

Chapter 5

Communication Styles: A Key to Adaptive Selling Today

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

- 1 Discuss how communication style influences the relationship process in sales.
- 2 Identify the two major dimensions of the communication-style model.
- 3 Explain the four communication styles in the communication-style model.
- 4 Learn how to identify your preferred communication style and that of your customer.
- 5 Learn to achieve interpersonal versatility and build strong selling relationships with style flexing.



Adaptive Selling Training Video Series **Communications Styles—A Key to Adaptive Selling**

COMMUNICATION STYLES—OR BEHAVIOUR STYLES, AS THEY ARE SOMETIMES CALLED—HAVE been described as one of the most popular training topics in sales and management.

In this two-part Adaptive Selling Today training video, you'll meet Lana, a senior salesperson. While working with Ron, Sandra, and Raymond (one of her top customers, her sales team member, and her marketing manager, respectively), Lana shares what she has learned about building selling relationships with communication styles. We will learn how Lana and her team take a “No, this won't work” response from Ron and, with the adaptive selling “Platinum Rule,” attempt to build a mutually rewarding relationship.

Every year publications such as *Canadian Business*, *Fortune*, and *Fast Company* feature profiles of well-known business leaders. These articles often focus on the communication styles of the executives who provide leadership in companies across North America. Who can forget Al “Chainsaw” Dunlap, who was described as aggressive, frank, opinionated,



Michael Ahearn

Communication styles are a key to adaptive selling.

and impatient? He earned his nickname by ordering huge layoffs when he was the CEO responsible for restructuring companies such as Scott Paper and Sunbeam Corporation. Deborah Hopkins earned the nickname “Hurricane Debby” for the way she conducted business while holding leadership positions at Unisys, GM Europe, Boeing, and Lucent Technologies. Her demanding, ambitious, and sometimes emotional style occasionally created personality clashes. In contrast, Bill Gates is described as a quiet, reflective person who often seems preoccupied with other matters. And then there is Jeff Bezos, the founder and CEO of Amazon.com, who is often described as the happy extrovert. He seems to enjoy being with other people and often displays spontaneous, uninhibited behaviour.¹

We form impressions of people by observing their behaviour. The thoughts, feelings, and actions that characterize someone are generally viewed as their **personality**.² Communication style is an important aspect of our personality.

personality The thoughts, feelings, and actions that characterize someone.

COMMUNICATION STYLES—AN INTRODUCTION TO MANAGING SELLING RELATIONSHIPS

ALMOST EVERYONE HAS HAD THE PLEASANT EXPERIENCE OF MEETING SOMEONE FOR THE FIRST time and developing instant mutual rapport. There seems to be something about some people that makes you like them instantaneously—a basis for mutual understanding that is difficult to explain. On the other hand, we can all recall meeting people who “turn us off” almost immediately. Why do these things happen during the initial contact?

The impressions that others form about us are based on what they observe us saying and doing. They have no way of knowing our innermost thoughts and feelings, so they make decisions about us based on what they see and hear.³ The patterns of behaviour that others observe can be called **communication style**. *Behaviour style* and *social style* are additional terms frequently used to describe these patterns of behaviour.

Adaptive selling, introduced in Chapter 2, is defined as altering sales behaviours in order to improve communication with the customer. It relates to a salesperson’s ability to

communication style Patterns of behaviour that others observe. Voice patterns, eye movement, facial expression, and posture are some of the components of our communication style.

adaptive selling Altering sales behaviours in order to improve communication with the customer.

We form impressions of others by observing their behaviour. Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon.com, is often described as the happy extrovert who frequently displays spontaneous, uninhibited behaviour. In contrast, Microsoft's Bill Gates is described as a quiet, reflective person who often seems preoccupied with other matters.



Stan Honda/Getty Images

collect information regarding the customer's needs and respond appropriately. Adaptive selling frequently requires complex behavioural adjustments.⁴ Adjusting one's communication style in order to fit individual customer needs and preferences is an important element of adaptive selling.

Communication-Style Bias

Bias in various forms is quite common in our society. In fact, governments at all levels have passed many laws to curb blatant forms of age, ethnic, religious, and gender discrimination. We also observe some degree of regional bias when people from various parts of Canada meet.

The most frequently occurring form of bias is not commonly understood in our society. What has been labelled **communication-style bias** is a state of mind that almost every one of us experiences from time to time, but we usually find it difficult to explain the symptoms. Communication-style bias can develop when we have contact with another person whose communication style is different from our own. For example, a purchasing agent was overheard saying, "I do not know what it is, but I just do not like that sales representative." The agent was no doubt experiencing communication-style bias but could not easily describe the feeling.

Your communication style is the "you" that is on display every day—the outer pattern of behaviour that others see. If your style is very different from another person's, it may be difficult for the two of you to develop rapport. All of us have had the experience of saying or doing something that was perfectly acceptable to a friend or co-worker and being surprised when the same behaviour irritated someone else. However, aside from admitting that this happens, most of us are unable to draw meaningful conclusions from these experiences to help us perform more effectively with people in the future.⁵

In recent years, thousands of sales professionals have learned to manage their selling relationships more effectively through the study of communication styles. Books such

communication-style bias A state of mind we often experience when we have contact with another person whose communication style is different from our own.

as *I'm Stuck, You're Stuck* by Tom Ritchey, *People Styles at Work* by Robert Bolton and Dorothy Grover Bolton, and *The Versatile Salesperson* by Roger Wenschlag serve as good references. Many training companies offer seminars that provide enrollees with a practical understanding of communication-style theory and practice. Wilson Learning (www.wilsonlearning.com) offers a program entitled *The Versatile Salesperson*. This program helps salespeople develop the interpersonal skills necessary to work effectively with customers whose communication style is different than their own. Over 7 million people worldwide have completed Wilson Learning programs that focus on communication styles.⁶

Communication-Style Principles

The theory of behavioural- or communication-style bias is based on a number of underlying principles. A review of these principles will be beneficial before we examine specific styles.

1. *Individual differences exist and are important.* It is quite obvious that we all differ in terms of such physical characteristics as height, shoe size, facial features, and body build, but the most interesting differences are those patterns of behaviour that are unique to each of us. Voice patterns, eye movement, facial expressions, and posture are some of the components of our communication style. Additional characteristics are discussed later in this chapter. Research by Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung and others has helped us understand the importance of individual differences.
2. *A communication style is a way of thinking and behaving.* It is not an ability, but instead a preferred way of using the abilities one has. This distinction is very important. An ability refers to how well someone can do something. A style refers to how someone likes to do something.⁷
3. *Individual style differences tend to be stable.* Our communication style is based on a combination of hereditary and environmental factors. Our style is somewhat

From the Field

Some Accountants Communicate

In a famous Monty Python skit, John Cleese describes an accountant he is interviewing as dull, unimaginative, humourless, tedious, and drab, and says that while in most professions these would be considered drawbacks, not so in accounting. But the reality today is that highly successful professional accountants do not match the stereotype that Cleese describes.

Today's best chartered accountants know they must manage relationships with clients, and that means regularly communicating with them. Ruth Todd is a partner at KPMG LLP (Canada) and has been a chartered accountant for approximately 20 years. Ruth says that KPMG promotes a culture of "client service excellence," and that means staying in touch with clients so they always

know you are interested in their business and that you wish to help them find solutions that meet their needs. Some clients call Ruth on a regular basis; some almost never call. Ruth says, "I regularly go through my portfolio of clients and ensure that none get ignored. I contact some by phone, some by email, and some in person, depending on their preference. I find that when I regularly call them, many reciprocate and call me when they have a question because they know I want to help." Ruth also points out that she does not invoice a client for every phone call. She says, "If you are too focused on billing, the client will become hesitant to call for advice. You need to think about adding value and building long-term relationships."^a

original at the time of birth; it takes on additional individuality during the first three to five years of life. By the time we enter elementary school, the teacher should be able to identify our preferred communication style. While an individual's communication style tends to remain fairly constant throughout life, adapting to different communication counterparts or the ability to “flex” can be enhanced and mastered.

