

SKILL ASSESSMENT

- 1A** I try not to say anything that might create tension or disharmony during a discussion of differences.
- 1B** I am usually open in providing others with information about their behavior and seek others' opinions of me.
- 2A** I hesitate to share my wants and needs with others.
- 2B** Sometimes I can give and receive information about behavior only when it is positive.
- 3A** I sometimes agree to meet the requests of others and follow through even at my own expense.
- 3B** I sometimes refuse to meet the requests of others.
- 4A** I always do everything I can to assure that my requests are met.
- 4B** I usually am open in providing others with information about their behavior and seek others' opinions of me.
- 5A** I always try to say things to soothe the other person's feelings during a discussion of differences.
- 5B** I sometimes make a point to have my wants and needs taken care of.
- 6A** In a conversation, I usually like to avoid having someone (myself or the other person) take charge.
- 6B** I always agree to meet the requests of others if they fit with my own wants and needs.
- 7A** In a discussion of differences, I sometimes attempt to change the subject.
- 7B** I always agree to meet the requests of others and follow through even at my own expense.
- 8A** I usually try to say things to soothe the other person's feelings during a discussion of differences.
- 8B** I usually agree to meet the requests of others if they fit with my own wants and needs.
- 9A** In a discussion of differences, I usually attempt to change the subject.
- 9B** I sometimes refuse to meet the requests of others.
- 10A** I hesitate to share my wants and needs with others.
- 10B** I prefer to give information to others about their behavior rather than receive it.
- 11A** In a conversation, I usually like to have both people (myself and the other person) take charge.
- 11B** I sometimes avoid getting involved in any unpleasant discussions.
- 12A** I do everything I can to assure that my requests are met.
- 12B** I try not to say anything that might create tension or disharmony during a discussion of differences.
- 13A** In a conversation, I like to take charge.
- 13B** In a conversation, I like to avoid having someone (myself or the other person) take charge.
- 14A** I always try to take care of others' wants and needs even if mine aren't taken care of.
- 14B** I usually am open in providing others with information about their behavior and seek others' opinions of me. ▶



Instructions

- Read the first set of paired statements in the questionnaire. On the chart at the right, circle the letter that corresponds to your choice for the statement that most closely describes how you communicate. Repeat for all 24 sets of paired statements. Circle only *one* choice for each set of paired statements. Press hard, as your responses are being recorded on the sheet below.
- Please do not read the interpretive material that follows until you have completed the inventory or have been instructed to continue.
- After you have made your choices for all 24 sets of paired statements, separate this two-part form and follow the scoring instructions on the next page.

