimes you wish they weren't so eager to tell you, or would do so with a little more empathy!

Limitation: Acceptance

You've heard the expression "they don't suffer fools gladly?" Well this tends to sum up how this style may feel about a lot of people, especially those who do not communicate directly, who don't tell it like it is. They have a tendency to be irritated by indecision, inefficiency and slowness and have difficulty hiding their impatience in these situations.

More than anyone, these salespeople need to work on valuing differences in their customers and prospects, and to recognise and appreciate the strengths that other styles bring to the situation.

HIGH I – INFLUENCING STYLE

Strengths: Openness and Acceptance

Salespeople who have a High "I" love to talk, to tell you how they feel, and they want to know what's on your mind. They are also the most "open" emotionally, with a tendency to "wear their heart on their sleeve", and will therefore be more "self-revealing" than other styles, perhaps even telling you very personal things about themselves.

Limitation: Reliability

These are the salespeople most likely to have a reputation for always being late. They're just so busy! They have so many things on the go at once, because they are enthusiastic, energetic, and optimistic. As a result, they "over-commit" themselves, and then have trouble following through on all of their commitments. Self-discipline is the key for the High "I". It does not come naturally, so it must become conscious. Stop and think. Pause. Count to ten (well maybe five) before committing yourself.

HIGH S – STEADINESS STYLE

Strengths: Acceptance and Reliability

Accepting others is very important to salespeople who are high on the "S" dimension, because of their own need to be accepted by others. They therefore focus on building and maintaining relationships with their customers and are more service oriented than other salespeople. They also have the ability to stay with the task until it is completed.

Limitation: Congruence

The High S style is concerned about other people and does not like to offend, confront, or hurt others' feelings. They, therefore, tend to feel uncomfortable about being direct with people, especially with bad news.

The challenge for the High S person is to learn to communicate "directly", to give straight answers, to be willing to risk offending people with the truth! In order to do this, High S people need to recognise their value, believe in themselves as worthwhile people, independent of others. Only then will they develop the assertiveness to be appropriately congruent.

HIGH C – CONSCIENTIOUS

Strengths: Reliability and Congruence

High C's are very strong on self-discipline. If they say they'll do it, it's as good as done. Before making a commitment, they think through all the implications. If information is confidential, you can rely on the High C to keep it confidential.

Limitation: Openness

There are two primary reasons for the High C's lack of openness. First, they don't want to divulge information until they are certain it is correct; secondly, they are private people. They do not build trust relationships easily, so they tend not to volunteer information about themselves.

To increase effectiveness in building trust, High C's need to appreciate the needs others have for more communication. Think about what other might like to know about, and volunteer it! Give more feedback!

USING ADAPTABILITY TO BUILD TRUST

The key to using adaptability, is first to recognise that each behavioural style tends to "judge" others' trustworthiness by their own primary strength in the Elements of Trust:

- High D's expect you to be congruent or direct
- High i's expect you to be open and verbal
- High S's expect you to be accepting and listen
- High C's expect you to be reliable, on time, and meet their standards for quality.

While it is important to be conscious of using all four elements of trust, special emphasis must be placed on meeting the expectations of the person whose trust you want to gain. The biggest challenge for all of us is when we need to build trust with someone with the opposite style of our own.

Let me give you an example. I was giving a presentation to a Marketing Director and Training Manager from one of the big pharmaceutical companies who were interested in our Perceptive Selling program. This program uses both the **DiSC® Model** and Trust Model to help salespeople learn how to build better relationships with their customers. I was just introducing the Trust Model in my presentation when the Marketing Director interrupted me with:

"You can forget that... our salespeople don't have time to build trust with the Doctors. They only get to see them for five to seven minutes a year."

He was quite obviously using High D behaviour and would not have responded well to anything but a direct answer. With one of the best flashes of intuition I've ever had I responded with:

"That's true... but they have time to destroy trust don't they?"

He nodded, kept quiet and listened to the rest of the presentation, and we subsequently put their entire sales force through the program. That was eighteen years ago and that company is still that program with all new salespeople who join them.

It takes effort for:

- A high D to be accepting and attentive to a High S.
- A High S to be direct and brief with a High D.
- A High C to share thoughts and feelings with a High i.
- A High i to be punctual and prepare the level of detail required by a High C.

If we are willing to put out the effort and focus on using these behaviours to build stronger relationships based on trust, the rewards are there. Everyone wants to buy from salespeople whom they trust, engage consultants whom they trust, and work for managers whom they trust. It is entirely up to each of us. It is our ability to adapt our behaviour that determines how successful we are.

