

Preparing yourself before a challenging conversation helps put focus on desired outcomes. Your preparation not only helps you communicate more effectively, it also helps others better communicate.

Using the Communication at Work Action Log, use the following checklist to prepare before a conversation.

Applying Communication Style

Identify Communication Style:

- How do they approach others?
- How do they display emotion?
- What is their style need?
- What blind spot does your style need to manage?
- What do you do when tension increases? What is your Backup Behavior?

Key considerations:

- Are they more Indirect (Ask) or Direct (Tell)?
- Are they more Reserved (Task) or Animated (People)?
- Analytical = Accuracy; Driving = Results; Amiable = People & Harmony; Expressive = Ideas & Endorsement
- Analytical = Analysis Paralysis; Driving = Not Listening; Amiable = Not Speaking Up; Expressive = Manage Impulses
- Analytical = Withdraw; Driving = Control; Amiable = Accommodate; Expressive = Confront

Putting Communication Style Into Action:

- How does their approach impact communication?
- How does their interpersonal display impact communication?
- The style need & tendency impacts motivation. How will you use this information in your communication?
- Self-management is a core EQ competency. Managing your blind spot leads to better interpersonal adaptability.
- Managing your Backup Behavior is another aspect of self-management. It is also a barrier to good communication.

Key considerations:

- Indirect approaches are more measured, using a slower pace. Direct approaches are more fast-paced. If needed, how will you adjust your pace?
- The more reserved in interpersonal display, the person will work from a task-focused perspective first. The more animated, the person will work from a people-focused perspective. If your display is different, how will you adjust your communication?
- What will you say and what actions will you take to address their style need & tendency?
- What are your signs that you are overusing your style strengths or overworking your style need? What do you need to do to manage yourself if you see the signs?
- What do you need to do to manage your own Backup Behavior? What will you do if you see Backup Behavior being demonstrated during your conversation? How will you balance the Logic/Emotion bubble in yourself and in the other person?

Debriefing the conversation

After your conversation:

- Review the conversation and identify what worked.
- Were there areas that didn't go well?
- What are your insights?

Key questions:

- How did Communication Style help you?
- Where did you have difficulty?
- What adjustments will you make next time?