Paired Statements

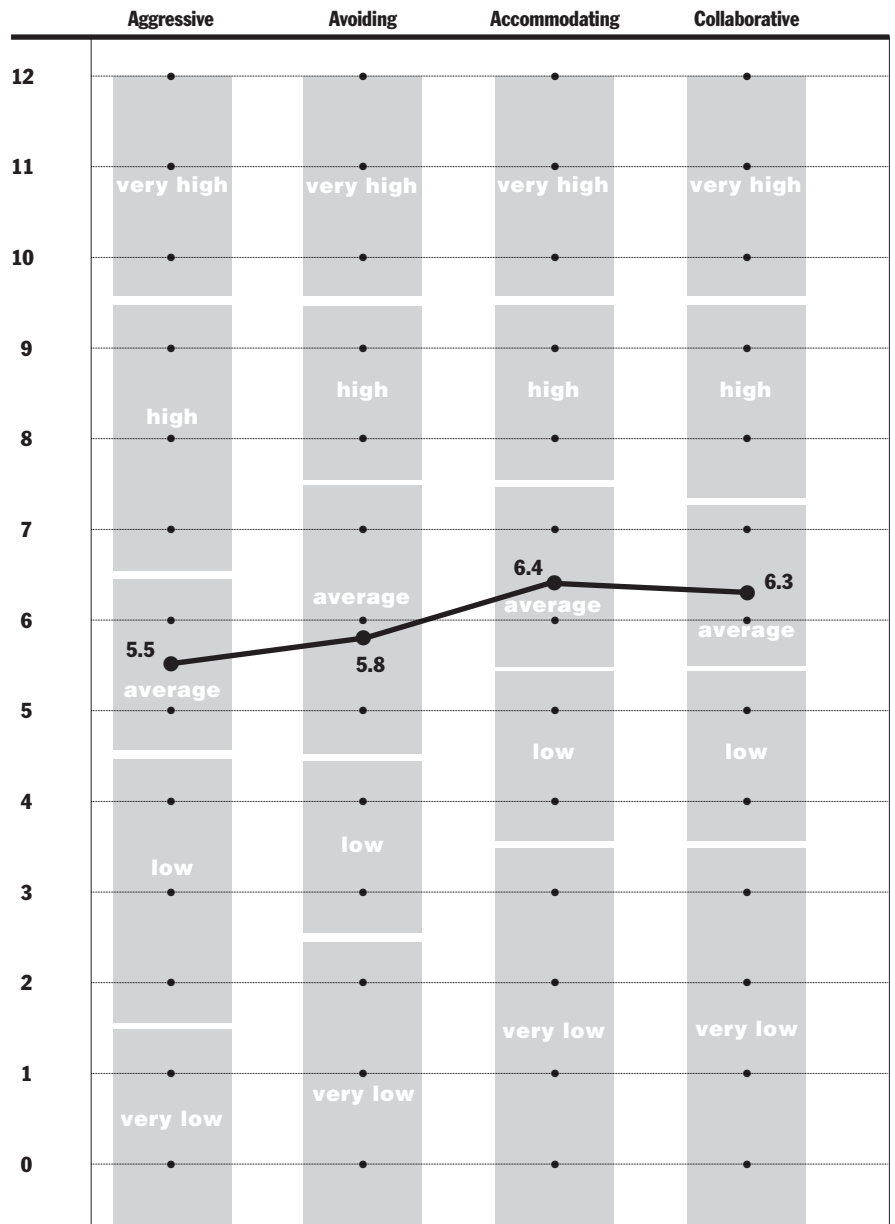
1.		A		B
2.		A	B	
3.	B		A	
4.	A			B
5.	B		A	
6.		A		B
7.		A	B	
8.			A	B
9.	B	A		
10.	B	A		
11.		B		A
12.	A	B		
13.	A	B		
14.			A	B
15.		B		A
16.	A		B	
17.	A			B
18.		B	A	
19.			B	A
20.	B			A
21.			B	A
22.		B	A	
23.	A		B	
24.	B			A



COMMUNICATION STYLE PREFERENCE PROFILE

Instructions

- Using your column totals from the Scoring Form on page 9, circle the appropriate number in each column of the matrix at the right.
- Next, draw a line to connect the circled numbers. This line is a profile of your communication style behavior in the situation you chose for the inventory.
- If you received feedback from others, use a different ink color or pattern to plot and connect your averages from the Feedback Data Chart on page 11.
- So you can compare your scores with others who have completed this inventory, averages are shown by the plotted line.



Difference Score Ranges

Another dimension to consider in interpreting your scores is the difference or gap between your Self score and the Others' scores. Differences indicate a perception gap between how you and your employees, colleagues or team members view your communication behavior. The difference score ranges information below will help you interpret any gaps you have between your Self scores and the Others' scores.

0-2 *No substantial difference.*

Your perceptions are very similar to those of the Others.

3-4 *Moderate difference.*

Your perceptions and those of the Others are in need of minor adjusting. A discussion between you and the Others about the difference should bring alignment.

5-7 *Significant difference.*

Your perceptions and those of the Others are seriously discrepant. In addition to a discussion with the Others about the difference, some changes in behavior are needed.

8+ *Major difference.*

Your perceptions and those of the Others are at a crisis stage. In addition to a discussion with the Others about the difference and changes in behavior, ongoing monitoring and follow-up are needed to bring about alignment.

