COMMUNICATION STYLE

How to Influence and Persuade Others Positively

by rick conlow | rick conlow international

INTRODUCTION

A major retail company held feedback meetings with its employees to identify problems and solutions. One of the major items on the list was, "We need better communication." The employees defined this to mean:

- ★ **Let us know about vacation schedules.**
- ★ **Teach us more about the products.**
- ★ **Talk to us about customer complaints.**
- ★ **Have regular meetings that are constructive.**
- ★ **Give us the respect and courtesy that you want us to give to customers.**

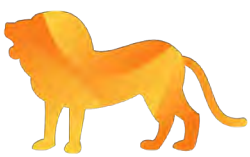
Businesses or managers face these common situations every day. One company faced a production quality crisis. Management was having a hard time fixing the problem. A consultant asked if employee input had been used. Management replied, "Why bother?" Another leader of a midwestern company made major changes through a memo. In one instance, a new employee review program was started. No training or meetings were held, only a memo was sent to explain what all supervisors must do. Not surprisingly, a couple of months later only a few employees had been through a performance review.

Communication is a broad term. It can mean many things to many people. Holding a staff meeting once in a while doesn't cut it. The "best" managers communicate, influence, and persuade well. Most often, it's a priority worked at daily and involves one-on-one contact with people. It begins by understanding style differences in people's communication patterns.

USE COMMUNICATION STYLE

Listed below are the names of four animals. Which one is most like you when you communicate with others? Consider, however you perceive these animals. Check the one you can relate to the most in a work situation.

LION



FOX

ST. BERNARD

DOLPHIN

On the next two pages is a Communication Style Inventory. Complete the first one about your communication approaches. The second one, consider it a primary copy for others to share their view of your communication style.

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COMMUNICATION STYLE INVENTORY

Personal Review

Directions: Work quickly. Select the best description that fits each area. Print this page and circle the word or phrase that best describes yourself in each area listed. Or just check the box that applies. Add the circles or checks in each column and place the number in the space below. **Read page 5 to score it.**

Area				
Interests	Status quo ☐	Making a good impression ☐	Facts/figures ☐	Results ☐
Personality	Easygoing ☐	Outgoing ☐	Distant ☐	Dominating ☐
Eye Contact	Tentative ☐	Warm ☐	Glancing ☐	Direct ☐
Gestures	Reserved ☐	Open ☐	Closed ☐	Impatient ☐
Communication	Practical ☐	Expressive ☐	Controlled ☐	Blunt ☐
Voice	Unemotional/ Low key ☐	Emotional/ Animated ☐	Unemotional/ Reserved ☐	Emotional/Sharp ☐
Attitude	Non-aggressive ☐	Trusting ☐	Critical ☐	Confident ☐
Talking	About current need ☐	About experiences ☐	About details ☐	About results ☐
Key Characteristics	People-oriented/ Lower energy ☐	People-oriented/ Higher energy ☐	Task-oriented/ Lower energy ☐	Task-oriented/ Higher energy ☐
Responsiveness	Controlled ☐	Extroverted ☐	Introverted ☐	Short/Quick answers ☐
Time Orientation	Past/Present ☐	Future ☐	Past ☐	Present ☐
Concerns	Dependability/ Cost ☐	Color/Style ☐	Technical/ Details ☐	Quality/Profit ☐
Fears	Change ☐	Confrontation ☐	Criticism ☐	Loss of control ☐
Goals	Steadiness ☐	Good relationships ☐	Being right ☐	Success ☐
Pace	Low energy/ Moderate ☐	High energy/ Enthusiasm ☐	Low energy/ Control ☐	High energy/Fast ☐
Decision-making	Indecisive ☐	Impulsive ☐	Methodical ☐	Decisive ☐
Dress	Traditional ☐	Stylish ☐	Conservative ☐	Formal ☐
Old Car Style	Functional ☐	Sporty ☐	Appropriate ☐	Impressive ☐
Weakness	Lack of intensity ☐	Organization ☐	People skills ☐	Dictatorial ☐
Strength	Flexibility ☐	Relationship ☐	Analysis ☐	Achieve the goal ☐
Total	_____	_____	_____	_____

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COMMUNICATION STYLE INVENTORY

Co-Worker/Other Review

DIRECTIONS:

Work quickly. Select the best description that fits the person. Circle the word or phrase that best describes that person in each area. Add up the number of circles in each column and place the number in the space below.

