

What Type Of Communicator Are You?



Mastering The Art Of Communication

When you have conversations, do you inspire and motivate people or simply drive them crazy while they nod politely? The truth is, you can't be sure.

Effective communication has little to do with how skilled or well-spoken you are. It's more about the communication style of the individual you're speaking to. One communication style requires you to slow down and get into the details, while another needs you to speed up and get to the point.

So how can you appease everyone? You have to consider THEIR communication style and work to meet them halfway.

This guide overviews the four main styles of communication. You'll learn your preferred style and how to uncover someone else's so you can adapt during conversations. Finally, you'll understand how to avoid conversational blind spots and gaps, so you don't frustrate your team members.

Using these techniques with your team, donors, volunteers and board members will make a world of difference in the way you share value and information. Are you ready to master the art of communication?









Let's Dive In

Miscommunication accounts for most issues in any organization, yet few people take the time to learn about how to communicate better.

Have you ever heard or said any of the following?

-  Working with others takes up 90% of my day; I don't have time to get anything done!
-  Our biggest challenge right now is getting the right people.
-  We have too many meetings!
-  Why do I have to do everything for it to get done at all?

These types of qualms are often a sign of an inability to effectively communicate with others.

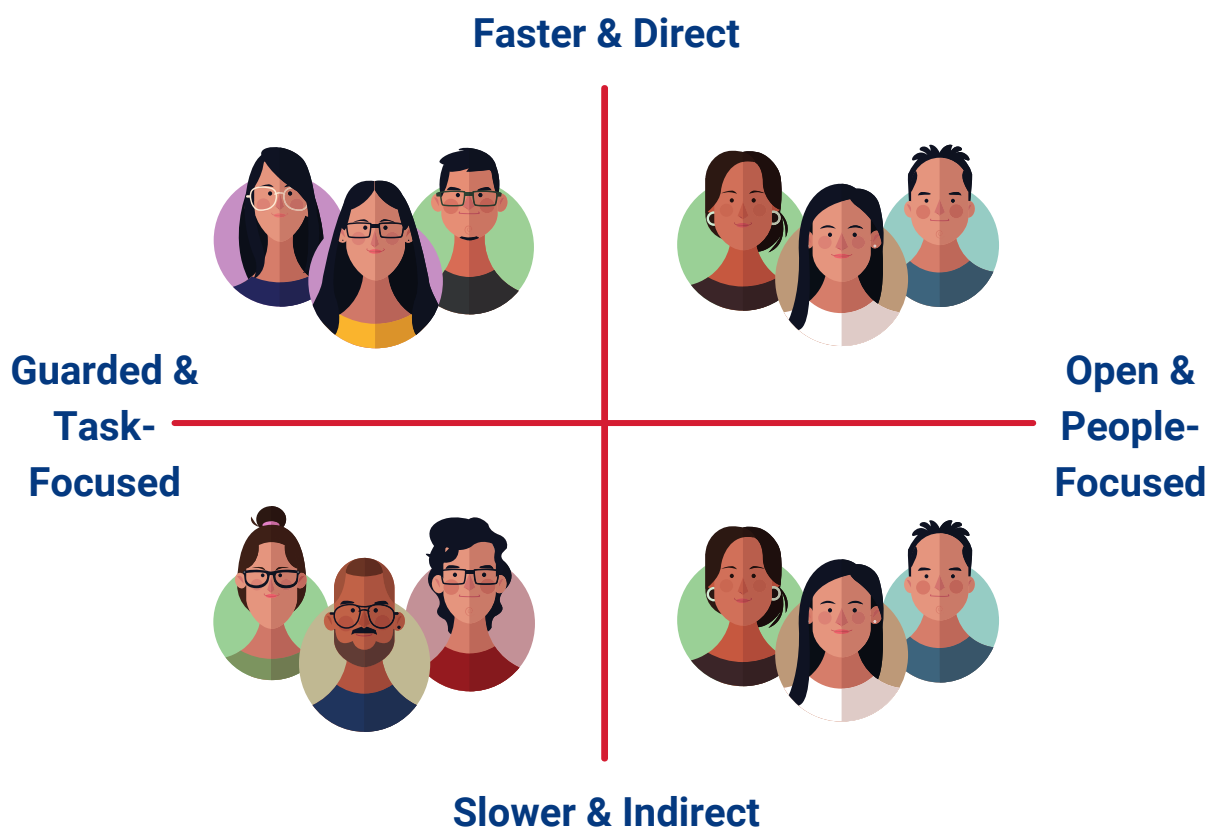


STOP! Have you taken the Communication Style Quiz? If you continue reading before doing the assessment, it can affect your results.



The framework discussed in this guide isn't new. You can find many similar models online, but they all point to the same four communication styles. An individual's preferred style depends on where they fall along the two axes shown below:

Faster & Direct to Slower & Indirect and Guarded & Task-Focused to Open & People-Focused.