4. *There are a finite number of styles.* Most people display one of several clusters of similar behaviours, and this allows us to identify a small number of behavioural categories. By combining a series of descriptors, we can develop a single “label” that describes a person's most preferred communication style.
5. *To create the most productive relationships, it is necessary to get in sync with the communication style of the people you work with.*⁸ Differences between people can be a source of friction unless you develop the ability to recognize and respond to the other person's style.

The ability to identify another person's communication style, and to know how and when to adapt your own preferred style to it, can afford you a crucial advantage in dealing with people. Differences between people can be a source of friction. The ability to “speak the other person's language” is an important relationship-management skill.⁹

Improving Your Relationship Selling Skills

Anyone who is considering a career in selling will benefit greatly from the study of communication styles. These concepts provide a practical method of classifying people according to communication style and give the salesperson a distinct advantage in the marketplace. A salesperson who understands communication-style classification methods and learns how to adapt them can avoid common mistakes that threaten interpersonal relations with customers. Awareness of these methods greatly reduces the possibility of tension arising during the sales call.

The first major goal of this chapter is to help you better understand your own most preferred communication style. The second goal is to help you develop greater understanding and appreciation for styles that are different from your own. The third goal is to help you manage your selling relationships more effectively by learning to adapt your style to fit the communication style of the customer. This practice is called **style flexing**.

style flexing The deliberate adjustment of one's communication style to accommodate the needs of the other person.

COMMUNICATION-STYLE MODEL

THIS SECTION INTRODUCES YOU TO THE FOUR BASIC COMMUNICATION STYLES. ONE OF THESE will surface as your most preferred style. The communication-style model that defines these styles is based on two important dimensions of human behaviour: dominance and sociability. We look at the dominance continuum first.

Dominance Continuum

dominance Reflects the tendency to influence or exert one's will over others in a relationship. Each of us falls somewhere on the continuum.

Dominance can be defined as the tendency to control or prevail over others.¹⁰ Dominant people tend to be quite competitive. They also tend to offer opinions readily and to be decisive, opinionated, self-assertive, and vocal. Each of us falls somewhere on the dominance continuum illustrated by Figure 5.1.



Figure 5.1 The first step in determining your most preferred communication style is to identify where you are on the dominance continuum.

A person classified as high in dominance is generally a “take charge” type of person who makes a position clear to others. A person classified as low in dominance is usually more reserved, unassertive, and easygoing. Dominance has been recognized as a universal behavioural characteristic. David W. Johnson developed the Interpersonal Pattern Exercise to help people achieve greater interpersonal effectiveness. He believes that people fall into two dominance categories:

1. *Lower dominance:* These people have a tendency to be quite cooperative and let others control things. They tend to be lower in assertiveness.
2. *Higher dominance:* These people like to control things and frequently initiate demands. They are more aggressive in dealing with others.¹¹

The first step in determining your most preferred communication style is to identify where you fall on the dominance continuum. Do you tend to rank low or high on this scale? To answer this question, complete the Dominance Indicator form in Table 5.1. Rate yourself on each scale by placing a check mark on the continuum at the point that

Table 5.1 Dominance Indicator						
<i>Rate yourself on each scale by placing a check mark on the continuum at the point that represents how you perceive yourself.</i>						
I Perceive Myself as Somewhat						
Cooperative	/	/	/	/	/	Competitive
Submissive	/	/	/	/	/	Authoritarian
Accommodating	/	/	/	/	/	Domineering
Hesitant	/	/	/	/	/	Decisive
Reserved	/	/	/	/	/	Outgoing
Compromising	/	/	/	/	/	Insistent
Cautious	/	/	/	/	/	Risk-taking
Patient	/	/	/	/	/	Hurried
Complacent	/	/	/	/	/	Influential
Quiet	/	/	/	/	/	Talkative
Shy	/	/	/	/	/	Bold
Supportive	/	/	/	/	/	Demanding
Relaxed	/	/	/	/	/	Tense
Restrained	/	/	/	/	/	Assertive

represents how you perceive yourself. If most of your check marks fall to the right of centre, you are someone who is higher in dominance. If most of your check marks fall to the left of centre, you are someone who is lower in dominance. Is there any best place to be on the dominance continuum? The answer is no. Successful salespeople can be found at all points along the continuum.

Sociability Continuum

sociability Reflects the amount of control one exerts over emotional expressiveness. People who are high in sociability tend to express their feelings freely, while people who are low on this continuum tend to control their feelings.

Sociability reflects the amount of control we exert over our emotional expressiveness.¹² People who are high in sociability tend to express their feelings freely, while people who are low in this dimension tend to control their feelings. Each of us falls somewhere on the sociability continuum illustrated in Figure 5.2.

Sociability is also a universal behavioural characteristic. It can be defined as the tendency to seek and enjoy interaction with others. Therefore, high sociability is an indication of a person's preference to interact with other people. Lower sociability is an indicator of a person's desire to work in an environment where he or she has more time alone instead of having to make conversation with others. The person who is classified as being lower in the area of sociability is more reserved and formal in social relationships.

The second step in determining your most preferred communication style is to identify where you fall on the sociability continuum. To answer this question, complete the Sociability Indicator form shown in Table 5.2. Rate yourself on each scale by placing a



Figure 5.2 The second step in determining your most preferred communication style is to identify where you are on the sociability continuum.

Table 5.2 Sociability Indicator

Rate yourself on each scale by placing a check mark on the continuum at the point that represents how you perceive yourself.

I Perceive Myself as Somewhat						
Disciplined	/	/	/	/	/	Easygoing
Controlled	/	/	/	/	/	Expressive
Serious	/	/	/	/	/	Lighthearted
Methodical	/	/	/	/	/	Unstructured
Calculating	/	/	/	/	/	Spontaneous
Guarded	/	/	/	/	/	Open
Stalwart	/	/	/	/	/	Humorous
Aloof	/	/	/	/	/	Friendly
Formal	/	/	/	/	/	Casual
Reserved	/	/	/	/	/	Attention-seeking
Cautious	/	/	/	/	/	Carefree
Conforming	/	/	/	/	/	Unconventional
Reticent	/	/	/	/	/	Dramatic
Restrained	/	/	/	/	/	Impulsive

check mark on the continuum at the point that represents how you perceive yourself. If most of your check marks fall to the right of centre, you are someone who is higher in sociability. If most of your check marks fall to the left of centre, you are someone who is lower in sociability. Keep in mind that there is no best place to be. Successful salespeople can be found at all points along this continuum.

As you reflect on your dominance and sociability ratings, keep in mind that self-ratings can be misleading. Many people do not see themselves in the same way that others see them. Friends and co-workers who frequently observe your behaviours may be in a better position to identify your communication style.

With the aid of the dominance and sociability continuums we can now discuss a relatively simple communication-style classification plan that has practical application in the field of selling. We describe the four basic styles: Emotive, Directive, Reflective, and Supportive.

Four Styles of Communication

By combining the two dimensions of human behaviour—dominance and sociability—we can form a partial outline of the communication-style model (Fig. 5.3). Dominance is represented by the horizontal axis and sociability is represented by the vertical axis. Once the two dimensions of human behaviour are combined, the framework for communication-style classification is established.

