

Problem Solving & Decision Making Style Inventory (PSI) - Self Report



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Problem Solving and Decision-making Style Inventory

(Perception of Self)

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Purpose

The purpose of this instrument is to provide feedback on your perception of your own leadership style in relation to problem solving and decision making interventions.

The information gathered with the Problem Solving and Decision Making Style Inventory provides broad insight into your current strengths as well as examining those areas where your skills could be developed. The inventory explains a range of different problem solving and decision making scenarios, and asks you to select the style description that most closely matches how you would typically respond to each of the situations.



Problem Solving and Decision-making Style Inventory

Interpreting Your Results

The Problem Solving and Decision Making Style Inventory has been developed to evaluate the problem solving and decision making style that you typically adopt when you are working with people.

Your Problem Solving and Decision Making Style Profile

This shows the style or styles you tend to adopt most frequently when you are trying to solve problems or make decisions.

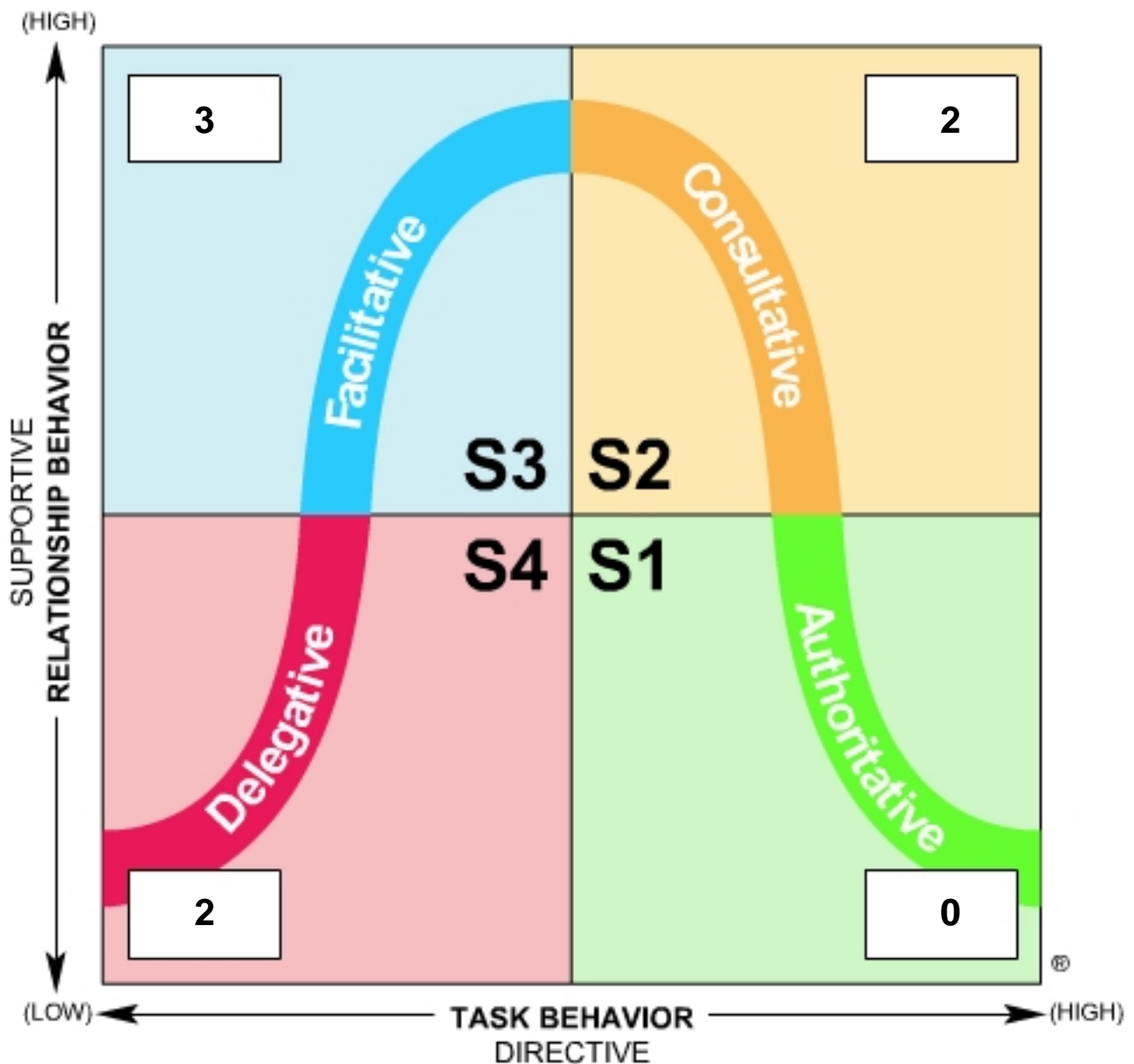
Three very important pieces of information come together to form your Problem Solving and Decision Making Style Profile:

