

## Understanding Your Audience Completely

*“All great achievements require time.” ~ Maya Angelou*

It is really important that you understand your audience, especially if you want to be successful each and every time you communicate with them. In this chapter we are going to uncover how you can identify the different behaviours and personality types of your audience.

If you think about the interactions you currently have in your day, you will no doubt have had one of those days where you have a very successful interaction with one person and in the next minute you completely have no connection at all to that person. There is a good reason why this happens and this chapter will uncover how you can be successful with every person you come into contact with.

DISC provides a common language that you can use to better understand not only yourself but also to be able to adapt your behaviour with others.

VARK is the understanding of learning styles that shows you how individuals have a preferential way in which they absorb, process, comprehend and retain information. In other words, some people prefer verbal instructions, while others prefer visuals or hands-on interaction.

So let's take a closer look:

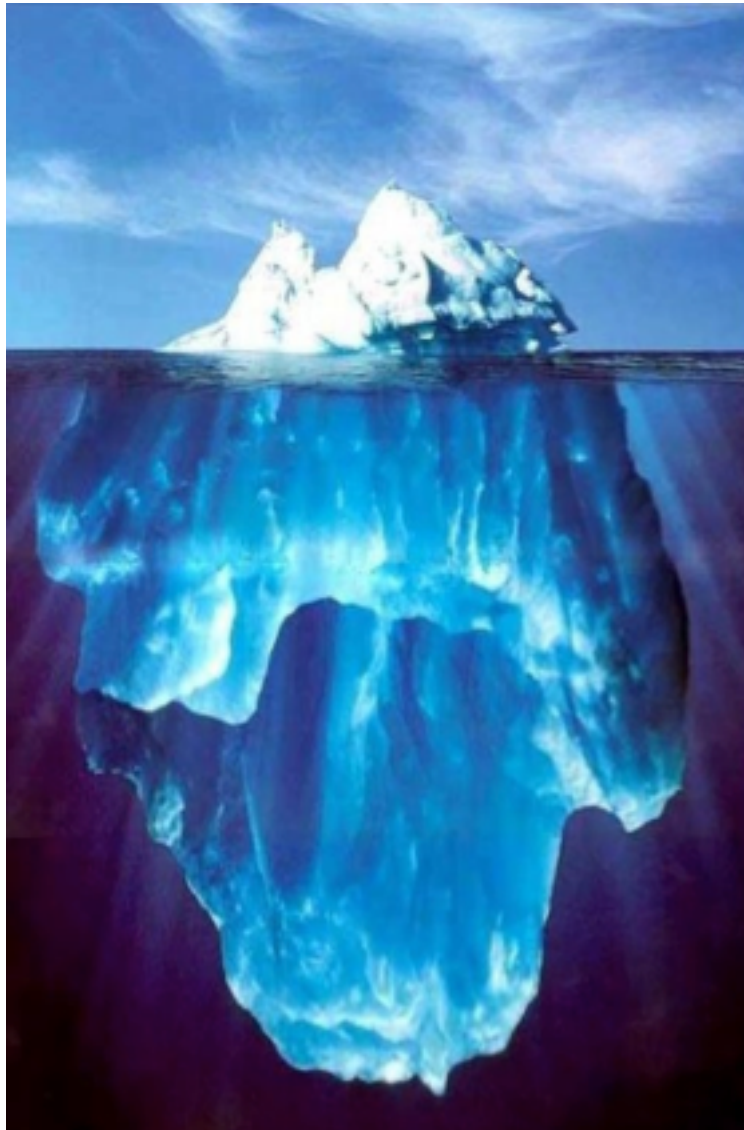
What influences your behaviour?

What influences the behaviour of others?

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## What influences behaviour?

When we observe others we are observing their behaviour.

What we see is just the tip of the iceberg; their behaviour is the outcome of an extremely complex mix of psychological factors.

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- ✓ Why do people behave the way they do?
- ✓ What causes one reaction in one person and a completely different reaction in another?
- ✓ What influences a person's behaviour?

