

*The communication and marketing strategies in "DISC: Leverage Your Nature, Increase Your Sales" will help you be prepared for any sales meeting regardless of your audience!*

## **DISC: Leverage Your Nature, Increase Your Sales**

By Stephanie Rising

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LEVERAGE  
YOUR  
NATURE

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**DISC**

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INCREASE  
YOUR SALES

A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2,400 YEARS IN THE MAKING

BUSINESS AND MARKETING COACH

**STEPHANIE RISING**

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# Introduction

## Evicting The Sales Boogie Man

“Used Car Salesman.” I’ve helped develop marketing and sales strategies for countless small business owners, and this singular phrase conjures up an image that I have had to help almost every client overcome. The enduring image of a super slick, high pressure, commission driven salesman lives on—and so has the need to help nervous business owners realize that they do not have to replicate those tactics in order to effectively represent their own product or service.

The U.S. Small Business Administration reports that small businesses comprise 99% of American business and 44% of the total U.S. private payroll. And yet, without a Super Bowl ad budget in sight, small business owners must be far more resourceful with their time and money. *DISC: Leverage Your Nature, Increase Your Sales* was developed specifically to help small business owners learn how to consciously process and utilize their innate strengths as their business’ greatest (and free!) sales resource.

In addition to consciously understanding your own behavior, you’re going to learn how to relate to those who differ from your style. This is key to improving your communication and, by extension, your sales. We’ve all heard of the “Golden Rule”: Treat others as you wish to be treated. The problem with that rule is it assumes everyone shares your perspective and values. I prefer the “Platinum Rule”: Treat others as they wish to be treated. Imagine being able to recognize what others value and connect with them in a way that’s meaningful to them. What would that do for your sales? For your communication with colleagues and clients? For your relationship with your spouse?

While DISC has a wide range of applications, for the purposes of this book let’s look at what happens in a sales situation when you cannot understand what others value. The following are common scenarios I have

repeatedly encountered as a consumer; they also represent why business owners come to me frustrated that their sales are suffering.

- You speak quickly and “bottom line” everything, thinking that you’re being respectful of the prospective client’s time. In reality, they find you brusque and aggressive. You do not get the sale.
- You are chatty and reveal personal information about yourself thinking that you’re establishing a rapport with a prospective client. In reality, they find you self-centered and unprofessional. You do not get the sale.
- You are quietly reserved and keep opinions to yourself thinking that you’re not bragging or being too forceful. In reality, the prospective client is left feeling that you are not qualified or fully engaged. You do not get the sale.
- You provide lengthy analysis and information to a prospective client thinking that you’re helping them to make an informed decision. In reality, they are overwhelmed and feel unheard. You do not get the sale.

Throughout *DISC: Leverage Your Nature, Increase Your Sales* I include real-life anecdotes of misfires, mishaps, and miscommunications between people for no other reason than they didn’t know how to really tune in to one another, let alone respond in a meaningful way.

As a business owner myself, and as someone who clearly remembers having to start a business from scratch, I wrote *DISC: Leverage Your Nature, Increase Your Sales* to de-mystify step-by-step sales activities you can engage in to build revenues. More importantly, I hope that the suggestions outlined in this book for your dominant DISC style make you feel empowered to succeed in marketing. Marketing involves a combination of people skills, industry knowledge, market research, and operational systems. It therefore offers every business owner the opportunity to hone a range of abilities integral to their

business' health. In the pages that follow, you will discover:

- Why the DISC is significant to your business and how to interpret your own DISC report.
- What the four DISC styles are, how they affect your sales strategy, and real-life stories of failures and successes.
- How to systematically add strategies specific to your nature that will increase your sales close rate.
- What communication tools to use with people who have your opposite style. You will be prepared for any sales meeting regardless of your audience!

It's perfectly all right to skip ahead and check out the chapters that you think apply most to your own style; however, I encourage you to review and understand the others, too. The better you understand what motivates those who are different from you, the more likely you are to be of genuine service to them—and *that's* sales.

