



DISC Sales

Target Applications



Assessments 24x7

GLOBAL LEADER IN ASSESSMENT TECHNOLOGY

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DISC SALES

DISC is designed to be a simple, practical, and applicable tool for building mutually-beneficial and effective communication. Understanding observable behavior and emotion is the foundation of self-awareness and connecting with others in a way that allows us to be intentional in our interactions, adapting to what is needed in any environment, situation, or relationship.

While DISC is useful in any circumstance or relationship, it may be helpful to have a deeper understanding of how to apply DISC in targeted situations or scenarios. Each document provides key insights to help you focus your DISC application in specific ways, including Leadership, Sales, Coaching, and Service. Through the step by-step style guidance provided, you can immediately leverage the DISC information to find the most appropriate and effective communication strategies based on your particular focus area or purpose.

DISC Sales provides specific insight into using DISC in sales and gives suggestions for interacting with different DISC styles and from different DISC styles in the five stages of the selling cycle - Connecting, Assessing, Solving, Confirming, and Assuring.

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RAPPORT THROUGHOUT THE SELLING CYCLE

There are five definable stages to most every buying cycle. Successfully guiding prospects through each phase will lead to positive outcomes for both of you.

- 1. Connecting:** Understanding DISC styles will have an impact on the impression you make in the first few minutes of a meeting. In that short, precious time, you make or break the sale. In that time, your prospect sizes you up and determines if you are the type of person he or she would like to do business with.

The purpose of making contact with your prospect is to begin opening up lines of communication. Great listeners make the best salespeople... period. Master the skill of effective listening and every other aspect of your relationships will improve.

- 2. Assessing/Exploring Needs & Wants:** The purpose of Exploring is to get an accurate picture of the customer's needs and what it will take to provide an effective solution. To do so, you need to listen to what the customer says as well as know how to ask the right questions to get the information you need.

Asking intelligent questions is a critical sales skill. It does not require asking many questions - just the right ones. Asking questions is similar to painting a picture. You start with a blank canvas and begin to fill in the background and rough in the picture with broad-brush strokes. Then you fill in the details using finer and finer strokes.

- 3. Solving the buyer's problem/Educating & Collaborating:** During this phase, you and your prospect collaborate to find a solution that meets the prospect's needs. It is a process of taking your prospect's ideas and combining them with your own ideas to arrive at a solution that makes sense to both of you.

The give-and-take exchange can be thought of as an opportunity to "switch heads" with your prospect. Imagine saying this to your customer: "If you and I could switch heads, that is, if you could know what I know about my product and if I could know what you know about your business, we would both know exactly how to give you the best possible solution for your needs."

That's your goal - to come as close as possible to the perfect knowledge that would allow you to develop the ideal solution for your prospect. To achieve that goal, you need to exchange enough information to fully understand your client's business, industry, trends and challenges; and they have to know as much as possible about your products and services and how they can help them. As you propose a solution, relate it to the prospect's needs discovered in the Explore phase and explain how it will work in your prospect's environment.

- 4. Confirming the Sale:** Gaining commitment flows naturally out of the Exploring and Collaborating stages for the DISC salesperson. If you did a thorough job during the first three stages of selling: Contacting, Exploring and Collaborating, the prospect should buy.

The Confirming stage is a critical point in building a customer partnership. DISC salespeople do not use fancy closing techniques. You cannot work through all the stages of the sale and then, at the end, try to use a manipulative closing technique to clinch the deal. It doesn't make sense... and it most certainly doesn't work when you're trying to build long-term customer relationships rather than simply closing one-shot sales.

- 5. Assuring Satisfaction:** A great weakness of most salespeople is the way they handle the Assuring phase of the sales process. Most salespeople stop with getting the sales commitment; they disappear from the customer's life, leaving service, installation, training and follow-up to others.

One "old-school" method of selling has an adage that the sale begins when the customer says "no." In direct contrast, the real job of selling starts when the customer says "yes."

