

# What is DISC?

DISC is one of the most widely-used performance enhancement tools, by companies large and small, to achieve their goals. As the leading self-assessment tool, millions of people use it annually to improve productivity, teamwork, and communication.

## DISC Overview

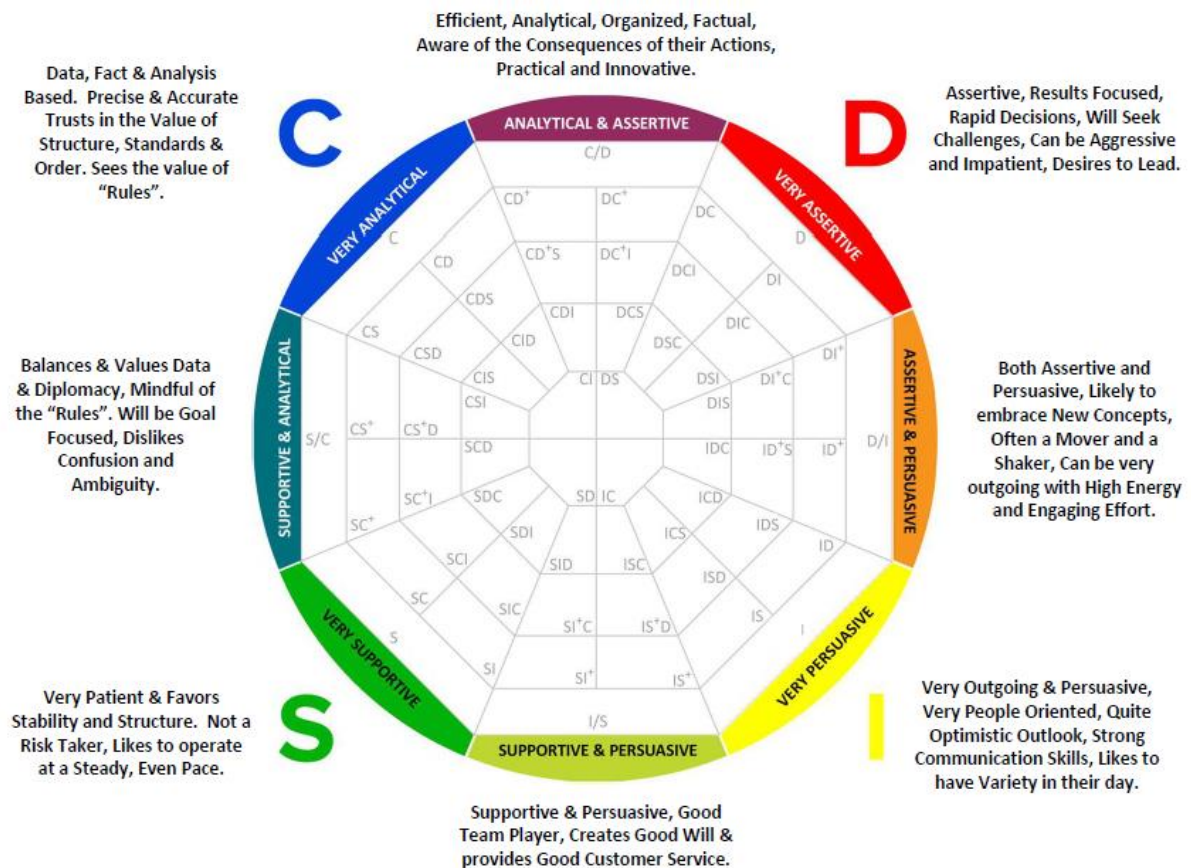
A smooth and high-functioning workplace does not happen by accident. It requires an intentional blending of talent, motivation, clearly communicated and understood objectives, and much more to reach optimum performance.

The DISC profile is a simple, practical, and easy-to-remember model that focuses on individual patterns of observable behavior and emotions. It measures the intensity of characteristics using scales of directness, openness, pace, and priority to create a unique blend of four behavioral styles:

- **Dominance (D)**
- **Influence (I)**
- **Steadiness (S)**
- **Conscientiousness (C)**

When a person uses the DISC model, they can identify their own blend of styles, recognize and adapt to the styles of others, and develop a better communication process that allows them to interact effectively with others to build mutually beneficial relationships. This is applicable in any setting, including working with teams, sales, leadership, or in other business and personal relationships.

Using DISC can provide insight into behavioral tensions, causes of stress, problem-solving, and ways to respond more effectively to conflict. When these items are identified for each individual, it leads to better relationships, both personally and professional. For example, salespeople using DISC can develop finely-tuned selling skills based on identifying and responding to a customer's style. In personal relationships, understanding the needs, emotions, and fears of others can help us build mutually-beneficial partnerships.