# Chapter 1

## What Is DISC?

Effective selling centers around two things: self-awareness and relationships. This focus on people is why sales and marketing are treated as two separate topics rather than being lumped together. A myriad of activities falls under the umbrella of marketing, including advertising, networking, branding, having a web presence, etc. The sales process is essentially about people: Being aware of how you interact with others, how others view the world, and how to utilize that information to forge a relationship that serves the client.

The ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, while not the most obvious source for sales and marketing strategies, is the originator of the basic concept behind the most bang-for-the-buck assessment you can use to promote your business: The DISC. As the Father of Modern Medicine, Hippocrates carefully noted his patients' behaviors, similarities, and differences. Around 400 B.C., he organized his collected observations into four behavioral categories: Fire, Air, Earth, and Water.

Hippocrates was the first to consistently use these four “humors” to monitor signs of imbalance in patients' health and their respective courses of treatment. This concept of categorizing human behavior eventually evolved beyond its medical application into the field of behavioral analysis.

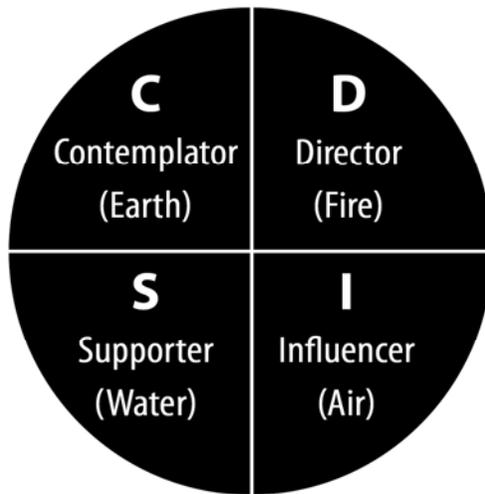
During the two millennia following Hippocrates, countless psychologists and social scientists continued studying and classifying human behavior from a dizzying number of viewpoints. One such psychologist, William Moulton Marston, found himself more fascinated by the behavior of the “normal” population than he was by abnormal psychology. After inventing the systolic blood pressure test in 1915—a key component of the polygraph—Marston expanded on his predecessors' theories to create practical, accessible explanations that

would help the average person to understand and manage their experiences and relationships.

Marston published his conclusions about DISC and integrative psychology in his aptly titled 1928 book *Emotions of Normal People*, in which he focused exclusively on analyzing behaviors that were observable and measurable. Based on his research, he found four primary characteristics that motivate the behavior of most normal people. He described them as Dominance (D), Inducement (I), Submission (S), and Compliance (C). In this book, I describe those characteristics as Director, Influencer, Supporter, and Contemplator. They correspond with Hippocrates' humors as Fire, Air, Water, and Earth respectively (see following page).

DISC measures your behavioral style—not intelligence, aptitude, mental health, or values. The four categories of scoring reflect how you respond to challenges, how you influence others, your preferred pace, and your compliance with rules and procedures.

Regardless of your business or industry, everything comes back to people—your employees, colleagues, vendors, clients, customers, and you as the owner. Your products, services, systems, financials, and sales are greatly influenced by your ability to communicate clearly, and that's why behavioral analysis and DISC are such powerful business tools.



You can learn how others think, what motivates their behavior, and ways to meaningfully connect with them. Apply that knowledge to your sales efforts, and it can be huge to your bottom line.

## **What We Believe And Why**

If we're honest with ourselves, most of us believe that the way we do things is the best. This is why over 80% of us believe that we are above-average drivers—despite the fact that it's statistically impossible for over 80% to actually be above the average. We're naturally biased in favor of our perceived abilities, just as we simultaneously downplay our perceived weaknesses. While there may be a tiny voice in your head obstinately saying, "*And what's wrong with that?*" that is the voice that unfortunately skews our perspective in ways that are unfavorable to our clients and business.

