Understanding Your Communication Style: Having a Positive Impact on Others

BILLD Conference

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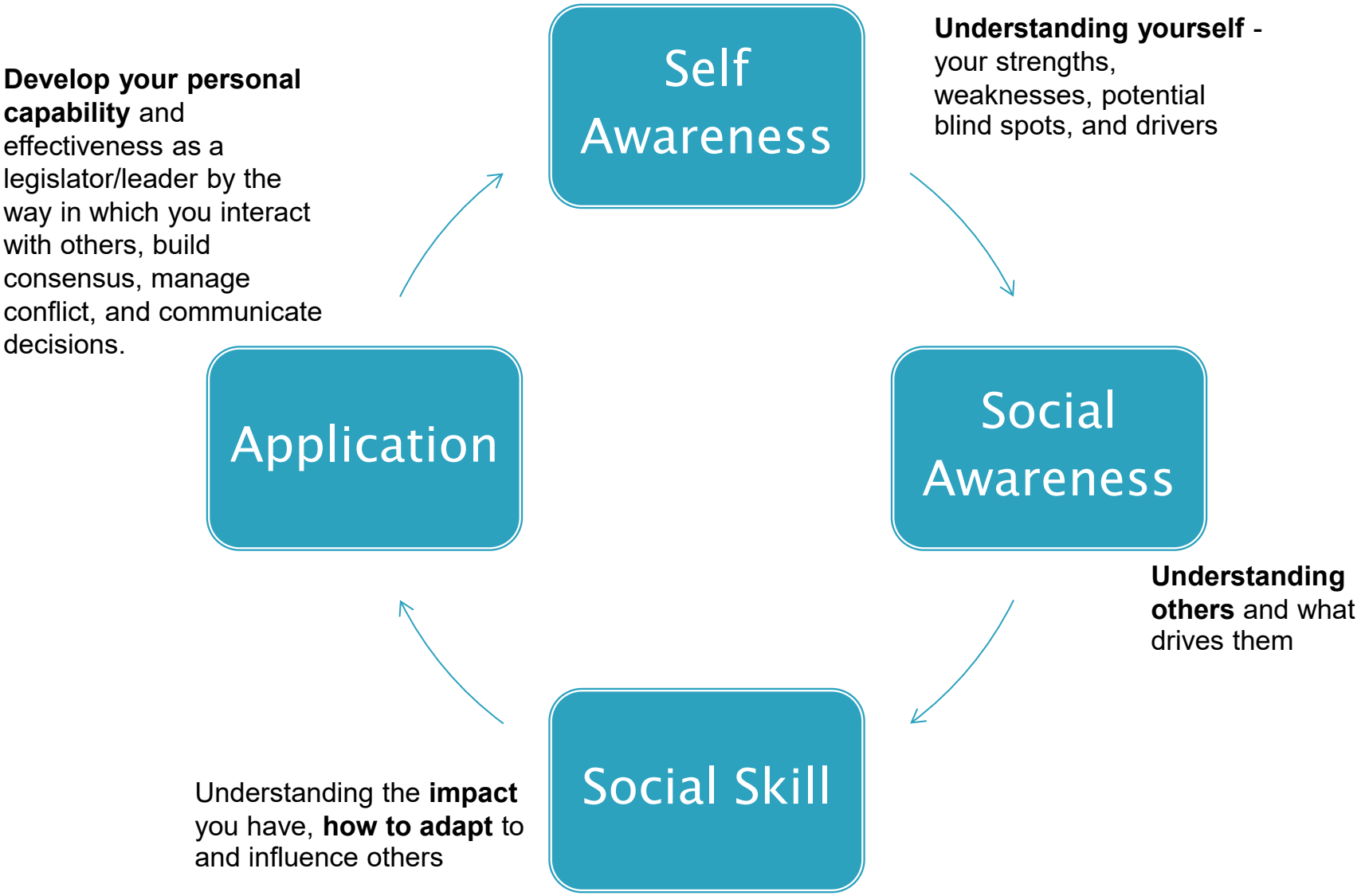
Facilitated by Patrick Hein

Patrick Hein Consulting


Self Awareness
Understanding yourself - your strengths, weaknesses, potential blind spots, and drivers
Social Awareness
Understanding others and what drives them
Social Skill
Understanding the impact you have, how to adapt to and influence others
Application
Develop your personal capability and effectiveness as a legislator/leader by the way in which you interact with others, build consensus, manage conflict, and communicate decisions.