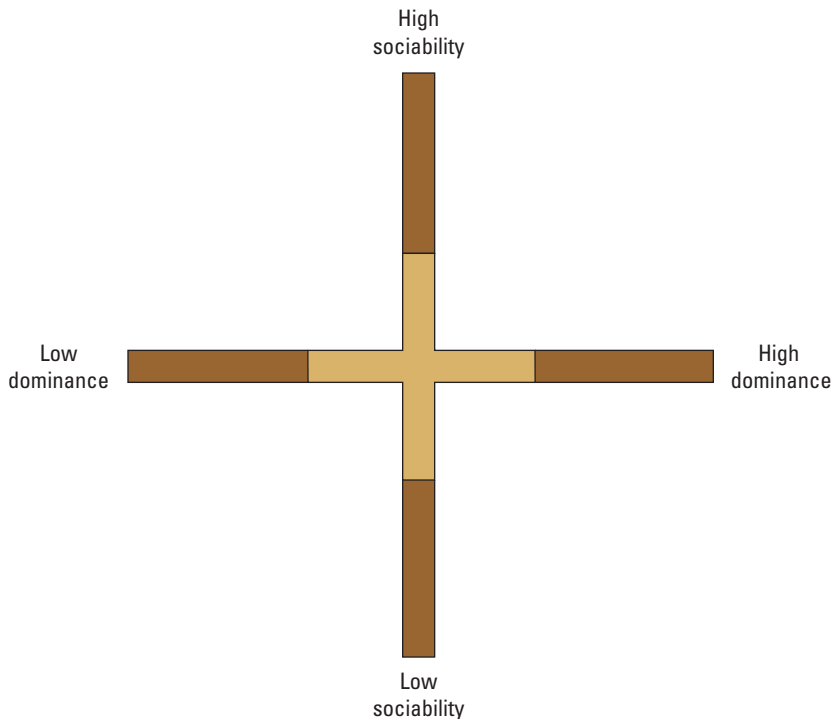
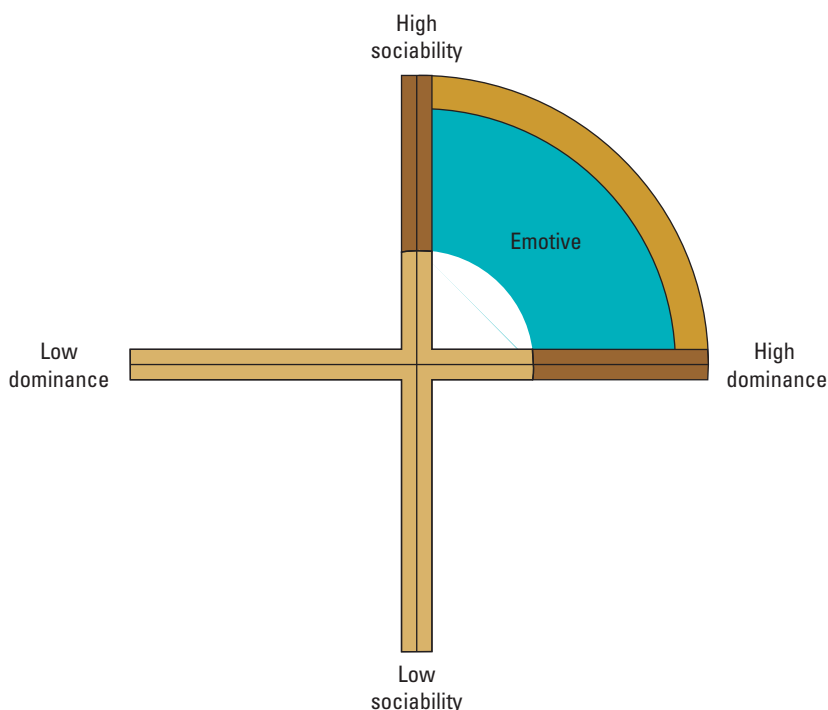


Figure 5.3 When the dominance and sociability dimensions of human behaviour are combined, the framework for communication-style classification is established.

Emotive style A communication style that displays the following characteristics: appears to be quite active, takes the social initiative in most cases, likes to encourage informality, and expresses emotional opinions.

Emotive Style The upper right-hand quadrant of Figure 5.4 defines a style that combines higher sociability and higher dominance. We call this the **Emotive style** (see Fig. 5.5). Emotive people stand out in a crowd. They are expressive and willing to spend time maintaining and enjoying a large number of relationships.¹³ Television personalities Rick Mercer and Oprah Winfrey provide excellent models of the Emotive communication style. Sports personality Don Cherry and actors Jim Carrey, Mike Myers, and Robin Williams (d. 2014) also project the Emotive communication style. They are outspoken, enthusiastic, and stimulating. The Emotive person wants to create a social relationship quickly and usually feels more comfortable in an informal atmosphere. Some of the verbal and nonverbal clues that identify the Emotive person follow:

1. *Appears quite active.* This person gives the appearance of being busy. A person who combines higher dominance and higher sociability often displays spontaneous, uninhibited behaviour. The Emotive person is likely to express feelings with vigorous movements of the hands and a rapid speech pattern.
2. *Takes the social initiative in most cases.* Emotives tend to be extroverts. When two people meet for the first time, the Emotive person is more apt to initiate and maintain the conversation as well as to initiate the handshake. Emotives rate higher in both directness and openness.
3. *Likes to encourage informality.* The Emotive person moves to a first-name basis as soon as possible (too soon in some cases). Even the way this person sits in a chair communicates a preference for a relaxed, informal social setting.



Sociable	Unstructured
Spontaneous	Excitable
Zestful	Personable
Stimulating	Persuasive
Emotional	Dynamic

Figure 5.5 Key words for the Emotive style.

Figure 5.4 The Emotive style combines high sociability and high dominance.

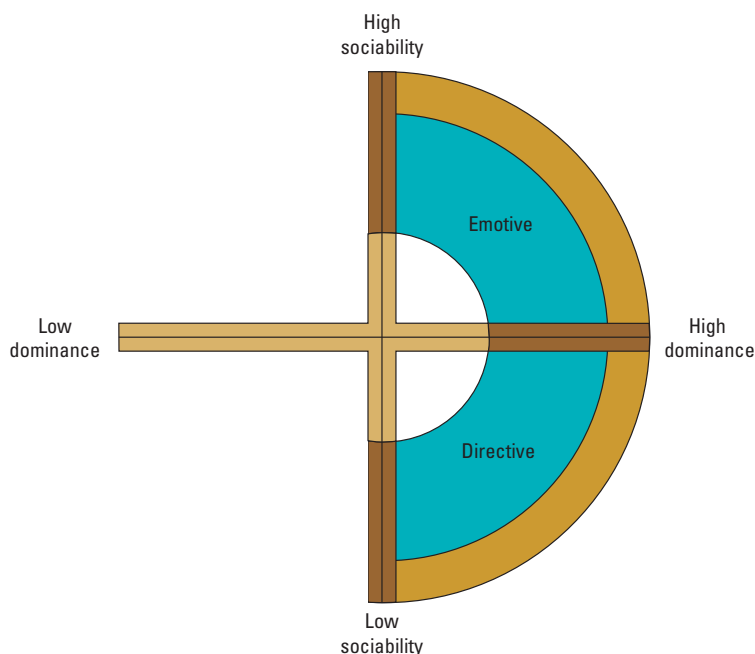


Emotive people, such as Rick Mercer, are stimulating, excitable, and spontaneous. Emotives generally do not hide their feelings and often express opinions dramatically and impulsively.

4. *Expresses emotional opinions.* Emotive people generally do not hide their feelings. They often express opinions dramatically and impulsively.

The Directive Style The lower right-hand quadrant of Figure 5.6 defines a style that combines higher dominance and lower sociability. We will call this the **Directive style** (see Fig. 5.7).

Directive style A communication style that displays the following characteristics: appears quite busy, may give the impression of not listening, displays a serious attitude, and likes to maintain control.



