

SELLING SEAMLESSLY TO EACH SOCIAL STYLE

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by

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my professor Mr. A. Wayne Noll, for always going above and beyond for not only me, but all his students. I credit you for my improvement, and confidence in sales. Your dedication to helping all your students is something I admire, and the endless support and advice I have received from you is something I cherish, and will use forever.

I also dedicate this work to my Pop, Larry Bane, for always showing interest in my studies and encouraging me to reach for the stars. You are the reason I chose Texas State University, or Southwest Texas as you always reminded me, the only college in Texas to produce a president.

Lastly, in dedication to my parents, James and Shalli Barry, who always assured me that I would do whatever I set my mind to. Without the constant support and never-ending love you give, I would never have gotten this far. Thank you for always pushing me to be my best.

Abstract

This dissertation explores how to identify, understand, and ultimately sell to the four personality types categorized by the ever-popular Merrill-Reid method. How can you identify the personality type of a buyer, and effectively alter your personality type in a selling role to become more appealing? Assessment of many academic journals along with the research of Merrill & Reid, *Personal Styles and Effective Performance* serves as a basis for an in-depth understanding of the personality types. Findings indicate that there are many ways to identify each personality type, and that we can alter our styles temporarily for the sake of dealing more effectively. In determining your buyer's personality type you can better meet their desires helping you answer some of their concerns before they make even make them known to you, and more importantly you can potentially avoid their pain points and dislikes. Further dividing the personality types using secondary styles may give a stronger understanding of how individuals think and stronger approaches to communication.

Introduction

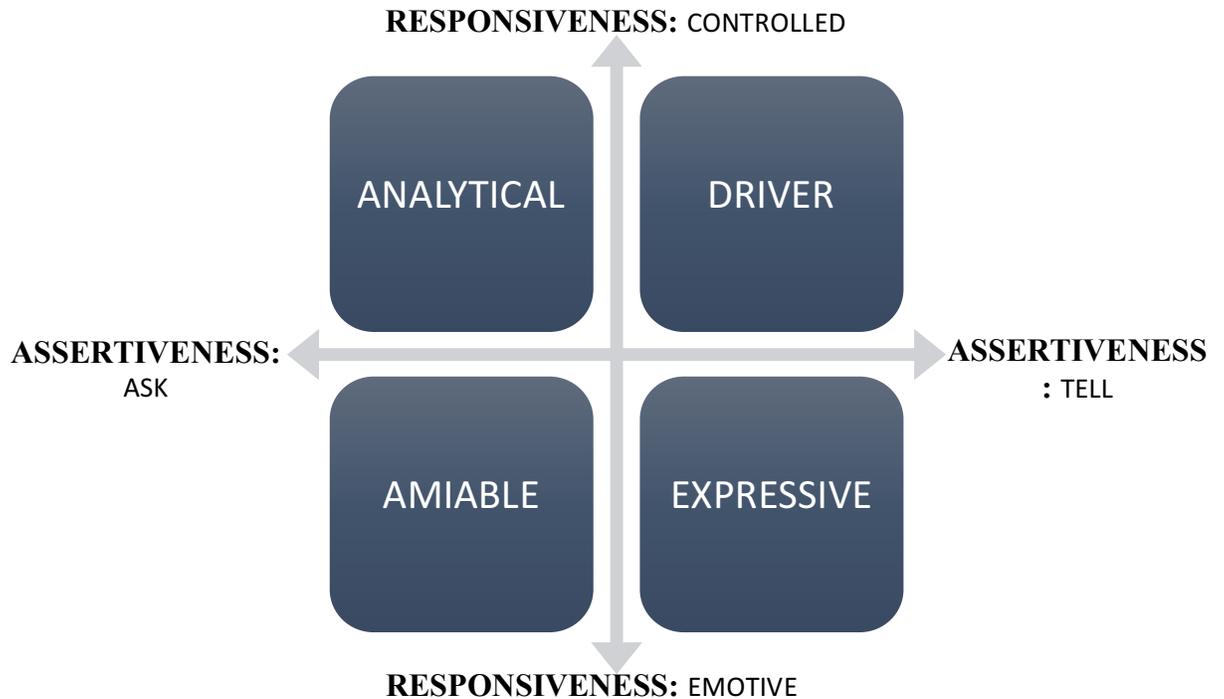
What if you could walk into a meeting and immediately know the most effective way to convey your information to the other party? It often takes many interactions, and a lot of time building a relationship before gaining a strong understanding of a person's expectations. When walking into a meeting with a buyer you know nothing about, it can seem as though it is impossible to understand how to best fit their communication style. Are they looking for a relationship-oriented, or task-oriented meeting? Would they prefer an emphasis on numbers and statistics, or testimonials? Should you focus on the general results, or the very detailed statistics and steps? Finding a way to quickly assess a buyer's pleasures and pains is the key to success in sales.

