



Work Style Assessment

Communication Guide



Introduction

What makes a great communicator? People have pondered this question for many thousands of years. And even today one of the best ways of thinking about it is to use Aristotle's three key elements: ethos, pathos and logos.

Ethos is about having credibility. People are more likely to listen to you, and be influenced by you, if they believe what you're saying. This is a matter of having the necessary experience and knowledge to make you sound believable and convey a strong impression of trust and integrity. After all, people need to feel that you're telling the truth.

Pathos concerns the ability to make an emotional connection with others. It's about being in the present and listening and responding to people at an individual level. Doing this creates an emotional bond and gives people a reason to believe that what you are saying, or asking them to do, is directly related to them, i.e., that they have a personal stake in the outcome.

Logos can be looked at in various different ways, but the most important thing is that you vary the content of your communication to suit the other person. If you like, it's about varying what you say to engage the other person's sense of reason. And that sense of logic or reason may rely on "the numbers" or something else. People respond differently to the different types of information they receive.

All three elements have something to do with your personality. Your personality will influence whether you appear credible and responsive, and, critically, it also affects the degree to which you match your communication style with the style of other people.

About This Guide

This guide describes how each of the seven core personality types prefers to communicate with other people. It also provides tips on how you can have an effective conversation with each of the other personalities by taking account of how they prefer to communicate.



Action-taker

You are a direct and goal-driven person. You enjoy doing practical tasks and are not scared to get cold, wet and dirty. In fact, you are drawn to manual and physical tasks and especially to activities that involve using technology or machinery. That's because you can use your particular skills in an applied and systematic way. When you're talking to other people, you have a can-do attitude, and this will manifest itself in a desire to start tasks and get things done. You're the sort of person who will encourage people to take immediate action.

Your preference will be for action rather than thinking, and you are likely to enjoy situations in which you can “fire-fight,” those where you can leap into action and solve problems as you go along. From a communications perspective, this can mean you don't spend much time explaining why you're going to do something; you just do it. Indeed you're probably happy working by yourself and don't necessarily need the support of others.

With like-minded people, say other Action-Takers, this approach is likely to work well. They will understand where you're coming from but of course may not want to work with you in a team unless everyone has clearly defined roles, i.e., they can apply their own expertise in their own particular way.

If you're an Action-Taker, here are some tips on how to communicate with these other types:

Analyzers

Analyzers are thoughtful, rational folk who like to get their thoughts in order. They don't want to immediately move to action, so if you want to have a constructive talk or get the most out of them in a meeting, make sure you provide plenty of space for discussion. They also like to have a rational basis for doing things. This means you need to marshal your facts.

Going beyond the obvious, being open to new ideas and figuring out things is what Analyzers like to do. They like experimenting and pushing boundaries. This can work in your favor if what you're proposing involves using existing technology—for example, in a new and innovative way. Talk about how it bridges the gap between practicality and experimentation.

The typical Analyzer is a “think-do-think” sort of character, so there's no point in rushing towards a plan of action. To you this will often feel as everything is moving far too slowly. However you need to accept that other people, while being systematic, are also more deeply analytic. Allow time for any Analyzers to think through and discuss your approach.

Inventors

Inventors are creative, intuitive and spontaneous and often get lost in their work. If you want to talk, you're probably going to have to go and find them. Equally they may just appear and want to talk about their latest idea immediately. If you're planning a meeting, be prepared to send lots of reminders. This may frustrate your need to move to action, but remember that an Inventor might just work out a better way of getting the job done.

Getting carried away by an idea, being able to see the world in any number of different ways and flying by the seat of their pants captures what it is to be an Inventor. From your viewpoint, this probably looks like a lack of goal orientation. To make progress, you will need to carefully explore how their ideas can feed into your rather more immediate way of doing things while at the same time personally recognizing that new ideas can be just as practical as old ones.

Inventors tend to focus on internal thoughts and ideas, so you might need to spend time drawing them out. It might also be that they prefer to communicate in nonverbal ways—for example, by drawing a diagram or a picture. If you think about it, making things “physical” in this way is probably what you prefer. So encourage Inventors to explain things to you in concrete terms.

Mentors

Mentors are drawn to working with other people and have a patient and empathic style. As they are excellent communicators, your problem may be how to get a word in edgeways. And in meetings, given their preference is for harmony, encourage them to say what they think in direct terms. You also need to consider that your individualistic style is likely to be at odds with their more inclusive approach. So don't forget to draw everyone into conversations.

Being both people and process-orientated, Mentors are good at sorting out complicated people problems. Their emphasis is likely to be on the human implications of any given action or plan. Yours will be on getting the job done. If you're proposing a plan, talk about the tasks but also concentrate on people's individual roles and responsibilities.