Aggressive	Determined
Intense	Frank
Requiring	Opinionated
Pushy	Impatient
Serious	Bold

Figure 5.7 Key words for the Directive style.

Figure 5.6 The Directive style combines high dominance and low sociability.

To understand the nature of people who display the Directive communication style, picture in your mind's eye the director of a Hollywood film. The person you see is giving orders in a firm voice and is generally in charge of every facet of the operation. Everyone on the set knows this person is in charge. While this common image of the Hollywood film director is probably exaggerated, this example will be helpful as you attempt to become familiar with the Directive style.

Many senior executives of large corporations project the Directive style, as does Kevin O'Leary of *Dragons' Den*, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Directives may be described as frank, demanding, assertive, and determined.

In the field of selling you will encounter a number of customers who are Directives. How can you identify these people? What verbal and nonverbal clues can you observe? A few of the behaviours displayed by Directives follow:

1. *Appears to be quite busy.* The Directive generally does not like to waste time and wants to get right to the point. Judy Sheindlin of the *Judge Judy* television show displays this behaviour.
2. *May give the impression of not listening.* In most cases the Directive feels more comfortable talking than listening.
3. *Displays a serious attitude.* A person who is lower in sociability usually communicates a lack of warmth and is apt to be quite businesslike and impersonal.
4. *Likes to maintain control.* The person who is higher on the dominance continuum likes to maintain control. During meetings the Directive often seeks to control the agenda.¹⁴

People who display the Directive style, such as Kevin O'Leary, like to take charge and maintain control. People who display the Directive style are generally viewed as determined, bold, and serious.



Leon Switzer/ZUMA PRESS/Newscom

The Reflective Style The lower left-hand quadrant of the communication-style model features a combination of lower dominance and lower sociability (Fig. 5.8). People who regularly display this behaviour are classified as having the **Reflective style** (see Fig. 5.9).

The Reflective person tends to examine all the facts carefully before arriving at a decision. Like a cautious scientist, this individual wants to gather all available information and weigh it carefully before taking a position. The Reflective type is usually a stickler for detail.¹⁵ The late physicist Albert Einstein fits the description. Rex Murphy, the journalist who hosts CBC's *Cross Country Checkup*; David Suzuki, the scientist who hosts CBC's *The Nature of Things*; and CBC news anchor Peter Mansbridge, who hosts *Mansbridge One on One*, all display the characteristics of the Reflective type.

The Reflective communication style combines lower dominance and lower sociability; therefore, people with this classification tend to be reserved and cautious. Some additional behaviours that characterize this style follow:

1. *Controls emotional expression.* Reflective people tend to curb emotional expression and are less likely to display warmth openly. Bill Gates displays this personality trait.
2. *Displays a preference for orderliness.* The Reflective person enjoys a highly structured environment and generally feels frustration when confronted with unexpected events.

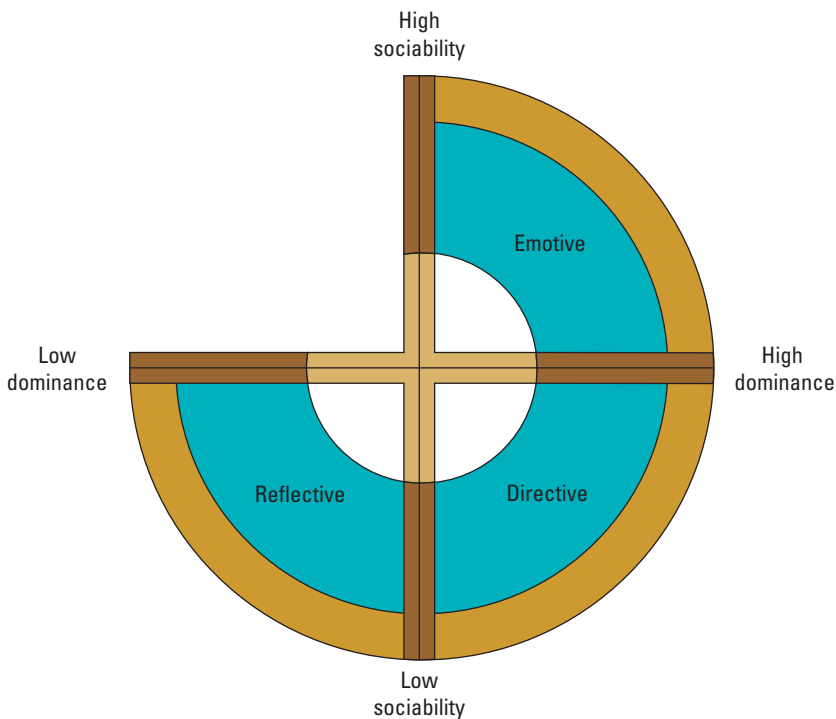


Figure 5.8 The Reflective style combines low dominance and low sociability.

Reflective style A communication style that displays the following characteristics: controls emotional expression, displays a preference for orderliness, tends to express measured opinions, and seems difficult to get to know.

Precise	Scientific
Deliberate	Preoccupied
Questioning	Serious
Disciplined	Industrious
Aloof	Stuffy

Figure 5.9 Key words for the Reflective style.

Persons with the Reflective style, such as Peter Mansbridge, tend to control their emotions and examine all the facts when making a decision.



George Pimentel/WireImage/Getty Images

3. *Tends to express measured opinions.* The Reflective individual usually does not express dramatic opinions. This communication style is characterized by disciplined, businesslike actions.
4. *Seems difficult to get to know.* The Reflective person tends to be somewhat formal in social relationships and therefore can be viewed as aloof by many people.

In a selling situation the Reflective customer does not want to move too fast. This person wants the facts presented in an orderly and unemotional manner and does not want to waste a lot of time socializing.

The Supportive Style The upper left-hand quadrant shows a combination of lower dominance and higher sociability (Fig. 5.10). This communication style is called the **Supportive style** (see Fig. 5.11) because these people find it easy to listen and usually do not express their views in a forceful manner. Entertainers Meryl Streep, Kevin Costner, Paul Simon, Julia Roberts and Canadian singer Anne Murray all display the characteristics of the Supportive style, as did the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

Low visibility generally characterizes the lifestyle of Supportive people. They complete their tasks in a quiet, unassuming manner and seldom draw attention to what they have accomplished. In terms of assertiveness, persons with the Supportive style rank quite low. Someone who ranks higher on the dominance continuum is likely to view the Supportive individual as being too easygoing. Other behaviours that commonly characterize the Supportive person follow:

1. *Gives the appearance of being quiet and reserved.* People with the Supportive communication style can easily display their feelings, but not in the assertive manner common to the Emotive individual.
2. *Listens attentively to other people.* In selling, good listening skills can be a real asset. This talent comes naturally to the Supportive person.

Supportive style A communication style that displays the following characteristics: appears quiet and reserved, listens attentively to other people, tends to avoid the use of power, and makes decisions in a thoughtful and deliberate manner.