David Merrill and Roger Reid developed a method used widely by employers and in management training workshops that categorizes personality types into four separate groups. The four personality types, also referred to as social styles or social behavior types, approach creates a foundation for further self-analysis and provides the basic framework for understanding not only one's self, but also others. This approach determines not only how we resolve problems and face conflict, but also how we make decisions and communicate with others. You may have taken a self-assessment questionnaire from an employer, organization, or even online that used their same concepts. While people have most-likely seen the four personality types at some point divided into shapes (triangle, squiggle, circle, and square), colors (green, orange, blue, and gold), or even animals (bear, monkey, dolphin, and owl) these symbols are often used in replacement of Merrill and Reid's titles. The titles given by Merrill and Reid for each personality type are driver, expressive, amiable, and analytical.

You may be wondering, how did two men come up with these four personality types? Or, what are the variables used when determining which social style a person falls under? Social style analysis begins with determining where a person lies on the two scales, which together form the matrix. These two defining dimensions involved in classifying the four personality types are, assertiveness and responsiveness.

Assertiveness, which is indicated on the horizontal line, is the degree to which a person's behaviors are seen by others as forceful or directive. The assertive dimension varies from an "ask" to "tell" scale, or low to high assertiveness. Ask assertiveness level is lower, these people are more introverted and prefer sequential information. Tell assertiveness level is higher, these people are more extroverted and are fine with information at random. The second dimension, responsiveness, is indicated on the vertical line, passing through the center of the horizontal line. Responsiveness is the degree to which a person's behavior are seen by others as emotionally controlled. The responsive dimension varies from controlled to emotive, or less responsive versus more responsive. Controlled responsiveness people are more guarded with their emotions; they are task-oriented, concrete, and have a higher need for control. Emotive responsiveness people react noticeably to their own emotions or to the emotions of others; they are relationship-oriented, abstract, and have a lower need for control.

Using these two variable we can divide social styles into four main quadrants; tellers who restrain emotional display, tellers who show their emotions, askers who show their emotions, and lastly askers who restrain emotional display. On the matrix, they are located respectively, in the upper right, lower right, lower left, and upper left quadrants. These quadrants are labeled as drivers, expressives, amiable, and analyticals.