Assuring customer satisfaction is a secret ingredient of extraordinary sales success. You will benefit two ways by assuring each customer. First, this assures repeat business. Almost all products have a life cycle and will be replaced or upgraded. Customers have a tendency to return to the salesperson who previously matched them with a product that met their needs and then provided excellent service and follow-up.

Secondly, satisfied customers are excellent sources of referrals. Customers talk. They talk about poor service and they talk about extraordinary service. When they get super service, they refer others to the salesperson who delivered on his or her promises.

Without repeat business and referrals, a salesperson must constantly prospect and cold-call new accounts. That is not the way most salespeople want to spend their lives... and it certainly is not the best way to be successful!

When you start the sales process, you have a chance to begin building a good customer relationship. However, it is only after the sale, when you make sure your customer is satisfied (preferably delighted!), that you really cement the relationship.

Note: these stages of the sales cycle correspond directly with the “sales competencies” in Jim Cathcart’s book Relationship Selling: The Eight Competencies of Top Sales Producers. They also match the categories in the Sales IQ Plus assessment.

Phase 1: Building Rapport During Initial Contact

Connecting with D Styles

- D styles want to know the bottom line.
- Just give them enough information to satisfy their need to know about overall performance.
- They do not want you to waste their time giving them a bolt-by-bolt description of your product, presenting a long list of testimonials from satisfied clients, or getting too chummy with them – always remember that they are Direct and Guarded.
- When you write, call, or meet a “D,” do it in a formal, businesslike manner. Get right to the point. Focus quickly on the task.
- Refer to bottom line results, increased efficiency, saved time, return on investment, profits, and so on. In other words, tell him what’s in it for him.
- If you plan to sell something or present a proposal to a “D,” take care to be well organized, time-conscious, efficient, and businesslike.
- They do not want to make friends with you; they want to get something out of you if they think you have something of value to offer.

Connecting with I Styles

- Remember that they are Direct and Open.
- When you meet an “I,” shake hands firmly, introduce yourself with confidence, and immediately show personal interest.
- Let him set the pace and direction of the conversation.
- Be an especially attentive listener with I styles.
- Give them positive feedback to let them know that you understand and can relate to their visions, ideas, and feelings.
- Tell humorous or unusual stories about yourself to win their heart.
- Allow them to feel comfortable by listening to their stories, even to the point of talking about topics that may stray from the subject.
- Since I styles typically enjoy talking about themselves, ask questions about them, but be prepared for lengthy answers. Plan to have as many meetings as necessary to build the relationship and gather information.

Connecting with S Styles

- S styles are Indirect and Open. However, keep the relationship businesslike until they warm up to you.
- They are concerned with maintaining stability; they want to know step-by-step procedures that are likely to meet their need for details and logical action plans.
- Organize your presentation: list specifics, show sequences, and provide data.
- Treat them with honesty, sincerity, and personal attentiveness.
- Listen patiently to their stories, ideas, and answers.
- Express your appreciation for their steadiness, dependability, and cooperativeness.
- Present yourself to be non-threatening, pleasant, friendly, but still professional.
- Develop trust, credibility, and friendship at a relatively slow, informal pace.
- Communicate with them in a consistent manner on a regular basis... especially at the outset.

Connecting with C Styles

- C styles don't care much about social interaction (beyond common courtesy and standard pleasantries), so get to the point.
- Avoid making small talk, except to initially establish your credibility.
- Speak slowly, calmly, and economize on words.
- C styles are precision-oriented people who want to do their jobs in the best possible manner.
- Build your credibility by thinking with your head, not your emotions.
- Before meeting, provide them with a brief overview of the agenda and length of meeting, so they know what to expect.
- Show them logical proof from reliable sources that accurately document your quality, record of accomplishment, and value.