## Predictability

Human behaviour is, to a large degree, predictable. Once you get to really know a person you can, with a certain degree of accuracy, determine how they will behave under normal circumstances.

There are broad bands of behaviour that are predictable due to cultural, educational and social conditioning.

By observing a person's past behaviour and understanding the patterns they usually follow, you can quite accurately predict how they will behave in a similar situation in the future.

## Perception

Perception is what our *mind* sees, not what our eye sees. Reality deals with logic and fact, perception deals with a mix of logic, fact, emotions, feelings, experience, personal interpretation and prejudice.

We filter our observations of the behaviour of others through a series of complex personal filters.

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## Full Breadth of Behaviour

**Dominance** - relating to control, power and assertiveness

**Influence** - relating to social situations and communication

**Steadiness** - relating to patience, persistence, and thoughtfulness

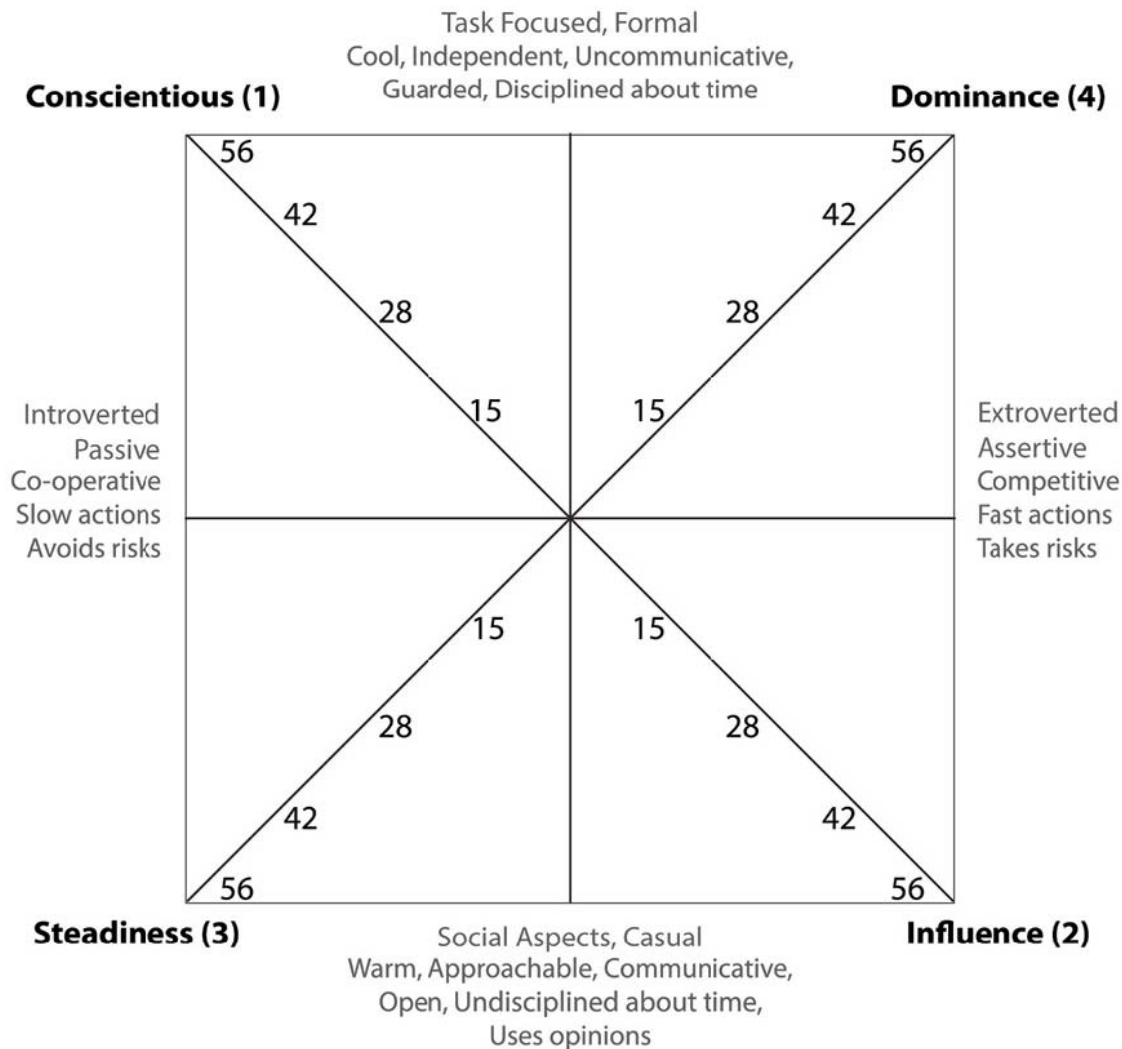
**Conscientiousness** - relating to structure and organisation