Behavioural Adaptability

As you can see from what we have to do to build trust, the ability to adapt is an essential skill.

The major barrier to adapting behaviour is *fear*. The theory behind William Marston's **DiSC® Model** helps us to understand the fear that each style will tend to experience as they move away from the behaviours that are most comfortable for them.

If we have another look at the **DiSC® Behavioural Model**, you can see that the four primary **DiSC® Behavioral Styles** are created by a response to the person's perception of the environment.

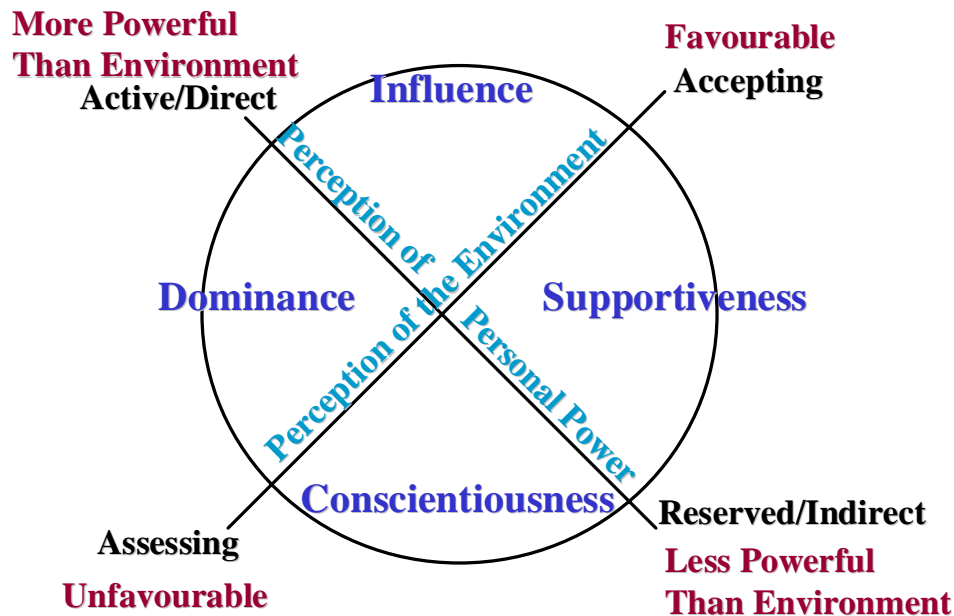
Dominance is the behaviour you would use when you see yourself as *more powerful than the environment* and you perceive the environment as *unfavourable*.

Influence is behaviour you would use when you see yourself as *more powerful than the environment*, and perceive the environment as *favourable*.

Supportive behaviour would result when you see the environment as *favourable*, and see yourself as *less powerful than the environment*.

Conscientiousness would therefore result from also seeing yourself as *less powerful than the environment* and seeing the environment as *unfavourable*.

DiSC Theory



Dominance - Major Fear: Being taken advantage of or losing control.

- **Dealing with a Favourable Environment.** People who are high on the "D" dimension not only see the environment as *unfavourable*... they like it that way. They enjoy having problems or challenges to overcome and if there are none, may create them. So when faced with a difficult prospect to deal with and the opportunity to make a big sale if successful, the High D salesperson rises to the challenge. They become very determined to overcome all the obstacles and objections to make the sale. This is an appropriate response, but be careful of becoming so determined that you come across as pushy or aggressive.

The *stretch* for the High "D" salesperson is to recognize when a *favourable environment* is desirable. For example when you are dealing with a High i or a High S customer. To establish a high level of trust with them, you need to behave in a more *accepting, trusting* way. This change in attitude and behaviour will tend to raise feelings of anxiety that the customer may take advantage of you, but if you don't adapt... no sale! Allow yourself to experience the anxiety and stick with the adapted behaviour.

- **When You are NOT More Powerful Than the Environment.** People who are high on the "D" dimension see themselves as *more powerful than the environment*, and therefore as capable of changing it. This can lead to a *rules were made to be broken* attitude, especially if your "C" is very low. The *stretch* for the "D" in this situation is to recognize situations where it is not appropriate for them to change the rules or the system, just because they can. An example of a selling situation where this would apply is where you are dealing with a High D customer who wants to control the meeting. Or a High C customer who requires you to comply

with all her policies and procedures to get the sale. Again feelings of *frustration*, *impatience*, of *being restrained* or *losing control* will need to be endured while you learn to cope with these situations.