Phase 2: Maintaining Rapport in the Assessing Needs & Wants Stage

Exploring with D Styles

- To head off the D styles impatience before it surfaces, keep your conversations interesting by alternately asking questions and offering relevant information.
- D styles need to view the meeting as purposeful, so they want to understand where your questions are leading.
- When asking a “D” question, make them as practical and logical as possible. Aim questions at the heart of the issue and ask them in a straightforward manner.
- Only request information that is unavailable elsewhere.
- When gathering information, ask questions showing you have done your homework about their desired results and current efforts.
- Be sure to make queries that allow him to talk about his business goals.
- Gear your exploring toward saving D styles time and energy.

Exploring with I Styles

- I styles get bored quickly when they’re not talking about themselves.
- Strike a balance between listening to their life’s stories and gathering the information you need to be an effective sales consultant.
- When asking business questions, keep them brief. If you can, work these exploratory questions in with social questions.
- The better your relationship with an “I” is, the more willing he’ll be to cooperate and talk about the task at hand.
- I styles can be so open they may tell you their fondest hopes and aspirations. If you can demonstrate how your product or service can get them closer to their dreams, they may become so excited about your product—and you—that they’re likely to sell you and your products and services to everyone else in their organization.

Exploring with S Styles

- S styles can be excellent interviewees, so talk warmly and informally and ask gentle, open questions that draw them out (especially around sensitive areas).
- Show tact and sincerity in exploring their needs.
- If they do not have a good feeling about your product, company, or even you, they are not likely to take the chance of hurting your feelings by telling you so.
- They want to avoid confrontations, even minor ones. So, S styles may tell you what they think you want to hear, rather than what they really think.
- They may not tell you about their dissatisfaction with your competitors. Even though this is exactly what you want to hear, the “S” may be hesitant about saying anything negative about them.
- Allow for plenty of time (possibly multiple meetings) for S styles to open up to you and reveal their innermost desires and pains.
- The more time you spend with an S style exploring, the higher the odds you’ll be landing them as a customer.

Exploring with C Styles

- C styles don’t care much about social interaction (beyond common courtesy and standard pleasantries), so get to the point.
- C styles often like to answer questions that reveal their expertise, so they can be very good interviewees.
- As long as you ask logical, fact-oriented, relevant questions, they will enjoy speaking with you.
- Phrase your questions to help them give you the right information.
- Ask open and closed questions that investigate their knowledge, systems, objectives, and objections.
- Make your own answers short and crisp.
- If you do not know the answer to something, do not fake it. Tell them you’ll get the answer for them by a certain time, and then do it.

Phase 3: Maintaining Rapport in the Solving & Collaborating Stage

Collaborating with D Styles

- Your presentation must be geared toward the D style's priorities.
- Gear your presentation toward how they can become more successful, save time, generate results, and make life easier and more efficient; you'll get their attention.
- Zero in on the bottom line with quick benefit statements.
- They want you to do the analysis and lay it out for them to approve or reject.
- D styles like rapid, concise analyses of their needs and your solutions.
- D styles like being in control, so give them choices backed with enough data and analysis to allow them to make an intelligent decision.
- Then, be quiet and let them make their decision. If you speak or interrupt while they are buying, you will dramatically decrease the odds of making this sale.

Collaborating with I Styles

- Show how your product would increase the I style's prestige, image, or recognition.
- Talk about the favorable impact or consequences your suggestions will have in making their working relationships more enjoyable.
- Give them incentives for completing tasks by stressing how their contribution will benefit others and evoke positive responses from them.
- Presentations need impact for people with short attention spans, so involve as many senses as possible.
- Show them how your solution will save them effort and make them look good.
- Back up your claims with testimonials from well-known people or high-profile corporations.
- Name satisfied acquaintances they know and admire.
- Sprinkle in "visualizing future ownership" questions, such as: "If you were already running this software, how would you use it?"

Collaborating with S Styles

- Show how your product or service will stabilize, simplify, or support the S styles procedures and relationships.
- Clearly define their roles and goals in your suggestions, and include specific expectations of them in your plan.
- Present new ideas in a non-threatening way.
- Provide them time to adjust to changes in operating procedures and relationships.
- When change becomes necessary, tell them why. Explain how long the changes will take and any interim alterations of the current conditions.
- Design your message to impart a sense of stability and security.
- S styles like to be shown the appropriate steps to follow, so share those with them.
- Involve them by asking their opinions and encourage them to give you feedback.