Area				
Interests	Status quo	Making a good impression	Facts/figures	Results
Personality	Easygoing	Outgoing	Distant	Dominating
Eye Contact	Tentative	Warm	Glancing	Direct
Gestures	Reserved	Open	Closed	Impatient
Communication	Practical	Expressive	Controlled	Blunt
Voice	Unemotional/ Low key	Emotional/ Animated	Unemotional/ Reserved	Emotional/Sharp
Attitude	Non-aggressive	Trusting	Critical	Confident
Talking	About current need	About experiences	About details	About results
Key Characteristics	People-oriented/ Lower energy	People-oriented/ Higher energy	Task-oriented/ Lower energy	Task-oriented/ Higher energy
Responsiveness	Controlled	Extroverted	Introverted	Short/Quick answers
Time Orientation	Past/Present	Future	Past	Present
Concerns	Dependability/ Cost	Color/Style	Technical/ Details	Quality/Profit
Fears	Change	Confrontation	Criticism	Loss of control
Goals	Steadiness	Good relationships	Being right	Success
Pace	Low energy/ Moderate	High energy/ Enthusiasm	Low energy/ Control	High energy/Fast
Decision-making	Indecisive	Impulsive	Methodical	Decisive
Dress	Traditional	Stylish	Conservative	Formal
Old Car Style	Functional	Sporty	Appropriate	Impressive
Weakness	Lack of intensity	Organization	People skills	Dictatorial
Strength	Flexibility	Relationship	Analysis	Achieve the goal
Total	_____	_____	_____	_____

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KEY STYLE POINTS

Before you score your inventory, read the style description information and keep these points in mind:

- All people have a characteristic, interpersonal communication style.
- All styles have strengths.
- All styles have potential areas for improvement.
- The style descriptions are based more on behavior than personality; therefore, you can change style approaches by changing behavior.
- Some behaviors are related to whether a person is higher energy or lower energy. Other behaviors relate to a task or people focus.
- To work more effectively with different styles:

    1. **Assess how people act (gestures, characteristics, goals, fears)**
    2. **Adapt your style through subtle communication techniques to focus on the other person.**

- Give other people what they want, and you'll get what you want.

Score your inventory by adding up the number of circles per column. The column with the most circles represents your style.

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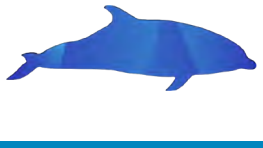
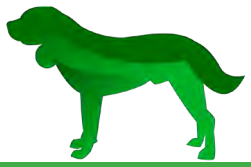
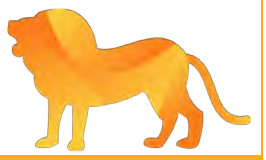
COMMUNICATION STYLE DESCRIPTIONS

DIRECTIONS:
This page gives you the strengths and potential weaknesses of each of the four styles. For scoring, these columns match up with the assessment's columns. (Column 1-Dolphin, Column 2-St. Bernard, Column 3-Fox, Column 4-Lion) Any score of ten or more is fairly dominant. Your highest score is your most predictable type of behavior, while we all tend to be a little of each. If all scores are close, you can call it the Chameleon Style. For a strength, It's very adaptable, but also as a weakness it's easily swayed. Also, note communication techniques are listed for each style. These are the approaches to apply when communicating with that style. Use this information to complete the questions on page 7 and 8.