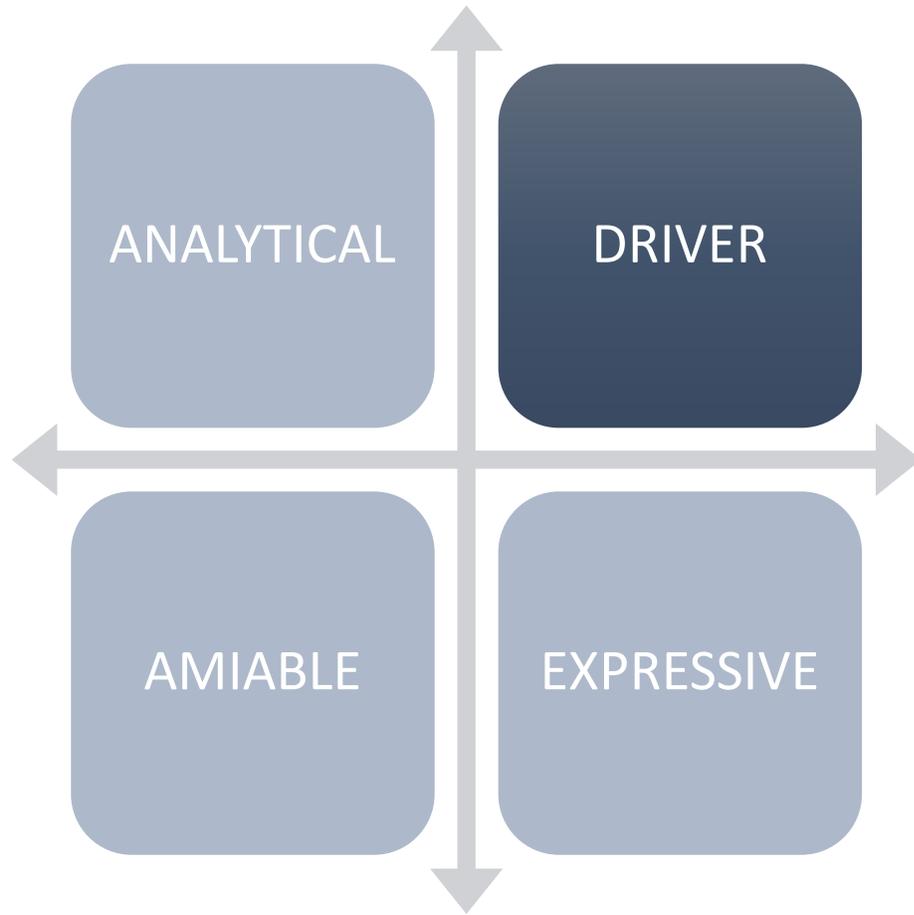


While no specific personality type is better than another, by identifying the four-primary social styles a we can determine not only our own, but other’s strengths, weaknesses, and social tendencies. This allows us to use flexibility, also known as style flexing, to more effectively build relationships with and influence others. Style flexing is the ability to get along with people whose styles differ from one’s own by adjusting your behavior to mirror or match the other person’s social style. Through style flexibility you can determine the characteristics of and perfectly mimic other personality types.

How do we determine which personality type a person falls into in a sales setting? What strategy of conveying information does each style prefer? And most

importantly how do we use the knowledge of their social style to better influence our buyer, and close a sale? We are going to take an in-depth look at each personality type individually to gain a better understanding of the traits and characteristics, best way to interactively communicate, and how to determine which quadrant a person fits into.

Driver



Summary

As you now know, located in the upper right quadrant of the matrix you will find the tellers who restrain emotion, otherwise known as drivers. The extroverted driver exudes confidence and naturally gravitates towards leadership positions where they can find power. While the driver is quick to move to action, they are not detail oriented, more visionaries who focus on the “big picture”. This action-oriented mindset alongside their competitive love for a good challenge, makes the driver a high achiever. This is partly due to their decisive nature; the driver believes it is better to make a bad decision than no decision at all, because at least a decision will have been made. The driver’s stubborn, impatient, insensitive, and harsh personality can be overbearing for many, which can probably account for a reason they work best alone. Strengths drivers often possess include their determination, independence, and productivity. Drivers know what they want and how to get there, because of this they get a lot of things done.

Sales Strategy

When meeting with a driver it is important to focus heavily on the changes and results that will come from to sale. This individual is not as concerned with the details of how something is done, as they are the results to be expected. It is important to be business-like and factual, this person does not want to waste any time. Throughout the meeting do not worry about spending too much time building a relationship, as the driver is task-oriented and will see these efforts as time wasted. It is best to have them tell you their expectations, then convey how you will meet their requirements so they have the

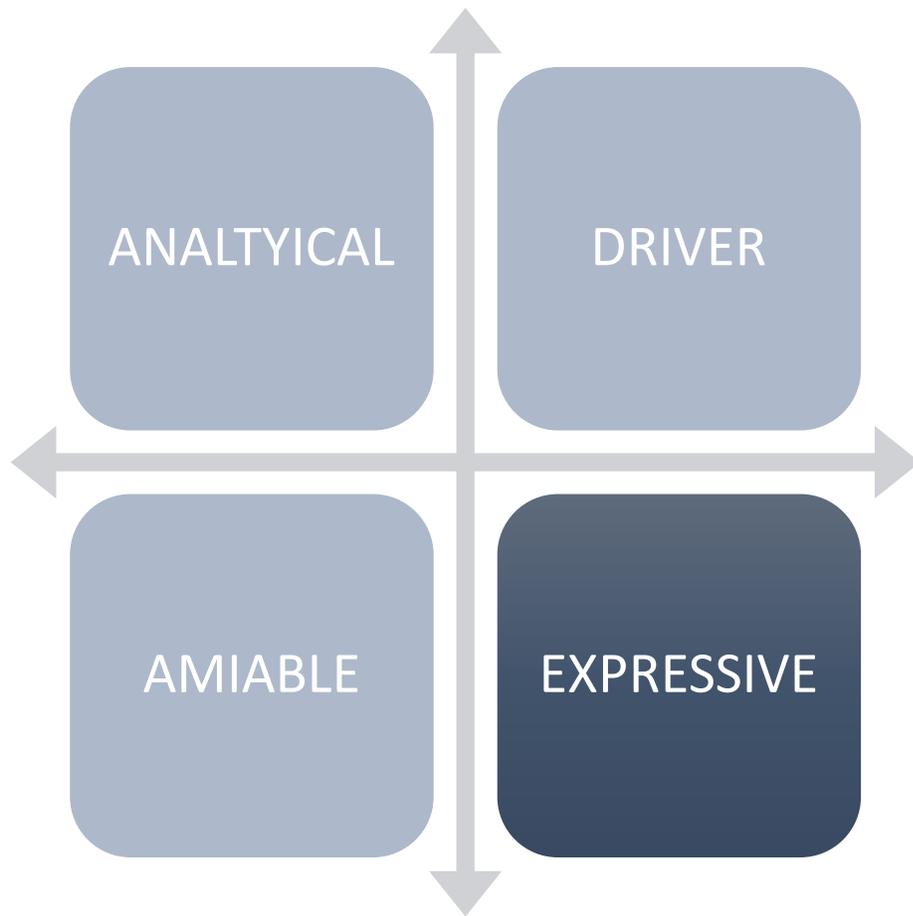
feeling that they are the ones in control and no time is being wasted discussing things that don't pertain to their exact situation. This personality type communicates quickly, so they will want to get straight to the point. When informing them of the product or service you are selling be sure what you are saying is concise, precise, and organized as one of driver's weaknesses is listening to others. A driver is someone who tells it the way it is and will expect you to do the same. In response to your pitch drivers will want to know "what" when asking questions, for example "What is going on?" "What is being done about it?". If it is necessary to disagree with something a driver says, be sure to disagree on a fact rather than an opinion and not only be assertive, but have proof, when doing so. This is because the driver personality does not shy away from conflict, they embrace it. Due to their uncompromising, opinionated, and take charge attitude, it is important to provide them with options and let them make the final decision. The decisive nature of drivers is something that can be very beneficial to the salesperson, he/she will not waste time they are either in or they are out. Lastly, be sure what you promise to them you can and will follow through on. Drivers not only expect efficiency, but due to their heavy focus on result they will be a force to reckon with if those results are not seen in an almost instantaneous manner.