Simply put, the DISC is an objective tool for raising your self-awareness. This knowledge can be applied to company operations, the hiring and training process, daily employee communications, financial stewardship, and just about every other aspect of your business. (It's even a handy marital tool—imagine understanding how your spouse thinks!) While you need to effectively manage all of those issues for a smoothly running business, sales and marketing remain its economic engines. There are only so many systems you can create, expenses you can cut, and payroll you can contain. To really move a business forward—or stay in business period—you have to maintain a sales pipeline that generates revenue as consistently as possible. Identifying and supporting strategies that minimize income peaks and valleys also means better overall cash flow. For those reasons, this book focuses on applying the DISC and your self-awareness to your sales and marketing efforts.

## **The Beatles: The Four Dimensions Of Behavior**

Behavioral analysis is a combination of both internal ("Natural") factors and external ("Adapted") influences. In other words, the DISC

is designed to reflect how other people observe our actions, instead of solely mirroring our view of ourselves. It's this inherent element of objectivity that makes the DISC such a powerful tool. While we may have difficulty accurately identifying our skills and traits, others may see them quite clearly, and their perspective provides us with a more comprehensive view of ourselves.

The four dimensions of behavior—or DISC “styles”—are:

- How you respond to problems and challenges (D).
- How you influence others to your point of view (I).
- How you react to the pace of your environment (S).
- How you respond to rules and procedures (C).

### Consider The Beatles:

- John was an anti-authoritarian leader who channeled his anger by challenging the “establishment” (D).
- Paul is a charming optimist and a natural-born entertainer who greatly influenced their album concepts (I).
- Ringo is an affable peacekeeper who was literally responsible for keeping the band’s rhythm (S).
- George was a quiet, serious, and deeply curious technician who obsessively practiced to hone his musical expertise (C).

### Interpreting Your Assessment

DISC provides objectively analytical guidelines for understanding ourselves and those around us. The following is an overview of how to interpret your own assessment and what each style represents. In later chapters, you will learn how to apply that understanding and use your

strengths to effectively communicate with and sell to others—even those with the opposite style.

## Scoring

The DISC assessment format that I prefer scores on a scale of 0 to 100:

- Scores between 61 and 100 indicate a strong preference for the behavior typical of that style.
- Scores between 0 and 39 indicate a strong aversion to the behavior typical of that style.
- Scores between 40 and 60 are considered “flexible”—you’re able to ratchet up or dial back your use of that style depending upon the circumstances.
- A “tight” profile occurs when all Natural scores are between 40 and 60. (See notes about “The Chameleon” in Chapter 7.)

As scores approach 100 or 0, the style traits exhibited in those categories become more pronounced. For example, a 100 S will exhibit a non-emotional, calm, and change-resistant attitude. A 0 (zero) S will exhibit an impetuous, tense, and flexible attitude. Note that many behavioral reports evaluate only your highest score to determine your likely behavior. The assessment format that I prefer to use takes into consideration all of your scores, which more accurately reflects how you are likely to behave and how others are likely to observe you.

## Natural vs. Adapted Styles

Your assessment contains two sets of scores, one Natural and one Adapted. The Natural style is the least changeable and will vary slightly throughout your life. The Natural style reflects your “genetic wiring”—

left to your own devices, this is how you instinctively go through life. Consequently, when your personal and professional life align with your Natural style, you will experience the most fulfillment, the least stress, and the highest levels of performance.

The Adapted style is the most changeable throughout your life. Where the Natural score reflects what's internal—your genetic wiring—the Adapted score reflects how you respond to your external environment. You may be adjusting your behavior to suit your job requirements, peer group, or other current life circumstances. Changing your behavior to match what you believe the external environment demands of you may cause you to feel under pressure, question whether you fit in socially, or stretch to achieve a particularly challenging objective.