Mentors are often quite happy to be in a team as long as the goal is to help or support other people. Be careful as they might not understand why you want to work on something by yourself rather than with other people. From a work perspective, it might be better to communicate that you understand the advantages of working in groups, even if you are the specialist in a particular area.

Naturalists

Naturalists are independent, laid-back people who like to go about things in a steady way. If you want to have a constructive talk, do it one to one. And if you're in a meeting, don't railroad them into a particular course of action however impatient you are to begin. Demonstrate that you respect their viewpoint.

Having a practical focus with a concerned eye on the natural world sums up the Naturalist. They will be happy talking about specific tasks or goals and be particularly concerned with the impact of any actions. Make sure you can talk about your approach in a way that acknowledges a more “sensitive” view of the world, especially if you are considering the use of machinery or technology.

Naturalists are by nature relaxed, but they are also interested in doing things efficiently. They can be just as systematic and orderly as you are but will tend to want to work at their own steady pace. Give them space and they will get the job done. If things do need doing more quickly, appeal to their sense of balance and explain how your approach can conserve or save precious resources.

Planners

Planners like to develop systems and to put procedures in place. If you want to have a productive talk with a Planner or to get him or her on board in a meeting, make sure you have your thoughts in order and have prepared a full agenda. And don't be too eager to move from planning to action. Planners will be just as keen to get things going, but they need you to provide the facts first.

The tried-and-tested, familiar and pragmatic drive how a Planner prefers to work. This orderly way of working will be much like your own. However, to satisfy a Planner you may need to explain how the detail of a task fits into the broader organizational picture, especially with regard to the scheduling of different tasks or projects.

Many Planners like to get into the fine print of whatever it is they are doing. They like to make decisions based on a methodical examination of the information that is available. Talk about how you can quickly put plans into action, which is your strength, and that of course you are willing to stick to an agreed plan once the details are finalized, which is their strong suit.

Visionaries

Visionaries are energetic, go-ahead people who want to make things happen. This means that in meetings, if you're the organizer, you will probably find yourself in agreement with the notion that work needs to start now! However bear in mind that you might need to bring a more systematic and practical voice to the discussion. A Visionary might not have your specialist knowledge.

Being enthusiastic, enjoying convincing other people and wanting to move before all the data is available captures the Visionary style. From your perspective, this may all feel a little unrealistic. You like to know what you're doing. However the important thing is to capture the energy and talk about how this can be directed towards an identifiable goal.

Visionaries often have a spontaneous approach to life and like to take risks. While you are likely to empathize with this ability to take charge of one's own destiny, you are probably going to need to talk around how this will affect the timely delivery and ultimate quality of a piece of work.



Analyzer

You are a natural “scientist” who likes to observe and understand the world and explain how things work. You are the sort of person who likes to delve deeply into problems and who enjoys experimenting and testing hypotheses. When you're talking about a favorite topic, you are likely to be enthusiastic and get great pleasure from explaining the intricacies to another person. In more formal situations, people will turn to you for “the science” or the hard facts. Additionally, you are likely able to describe, in a cool-headed way, the pros and cons of various courses of actions.

Your preference will be for exploration and grappling with knotty problems rather than necessarily working out how to apply what you have discovered. When it comes to communicating with other people, you might seem a little detached or even serious, but that's because your default mode is to take a rational approach to whatever presents itself. However this does not imply that you are not prepared to “think the unthinkable” that's all part of intellectual curiosity.

With like-minded people, say other Analyzers, this approach is likely to work well. They will understand your need to understand things at a deep level, and where there is disagreement it will often be with regard to the theoretical or technical basis for a particular viewpoint.

If you're an Analyzer, here are some tips on how to communicate with these other types:

Action-takers

Action-Takers like tangible goals and enjoy applying specialist skills and knowledge. These are realistic down-to-earth folk, so tell it like it is and work to produce well-defined goals. In meetings, try and tap into their particular skill set and let them describe how they would approach a problem. You can then enrich the debate by using your keen eye for detail and your ability to go beyond the surface of an argument.

Operating in the present, fixing things as they happen and dealing with concrete tasks are what Action-Takers prefer to do. They are great at “fire-fighting” and moving quickly. They are probably rather more action-orientated than you; equally they won't buy into vague views of the future. You're going to have to explain how your proposals can be turned into positive actions to improve the here and now!

Action-Takers can work in teams, but they particularly like working alone. This probably sums you up as well. However there are occasions when team or group work is required, so you may need to put the case for this type of work. In this scenario, your argument might be that many goals are easier to achieve if people not only contribute at the physical level but collectively at the intellectual level as well.

Inventors

Inventors are creative, intuitive and spontaneous and often get lost in their work. If you want to talk, you're probably going to have to go and find them. Equally they may just appear and want to talk about their latest idea immediately. If you're planning a meeting, be prepared to send lots of reminders. And you'll probably need to send one to yourself because you're the sort of person who gets lost in work as well!