Influence - Major Fear: Social Rejection

- **Dealing with an Unfavourable Environment.** The High "I" not only perceives the environment as favourable, they have a tendency to avoid unfavourable situations such as difficult customers, argumentative coworkers etc. If this is your style you may lose out on good business, or find that the problems you have attempted to avoid just don't go away. You need to learn to deal with your discomfort with *negativity* and *arguing*... just hang in there and ask questions to find out how to deal with the situation. The fact that someone is being *negative* or *arguing* does not necessarily have anything to do with you... *don't take it personally!*
- **When You are NOT More Powerful Than the Environment.** Like those who are high on the "D" dimension, salespeople with High "I" also see themselves as *more powerful than the environment*, and therefore as capable of changing it. In your case it is more the need for *spontaneity* that results in you wanting to operate outside the *rules* or *system*. The *stretch* for the "I" in this situation is to recognize situations where it is appropriate for you to operate within the system or rules. Like the High D, feelings of *frustration* and of *being restricted* will emerge while you learn to cope with these situations.

Supportiveness - Major Fear: Personal rejection

- **Dealing with an Unfavourable Environment.** The High "S", like the High "I", perceives the environment as favourable and has a tendency to avoid unfavourable situations. You do not like conflict and are greatly concerned about hurting other's feelings. As a result you may tend to avoid contacting someone who is not very friendly, or worse, is just plain difficult to deal with. You need to learn to deal with your fear of rejection... most people are not as sensitive as you may think they are. Remember the saying... *"We would not worry so much about what other people thought of us if we realised how little they did!"*
- **When You are More Powerful Than the Environment.** People who are high on the "S" dimension tend to see themselves as *less powerful than the environment*, and as a result, may put up with things that they are perfectly capable of changing. It can also be seen as a lack of initiative. To be more effective in this situation, the high "S" needs to become more aware of the things that need changing or can be improved and speak up about it. Suggesting to the customer that they need to expand their thinking, or go for a bigger purchase (if you know it would really benefit them) is not being pushy. You may experience some anxiety about what they may think of you or your ideas, but this a time for belief in yourself and to stick to what you know to be right.

Conscientiousness - Major Fear: Criticism of what they do

- **Dealing with a Favourable Environment.** People who are high on the "C" dimension, like the High "D", have a tendency to see the environment as *unfavourable*. They like having problems to solve... something to get their analytical mind around. Like the High "D", the *stretch* for the High "C" in this area is to recognize when a *favourable environment* is desirable and to learn to behave in a more *accepting, trusting* way. This change in attitude and behaviour will tend to raise feelings of anxiety that the customer will not do the right thing by you... allow yourself to experience these feelings and stick with the adapted behaviour.
- **When You are More Powerful Than the Environment.** People who are high on the "C" dimension tend to see themselves as *less powerful than the environment*, which may also lead to a lack of initiative. The High "C" does tend to notice things that are not right within the environment and then works toward fixing it up. This is a valuable skill in a salesperson when it comes to understanding the customer's problems and needs and diagnosing an appropriate solution. However, your need for perfection may lead to continual refinement of your proposal, or a tendency to get into more detail than the customer wants. Again, you may experience some anxiety about making mistakes by not going into enough detail for you, but this is a time for stretching yourself, taking a risk, and not being overly critical of yourself if everything is not perfect.

The key to successful style adaptability is to be more aware of what is happening around you... think about what would be the best way of responding to this person or situation. I'm not suggesting that you think about this all the time. If people are responding to you positively then forget everything I have said... just go with what comes naturally.

But if you are not getting the response that you want, or you have difficulty with some of your customers... then go back and read it all again. That is when an understanding of yourself and others is most valuable.

The final piece in the puzzle is to learn to recognise the behavioural style of the customer, because if we can't do that, we can't apply what we have learned about style adaptability.

People Reading

People reading with the **DiSC® Model** is really quite easy. You can pick up another person's primary behavioural style within one to two minutes of meeting them, even over the telephone, by knowing what to look for. The key to people reading is an understanding of the DiSC Theory Model.

