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CONFIDENT COMMUNICATORS, LLC
Training For Leaders, Managers & Teams

Communicating Across 4 Generations Now In The Workplace

March 20, 2024

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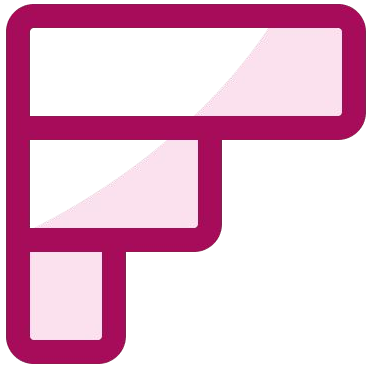

I identify as a...

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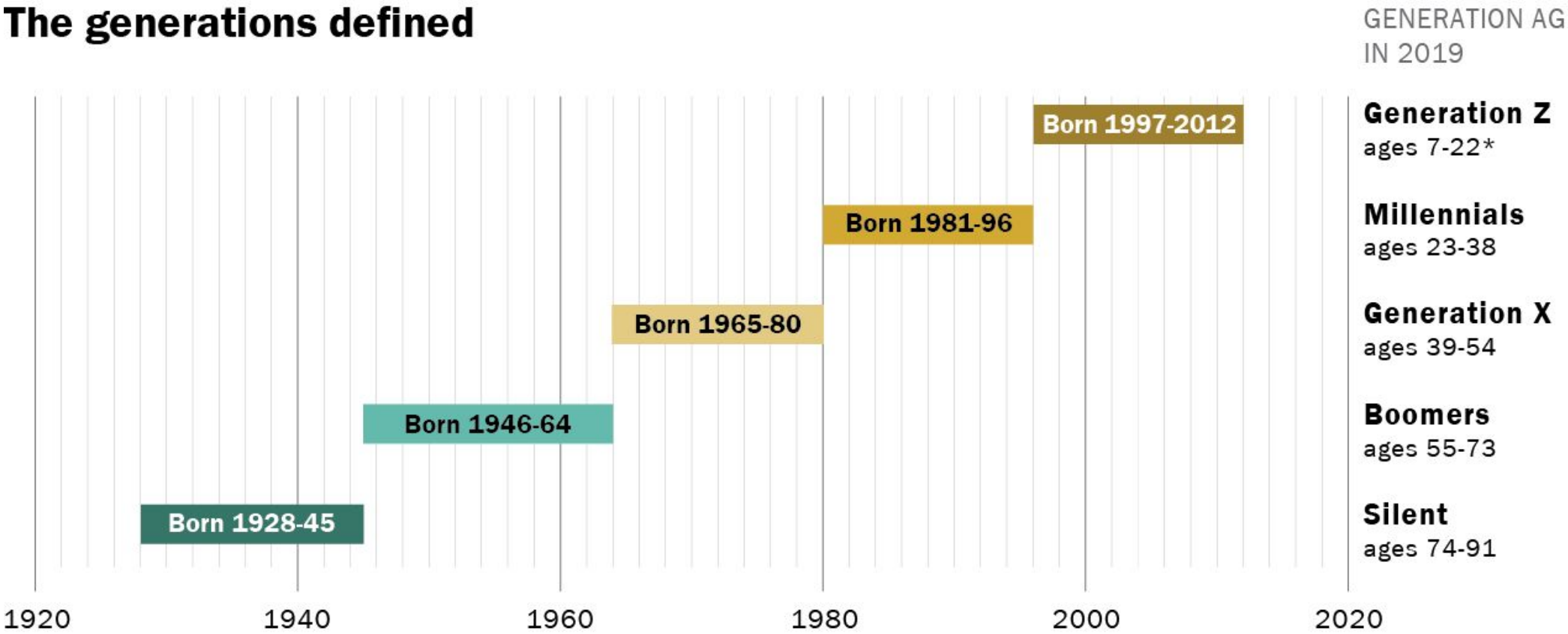
Today's Objectives

- Dispel some myths
- Learn how we are more similar than different
- Hear directly from the 4 generations about how they prefer to give and receive feedback