Our Objectives for Using the DISC Assessment

- Identify the **strengths** of your behavioral style and how to leverage those in your relationships and communication with constituents.

- Identify the elements of your behavioral style that could create **barriers to your success** and how to overcome or compensate for them.

- Plan ways in which you can **adapt your approach** to be more effective with specific people that you find challenging.

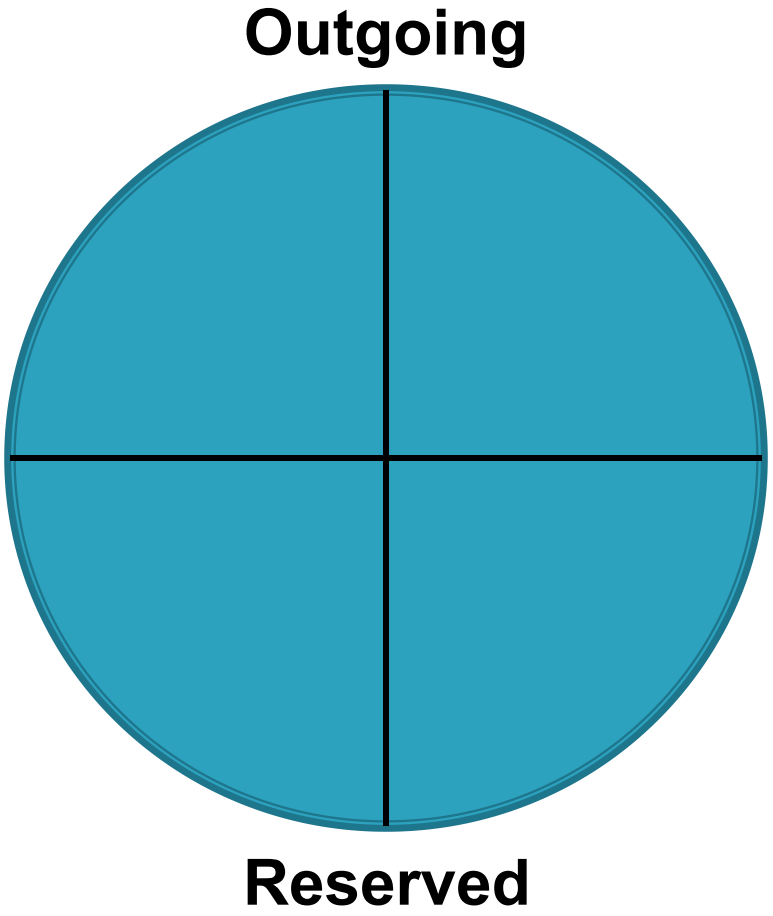
What DISC Measures

- What drives or motivates us
- What we're passionate about
- What our natural perspective on things is (i.e. the perspective through which we see our own behavior and the behavior of others)
- Our priorities and focus
- Our approach to tasks like decision making, managing conflict, leading others, and our reactions under stress
- The potential *impact* of our behavior

