

# The secret of better communication

There is one skill all successful people share in the world. It bridges countries, languages and cultures. It is the ability to observe a person's behaviour and instantly gain great insight into that person's mindset – how they feel about themselves and how they feel about others. The first step to improve your success is to examine your existing communication tactics and begin to form a picture of your natural style and the effect this has on others.

Studies over the years have shown that, to greater or lesser degree, effective communication consists of:

Body Language	55%
Tonality	38%
Words	7%

The words we use only contribute 7% to effective communication. We receive just over half of our information through body language, and yet there are no classes, tests or recognition of this in our schools or universities. Perhaps the next time you are watching effective communicators on TV, politicians for example, think about your own reception of information. How much information do you receive consciously and how much subconsciously? Who are the better communicators in your estimation? Why?

Over the past 100 years psychologists have looked at human behaviour and specific traits that clearly identify our communication and leadership styles, motivators and fears. One of the more successful methods of identifying behaviours is the D.I.S.C theory which looks specifically at behavioural styles in a work environment and creates profiles of these traits. Different profiles have their own preferred style of communication - this includes body language. So what is your profile? What does your body language say about you? And how successful are you at communicating with others? Of course the other side of the coin asks how good are you at reading other peoples' body language and hence their profile? Do you modify your behaviour in response to this information to improve your success rate?

We have all seen Sir Alan Sugar in the TV series 'The Apprentice'. Have you noticed:

The direct stare in to the eye?

The pointed finger executing a stabbing action?

The confrontational body posture?

These combine with an assertive direct approach that at times borders on aggressive and forceful. This particular range of body language and behaviour has been identified as the Dominance (D) profile.

How would you sell to Sir Alan?

What is his preferred style of communication?

Do you understand his motivators?

Do you understand his fears and can you use them to your advantage?

Could you communicate or even sell to him in his preferred style even though it may be different to yours?

Understanding these factors can also help to influence others on a larger scale. We have all recently witnessed the engaging style and persuasive charm of Barack Obama and the difference in his approach compared with his opponent and predecessor. A completely different style to Alan Sugar or Margaret Thatcher! Obama displays strong characteristics of an 'S' profile or Steadiness. This is about being thorough, empathetic and even-paced. In short, a team player. No wonder he has been nicknamed "No Drama Obama"! An effective communication to President Obama would require an entirely different body language, tone of voice and level of detail to that of Sir Alan.

Which of the following political leaders most reflect YOUR style?

Margaret Thatcher

Bill Clinton

Barack Obama

Gordon Brown

Have you noticed any behaviour modification over a period of time with these politicians? They are all groomed to improve their communication, building new skills on top of their original profile platform. How would each style react to the credit crunch? Irrespective of the ideology, how do they sell their ideas to the general public? Which one appeals to you more - and why?

There are many different behaviour styles. Being able to recognise and react to them will help you to communicate more effectively and get what you want more often.