Let's define these axes together:

Faster vs. Slower: This is the speed at which a person speaks. It's a function of how swift or delayed they are at making decisions, analyzing problems, walking, and talking. Keep in mind that being slower doesn't imply less intelligence. Instead, it simply means the speaker is more thorough and considers more variables when making decisions.

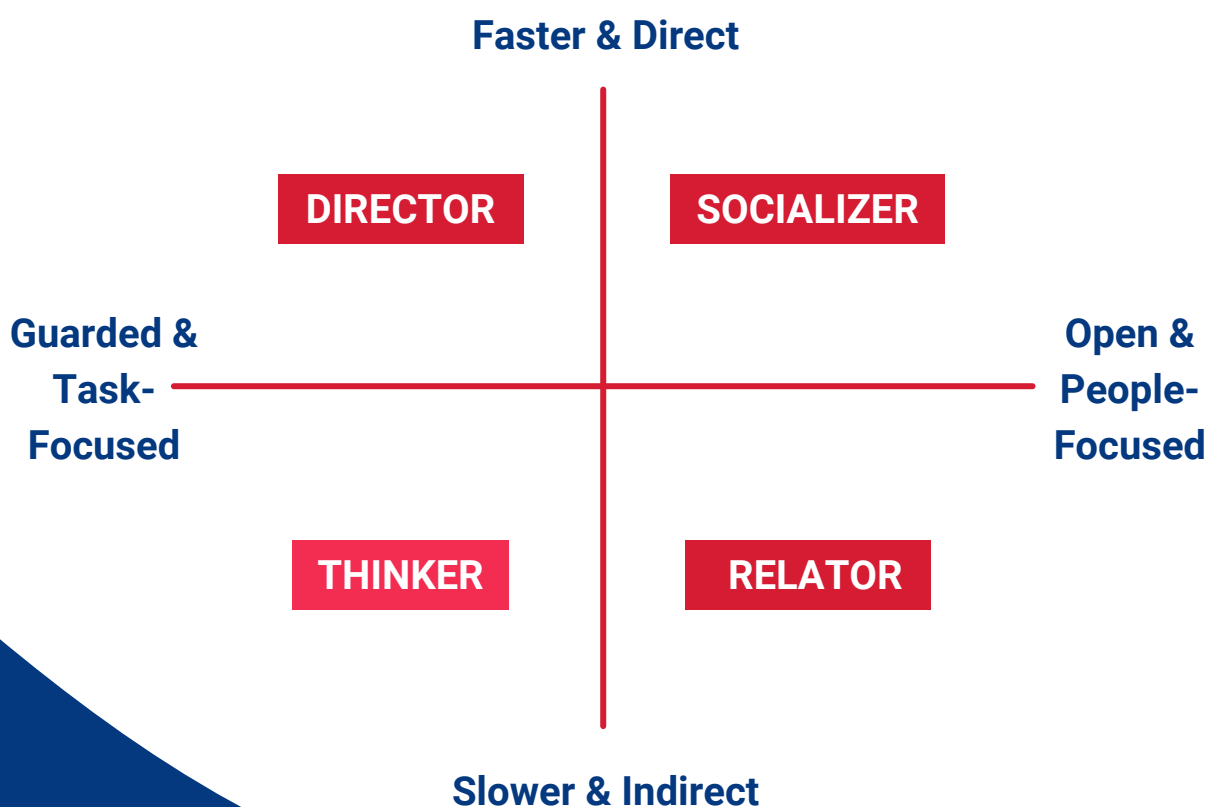
Direct vs. Indirect: This considers how explicit the communicator is. Do they say exactly what they mean regardless of how others may feel? Or do they value politeness and compassion over clarity?

Guarded vs. Open: This refers to how open the person is when sharing their thoughts, feelings and needs. Do they take a long time to warm up? Or do they tell anyone who will listen about their personal life?

Task-Focused vs. People-Focused: A task-focused person considers the actions required to complete a task. A people-focused person, however, considers the feelings of the people involved and the impact the task has on them.

Each communication style has its strengths and blind spots. The more you understand how to utilize your team's individual strengths and guide them to avoid blind spots, the more you'll get out of this framework.

Let's look at each communication style in detail:



Director

Directors are the fast-paced, hard-charging leaders that focus on results above all else. They are direct, task-focused, and generally less open than other styles. They stick to business and like to get things done. They may not feel they have time to discuss your weekend or build rapport as much as other styles may want.

The Director assumes that being decisive always leads to the best outcome, so they make decisions quickly and move on. They tend to get started on tasks immediately and often feel impatient, especially in meetings.

They may intimidate others with their communication style but rarely realize they have this effect. For them, being direct and clear is always the best way to communicate, and although they think people are important, they aren't as important as the task at hand and intended results.