One of the important things to note is the numerical difference between the Natural and Adapted scores. A 20+ point difference between the two is indicative of stress in that area. The characteristics of each DISC style are summarized by the tables in this chapter, and additional chapters are devoted to examining each style in detail. After understanding what each style represents, return to your assessment. If you have a 20+ difference between one or more of your styles, reflect on what could be causing your stress and write down some clear, actionable steps for what you can do to reduce it. If you are working with a coach, share those steps with him or her for accountability.

## Additional Scoring Information

Your DISC scores represent the intensity of the emotions that you display to the outside world. The higher the percentage, the higher the level of intensity of that emotion and the more you tend toward that behavior. The lower the percentage, the lower the level of intensity of that emotion and the more you tend to move away from the behavior most characteristic of that category.

Also bear in mind that Ds and Cs are task oriented, whereas Is and Ss are people oriented. Most people have one strong task component and one strong

people component to their style; however, this is not a rule. I have done DISC assessments on numerous people whose highest scores are D and C (super task oriented), or I and S (super people oriented). We'll get into the specific styles in each chapter.

On the following pages are tables outlining the basic interpretation of the four styles, as well as a general idea of how to interpret scoring between 0 and 100. ⇨

<b>Director</b>	<b>Influencer</b>
How you respond to problems and challenges	How you influence others to your point of view
<b>Scores 61 to 100</b> <b>High D: Demanding</b>  Prefers to solve problems in an active, assertive, decisive, direct, and bottom-line manner	<b>Scores 61 to 100</b> <b>High I: Inspiring</b>  Prefers meeting new people in an outgoing, socially enthusiastic manner; tends to be talkative and reactive
<b>SCORES 40 TO 60:</b> <b>THIS IS A FLEXIBLE, ADAPTABLE, ACCOMMODATING, OR SITUATIONAL ZONE</b>	
<b>Scores 39 to 0</b> <b>Low D: Discreet</b>  Prefers to solve problems in a controlled, calculated, deliberate, and organized manner—unobtrusive	<b>Scores 39 to 0</b> <b>Low I: Introverted</b>  Prefers meeting new people in a quiet, controlled, and reserved manner; tends to show a logical, unemotional approach

<b>Supporter</b>	<b>Contemplator</b>
<p>How you react to the pace of your environment</p>	<p>How you respond to rules and procedures (based on logic)</p>
<p><b>Scores 61 to 100</b> <b>High S: Steady</b></p> <p>Prefers a structured, secure, and slower-paced environment with non-hostile interactions</p>	<p><b>Scores 61 to 100</b> <b>High C: Compliant</b></p> <p>Prefers to adhere to fact-based rules and analyze data; “good rules are made to be followed”; formal or reserved</p>
<p><b>SCORES 40 TO 60:</b> <b>THIS IS A FLEXIBLE, ADAPTABLE, ACCOMMODATING, OR SITUATIONAL ZONE</b></p>	
<p><b>Scores 39 to 0</b> <b>Low S: Spontaneous</b></p> <p>Prefers a flexible, change-oriented, unstructured environment with freedom of expression and ability to change</p>	<p><b>Scores 39 to 0</b> <b>Low C: Cavalier</b></p> <p>Prefers to develop ideas and strategies independent of the rules; “rules are made to be broken”; informal and open</p>

## Common Pairings and Opposites

The D and C categories reflect different approaches to tasks: Get it done now vs. get it done right. The I and S categories reflect different interactions with people: Socialize vs. organize. The most common high score pairings put one task-oriented style and one people-oriented style together, with those typically being D-I and S-C. When you review the DISC categories with their original labels, it's easy to discern the opposites: Fire (D) and Water (S), Air (I) and Earth (C).

