

Communication Styles that Contribute to Team Dynamics

Understanding your own communication style is essential to contributing to a high performing team. Understanding the communication style of your colleagues helps to build trust, collegiality and ultimately strengthens your relationships as a team. Lastly, understanding your own communication style and that of others allow team members to embrace their differences and leverage strengths. There are a few steps to this activity:

Step One: As individuals, take the communication styles self-assessment and score it using the scoring sheet provided.

Step Two: Come together with your team and share the results of your communication style quiz.

- Allow each person to describe his or her communication style. If you are working in a larger team, ask members who have the same results to group together to discuss their communication style. Invite one member of the group report out to the larger team.
- Remember, everyone has their own unique communication style to report out and one style is not better or worse than another.

Step Three: Once everyone has reported out on their style, consider and discuss these questions:

- What do you have in common and what is different about your styles?
- What improvements could you make to your team's communication to take into consideration the variation of styles on your team?
- How do you think you could leverage communication style differences to strengthen your team?
- What strategies will you use on your team to leverage the strengths of team members?
- What strategies will you use to recognize the diversity of team members?

Step Four: Revisit your teamwork agreement.

- Based on your discussion about communication styles, does your teamwork agreement need to be updated?
- How do ground rules need to be set around how you communicate?
- Consider the modality, formality, and frequency of your team communication when updating the agreement.

**If you have not completed your teamwork agreement, go ahead and download the teamwork agreement pdf and complete it as well.*

COMMUNICATION STYLE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Select from each pair of statements the one that is most typical of your personality. Think about how you typically act, talk, and interact with others at work. Each pair may not seem like an either-or proposal, so choose the one which resonates most for you. Make your choice as spontaneously as possible. There is no wrong answer.

1. I like action.	2. I deal with problems in a systematic way.
3. I believe that teams are more effective than individuals.	4. I enjoy innovation very much.
5. I am more interested in the future than in the past.	6. I enjoy working with people.
7. I like to attend well-organized group meetings.	8. Deadlines are important for me.
9. I cannot stand procrastination.	10. I believe that new ideas have to be tested before being used.
11. I enjoy the stimulation of interaction with others.	12. I am always looking for new possibilities.
13. I want to set up my own objectives.	14. When I start something, I go through until the end.
15. I basically try to understand other people's emotions.	16. I do challenge people around me.
17. I look forward to receiving feedback on my performance.	18. I find the step-by-step approach very effective.
19. I think I am good at reading people.	20. I like creative problem solving.
21. I extrapolate and project all the time.	22. I am sensitive to others' needs.
23. Planning is the key to success.	24. I become impatient with long deliberations.
25. I am cool under pressure.	26. I value experience very much.
27. I listen to people.	28. People say that I am a fast thinker.
29. Cooperation is a key word for me.	30. I use logical methods to test alternatives.
31. I like to handle several projects at the same time.	32. I always question myself.
33. I learn by doing.	34. I believe that my head rules my heart.
35. I can predict how others may react to a certain action.	36. I do not like details.
37. Analysis should always precede action.	38. I am able to assess the climate of a group.

39. I have a tendency to start things and not finish them up.	40. I perceive myself as decisive.
41. I search for challenging tasks.	42. I rely on observation and data.
43. I can express my feelings openly.	44. I like to design new projects.
45. I enjoy reading very much.	46. I perceive myself as a facilitator.
47. I like to focus on one issue at a time.	48. I like to achieve.
49. I enjoy learning about others.	50. I like variety.
51. Facts speak for themselves.	52. I use my imagination as much as possible.
53. I am impatient with long, slow assignments.	54. My mind never stops working.
55. Key decisions have to be made in a cautious way.	56. I strongly believe that people need each other to get work done.
57. I usually make decisions without thinking too much.	58. Emotions create problems.
59. I like to be liked by others.	60. I can put two and two together very quickly.
61. I try out my new ideas on people.	62. I believe in the scientific approach.
63. I like to get things done.	64. Good relationships are essential.
65. I am impulsive.	66. I accept differences in people.
67. Communicating with people is an end in itself.	68. I like to be intellectually stimulated.
69. I like to organize.	70. I usually jump from one task to another.
71. Talking and working with people is a creative art.	72. Self-actualization is a key word for me.
73. I enjoy playing with ideas.	74. I dislike wasting my time.
75. I enjoy doing what I am good at.	76. I learn by interacting with others.
77. I find abstractions interesting and enjoyable.	78. I am patient with details.
79. I like brief, to the point statements.	80. I feel confident in myself.



SCORING SHEET

Circle the items you have selected in each row and add up the totals for each style (one point per answer). The maximum is 20 per style and your total for the four styles should be 40. The highest score indicates your communication style. You may have more than one dominant style.