What DISC Does NOT Do

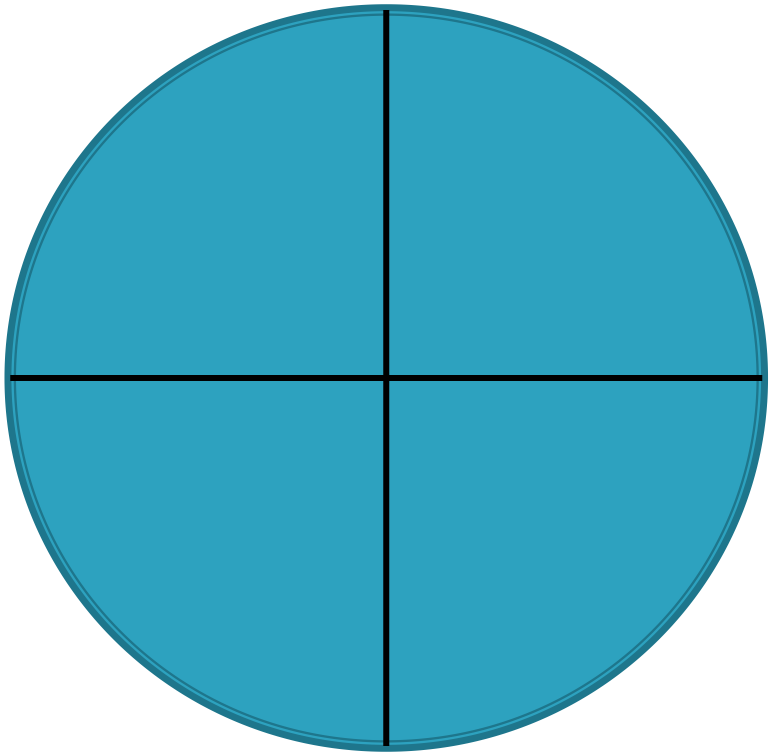
- Measure intelligence, values or beliefs
- Judge right or wrong
- Measure education, skills or experience
- Intend to be subjective or judgmental, rather objective and observable