The generations defined

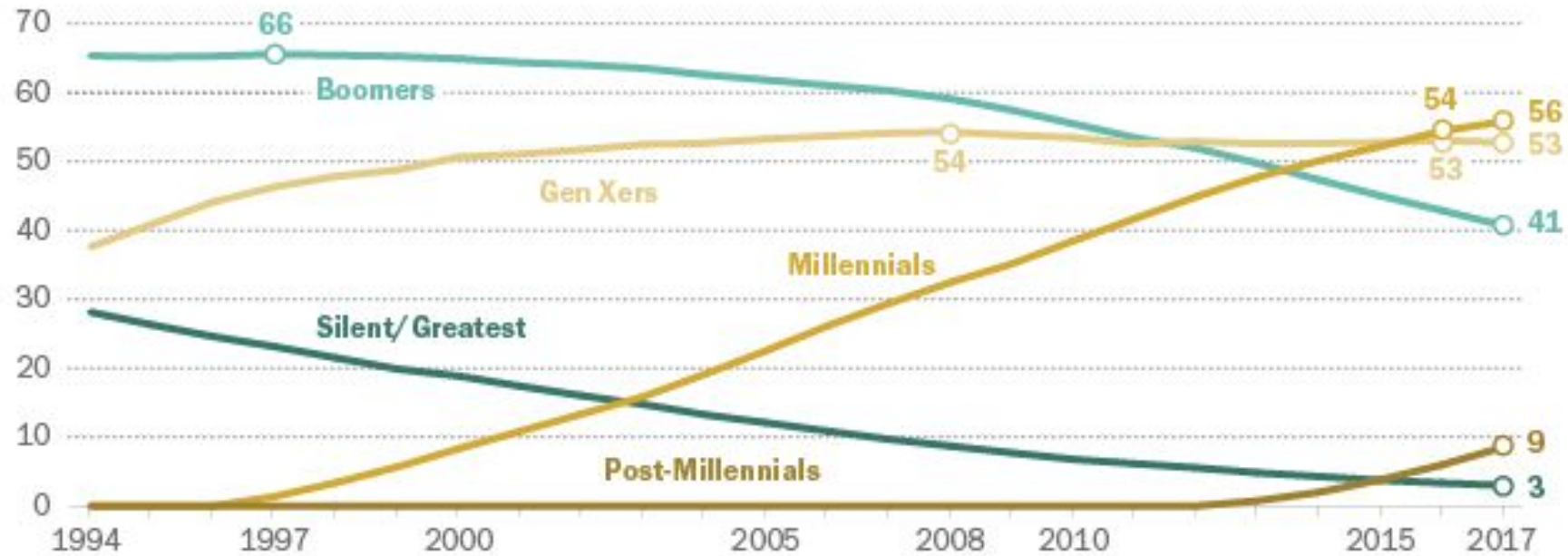


*No chronological endpoint has been set for this group. For this analysis, Generation Z is defined as those ages 7 to 22 in 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Millennials became the largest generation in the labor force in 2016

U.S. labor force, in millions

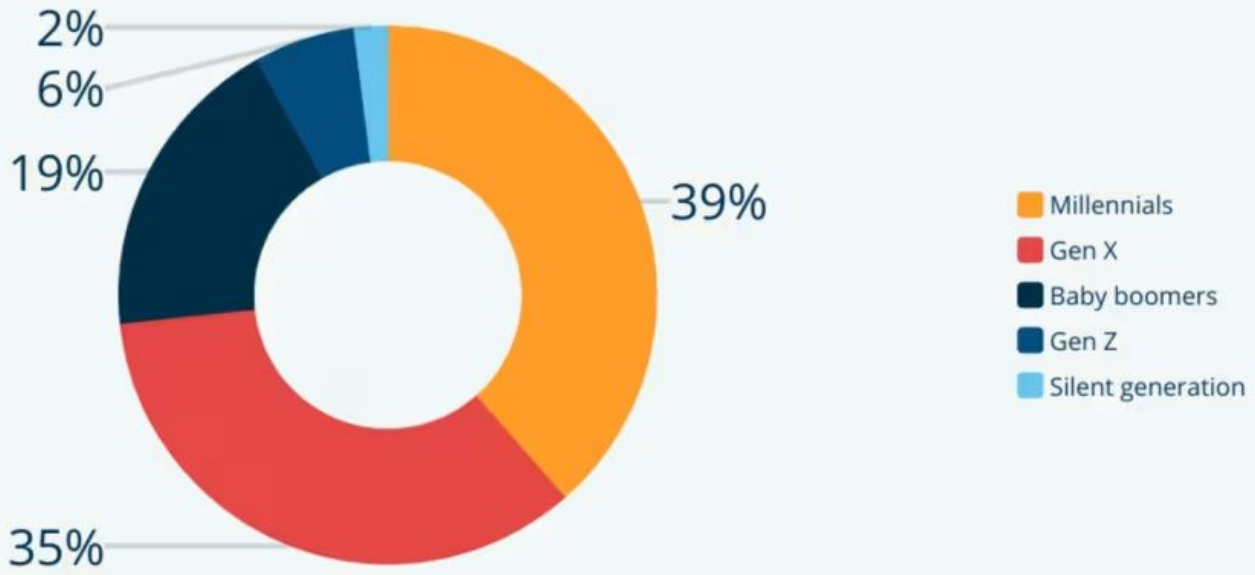


Note: Labor force includes those ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work. Annual averages shown.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of monthly 1994-2017 Current Population Survey (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A breakdown of the 5 generations in the workforce

September, 2023



Source: "Gen Z In The Workplace: How Should Companies Adapt?," John Hopkins University

Capterra

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Labels & stereotypes about Gen Z (Under 27)?

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Myth: Gen Z is lazy and don’t care about work.

49%

of Gen Z view their work as more important than exercise, music, or hobbies, second only to family and friends.

Deloitte’s 2023 Gen Z and Millennial Survey

Generation Z entered the workplace when there wasn’t even one to go to.

Those years, marked by a global health crisis and social unrest, helped shape their views about life as well as work.

Many of them were home as their parents’ workplaces closed, so they got a ground-floor view of what jobs really looked like, and they didn’t like what they saw: a work-life balance that left little time for life, management that seemed to not care about the mental health of their employees, and an organizational structure that didn’t give workers much of a voice.

Now, they have an opportunity to shape the workplace as they begin to enter the ranks of management themselves.