These four dimensions can be grouped in a grid with D and I sharing the top row and representing extroverted aspects of the personality, and C and S below representing introverted aspects. D and C then share the left column and represent task-focused aspects, and I and S share the right column and represent social aspects. In this matrix, the vertical dimension represents a factor of "**Assertive**" or "**Passive**", while the horizontal represents "**Open**" vs. "**Guarded**".

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**Dominance:** People who score high in the intensity of the 'D' styles factor are very active in dealing with problems and challenges, while low D scores are people who want to do more research before committing to a decision. High "D" people are described as demanding, forceful, egocentric, strong willed, driving, determined, ambitious, aggressive, and pioneering. Low D scores describe those who are

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conservative, low-keyed, cooperative, calculating, undemanding, cautious, mild, agreeable, modest and peaceful.

**Influence:** People with High I scores influence others through talking and activity and tend to be emotional. They are described as convincing, magnetic, political, enthusiastic, persuasive, warm, demonstrative, trusting, and optimistic. Those with Low I scores influence more by data and facts, and not with feelings. They are described as reflective, factual, calculating, skeptical, logical, suspicious, matter of fact, pessimistic, and critical.

**Steadiness:** People with High S styles scores want a steady pace, security, and do not like sudden change. Low S intensity scores are those who like change and variety. High S persons are calm, relaxed, patient, possessive, predictable, deliberate, stable, consistent, and tend to be unemotional and poker faced. People with Low S scores are described as restless, demonstrative, impatient, eager, or even impulsive.

**Conscientiousness:** Persons with High C styles adhere to rules, regulations, and structure. They like to do quality work and do it right the first time. High C people are careful, cautious, exacting, neat, systematic, diplomatic, accurate, and tactful. Those with Low C scores challenge the rules and want independence and are described as self-willed, stubborn, opinionated, unsystematic, arbitrary, and careless with details.

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V.A.R.K.

VARK is a short, simple inventory whose dimensions are intuitively understood and whose applications are practical. Its use has helped people to learn more effectively and mentors to become more sensitive to the diversity of teaching strategies necessary to reach all learners.

## **A Brief Overview of VARK and its Development**

VARK is an acronym made from the initial letters of four sensory preferences (Visual, Auditory, Read/write (Auditory Digital) and Kinaesthetic). People use preferences when they are taking in or giving out information. For example some people prefer to 'read about it,' others to talk or draw. Some have no strong preferences for any one mode.

### **Visual (V):**

This preference includes the depiction of information in charts, graphs, flow charts, and all the symbolic arrows, circles, hierarchies and other devices that instructors use to represent what could have been presented in words. They love colour.

### **Auditory (A):**

This perceptual mode describes a preference for information that is "heard." People with this modality, report that they learn best from lectures, tutorials, tapes, and talking to other people.

### **Read/Write (Auditory Digital) (R):**

This preference is for information displayed as words. Not surprisingly, many academics, accountants, lawyers, engineers have a strong preference for this modality.

### **Kinaesthetic (K):**

By definition, this modality refers to the perceptual preference related to the use of experience and practice (simulated or real). Although such an experience may

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invoke other modalities, the key is that the student is connected to reality, either through experience, example, practice or simulation.