## Cornerstone Principles of a DISC Workplace

- All DISC styles are equally valuable and everyone is a blend of all four styles.
- All DISC styles have unique strengths and challenges and no one style is better than another.
- Your work style is also influenced by other factors that are not measured by DISC such as life experiences, education, **Motivations**, **Emotional Intelligence**, and maturity level.
- Understanding yourself better is the first step to becoming more effective when working with others.
- Learning about the DISC styles of other people can help you understand their priorities, needs and fears, and how they may differ from your own.

- You can improve the quality of your workplace interactions by using DISC to build more effective, mutually-beneficial relationships.

## **What is the DISC Assessment used for?**

DISC teaches users how to identify the predictable aspects of behavior and communication and to use that knowledge to their advantage. The ability to create a strong and immediate connection with others is a fundamental skill in sales, management, executive-level leadership, and everyday life.

The goal of DISC is to help users build and maximize productive relationships. Users don't need to change their personality traits; they need to recognize what drives and motivates others and determine the best ways to effectively interact with them.

The comprehensive, yet simple, DISC reports teach users specific skills to improve their personal interactions that create immediate results.

### **DISC Assessment applications include:**

- Hiring & Selection using Benchmarking - Gives business owners, managers, and HR professionals the tools they need to compare applicants to desirable job-performance benchmarks
- Change Management - Teaches behaviors that transform resistance into receptivity
- Coaching - Empowers you to help others consistently achieve their potential
- Conflict Resolution - Brings clarity, rapport, and understanding to different behavioral styles
- Customer Service - Teaches administrative and customer support teams how to dependably provide world-class service and effective interaction regardless of behavioral style
- Leadership Programs - Teaches leaders how to get the most out of their teams in a way that really works
- Management Skills - Teaches methods to consistently and genuinely motivate, engage, and challenge their staff

- Mentoring - Reveals how to propel fast trackers and high-potentials to greater effectiveness
- Sales Training - Enhances revenue by teaching sales professionals the keys to harnessing identifiable behaviors in their prospects
- Team Building - Helps create teams based on compatible skills and traits as well as identifying where other support or resources may be needed to address performance gaps
- Productive Meetings - Assists in planning meetings that account for behavioral styles to ensure best outcomes and results

## Who Created DISC?

Dr. William Moulton Marston was a lawyer and a physiological psychologist who first shared the DISC model in his 1928 book *Emotions of Normal People*. A man of many talents, Marston was also credited with helping to contribute to the first polygraph test, creating the character Wonder Woman, and authoring several self-help books.

Marston conducted research on human emotions, and based on those findings, postulated that people illustrate their emotions using the behavior types of Dominance (D), Inducement (I), Submission (S), and Compliance (C), or DISC for short.

It was his belief that these behavioral types came from people's sense of self and their interaction with the environment. In addition, he included two dimensions that influence people's emotional behavior:

1. The first dimension was whether people view their environment as favorable or unfavorable.
2. The second dimension was whether a person perceives himself as having control or lack of control over his environment.

Marston did not create an actual assessment tool from his theories, but based on his work, others did. In 1956, Walter Clarke, an industrial psychologist first constructed an assessment that confirmed Marston's theories. He created the Activity Vector Analysis, a psychometric tool that

was designed for use by businesses to help them choose qualified employees.

In 1965, DISC findings were published in the Journal of Clinical Psychology. The test format continued to evolve when a "Self-Description" test forced respondents to make a choice between two or more terms.

While the assessments used today have evolved from the original work of Marston and Clarke, the same premise of four behavioral styles is used as the foundation and the continued development of the tools to embrace new science all the time comes from a rich history.

## What does DISC stand for?

The DISC model uses four behavioral reference points. A formal assessment goes much deeper, but an overview of the four styles are:

				
<b>DISC Focus</b>	<b>Problems/Tasks</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Pace or Environment</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
<b>Needs</b>	Challenges to solve, Authority	Social relationships, Friendly environment	Systems, Teams, Stable environment	Rules to follow, Data to analyze
<b>Fears</b>	Being taken advantage of/loss of control	Being left out, loss of social approval	Sudden change/loss of stability and security	Being criticized/loss of accuracy and quality
<b>Emotions</b>	Anger, Impatience	Optimism, Trust	Patience, Non-Expression	Fear, Concern

### Dominance (D)

People with the D style place an emphasis on shaping the environment by overcoming opposition to accomplish results. They are fast-paced and task-focused.

A person with a D style...