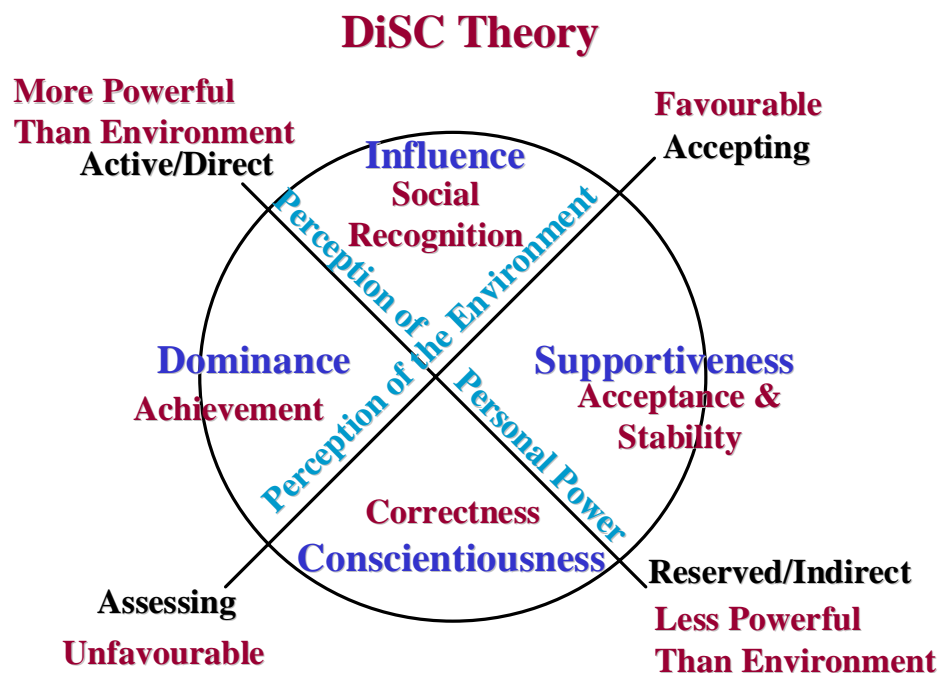


Figure 4: Outstanding Needs of the DiSC Dimensions

When people perceive themselves as *more powerful than the environment*, they tend to behave in a more active or direct way. They will tend to move and speak at a faster pace and speak with a louder voice. Those who see themselves as *less powerful than the environment* and are more *reserved* or *indirect* will tend to move and speak more slowly and be more soft-spoken.

These behaviours are very easy to pick up within a minute or two of meeting someone... but don't fall into the trap of *stereotyping*. We are reading *behaviour*, and at a different time this person may come across quite differently.

Once you have made the first decision as to whether the person you are *reading* is more active/direct or reserved/indirect, we turn our attention to the other dimension of

DiSC Theory, which is whether the person perceives the environment as *favourable* or *unfavourable*.

A person who perceives the environment as favourable will behave in an *accepting* way. That is, they will be more open, receptive and friendly and express their feelings through both their facial expressions and tone of voice. By contrast, when a person perceives the environment as unfavourable, they will behave in a more *assessing* way... being more guarded, sceptical and may appear to be aloof. Their face will appear more unexpressive and their tone of voice more "matter-of-fact" or unemotional.

High D or Dominant Behaviour is what you are seeing when the person is more *active or direct* and *assessing or unemotional*. This is an indication that they have an outstanding need for **achievement**. If you refer back to *The Whole Person Concept* on page 2, this is the need at the bottom of the "iceberg". They usually want to control this situation and it may take some time to establish a trust relationship.

With this person you need to be direct and to the point in your communication... particularly when it comes to answering their questions. Don't elaborate too much, especially if you are high on the "I" or Influence dimension. Focus on asking questions related to results and efficiency, such as, "How would you rate the efficiency of the product (or service) you are currently using?" Then perhaps, "What level of efficiency are you looking for?"

Then when describing your product or service, focus on benefits that will demonstrate how you can save them *time* and *money*!

Some years ago I had an appointment with the Marketing Director of a computer company to talk about sales training. What was most obvious about on first meeting was his *formality*. There was no smile, no facial expressions, in fact a very serious approach to the meeting, so I knew straight away that he was highest on either the Dominance or Conscientious dimensions. Initially he seemed very reserved and slow paced, so I slowed down with him and started to ask questions related more to the High "C" dimension.

After a short period of time however, he quite suddenly became quite impatient and told me to get to the point of why I was there... why our sales training program was the one he should do. Obviously he had switched to "D" behaviour, so I went with him. I gave him the direct answers he was looking for related to improving results... and got the business. The reason I relate this example is to highlight the importance focusing on the behaviour not the person... by doing that it is easy to go with them as their behaviour changes and adapt what you are doing.

High I or Influence Behaviour is what you are seeing when the prospect or customer is *active* and *direct*, but also more *accepting* and *friendly*. This is probably the easiest of all the behaviours to pick initially, because it is so *out there*, so obvious. The person is friendly, talkative, enthusiastic and expressive. They have an outstanding need for **social recognition**... to be liked or popular.