Identification

A driver will be sitting erect in his/her seat, due to their quick pace they never sit down and relax for a meeting, and are often in a hurry. This high energy hardworking personality type is always on the go; they talk fast, they walk fast, and are sure not to waste any time. The driver is a multi-tasked person who can, and will, sign letters, hold interviews, and talk in the phone simultaneously. In the business setting the best way to

identify a driver quickly can often be by examining the things in their office. They will likely have had their office decorated by an interior designer with the feeling of power in mind. Their office will likely be decorated using strong power colors, exotic flowers or plants carefully chosen to contribute to the impression of power, and office furniture will likely be very expensive. Photos on the desk may be formal family portraits, never candid, showing everyone looking their best in his/her proper role.

Expressive



Summary

In the bottom, right hand quadrant lies the teller who shows their emotions, also known as expressives. The expressive is often referred to as the social specialist, due to their outgoing personality and strong desire to be included. They have a strong relationship-orientation, rather than task-oriented like the driver. This is often found in their likelihood to spend too much time talking about things and far less time accomplishing them. The expressive is a natural story teller who can often tend to exaggerate causing them to leave out facts and details. This personality type loves to have fun, they want to be liked, and most importantly they want to be included. They are individuals who will turn disaster into humor, with an expressive around there will never be a dull moment. Expressives fear rejection, isolation, and being controlled they are free spirited people.

Sales Strategy

When beginning a sales meeting with an expressive it is important to initially spend a generous amount of time building rapport. If you are aware of any awards or recognitions they have received recently, be sure to acknowledge the accomplishment by congratulating them and asking a few questions regarding the situation. It is important to remember aspects of their life and ask about them later, to build a strong relationship. This socially adept person strongly values relationships, and will readily exchange not only life experiences and stories, but more importantly information. Be directive throughout the meeting to assure the incredibly talkative, undisciplined, and disorganized