This is not to say that pairings outside of D-I and S-C don't exist in ways that can be highly effective. A friend of mine has dominant I and C scores, and though they are traditionally opposites on the DISC scale, this combination serves her well as an attorney. She is intellectually curious, balanced, and detailed, while also possessing a warmth and compassion that her clients find comforting under stressful circumstances. (We also joke that her flashy I drives a Corvette, and her conservative C wears her hair in a bun.)

Another example of a non-traditional pairing is found in my husband, George. George is very task-oriented, with his dominant scores being C followed by D. This combination has proven advantageous to his career as a school principal. He leads his teachers by example in his thirst for information and attention to details, both of which create a high caliber learning environment. As an administrator, George leverages his D to take actions that keep the school moving forward, knowing that he can amass only so much data before strategic decisions must be made. His faculty and staff appreciate his careful leadership, and the parents appreciate his diplomacy.

I have encountered countless examples of DISC profiles that fall outside of the typical D-I or S-C pairing, with those individuals learning how to reconcile and utilize their opposites, as my attorney friend did, or reframe their perspective to bring greater balance to a task-or people-centered style, as George did. In Chapter 7, I will discuss in greater detail how to address the "multiple style personality" (three dominant scores).

## Emotional Motivators

Each of the DISC styles has a specific emotional motivator that tends to guide decision making in that area. While there are some pitfalls to be aware of, it's more important to explore the advantages to be gained if you are able to consciously identify your natural gifts. Again, I emphasize that this is not about "good" or "bad." This is about understanding the source of people's energy and how they can put it to best use.

### D = Anger

Remember, this is the category that was originally described as Fire, and fiery they are. They are a courageous, passionate, and entrepreneurial group who invest a great deal of themselves into accomplishing their goals. Their love of competition (and winning) pushes them to achieve where others may be too timid. For innovation, strategic thinking, and growth, you want a D on your team.

Sometimes their sheer drive can be perceived as abrasive or invasive, as the D can be unintentionally insensitive to peoples' feelings and personal space in pursuit of their objectives. They are unafraid of tough decisions, so when others around them are reacting more gradually—or being wishy washy—they can become easily irritated and impatient, if not irate. To a D, the way forward is clear, and it's the only direction that interests them.

Keep in mind that a D's anger is more akin to frustration. They tend to be intuitive, processing information and acting on it very quickly. So it provokes this action-oriented bunch when progress is made too slowly, and they're not shy about saying as much. One of the benefits to this seeming insensitivity is that a D's temper may be furious, but it is not lingering. They are not prone to grudge holding, mostly because that involves dwelling in the past, and they much prefer to stride on toward the future. That ability to always look forward is one reason why they are typically in leadership and planning positions.

There is another aspect of their intensity that can be very positive: Anger is motivating. If a project is stalling or sales are down, leave it to the Ds to channel their frustration about the lack of momentum into a flurry of concentrated activity that will get the collective ball rolling again.

## I = Optimism

Formerly the Air category, the high I style floats easily from person to person, engaging people with their natural charm and enthusiasm. Born communicators, high Is frequently find themselves in sales, marketing, and public relations careers. They are “the people people” whose empathy serves them well in attracting clients. That same level of sensitivity often requires patience, as their feelings can be easily hurt.

Sensitive as they are, it’s fortunate for Is that they are motivated by optimism. Never down for long, they rebound quickly in their confidence that tomorrow is indeed another day. Similarly to the D style, Is like to keep things moving along without getting bogged down in too many details. However, where the D is driving for results, the I is seeking out fun and friendship. In work or play, Is must enjoy what they do and who they interact with, or they become bored. Their near constant need for variety can be difficult to fill, as well as make them prone to flit from idea to idea (they’re sprinters, not marathoners).

It’s that combination of few details, much hopefulness, and easy distraction that can cause others to view high Is as “Pollyannas.” With that airy style, Is can lack the concrete facts that typically root solid decisions, trusting instead their own feelings. A talkative and emotional group, Is sometimes get off task and share more information than others can comfortably hear. But, Is who master their gift of the gab and adapt to the listener’s style are highly effective at connecting with and influencing others.