This behaviour also tells you that they don't see you as a threat and that they want to get to know you as a person. It is important to the High I that they like the people they deal with... so be friendly! Smile! Show them that you enjoy their company.

Building the relationship is important here first, and remember the *Trust Model*... be open with these people. They will get down to talking business with you when they are ready, which is when they have decided that they like you enough to want to talk business. If you try to move them too quickly into the business discussion you may lose them.

When you do get down to the business side of things, remember to ask questions that allow them to talk. And since the High I prides themselves on their imagination and creativity, ask for their ideas on the subject... I mean use the word *ideas* in your question. For example: "*Have you any ideas on how your present supplier could improve the service that they provide you?*"

Have they got ideas! Be prepared to listen now, and they could go on for a bit... they do like to talk. The key benefits you need to focus on with the High I is how they are going to *Gain Recognition* and *Save Effort*... *make it easy to use or do!*

Be careful with the first benefit... don't over do the recognition bit... only use it where appropriate. For example, you could ask: "*What do you think your boss will think when he sees you achieving far better results as a result of using our product?*" That would be far more effective than saying: "*Your boss will be really impressed with you if you buy my product.*"

The second benefit for the High I, *saving effort* is a key one. The High I does not want to get bogged down in details, and won't buy if they feel it will be too complex or hard to do. Cameras are a great example. Some people like to have cameras with different lenses and filters that they can change based on the conditions, to ensure that they get the best quality photograph. Not the High i... give them something fully automatic, that they can just point and shoot. So spell it out with them. For example: "*One of the things that you are going to really appreciate about our service is that it is hassle free. We take care of all the details and installation, we keep you informed at each stage of the process... there really is nothing for you to do, except perhaps to get out for that mid-week game of golf that you don't have time for right now.*"

High S or Supportive Behaviour is what you are seeing when the other person is more *reserved* or *slower paced* and *accepting*. There is a difference between the friendliness you will see from a High I compared to a High S. The High S is much more low-key in their friendliness... they smile, but their facial expressions are more *relaxed* than *animated*. Their outstanding need is for **acceptance** and **stability**.

Again, building the relationship with them before we do business is important, but in this case it is the degree to which they experience you as *accepting* of them as a person that will determine how quickly you build trust.

Don't expect to close the sale on the first meeting with them. You may be lucky depending on what it is that you are selling, but they do like to think about important decisions, and also check out what other people think about the idea... especially their

spouse or partner. The key benefits for the High S are to *Gain Stability* and to *Save Relationships*. By *save relationships* I mean that they don't want to upset anyone or lose any friends, so before making a decision they are going to sound it out with other people to make sure they will be happy with the decision.

The need to *gain stability* will also tend to delay their decision while they check out your proposition thoroughly. When they make a decision, they stick with it. They don't want to have the disruption of having to change again in a few months time or for that matter within a few years even depending on the product. They want something they can stick with for the long term... so emphasise that, but be ready to substantiate what you are saying.

Finally, **High C or Conscientious Behaviour** is what you are seeing when the person is *reserved*, *slower paced* and more *formal* or *assessing*. Generally you will not see any facial expressions, and they may not have a lot to say, even in answer to your questions. Because they have an outstanding need for *correctness* they do not want to say anything unless it is correct, so they can be hesitant in sharing information with you.

Remember that *reliability* is their strength in building trust, so they will also judge your trustworthiness by your *reliability*... but they will judge you by their standards of reliability. For example, be early for the meeting, not just on time. Make sure you have every bit of evidence you might need during the meeting, not only to give all the right answers, but also to show them the proof of what you are saying. And keep your pace and tone of voice *moderate*. Don't jump up and down with enthusiasm... they will see you as a phony. In their mind, no one is that enthusiastic so it must be a big act.

The key benefits they are looking for are to *Gain Certainty* and *Save Face*. They won't make a decision until they are *certain* that it is the right one, so they will also require time. The things you can do to expedite a decision are to minimise the risk, for example by offering a money back guarantee. Another approach that works very well with the High C is to clarify what their options are, and help them choose by pointing out why your option is the right one. Do your homework here so that you know what their options are, and don't forget to include "doing nothing" as one of the options, because that is often the safe bailout position for this person. But if you show them that that is a costly option, it is easier for them to see that they need to do something.

Relationship building is fundamental to success in selling. You may make some sales without it, but you will always be looking for new customers. If your customers have no loyalty to you then they won't even think about coming back, or of referring their friends to you. But as we have discovered, building relationships is not always about being friendly and having lunch with people... when dealing with the High D and High C behavioural styles we need to be more formal and focus on their needs. That means being more business-like... and that's the relationship they want.