What’s It Like to Work for a Gen Z Boss? Very Different.
- WSJ, March 10, 2024

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Labels & stereotypes about Millennials (28-43)

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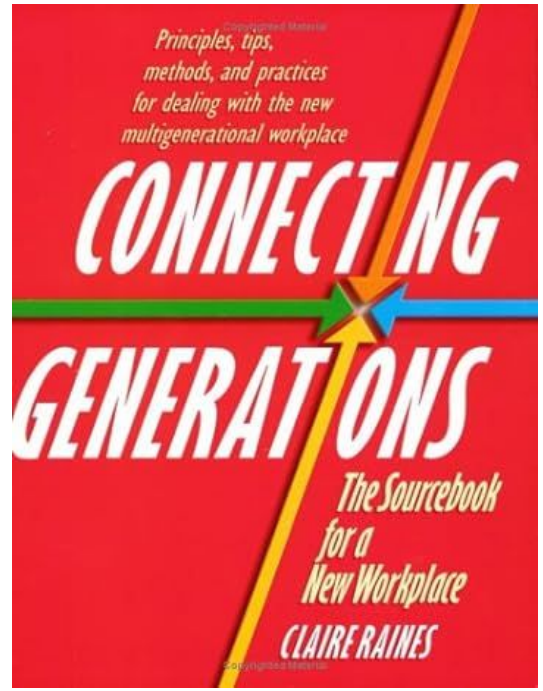
Myth: Millennials Have No Work Ethic

- It isn't that Millennials don't want to work. Rather, they don't believe in the value of work for it's own sake.
- They want to work efficiently to balance work time and play time.
- For them, long work hours do not equal hard work.
- They're achievement-oriented.
- In your business, this translates to higher production in a shorter time period, allowing for more leisure time.



Connecting Generations: The Sourcebook for a New Workplace, Claire Raines

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Labels & stereotypes about Gen X (44-59)?

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Myth: Your work hours reflect how hard you work.

- In the traditional workplace of desk-based 9 to well-past-5 employees, visibility was a key metric to see how productive an employee was.
- The unspoken assumption was if you were in the office you were working hard, if at home, you had your feet up watching Netflix.
- However, post Covid-19, that has gone out the door, at least for younger generations.

"There's an argument to be had with that presenteeism of 'I've sat at my desk for 10 hours today' compared to someone who says they are only going to work when they know they are the most productive."

Niamh Spence, communications consultant

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Labels & stereotypes about Baby Boomers (60-78)?

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Myth: Baby boomers aren’t embracing new technology

56%

of C-suite executives educated themselves on generative AI tools, whereas only 12% of entry-level employees did.

Visier

25%

of 18-29 year olds would actively avoid participating in a meeting if they thought their tech tools might cause disruption, whereas it was just 6% for those older than 40.

HP

Myth: You have to manage the generations differently

Across age groups, employees tend to leave—and start new jobs—for similar reasons

Mckinsey

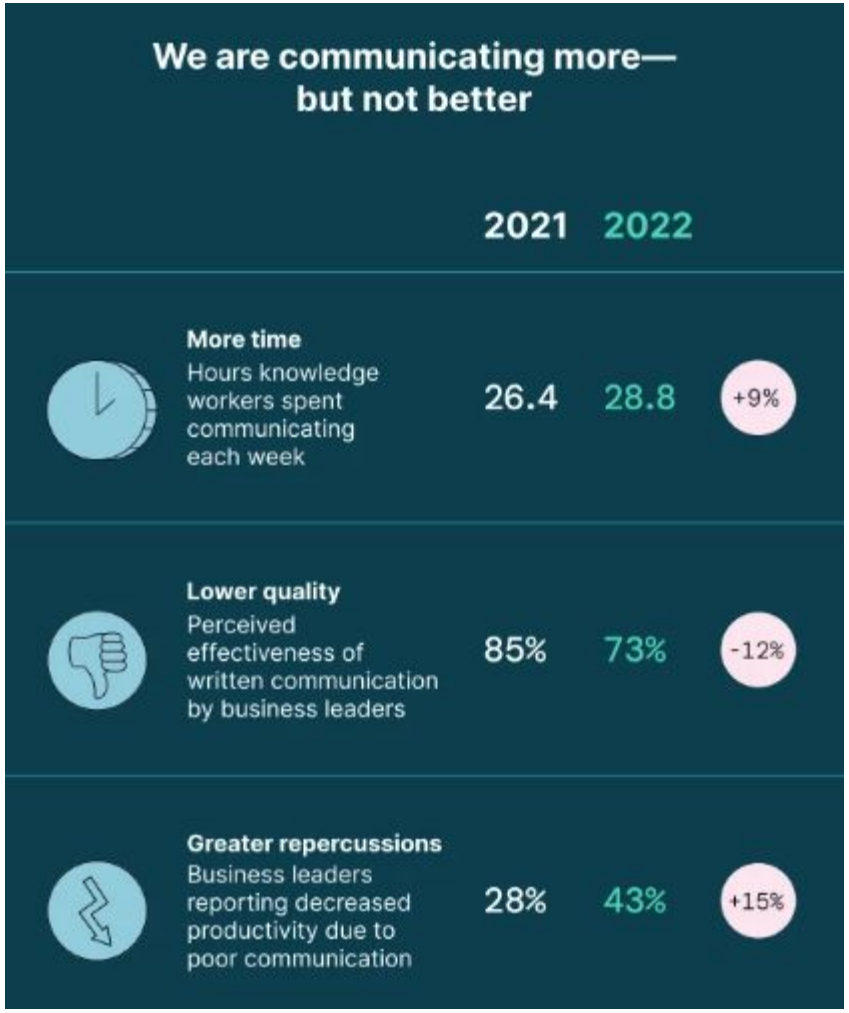
“With few exceptions, we don’t see big differences in our research across the generations.”