If you're a Director, others may consider you to be pragmatic, practical, and tough, but as far as you're concerned, you're simply realistic and efficient.



How to Recognize a Director:

- They are fast-talking, impatient
- They are direct, and to the point
- They move quickly to action
- They tend to make direct eye contact

Common Director Career Choices:

- CEO
- Executive Director
- Stock Broker
- Business Executive
- Entrepreneur

Socializer

Socializers are creative, outgoing visionaries. They have bold, new ideas and love to share them with their communities. They are direct but far more people-focused than task-focused. They tend to be storytellers and may deviate from the agenda during meetings.



Socializers are entertainers, motivators, and cheerleaders; they share openly, think outside the box, and generally feel others should be free to voice their opinions. At times, they may get so wrapped up in a task that they miss a deadline. Yet, they are detail-oriented and love looking at the big picture.

How to Recognize a Socializer:

- They smile, crack jokes, tell stories—often personal ones
- They are excitable, fast-talking, comfortable to talk to
- They tend to mirror others quite well

Common Socializer Career Choices:

- Politician
- Fundraiser
- Actor
- Trial Attorney
- Comedian
- Sales Executive



♥ Relator

Relators are caregivers and healers. They bring muffins to work in the morning and like to give gifts on holidays. People naturally turn to them for comfort in times of trouble. Relators may not be decisive or daring, but they often keep people working happily together in subtle ways.

Relators listen intently. You may need to ask them to share in a meeting as they are focused on others and may need prompting. They can read a team better than any other style. If you want to get a pulse on your team, ask a Relator.

Relators are attuned to people's feelings, and they like to talk about people—not in the same animated way Socializers do, but more quietly, drawing less attention to themselves.

Relators prefer to fit in, not stand out. They try to avoid conflict and could often come across as people-pleasers. As a result, they can take on too much and feel overwhelmed.



🔍 How to Recognize a Relator:

- They listen well, wait for you to finish speaking
- They ask good questions, and tend to have a softer voice
- They are patient and show genuine care

📁 Common Relator Career Choices:

- Director of HR
- Program Manager
- Doctor or Nurse
- Therapist
- Teacher

Thinker

Problem-solving is of paramount importance to Thinkers.

A Thinker can focus entirely on the problem at hand and, at times, exclude the bigger picture. They can seem tedious to other styles, specifically Directors and Socializers who want to move quickly. But details are not tedious to a Thinker, and their attention to detail makes them a valuable team member.

Task-focused and a lover of checklists, Thinkers tend to be more cautious than Directors or Socializers. They play out scenarios in great detail in their minds and like to discuss those details with others to make sure they've considered all the possible moving pieces before acting.

As the world's problem solvers, they ask questions and revel in details. Thinkers may underestimate the amount of time they need to complete a project. Unlike Directors, who rarely miss a deadline, Thinkers will give themselves "extensions" to make sure the project is done precisely and accurately.

They are the perfectionists of the four styles, and perfection takes time. This means Thinkers may be less sensitive to people than other styles, focusing more on a task and how best to get it done.

How to Recognize a Thinker:

- They may sound monotone or unenthusiastic
- They may speak with a lack of hand motions, or without eye contact
- They ask a lot of questions

Common Thinker Career Choices:

- Engineer
- Accounting Manager
- Developer
- Scientist



Your Blindspots and How to Work Well with Other Styles

The most important takeaway from this guide is how you can work better with others, whether you're planning your next campaign with your team, trying to solicit feedback from a board member, or interviewing a major donor.

While each communication style has its strengths, each strength comes with an associated blind spot. We don't call these weaknesses; we aren't aiming to fix these, as that may dilute your strengths in other scenarios.

Being aware of your blindspots and tendencies, however, can make you a far better team player.



Director

You move quickly and take action, often before all scenarios are thought through. This approach is great when a fast decision matters most. However, when quality matters, you should work with Thinkers and Relators to ensure you weigh your options properly.

Ask Relators how your plan might affect others (and really listen to them!). Ask Thinkers if there are things you have not considered that may foil your plan. Thinkers may take some time to do this, but trust they will come up with elements you have not even considered.

Finally, if you need to present your plan in a way that will get others excited, consider asking a Socializer to help with the presentation.

In large meetings, plan your agenda, then cut a third of it out. You will naturally want to move too quickly and will lose others along the way. Your fast pace can feel stressful and cause anxiety in others who will feel unheard. Stop talking, and ask the Relators to share their opinion. Then listen. Don't cut in, don't interrupt; it won't be easy for you. But if you can do this well, you'll be seen as a better leader.

During or after meetings, ask Thinkers if they have any insight or notes to share. Take the time to read their notes. When it matters, being fast and quick on your feet is powerful. But when a team is involved, and collaboration is necessary, slowing down creates camaraderie, connection and better ideas.