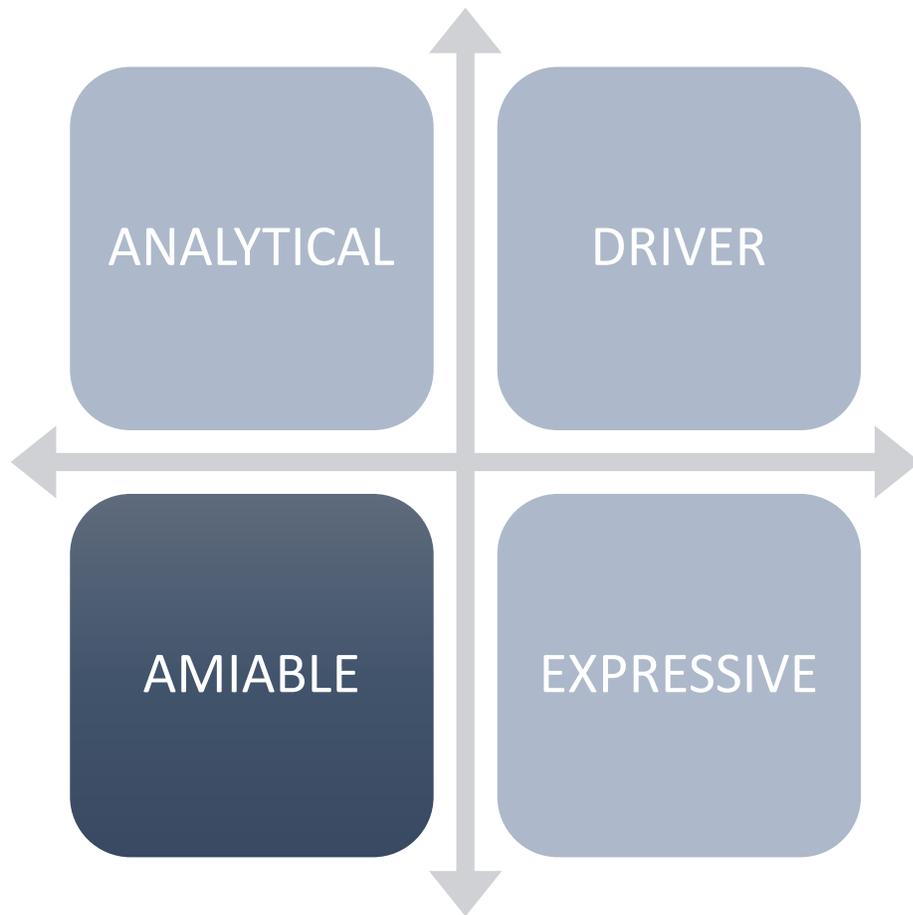
traits expressives possess do not impede the meeting's objectives. It is crucial a sales person matches the expressives upbeat and animated personality throughout the meeting. Be sure to keep the information you are sharing throughout the meeting engaging and transparent, and your approach warm and enthusiastic. Most importantly try to show how your product, or service will improve his or her image bringing them recognition and approval from others. The expressive will likely ask "who" questions in response to your pitch, for example "Who do I contact if I have issues?". In response to questions raised be sure to maintain the same open, responsive, and willing to talk approach used throughout the meeting. Once an expressive is onboard with your product or service they will quickly create excitement and motivate others to join them in support of your product. Lastly, throughout the process following purchasing to product attempt to minimize the direct involvement with details, and especially personal conflict as the fun loving expressive struggles with these aspects. Maintaining a strong relationship with expressives post-purchase will not only increase the likelihood of them purchasing from you again, but as they are so enthusiastic you can often receive referrals as they will consider you a friend.

Identification

How do you know if the person you are meeting with is an expressive? Expressives will likely be very animated when talking, and easily engrossed by conversation. This personality type is loud and lively, and their office will most likely portray that. The colors will be vibrant, and their favorite sayings will be plastered on the wall or desk. Their office will likely be a mess. Files piled in stacks on the desk rather than in the filing cabinets. Don't be fooled by the chaos though, they know exactly

where everything is. As expressives biggest pleasure is recognition and approval, any awards or forms of acknowledgement received will be openly on display for everyone to see.

Amiable



Summary

In the bottom, left hand quadrant lies the asker who shows their emotions, also known as amiables. Amiables are born followers. They are known for their quiet, non-confrontational personality as their biggest worry is to not offend others. Everybody likes the amiable, likely because of their dedication to avoiding conflict. They are often too passive, too focused on conforming to others, and will not speak up for themselves as they never want to offend others or create conflict. This aversion to conflict can sometimes manifest as a weakness for the amiable making them seem as though they lack drive. While amiables are often soft spoken and seemingly shy causing them to be overlooked, they are also reliable workers and great team players. Amiables are loyal, devoted, and consistent, these hard workers will persevere long after others have given up. This personality type is very patient and well-balanced; this helps the amiable blend into any situation with ease. They are nurturers, amiables are great at coaching, supporting, and empathizing for others. This is partly why they are so well liked, he or she wants everybody to be happy, they are always cooperative and willing to help. Amiables pleasure is stability and cooperation, they often stay in the background of projects and meetings to avoid causing any friction. While they are “behind the scenes” workers they still desire appreciation from others. Amiables pain includes chaos, change, and emotional discomfort. This leads to their weaknesses; taking a stand and staying focused on results. Amiables wish to avoid their pains often keep them from taking a stand for themselves or their beliefs, and can even distract them from focusing on end results. This is shown by their difficulty to make a firm decision.