Josh Millet, Criteria

In 2017, 24% of respondents to a Pew survey said their job or occupation was very important to their identity.

In 2021, just 17% did.

Americans Don’t Care as Much About Work. And It Isn’t Just Gen Z, WSJ



Ineffective communication costs U.S. businesses an estimated **$12,506 per employee per year**.

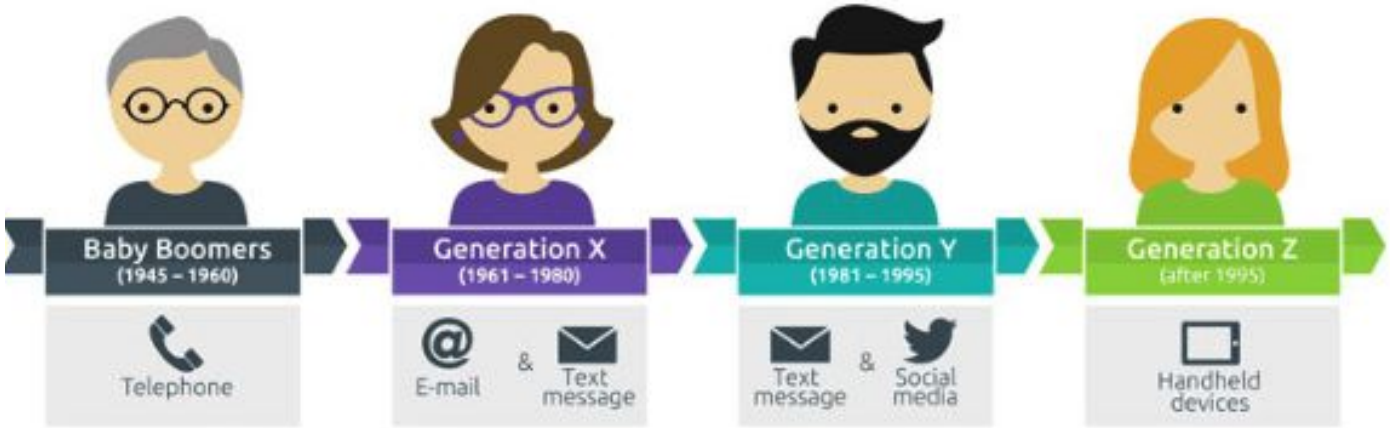
Grammarly

Panel Discussion

What works for me when communicating at work?
Especially giving and receiving feedback?

Best Practices

YOUR Preferred Channels Are Not Always The Right Channels For YOUR AUDIENCE



Consider how your message needs to be received before sending.

YOUR Preferred Channels Are Not Always The Right Channels For YOUR AUDIENCE

20%
Of Baby boomers still use their office landline

66%
Of workers say they want a heads-up via text message before getting a call from a colleague

25%
of employees say they get anxiety when they receive an unexpected call or voicemail from work.

“Effective communication is not a one-size-fits-all solution in today’s modern, digital workplace”

“You have to have an understanding of the demographic preferences, you have to consider what type of information you’re communicating, the urgency of the message, the context of the message; all of these are key factors when deciding on the mode of communication.”

The Slack generation can’t communicate with the email generation. Why more platforms are dividing the workplace, Fast Company

Baby Boomers

1. Appreciate formal and structured feedback, such as annual performance reviews.
2. Value recognition and respect for their achievements and seniority.
3. May not be comfortable with receiving feedback from younger generations or using technology for feedback.

Gen X

1. Prefer direct and honest feedback, such as face-to-face conversations.
2. Value autonomy and independence in their work.
3. May not appreciate feedback that is too frequent or too vague.
4. May also be skeptical of feedback that is not backed by facts or evidence.

Millennials

1. Prefer frequent and constructive feedback, such as real-time feedback or coaching.
2. Value Learning and Development opportunities in their work.
3. May not respond well to feedback that is too harsh or too generic.
4. May also expect feedback to be personalized and tailored to their goals and interests.

Gen Z

1. Prefer instant and interactive feedback, such as feedback via digital platforms or gamification.
2. Value creativity and innovation in their work.
3. May not tolerate feedback that is too slow or too boring.
4. May also seek feedback from multiple sources and perspectives.

Mutual Objectives

Before you say anything to anyone, pause and ask yourself:

1. What do I want for myself?
2. What do I want for the other person?
3. What do I want for the relationship?

Recent Media

The Performance Review Is Dying. Make Way for a Fire Hose of Feedback, WSJ

What's It Like to Work for a Gen Z Boss? Very Different, WSJ

Simon Sinek on Millennials in the Workplace, YouTube

Americans Don't Care as Much About Work. And It Isn't Just Gen Z, WSJ

The Slack generation can't communicate with the email generation. Why more platforms are dividing the workplace, Fast Company