As they are single-minded and able to see the world in any number of different ways, Inventors may be your natural ally. However they are likely to fly by the seat of their pants rather than spend time carefully checking the data. So it's fine to speculate on what might be and to capture the passion of the inventive mind, but you will inevitably need to bring discussions back to the facts.

Inventors tend to focus on internal thoughts and ideas, so you might need to spend time drawing them out. It might also be that they prefer to communicate in nonverbal ways—for example, by drawing a diagram or a picture or in even more abstract terms. As an analytical person, you might think this is all rather vague and quirky. However go with the flow, as it could lead to something that you can put to the test.

Mentors

Mentors are drawn to working with other people and have a patient and empathic style. As they are excellent communicators, your problem may be how to get a word in edgeways. And in meetings, given their preference is for harmony, encourage them to say what they think in direct terms. You also need to consider that your individualistic style is likely to be at odds with their more inclusive approach. So don't forget to draw everyone into conversations.

Being both people and process-orientated, Mentors are good at sorting out complicated people problems. Their emphasis is likely to be on the human implications of any given action or plan. Yours will be on getting the job done. If you're proposing a plan, talk about the tasks but also concentrate on people's individual roles and responsibilities.

Mentors are often quite happy to be in a team as long as the goal is to help or support other people. Be careful as they might not understand why you want to work on something by yourself rather than with other people. From a work perspective, it might be better to communicate that you understand the advantages of working in groups, even if you are the specialist in a particular area.

Naturalists

Naturalists are independent, laid-back people who like to go about things in a steady way. If you want to have a constructive talk, do it one to one. And if you're in a meeting, don't deluge them with arguments. Instead, demonstrate that you respect their viewpoint. This should be an instinctive thing to do as what you both have in common is being independently minded.

Having a future focus with a concerned eye on the natural world sums up the Naturalist. They will be happy talking about the big stuff and change, just as you are, but will be particularly concerned with the impact. Make sure that in your exploration of a situation you have checked out the real-world implications of anything you suggest.

Naturalists are by nature relaxed, but they are also interested in doing things efficiently. If you come up with too many options, you will bring progress to a complete halt. Be selective and let them use their own approach. Likely as not this will be both constructive and orderly and will lead to a successful conclusion.

Planners

Planners like to develop systems and to put in place procedures. If you want to have a productive talk with a Planner or get him or her on board in a meeting, make sure you have your thoughts in order and have prepared a full agenda. Also be careful not to get stuck in a cycle of wanting to test out every possible idea. Planners will want to talk about how to move things forward rather than multiply the possible courses of action.

The tried-and-tested, familiar and conventional drive how a Planner prefers to work. If you're trying to pitch a new idea, you will need to show how it builds on the existing way of doing things. And if big change is involved, try breaking it down into small steps and illustrating how they can become a routine activity. If your idea is too far out, it might be dismissed as unworkable.

Many Planners like to get into the fine print of whatever it is they are doing. They like to make decisions based on a methodical examination of the information that is available. This is very much like you, but the difference is that Planners want to create a system while you might just be satisfying your curiosity. To help a Planner act, make sure you present the most compelling information and remember that from your perspective this might not be the most interesting!

Visionaries

Visionaries are energetic, go-ahead people who want to make things happen. This means that in meetings, if you're the organizer, you will often feel carried along by events. To regain control, you will need to slow things down by moving the discussion on to the available information and how this can be used to intelligently decide on the best course of action.

Being enthusiastic, enjoying convincing other people and wanting to move before all the data is available captures the Visionary style. The latter is not how you operate, and so you're likely to feel a tension between wanting to think about things in a flexible way and not having enough data to act. The important thing may be to persuade any Visionaries to use their energy to explore the available options and to see what seems to work so that you can test out the best prospects.

Visionaries often have a spontaneous approach to life and like to take risks. While you like to take intellectual risks, you are far less likely to plunge into things without being on top of the data. In this sense, you are more deliberate than daring. A possible way of squaring the circle is to talk to Visionaries about the personal or business implications of acting too soon without understanding situations at a deep enough level.



Inventor

You are a contemporary, lateral thinking, passionate and probably quite intuitive person. As a person, you are attracted to the unusual, possibly even the strange and whimsical. You don't think in straight lines and are not particularly interested in elaborate planning. Your thing is personal expression, generally in the aesthetic or artistic sense but also when it comes to trying to make your ideas tangible. When you're talking to other people, often in an animated and expressive way, you will frequently try to bring them around to your point of view. In meetings, you're often the ideas person and someone who is not afraid to make bluesky suggestions.