Diagnostic Questions

Refer back to your Communication Style Preference Profile on page 12 of this booklet. If you have Self or Other scores that fall into either the "very high" or "very low" categories, the following questions will help you gain additional insight into your possible over-use or under-use of these communication styles and identify areas for improvement.

Aggressive Style

If you scored very high:

1. At the end of a discussion, do you frequently feel like you've "won out" over the other person?
(Aggressive communication takes the form of a win/lose discussion.)
2. Do you feel you are in control of almost every interaction situation?
(People who communicate aggressively often do so because of a perceived need to control the outcome of a discussion.)
3. After a conversation has ended, do you sometimes feel guilty about what you said and how you said it?
(Most people who communicate aggressively end up feeling guilty about how they behaved during the discussion.)

If you scored very low:

1. After a conversation, do you frequently feel like there are other things you wish you had said?
(Being overly concerned about how someone might react to what you say may cause you to not say anything.)

INTERPRETING YOUR SCORES

2. After a conversation has ended, do you frequently feel like you've been taken advantage of? *(Not asserting your own concerns, wants, needs and opinions typically results in them never being considered let alone addressed.)*

Avoiding Style

If you scored very high:

1. Do you frequently rationalize that a reason not to bring up a topic of conversation is because either it is likely to be unpleasant or it will be a difficult discussion? *(Some discussions may be unpleasant or difficult, but avoiding them won't make them easier. It only gets you off the hook temporarily.)*
2. Do you sometimes agree to do things that you have no intention of completing? *(While not agreeing to do something you have no intention of completing may be difficult, explaining why you didn't keep your word is more difficult.)*
3. Do you frequently rationalize that a reason not to say something to someone is because it won't do any good — either the person won't listen or the person is behaving just as he or she always does? *(Saying something to someone may not do any good. However, unless you try, you'll never know.)*

If you scored very low:

1. Do you frequently say things you wish you hadn't said? *(Sometimes counting to 10 before saying something or mulling over a discussion before having it can keep you from the dreaded "foot in mouth" disease.)*



The Four Communication Styles

In every interpersonal interaction situation, communication behavior is a function of two variables:

1. Concern for self

The extent to which you are willing to assert your own wants, desires, thoughts, feelings, opinions or ideas in an interaction, and the degree to which you will attempt to get them met or accepted.

2. Concern for other

The extent to which you are willing to listen to and attempt to satisfy the wants, desires, thoughts, feelings, opinions or ideas of the other person in the interaction.

These two variables can be plotted along the two axes of a graph. From these two axes, four specific communi-

cation styles can be identified. Refer to the Communication Styles Matrix below for an illustrated model of these two variables and the four communication styles. Following is a description of these communication styles and the behaviors and likely outcomes associated with each style. Regardless of your scores, you will likely find the information in the reading useful, but pay special attention to styles where you scored either “very high” or “very low.” After completing the reading, turn to the Improvement Ideas on page 18 of this booklet and start planning how you can improve your interpersonal communication effectiveness in the situation you chose to complete the inventory.