- is motivated by winning, competition, and success
- focuses on accepting challenges, taking action, and achieving immediate results

- is described as direct, demanding, forceful, strong-willed, driven, determined, and self-confident
- may be limited by lack of concern for others, impatience, and stubbornness
- may fear losing control, being taken advantage of, or being seen as vulnerable; values competency, action, concrete results, and challenges
- values results and action, getting things done now

When communicating with D-style individuals, give them the bottom line, be brief and quick, focus your discussion, avoid making generalizations, refrain from repeating yourself, and focus on solutions rather than problems. Allow them to make choices and have control.

### **Influence (I)**

People with the I style place an emphasis on shaping the environment by influencing or persuading others. They are fast-paced and relationship-focused.

A person with an I style...

- is motivated by social recognition, group activities, and networking
- focuses on spontaneity, collaboration, and expressing enthusiasm
- is described as convincing, charming, enthusiastic, charismatic, trusting, and optimistic
- may be limited by lack of follow-through, impulsiveness and being disorganized
- may fear loss of social approval, being alone or ignored; values spontaneity, dreaming, freedom of expression, and a variety of relationships
- values social acceptance and interaction, fun and excitement

When communicating with I-style individuals, share your experiences, allow them time to ask questions and talk openly, and don't get frustrated with a quickly moving, sometimes scattered conversation. Focus on the positives, avoid overloading them with details, and don't interrupt. Follow up in writing.

### **Steadiness (S)**

People with the S style place an emphasis on cooperating with others within existing circumstances to carry out the task in a steady and predictable manner. They are slower-paced and relationship-focused.

A person with an S style...

- is motivated by cooperation, opportunities to help, and sincere appreciation
- focuses on collaboration, maintaining stability, and giving support
- is described as calm, patient, predictable, deliberate, stable, and consistent
- may be limited by being indecisive, overly accommodating, and a tendency to avoid sudden change without an opportunity to plan
- may fear sudden change, loss of stability, and offending others
- values loyalty, helping others, and security

When communicating with the S style individuals, be personal and amiable, express your interest in them and what you expect from them, take time to provide clarification. They may need some time to process. Be polite, and avoid being confrontational, overly aggressive, or rude.

### **Conscientiousness (C)**

People with the C style place an emphasis on working meticulously within existing circumstances to ensure quality and accuracy. They are slower-paced and task-focused.

A person with a C style...

- is motivated by opportunities to gain more information and build their knowledge, show their expertise, and produce high-quality, accurate work
- focuses on ensuring accuracy, maintaining procedures and protocols, and challenging assumptions with evidence and data
- is described as careful, cautious, systematic, diplomatic, accurate, and tactful
- may be limited by being overcritical, overanalyzing, and isolating themselves
- may fear criticism and being wrong
- values quality and accuracy

When communicating with a C-style individual, focus on facts and details; minimize "pep talk" or emotional language; be patient, persistent, and diplomatic. C styles need time to process and respond so be sure to allow time for them to gather their thoughts and resources to formulate the best response they can offer.

## **How DISC Behavior Assessments Work**

The good news about DISC assessments is that there are no right or wrong answers. They're also simple to take online, with some assessments taking as little as 10 minutes to complete.

Although a person's Natural profile tends to stay fairly consistent over time, the Adapted style can change based on the environment, situation, or relationship and is a reflection of a moment in time. Some may consider taking the assessment again several years apart because the accuracy of the assessment itself is continually improved. Keep in mind, changes to behavioral style can also occur due to seasons of life and emotional experiences. It's always a good idea to continue to evaluate your behavioral patterns to build awareness of how you are responding to various situations, environments, and relationships.

Scoring and reporting can either be done electronically or in a few simple steps if you take a paper version of the assessment.

Taking a DISC assessment involves answering a questionnaire about your own behavior by choosing descriptors most like you and least like you. From your selections, an algorithm returns your personal behavioral blend and your scores produce a profile report. You'll be able to read about your unique behavioral style, your tendencies, needs, preferred environment for greatest opportunities to be effective, and strategies for adapting behavior appropriately with others. You will also learn more about your strengths and potential challenges.

Reports also include insights about other DISC styles so you can learn more about how others act and what their strengths and weaknesses are as well. When you do this in a work team setting, you will end up with a greater



understanding of your workplace colleagues to help you with effective communication strategies going forward.

Some people are concerned that DISC profiles can place unfair labels on people. For example, you might have heard someone dismiss someone's action or comments with a remark like "She's a D, what do you expect?" Assigning labels and rationalizing poor behavior are not what DISC profiles are about. Not all D styles behave or respond in the same way, especially when we consider the style blend. A DC will behave differently than a DI, even though their primary style is the same. DISC simply helps people better understand behavioral and communication preferences and priorities.

