

DiSC® Theory

Two Dimensions of Human Behavior

VERTICAL: LEVEL OF ACTIVITY



Everything DiSC Vertical Level of Activity

The vertical dimension is best described as level of activity, ranging from active to thoughtful. People with DiSC styles at the top of the circle tend to be fast-paced and are often described as assertive, dynamic, and bold. Traditional explanations of the model suggest that these people perceive themselves as more powerful than the environment. Because of this perception, they tend to exert effort to change their circumstances. Conversely, people with styles that fall toward the bottom of the circle tend to be more moderate paced and are often described as calm, methodical, and careful. Traditionally, these people are thought to perceive themselves as less powerful than the environment, and thus they are more inclined to adapt to existing circumstances.

HORIZONTAL: LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE



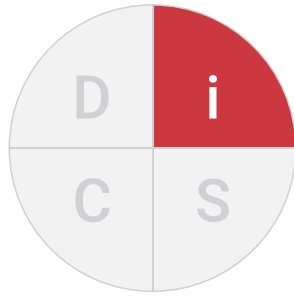
Everything DiSC Horizontal Level of Acceptance

The horizontal dimension runs from questioning to accepting. People with DiSC styles that fall toward the left side of the circle are naturally more skeptical in nature and are often described as logic-focused, objective, and challenging. A traditional explanation of these characteristics is that these people see the environment as antagonistic. In other words, they instinctively withhold trust from people and ideas until those outside elements can be thoroughly vetted. On the other hand, people with styles on the right side of the circle are naturally more receptive in nature and are often described as people-focused, empathizing, and agreeable. Traditionally, they are said to see the environment as being aligned with their interests. In essence, they are biased to see the people and ideas around them as favorable and are thus inclined to trust them.

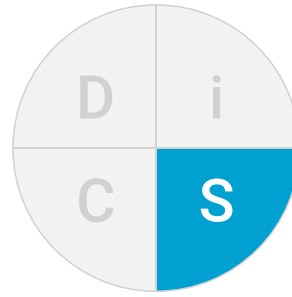
The Four Quadrants of DiSC®



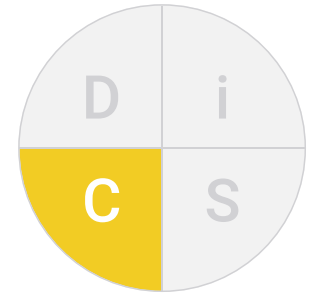
The **D (Dominance)** style is active and questioning. This describes people who are direct, forceful, and outspoken with their opinions.



The **i (Influence)** style is active and accepting. This describes people who are outgoing, enthusiastic, and lively.



The **S (Steadiness)** style is thoughtful and accepting. This describes people who are gentle, accommodating, and patient with others' mistakes.



The **C (Conscientiousness)** style is thoughtful and questioning. This describes people who are analytical, reserved, and precise.

Although the DiSC dimensions form four distinct styles, it is probably more useful to think of the DiSC circle in continuous terms. Consider that each of the four styles blend into their neighboring styles much the same way that colors blend into one another on the color wheel. Red and yellow are distinct colors, but they both blend to form a new color, orange. In the same way, the D and i styles are distinct, but the space between them on the circle represents an equally distinct set of traits. For instance, people with a Di style are more likely than people with the D style to describe themselves as daring and convincing. A person with an iD style is more likely than someone with the i style to describe himself as charismatic and dynamic. In both cases, these two styles (Di and iD) share something with the D and i styles, but they also have characteristics that differentiate them from those singular styles.

You may also notice that when discussing DiSC, we go out of our way to say “a person with the C style” rather than simply calling someone a “C”. This subtle difference in language is meant to mitigate the natural temptation to pigeonhole people. Although a person with the C style predominantly demonstrates C traits, she has elements of the other four styles in her as well. For example, it is likely that she is quite capable of patiently listening to a coworker describe his hurt feelings, even though this is more of an S quality.

THE IDEA OF STRETCH

The continuous nature of the DiSC circle also helps people understand the idea of “stretch.” It is helpful to think of your style as your home base or comfort zone. Someone with a C style may be very comfortable working alone on analytical projects that require accuracy. At times, however, this person may be called on to mingle with strangers at a professional function. In this case, the person is being asked to stretch across the circle toward the i style. Now, someone with the C style who has a dot close to the center of the circle will probably find this mingling unpleasant, but manageable. On the other hand, someone with a C style whose dot is located on the edge of the circle is more likely to find this mingling highly stressful. In the second case, the person has had to travel farther outside their comfort zone, and that will require more energy. So, as a general rule, people with dots located close to the center usually have a somewhat easier time adopting foreign DiSC styles when the situation calls for it. People whose dots are on the edge of the circle may have to stretch more (and experience more stress) if they want to adopt another style. On the other hand, because these people have more pronounced DiSC styles, those styles are often accompanied by some very distinct strengths.