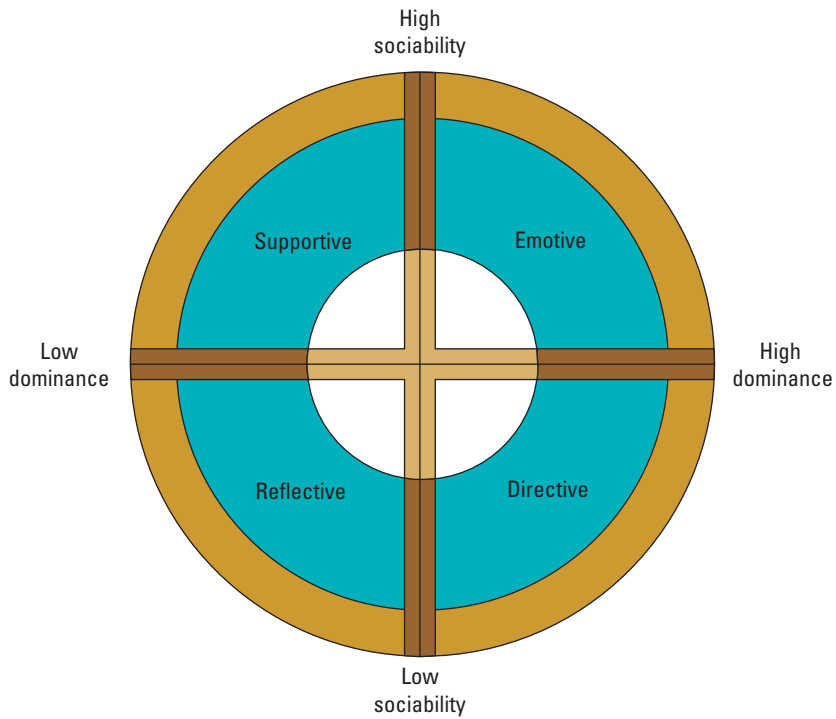


Figure 5.10 The Supportive style combines low dominance and high sociability.

Lighthearted	Patient
Reserved	Sensitive
Passive	Relaxed
Warm	Compliant
Docile	Softhearted

Figure 5.11 Key words for the Supportive style.



Doreen Salcher/Hemera/Getty Images

People with the Supportive communication style are usually quiet and unassuming.

Supportive (Manning/Reece/Ahearne/MacKenzie)	Emotive (Manning/Reece/Ahearne/MacKenzie)
Amiable (Wilson Learning)	Expressive (Wilson Learning)
Supportive-Giving (Stuart Atkins Inc.)	Adapting-Dealing (Stuart Atkins Inc.)
Relater (People Smarts)	Socializer (People Smarts)
Steadiness (Personal Profile System)	Influencing (Personal Profile System)
Supportive (DiSC)	Influencing (DiSC)
Reflective (Manning/Reece/Ahearne/MacKenzie)	Directive (Manning/Reece/Ahearne/MacKenzie)
Analytical (Wilson Learning)	Driver (Wilson Learning)
Conserving-Holding (Stuart Atkins Inc.)	Controlling-Taking (Stuart Atkins Inc.)
Thinker (People Smarts)	Directive (People Smarts)
Cautiousness/Compliance (Personal Profile System)	Dominance (Personal Profile System)
Conscientious (DiSC)	Dominance (DiSC)

Figure 5.12 The four basic communication styles have been used in a wide range of training programs. For comparison purposes, the approximate equivalents to the four communication styles discussed in this chapter are listed.

3. *Tends to avoid the use of power.* Whereas the Directive may rely on power to accomplish tasks, the Supportive person is more likely to rely on friendly persuasion.
4. *Makes decisions in a thoughtful and deliberate manner.* The Supportive person usually takes longer to make a decision.

Popularity of the Four-Style Model

We are endlessly fascinated by ourselves, and this helps explain the growing popularity of the four-style model presented in this chapter. To satisfy this insatiable appetite for information, many training and development companies offer training programs that present the four social or communication styles. Figure 5.12 features the approximate equivalents of the four styles presented in this chapter. Although four-style programs were initially created and marketed in the United States, they have become a global phenomenon, according to staff at Wilson Learning.¹⁶ Inscape Publishing, the company that developed

Keeping Track of Communication Styles with CRM

Customer relationship management (CRM) software empowers a salesperson with information essential to continue a partnership. The software can be used to record, retain, and produce personal information including such factors as marital status, names and ages of children and other family members, and individual preferences, interests, and hobbies. (An astute sales organization will implement privacy policies for such personal information.) With

a large customer list, before placing a call, the salesperson could quickly review the database information to refresh his or her memory about the prospect. Were any promises made during a previous call fulfilled, or are there still some issues outstanding? Were things discussed previously that now need to be followed up? This can be especially helpful when preparing to talk with someone with a specific communication style.

the DiSC learning instrument over three decades ago, reports that more than 40 million people worldwide have completed DiSC workshops.¹⁷

Determining Your Communication Style

You now have enough information to identify your own communication style. If your location on the dominance continuum is right of centre and your position on the sociability continuum is below the centre mark, you fall into the Directive quadrant. If your location on the dominance continuum is left of centre and your position on the sociability continuum is above the centre mark, then your most preferred style is Supportive. Likewise, lower dominance matched with lower sociability forms the Reflective communication style, and higher dominance matched with higher sociability forms the Emotive communication style.

An Online Assessment of Your Communication Style You can gain further insight into your communication style by accessing the www.pearsoncanada.ca/manning website and clicking on the Online Assessment of Your Communication Style link. After completing the assessment, you will be supplied with a profile indicating your most preferred communication style. You will also be presented with a profile of your secondary style. See application exercises 1, 2, 3, and 4 on page 121 for more ways to use this online assessment tool.

Of course, all of us display some characteristics of the Emotive, Directive, Reflective, and Supportive communication styles. However, one of the four styles is usually predominant and readily detectable.¹⁸ This is your preferred style.

Some people who study the communication-style model for the first time may initially experience feelings of frustration. They find it hard to believe that one's behavioural style tends to remain quite uniform throughout life. People often say, "I am a different person each day!" It is certainly true that we sometimes feel different from day to day, but our most preferred style remains stable.

The Supportive person might say, "I sometimes get very upset and tell people what I am thinking. I can be a Directive when I want to be!" There is no argument here. Just because you have a preferred communication style does not mean you will never display the behavioural characteristics of another style. Some people use different styles in different contexts and in different relationships.¹⁹ Reflective people sometimes display Emotive behaviour, and Emotive people sometimes display Reflective behaviour. We are saying that each person has one most-preferred and habitually used communication style. The online assessment mentioned earlier will help you identify the frequency of you displaying a secondary style.

MINIMIZING COMMUNICATION-STYLE BIAS

SALESPeople often make the mistake of focusing too much on the content of their sales presentation and not enough on how they deliver their message.²⁰ Communication-style bias is a barrier to success in selling. This form of bias is a common problem in sales work simply because salespeople deal with people from all four quadrants. You cannot select potential customers on the basis of their communication style. You must be able to develop rapport with people from each of the four quadrants. When people of different styles work together but don't adapt to one another, serious problems can develop.²¹

How Communication-Style Bias Develops

To illustrate how communication-style bias develops in a sales situation, let us observe a sales call involving two people with different communication styles. Lana Wheeler entered the office of Ron Harrington, one of her large accounts, with a feeling of optimism. She was sure that her product would save Ron's company several thousand dollars a month. She was 99 percent certain that, this being her third call on Ron, the sale would be closed. Ten minutes after meeting Ron, she was walking out of his office without an order. What went wrong?

Lana Wheeler is an engaging type who is an Emotive in terms of communication style. Her sales calls are typically fast-paced. She entered Ron's office and immediately began to close the sale. Ron interrupted and told Lana he couldn't commit to her proposal. Lana appeared to ignore Ron's response and told him she could put some more figures together on pricing and then used another trial close. Ron finally told Lana, "Look, you don't understand the way I do business. We have bigger issues than additional figures. As I said, this is a 'no go' project."

Ron's communication style is Directive. He feels uncomfortable when someone is making a decision for him. He wants to maintain control and be in charge of making his own decisions. He felt tension when Lana tried to get him to make a decision on her terms. If Lana had spent more time asking questions, listening more closely, and allowing Ron to feel like the decision was his, she may have found out what "the bigger issues" were. The approach she used would have been more appropriate for the Supportive or Emotive communication style.

A salesperson who is highly adaptable can usually build rapport with customers regardless of their communication style. Style flexibility is a sales strategy that can be learned and is crucial to building partnering relationships.