1. **Your Primary Style** : Most people have a favorite, or primary problem solving and decision making style. Your primary style is the one you feel most comfortable with and therefore will have selected most often.
2. **Your Secondary Style** : Secondary, or supporting problem solving and decision making styles tend to be your "backup" styles when you are not using your primary style. The column on graph 1 indicating the second highest number of responses is your secondary style.
3. **Your Style Range** : Style range provides you with a sense of how flexible you are in varying the types of behaviors you engage in when attempting to influence people. Three or more responses in any one quadrant suggest a high degree of flexibility. The greater your style range, the more you are likely to be able to accommodate the needs of different followers and 'flex' your problem solving and decision making style or behavior accordingly. However, if your style range is restricted to one or two quadrants, you may find it more difficult to 'flex' your behavior in some situations that you encounter.

Problem Solving and Decision Making Inventory

jon warner's PSI Self Results

Your scores from completing the on-line questionnaire are shown in the four quadrants below.



Adaptability - 7

Problem Solving and Decision-making Style Inventory

The Style/Readiness Adaptability Matrix

Determining Your Style Adaptability Score

Style Adaptability is measured on the Graph on the previous page of the Problem Solving and Decision Making Style Inventory.

Style adaptability is the degree to which you are able to vary your style to match the needs of a follower. Style Range shows an individual's degree of "know-how" of different problem solving and decision making styles, while Style Adaptability measures "know-when" – a person's ability to use the appropriate style in the appropriate situation.

In the Style Adaptability Graph, points are given for each alternative action selected in response to the twelve scenarios provided in the assessment. The number of points awarded is determined by how well the alternative action selected matches the situation. A '3' response indicates the 'best fit', while a '0' response indicates that the selected action has a very low probability of success.

The use of a point system allows your Style Adaptability to be expressed as a score which allows some generalizations to be made based on numerical benchmarks. The possible adaptability score ranges from 0 to 36.

Your Style/Adaptability score is 7

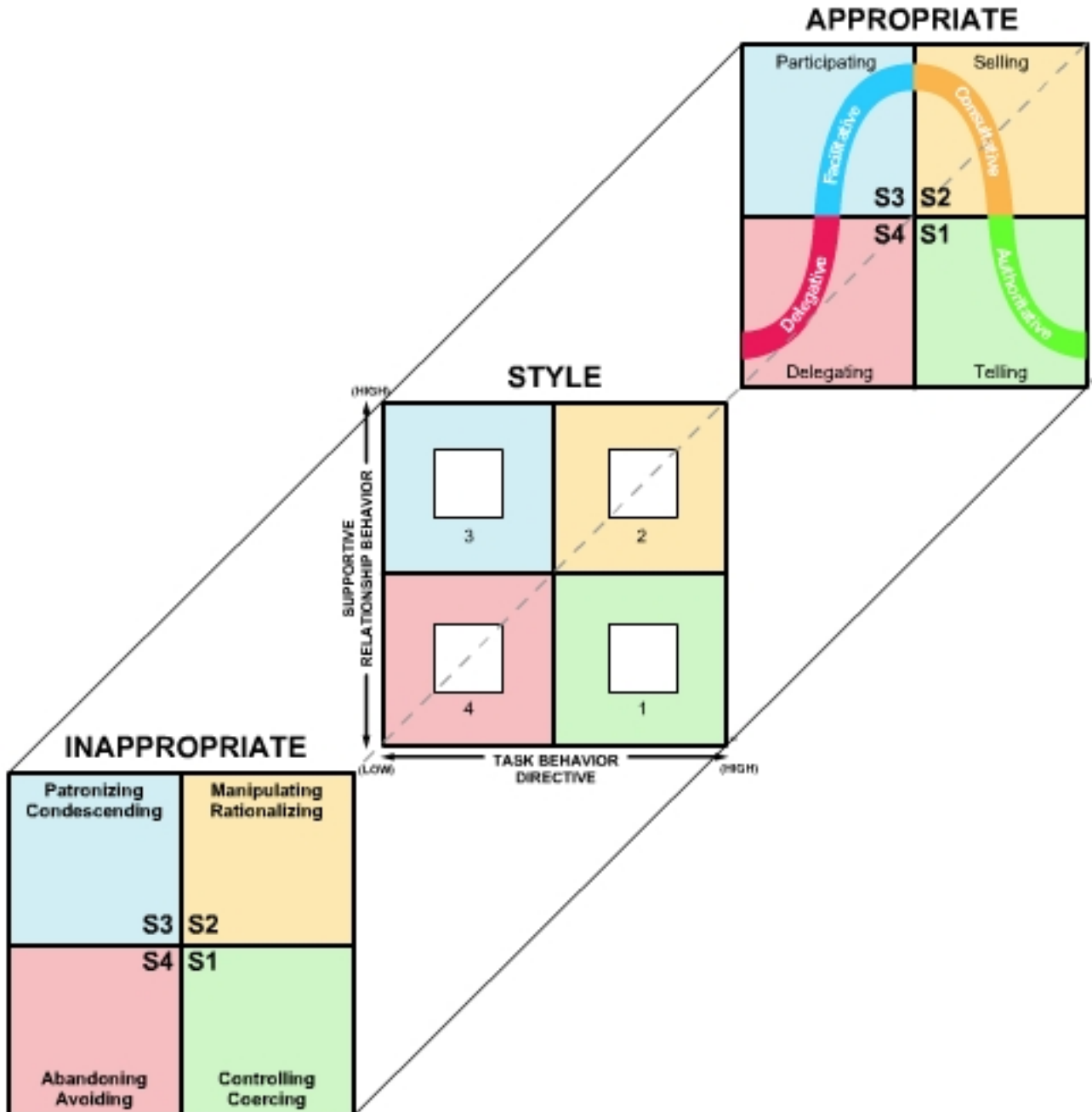
30-36
HIGH Scores in this range indicate an individual with a high degree of adaptability. The person accurately diagnoses the needs of different followers or their needs in different situations and makes the necessary adjustments in terms of problem solving and decision making style accordingly.