## **How Long Does the DISC Assessment Take?**

In most cases, it takes 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

When you begin the assessment, you will make 26 selections of the words or phrases that are most like you and the words or phrases that are least like you. From these choices, the report algorithm determines the balance of your DISC blend and returns the comprehensive report tool.

It is important to note that not all vendors will have the same DISC assessment process. Some offer computer adaptive testing with up to 80 questions, and others provide a 28-item forced-choice questionnaire.

Because DISC is not a copyrighted model, vendors are free to use their own process. However, there are only a small handful of valid, scientifically-backed versions of DISC assessments out there. Be sure you examine the validity of the tools and pay special attention to the last time the data was validated.

# What Does DISC Measure?

DISC measures observable behavior and emotions. It does not measure intelligence, education, experience, aptitude, mental health, or values.

You may gain greater insight into how you respond to challenges, how you influence and interact with others, how you operate at your preferred pace, and how well you follow directions and function with structure in place, as well as many other tendencies.

When you are aware of these dimensions and know how to apply them effectively, you can use your style strengths or modify your style weaknesses to meet your needs and the needs of others.

## **A DISC report has three parts:**

- **Part I** helps you understand each DISC style and identifies characteristics, including the tendencies of each behavioral style. The overview of the model is provided to help you with a strong foundation of understanding in directness, openness, pace, priority, and the emotions of each style.
- **Part II** focuses on understanding yourself and will reveal information about the tendencies that make you unique. You'll receive narratives and visuals that support your understanding of your style as well as bullet-point lists including Communication Do's and Don'ts, Your Workplace Tendencies, Potential Areas of Improvement, How You Respond in Stress, and your 12 Behavioral Tendencies at Work. This section is all about you, and there are several pages devoted to helping you achieve a deeper understanding of your style blend.
- **Part III** explores adaptability and offers actionable recommendations for you and others who interact with you. This section is designed as a resource to assist you in communicating more effectively with others and includes multiple tools to help you practice your new DISC knowledge and guide your continued development and implementation in your everyday environments.

# Our Reporting, Research, and Validation

Assessments 24x7 maintains the highest standards of development and application through extensive research and we diligently work to validate and ensure our reports are accurate. Each report is designed to provide clear interpretations and feedback based on the individual's self-perception score that is then confirmed with face validity (to ensure the assessment measures what it says it will measure).

We also practice a philosophy of transparency and openly share our rigorous reporting, research, and validation information to ensure a high degree of confidence for use in business, non-profit, coaching, or counseling. Our research reports are publicly **available here**.

## DISC Assessment Test Sample Reports

**DISC Self** - Describes "you" based on your observable behavior and can provide insights for others regarding your communication preferences as well as how you will likely interact with and respond to them. This self-perception report allows you to observe and evaluate your behavioral responses in various environments. By exploring your behavior and communication in a variety of environments, situations or relationships, you can determine the most effective communication strategy or course of action to take with others.

**DISC Leadership** – After the DISC-Self portion of the report, this report provides simple, practical tools to help with using DISC as a leader in Developing, Adapting, Helping, Motivating, Complimenting, Counseling, Correcting, Delegating, & Acknowledging.

**DISC Sales** – This report uses individual assessment data to provide information about your sales priorities and preferences. You'll also learn how to connect better with customers whose priorities and preferences differ from yours through the five stages of the selling cycle – Connecting, Assessing, Solving, Confirming, and Assuring.

**DISC Service** – This helps you to understand how you can use your strengths and improve upon your weaknesses to improve customer service in your organization by communicating effectively in the service process – Greet, Value, Ask, Listen, Help, Invite.

**DISC Coaching** – Coaches really enjoy helping people and this report helps to determine how you can best provide this type of mentoring based on your strengths and skills and the interaction you have with others. DISC Coaching focuses on 5 ways to mentor and support others - Ask, Listen, Coach, Praise, and Challenge.

**DISC-Motivators Combination** – By combining DISC and Motivators, you can not only apply what you've learned about your behaviors and emotions, but also align them in ways that reflect what matters most to you (your motivations). This combination report allows end-users to evaluate how their behavior is in alignment with or in a position of tension against their core values and motivational drivers.

**DISC Virtual Training** – An interactive program that trains, tracks, monitors, and measures every student in real-time to give a deeper, more comprehensive foundation of DISC through a video series. This program can be re-visited by each user repeatedly as necessary to keep the information fresh and accessible at any time.