At times exasperatingly idealistic and with a need to be appreciated, gregarious Is generate enthusiasm for ideas and excel at motivating their team. Their personableness makes them excellent for business development, as they tend to be top revenue producers.

## S = Non-emotion

The high S style is perhaps the most misunderstood of the DISC group, in large part because they are much more reserved with their emotions. Fiery Ds and charming Is are overtly dynamic characters; but, the quiet Ss deserve much respect for the stability they provide. Ss do not seek the spotlight—they much prefer a supportive role in a team environment. Consequently, they often can be found in management and HR positions, the compasses who help give direction to their staff.

In keeping with their original Water category, high Ss are still-waters-run-deep people. They may not freely offer their opinion on every matter that crosses their path, but they notice and remember everything. Let me repeat that: They remember everything, so choose your words respectfully. Whereas high Is are emotional but rebound quickly because of their optimism, the S's reserve and distaste for confrontation causes them to tamp down frustration. Outwardly even-tempered as they are, Ss are champion grudge holders.

Also, do not underestimate the quiet S's deep reserve of stubbornness. With the very high value they place on stability, they are slow to adapt to change and can be downright resistant to it. They need time to process things that are new and, being team-oriented, they will want to know how change will benefit the group. Slow and steady wins the race with this style, so be prepared to have changes sometimes met with passive-aggressive behavior. For those who are faster paced, this can be an exhausting process.

The high S style safeguards a sense of security for everyone around them as much as for themselves. While they require more time and effort to truly know, the quality of their character and deep reserve of affection for those close to them make them loyal, discreet, and thoughtful confidants.

## C = Fear

This previously coined “Earth” style grounds itself firmly in the facts (some of them even embracing comparisons to Mr. Spock).

Relentless in their pursuit of information and logic, high Cs are frequently found in knowledge-based fields such as law, accounting, engineering, medicine, and education. Where Ds and Is stick with the broader, swifter strokes, Cs take great pride and pleasure in ensuring that every “t” is crossed and every “i” is dotted. (If you’re writing a book, have a C edit it for you—thank you, George!).

Cs can be anxious and their obsession with detail paralyzing, as they often fear that they never have enough data to make a truly informed decision. “Paralysis through analysis” means they can fail to act—even when the need for action is clear—in their desire to leave not one stone unturned. As a result, Cs function best when they have plenty of opportunity for careful deliberation, or when they can plan in advance in order to meet a deadline.

Because of their respect for logic, Cs can appear cold and detached, making it sometimes difficult for them to relate well with those who are more emotional. Cs fare much better in their personal interactions when they learn that how someone feels can be counted among one of the facts they must process in their decision making. To their much-deserved credit, their lack of emotional extremes makes them balanced and diplomatic advisors.

Great debaters, the high C style is a tremendous resource to have on your team. They exact high standards of conduct and knowledge, which tends to push those around them first to distraction, but then to excellence. They are top-notch researchers whose detailed analysis of market data can pump fuel into a successful sales strategy.

## Questions To Keep In Mind

A quick word before we jump into a more in-depth understanding of what commonly motivates people: Using this information is going to be a matter of ongoing practice. Given that we’re talking about human nature and all its variables, it takes time, practice, and patience to utilize the DISC—but it’s well worth it! Also, in many ways, it’s liberating. Rather than using up energy by taking things personally or making false

