

# Understanding Personality Styles

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Customers should beware ... but not of you. Are you a people person, always concerned about what others feel and think? Or perhaps getting the job done without regard to feelings is more your forte. Do you like to know every last detail before reaching a decision? Is having fun in everything you choose to do important to you?

Every aspect of society is influenced by the personalities of the people involved. Working with account holders, suppliers and customers in any industry means that you have to learn how to successfully communicate with people based on their individual personality styles. By doing so, your relationship with them will improve dramatically. (This is not to say that most of your customers have difficult personalities.)

Towards this end, you can learn to predict how individuals will respond to certain business and personal situations by identifying their personality type. Then, you can employ specific approaches for each personality style in order to more effectively address communication needs. Remember, each personality type serves its unique purpose in life. *No one personality is better than another; they are just different from one another.*

In dealing with personality types,

there are no set norms. However, there are individual styles that can be used to make communication more successful. Training on personality and style will improve your effectiveness and your ability to help as a customer service representative, especially in dealing with irate and/or dissatisfied account holders, as many of us do.

There are four major personality types: driver, analytical, amiable and expressive. An individual can possess two types, but generally one is primary and the other, secondary. The primary type is biological in origin, while the secondary is usually picked up through life experiences.

- **Driver:** Drivers are results-oriented individuals. Impatience and high energy are hallmarks of their temperament.
- **Analytical:** The orderly and ceremonious analytical types tend to be very efficient at what they do. If an individual with an analytical personality comes in to open an account of any type, be prepared to give statistics (probably beyond the standard ones posted) and to provide an accurate, full disclosure of what is involved. A conservative nature is an indicator of an analytical personality type.
- **Amiable:** Individuals with an amiable personality tend to be good listeners. They have a more relaxed posture and are likely to "give in" to pressure.
- **Expressive:** Expressives don't mind at all letting the representative "have it." Since you don't want to lose their business, you have to know how to effectively handle an incident with expressives.

There are many natural indicators of personality types. For example, would you be more likely to say, "Close the window!" or "Can you please close the window?" Would you say that you

move "more rigidly" or "more freely"? How freely or rigidly you move about can say a lot about how responsive you are to business and other situations. If you tend to give specific orders that you expect to be completed (like a driver), instead of asking for them to be done (like an expressive), this will indicate how forceful your personality is. These everyday responses give clues to the type of personality of the individual. Similarly, the colors an individual wears and likes as decor are also expressions of personality type.

Turning a negative situation into a positive one seems less farfetched once you identify the personality types involved. What draws people to you or pushes them away from you? The answer lies in your personality. By tuning into a client's personality type, you more effectively control the way you talk with him/her. Finding the "right way" to deal with customers involves studying, identifying and accepting their personality types. We've all heard the saying that "money makes the world go around." But people make the money go around, so it is only natural that financial success and strong "people skills" go hand-in-hand.

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