Sales Strategy

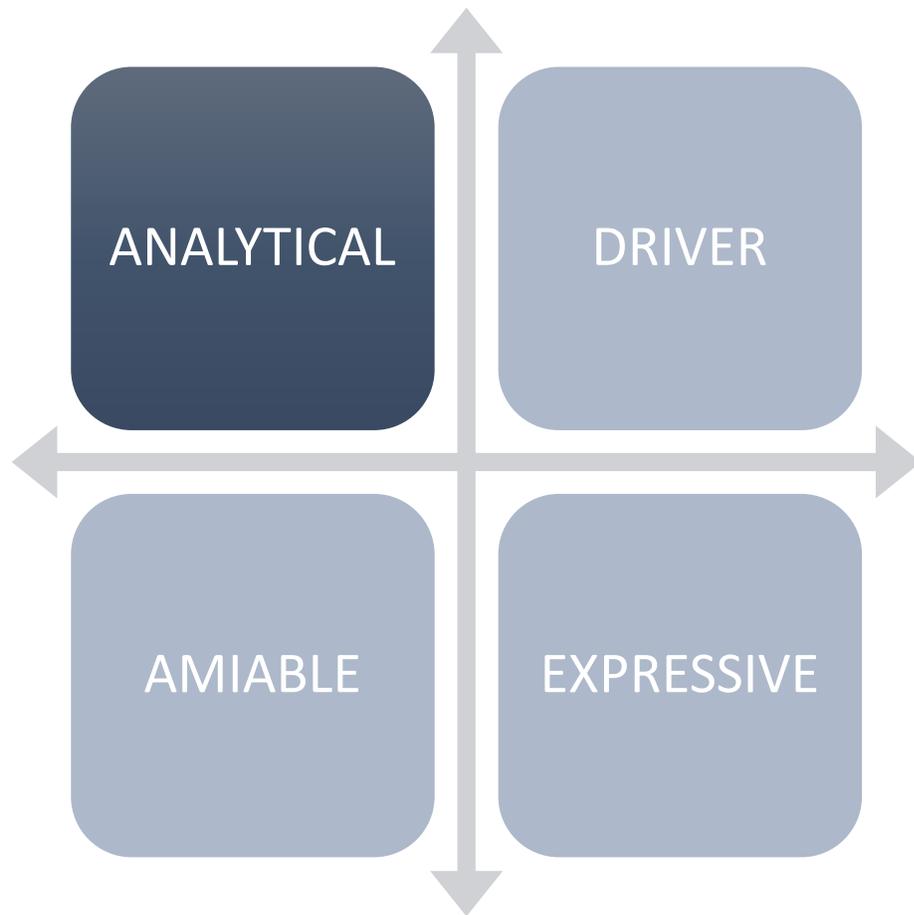
When beginning a sales meeting with an amiable it is important to have a plan with a written guideline available to share with them. To make them feel more comfortable try to remain predictable, relaxed, and agreeable. When building rapport, compliment him or her as a team player and ask about pictures of their family or pets. The amiable is sensitive and values harmony. Remember to use we when discussing the process or events of the future to appeal to their team player, cooperative personality. Throughout the meeting avoid being pushy and rushing through information or their decision-making process. Amiables are painstakingly slow at making decisions. Be prepared to answer many “why?” questions, “why is yours better?” or “why do we need this?”. Never respond in a confrontational manner, agree clearly and often, and most importantly be a good listener. Amiables are attracted to security and stability, be sure to show them how your product or service is reliable and can provide these aspects for them. It is important to inform them of, or show them how, you will be there every step of the way to rely on if they ever have any questions or concerns.

Identification

The first thing you will notice upon entering an amiable’s office is the pictures of loved one on their desk. There will be pictures of the husband or wife, their family, and even their favorite pets. These pictures will most likely be candid shots, not portraits, and amiables will love to talk about them. If they have flowers or plants, they will be growing beautifully. On the walls, will be colorful paintings of landscapes, sunsets, animals, or waterfalls. Amiables are often lovers of art, music, and poetry which will

likely be portrayed throughout their office. The color scheme in their office will be harmonious and restful colors that bring warmth and calm, matching their personality. Their furniture will be fashionable, but simple and not overwhelming. Their files while kept nearby, will not be visible. Their office is kept organized and tidy, but not rigid. Amiables are loyal, so often they will have been with their company or a previous company for a very long amount of time. The amiable thrives on harmony, and often has a stabilizing effect of those around him or her. Often they will not be concerned about the time used by the meeting, amiables are very patient and have no distinct time boundaries. This often results in them not getting things done, and their indecisiveness when making decisions.

Analytical



Summary

Located in the top left hand quadrant lies the asker who restrains emotion, also known as Analyticals. Analyticals are disciplined thinkers who are highly detail oriented. They are often ridiculed for being too rigid, demanding, and critical. This personality type has extremely high standards of performance personally and professionally, not only for their selves, but also for others. Analyticals want things done right, and them done right the first time. Due to this, they often prefer to work by themselves so they can assure everything was done correctly, or in the manner they believe is correct. They are born thinkers who enjoy solitude and silence, because of this Analyticals make great accountants and engineers. This personality type is polite but reserved, has a very dry sense of humor, and are extremely organized. Analyticals are logical, fact- and task-oriented people who strives for perfection. This can often end up as a weakness, as they can sometimes stall completion of projects trying to perfect them or delay coming to a decision without over-analyzing every detail and fact prior. With that being said, this personality type is absolutely not a risk taker. Analyticals pleasure is accuracy, and their pain is being wrong or criticized. Because of their strong task orientation analyticals can often see withdrawn, reclusive, and even boring to others. This is not entirely true though, analyticals are very deep, thoughtful, and purposeful individuals.