Know Your Audience

Active, Assertive, Dynamic, Bold

Fast-paced & Outspoken

Cautious & Reflective

Moderate-paced, Calm, Methodical, Thoughtful

Questioning & Skeptical

Logic-focused, Objective, Reserved, Challenging

Accepting & Warm

People-focused, Empathizing, Receptive, Agreeable

Faster

Fast-paced/Outspoken
&
Questioning/Skeptical

Fast-paced/Outspoken
&
Accepting/Warm

Facts

People

Cautious/Reflective
&
Questioning/Skeptical

Cautious/Reflective
&
Accepting/Warm

Cautious

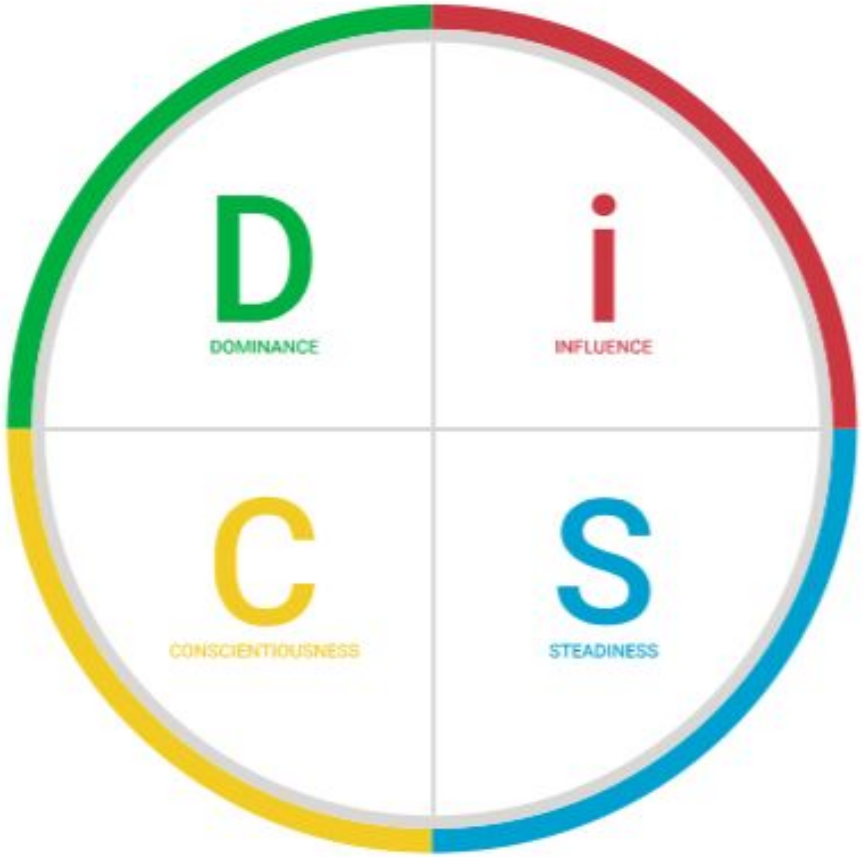
The DiSC® Model

DOMINANCE

- Direct
- Firm
- Strong-willed
- Forceful
- Results-oriented

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

- Analytical
- Reserved
- Precise
- Private
- Systematic



INFLUENCE

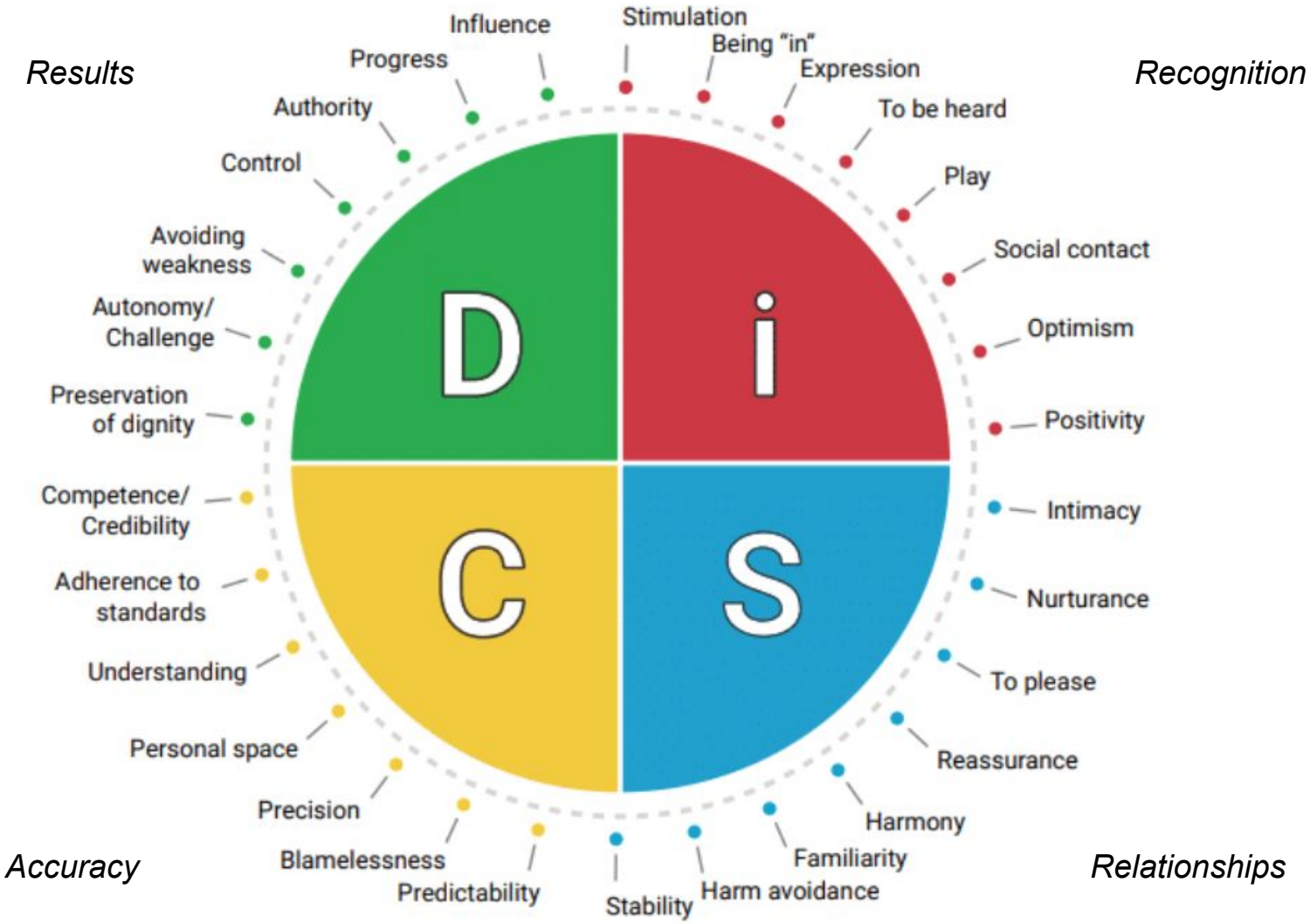
- Outgoing
- Enthusiastic
- Optimistic
- High-spirited
- Lively