Style 1 - Eagle

Total

1 - 8 - 9 - 13 - 17 - 24 - 26 - 31 - 33 - 40 - 41 - 48 - 50 - 53 - 57 - 63 - 65 - 70 - 74 - 79

Style 2 - Owl

Total

2 - 7 - 10 - 14 - 18 - 23 - 25 - 30 - 34 - 37 - 42 - 47 - 51 - 55 - 58 - 62 - 66 - 69 - 75 - 78

Style 3 - Penguin

Total

3 - 6 - 11 - 15 - 19 - 22 - 27 - 29 - 35 - 38 - 43 - 46 - 49 - 56 - 59 - 64 - 67 - 71 - 76 - 80

Style 4 - Peacock

Total

4 - 5 - 12 - 16 - 20 - 21 - 28 - 32 - 36 - 39 - 44 - 45 - 52 - 54 - 60 - 61 - 68 - 72 - 73 - 77



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DESCRIPTIONS

EAGLE	People with this style talk about... Results Responsibility Objectives Performance Experience Productivity Challenges Efficiency Achievements Moving ahead Change	People with this style are... Pragmatic (down to earth) Feedback Direct (to the point) Impatient Decisive Quick (jump from idea to idea) Energetic (challenge others)	Communicating with an Eagle • Focus on the result first; state the conclusion at the outset. • State your best recommendation; do not offer many alternatives. • Be as brief as possible. • Emphasize the practicality of your ideas. • Use visual aids.
OWL	People with this style talk about... Facts Organizing Procedure Proof Analysis Details Planning Testing Observations	People with this style are... Cautious Systematic (step-by-step) Logical (cause and effect) Factual Unemotional Patient	Communicating with an Owl: • Be precise; state the facts. • Break down your recommendations. • Include options and alternatives with pros and cons. • Do not rush them. • Outline your proposal.
PENGUIN	People with this style talk about... People Needs Motivation Teamwork Feelings Cooperation Team spirit Values Understanding Beliefs Expectations Relationships Self-development	People with this style are... Spontaneous Empathetic Warm Subjective Emotional Perceptive Sensitive	Communicating with a Penguin: • Allow for small talk; do not start the discussion right away. • Stress the relationship between your proposal and the people concerned. • Show how the idea worked well in the past. • Indicate support from well- respected people. • Use an informal writing style.
PEACOCK	People with this style talk about... Concepts Innovation Interdependence New ways New methods Improving Problems Creativity Opportunities Possibilities Issues Potential Alternatives What's new in the field	People with this style are... Imaginative Charismatic Difficult to understand Ego-centric Unrealistic Creative Full Ideas Provocative	Communicating with a Peacock: • Allow enough time for discussion. • Do not get impatient when he or she goes off on tangents. • Try to relate the discussed topic to a broader concept or idea. • Stress the uniqueness of the idea or topic at hand. • Emphasize future value or relate the impact of the idea to the future. • If writing, try to stress the key concepts that underlie your recommendation at the outset. • Start with an overall statement and work toward the particulars.



UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS OF YOUR ASSESSMENT

Team Communication Styles

EAGLE	People with this style talk about... Results Responsibility Objectives Performance Experience Productivity Challenges Efficiency Achievements Moving ahead Change	People with this style are... Pragmatic (down to earth) Feedback Direct (to the point) Impatient Decisive Quick (jump from idea to idea) Energetic (challenge others)	Communicating with an Eagle • Focus on the result first; state the conclusion at the outset. • State your best recommendation; do not offer many alternatives. • Be as brief as possible. • Emphasize the practicality of your ideas. • Use visual aids.	Team members who are Eagles
OWL	People with this style talk about... Facts Organizing Procedure Proof Analysis Details Planning Testing Observations	People with this style are... Cautious Systematic (step-by-step) Logical (cause and effect) Factual Unemotional Patient	Communicating with an Owl: • Be precise; state the facts. • Break down your recommendations. • Include options and alternatives with pros and cons. • Do not rush them. • Outline your proposal.	Team members who are Owls
PENGUIN	People with this style talk about... People Needs Motivation Teamwork Feelings Cooperation Team spirit Values Understanding Beliefs Expectations Relationships Self-development	People with this style are... Spontaneous Empathetic Warm Subjective Emotional Perceptive Sensitive	Communicating with a Penguin: • Allow for small talk; do not start the discussion right away. • Stress the relationship between your proposal and the people concerned. • Show how the idea worked well in the past. • Indicate support from well- respected people. • Use an informal writing style.	Team members who are Penguins
PEACOCK	People with this style talk about... Concepts Innovation Interdependence New ways New methods Improving Problems Creativity Opportunities Possibilities Issues Potential Alternatives What's new in the field	People with this style are... Imaginative Charismatic Difficult to understand Ego-centric Unrealistic Creative Full Ideas Provocative	Communicating with a Peacock: • Allow enough time for discussion. • Do not get impatient when he or she goes off on tangents. • Try to relate the discussed topic to a broader concept or idea. • Stress the uniqueness of the idea or topic at hand. • Emphasize future value or relate the impact of the idea to the future. • If writing, try to stress the key concepts that underlie your recommendation at the outset. • Start with an overall statement and work toward the particulars.	Team members who are Peacocks