Your preference is for quickly sketching out the details of something and bringing together information from many different places. At times, you will seem to be lost in your own world. So engrossed, in fact, that people will probably have to come and find you rather than the other way around. As a communicator, you might sometimes be seen as infuriating, especially by those who have a more linear way of thinking. That's because your thoughts and your conversations are likely to rapidly move from one thing to another in an extremely open, flexible and agile manner.

With like-minded people, say other Inventors, this approach is likely to work well. They will understand why you get lost in your work and, equally, why you can flip from one thought to another. Where there is disagreement, it will often be with regard to the inventive "arms race," i.e., who can claim to have the most imaginative and progressive approach.

If you're an Inventor, here are some tips on how to communicate with these other types:

Action-takers

Action-Takers like tangible goals and enjoy applying specialist skills and knowledge. These are realistic down-to-earth folk, so tell it like it is and work to produce well-defined goals. In meetings, try and tap into their particular skill set and let them describe how they would approach a problem. This will involve you being clear about what you want or need, as well as restraining yourself from telling everyone how you would solve a problem!

Operating in the present, fixing things as they happen and dealing with concrete tasks are what Action-Takers prefer to do. They are great at "fire-fighting" and moving quickly. This ability to move quickly is in the physical sense rather than having a preference for juggling ideas. As a consequence, you're going to have to explain how your proposals can be turned into positive actions to improve the here and now. Being vague on the detail won't get you very far!

Action-Takers can work in teams, but they particularly like working alone. This probably sums you up as well. However there are occasions when team or group work is required, so you may need to put the case for this type of work. In this scenario, your argument might be that many goals are easier to achieve if people not only contribute at the physical level but collectively at the intellectual level as well. As it happens, the latter is something you probably need to seriously consider.

Analyzers

Analyzers are thoughtful, rational folk who like to get their thoughts in order. They don't want to immediately move to action. So if you want to have a constructive talk or get the most out of them in a meeting, make sure you provide plenty of space for discussion. Actually you probably also want plenty of time to talk. However bear in mind that Analyzers are interested in the rational basis for doing things. So present the critical argument for something as opposed to relying on whether or not it “feels” right.

Going beyond the obvious, being open to new ideas and figuring out things is what Analyzers like to do. They like experimenting and pushing boundaries. This can work in your favor if what you're proposing involves using existing ideas or research in a new and innovative way. You should be on the same wavelength here but make sure you talk about how things can be applied and shown to work.

The typical Analyzer is a “think-do-think” sort of character, so there's no point in rushing towards a plan of action. While you're not big on plans, this will often feel like moving far too slowly. However you need to accept that other people take a more analytical approach. Allow time for any Analyzers to think through and discuss your ideas.

Mentors

Mentors are drawn to working with other people and have a patient and empathic style. As they are excellent communicators, your problem may be how to get a word in edgeways. And in meetings, given that their preference is for group agreement, encourage them to talk about topics that they feel disrupt group harmony. Use your open approach to situations to make them feel it is okay to talk about “difficult” people topics.

Being both people and process-orientated, Mentors are good at sorting out complicated people problems. Their emphasis is likely to be on the human implications of any given action or plan. If you're proposing something radical, explain why it's a viable option and how it will affect people. You will certainly gain points if you can explain how it will help people grow, develop and fully express themselves.

Mentors are often quite happy to be in a team as long as the goal is to help or support other people. If it's an obviously creative challenge, they will be quite happy with you taking the lead. However, be careful not to leave people behind in your enthusiasm to talk about all your great ideas!

Naturalists

Naturalists are independent, laid-back people who like to go about things in a steady way. If you want to have a constructive talk, do it one to one. This should suit your style, but remember that while you're busy thinking about human processes, Naturalists are thinking about hands-on activities. This means you will need to manage activities like meetings in such a way that there is room for a discussion of more “earthy,” practical matters.

Having a future focus with a concerned eye on the natural world sums up the Naturalist. They will be happy talking about the big stuff and change but will be particularly focused on impact. This is where you can have a joining of minds because you are both concerned with impact, if in different areas. Try and show how there is a similarity between being drawn to helping the environment prosper and helping humans grow and prosper.

Naturalists are by nature relaxed, but they are also interested in doing things efficiently. If you are too concerned with always making sure people are on your side, it will get in the way of their work. Just let them get on with it and operate at their own pace, using their experience of what works, and then maybe occasionally remind them that we're all part of the animal kingdom!

Planners

Planners like to develop systems and to put in place procedures. If you want to have a productive talk with a Planner or get him or her on board in a meeting, make sure you have your thoughts in order and have prepared a full agenda. Also be careful not to get stuck in a cycle of wanting to test out every possible idea. Planners will want to talk about how to move things forward rather than multiply the possible courses of action.

The tried-and-tested, familiar and conventional drive how a Planner prefers to work. If you're trying to pitch a new idea, you will need to show how it builds on the existing way of doing things. And if big change is involved, try breaking it down into small steps and illustrating how they can become a routine activity. If your idea is too far out, it might be dismissed as unworkable.