24-29
MEDIUM Scores in this range reflect a moderate degree of adaptability. This score usually indicates a pronounced primary problem solving and decision making style with less flexibility in the secondary styles.

0-23
LOW Adaptability scores less than 23 usually indicate a need for self development to improve both the ability to diagnose follower needs and to use appropriate problem solving and decision making communication behaviors and alternative or better matched styles in different scenarios.

Problem Solving and Decision Making Model

From your carbon response sheet, transfer your graph 1 and graph 2 scores from the 1, 2, 3 and 4 boxes into the model below.



Interpreting Your Results

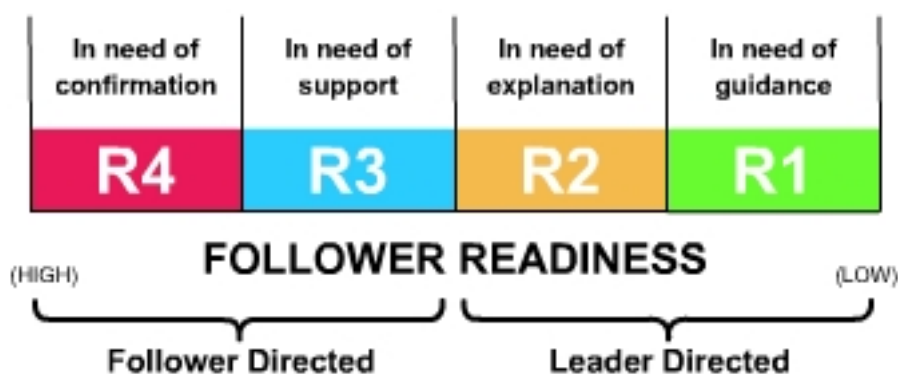
Determining or Assessing Follower or Group Readiness

Your success in intervening in or helping a group with its problem solving and decision making efforts depends, to a large extent, on the meaning or interpretation that your followers place on the communication messages you “send”. To maximize your potential for successful communication, it is important to identify the factors that will influence and affect the follower’s or the group’s ability to understand, interpret and respond to the information that you communicate, or the questions that you ask.

