

Tailor your communication style to fit employees' personalities

We all have different personal communication styles. The better you can recognize and understand them, the more effective you'll be in your leadership role. Here are four basic styles to look for:

- **Direct.** These people are focused on results. They want other people to get to the point, and quickly. They grow impatient with too much chitchat or beating around the bush. Chances are their workplaces are very well organized and uncluttered. You'll communicate most effectively by going straight to the basic message without delay.
- **Relationship-oriented.** Some people are driven to connect with others on a personal basis. They're always ready to talk about their family and friends and ask you about yours. They know lots of people around the organization and usually know what's going on better than anyone else. Take some time to get friendly with these people; learn about their families and personal history.

You'll form a bond that will help you communicate smoothly when it comes to business matters.

- **Analyzer.** These folks rely on facts and data to make decisions. They'll listen if you can provide detailed, logic-driven information supporting your point. One good strategy: Give them a few pages of statistics and other data to look over on their own so they can convince themselves that your ideas are workable.
 - **Enthusiastic.** Turned on by new ideas and interesting challenges, these people can get very involved in what they're talking about, using physical gestures and dramatic figures of speech. Talk about the big picture to get their energy up; don't drown them in excessive details.
- Adapted from "Communicate with others the way they communicate best," by Carolyn B. Thompson and Robin Vance, on the Training Systems Inc. Web site