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How to Manage Your Manager using the DiSC Approach

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There's always room for improvement. Two-Minute Reads are a free tool you and your organization can use just for that reason.

Achieving success with your manager will mean combining relationship skills with task skills. But we know from research that a trusting relationship must come first. To do that, take a look at the checklist we have created:

Checklist for Managing Your Manager

1. Make sure you understand your manager, supervisor, or boss and his or her context, including:

- Goals and objectives
- Pressures
- Strengths, weaknesses, blind spots

2. Know your own and your manager's DiSC work style

- Assess yourself and your manager
- Your DiSC profile and your manager's DiSC profile
- Your and your manager's strengths and weaknesses
- Your support needs and your manager's support needs

3. Develop and maintain a relationship that:

- Fits both your needs and styles
- Is characterized by mutual expectations
- Keeps your boss informed
- Is based on dependability and honesty
- Selectively uses an approach which best fits your boss's DiSC profile

People Reading Guide

The purpose of this people reading guide is to assist you in making a tentative judgment about the primary behavioral style of your prospect or customer.

To use the guide: *Identify the behaviors listed below that are the one best set of clues for discovering your manager's primary behavioral style in a specific situation. If a second behavioral style seems to be present, focus on that only after you have identified strongest-need behavior.*

Outgoing/Direct?

- Faster pace
- More telling
- Louder speech
- More inflection



Reserved/Indirect?

- Slower pace
- More asking
- Softer speech
- More monotone

More competitive and Directing ("D" Need)?

- Closed posture
- Unexpressive/cool face
- Feelings unexpressed
- Formal
- Focuses on "What?"
- All goals are high priority items

More Accepting and Doing ("S" Need)?

- Open posture
- Relaxed/warm face
- Feelings expressed
- Casual
- Focuses on "How?"
- Priority on cooperation and stability



More Talkative and Interactive ("I" Need)?

- Open posture
Animated/warm face
- Feelings expressed
- Casual
- Focuses on "Who?"
- Priority on people and approval

More Assessing and Thinking ("C" Need)?

- Closed posture
- Unexpressive/cool face
- Feelings unexpressed
- Formal
- Focuses on "Why?"
- Priority on quality and analysis

Support Your Manager

If Your Manager is a “D” DiSC Style

Try to be direct, straightforward, and open to their need for results. Their goal is to search for a sense of adequacy through achievement.

Try to:

- Make communication brief and to the point
- Respect their need for autonomy
- Be clear about rules and expectations
- Let them initiate
- Show your competence
- Stick to the topic
- Show independence
- Eliminate time wasters

Be prepared for:

- Blunt and demanding approach
- Lack of empathy
- Lack of sensitivity
- Little social interaction

Support them by:

- An assertive approach-you are stopping a speeding bullet.
- Slowing them down, and focusing on detail.
- Staying active during the whole project-not just the beginning
- Pushing back on bluntness and insensitivity.

If Your Manager is an “i” DiSC Style

Try to be friendly, emotionally honest, and recognize their contributions. Their goal is to search for self-worth through being liked.

Try to:

- Approach them informally
- Be relaxed and sociable
- Let them verbalize thoughts and feelings
- Keep the conversation light
- Provide written details
- Give public recognition for individual accomplishments
- Use humor

Be prepared for:

- Attempts to persuade or influence others
- Need for the “lime light”
- Over-estimating self and others
- Over-selling ideas
- Vulnerability to perceived rejection

Support them by:

- Having them face conflict instead of avoiding it.
- Helping them see that they are not responsible for everyone else.
- Focus on the goal, or task.
- Becoming aware of time deadlines.
- Help them overcome a tendency to lash out and feel guilty afterwards.

If Your Manager is an “S” DiSC Style

Try to be relaxed, agreeable, cooperative, and show appreciation. Their goal is to assure a sense of safety by avoiding risk.

Try to:

- Be logical and systematic in your approach
- Provide a consistent and secure environment
- Let them know how things will be done
- Use sincere appreciation
- Show their importance to organizational good
- Let them move slowly into change

Be prepared for:

- Friendly approach to colleagues and supervisors
- Resistance to change
- Difficulty prioritizing
- Difficulty with deadlines

Support them by:

- Facing conflicts without giving in
- Taking a stand
- Speaking up
- Allowing them time to think before answering

If Your Manager is a “C” DiSC Style

Try to minimize socializing, give details, and value accuracy. Their goal is to search for a complete sense of perfection.

Try to:

- Give clear expectations and deadlines
- Show dependability
- Show loyalty
- Be tactful and emotionally reserved
- Allow precedent to be a guide
- Be precise and focused
- Value high standards

Be prepared for:

- Discomfort with ambiguity
- Resistance to vague or general information
- Desire to double check
- Little need to affiliate with other people

Support them by:

- Seeing conflict as unproductive
- Joining the group early in the decision making stage of projects
- Exposing their thoughts and ideas
- Staying involved instead of withdrawing

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