Effective communication exchanges in problem solving or decision making situations require that you:

1. Identify the specific problems to be tackled or discussed or decision to be made
2. Identify the specific problems to be tackled or discussed or decision to be made
3. Identify the specific problems to be tackled or discussed or decision to be made

In this model there are four levels of readiness. These readiness levels are identified in the diagram below:



Readiness within the model can be determined by assessing two key factors:

1. The level of Knowledge an individual has about the problem to be tackled or decision to be made
2. The level of Interest an individual has in the problem to be tackled or decision to be made

Your role as a leader is to assess the follower or group’s knowledge and interest (each time they initiate a particular discussion) and adjust your communication style in order to achieve the best results.

The style of communication you adopt for a given exchange – Authoritative, Consultative, Facilitative or Delegative – depends upon your assessment of the readiness of the person or the group you are communicating with.

It’s useful to note that while the first two readiness levels (“in need of guidance” and “in need of explanation”) are “leader directed”, i.e. led by the leader given the nature and content of the communication, the other two readiness levels (“in need of support” and “in need of confirmation”) are likely to be “follower directed”, i.e. led by the follower/s in terms of what they want or need from the communication.

The two receiver readiness scales are:

Knowledge

When you analyze a follower or group's knowledge of a topic you could consider influencing factors such as:

- Experience – past practice
- Expertise – current practice
- Education – learning (past or current)

It's good to remember that one or more of these factors may still render a person relatively low in knowledge related to a particular subject. For example, if you studied engineering 30 years ago but have not applied or studied it since then, you probably wouldn't have an adequate level of knowledge to engage in a sophisticated, hi-tech engineering problem analysis exercise.

When you attempt to analyze a person's knowledge, be specific about the subject, topic or issue to be considered. Try to avoid talking down to the person, or talking "over their head" as in either case, you risk limiting your communication effectiveness.

Interest

When you analyze another person's interest in a topic you may consider influencing factors like:

- Engagement with the topic – motivation or need for engaging in discussion, nonverbal and verbal expressions that indicate connection or disconnection
- Enthusiasm or excitement with the topic at hand
- Expectations – do they know that they need the information, or do they anticipate a discussion about the topic will be difficult, boring, relevant, stimulating, challenging, confusing, awkward

A person's readiness level is not necessarily "good" or "bad", it just "is". When you correctly identify the readiness level of others, you are able to more effectively communicate by considering the other party's knowledge of and interest in the topic at hand. On the other hand, when you simply deliver a message without considering the follower or group's readiness, you miss out on the opportunity to pitch your message appropriately and risk engaging in ineffective, or faulty communication.

It's useful to note that while the first two readiness levels ("in need of guidance" and "in need of explanation") are "leader directed", i.e. led by the leader given the nature and content of the communication, the other two readiness levels ("in need of support" and "in need of confirmation") are likely to be "follower directed", i.e. led by the follower/s in terms of what they want or need from the communication.

Readiness is particularly important to evaluate because people often approach communication exchanges from an egocentric perspective; that is, we mistakenly assume that the other party shares our own levels of interest and knowledge when, in fact, our listeners may vary considerably in knowledge of and interest in the topic at hand.

Using the mix of Knowledge and Interest, the Problem Solving and Decision Making model attaches simple descriptive labels to each of the four levels of readiness:

- Readiness level 1 (R1 – Low Knowledge and Low Interest) "In need of Guidance"
- Readiness level 2 (R2 – Low Knowledge and High Interest) "In need of Explanation"
- Readiness level 3 (R3 – High Knowledge and Low Interest) "In need of Support"
- Readiness level 4 (R4 – High Knowledge and High Interest) "In need of Confirmation"

Follower or Group Readiness Chart

Follower or group readiness can be determined by considering two factors, Knowledge and Interest. These factors are related and should be considered both independently and in combination to accurately diagnose readiness.



Readiness should always be determined by considering the problem solving or decision making subject, activity, goal or question, in combination with a general assessment about the follower or group.

Problem Solving and Decision-making Style Inventory

Understanding the different problem solving styles and how they can be most effectively matched with particular follower needs

This inventory aims to provide feedback on your perception of how you behave in a problem solving or decision making situation. The extent to which you engage in “directive” or “supportive” behavior is your “style”. These two dimensions are defined as follows:

Sirective Directive behavior is the extent to which you generally solve the problems, make the decisions, spell out the duties of others or the approach that they should take, and engage in telling people what to do, where to do it and who is to do it. Some alternative terms for directive behavior include task behavior, assertive behavior and direct guidance.

Supportive Supportive behavior is the extent to which you engage in genuine two-way communication with others regarding the problem or decision, and provide socioemotional support and facilitative behavior. Substitute terms for supportive behavior include relationship behavior, open discussion and broad encouragement.

