

## **Understanding and Motivating Volunteers**

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Have you ever had a board member with whom you had difficulty relating? Have you ever emphasized something you thought important and your board members or committee chairs responded blankly? Do you find some board volunteers make slower (or faster) decisions than you think appropriate?

Answering yes to any of these questions means that you have run across a volunteer whose behavior style is different from yours. To have a more effective relationship with the volunteer you need to learn to adapt your behavior style to fit theirs.

In the 1930s, William Marston developed a concept which was later elaborated upon by Dr. John Grier which divides people into four basic personality types. Understanding these types will allow you to relate more successfully.

The first step in this process is discovering your own style. The next step is recognizing your volunteer's style, and the final step is applying this information to your relationship.

The four basic styles are called Dominance (D); Influencing (I); Steadiness (S); and Conscientiousness (C). Keep in mind the key to being successful is being able to adapt your approach to fit your volunteer's style.

### **Determining Your Style**

You first need to determine your own relationship style by answering several questions. When you select your answers, think about which response best characterizes you when relating to volunteers.

#### **Is your relationship style more active and outgoing or more reserved?**

If you answered active and outgoing, you are either a D (Dominance) or an I (Influencing) style. To find out more specifically what your style is select one of the following:

#### **Are you more concerned with directing others or relating to others?**

If you answered relating, then you're an I style. If you answered directing, you're a D.

If you answered reserved, you are either an S (Steadiness) or a C (Conscientiousness). To find out more specifically what your style is select one of the following:

#### **Are you more concerned with accepting of others or assessing or judging of others?**

If you answered accepting, you're an S. If you answered assessing or judging, you're a C.

### **Characteristics of the Styles**

Now that you know what style you are, let's explore the different styles characteristics.

If you're D, you like getting immediate results, causing action, accepting challenges and making quick decisions to solve problems.

If you're I, you enjoy contacting and entertaining people while making a favorable impression. You are verbal and enthusiastic.

If you're S, you like staying in one place while concentrating on the task at hand. You are loyal, a good listener and patient.

If you're C, you prefer following standards and procedures, concentrating on details, and working under controlled circumstances.

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### **Your Volunteer's Style**

Now that you know more about your style, let's explore your volunteer's style.

#### **D Style**

A D style volunteer is highly interested in being involved in new and innovative projects. To convince him get right to the bottom line and don't waste his time with lots of facts and figures.

#### **I Style**

An I volunteer is the friendly, gregarious types who enjoys talking and socializing. She's great at convincing other. Spare the details she is not interested. She loves new and innovative projects.

#### **S Style**

An S volunteer may be a bit shy but wants to be your friend. He's not suspicious, but is slow to make changes, likes the traditional and needs to feel he can trust you. To earn his trust and friendship, ask about family and hobbies.

#### **C Style**

A C volunteer may sometimes be suspicious of you. They can become solidly faithful to you, but only after they trust you. They're not great talkers or innovators. Give solid background information on projects.

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### **Blending Seller and Buyer**

To be truly effective, you need to blend your relationship style with that of your volunteer.

#### **If you're a D**

*Working with a D volunteer:* Be yourself. One D communicates well with another.

*Working with a I volunteer:* Be friendlier than usual and less businesslike.

*Working with an S volunteer:* Slow down, give him assurances and a chance to digest facts.

**Working with a C volunteer:** Present plenty of proof and facts and answer all questions.

### **If you're an I**

**Working with a D volunteer:** Don't tell jokes or make small talk. Stay businesslike; don't waste time.

**Working with an I volunteer:** No problem, just ask for their agreement.

**Working with an S volunteer:** Earn their trust before becoming too friendly. Stick to facts and figures. Talk about your families.

**Working with a C volunteer:** He's not impressed by story-telling or socializing. Give him facts, figures, and proof.

### **If you're an S**

**Working with a D volunteer:** Assert confidence, answer strongly and hold your ground.

**Working with an I volunteer:** You may not like his over-friendly, time-wasting attitude, but you should get along well.

**Working with an S volunteer:** She'll probably require assurances, so be confident.

**Working with a C volunteer:** Confidently answer all her questions and firmly present specific facts and figures.

### **If you're a C**

**Working with a D volunteer:** Don't overwhelm her with facts and figures. Just hit the high points

**Working with an I volunteer:** Resist the urge to lay out all the facts; just hit the high points, being as friendly as possible.

**Working with an S volunteer:** Don't talk too fast. Give him time to digest facts. Talk about his family.

**Working with a C volunteer:** You'll see eye to eye with him from the start.

Blending your style with your volunteer's is a most effective to increase you success with working with your volunteers. As a leader of volunteers I want to share with you a poem that was shared with me by Dr. Herb True.

Watch your thoughts  
They become your actions,

Watch your actions

They become your habits,

Watch your habits  
They become your character,

And watch your character  
It becomes you!

As you relate to your volunteers, you are bringing your behavior style into play with theirs to create more success for both of you. Happy blending!

Dr. Jerry V. Teplitz is an attorney and has a Ph.D. in Wholistic Health Sciences. He is celebrating his 30th year as a professional speaker, Dr. Teplitz has spoken to over one million people. Clients have included ASAE, NYSAE, FSAE, American Bankers Association, National Association of Realtors and Young Presidents' Organization. He has been honored by the National Speakers Association by receiving the title Certified Speaking Professional. Dr. Teplitz is author of the books, *Managing Your Stress: How to Relax and Enjoy*, *Switched-On Living* and *Brain Gym for Business*. Dr. Teplitz can be reached at 800 77-RELAX. His website is [www.Teplitz.com](http://www.Teplitz.com) and his email is [Info@Teplitz.com](mailto:Info@Teplitz.com).