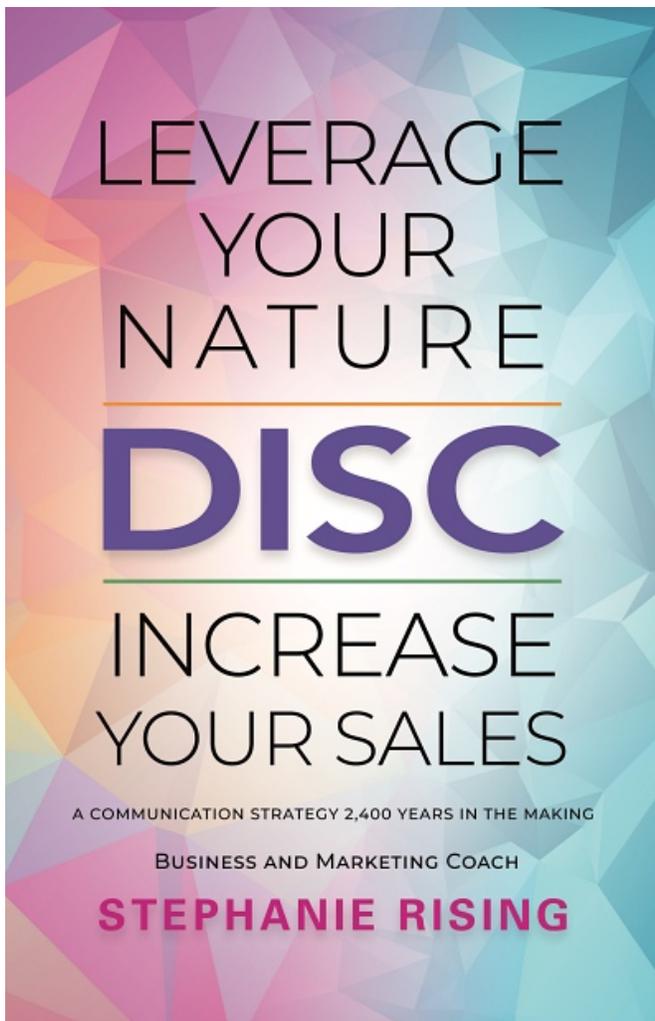
assumptions about what someone is thinking or feeling, an understanding of DISC helps to make interactions more meaningful and productive. As you continue to read, ask yourself the following:

- Who do these characteristics remind me of?
- How have I traditionally interacted with that person? What assumptions have I made about their behavior that perhaps need correcting?
- Do I need to make any adjustments to my own behavior toward them?
- How can I use my own real-life examples to help me raise my awareness of others' styles in sales situations?

For a quick reference, on the following pages are outlines of the characteristics common to each style as scores move toward 100 or 0.  
⇒

	<b>Director</b>	<b>Influencer</b>
↑ MOVING TOWARD 100	Demanding Egocentric Driving Ambitious Pioneering Strong-Willed Forceful Determined Aggressive Competitive Decisive Venturesome Inquisitive Responsible	Effusive Inspiring Magnetic Political Enthusiastic Demonstrative Persuasive Warm Convincing Polished Poised Optimistic Trusting Sociable
↓ MOVING TOWARD ZERO	Conservative Calculating Cooperative Hesitant Low-Keyed Unsure Undemanding Cautious Mild Agreeable Modest Peaceful Unobtrusive	Reflective Factual Calculating Skeptical Logical Undemonstrative Suspicious Matter-Of-Fact Incisive Pessimistic Moody Critical

	<b>Supporter</b>	<b>Contemplator</b>
↑ MOVING TOWARD 100 50 MOVING TOWARD ZERO ↓	Phlegmatic Relaxed Resistant To Change Nondemonstrative Passive Patient Possessive Predictable Consistent Deliberate Steady Stable	Evasive Worrisome Careful Dependent Cautious Conventional Exacting Neat Systematic Diplomatic Accurate Tactful Open-Minded Balanced Judgment
	Mobile Active Restless Alert Variety-Oriented Demonstrative Impatient Pressure-Oriented Eager Flexible Impulsive Impetuous Hypertense	Firm Independent Self-Willed Stubborn Obstinate Opinionated Unsystematic Self-Righteous Uninhibited Arbitrary Unbending Careless With Details



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## **DISC: Leverage Your Nature, Increase Your Sales**

By Stephanie Rising

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