By examining your scores in the 1, 2, 3 and 4 boxes in the model, you can identify your perception of the relative emphasis you place on the four problem solving and decision making styles (telling or authoritative, selling or consultative, participating or facilitative and delegating or delegative). These styles are elaborated upon later in this booklet.

The highest score represents your primary style, which tends to be the most comfortable for you. The style with the next highest number is considered to be your secondary style. Although you may not be as comfortable with this style as with your primary style, you use this style to a moderate extent.

Your style range includes both primary and secondary styles (the more balanced your scores across all four quadrants, the better your range).

Add the totals of 1 plus 2, 2 plus 3 and 3 plus 4 from graph 1, and enter those totals in the spaces below. The total for 1 plus 2 represents your perception of the relative emphasis placed on leader-made problem solving effort and decisions: 2 plus 3 represents collaborative decision making; and 3 plus 4 represents your perception of the relative emphasis placed on follower-made problem solving effort and decisions.

1 + 2 = Leader-made decisions

2 + 3 = Collaborative decisions

3 + 4 = Follower-made decisions

In addition to the two kinds of behavior (Directive and Supportive) this inventory suggests that two & underpinning scales, or dimensions, exist in all attempts to communicate with, relate to, and guide individuals, when engaged in problem solving and/or decision making efforts. These scales are Task and Relationship behavior. Consequently, there are four broad styles based on the various levels of Task and Relationship behavior that can be used when dealing with people that are solving different kinds of problems or at different stages of the problem solving effort. These are:

Directive

- Authoritative Style (high levels of task behavior and low levels of relationship behavior)
- Consultative Style (high levels of task behavior and high levels of relationship behavior)

Supportive

- Facilitative Style (low levels of task behavior and high levels of relationship behavior)
- Delegative Style (low levels of task behavior and low levels of relationship behavior)

Summary characteristics of each style:

The Authoritative Style (Directive Communication)

Your Score is 0

The “Authoritative Style” is often appropriate for use with people who need lots of clarity and direction when trying to solve problems or make decisions. The Authoritative Style is characterized by interaction and communication that is very clear and focused on the problem to be solved or future decision that needs to be made. It also often reflects a strong concentration on the problem solving and decision making process that should ideally be followed. In this quadrant, the leaders will firmly “steer” the follower/s along a well-defined path or route in order to make progress or achieve a positive result.

The Consultative Style (Feedback Based Communication)

Your Score is 2

The “Consultative Style” is often appropriate to use with people who need reasonable levels of clarity and direction but in a more collaborative or consultative way than that used by the authoritative style. The Consultative Style is characterized by interaction and communication that is clear and focused, as well as highly energetic and engaging. This style is very interactive, typified by give-and-take communication; that is, offering information and asking questions to engage the energy and commitment of follower/s to accomplish the problem solving or decision making objectives. It may also help followers to understand where the potential solutions to the problem may lie. This style therefore involves active coaching and directing to build skills and involvement.

The Facilitative Style (Exploratory Communication)

Your Score is 3

The “Facilitative Style” is often the most appropriate style to use when followers have good problem solving skills and/or experience but also need direct relational support to help maintain their confidence and momentum to solve the problem. The Facilitative Style is characterized by interaction and communication that is supportive of the individual’s contribution and expertise, and less focused on clarifying problem solving objectives. Often, an effective communication technique for these followers is to calmly listen, offer support, and engage the person in collaborative decision making. In this quadrant, the individual/s may be more likely to dominate and control the problem solving discussion while the leader is best left to offer general encouragement, rather than to suggest specific strategies or solutions. People in this quadrant will often draw on their experience in terms of direction but also like to feel that they are part of a team in terms of relationships.

The Delegative Style (Delegative Communication)

Your Score is 2

The “Delegative Style” should be used when the problem solving skills, expertise and experience of the individuals or group are generally high and they have the intrinsic ability to maintain momentum towards readily and effectively solving the problem or reaching a decision. The Delegative Style is characterized by interaction and communication that is less focused on being clear and directive, and requires less energy and engagement than is necessary in the other three quadrants of the model. Followers in this quadrant are often very capable and have attained a high level of expertise, wisdom, and confidence through their work experience and interaction with all types of people. Remember, however, that “low” does not mean “no”, for either task or relationship behavior. The leader can often let individuals operate independently and simply be available for advice if and when it may be sought. In this quadrant, the follower/s are likely to dominate and control the communication while the leader is best left to listen and make an assessment of whether the information being presented and the problem solving approach being followed are broadly “on-track”.