Many Planners like to get into the fine print of whatever it is they are doing. They like to make decisions based on a methodical examination of the information that is available. This is very much like you, but the difference is that Planners want to create a system while you might just be satisfying your curiosity. To help a Planner act, make sure you present the most compelling information and remember that from your perspective this might not be the most interesting!

Visionaries

Visionaries are energetic, go-ahead people who want to make things happen. This means that in meetings, if you're the organizer, you will often feel carried along by events. To regain control, you will need to slow things down by moving the discussion on to the available information and how this can be used to intelligently decide on the best course of action.

Being enthusiastic, enjoying convincing other people and wanting to move before all the data is available captures the Visionary style. The latter is not how you operate, and so you're likely to feel a tension between wanting to think about things in a flexible way and not having enough data to act. The important thing may be to persuade any Visionaries to use their energy to explore the available options and to see what seems to work so that you can test out the best prospects.

Visionaries often have a spontaneous approach to life and like to take risks. While you like to take intellectual risks, you are far less likely to plunge into things without being on top of the data. In this sense, you are more deliberate than daring. A possible way of squaring the circle is to talk to Visionaries about the personal or business implications of acting too soon without understanding situations at a deep enough level.



Mentor

You are a patient, caring, empathic person who likes to work directly with other people. You're likely to be a champion of “co-working,” that is, you believe the best way to achieve goals is by working in a team or group. Being peoplecentered, your focus is on getting on with other people and seeing their point of view, on trust and straightforwardness and on dealing with others in a patient and sensitive manner. When you're talking to other people, you're generally looking for the positive side of things, are eager to help, and believe that if you are helpful other people will be helpful in return. In groups or meetings, you will often be the gel that holds everything together, the person who concentrates on creating harmonious interactions.

Your preference is for open communication, and indeed you're probably seen by others as a very skilled communicator. You really enjoy helping people fulfil their potential and are likely to be seen as a loyal friend or colleague. From a communication perspective, this can mean that you don't necessarily push things with perhaps the vigor they deserve, and at times you might be a little too mild, usually to avoid interpersonal conflict. All this makes for easy conversations, with others seeing you as open and agreeable, but perhaps at the expense of not being direct enough.

With like-minded people, say other Mentors, this approach is likely to work well. They will understand your warm process-orientated style and engage with your desire to include other people in a generous and open manner. Where there is disagreement, it will often be with regard to just how cooperative to be. Those who are even more altruistic will always put the other person first.

If you're a Mentor, here are some tips on how to communicate with these other types:

Action-takers

Action-Takers like tangible goals and enjoy applying specialist skills and knowledge. These are realistic down-to-earth folk, so tell it like it is and work to produce well-defined practical goals. In meetings, try and tap into their particular skill set, that is, let them be the experts. This last bit should jive with your view that everyone should be free to contribute what they have to offer.

Operating in the present, fixing things as they happen and dealing with concrete tasks are what Action-Takers prefer to do. They are great at fire-fighting and moving quickly. They like concrete tasks and often enjoy using machinery and technology. This might be a bit alien to you, but to work together you will need to embrace their interest in “things” and explain how your proposals improve the immediate situation.

Action-Takers can work in teams but also really like working alone. You, on the other hand, always prefer to work as part of a team or group. Reflect on the fact that some people work much better when they are not closely supervised or when they are not being forced to work in a collaborative way rather than their preferred way.

Analyzers

Analyzers are thoughtful, rational folk who like to get their thoughts in order. If you want to have a constructive talk or get the most out of them in a meeting, make sure you provide a good reason for the encounter and plenty of notice. Also, you'll find you have a greater impact if your arguments have depth and breadth. So be prepared to make the intellectual case for a particular course of action.

Deep thinking, being open to new ideas and figuring out things in a rational way is what Analyzers like to do. Dealing with people and all their irrationality is more your scene. Trying to bridge the gap between these two viewpoints won't be easy. However, try to explain what you want by drawing out the consistent parts of an idea or the predictable aspects of human behavior.

The typical Analyzer is a “think-do-think” sort of character, so there's no point in rushing towards a plan of action. Not that you're probably likely to be in a rush! However you will need to temper the analytic and often cautious view of the Analyzer with your desire to start actively working towards a common goal. As ever, be prepared to allow space for thinking and discussion.

Inventors

Inventors are creative, intuitive and spontaneous and often get lost in their work. If you want to talk, you're probably going to have to go and find them. Equally they may just appear and want to talk about their latest idea immediately. If you're planning a meeting, be prepared to send lots of reminders! Additionally, you might be just the person with just the right skills to get Inventors to move from introspection to sharing their ideas more widely.