Sales Strategy

When meeting with an analytical be sure to have your facts straight, and to have many of them. Analyticals are thorough, and wonderful at excluding their feelings when making decisions. Due to this, it is important to have a high focus of facts and

information rather than the recognition your product or service would bring them. This in part is to blame for their very cautious, seemingly indecisive approach to decision-making. Analyticals fear being wrong or making mistakes, resulting in them having a very difficult time making decisions. When sharing information with him or her through the meetings remain systematic, thorough, deliberate, and extremely precise. Remain focused on the task, and avoid getting too personal. In building rapport at the beginning compliment the precision and accuracy of any work they have been awarded for, or that you are aware of. Be sure to use as much relevant information as you can consolidate, and allow time for evaluation. Recognize and acknowledge the need to be accurate and logical. Be prepared for many “how” questions in response to the information you provide. The analytical will not want to decide without thoroughly analyzing all the facts to avoid making a mistake, so do not rush them if it is not necessary. Analyticals have extremely high standards, so following the sale it is extremely important to check in and assure everything is going as expected. This way, if there is an issue you will have a chance to identify and fix the problem immediately.

Identification

Analyticals do not come off as friendly, they are often shut off and reserved. When first meeting they will likely greet you skeptically, and do not want to share much. In their office, you will notice everything is carefully arranged. On the wall, you may see framed degrees, but the main decorations will be charts, figures, and graphs of every kind. There will be no flowers or plants decorating the office, because to the technically oriented analyst they'll belong in a greenhouse. There will no photos or decorations on the desk, only business related information. The colors will be neutral; black, white, or

browns will do fine. The office will be functionally, with no concerns of displaying power, fun, or relaxation through colors or furniture.

Conclusion

While we should never put people in a box and keep them there, doing so can be a very useful way to classify behavior so we can better understand their personalities and leverage strengths. In the selling process, understanding the way your consumer thinks and works best is key to success. Always remember your self-personality type as a sales person. How do you convey information? How do others perceive you? In doing so, you will be better able to alter your behavior and counter your preferences when adapting to match a buyer. When assessing your personality type it is important that you ask colleagues, friends, and family their opinion on where you fit on the matrix. People can be partial and answer using their personal bias view of themselves, which can often lead to getting an inaccurate result from the questionnaire.

While, you may not be ready to immediately know the most effective way to convey your information to the other party, hopefully now you feel more comfortable translating the behavior of others. With an increased awareness and a clearer understanding of the way others think and react, you should be able to more effectively communicate your information to others once determining their social style.

I have shown you how to identify, understand, and ultimately sell to each personality type more easily. In understanding personality types that differs from your own, the primary goal is to increase the awareness of possible differences between one person's own and other people's personality type so that adaptive communication can take place. We can also aim to develop a personality that reflects a balance of the positive aspects of all four personality types. In acknowledging the four personality types we can more easily assess and classify people during everyday interactions and predict

how they may behave. By understanding another individual's style, you can customize the way you negotiate with them and persuade them by changing your style to more closely match that of your buyer's.

Social Styles: Questionnaire

Examine the following word sets and choose one from each set that describes you best. When you have answered all twenty, plot your answers on the score sheet.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|--|-----|--|
| 1. | a. Persuasive
b. Fearful
c. Open-minded
d. Original | 2. | a. Cautious
b. Convincing
c. Aggressive
d. Good-natured | 3. | a. Docile
b. Dogged
c. Open-minded
d. Bold |
| 4. | a. Charming
b. Loyal
c. Determined
d. Even-tempered | 5. | a. Willing
b. Eager
c. Nervy
d. Strong-willed | 6. | a. Agreeable
b. High-spirited
c. Confident
d. Even-tempered |
| 7. | a. Obliging
b. Assertive
c. Precise
d. Animated | 8. | a. Disciplined
b. Cheerful
c. Restless
d. Resigned | 9. | a. Sympathetic
b. Persistent
c. Obedient
d. Spontaneous |
| 10. | a. Competitive
b. Tolerant
c. Fussy
d. Pioneering | 11. | a. Respectful
b. Jovial
c. Influential
d. Optimistic | 12. | a. Generous
b. Unconquerable
c. Inspiring
d. Submissive |
| 13. | a. Considerate
b. Brave
c. Timid
d. Adaptable | 14. | a. Argumentative
b. Kind
c. Nonchalant
d. Patient | 15. | a. Self-reliant
b. Lighthearted
c. Soft spoken
d. Trusting |
| 16. | a. Adventurous
b. Peaceful
c. Positive
d. Moderate | 17. | a. Cordial
b. Vigorous
c. Receptive
d. Controlled | 18. | a. Accurate
b. Good mixer
c. Decisive
d. Lenient |
| 19. | a. Talkative
b. Conventional
c. Outspoken
d. Satisfied | 20. | a. Audacious
b. Popular
c. Companionable
d. Polished | | |