Adaptive Selling Requires Versatility

Personal selling has become more customer focused than ever before, so every effort should be made to reduce the tension between the salesperson and customer. Dr. David Merrill, one of the early pioneers in the development of communication-style instruments and training programs, uses the term **versatility** to describe our ability to minimize communication-style

versatility Our ability to minimize communication-style bias.

From the Field

Closing the Sale with Adaptive Selling

Rich Goldberg, CEO of Warm Thoughts Communications, a marketing communications company, sensed he was about to lose an important client. He met with his staff and together they created a profile based on their knowledge of the client's communication style. It soon became apparent that there was a mismatch between the client and the salesperson who called on that person. The customer was

low in sociability but high in dominance. The customer was also described as someone who needed facts and figures. The salesperson was working on relationship building, and this approach was agitating the client. Goldberg counselled his staff to keep conversations with this customer brief, use facts and figures frequently, and clearly spell out the company's commitment to the client.^b

bias.²² Roger Wenschlag, author of *The Versatile Salesperson*, describes versatility as “the degree to which a salesperson is perceived as developing and maintaining buyer comfort throughout the sales process.” *Adapting* to the customer’s preferred communication style can enhance sales performance.²³

Mature and Immature Behaviour There is a mature and an immature side to each behavioural style. Let us examine the Emotive style to illustrate this point. People with this style are open, personable individuals who seem genuinely friendly. The natural enthusiasm displayed by the mature Emotive is refreshing. On the other hand, an Emotive person who is too talkative and too emotional may have difficulty building rapport with some customers; this is the immature side of the Emotive communication style.

You will recall that we used the words “industrious” and “precise” to describe the Reflective style. These are words that apply to the mature side of the Reflective person. We also used the words “aloof” and “stuffy.” These words describe the immature side of the Reflective. The good news is that we all have the potential for developing the mature side of our communication style.

Strength/Weakness Paradox It is a fact of life that your greatest strength can become your greatest weakness. If your most preferred style is Reflective, people are likely to respect your well-disciplined approach to life as one of your strengths. However, this strength can become a weakness if it is exaggerated. The Reflective person can be too serious, too questioning, and too inflexible. Robert Haas, former CEO of Levi Strauss & Company, is known for extraordinary—some say obsessive—attention to detail. Those who work with him say an offhand conversation can sound like a lecture. This Reflective, however, has the ability to flex his style. Levi’s employees are fiercely loyal to Haas and describe him as compassionate to a fault.²⁴

People with the Directive style are open and frank. They express their true feelings in a direct manner. In most cases we appreciate candour, but we do not like to be around people who are too straightforward or too blunt in expressing their views. Steven Ballmer, former CEO of Microsoft, was known as a very demanding executive during his early years with the company. His explosive temper was legendary and he often put the fear of God into his staff members. He once needed throat surgery because he yelled so much. Later he became more diplomatic and less domineering.²⁵ Satya Nadella, who replaced Ballmer in 2014, is expected to manage in a more relaxed, low-key manner. When people come across as *opinionated*, they tend to antagonize others. We should avoid pushing our strengths to the point of unproductive excess.²⁶

To illustrate how strengths become weaknesses in excess, let us add more detail to our communication-style model. Note that it now features three zones that radiate out from the centre (see Fig. 5.13). These dimensions might be thought of as intensity zones.

Zone one. People who fall within this zone display their unique behavioural characteristics with less intensity than those in zone two. The Emotive person, for example, is moderately high on the dominance continuum and moderately high on the sociability continuum. As you might expect, zone one communication styles are more difficult to identify because there is less intensity in both dimensions (dominance and sociability).

Zone two. Persons who fall within this zone display their unique behavioural characteristics with greater intensity than persons in zone one. The zone two Reflective, for example, falls within the lowest quartile of the dominance continuum and the lowest

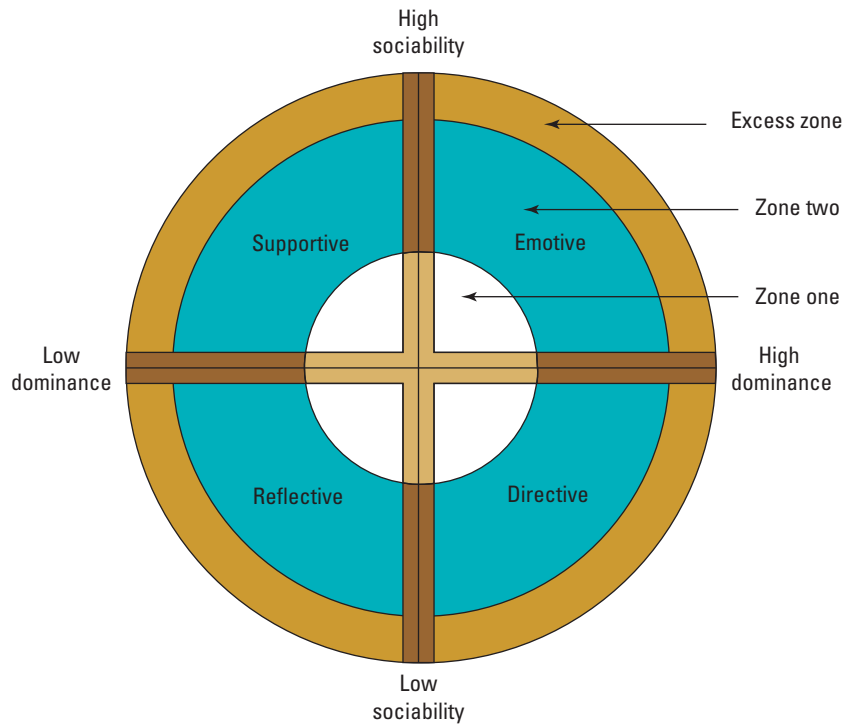


Figure 5.13 The completed communication-style model provides important insights needed to manage the relationship process in selling.

quartile of the sociability continuum. The boundary line that separates zone one and zone two should not be seen as a permanent barrier restricting change in intensity. Under certain circumstances we should abandon our most preferred style temporarily. A deliberate move from zone one to zone two, or vice versa, is called *style flexing*.

Excess zone. The excess zone is characterized by a high degree of intensity and rigidity. When people allow themselves to drift into this zone, they become very inflexible, which is often interpreted by others as a form of bias toward their style. In addition, the strengths of the inflexible person become weaknesses. Extreme intensity in any quadrant is bound to threaten interpersonal relations.

We are apt to move into the excess zone and exaggerate our style characteristics under stressful conditions. Stress tends to bring out the worst in many people. Here are some of the behaviours that salespeople and customers may display when they are in the excess zone:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Emotive style | Expresses highly emotional opinions
Stops listening to the other person
Tries too hard to promote own point of view |
| Directive style | Becomes outspoken to the point of being offensive
Gets impatient with the other person
Becomes dictatorial and bossy
Does not admit being wrong
Becomes extremely competitive |



Blend Images/Superstock

The excess zone is characterized by a high degree of intensity and rigidity. We are more apt to move into the excess zone under very stressful conditions.

Reflective style

Becomes stiff and formal
 Is unwilling to make a decision
 Avoids displaying any type of emotion
 Is overly interested in detail

Supportive style

Agrees with everyone
 Is unable to take a strong stand
 Becomes overly anxious to win approval of others
 Tries to comfort everyone

Global Business Insight

Doing Business in Italy

The majority of Italian Canadians have roots in Sicily or southern Italy. Canadian businesspeople may think that all Italians are like the Italian Canadians whom they have had contact with in Canada, but in reality, Italy is a very varied country where you will find all types of physical characteristics—fair, dark, short, tall—with a variety of accents and customs.

- Italian businesspeople tend to be quite formal in terms of introductions and dress. When you introduce yourself,

say your last name only, and then shake hands. Wait until invited to use your first name. Personal and professional titles are used almost all the time in business dealings.