- Imply that one style is better than another or that there is any correlation between style and the likelihood of success

What Drives Us?



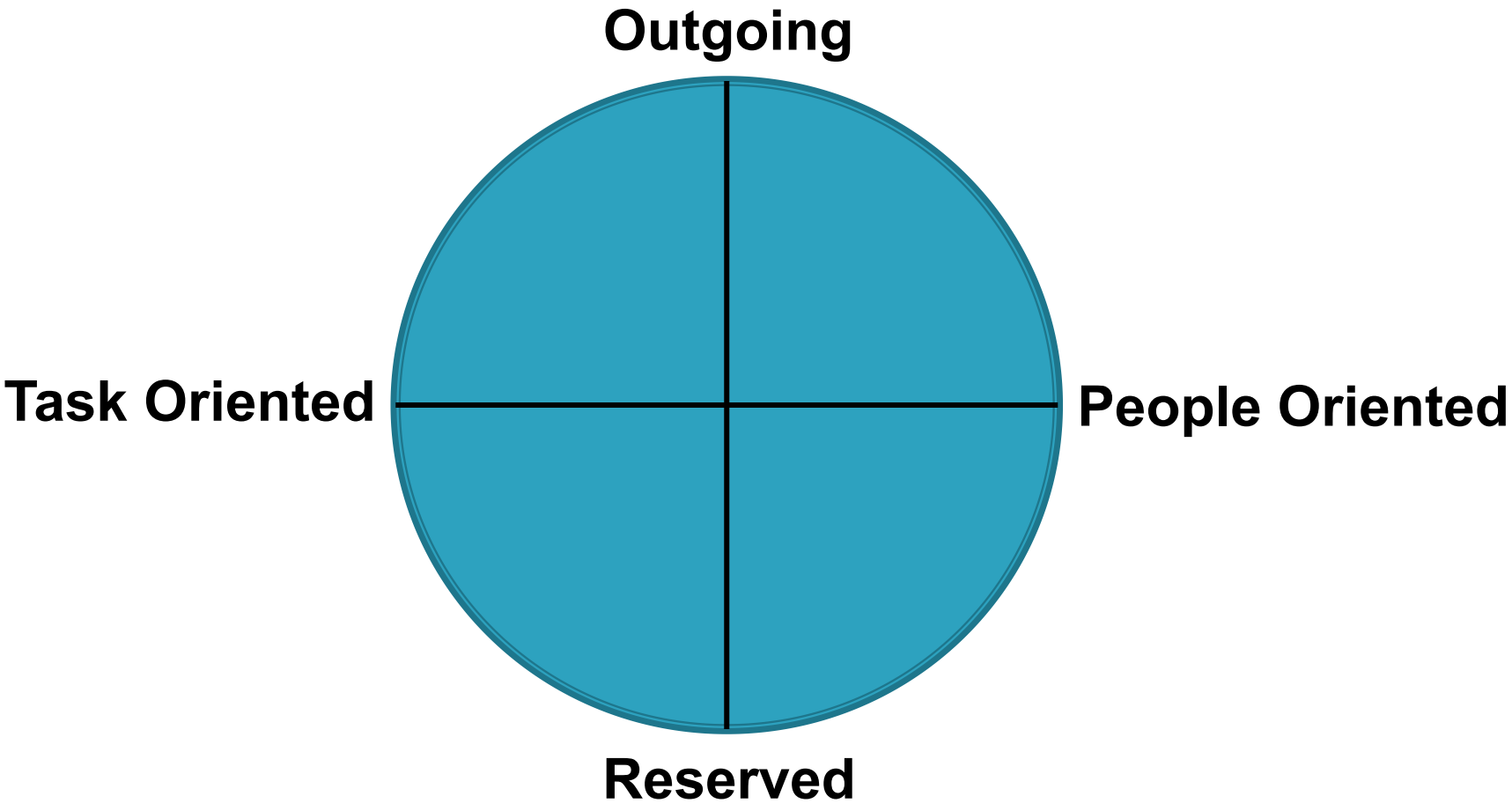
What's Our Compass?