	 Dolphin	 St. Bernard	Fox	 Lion
Strengths	• Agreeable • Draws others out • Easygoing • Patient • Team player • Supportive	• Enthusiastic • Trustworthy • Openly expresses feelings • Optimistic • Loyal • Promotes ideas	• Analytical • Methodical • Accurate • Factual • Detailed • Persistent	• Decision-maker • Risk-taker • Take control • Confident • Goal-oriented • Competitive
(Potential) **Weaknesses**	• Wishy-washy • Uninspired • Easily led • Uninterested • Resistant to change	• Unrealistic • Flaky • Taken advantage of • Unforgiving • Disorganized	• Nitpicky • Rigid • Unfeeling • Perfectionist • Indecisive	• Authoritarian • Arrogant • Non-diplomatic • Tunnel Vision • Combative
Communication Techniques	• Provide a sincere interest in them • Ask questions • Have periodic follow-up conversations (this proves your sincerity) • Provide reinforcement • Be cooperative • Show patience • Move slowly-check out fears & insecurities • Be patient	• Be stimulating • Present big picture • Use jokes and stories to make a point • Socialize before getting down to the task • Provide professional opinions from people who impress them • Don't dwell on details too long • Ask about their feelings • Get them to outline specific and time-frames • Be friendly	• Be correct • Present facts accurately • Outline the status quo, show the need for change • Include stats and percentages • Keep your word • Take one step at a time; don't push • Prepare written comparisons • Provide many explanations and give them reassurance • Be somewhat formal	• Provide direct answers • Be brief and to the point • Stick to business • Ask questions regarding specifics • Deal with actions and results • Stick with WHAT questions • Don't get bogged down in detail • Be part of the solution, not part of the problem • Provide options and possibilities • Let them choose • Confront them • Don't back down

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COMMUNICATION STYLE EXERCISE

1. What is your style?

2. How can your style work best with the other styles?

   a.

   b.

   c.

3. How can you best work with others of the same style?

4. What have you learned or re-learned about yourself?

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4 COMMUNICATION STYLES

INTRODUCTION:
Consider a person's style by asking two questions:

- Is the person higher energy, or lower energy?
- Is the person task focused, or people focused?

By answering these questions, you can quickly assess someone's style and adjust your communication approaches with the person more effectively.

DIRECTIONS:
Select one person you know that fits each communication style. From the Style Descriptions, write in characteristics of each person and communication techniques you can use to better relate to each. (See the techniques on page 6)

Higher Energy

Lion		**St. Bernard**	
Person	Characteristics	Person	Characteristics
Techniques:		Techniques	

Task Oriented — **People Oriented**

Fox		**Dolphin**	
Person	Characteristics	Person	Characteristics
Techniques:		Techniques	

Lower Energy

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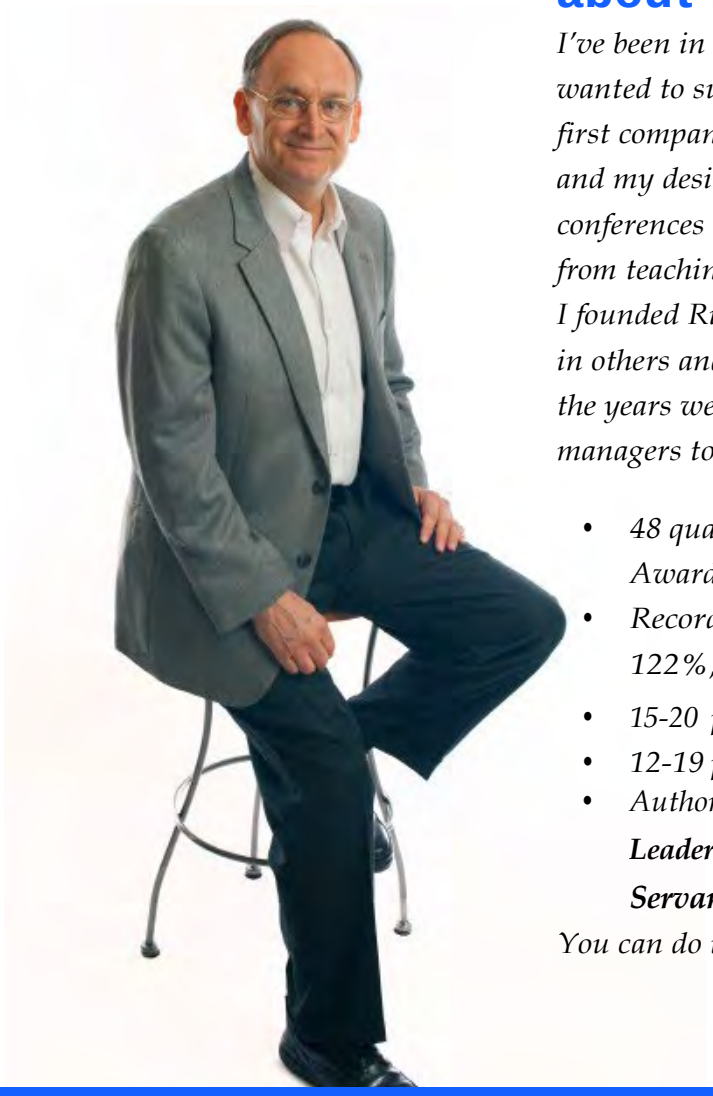