- Entertaining clients is typically done in restaurants and not in the home.
- Most Italian businesspeople are not in a hurry, so be patient and do not try to rush the sale.
- The practice of gift giving will vary. A gift such as a bottle of wine at Christmas is quite common.^c

BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH STYLE FLEXING

Style flexing IS THE DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO ADAPT ONE'S COMMUNICATION STYLE TO accommodate the needs of the other person. You are attempting to communicate with the other person on his or her own "channel." Ron Willingham, in his book *Integrity Selling*, reminds us that "people are more apt to buy from you when they perceive you view the world as they view the world."²⁷ In a selling situation, you should try to determine the customer's most preferred style and flex your own accordingly. If your preferred communication style is Directive and your customer is a Supportive, try to be more personal and warm in your presentation. Once you know the customer's style, flexing your style can make the difference between a presentation that falters and one that exceeds your expectations.²⁸ Style sensitivity and flexing add value to the sales process.

Throughout the preapproach, you should learn as much as possible about the customer and try to determine his style. Once you are in the customer's presence, do not become preoccupied analyzing the person's style. If you are trying hard to analyze the person's style, you may not listen closely enough to what she is trying to tell you. If you are truly tuned in to the customer, you can absorb many clues that will help you determine her style. After the sales call, analyze the communication and record your findings. Use this information to plan your next contact with the customer.²⁹ Listen closely to the customer's tone of voice. A Supportive person sounds warm and friendly. The Reflective customer's voice is more likely to be controlled and deliberate. Pay particular attention to gestures. The Emotive individual uses his hands to communicate thoughts and ideas. The Directive also uses gestures to communicate but is more controlled and less spontaneous. The Reflective person appears more relaxed, less intense. The Emotive individual is an open, impulsive communicator, while the Reflective person is quite cautious. The Supportive type is personal and friendly, while the Reflective person may seem difficult to get to know. To avoid relationship tension, consider the following suggestions for each of the four styles.

Building Relationships with Emotive Customers

If you are attempting to sell products to an Emotive person, keep in mind the need to move at a pace that will hold the attention of the prospect. Be enthusiastic and avoid an approach that is too stiff and formal. Take time to establish goodwill and build relationships. Do not place too much emphasis on the facts and details. To deal effectively

The Platinum Rule Do Unto Others As They Want Done Unto Them.

Selling in Action

The Platinum Rule[®]

The Platinum Rule[®], created many years ago by Dr. Tony Alessandra, provides each of us with the motivation we need to treat others the way they want to be treated. This rule is a simple, proven method for building strong relationships with our customers.

"Do Unto Others As They Want Done Unto Them."

The Platinum Rule[®] (www.platinumrule.com) is at the heart of the style-flexing sales strategy. When we take time to determine if the customer is behaving as an Emotive, Directive, Reflective, or Supportive, we can then treat them the way they want to be treated.^d

with Emotive people, plan actions that will provide support for their opinions, ideas, and dreams.³⁰ Plan to ask questions concerning their opinions and ideas, but be prepared to help them get “back on track” if they move too far away from the topic. Maintain good eye contact and, above all, be a good listener.

Building Relationships with Directive Customers

The key to relating to Directives is to keep the relationship as businesslike as possible. Developing a strong personal relationship is not a high priority for Directives. In other words, friendship is not usually a condition for a good working relationship. Your goal is to be as efficient, time disciplined, and well organized as possible, and to provide appropriate facts, figures, and success probabilities. Most Directives are goal-oriented people, so try to identify their primary objectives and then determine ways to support and help with these objectives. Early in the sales presentation, ask specific questions and carefully note responses. Look for specific points you can respond to when it is time to present your proposal.

Building Relationships with Reflective Customers

The Reflective person will respond in a positive way to a thoughtful, well-organized approach. Arrive at meetings on time and be well prepared. In most cases it is not necessary to spend a great deal of time building a social relationship. Reflective people appreciate a no-nonsense, businesslike approach to personal selling. Use specific questions that show clear direction. Once you have information concerning the prospect’s needs, present your proposal in a slow, deliberate way. Provide as much documentation as possible. Do not be in too big a hurry to close the sale. Never pressure the Reflective person to make quick decisions.

Building Relationships with Supportive Customers

Take time to build a social relationship with the Supportive person. Spend time learning about the things that are important in this individual’s life—family, hobbies, and major interests. Listen carefully to personal opinions and feelings. Supportive individuals like to conduct business with sales personnel who are professional but friendly. Therefore, study their feelings and emotional needs as well as their technical and business needs. Throughout the presentation, provide personal assurances and support for their views. If you disagree with a Supportive person, curb the desire to disagree too assertively; Supportive people tend to dislike interpersonal conflict. Give them the time to comprehend your proposal. Patience is important.

As you develop your communication-style identification skills and become more adept at style flexing, you are better able to manage the relationship process. With these skills, you should be able to open more accounts, sell more to established customers, and more effectively meet the pressures of competition. Most important, your customers will view you as a person better able to understand and meet their needs.

Word of Caution

It is tempting to put a label on someone and then assume the label tells you everything you need to know about that person. If you want to build an effective sales partnership with a prospect, you must acquire additional information about that person. Stuart

Atkins, a respected authority on communication styles and author of *The Name of Your Game*, says we should be careful not to use labels that make people feel boxed in, typecast, or judged. He believes we should not classify *people*; we should classify their *strengths* and *preferences* to act one way or another under certain circumstances.³¹ You must also be careful not to let the label you place on yourself become the justification for your own inflexible behaviour. Try not to let the label justify or reinforce why you are unable or unwilling to communicate effectively with others.

REVIEWING KEY CONCEPTS

- Discuss how communication style influences the relationship process in sales.

Many sales are lost because salespeople fail to communicate effectively with the prospect. Communication-style bias contributes to this problem. Every salesperson who is willing to develop style sensitivity and engage in appropriate style flexing can minimize one of the most common barriers to success in selling.

- Identify the two major dimensions of the communication-style model.

The communication-style model is based on two continuums that assess two major aspects of human behaviour: dominance and sociability. By combining them as horizontal and vertical continuums we create quadrants that define four styles of communication. We have called these the Emotive, Directive, Reflective, and Supportive styles.

- Explain the four communications styles in the communication-style model.

The Emotive style combines high sociability and high dominance, whereas the Directive style combines high dominance and low sociability. The

Reflective style combines low dominance and low sociability, whereas the Supportive style combines low dominance and high sociability.

- Learn how to identify your preferred communication style and that of your customer.

With practice you can learn to identify your preferred communication style. The starting point is to rate yourself on each scale (dominance and sociability) by placing a check mark at a point along the continuum that represents how you perceive yourself. Completion of the dominance and sociability indicator forms will help you achieve greater awareness of your communication style. This same approach can be used to identify the customer's preferred style.

- Learn to achieve interpersonal versatility and build strong selling relationships with style flexing.

A third dimension of human behaviour—versatility—is important in dealing with communication styles that are different from your own. You can adjust your own style to meet the needs of others—a process called *style flexing*. Style flexing is an attempt to change or alter your style to meet the needs of the customer.

Key Terms

adaptive selling 99
communication style 99
communication-style bias 100
Directive style 107
dominance 102
Emotive style 106
personality 99

Reflective style 109
sociability 104
style flexing 102
Supportive style 110
versatility 114
The Platinum Rule 118

Review Questions

1. What is the meaning of the term *communication style*?
2. Describe the five major principles that support communication-style theory.
3. What are the benefits to the salesperson who understands communication style?
4. What two dimensions of human behaviour are used to identify communication style?
5. Describe the person who tends to be high in sociability.
6. What are the four communication styles? Develop a brief description of each.
7. What is the reaction of most people who study communication styles for the first time? Why does this reaction surface?
8. Define *style flexing*. How can style flexing improve sales productivity?
9. Explain the statement, "Your greatest strength can become your greatest weakness."
10. What suggestions would you give to a salesperson who is planning to meet a new prospect who displays the Reflective communication style?

