SOCIAL STYLE®

TRACOM Sneak Peek

Excerpts from

Improving Personal Effectiveness With Versatility™

TRACOM®GROUP

THE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY®

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Introduction

PREREQUISITES

This Applications Guide provides ways that you can apply SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts in a variety of specific situations with your boss and co-workers of different SOCIAL STYLEs. The guide assumes that you already have attended a SOCIAL STYLE training session and that you have completed a SOCIAL STYLE instrument to identify your SOCIAL STYLE.

A Guide For You

The purpose of this guide is to help you increase your effectiveness and productivity when interacting with others at work. You have ways that you prefer to act and interact with your co-workers. Similarly, they have preferences, too. This guide shows you how different Styles can work together to become mutually effective and productive and how, in the process, you can become more valued in the workplace. While SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts will help you improve your interpersonal effectiveness in most work situations, you should not expect them to work magically all the time.

Why Learn to Become Highly Versatile?

TRACOM's research shows that a person's Versatility rating, which is an indicator of the support and respect granted by others, tends to go up when others see that person as sincerely trying to improve the quality of his or her interpersonal interactions. As you work to apply SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts to improve your interactions with your co-workers, chances are you, too, will gain more cooperation, support, and respect from them, and thereby be seen as more effective.

The application of SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts and techniques can help you more effectively do such things as listen and communicate with others, influence decisions, and present and gain commitment for your ideas. In addition, application of these concepts and techniques can help you resolve, or even avert, unnecessary conflict caused by "interpersonal friction."

SOCIAL STYLE at Work

You've already learned about the major characteristics of each SOCIAL STYLE. This section builds on what you've learned by describing, in detail, how people of each Style behave at work. In particular, you will learn how each Style acts toward others, and how each one approaches time and decision-making.

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Awareness of three key workplace behaviors can give you great insight into the SOCIAL STYLE of co-workers and how best to support their Style Need. These key behaviors are:

A. Actions toward others

B. Best use of time

C. Customary approach to decision making

Each SOCIAL STYLE typically acts towards others, uses time, and approaches decision making in characteristic and predictable ways. By recognizing the behaviors, you can better understand how your co-workers prefer to act and interact with others to get things done at work.

Amiable Style

ACTIONS TOWARD OTHERS

A
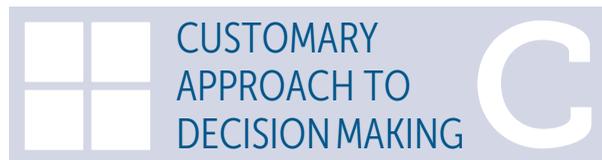
The **Amiable Style** individual is the most "people-oriented" of the Styles. To this Style of person, people count as people rather than as ways to achieve results or recognition. He or she prefers cooperating and collaborating with others rather than competing with them. People with an Amiable Style do not seek power over others as an important personal objective. Thus, this Style of person achieves objectives with people through understanding and mutual respect rather than through force and authority.

An Amiable Style person gets along well with co-workers who adopt an interactive approach that supports this individual's feelings and relationships with others. Typically, these people seek the recommendations and personal support of others, and they readily accept advice from friendly, understanding co-workers who take the initiative to treat them as real individuals.

The Amiable Style person is comfortable with sharing information about personal subjects, such as family, hobbies, or personal pursuits, and enjoys exploring areas of common interest that help build a personal connection with others.

In order to avoid confrontations, this Style of person can be "too quick" to reach agreement. The apprehensions and concerns may later become apparent when the Amiable Style person withholds full cooperation and support, despite his or her earlier agreement. This person appreciates the co-worker who takes the initiative to talk through potentially volatile issues before seeking his or her concurrence.

The Amiable Style individual tends to get along well with co-workers who also work cooperatively. He or she wants to do things on a joint basis as a means of achieving his or her personal objectives. However, to avoid possible conflict, this person may understate personal goals, so that others may need to clarify the specifics in terms of "why," "who," "how," and "what" that the individual expects to achieve.

The Amiable Style person values co-workers who realistically state what they can do to achieve mutually agreed-upon objectives. This Style of individual tends to take it personally and is quickly alienated when co-workers overstate what they can do and do not fully deliver on their promises or fulfill their commitments.

In heated discussions, an Amiable Style person prefers focusing on personal opinions and feelings to examining facts and data. If co-workers disagree with this person too openly, they should expect him or her to have hurt feelings and, if the disagreement is loud, to see it as a personal attack.