Getting carried away by an idea, being able to see the world in any number of different ways and flying by the seat of their pants captures what it is to be an Inventor. This can often be an inward-looking way of operating. Part of your job, when talking about how things can be achieved, may be to highlight the fact that, to make new ideas work, a number of different types of people are required, not just the “creatives.”

Inventors tend to focus on internal thoughts and ideas, so you might need to spend time working out the best way of drawing them out. It might also be that they prefer to communicate in nonverbal ways—for example, by drawing a diagram or a picture. Consider that people are usually better at explaining their thoughts if they are using their preferred method of communication. You like talking; other people may not!

Naturalists

Naturalists are independent, laid-back people who like to go about things in a steady way. If you want to have a constructive talk, do it one to one. This should suit your style, but remember that while you're busy thinking about human processes, Naturalists are thinking about hands-on activities. This means you will need to manage activities like meetings in such a way that there is room for a discussion of more “earthy,” practical matters.

Having a future focus with a concerned eye on the natural world sums up the Naturalist. They will be happy talking about the big stuff and change but will be particularly focused on impact. This is where you can have a joining of minds because you are both concerned with impact, if in different areas. Try and show how there is a similarity between being drawn to helping the environment prosper and helping humans grow and prosper.

Naturalists are by nature relaxed, but they are also interested in doing things efficiently. If you are too concerned with always making sure people are on your side, it will get in the way of their work. Just let them get on with it and operate at their own pace, using their experience of what works, and then maybe occasionally remind them that we're all part of the animal kingdom!

Planners

Planners like to develop systems and put procedures in place. If you want to have a productive talk with a Planner or to get him or her on board in a meeting, make sure you have your thoughts in order and have prepared a full agenda. Likewise Planners are typically about data and detail, so to be persuasive your

arguments need to be backed up by facts. Perhaps this isn't what you would normally do, but to make an effective case you will need to use objective rather than subjective information.

The tried-and-tested, familiar and conventional drive how a Planner prefers to work. If you're trying to pitch a new idea, even if it is essentially to do with other people, you will need to show how it builds on the existing way of dealing with people. Your task will probably be to talk about how routine activities can incorporate an understanding of the human side of things.

Many Planners like to get down into the fine print of whatever it is they are doing. They like to make decisions based on a methodical examination of the information that is available. In this case, it looks like you will need the facts! As a consequence, you may need to push other people more than you would like in order to get hold of enough of the right information.

Visionaries

Visionaries are energetic, go-ahead people who want to make things happen. This means that in meetings, if you're the organizer, you will often feel carried along by events. As a result, you will probably feel that insufficient attention is being paid to creating the right "mood." To help in this situation, you will need to slow things down, and one way of doing this is to make sure that everyone has a voice.

Being enthusiastic, enjoying convincing other people and wanting to move before all the data is available captures the Visionary style. You, on the other hand, are likely to want to take a more consensual and patient approach. In this situation, you could consider acting more as an honest broker between the ambitions of any Visionaries and the need to base decisions on what will actually work at a team or group level.

Visionaries often have a spontaneous approach to life and like to take risks. Your focus is social and in many ways risk-averse, especially if the taking of a risk is likely to affect other people. When talking to Visionaries, you will need to prick their social conscience to ensure that their competitive spirit does not interfere with group cohesion.



Planner

You are a meticulous and organized person who likes to get things in order and to create plans and routines. Your strength is in creating systems and working out how to make sense of all types of information. This means you will have particular views about the sort of information required to run an office, for example, or plan a task or manage a project. As a result, you are likely to be very precise about how you ask other people for the information you need. If you're in a meeting, this will show itself in the way you ask detailed questions and often in your ability to notice when other people are wandering away from the facts.

Your preference will be for talking about things you know well and understand. While you can be as decisive as anyone else, you will need to be convinced of the need to change if someone suggests a different way of doing things. This is because you are a cautious character with a logical turn of mind who also wants completed work to be high quality. Yours is likely to be the voice of reason and that of the person who wants to know how tasks will be monitored, where the risks might be and how everything will be completed on time!

With like-minded people, say other Planners, this approach is likely to work well, although you may encounter some disagreement if your way of measuring and organizing the world does not correspond to theirs.

If you're a Planner, here are some tips on how to communicate with these other types:

Action-takers

Action-Takers like tangible goals and enjoy applying specialist skills and knowledge. They work in much the same way as you, so in meetings lay out your plans in detail and don't ignore any particular skills or insights they might have—they will often have a very practical view on how things can be achieved.

Operating in the present, fixing things as they happen and dealing with concrete tasks are what Action-Takers prefer to do. They are great at fire-fighting and moving quickly. The first part might sound a bit like you, but when it comes to moving quickly you are likely to want to apply tried-and-tested data-driven solutions. Be careful not to stifle action or de-motivate them by insisting on too much information up front!