Application Exercises

1. Communication, or behaviour, styles are the basis for one of the most popular training programs. Worldwide, 47 million people have participated in Wilson and DiSC programs. An understanding of communication styles assists us in building better personal and business relationships. As indicated in this chapter, the first step in applying what you have learned about communication styles is to identify and understand your own style. Using the Online Communication Style Assessment tool at www.pearsoncanada.ca/manning, assess your communication style.
 - a. Do you agree with your assessment of your most preferred style? How about your results on your secondary style?
 - b. Referring back to the material presented in this chapter, identify the strengths and weaknesses of your style.
 - c. Identify the styles you enjoy working with best. Identify the styles you enjoy working with least.
 - d. Referring to the behaviours listed on pages 116–117, can you identify those behaviours you tend to exhibit when you feel stressed?
 - e. Explain why you think so many individuals and companies have participated in these programs. From Figure 5.12 on page 112, list the names of other training programs you could use to identify your most preferred style.
2. Self-awareness is important in personal selling. As we get to know ourselves, we can identify barriers to acceptance by others. Once you have identified your most preferred communication style, you have taken a big step in the direction of self-awareness. We have noted that self-ratings can sometimes be misleading because some people lack a high degree of self-awareness. They do not see themselves as others see them. Consider asking four or five people, co-workers for example, to assess and print the profile of your communication style using the online assessment. Then compare these ratings with your self-rating.
 3. Many salespeople, after being introduced to communication-style concepts, attempt to categorize each of their customers. They report that their relationships become mutually more enjoyable and productive. Select four people whom you know quite well (e.g., supervisor, subordinate, customer, teacher, friend, or member of your sports team). Using the two behavioural continuums in this chapter, determine these people's communication styles. Using your own descriptive terminology in conjunction with terminology in this chapter, develop a descriptive behavioural profile of each of these people. Explain how this information could improve your relationship with each of these people.
 4. To assess your ability to style flex, assume you are going to make four sales calls on customers displaying each of the four communication styles. For purposes of illustration, consider your first call is on an Emotive customer with a communication style like Rick Mercer's. The second call is on a Supportive customer with a communication style like Anne Murray's;

the third is on a Reflective customer with a communication style like Peter Mansbridge, and the last is on a Directive customer like Kevin O'Leary. For each of these customers, refer to the online communication style assessment, and assess the behaviours you would demonstrate as you established your relationship with them. Print each of the profiles and compare them to one another. Did you flex your style of communication to better interact with the customer representing Rick Mercer's style versus the customer representing Anne Murray's style? Did you flex differently for the customers representing Peter Mansbridge and Kevin O'Leary?

5. Myers-Briggs Personality Types and Jungian Personality Types are two very popular descriptions of the material in this chapter. Using your search engine, access the Internet sites that refer to these concepts. Type in "Jungian + personality profiles" to access the Jungian personality types. To access the Myers-Briggs types, type in "Myers-Briggs + personality profiles." Does the number of hits indicate anything about the validity and popularity of these theories? Examine specific queries about both. Do you see the relationship between the theories and the material in this chapter? Each year, about 2.5 million North Americans complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Why is this psychological assessment instrument so popular?

ROLE-PLAY EXERCISE

For the purpose of this role play, assume the role of Ray Ito, who is described in the case problem below. Ray is described as a quiet, amiable person who displays the Supportive communication style. You will meet with Vera Maynard, who is also described in the case problem.

For the purpose of this role play, assume that Vera displays the characteristics of the Directive communication style. Prior to the role play, study the chapter material on style flexing and information on how to sell to persons who have the Directive communication style.



Case Problem

Ray Ito has been employed at CanTrust Real Estate for almost two years. Prior to receiving his real estate licence, he was a property manager with a large real estate agency in another community. During his first year with CanTrust, he was assigned to the residential property division and sold properties totalling \$3 875 000. He then requested and received a transfer to the commercial division.

Three months ago, Ray obtained a commercial listing that consisted of 10.5 hectares (26 acres) of land near a growing residential neighbourhood. The land is zoned commercial and appears to be ideally suited for a medium-sized shopping centre. Ray prepared a detailed prospectus and sent it to Vera Maynard, president of Consumer Growth Corporation, a firm specializing in development of shopping centres. One week later he received a letter from Ms. Maynard requesting more information. Shortly after receiving Ray's response, Ms. Maynard called to set up an appointment to inspect the property. A time and

date were finalized, and Ray agreed to meet her plane and conduct a tour of the property.

Ray is a quiet, amiable person who displays the Supportive communication style. Friends say that they like to spend time with him because he is a good listener.

Questions

1. If Ms. Maynard displays the characteristics of the Directive communication style, how should Ray Ito conduct himself during the meeting? Be specific as you describe those behaviours that would be admired by Ms. Maynard.
2. If Ms. Maynard wants to build rapport with Ray Ito, what behaviour should she display?
3. It is not a good idea to put a label on someone and then assume the label tells us everything about the person. As Ray attempts to build rapport with Ms. Maynard, what other personal characteristics should he try to identify?

PART II

ROLE-PLAY EXERCISE

Developing a Relationship Strategy

SCENARIO

You are Dana Davis, senior account representative for Specialty Fasteners, Canada's largest and most competitive manufacturer of stainless steel fasteners. Your company is ISO 9002 certified and has earned many accolades, including three consecutive J. D. Power & Associates awards for customer satisfaction. Over the years, your company has continually invested in automation technology as a means of ensuring consistent manufacturing quality and cost leadership. You have recently received a request to quote on a large order for T316 stainless steel fittings and are now making a sales call on the purchasing agent to see if you can secure the order. On the way to the purchasing agent's office, you drop by the customer's receiving area to check on an unrelated issue and you notice a very large shipment of T304 stainless steel fasteners, a much less expensive grade of stainless steel. When you asked the receiving clerk where it came from, you were surprised to hear that it was from a minor competitor, one not normally capable of being price competitive on large orders. And, when you asked whether the material was supposed to be T316 stainless, the clerk told you that the packing slip didn't specify. It simply stated stainless steel. When he showed you the packing list, you immediately recognized the bill of material as identical to what you had recently quoted.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Tyler Harper is senior purchasing agent at Regina Fabricators, Saskatchewan's largest stainless steel fabricator.

He has negotiated over a dozen purchase agreements with you. Tyler takes pride in purchasing quality materials at the best price. He knows that the quality of the materials he buys determines the quality of the finished goods that Regina Fabricators manufactures.

SALESPERSON PROFILE

You have been employed by Specialty Fasteners for about four years. After completion of an extensive sales training program, you were assigned to a territory in Saskatchewan, and were soon promoted to senior account representative. You have approximately 60 accounts, but Regina Fabricators is the largest.

PRODUCT

Specialty Fasteners manufactures and sells the broadest range of stainless steel fasteners available in Canada. It manufactures T304 grade stainless fasteners for general applications, and the more expensive T316 grade stainless fasteners for use in more corrosive atmospheres, such as those found in pulp mills, chemical plants, and salt water environments. Customers always specify the grade of stainless they need depending on their end-use application.

INSTRUCTIONS

During the early stages of the role play, you will want to obtain more information from the customer and resolve any misunderstandings. You want to obtain an order for T316 stainless steel fasteners, and maintain a good relationship with this important customer. Keep in mind that ethical decisions can greatly influence the relationship between a salesperson and the customer. (You might want to reflect on the important information covered in Chapter 3 prior to your meeting with Tyler Harper.)