STEADINESS

- Even-tempered
- Accommodating
- Patient
- Humble
- Tactful

Fast-Paced

Facts & Process Oriented



People Oriented

Cautious

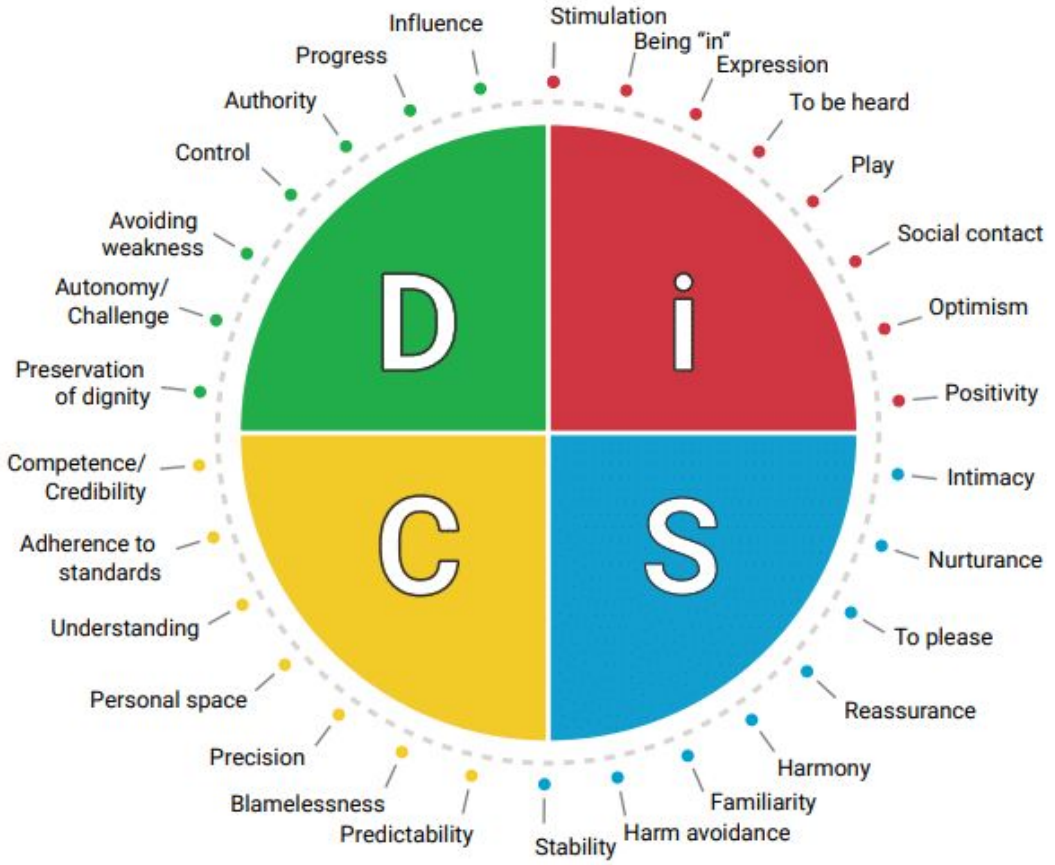
Decision Making Tendencies

“Let’s get to the root cause.”

- Wants to make decisions
- Independent
- Wants only essential facts
- Big picture reasoning
- Risk-taker
- Quick

“Let’s analyze all the angles.”

- Avoids risk
- Wants to make the correct decision
- Cautious / won’t rush
- Follows rules
- Focuses on data and details



“Let’s talk about it.”

