

Dealing With The Differences In People

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Do you sometimes think your interactions with certain people are *always* a struggle...you never seem to be in sync? Maybe the problem is simply that your personal behavioral and communication styles don't match. Being willing to make minor adjustments to your style to better fit the needs of others is often a valuable key to creating successful business relationships.

Do you remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you?" In business, we probably need to amend this adage to: "Do unto others as they would have *you* do unto *them*". When an important business relationship seems strained, you can frequently get the situation back on track by aligning your style to better match the other person's.

Although behavioral styles studies are often quite complex, here's a crash course:

Some people are naturally Open and Direct. They eagerly express emotions, reveal thoughts and feelings, and thrive on developing relationships. These individuals usually base their decisions on intuition and emotion. They use frequent eye contact, spontaneous hand gestures and facial expressions. These straightforward, fast-paced, out-spoken individuals are often called **Socializers**. People who are Open, but Indirect – soft spoken, cautious and unassertive are known as **Relaters**.

On the other side of the spectrum are those who are Self-Contained – slow to show warmth, emotions, or private feelings. They tend to be cautious, organized, and task/results-oriented. Self-Contained individuals who are also Direct are often labeled **Directors**. Those who are more Indirect are often called **Thinkers**.

Here are several simple relationship strategies you can begin to use right away:

- If you tend to be a Director or Socializer, you might want to be more accommodating when dealing with Relaters or Thinkers. To them, nothing is simply black or white. Look for those gray areas of compromise.
- If you are more of a Thinker or Relator, get right to the point when communicating with Socializers and Directors. These individuals like to forge ahead.
- Relaters or Socializers dealing with Thinkers or Directors should also get down to business quickly. Spend less time developing personal relationships.
- In contrast, Thinkers or Directors working with Relaters or Socializers should allow more time for creating camaraderie and being receptive to feelings and ideas. These individuals are likely to be put off by insensitivity.
- Keep in mind that Relaters want to be liked, Socializers want to be admired, Thinkers want to be correct, and Directors want to be in control.