Further information on each of these four problem solving and decision making styles is provided in the next few pages.

Problem Solving and Decision-making Style Inventory

The Authoritative Style - Your Score is 0

*High levels of Task; low levels of Relationship behavior
Matched with Readiness Level 1
Low Willingness or Motivation and Low Ability*

In the Authoritative quadrant, the information to be delivered by a leader on the problem to be solved or the decisions to be made should be specific and relayed in a clear and concise manner. Communication by the leader is likely to be dominant, with listening restricted mainly to checking that individuals have heard the message and have little or no confusion about the problem solving effort that needs to be invested, as well as the broad objectives that need to be achieved.

1. Readiness cues for this style

Typically, because their Ability and Willingness in the topic is low at Readiness Level 1, followers will often request specific information or demonstrate in their demeanor that they would benefit from the leader "leading the way".

Specific behavior cues may be:

- Specifically requesting factual data
- Showing little grasp or understanding of the problem
- Remaining quiet
- Looking lost or confused

2. Delivery characteristics of this style

The style in this quadrant is high in Task but low in Relationship behavior and is very much leader-led. The leader will usually do most of the talking. This style is most effectively delivered in a clear, concise and confident manner by the leader, allowing the followers the opportunity to respond or clarify anything that they do not understand before moving on.

3. Examples of questions/statements made when using this style

When using this style communication is mainly demonstrated by the leader making short statements of fact or giving followers information about the problem or the approach that is likely to work well. When a leader uses questions, these are typically "closed" ones requiring only "yes" or "no" answers from the followers.

A few examples of statements/questions that could be used in this style quadrant are:

- *"Let's brainstorm for a while and then select the best of the ideas that emerge to find some possible solutions"*
- *"It's a good idea to use a fact-based decision approach here"*
- *"Gather the facts carefully and I'll make a decision based on the evidence that you present"*

Problem Solving and Decision-making Style Inventory

The Consultative Style - Your Score is 2

*High levels of Task; low levels of Relationship behavior
Matched with Readiness Level 2
Low Ability and High Willingness or Motivation*

In the Consultative quadrant, the information or message to be provided to an individual or group is likely to be more complex than in the Authoritative quadrant, and requires more depth of explanation. The "Consultative Style" is often appropriate to use with individuals who need some direction and guidance but also require the active involvement of the leader from whom ideas can be solicited and questions asked. In this style quadrant the leader generally attempts to use two-way communication and relationship-based support to get people actively engaged in issues, approaches or decisions.

1. Readiness cues for this style

Because their ability to solve a particular problem may be low but their willingness or motivation is high at Readiness Level 2, individuals will often show high levels of attentiveness and even enthusiasm about the challenge of trying to solve a problem. However, they will still need the leader to provide quite a lot of information and to explain things or ask quite detailed questions.

Specific behavior cues may be:

- Being alert and attentive
- Showing high levels of enthusiasm
- Asking questions
- Being eager for more information

2. Delivery characteristics of this style

The style in this quadrant is high Task and high Relationship, and is therefore still leader led. However, unlike the Authoritative quadrant, followers respond more strongly or make a greater contribution to the discussion. This style is most effectively delivered in a warm and friendly way by the leader, while using probing questions and statements to elicit information.

3. Examples of questions/statements made when using this style

When using this style communication is usually demonstrated by a leader asking mainly open questions or seeking clarification from the followers in some way.

A few examples of statements/questions that could be used in this style quadrant are:

- *"Let's develop an accurate description of the problem we are trying to solve together"*
- *"Shall we try to agree the best problem solving process to use in this situation?"*
- *"Since we all agree that it worked well last time, let's use root cause analysis for this situation, shall we?"*

Problem Solving and Decision-making Style Inventory

The Facilitative Style - Your Score is 3

*Low levels of Task; High levels of Relationship behavior
Matched with Readiness Level 3
High Ability and Low Willingness or Motivation*

In the Facilitative quadrant, the information or message to be delivered by the leader is likely to be highly responsive to follower needs. In other words, either directly or indirectly, a follower may need information to be added to his or her existing knowledge. It is the leader's job to suggest comments or ideas or thoughts that may be useful. This can be done by asking detailed or incisive questions which challenge followers to indicate what they would think or do in the circumstances. This style involves some talking by the leader in offering the scenarios or questions but is more likely to be follower-oriented, as they are encouraged to do most of the talking.