Collaborating with C Styles

- Emphasize accuracy, value, quality, and reliability.
- They dislike talk not backed up by evidence.
- Describe a process that will produce the results they seek.
- Elicit specific feedback by asking, "So far, what are your reactions?" or "Do you have any questions that you'd like me to clear up?"
- Present your solution that shows them they'll be correct in making the purchase.
- Base your claims on facts, specifications, and data that relate specifically to their needs.
- C styles are cost-conscious; increase their perceived value with facts and ROI data.
- C styles are likely to see the drawbacks, so point out the obvious negatives before they do. Let them assess the relative trade-offs when choosing between competing (yet imperfect) products or services.

Phase 4: Maintaining Rapport in the Confirming Stage

Confirming with D Styles

- With D styles, you come right out and ask if they are interested. A D style will tell you “yes” or “no.”
- You can easily lose the attention and/or interest of a D style by presenting your information too slowly or by spending too much time discussing minute details.
- When you draw up a commitment letter, don’t spend too much time on points the “D” may not care about.
- Present them with options and probable outcomes. D styles like to balance quality with cost considerations, so offer options with supporting evidence and leave the final decision to them.
- We have found that it is effective to present a D style with two or three options. Provide a short summation of each option, along with your recommendation of each.
- While the “D” is reviewing your proposal, don’t interrupt them. The odds are high that they will find an option that appeals to them and closing the deal themselves.

Confirming with I Styles

- Show how your product would increase the I style's prestige, image, or recognition.
- Be open and ask, “Where do we go from here?” or “What’s our next step?”
- If they like something, they buy it on the spot (all other things being equal).
- You may have to slow them down because they also tend to overbuy and/or buy before weighing all the ramifications; behaviors that both of you may live to regret.
- I styles dislike paperwork and details so they are likely to hesitate, and even procrastinate, when it comes to spending the time required on a contract.
- Have a written agreement prepared due to their tendency to be unclear about procedures, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Make sure that you agree on the specifics in writing or, later on, you can almost bet on some degree of misunderstanding and/or disappointment.

Confirming with S Styles

- S styles are slower, deductive decision makers who listen to the opinions of others and take the time to solicit those opinions before deciding. So, make a specific action plan and provide personal guidance, direction, or assurance as required for pursuing the safest, most practical course to follow. Arm them with literature, case studies, and any documentation available, because they'll be "selling" your proposal to others within their organization.
- When you do reach agreement, carefully explore any potential areas of misunderstanding or dissatisfaction.
- S styles like guarantees that new actions will involve a minimum risk, so offer assurances and support.
- Try not to rush them, but do provide gentle, helpful nudges to help them decide (when needed).
- Involve them by personalizing the plan and showing how it will benefit them and others.
- When asking for a commitment, guide them toward a choice if they seem indecisive.

Confirming with C Styles

- Emphasize accuracy, value, quality, and reliability.
- Provide logical options with appropriate documentation and time to analyze their options.
- They're uncomfortable with snap decisions and when they say they will think about it, they mean it!
- If pressured by people or excessive demands, they may use "I'll think about it," as a stalling tactic.
- C styles are educated, logical, comparative "shoppers." Know your competition so you can point out your advantages relative to the competition in a factual, professional way. Mention your company's strengths as you suggest questions they may want to ask your competitors- that allows them to do a comparative cost-benefit analysis of the options and solutions.

Phase 5: Maintaining Rapport in the Assuring Stage

Assuring with D Styles

- D styles usually do not look for personal relationships at work due to their focus on accomplishing tasks.
- With D styles, do not rely on past sales to ensure future purchases. Follow up to find out if they have any complaints or problems with your product. If they do have complaints, address them immediately.
- Impress upon your customer your intent to stand behind your product or service.
- Stress that you will follow-up without taking much of their time.
- You may also want to offer a money-back guarantee.
- Whatever the promise, make sure you deliver everything you offer!