- Wants the popular decision
- People-focused
- Doesn’t need lots of information
- Optimistic
- Uses gut feeling / intuition
- Quick / impulsive

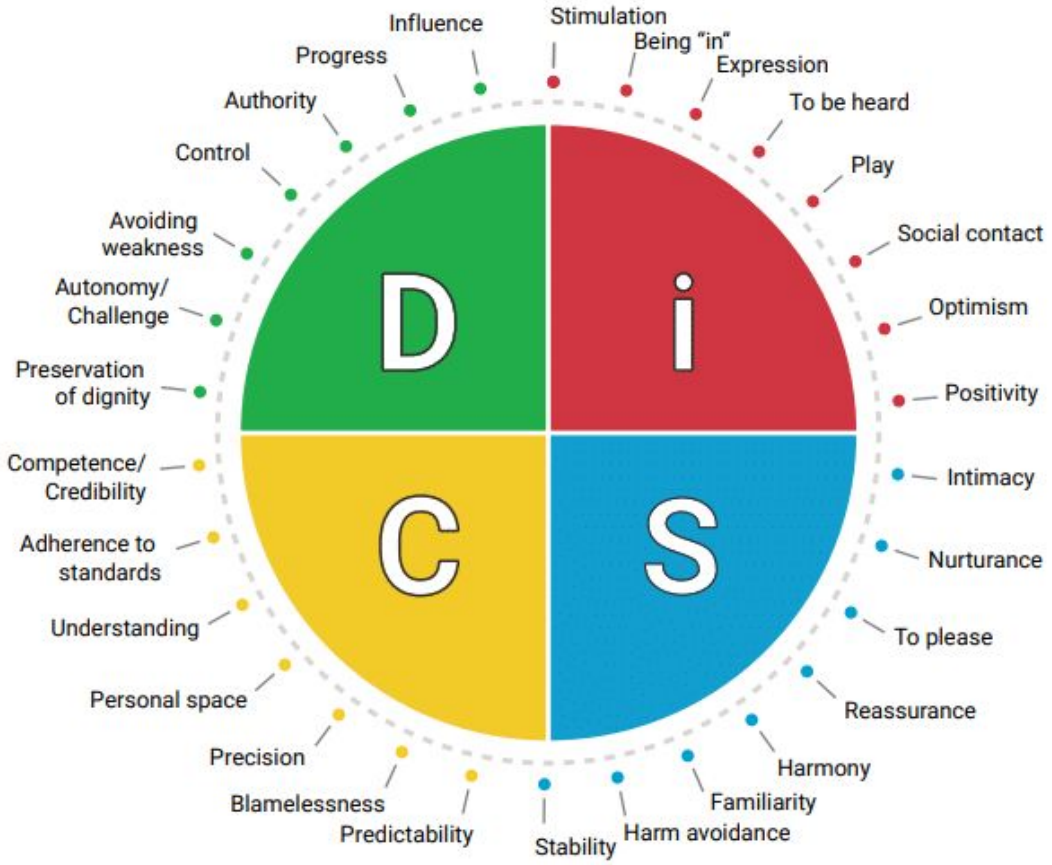
“Let’s make sure we hear all the perspectives.”

- Considers people close to the issue / team
- Looks for sounding board / support for ideas
- Cautious & slower
- Doesn’t want to disappoint

Reaction to Lack of Clarity

Likely to push back and resist decisions they don't understand, showing overconfidence.

Tend to be solitary and may simply focus on on their own objectives, deepening the sens of misalignment