Task Oriented

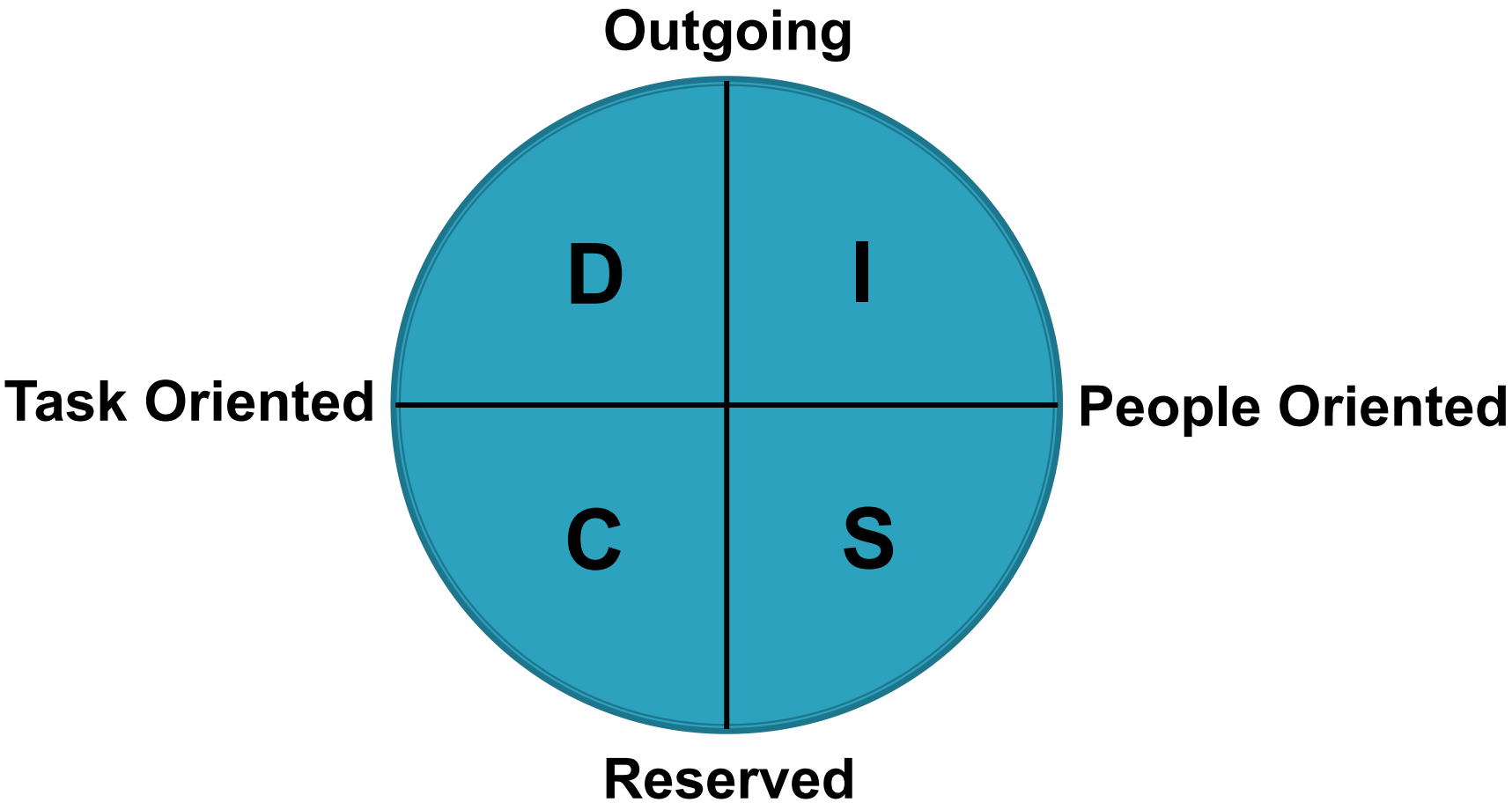


People Oriented

Putting it all Together



Putting it all Together



Recognizing a Strong D

Leads with…	Tenacity, Drive, Energy
Expects people to…	Accept responsibility, Do "whatever it takes" Get results, Take action
Operating from strengths, they…	Confront issues effectively, Complete enormous amounts of work, Focus on goals, Make things happen
Potential blind spots…	Keeping too much control, Deciding before getting enough facts or input, Ignoring relationship issues, Moving quickly before others are “on board”

Recognizing a Strong I

Leads with…	Inspiration, Enthusiasm, Optimism, Humor
Expects people to…	Relax and lighten up (not take themselves too seriously), Figure things out, Be flexible
Operating from strengths, they…	Provide inspiration, Encourage people, Help people see a better future, Bring new ideas and fresh approaches, Lighten tense situations,
Potential blind spots…	Focus on ideas rather than follow through, Being (or appearing) disorganized, Lacking direction