1. Readiness cues for this style

Because their Ability in relation to the discussion topic or problem is high but their Willingness or motivation is likely to be low at Readiness Level 3 (or they may be unsure what they can actually do to succeed), followers will be looking to demonstrate that their experience, education and expertise is useful (but without readily knowing how relevant or suitable it may be to the problem or decision in question).

Specific behavior cues may be:

- Giving lots of incidental information about their experience or knowledge
- Occasionally seeking to change the subject to more comfortable ground
- Over-discussing or debating a problem or decision
- Demonstrating a degree of calm aloofness

2. Delivery characteristics of this style

The style in this quadrant is low Task and high Relationship and is generally follower led, in as much as they are keen to show their expertise but without necessarily knowing how to do so, which may affect their confidence. This style is most effectively delivered by the leader asking general and open questions, allowing both parties to explore the topic area while letting followers demonstrate their relevant knowledge and understanding.

3. Examples of questions/statements made when using this style

When using this style communication is mainly indicated by the leader asking general questions which invite followers to expand on previous responses or offer information they have not previously presented.

A few examples of statements/questions that could be used are:

- *"That's an interesting way to look at this problem – where does that lead you?"*
- *"Didn't a couple of you suggest several useful ways to categorize all the data that you gathered earlier?"*
- *"How about a few people work together to assemble the possible decision matrix?"*

Problem Solving and Decision-making Style Inventory

The Delegative Style - Your Score is 2

*Low levels of Task; Low levels of Relationship behavior
Matched with Readiness Level 3
High Ability and Low Willingness or Motivation*

In the Delegative quadrant, the information or message to be delivered about a problem to be tackled is likely to be very much dependent upon the follower's needs as they express them (which may only confirm of what they already know).

In this quadrant, followers are likely to be highly knowledgeable and confident about a subject area or the problem to be dealt with and only need to demonstrate or use their knowledge and expertise in a practical way. The leader's role is highly responsive and very listening-orientated, as they act to gently encourage and support followers.

1. Readiness cues for this style

Because their Ability, Willingness and/or Motivation to tackle the problem is high at Readiness Level 4, followers are likely to appear both confident and adept in terms of their past experience.

Specific behavior cues may be:

- Quiet attentiveness
- Full, fluent and fast responses to questions
- Easily calling on example and analogies to communicate
- Demonstrating broad knowledge and awareness about the problem or successful approaches that might generate solutions

2. Delivery characteristics of this style

The style in this quadrant is low Task and low Relationship and is very much follower led. This style is most effectively delivered by the leader very quietly providing broad goals or challenges to the followers, and then letting them determine the tactics of what they might without the leader's intervention do.

3. Examples of questions/statements made when using this style

When using this style communication is mainly shown by the leader offering some broad guidance statements to followers and then letting them get on with it.

A few examples of statements/questions that could be used are:

- "Can you describe what solutions the group seems to favor?"
- "You seem to have covered all the necessary ground in looking at this problem"
- "Have you thought about who is going to implement your chosen decision?"

Problem Solving and Decision-making Style Inventory

Summary

There is no one “best” style for problem solving or decision making. A person’s appropriate leadership style depends on the “readiness” of others involved. If your style matches the readiness level of others with whom you are interacting it is likely to be appropriate and effective.

As this inventory has described the following designations from the problem solving and decision making model are used to broadly label the four possible appropriate styles:

- S1 = Authoritative (Telling)
- S2 = Consultative (Selling)
- S3 = Facilitative (Participating)
- S4 = Delegative (Delegating)

If there is not a match between the leader’s style and the follower’s readiness, the style is likely to be inappropriate and the following behavioral descriptors from the model may apply:

- S1 = Coercing (Controlling)
- S2 = Manipulating (Rationalizing)
- S3 = Patronizing (Condescending)
- S4 = Avoiding (Abandoning)

Furthermore, Readiness to solve problems or to make decisions depends upon two major factors:

- Knowledge is the extent to which an individual demonstrates the necessary experience, expertise or education to solve the problem or make the required decision, and
- Interest relates to the individual’s engagement, enthusiasm and expectation to solve the problem or to make the decision.

To evaluate your current performance and to determine the appropriate style to use in any given set of circumstances, you must assess the readiness of others who are involved in the problem solving or decision making effort.

The four levels of readiness, corresponding to the four problem solving and decision making styles, are defined and summarized on the matrix shown on the back cover of this booklet. You can also use the personal action planning sheet shown overleaf to think about steps you can take to increase your problem solving and decision making effectiveness in the future.