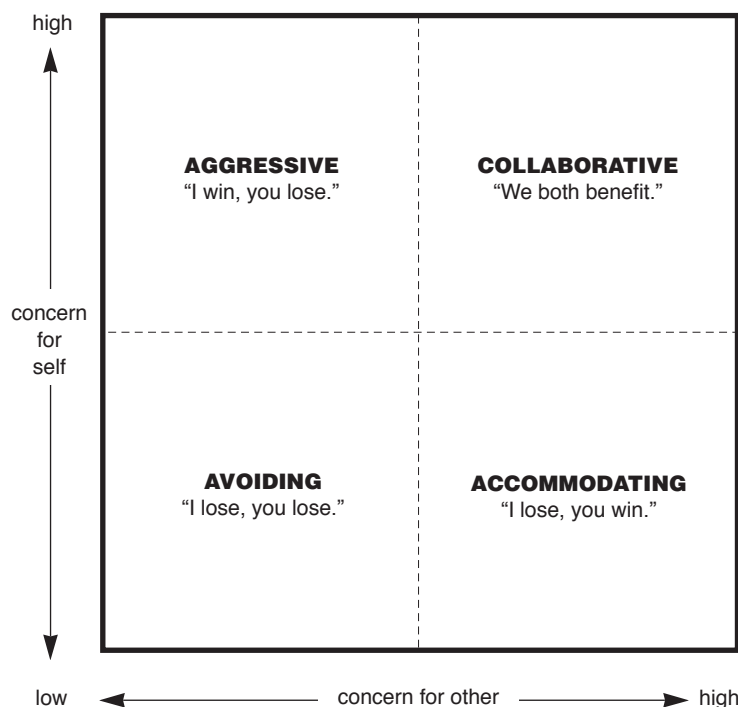
Aggressive

Aggressive communication is high

concern for self/low concern for other. In this style, one pursues one’s own concerns at the other person’s expense. This interaction becomes a win/lose struggle where the object of the aggressor is to win out over the other person. Aggressive communication might take the form of interrupting others, talking past the real issue, speaking in a loud tone, or attempting to defeat the other person through the use of blaming, condemning or judgmental statements.

Several outcomes are associated with aggressive communication. First, aggressive communicators are likely to succeed in getting what they want out of the interaction. However, this success always comes at the expense of the other person. Second, the aggressor is likely to end up feeling guilty following the interaction. For

Communication Styles Matrix



high or too low. The individual items may help you think of additional improvement ideas. After you have reviewed the ideas below and the items making up the scale(s), turn to page 19 and complete the Action Planning exercise to help you identify some concrete steps for your own development.

Aggressive

If you scored too high:

1. Make a point to ask questions for clarification and paraphrase to test for understanding of what the other person has said before responding yourself.
2. Ask others with whom you interact on a regular basis and have a trusting, honest relationship to provide you feedback each time they feel you've communicated with them using an aggressive style.
3. In communication situations where there is emotion, take time to think about what you're going to say before saying it — don't just react.

If you scored too low:

1. Read a book about assertiveness or take an assertiveness training course.
2. Where you can, plan out and practice in advance what you want to say so you don't leave out anything important.

Avoiding

If you scored too high:

1. Set up a reward and punishment system for yourself. Reward yourself each time you don't avoid a conversation, and punish yourself each time you do.
2. If you keep putting off difficult

discussions, set specific dates by which you will complete them.

3. If you avoid discussions because you're not sure what to say, or how the other person is going to react, role practice the discussions with a friend and then debrief what you said and how it was received.

If you scored too low:

1. Make a point to look for opportunities when *not* saying something might be more effective than saying something, and don't say anything.
2. Analyze communication situations where you've said something you wish you hadn't. Figure out what you could have done differently so that when the same or similar situation presents itself, you can handle it better.

Accommodating

If you scored too high:

1. Place yourself in situations where others are making requests of you (e.g. telemarketers, high pressure sales situations, etc.) and practice saying "No, thank you."
2. Read a book about assertiveness or take an assertiveness training course.
3. Analyze those communication situations where you feel you're too accommodating and see if there is a common element running through them (e.g. the person with whom you're communicating is always an authority figure; the person is always male/female; the person reminds you of one of your parents, etc.) and then prac-

BACKGROUND READING

tice being more assertive with the type of person identified.

If you scored too low:

1. Set a goal each day to meet a certain number of requests from others and continue to do so until it becomes habit.
2. Ask others with whom you interact in a regular basis and have a trusting honest relationship to provide you with feedback anytime they feel your communication approach could have been more accommodating.

Collaborative

If you scored too high:

1. Recognize that not every communication situation requires a collaborative communication approach and that sometimes an aggressive, avoiding or accommodating style could be appropriate.

If you scored too low:

1. Make a point not to interrupt others by waiting until they have finished talking before responding yourself.
2. Take a listening skill seminar or read a book on listening skills.
3. Take an assertiveness training course or read a book about assertiveness.