Amiable Style

BEST USE OF TIME — B

The **Amiable Style** individual tends to move slowly with less time discipline. Because this Style of individual tends to avoid direct confrontations, others may feel that they can exert themselves and quickly achieve their objectives. Because this person has a slower pace, faster paced co-workers may quickly move forward, believing that he or she has agreed to a course of action when, in fact, he or she hasn't. In such circumstances, these people may later resist implementation of objectives, even though they might have appeared as if they had agreed to them.

An Amiable Style individual tends to achieve results that are more lasting when others display a willingness to spend some time, listen, and respond. In such circumstances, this individual is more likely to share both positive feelings (such as hopes), as well as negative feelings (such as apprehensions).

The Amiable Style person wants time allowed for "small talk," and values co-workers who genuinely want to hear what he or she has to say. However, the person must make an extra effort to ensure that the talking and socializing does not become so important that it is difficult to get back to the task at hand.

CUSTOMARY APPROACH TO DECISION MAKING — C

The **Amiable Style** individual values the input of others with whom he or she has established a personal relationship. Thus, this person's decision-making process can be influenced by such others, even if they are not formally involved in the decision or the outcome. Remember, these individuals are not risk takers and attempt to reduce risk by ensuring that any actions taken will not damage ongoing personal relationships.

This Style of individual often wants others with whom they have a trusted relationship to make specific recommendations for safe choices that minimize risk. This person also wants reassurances from others that they will stand behind their recommendations. In contrast to the Driving Style, the Amiable Style individual really doesn't want options and probabilities. Instead, he or she seeks a clear, specific solution with maximum assurances that this is the right decision with no need to look at other options. Typically, the need to feel safe in the decision-making process gets very high priority from an Amiable Style person. If this person does not feel secure in acting on a recommendation, he or she will tend to involve others in the decision process, which can draw out the time it takes to come to a decision.

Using SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility at Work

The previous section provided general techniques for working effectively with people of each Style. This section provides tips for working with co-workers of each Style in specific and common workplace circumstances. It will be helpful for you to use these techniques when you are confronted by specific challenges, or often find yourself dealing with people in these situations.

Work Situations and Style

No matter how skilled you are at the specific tasks necessary to do your job, you must be able to accommodate your co-workers in order to earn their support and respect, and for them to see you as a Versatile co-worker. This section provides guidelines for working more productively with people of different Styles in these common work situations:

- Communicating effectively
- Using e-mail and voicemail effectively
- Giving positive feedback
- Conducting effective discussions
- Making your case, getting commitment
- Getting what you need from a co-worker
- Dealing with conflict (backup behavior)
- Dealing effectively with your boss

Making Your Case, Getting Commitment

Workplace interactions frequently require people to make a case for an idea or action and to get others to go along with it. Convincing a co-worker can be difficult, especially if the co-worker has a competing set of ideas. Because a co-worker is not your boss or a direct report, you are on a level playing field when you are presenting ideas. However, your understanding of SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts and techniques tilts the playing field in your favor as you apply these guidelines.

ANALYTICAL STYLE

- Take your time to be accurate by being well- prepared and organized
- Present relevant information (facts, timeframes, and data)
- Don't rely on testimonials or opinions to make your strongest points
- Present both the pros and cons of your idea to help establish (or maintain) credibility
- Approach the situation as though accepting your idea/action were the next logical step in the process
- If the Analytical Style person seems hesitant or reluctant, ask, "Do you have enough information?"

DRIVING STYLE

- Be direct; use your time to be efficient and keep your case short and to the point
- Focus on what will be accomplished by going along with your idea/action
- Provide facts and logic as support, but keep your main points simple. (Have the details ready, but don't present them unless requested)
- Look for opportunities to give the Driving Style person choices in how to support you
- To gain commitment, give choices by asking questions like, "Which one do you think is best?"
- Don't beat around the bush and don't be afraid to ask for a decision

AMIABLE STYLE

- Use a less direct approach, one that does not take on the appearance of confrontation
- Take time to be agreeable by presenting your ideas in a less formal, more personal way
- Focus on providing assurances that a decision to go along with your ideas/ actions is relatively safe
- Ask if your idea is acceptable to others who are important to your co-worker
- If the Amiable Style co-worker seems hesitant, ask, "What other things should we talk about?"
- When an Amiable Style co-worker reaches a decision, "double confirm" to assure that this co-worker is not just seeming to say "Yes," (acquiescing) just to appease you

EXPRESSIVE STYLE

- Use your time to be stimulating by presenting the "big picture" of your idea (avoid excessive detail)
- Refer to respected others who agree with your idea
- Be inspiring, but don't try to outshine this co-worker
- Explain how your idea/action might personally benefit this co-worker in the future
- Press for a decision—but let the Expressive Style co-worker make it
- When you get a commitment, follow up with an e-mail or other reminder of the details
- Do what you said you will do in a timely manner