



November 2009

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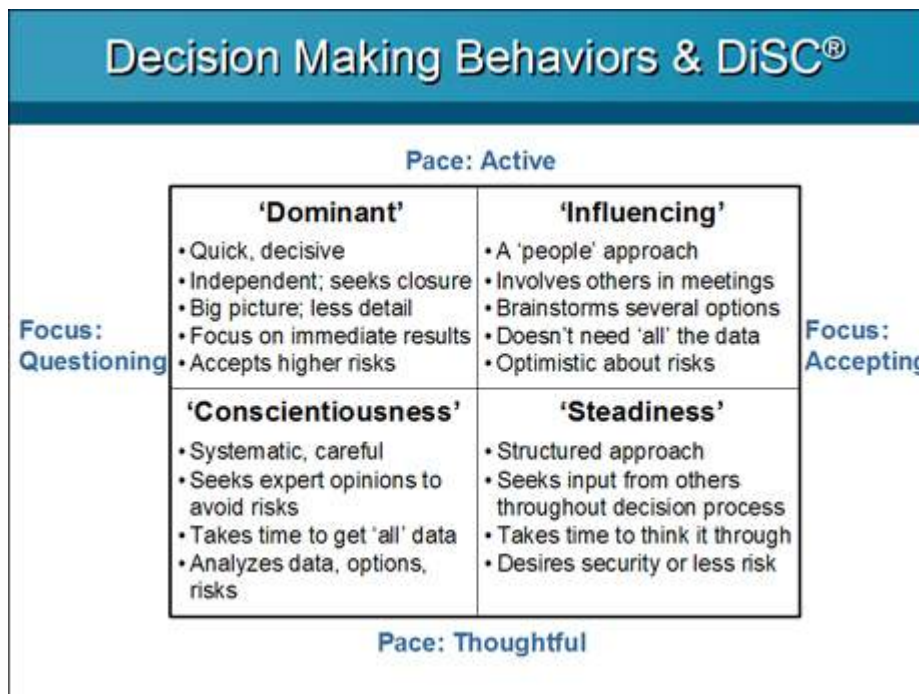
What is the Decision Leader Review?

This monthly publication brings you current research and information in the area of business decision making. You'll find new concepts and ideas you can put to use immediately to improve the quality and speed of your strategic and tactical decision making activities.

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Decision Making & Behavioral Styles

Last month, we explored how personal styles influence decision making. See the summary below:



This month, we'll discuss the "hidden trap dangers" with each behavioral style. Then, we'll identify some actions you can take when interacting with each style, while engaged in a decision making process.

Dominant Style

Decision characteristics: Seeks quick closure on decisions, independent, focuses on end results, high risk tolerance.

Decision making dangers: May fail to take enough time to gather sufficient information and consider the possible negative consequences (risks). May tend to take higher risks than are comfortable for others, believing the potential for big payoffs justify the risk.

When interacting with Dominant-style style people during the decision process:

- Point out the benefits of taking more time, but frame it in terms of how that extra time will improve the decision result.
- Do not come with a ready-made decision, nor force them into your option. Ask questions, rather suggest what to do.
- If you have concerns about their preferred choice, list the negative risks on paper. Ask them to rate the Probability (Low, Medium, High) of the risk occurring and Seriousness (Low, Medium, High) if it does occur. If you disagree with those ratings, discuss why (with logic and some data). Help them see the risks that you see, in terms of impact on results.
- If you disagree, do not let it reflect on them personally. State disagreements in terms of logic and facts, not the person.

Influencing Style

Decision Characteristics: Prefers interaction with others and organizes decision meetings. Engages in open-ended, brainstorming activities. Is comfortable making a decision even if all information has not been gathered or analyzed. Optimistic view of risks and ability to achieve success. Tends to be positive about expectations of people and the decision outcomes.

Decision Making Dangers: Tends to make emotion-based decisions, sometimes impulsively, based on a "gut-feeling". May avoid making decisions which involve interpersonal conflict, "looking bad" or have negative consequences (risk). May unrealistically expect the best, failing to consider risks.

When interacting with Influencing-style people during the decision process:

- Provide assistance to develop a more logical, fact-based approach.
- Discuss how making the decision will reduce negative outcomes in the long term.
- Show them how to understand and reduce risks, based on an assessment of Probability, Seriousness and Preventive/Contingent Action to reduce each.
- Put details in writing.
- Ask for their opinion and ideas regarding how the decision will impact the people involved.

Steadiness Style

Decision Characteristics: Prefers a structured, step-by-step approach, involving collaboration with others. Considers the impact on others, especially if they will be affected. Seeks a decision that will result in long-term stability and security. Tends to be factual, taking the time to think things through.

Decision Making Dangers: Tends to procrastinate on decisions involving interpersonal conflict or involving changes that involve risk-taking. May prefer to choose a lower payoff option, in return for higher security and less risk. May take more time than necessary, seeking to reduce risk and assure success and security of the decision choice.

When interacting with Steadiness-style people during the decision process:

- Support their methodical, logical approach to some decisions, but help them identify decisions that are lower risk and can be made more quickly.
- Identify how the decision choice will improve the work group's overall stability, harmony and future success.
- Provide support and personal assurances that your role in the decision process will have minimal risk.
- Ask "how" questions related to a completion time-frame, ie: "how do you plan to complete this decision process?" Then lead into discussion of a finish date. Hold them accountable to that date.
- Patiently draw out their personal goals for the decision and work with them to help achieve those goals; be responsive to their comments and input.

Conscientiousness Style

Decision Characteristics: Tends to be a careful, analytic decision maker, gathering information and assessing possible risk before making decisions. Desires enough time to conduct a thorough analysis. Prefers a straight-forward, direct process, sticking to business along the way.

Decision Making Dangers: May get bogged down in the "what if" concerns. May get stuck in information-gathering, analysis and pursuit of "expert opinions" due to fear of making the wrong decision. Tends to defer risky decisions to higher levels of authority. May do nothing on a risky decision, until higher levels inquire. May spend too much time seeking the perfect solution, rather than moving forward with a good, workable one.

When interacting with Conscientiousness-style people during the decision process:

- Discuss what are appropriate amounts of time to spend in analysis, and assist in setting a time limit for a decision.
- Help them make their decision process steps visible and explore ways to streamline it.
- Ask what data will take a long time to gather, and ask "why" it is so important. Again, seek to help them speed their decision process.
- Provide assurances on what the personal consequences of being wrong will be.
- Do not push too hard, or be unrealistic with time deadlines.

The Idea in Practice

Think of someone with whom you've experienced some decision-making difficulties. Identify both their primary and secondary D-i-S-C styles. Find one strategy, from the lists above, that will

help reduce those difficulties.

Next month is part three of this three-part series on decision making and personal styles, where we will identify several strategies to improve your personal decision making effectiveness.

Quote of the Month

"Time plays a role in almost every decision. And some decisions define your attitude about time."

-John Cale