Action-Takers can work in teams, but they also like working alone. This probably doesn't concern you too much, although for the really solitary Action-Taker you might be worried about getting hold of the information you need to keep your plan on track. However you're both systematic people, so create a way of keeping up to date that's based on a regular form of fact-based communication.

Analyzers

Analyzers are thoughtful, rational folk who like to get their thoughts in order. In many ways they're just like you, so if you want to have a constructive talk or get the most out of them in a meeting, make sure you provide a good reason for the encounter and plenty of notice. And don't be worried about supplying plenty of supporting information in advance—they like playing with data just as much as you do.

Deep thinking, being open to new ideas and figuring out things is what Analyzers like to do. They like experimenting and pushing boundaries. From your perspective, being this open to new ideas will sometimes seem like going in the wrong direction. This might strike you as inefficient. However, be prepared to discuss

their thought processes as there may be fresh insights that can help you with your planning activities.

The typical Analyzer is a “think-do-think” sort of character, so there's no point in rushing towards a plan of action. You'll get far more out of any collaboration if you balance your desire to organize and plan with their need to fully talk through ideas and to possibly challenge and refine things as they move along.

Inventors

Inventors are creative, intuitive and spontaneous and often get lost in their work. If you want to talk, you're probably going to have to go and find them. Equally they may just appear and want to talk about their latest idea immediately. If you're planning a meeting, be prepared to send lots of reminders!

Getting carried away by an idea, able to see the world in any number of different ways and flying by the seat of their pants captures what it is to be an Inventor. This is probably not what you're like at all! To make progress, you will need to explore very carefully how their thoughts and ideas can feed into a given plan in a tangible way while at the same time personally recognizing that new systems require new thinking.

Inventors tend to focus on internal thoughts and ideas, so you might need to spend time drawing them out. It might also be that they prefer to communicate in nonverbal ways—for example, by drawing a diagram or a picture. Don't be too insistent on getting information in the form you like; otherwise you might miss a useful idea.

Mentors

Mentors are drawn to working with other people and have a patient and empathic style. As they are excellent communicators, your problem may be how to get a word in edgeways. And in meetings, given their preference is for harmony, encourage them to say what they think in objective terms. At times you may need to encourage logical rather than predominantly “emotional” thinking.

Being both people and process-orientated, Mentors are good at sorting out complicated people problems. Their emphasis is likely to be on the human impact of any given action or plan. If you're making a proposal, be careful to talk about the human impact as well as the facts and figures.

Mentors are often quite happy to be in a team as long as the goal is to help or support other people. However don't mistake this goal-orientation for the desire to get the job done come what may. You will still need to explain how particular tasks help everyone move towards a fair and common goal.

Naturalists

Naturalists are independent, laid-back people who like to go about things in a steady way. If you want to have a constructive talk, do it one to one. And if you're in a meeting, don't railroad them into a particular course of action whatever your facts may suggest. Demonstrate that you respect their viewpoint.

Having a future focus with a concerned eye on the natural world sums up the Naturalist. They will be happy talking about the big picture and be particularly concerned with the impact of any actions. Make sure you can talk about your data, system or process in a way that acknowledges a more strategic view of the world.

Naturalists are by nature relaxed, but they are also interested in doing things efficiently. They can be just as systematic and orderly as you are but will tend to want to work at their own steady pace. Cut them some slack and they will get the job done.

Visionaries

Visionaries are energetic, go-ahead people who want to make things happen. They often like to take personal charge of communications. This means that in meetings, if you're the organizer, you will need to keep things on track with a firm hand. So by all means let the Visionaries have their say but make sure that everyone else has a chance to speak as well.

Being enthusiastic, enjoying convincing other people and wanting to move before all the data is available captures the Visionary style. This taps into your need for decisive action but is likely to be at odds with your desire to create a system that you feel will work, that is, one that's based on the data. The trick here is to recognize the energy and the vision but also to encourage more fact-finding before moving forward.

Visionaries often have a spontaneous approach to life and work and like to take risks. From your viewpoint, this can seem to be an approach lacking in both detail and foresight. However, if you're trying to persuade a Visionary, you will need to acknowledge their point of view. So try discussing how their vision can be used to effectively pivot an existing plan.



Visionary

You are an energetic go-ahead sort of person and want to make things happen. As a gregarious character you also want to get everyone involved and enjoy filling others with a sense of wonder, excitement and urgency. This means you will prefer to take personal charge of communications and to be in control of how they happen, when they happen and who will be listening. Likely as not, you will also want to talk to people the moment you think of something or schedule a meeting as soon as possible.

Your preference will be for talking about the big picture, about the future and about how in your eyes things can be changed for the better. You will often try to convince others that to make progress risks need to be taken and that it's often necessary to make a move before all the data is in. In fact you are likely to revel in putting forward a fresh vision, in using your strength of character to convince people of a new direction and in being positively energized by the thought of being at the edge of something.

With like-minded people, say, other Visionaries, this approach is likely to work well, although of course there may be friction with regard to the “vision thing.” This might be about the future in general terms or more specifically about the ultimate direction of something like a business.

If you're a Visionary, here are some tips on how to communicate with these other types

Action-takers

Action-Takers like tangible goals and enjoy applying specialist skills and knowledge. These are realistic down-to-earth folk, so tell it like it is and work to produce well-defined goals. In meetings, try and tap into their particular skill set—let them be the expert. Operating in the present, fixing things as they happen and dealing with concrete tasks are what

Action-Takers prefer to do. They are great at fire-fighting and moving quickly, which might sound a bit like you, but they won't buy into vague or unrealistic views of the future. In addition, you're going to have to explain how your proposed actions or ideas improve the here and now!

Action-Takers can work in teams, but they also like working alone. This is probably not your preferred way of doing things as you tend to like to be in a leadership role. Reflect on the fact that some people work much better when they are not closely supervised or when they are not being forced to work your way rather than their way.

Analyzers

Analyzers are thoughtful, rational folk who like to get their thoughts in order. If you want to have a constructive talk or get the most out of them in a meeting, make sure you provide a good reason for the encounter and plenty of notice. You'll find you have greater impact if your arguments have depth—don't try and get along by “winging it.”

Deep thinking, being open to new ideas and figuring out things is what Analyzers like to do. They will be just as interested in pushing boundaries as you are. However they will want the facts! So if you want to be convincing, supply some compelling and well-researched evidence.

The typical Analyzer is a “think-do-think” sort of character, so there's no point in rushing towards a plan of action. You'll get far more out of any collaboration if you balance your desire to start things with their need to talk through ideas fully and possibly challenge and refine things as they move along.

Inventors

Inventors are creative, intuitive and spontaneous and often get lost in their work. If you want to talk, you're probably going to have to go and find them. Equally they may just appear and want to talk about their latest idea immediately. If you're planning a meeting, be prepared to send lots of reminders!

Being passionate and able to see the world in any number of different ways may make the Inventor your natural ally. However they are likely to fly by the seat of their pants even more than you do, so it's likely you will have to explain how everything fits together and what their role will be—otherwise nothing much will get done.

Inventors tend to focus on internal thoughts and ideas, so you might need to spend time drawing them out. It might also be that they prefer to communicate in nonverbal ways—for example, by drawing a diagram or a picture. Consider that people are usually better at explaining their thoughts if they are using their preferred method of communication.

Mentors

Mentors are drawn to working with other people and have a patient and empathic style. As they are excellent communicators, your problem may be how to get a word in edgewise. And in meetings, given their preference is for harmony, encourage them to say what they actually think. You will need to create the conditions that enable everyone to speak frankly.

Being both people and process-orientated, Mentors are good at sorting out complicated people problems. Their emphasis is likely to be on the human impact of any given action or plan. If you're proposing something new or different, explain why it's a viable alternative and how it will affect people.

Mentors are often quite happy to be in a team as long as the goal is to help or support other people. As such, they might quite like you taking charge as long as you deal with everyone in a sensitive manner and encourage all to contribute. Given that you prefer to be in control, you might need to think about how to be more democratic and inclusive.

Naturalists

Naturalists are independent, laid-back people who like to go about things in a steady way. If you want to have a constructive talk, do it one to one. And if you're in a meeting, don't railroad them into a particular course of action. Instead, demonstrate that you respect their viewpoint.

Having a future focus with a concerned eye on the natural world sums up the Naturalist. They will be happy talking about the big stuff and change, just as you are, but will be particularly concerned with the impact. Make sure you have thought this through and can explain the large-scale effects of any actions, both now and in the future.

Naturalists are by nature relaxed but they are also interested in doing things efficiently. If you're not too pushy—for example, you stop yourself from trying to tell them how to do things—you will find they are organized and optimistic and will get the job done. Just let them operate at their own pace using their experience of what works.

Planners

Planners like to develop systems and put procedures in place. If you want to have a productive talk with a Planner or get him or her on board in a meeting, make sure you have your thoughts in order and have prepared a full agenda. And take care to follow through on any agreed actions. Try and resist the temptation to skip steps!

The tried-and-tested, familiar and conventional drive how a Planner prefers to work. If you're trying to pitch a new idea, you will need to show how it builds on the existing way of doing things. And if big change is involved, try breaking it down into small elements, and illustrating how they can become a routine activity.

Many Planners like to drill down into the fine print of whatever it is they are doing. They like to make decisions based on a methodical examination of the information that is available. Try not to push too hard and be sure to explain why you are using a particular set of information or data. Better still, check in advance on what sort of information is required and in what quantity.