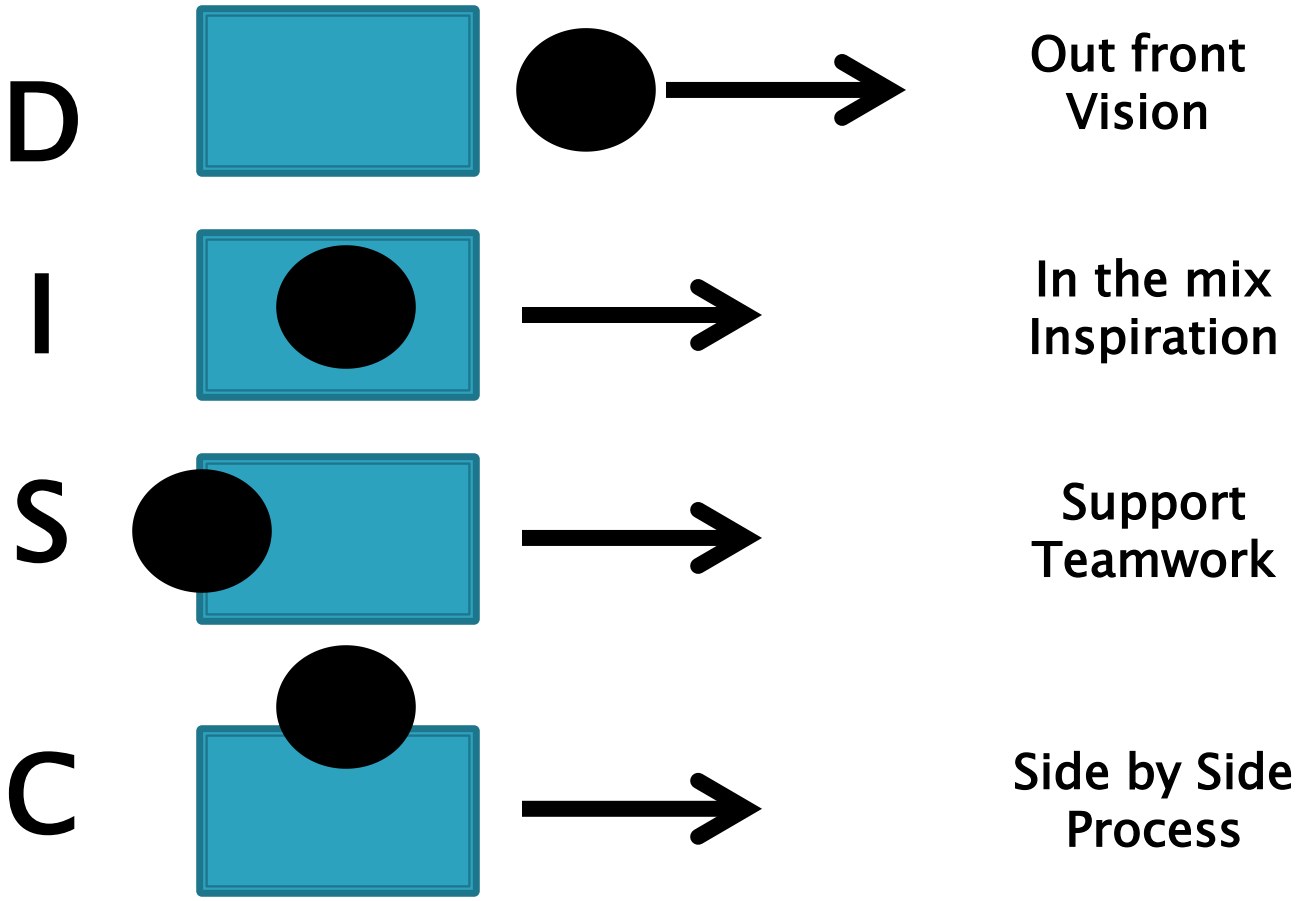
Recognizing a Strong S

Leads with…	Encouragement, Support, Affirmation
Expects people to…	Be nice to one another, Be helpful, Support the team
Operating from strengths, they…	Build strong relationships, Help people resolve conflicts, Create a warm, inviting environment, Support other people, Keep in touch with how people are feeling
Potential blind spots…	Avoiding conflict, Being indecisive – fear of consequences for a wrong decision, Becoming overwhelmed then shutting down or withdrawing

Recognizing a Strong C

Leads with…	Rules, Procedures, Guidelines, Process and detail orientation
Expects people to…	Focus, Follow the rules, Be logical Do what's right
Operating from strengths, they…	Are very analytical, Notice what can go wrong before it does, Think logically, See the details, Listen before they speak
Potential blind spots…	Ignoring people or relationship issues, Procrastinating on taking action, Being too much a perfectionist

Four Ways to Lead



Learning from Other Styles

- Review the page on your style's leadership characteristics and prepare a summary for the rest of the group.
- What are some ways others can **adapt** to your style? Please identify specific behaviors, words, or actions that would be most effective with your style.
- What would be the perfect mascot and/or motto for your style?

Keys to Adapting for Greater Effectiveness

- **Diagnosis**: Recognize or predict the need to alter communication behavior.
- **Flexibility**: Are you willing to adapt? Are you sending the right messages? Is your intent clear?
- **Partnering**: Talk with the other person about your different communication needs and how you can work best together. Demonstrate a willingness to listen and collaborate.

Note – the terms Diagnosis, Flexibility and Partnering are borrowed from Ken Blanchard's Situational Leadership model

Adapting to a High D

- Get down to business
- Be prepared for meetings
- Talk about facts, results, not personal feelings – be candid
- Be clear on goals, time expectations, desired results
- Provide alternative actions with brief supporting analyses to influence decisions
- Be precise, efficient, and well-organized
- **Above all, be efficient and competent**

Adapting to a High I

- Be willing to listen to their opinions, ideas, and dreams
- Allow time for brainstorming
- Be flexible as priorities may change if a new and better idea comes up
- Summarize in writing who is to do what, where, and when
- Share some of your personal side – allow them to get to know you
- **Above all, be willing to engage**