Finally, when you want to schedule a last-minute meeting to finalize a decision, give everyone a heads up, especially the Thinkers and Relators. Tell them what you want to discuss and if they need to prepare anything. Even if you feel they don't need to prepare, they may want to. They will appreciate you for this and will be far more engaged in the meeting.



You are great at inspiring your team! What a brilliant skill. Remember, though, that not everyone is as excited by large visionary ideas.

Thinkers need to know your ideas will play out; they will poke holes in the plan, not to dishearten you, but to make the plan even better. A Director will want to get started right away.

A Relator may not say much, but they are thinking about everyone this idea will impact. Your strength is in selling the vision; let everyone else help make it a reality.

You are naturally open to sharing your personal life and ideas with others, but don't forget that other styles (Thinkers and Directors especially) may not be as comfortable with this.

As a Socializer, you can quickly get off track during meetings. Do your best to always consider the task at hand and notice when you're a distraction rather than an inspiration. Finally, you may not be the most detail-oriented person on the team, and that's okay! Ask a colleague with an eye for detail to proofread your work for you and ensure you're not missing anything.

Remember, the goal isn't to fix your blind spots; the goal is to work better with others. Your strengths are evident to those around you; asking for their help with the details may even be a positive rapport-building experience.



Creativity is the highest contribution, right? Well, for you, it is. But for others, a new creative idea each week, day, hour may feel overwhelming. If you're in a leadership position, this may be even more challenging for others as they don't want to seem discouraging or unenthused but simply can't turn every new idea into action. Don't stop creating new ideas, this is your superpower and it's vital. But notice when people seem stressed and bogged down with everything on their plate. In such moments, a new idea may not be the best thing to share. Instead, write it down and share when the time feels right.

Relator

Your style is often pulled so strongly into specific roles like healthcare, teaching and HR, that there can be a distinct shortage of Relators in many other areas of organizations. If you are a Relator in a role other than the ones mentioned above, you may feel frequently unheard.

As a Relator, you like to consider everyone else's wellbeing to determine how the team or organization can win, even above your ambitions. This is a beautiful trait that, in today's fast business environment, can be undervalued.

Relators often wait to speak in meetings, allowing others to go first. Don't get trapped doing this; your voice needs to be heard, and others will simply assume you'll speak if you have something to say.



Relators see things differently and without your unique understanding of a situation, a team can make a very wrong decision. As an empath, you intuitively know how those around you feel and are constantly observing others.

This level of emotional awareness can be overwhelming at times. The best leaders acknowledge this and make space for you to be heard, especially if they are a less people-focused style, such as a Director or Thinker.

When working with Directors, speak up, but be ready to share possible solutions. If you explain your feedback and then boldly tell them what action you recommend taking because of it, they will appreciate that.

You probably prefer to prepare before meetings, let others know this. They may happily jump right into last minute meetings, especially Socializers and Directors, but tell them clearly you want an agenda and time to prepare whenever possible.

You may be the one who needs to make the agenda, but that will be a welcomed contribution and one you probably don't mind doing for the team.

Finally, don't forget that while people are an essential element of any organization, other factors are also at play.

Financial resources, competition, and strategy are all important. Although you may be people-focused, don't forget to acknowledge other organizational factors and consider them as you tackle problems and create solutions.





As the detail-focused, analytical style, you are constantly calculating. Not in the negative sense; rather, you're always weighing variables to figure out how to best solve a problem. Make sure you pause to understand the big picture to ensure the problem you are working so hard on is actually the problem worth solving.

You may find Directors pushy and impatient and think of Socializers as distracting and dramatic. While this is valid, at times, remember they probably find that you move too slowly and are overly thorough.

Remember to show your excitement when you do like an idea or a Socializer may think you're unimpressed.

Allow a Director to motivate you to take action when you know it's time to stop analyzing and be decisive. If you feel deep down that a problem needs more time or a wrong decision is being made, hold firm and dig in.

Don't let the assertive Director or inspiring Socializer sway you. Making quality decisions is your superpower.

You probably get along well with Relators; most people do. But leaning on a Relator that you connect with is especially beneficial for you. You can ask them to give you insight into the people involved in a problem to help you identify elements of your plan where the effect on people may have been overlooked.

Remember, there is a time for deep and thorough analysis and time for fast and decisive action. So, acknowledge your strengths in the first scenario, lean in, and recognize your blind spots in the second scenario, letting a Director drive.



Ready to Start Communicating?

Every style has its strengths! The best teams know how to lean on different individuals and trust their respective strengths. The best leaders know and understand their blind spots and work well with others by meeting them in the middle. Be sure to recognize the areas where your style frustrates others and appreciate their strengths. By doing this, you'll be able to communicate more effectively with your stakeholders, donors, and more.



Good communication is team-wide. Share this guide with your team and start communicating effectively today.

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