

Defining Communication Styles

The Project Management Institute (PMI) encourages using assessments to determine personal communication styles, work styles, and individual motivations. Some common assessments include Meyers-Briggs, Insights, I-Speak, and Emergenetics. There are many more.

Let's look at the four Emergenetics communications styles to understand how different people communicate and how to use that knowledge to improve the effectiveness of our communications.

Note: Different models use different labels for each style. However, there is consistency across all models, which are based on the same scientific principles.

Common Communication Styles

There are four common styles of communication. The table below provides an overview of all the styles with communication preferences and the questions that will help you design the communication content.

Communication Style	Communication Preferences	Burning Questions
Analytical Key Focus: Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to have facts to support points made• Direct and to-the-point communications• Leave time for thinking and analysis• Get results and solve the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do I have the pertinent facts?• What provides the most value?• Will this solution fully resolve the problem?
Structural Key Focus: How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask what, when, where, and how questions• Speak in complete sentences/paragraphs• Very deliberate and clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can I get this done?• What is the implementation process and timeline?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meticulous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will I be in control?
Conceptual Key Focus: What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks questions that lead to other questions • Stop in mid-sentence, assuming others know • Use metaphors to make a point • Very abstract in speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I seen the possibilities? • What is the big picture? • How can we take this to a new level?
Social Key Focus: Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use stories/experiences to illustrate • Prefer face-to-face communications • Caring and compassionate • Empathetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will I affect others? • How can we do it together? • Are the right people involved?

According to statistics, 6% of people have a singular preference, 58% have two preferences, 36% have three preferences, and less than 1% have all four styles. However, while an individual may have multiple styles and preferences, one style stands out.

Tips for Adapting Your Communication Style

A "one size fits all" communication style is not affected. Try to adapt your communication style to meet the needs of the individual you are communicating with. Here are some tips.

Communication Style	How to Plan and Manage Each Style
Analytical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be brief • Provide executive summaries • Provide credible data • Present information logically

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow time to digest
Structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all facts and details • Give specifics and clear direction • Leave them alone to get the job done • No surprises • Allow time for questions and clarification
Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow time to brainstorm • Give freedom to reach the goal their way • Give the big picture and skip the details • Allow time to think outside of the box • Allow time to use creativity
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow some non-work conversation to break the ice • Watch your non-verbal's • Be sincere • Ask for and value their input • Give more than just the facts