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## Visual Strategies



For those with a strong preference for Visual learning, you should use some or all of the following:

To help them take in the information, use:

- ◆ Underlining
- ◆ Different colours
- ◆ Highlighters
- ◆ Symbols
- ◆ Flowcharts
- ◆ Charts
- ◆ Graphs
- ◆ Pictures, videos, posters, slides
- ◆ Different spatial arrangements on the page
- ◆ White space
- ◆ Textbooks with diagrams and pictures
- ◆ Trainers who use gestures and picturesque language

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These people are holistic rather than reductionist in their approach. They want the whole picture. Visual learners do not like handouts, words, lectures, textbooks or assessment that hinge on word usage, syntax and grammar. They are going to watch TV!

## Visual Words

See	Bright	View
Show	Clear	Illustrate
Picture	Perceive	Focused
Look	Highlight	Perspective
Envision	Reflect	Preview
Watch	Appear	Dawn
Reveal	Illuminate	Imagine
Crystal		

## Examples at work

- ◆ Let me have a **look** at it for you
- ◆ I will **see** if I can do anything
- ◆ **Show** me the specific numbers and we will **see** what we can do
- ◆ Let me run the numbers and that will give me a **clear** picture

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## Auditory Strategies



For those with a strong preference for learning by Auditory methods you should use some or all of the following:

To help them take in the information use:

- ◆ Lectures and tutorials
- ◆ Discussion of topics with other students and tutors
- ◆ Get them to explain new ideas to other people
- ◆ Use a tape recorder
- ◆ Interesting examples, stories, jokes
- ◆ Describe the overheads, pictures and other visuals
- ◆ Leave spaces in your notes for later recall and 'filing'

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These people will prefer to have this entire page explained to them. The written words will not be as valuable as those they hear. They will probably go and tell somebody about this!

## Auditory Words

Say	Tell	Tone
Static	Rings a bell	Sound
Speak	Express	Mention
Accent	Resonate	Remark
Ask	Unique	Hear
Talk	Listen	Make music
Tune in/out	Silence	Be all ears
Be heard	Question	Unhearing

## Examples at Work

- ◆ I will **speak** with management about your client and they will **tell** us if we can make it work
- ◆ **Sounds** good, send me the details and I will **ask** if we can make those numbers work
- ◆ I will **talk** to our team, **express** your concerns and let's wait to **hear** what they say

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## Read/Write (Auditory Digital) Strategies



For those who have a strong preference for learning by reading/writing you should use some or all of the following:

To help them take in the information, use:

- ◆ Lists
- ◆ Headings
- ◆ Dictionaries
- ◆ Glossaries

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- ◆ Definitions
- ◆ Handouts
- ◆ Textbooks
- ◆ Readings - Library
- ◆ Lecture notes (verbatim)
- ◆ Trainers who use words well, with lots of information in sentences and notes
- ◆ Essays
- ◆ Manuals (computing and laboratory)

These people will like this page because the emphasis is on words and lists. They believe that the meanings are within the words, so the talk was OK, but this handout is better. They will shortly be heading for the library to do further research.

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## Kinaesthetic Strategies



For those who have a strong preference for Kinaesthetic learning you should use some or all of the following:

To help them take in the information, use:

- ◆ All your senses - sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing
- ◆ Examples of principles
- ◆ Mentors who give real-life examples
- ◆ Applications
- ◆ Hands-on approaches
- ◆ Trial and error
- ◆ Exhibits, samples, photographs

These people want to experience the results so that they can understand it. The ideas on this page are only valuable if they sound practical, real and relevant. They need to do things to understand.

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## Kinaesthetic Words

Feel	Grab	Touch
Get a handle	Rub	Grasp
Affect	Impress	Hit
Suffer	Tackle	Pressure
Know	Intuition	Make contact
Get hold of	Slip through	Catch on
Tap into	Throw out	Turn around
Hard	Unfeeling	Concrete

## Examples at Work

- ◆ Let me **get a handle** on your proposal
- ◆ Once I have **grasped** the numbers, we can **tackle** the situation better
- ◆ I need to **know** specifics, send it to me and I will be able to get a **feel** for the numbers and how we can **affect** things our end for you

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