I've been in your shoes; I was an employee and manager just like you. I wanted to succeed by making a positive difference just like everyone. The first company I worked for believed in training, with this opportunity and my desire to learn, I attended over 100 training programs and conferences in a little over fifteen years. My results improved and I moved from teaching and selling to executive, with five promotions. Eventually, I founded Rick Conlow International. Our purpose is to bring out the best in others and make a positive difference in peoples' careers. Throughout the years we have partnered with over two hundred companies and fine managers to achieve:

- *48 quality service awards including JD Power, Ford's President Award, and Canada's Consumers Choice Award.*
- *Record-breaking sales year after year: 30%, 48%, 52%, 75%, 122%, and 212% gains in sales.*
- *15-20 points on customer experience surveys,* ***and 50-95% NPS.***
- *12-19 points on employee engagement surveys,* ***and 50-84% eNPS.***
- *Author of 22 books, including* ***the best seller, Superstar Leadership, and the newest one, The Dynamics of Servant Leadership.***

You can do this and more. Partner with us today!

POSITIVELY,

Rick Conlow

⇧ **8%**
Positive gains in retail sales growth

⇩ **57%**
Reduction in customer complaints

⇧ **5-7%**
Gains in transaction counts

⇧ **53%**
Improvement in sales

⇧ **75%**
Gains in sales to existing customers

48
Quality and customer service awards

Ford's President's Award

JD Power Award
for customer service

Canada's Consumer Choice Award

visit rick's website & blog

website

RICK CONLOW'S
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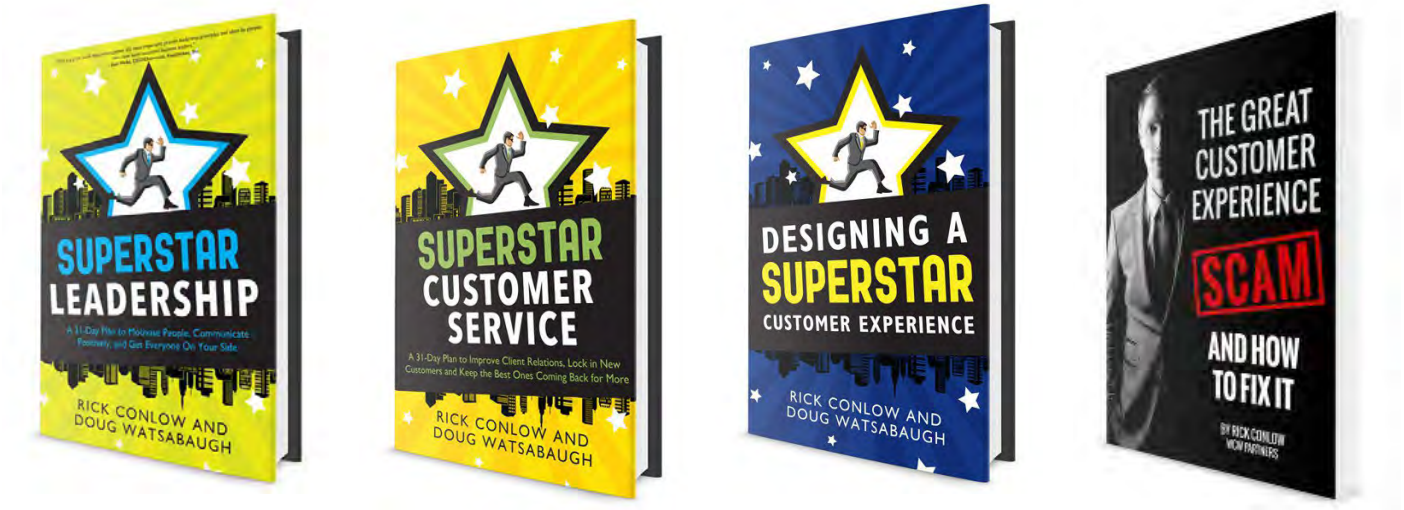
read rick's customer experience resources



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