Personal Action Planning Sheet

Name : jon warner

Date : 7/11/2007 1:59:31 PM

The Communication / relational style(s) I use most : **Facilitative**

My Style Adaptability Score is : **7(Low)**

The Style(s) I need to use more is / are :

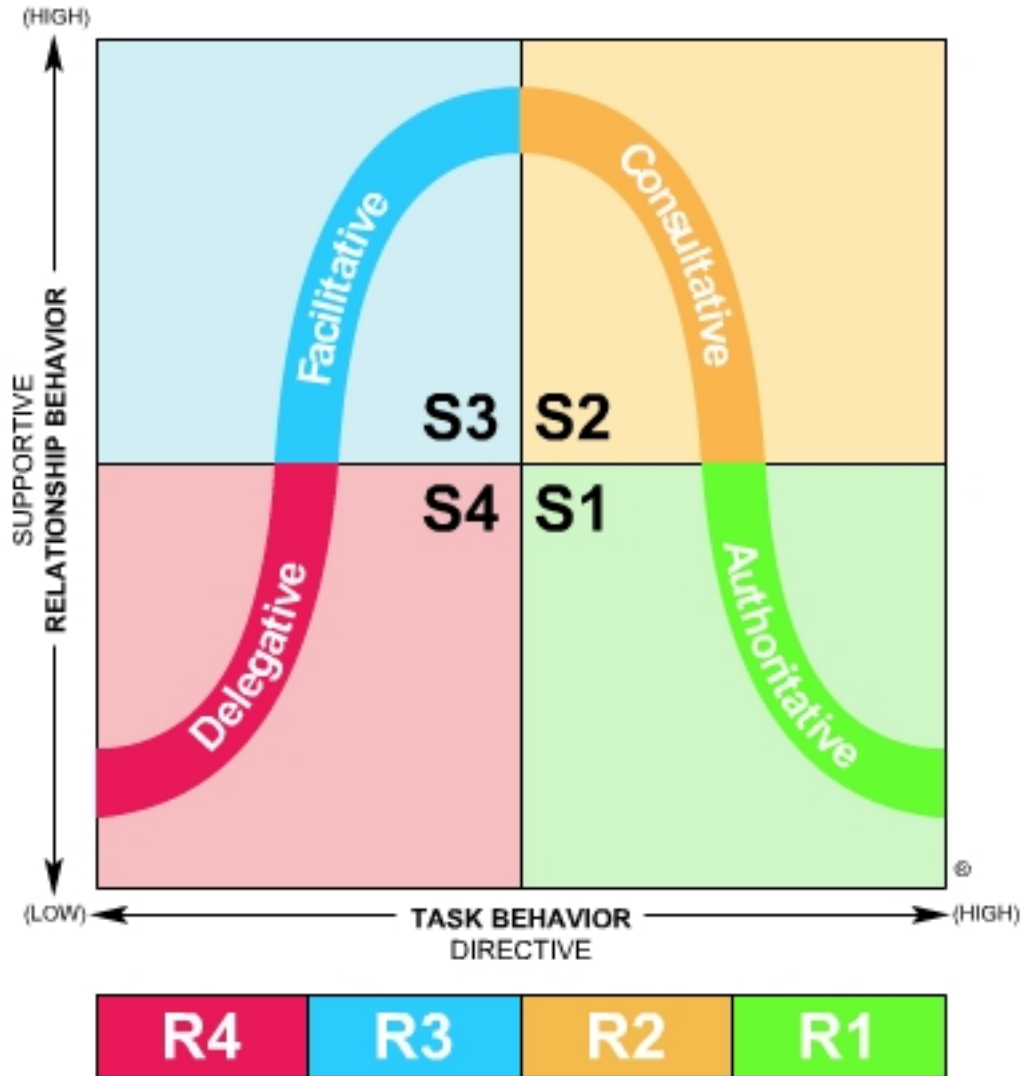
The changes I need to make to my style and / or adaptability include:

The resources (e.g written materials,people,experiences) I will access to make these changes are :

The timeline (short and long-term) I have set for myself to make these changes is :

To keep me honest, I will share this plan and ask for frequent feedback from:

Problem Solving and Decision Making Readiness



- R1 = Unable to make the decision or solve the problem and either unwilling or insecure
- R2 = Unable to make the decision or solve the problem, but willing or confident.
- R3 = Able to make the decision or solve the problem, but unwilling or insecure.
- R4 = Able to make the decision or solve the problem and willing and confident

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