Assuring with I Styles

- I styles frequently buy before they're sold which may lead to buyers' remorse.
- I styles can benefit from ongoing reminders that they have made the right decision.
- Reinforce their decision by giving plenty of assistance immediately after the sale.
- Be certain they actually use your product or they may get frustrated from incorrect usage and either put it away or return it for a refund.
- Since they mingle with so many people, you can even ask I styles if they'd be willing to share their glowing testimonials about you and your product with others.
- If they are feeling smart for using your product or service, most I styles will give you more referrals than the other three styles combined!

Assuring with S Styles

- Follow-up consistently with an S style.
- Give them your personal guarantee that you will remain in touch, keep things running smoothly, and be available on an “as needed” basis.
- S styles like to think they have a special relationship with you; that you are more than just another business acquaintance; they prefer a continuing, predictable relationship.
- Give them your cell number, along with an invitation to call you any time with any concern. They will rarely use it, but will feel secure knowing it’s available to them.
- They dislike one-time deals, so follow up to maintain your relationship.
- Impersonal, computerized follow-up is not very appealing to S styles, so continue building your relationship with low-key, personalized attention and assistance.

Assuring with C Styles

- Set a specific timetable for when and how you will measure success with the C style. Continue proving your reliability, quality, and value.
- Make yourself available for follow-up on customer satisfaction and ask for specific feedback on the product or service performance record.
- If you have tips for improved usage or user shortcuts, email them to your C style customers.
- You should also ask for their ideas and opinions for how to improve your products and/or services.
- When they offer you their suggestions, get back to them about how your company is incorporating their ideas into upgrades into future upgrades, revisions, or new products.

PHASE	With D styles	With I styles	With S styles	With C styles
Connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skip small talk Lead with the main point Show up fully prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for time and stories before turning focus to business at hand Let them set the pace of the conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stick to business until they warm up to you Don't rush into agenda first Take an active interest in them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skip small talk Bring an agenda Remain cool, calm, and professional
Assessing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let him/her know where the questions are headed Only ask for information that's unavailable elsewhere Answer their questions directly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate questions between them personally and business Gently guide them back to the topic Keep the focus on their vision and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be sincerely interested in their answers Never interrupt them Ask nonthreatening questions to draw them out over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions that reveal their expertise Keep the questions focused on the topic Alternate open and closed-ended questions
Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make any presentation brief Focus on the bottom line and/or time savings Provide concise analysis of needs along with your professional recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve as many senses as possible Ask for their ideas often Sprinkle in testimonials Provide incentives for making decisions Show how the solution enhances their image and/or saves them effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show how solution will simplify, add stability or support their goals Present new ideas in a non-threatening way Never rush them, but provide gentle, helpful nudges toward a decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize value, accuracy, precision, quality and reliability Stick to facts and logic; attempt to reduce risks when possible Never pressure for any decision Remain cool and emotionally detached
Confirming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flat out ask if they are interested Present two or three options with recommendations and summaries Be quiet while they review and decide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openly ask, "Where do you see us going next?" Be ready to take their order Slow them down if they're buying too quickly Do the paperwork for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are slow decision makers and like to consult opinions of others Don't press for a decision Focus on a guarantee if relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide logical options with documentation Give them both time and space to make their decisions Point out any glaring downside to deal if one exists Suggest a pilot program or warranty to reduce risk
Assuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up to ensure they're 100% satisfied with solution Keep the relationship all business Make certain you deliver on every small promise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce their decision by providing ample assistance after the sale Make sure they don't get frustrated (they don't read instructions) Help them use the product/service to reduce anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide consistent follow-up along with personal assurances Give them private phone number to reach you Remind them that you also desire a long-term business relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share your process and/or timetable for your follow-up Double-check their method for measuring satisfaction Email them ideas and shortcuts Reinforce value, quality and reliability.