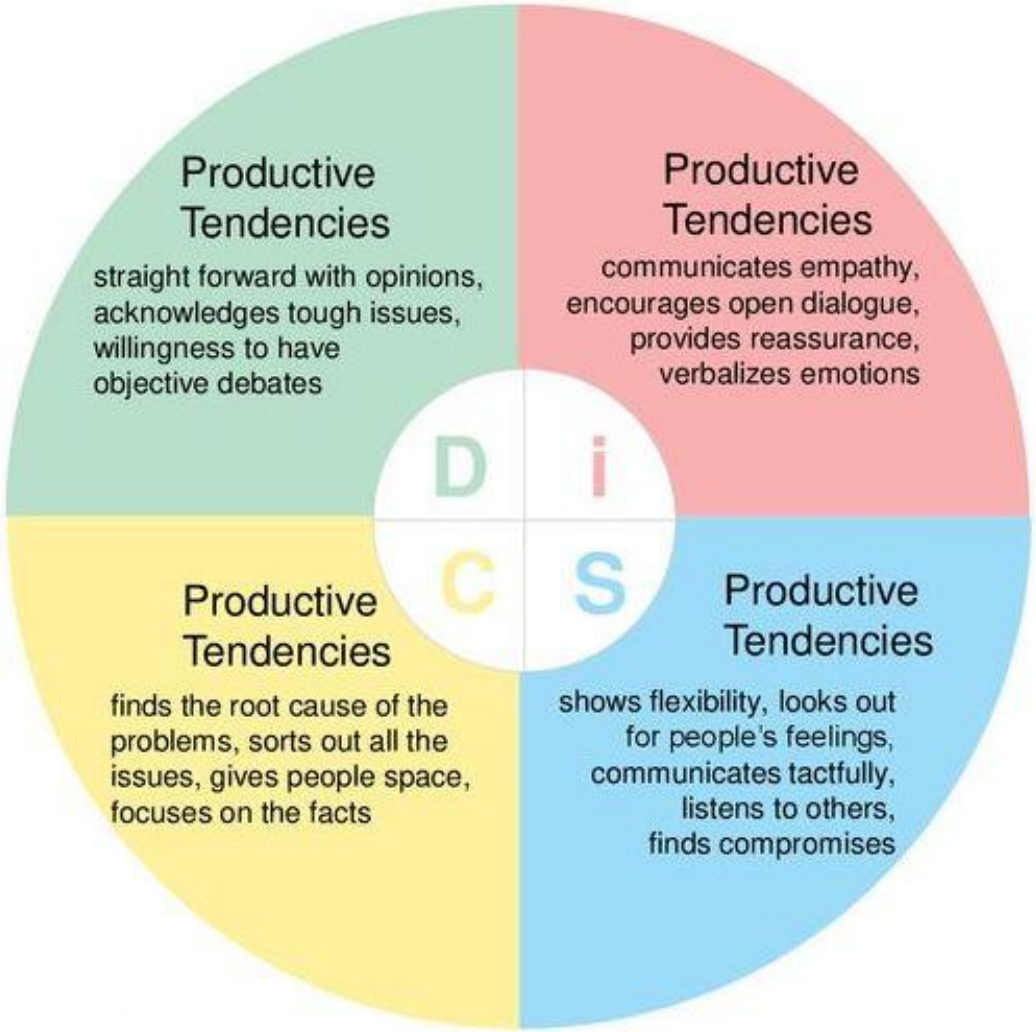


Prone to impulsiveness and may be disorganized at times, so without clear goals they may simply fail or not follow through.

May second-guess themselves and their work, which may impede their productivity.

(Un)Healthy Conflict Behaviors

Destructive Tendencies
insensitivity, impatience, creates win-lose situations, refuses to bend, overpowers others



Destructive Tendencies
becomes overly emotional, talks over others, impulsiveness, glosses over tension, makes personal attacks

Destructive Tendencies
defensiveness, uses passive-aggressive tactics, becomes over critical, isolates self, overanalyzes the situation

Destructive Tendencies
withdraws, gives in to please others, ignores problems, lets issues simmer beneath the surface, avoids tension

Different Communication Styles Appreciate Different Feedback Approaches

- Get to the point
- Show how it helps achieve their results
- Keep it brief and direct
- Offer a sense of control in the situation
- Be prepared for pushback

- Be personable
- Show how it helps/affects people
- Focus on their accomplishments
- Frame in the positive
- Avoid too much detail
- Be prepared for them to gloss over it or brush it aside

- Be logical
- Show how it impacts process, effectiveness, or efficiency
- Be formal, possibly in writing
- Provide details, examples, and data
- Be prepared to answer questions

- Slow down
- Be sincere & build rapport
- Show how it affects harmony or disruption
- Explain carefully
- Give assurances & support
- Be prepared for sensitivity

Adapt To Your Listener's Style

Dominance

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE D STYLE

When Trying to Connect

- Make efficient use of time
- Focus on the topic at hand and avoid going off on tangents
- Expect candor

When Problems Need to Be Solved

- Be aware that they respond well to bold or daring ideas
- Avoid suggesting unrealistically positive scenarios
- Focus on the big picture and avoid overanalysis

When Things Get Tense

- Address issues quickly and directly
- Resist the urge to give in to their demands just to regain harmony
- Avoid taking bluntness personally

influence

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE i STYLE

When Trying to Connect

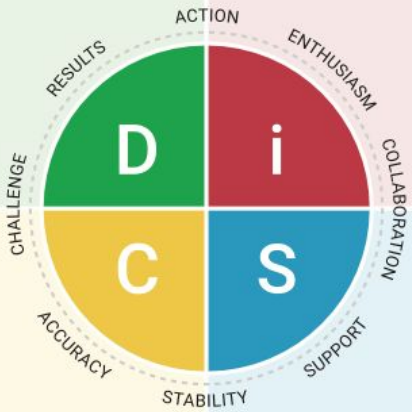
- Be open to collaboration
- Recognize the value of their energy and enthusiasm
- Find ways to recognize them so they feel well-liked and appreciated

When Problems Need to Be Solved

- Remain optimistic while considering all potential issues
- Show them that you're open to creative solutions
- Expect spontaneity

When Things Get Tense

- Avoid personal attacks that could escalate the conflict
- Acknowledge the importance of their feelings
- Let them know that your relationship is still solid despite your differences



WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE C STYLE

When Trying to Connect

- Talk to them about the objective, fact-based aspects of ideas and projects
- Avoid pressuring them for an immediate decision
- Expect skepticism

When Problems Need to Be Solved

- Allow them time for careful analysis
- Show appreciation for their logic
- Don't let them get bogged down in the details

When Things Get Tense

- Support your opinions with logic and facts
- Give them space to process the situation before confronting the issues
- Avoid using forceful or emotional tactics

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE S STYLE

When Trying to Connect

- Show warmth and concern for their feelings
- Offer your point of view, but take an easygoing approach
- Work collaboratively with them

When Problems Need to Be Solved

- Respect their cautious pace
- Consider other people's feelings when making decisions
- Set a timeline that fits everyone's needs

When Things Get Tense

- Address the situation directly without being confrontational
- Avoid forceful tactics or dismissing the conflict completely
- Show that you sincerely care about resolving the issues

Conscientiousness

Steadiness

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Authorized Partner EVERYTHING DiSC® A Wiley Brand

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- Director Level Communications
- Management Communications
- Workplace Communications
- Sales Communications
- Team Communications
- Conflict Communications
- Emotional Intelligence
- Train the Trainer, Custom Training & Consulting

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