Social Styles: Answer Sheet

	Analytical	Amiable	Expressive	Driver
1	c	b	d	a
2	a	d	b	c
3	c	a	d	b
4	d	b	a	c
5	c	a	b	d
6	d	a	b	c
7	c	a	d	b
8	d	b	c	a
9	c	a	d	b
10	c	b	d	a
11	a	b	c	d
12	d	a	c	b
13	c	a	d	b
14	d	b	c	a
15	d	b	c	a
16	d	b	a	c
17	d	c	a	b
18	a	d	b	c
19	b	d	a	c
20	d	b	c	a
Total				
X 5				

4 Social Styles				
	Driver	Expressive	Amiable	Analytical
Pleasure	Power Respect	Approval Recognition	Stability Cooperation	Accuracy
Pain	Lack of results Loss of respect	Isolation Lack of Attention	Chaos Change	Criticism Being Wrong
Strengths	Decisive Determined Independent	Imaginative Enthusiastic Good Communicator	Patient Supportive Diplomatic	Thinking Thorough Disciplined
Weaknesses	Stubborn Insensitive Domineering	Irrational Impatient Verbal Assault	Indecisive Inability to take Risks	Quiet Reclusive Withdrawn
Orientation	Action Oriented	Intuition Oriented	Relationship Oriented	Thinking Oriented
Reaction	Swift	Rapid	Unhurried	Slow
Emphasize	Control	Involve	Relate	Organize
Avoids	Inaction	Isolation	Conflict	Involvement
Desires	Power Challenges	Social Recognition Being with Others	Security Appreciation	Details Perfection
Work Strategy	Alone Quickly	Quickly With Others	Slowly With Others	Alone Carefully

Sell Seamlessly to each Social Style

Research Sources

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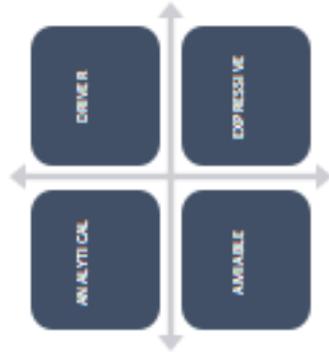
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Defining Dimensions

- Responsiveness
 - High Responsive
 - Emotive
 - Low Responsive
 - Controlled
- Assertiveness
 - High Assertive
 - Tell
 - Low Assertive
 - Ask

Social Styles

- Driver**
 - Low Responsive
 - High Assertive
- Expressive**
 - High Responsive
 - High Assertive
- Amiable**
 - High Responsive
 - Low Assertive
- Analytical**



David Merrill – Roger Reid Method

right inside flap

back

front

Marketing Brochures

Sales Strategy	Social Styles Traits	Sales Strategy
<p>Driver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task-Oriented • Focus on results to be expected • Communicate quickly • Maintain concise, precise, and organized • Embrace Conflict • Follow through on promises • Attitude is opinionated, uncompromising, and take charge 	<p>Pleasure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver – Power • Expressive – Approval • Amiable – Stability • Analytical – Accuracy <p>Pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver – Loss of Respect • Expressive – Isolation • Amiable – Chaos • Analytical – Criticism <p>Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver – Decisive • Expressive – Enthusiastic • Amiable – Supportive • Analytical – Thorough <p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver – Stubborn • Expressive – Impatient • Amiable – Indecisive • Analytical – Withdrawn <p>Work Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver – Quickly Alone • Expressive – Quickly in Groups • Amiable – Slowly in Groups • Analytical – Carefully Alone <p>Reaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver – Swift • Expressive – Rapid • Amiable – Unhurried • Analytical – Slow 	<p>Amiable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-Oriented • Remain predictable, relaxed, and agreeable • Avoid rushing through information or being pushy • Show how you and your product/service are a reliable investment • Provide written agenda for meeting • Be a good listener
<p>Expressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-Oriented • Acknowledge accomplishments • Remain directive, engaging, and transparent • Avoid details and direct involvement • Maintain a post-purchase relationship for referrals • Often talkative, undisciplined, and disorganized 	<p>Analytical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task-Oriented • Focus heavily on facts and information • Remain systematic, thorough, deliberate, and extremely precise • Consolidate and use as much relevant information as possible • Recognize the need to be accurate and logical • Allow time to evaluate 	<p><i>Inside left</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Inside middle</i></p> <p><i>Inside right</i></p>

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