Adapting to a High S

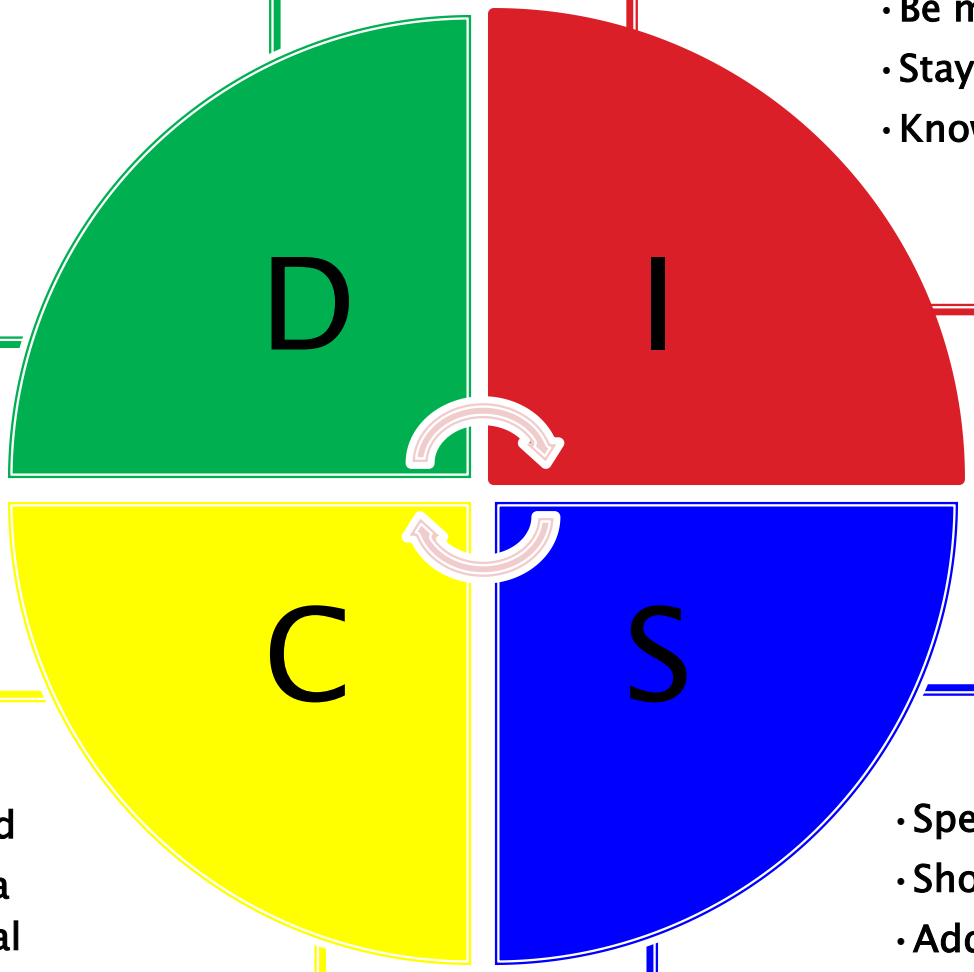
- Support them by showing personal interest
- Allow them time to trust you – don't "bulldoze"
- Draw them into conversations with open-ended questions
- Take advantage of their focus on the human impact of decisions/actions
- Take time to talk through the impact and risks involved when decisions are made
- **Above all, be warm & sincere**

Adapting to a High C

- Take advantage of their organized, thoughtful approach
- Agree on specific action steps and be sure to follow through
- Be organized and well-prepared for meetings
- List the advantages and disadvantages of any plan
- Provide solid, tangible, factual evidence
- **Above all, be thorough & well prepared**

- Don't push
- Give people time to process
- Slow down
- Use "softer" tones

- Be more organized
- Stay focused
- Know when to be serious



- Share details if asked
- Smile more – share a little of your personal side

- Speak up
- Show your confidence
- Address conflict

How Can You Adapt?

- Determine the style of a person with whom you have difficulty communicating.
- What does this person do that frustrates you or creates communication difficulties?
- Are there style-related differences that would promote this response?
- What can you do to adapt to this person's communication style and attempt to improve the relationship?

Summary Reflection

- In my current role, my style works well for me in the following ways:

- I need to be aware of style differences in the following situations:

- In those situations, things I can do to be more effective include: