



Your Work Style in Color:

A Colorful Approach to Working Relationships

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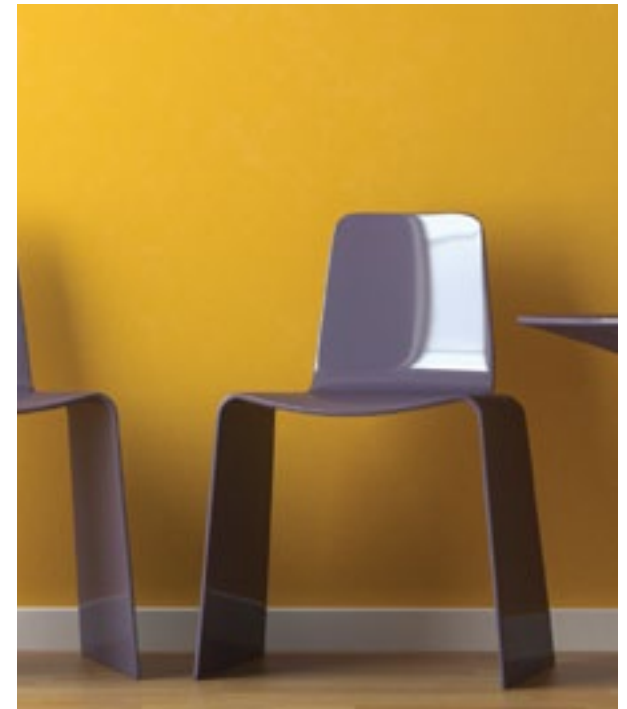
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How to Use This Guide

1. Take a brief online survey at www.officeteam.com/workstyle to find out which color energy you prefer.
2. Share the online survey link with your colleagues so they can identify their dominant color energy, too.
3. Read about each of the color energies in this guide to learn how you can improve your work relationships.
4. Print out Pages 18-19 and post them in your workspace.
5. Visit www.officeteam.com/workstyle to read how managers and administrative professionals who have taken the full Insights Discovery® Personal Profile evaluator are using the information to work together better.
6. Encourage your organization to learn more about the solutions from Insights® by visiting www.insights.com or contacting generalenquiries@insights.com.





Introduction

It's a workplace conundrum: Your on-the-job success depends largely on your ability to work well with others. But one thing you can count on in the office is that no two people are completely alike. Indeed, interacting smoothly with colleagues often is easier said than done because different people have different ways of doing things.

Fortunately, there are behavioral traits certain personalities tend to share, and understanding them can help you work with your colleagues more effectively. OfficeTeam and the International Association of Administrative Professionals® (IAAP®) have collaborated with Insights, a leading people development company, to identify

four sets of work preferences, each of which is represented by a particular color energy. You can discover which color energy you prefer by taking a brief online survey at www.officeteam.com/workstyle. By encouraging your colleagues to complete the survey, too, you can obtain valuable information that can improve your work relationships.

Along with providing details about the work preferences represented by each color energy, this guide also reveals how administrative professionals feel about a variety of work style issues. We hope you find it useful and, as always, invite you to visit www.officeteam.com for additional career advice and information.



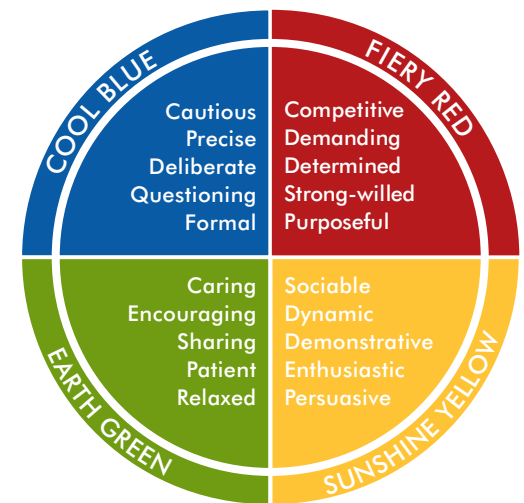
Unlocking the Mystery of You

In a survey of more than 3,200 administrative professionals conducted by OfficeTeam, IAAP and Insights, nearly all respondents said they are at least somewhat aware of their work style. But even if you believe you know your work style, you might not fully understand all of your personal preferences — and how they come into play in the office.

Insights segments professionals into four different work style types. Each category is represented by a color energy — Cool Blue, Earth Green, Sunshine Yellow and Fiery Red — and is associated with a number of specific characteristics. We all have a mix of traits from these areas, but a dominant color energy emerges for each of us. To the right is an explanation of the four color energies.

You can discover which color energy you prefer by taking a brief online survey at www.officeteam.com/workstyle. Keep in mind that no one has the “best” approach to work — each color energy has its own strengths and challenges. Identifying with one color energy doesn’t mean you don’t possess some qualities of other colors in the spectrum. The survey and results are simply tools for better understanding your own work preferences, as well as those of your colleagues. The following pages explore the different categories.

Insights Discovery Color Energies



COOL BLUE



Cautious
Precise
Deliberate
Questioning
Formal

Professionals who lead with dominant Cool Blue energy tend to be careful and precise. They like to analyze things, and often probe for more information. These workers are tuned into the details of a situation. They may be the first to spot errors, and managers often turn to them when projects require perfection. They prefer work that is structured and aren't apt to make changes unless they are warranted.

When working with someone who leads with Cool Blue energy:

Do

- Be well prepared and thorough
- Put things in writing
- Let them consider all the details

Don't

- Be overly emotional or casual with important issues
- Keep changing things without good reason
- Answer questions vaguely

Caring
Encouraging
Sharing
Patient
Relaxed

**EARTH
GREEN**



These nurturing professionals are willing to guide others and offer support to coworkers. Specialized tasks are their favorites, and they appreciate clear direction. These personalities are characterized by calmness, confidence and depth. They prefer scheduled work, and apply themselves with composed determination and perseverance to matters that are important to them.

When working with someone who leads with Earth Green energy:

Do

- Be patient and supportive
- Slow down and work at their pace
- Ask for their opinions and give them time to answer

Don't

- Take advantage of their good nature
- Push them to make quick decisions
- Spring last-minute surprises on them





SUNSHINE YELLOW



Sociable
Dynamic
Demonstrative
Enthusiastic
Persuasive

These workers enjoy working on teams and sharing their thoughts and feelings. Rarely at a loss for words, these professionals are expressive and persuasive communicators and often infuse energy and passion into their programs. They enjoy working on diverse projects, but they may have difficulty keeping track of all of them.



When working with someone who leads with Sunshine Yellow energy:

Do

- Be friendly and sociable
- Be entertaining and stimulating
- Be open and flexible

Don't

- Tie them down with routine
- Ask them to work alone
- Bore them with details

Competitive
Demanding
Determined
Strong-willed
Purposeful



FIERY RED

These professionals tend to be decisive and focused. When seeking solutions to problems, they work logically, pragmatically and quickly. They are action-oriented and may thrive on competition. These workers strive to “get things done” efficiently and may not spend much time on small talk or details.

When working with someone who leads with Fiery Red energy:

Do

- Be direct and to the point
- Focus on results and objectives
- Be confident and assertive

Don't

- Be hesitant or wordy
- Focus on feelings
- Try to take over





Understanding Differences

There are administrative professionals and supervisors of every style. However, more than four in 10 of the support professionals we surveyed said they have a work style that is different from their boss. And of those who have taken the full Insights Discovery Personal Profile evaluator, 45 percent of administrative professionals lead with dominant Earth Green and 49 percent of managers lead with dominant Fiery Red.

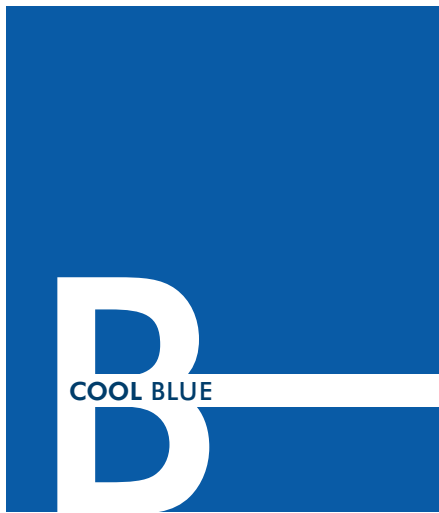
Earth Green and Fiery Red energies are on opposite sides of the Insights Wheel®. That's not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, opposite types often have complementary strengths that can lead to strong partnerships. But these differences also can cause conflict if the parties don't recognize or adapt to each other's work preferences. For example, a professional with strong Fiery Red energy may come across as intolerant or controlling when stressed. This could cause individuals leading with Earth Green energy, who value harmony, to react in a slow or stubborn way.



Common Conflicts

We asked administrative professionals to describe an issue they'd had with their manager due to differing work styles. Here are some of their responses:

- "He makes decisions quickly, and I like to analyze."
- "Time constraints and deadlines are an issue: My boss does work at the last minute, and I do it ahead of schedule."
- "I am more detail-oriented than my boss and like to have as complete a picture as possible before we make a decision. My boss is a 'full speed ahead' kind of guy."
- "My manager does not check e-mail and calendars on a regular basis and misses many appointments."
- "She likes to micromanage, and I like to be given a task and be left to do it. If I need clarification or have questions, then I like to go to my supervisor."
- "We have conflicted over deadlines. I think they're set in stone, and my supervisor sees them as guidelines. It can be frustrating for both of us."
- "There's often a lack of information because my boss 'keeps it all in his head' and does things at the last minute. He's creative and doesn't realize the need to plan ahead — including for travel, meetings and projects."



The charts below show the different color energy preferences on a **good** day, and on a **bad** day.

on a **good** day

cautious
precise
analytical
detailed
objective

on a **good** day

caring
relationship-focused
harmonious
relaxed
patient

on a **good** day

dynamic
enthusiastic
convincing
expressive
visionary

on a **good** day

decisive
determined
confident
powerful
purposeful

on a **bad** day

nitpicky
indecisive
suspicious
cold
reserved

on a **bad** day

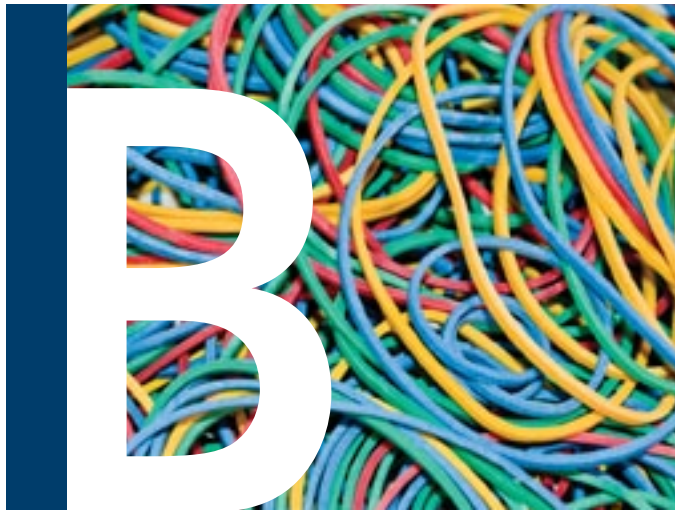
compliant
passive
slow
dependent
stubborn

on a **bad** day

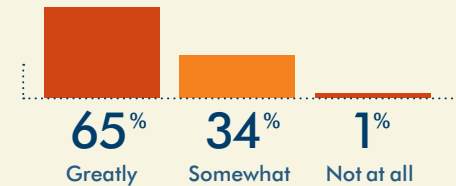
excitable
frantic
indiscreet
boastful
hasty

on a **bad** day

aggressive
controlling
overbearing
dominant
intolerant

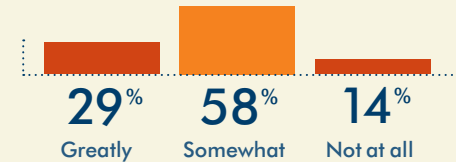


To what extent do you adapt to your manager's work style?



Source: OfficeTeam, IAAP and Insights survey of 3,249 administrative professionals

To what extent does your manager adapt to your work style?



Source: OfficeTeam, IAAP and Insights survey of 3,249 administrative professionals. Responses do not total 100 due to rounding.

Bringing Out the Best in Each Other

Nearly two-thirds of administrative professionals surveyed said they make a strong effort to adapt to their manager's work style. However, the majority — 58 percent — indicated that their supervisor only adjusts "somewhat" to their work style. And 14 percent said their managers don't adjust to their style at all.

It's not hard to see that understanding your own approach to work, as well as those of your supervisors, can increase your success on the job. In our survey, we asked administrative professionals to share the creative solutions they use when working with managers who have different styles. Here are some of their responses:

- "We sit down and discuss issues. I provide her with examples of the problem and a solution at the same time. We talk through it."
- "My boss used to misread my e-mails and not answer the question I was asking. Now I know to use short, bulleted questions. If there are two questions, I number them in separate paragraphs and use different colors."
- "I'm proactive and set deadlines earlier than they actually are."
- "I approach my manager lightly, politely and with a smile. I always offer to help or give assistance and find something in common to talk about to help break the ice."

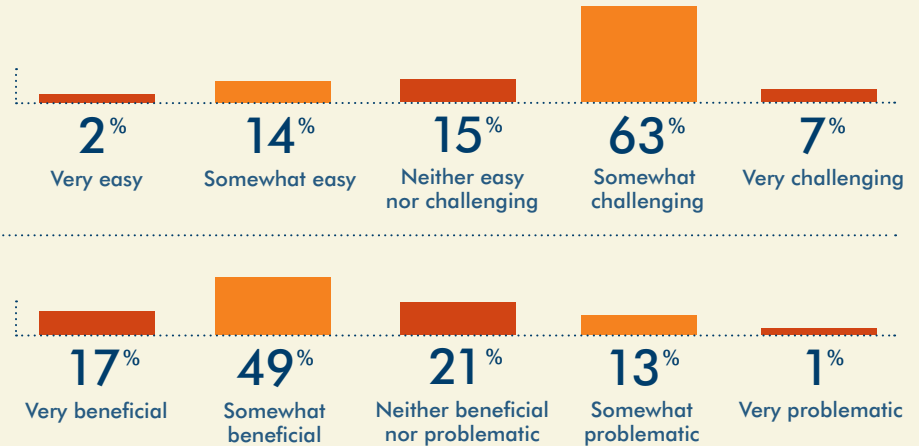


How easy or challenging do you think it is to work with someone who has a work style that is very different from your own?

Source: OfficeTeam, IAAP and Insights survey of 3,249 administrative professionals. Responses do not total 100 due to rounding.

Do you think it's beneficial or problematic to work with people who have work styles that are different from your own?

Source: OfficeTeam, IAAP and Insights survey of 3,249 administrative professionals. Responses do not total 100 due to rounding.



- “I have had several bosses with different styles. I find that if we openly acknowledge our work styles, and then work out how we can adapt to each other, things remain professional instead of personal. It’s important to have the confidence to be in front of this issue instead of being afraid to bring it up. As long as I make sure a manager understands this is for his or her benefit, it keeps our conversation customer service-oriented and softens it.”
- “I ask leading questions so the other person gives me timelines and describes how the work will be completed. I reinforce those responses by repeating the answers back to him or her. For example, I might say, ‘So you are saying you need the draft copy by 2 p.m. tomorrow. You’ll make any changes and have the final copy to me by Thursday, and the final handouts are to be prepared for Monday morning.’”
- “Learning to ask the right questions for clarification has been key. I share more information as it becomes known rather than waiting until an issue develops. This prevents surprises and misunderstandings.”

- “For one procrastinator, I drafted presentations leaving blanks or question marks where he needed to insert data.”

Although it may be initially challenging to work with someone who has a dissimilar style, remember that each individual also brings different assets to the table. Once you understand someone’s approach and preferences, working together becomes less about differences and more about taking advantage of complementary strengths. This dynamic is reflected in the survey: While 70 percent of administrative professionals polled said it can be challenging to work with someone who has a different work style, 66 percent cited benefits to working with those who have different approaches.





Seven Tips for Overcoming Clashing Work Styles

What do you do when, despite your best efforts, you repeatedly lock horns with a colleague or boss who has a different work style? Try these tips:

- 1. Take the high road.** Your attitude, effort level and reactions are all in your control, even if others' aren't. If an issue arises or you disagree with someone, always be positive and professional. You don't have to be best friends with everyone — you just need to find a way to work effectively with them.
- 2. Work with what you have.** Accept the person you're working with now, quirks and all. If your colleague prefers scheduled meetings and you like to simply drop by, try it his way to reduce conflict.
- 3. Get on the same page.** Simple miscommunications — such as the desired outcome of a project — can cause friction. Arrange a face-to-face meeting with a colleague to make sure you're on the same page, and follow it up with an e-mail recapping what you discussed.
- 4. Check in regularly.** If you've had trouble communicating with someone, it's important to keep information flowing freely and frequently. Find out the person's preferred method of communicating — for example, by e-mail, in person or over the phone — and provide weekly (or daily, if desired) updates.
- 5. Put yourself in the other person's shoes.** Understanding someone's work style is just one piece of the puzzle: Learn what other pressures a colleague faces. For example, knowing whom she reports to and how many people she supervises will add perspective to the situation.
- 6. Don't take it personally.** Often, a person's behavior is not a reflection on you. Someone who doesn't greet you every morning may not be a morning person. Start with the assumption that it's not personal and you'll be less likely to take offense and react negatively.
- 7. Know your own behaviors.** Your habits can drive your colleagues just as nuts as theirs drive you. What do friends and family say you do that can be annoying? This same behavior can be going on at work. Be aware of how you may be affecting others and try to make changes, where appropriate.



Putting It All Together

Our day-to-day interactions with colleagues might be easier if everyone had the same work style: Eight in 10 administrative professionals surveyed said they prefer working with someone who has a style similar to their own. But as attractive as it might sound to work with people who think or behave like you do, it may be more difficult to generate new ideas in this type of arrangement. It's also not the reality in most offices: Companies benefit from bringing together people with different strengths and personalities, so you're apt to encounter colleagues of all types throughout your career. Taking the time to understand how you approach work, as well as how your coworkers prefer to do their jobs, won't solve every issue, but it can help you build stronger, more effective professional relationships.

We hope you have found this booklet useful and invite you to visit www.officeteam.com/workstyle for more information, including access to our online survey and case studies of managers and administrative professionals who have completed the full Insights Discovery Personal Profile evaluator. For help with any of your career or staffing needs, visit www.officeteam.com.

Survey Methodology

OfficeTeam, a division of Robert Half International, and Insights teamed up with IAAP to conduct the online survey of 3,249 career-minded administrative professionals within the association and living in the United States or Canada.



About OfficeTeam

OfficeTeam is the world's leading staffing service specializing in the temporary placement of highly skilled office and administrative support professionals, ranging from executive and administrative assistants to receptionists and customer service representatives. Throughout the year, we compile the data, trends and insights we uncover through our daily contact with clients and candidates and our extensive research on employment and workplace issues. We offer this information in the form of complimentary guides, articles and other materials. We have more than 320 offices worldwide and offer online job search services and career resources at www.officeteam.com. Please call **1.800.804.8367** for the office nearest you.

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About Insights

Insights is a people development company working in partnership with leading organizations across the world. Our transformational learning solutions are supported by our extensive portfolio of customizable products and services. This portfolio, delivered by Insights' worldwide team of exceptional and inspirational people, helps our clients improve their effectiveness in five key areas:

- Individuals
- Sales
- Teams
- Leadership
- Organizations

Underpinning our learning solutions are two unique and complementary learning systems, Discovery and Navigator. These systems measure preference and capability and provide an engaging and accessible language for learning.

This language, threaded through our entire portfolio, enables our clients to experience rich, deep and inspiring learning solutions that enhance relationships, improve performance, and change personal and professional lives forever.

For more information on how Insights can help your organization, please contact generalenquiries@insights.com.

About IAAP

The International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) is the world's largest association for administrative support staff, with more than 550 chapters and 24,000 members and affiliates worldwide. For more than 60 years, IAAP has provided up-to-date research on office trends, cutting-edge publications, outstanding seminars and conferences, leadership development, global networking opportunities, and top-notch resources to help administrative professionals enhance their skills and become more effective contributors to their employers. For more information, please visit www.iaap-hq.org or call 1.816.891.6600.

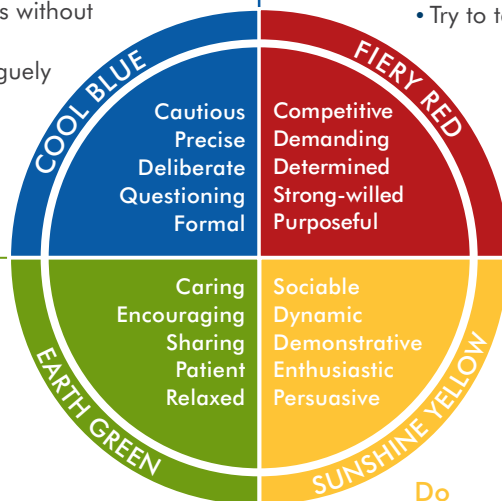
Communication Tips

Do

- Be well prepared and thorough
- Put things in writing
- Let me consider all the details

Don't

- Be overly emotional or casual with important issues
- Keep changing things without good reason
- Answer questions vaguely



Do

- Be patient and supportive
- Slow down and work at my pace
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Communication Tips

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Do

- Be friendly and sociable
- Be entertaining and stimulating
- Be open and flexible

Don't

- Tie me down with routine
- Ask me to work alone
- Bore me with details

Communication Tips

Colorful Connections

Take a brief online survey at www.officeteam.com/workstyle to find out which color energy you prefer.

By also encouraging your colleagues to complete the survey, you can obtain valuable information about their individual preferences, which can help prevent friction, miscommunication and frustration, not to mention increase productivity.

Use the tips provided here to help you improve interactions with coworkers who have styles different from your own.



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What Color Energy Do You Prefer?

Want to learn more about your colleagues' work styles? Encourage them to take a brief online survey at www.officeteam.com/workstyle to find out which color energy they prefer.

Once they've received their results, write their names in the diagram on the right next to the colors they identified with. You might even hang this poster up in the office for others to see.

Refer to the tips on the previous page for advice on how you can work more effectively with coworkers of various work styles.



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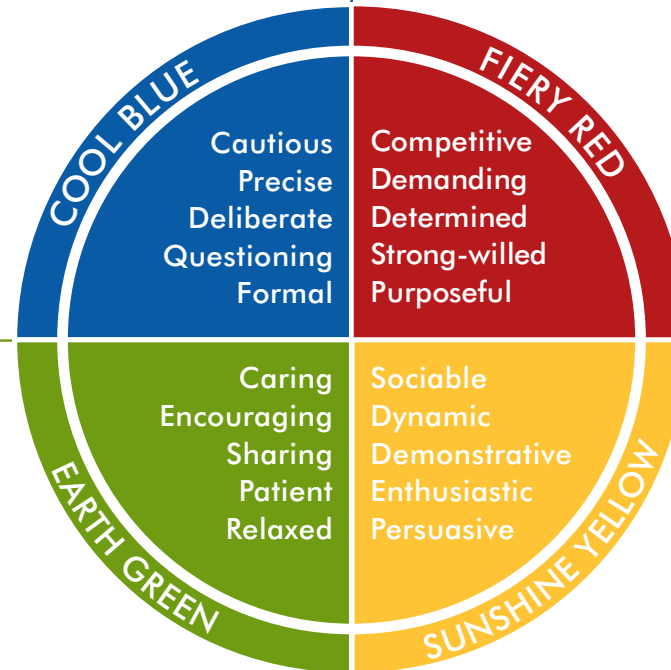
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Cool Blue Preference

Fiery Red Preference



Earth Green Preference

Sunshine Yellow Preference

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