

TRACOM Sneak Peek

Excerpts from

Enhancing Emotional Intelligence

with
STYLE





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Introduction: SOCIAL STYLE and Emotional Intelligence

In recent years it has become increasingly evident that interpersonal skills are critical for workplace effectiveness. More and more researchers are exploring the effects that employees' interpersonal skills have on important outcomes such as productivity, morale and engagement, turnover, sales performance, and revenue. Much of this research focuses on the role that leaders' interpersonal skills have on their teams and organizations. And for good reason. It's been shown that one of the most important factors in people's decisions to stay or leave a job is the quality of the relationship they have with their immediate boss.¹

The term "emotional intelligence" (also referred to as "EQ") has become a popular label for describing skills related to interpersonal effectiveness. Many books and articles have been written about EQ that provide compelling evidence for the importance of interpersonal skills. However, one criticism of many of the resources on EQ is that they present a generic one-size-fits-all approach to behavior, and don't offer practical ways to learn and apply interpersonal skills for enhanced effectiveness.

TRACOM has been promoting the relationship between interpersonal effectiveness and productivity for decades. We emphasize the importance that behavioral SOCIAL STYLE differences play in how people understand and interact with one another. The primary benefit of learning about SOCIAL STYLE is the practical insight this knowledge provides for interacting more effectively with co-workers and others.

We're assuming that you are interested in this guide because you want to work more effectively with others, and you're looking for some realistic advice. Keep in mind that no person has perfect emotional intelligence. However, through learning about EQ and how it is related to SOCIAL STYLE, and incorporating some practical suggestions for interacting with others, you can improve your interpersonal effectiveness. As you will see, there is more to working effectively with others than just learning about EQ.

This guide provides you with strategies to enhance your emotional intelligence. We present a framework for understanding how people of different Styles both display and interpret emotional intelligence skills. By understanding how people of different Styles react to your behavior, you will be able to increase your effectiveness.

This guide will show you how to:

- Recognize your own EQ and how it is influenced by your Style
- Become aware of how others interpret and respond to your EQ behavior
- Determine EQ strategies that will work most effectively with others

¹ Zipkin, A. (2000, May 31). The Wisdom of Thoughtfulness. The New York Times.



Self-Awareness (Know Yourself)

Understanding yourself means being aware of your own emotions, your strengths and weaknesses, your values, and what motivates you. It also means having a good understanding of your Style and how your behavior impacts others. Though it seems straightforward, it is a critical step and should not be glossed over. Improving your interactions with others begins with Self-Awareness.

Below we describe each of the Self-Awareness competencies, followed by descriptions of how people of each Style are likely to display these competencies and how they can improve.

Emotional Self-Awareness

While much of our behavior is habitual, some of our actions that other people see and respond to is a result of what we are experiencing internally. Our emotions often control our thoughts and moods, and these in turn can control our behavior. Being attuned to our emotions is important for understanding the other components of Emotional Intelligence. For example, without recognizing the link between what we are feeling and how we are behaving, how can we control or manage our behavior, or learn to work productively with others?

People of all Styles can work on this skill by taking some time to reflect on themselves. What emotions are you feeling throughout the day, and how is this impacting your behavior? Recognize that these emotions can be both good (happiness, excitement) and bad (frustration, anger). Even more fundamentally, set aside time to reflect on your passions and goals in life. How are these being realized through your work?

Accurate Self-Assessment

Related to understanding our emotions is developing a healthy awareness of our abilities, strengths and weaknesses. This is important for making the most of our careers. After all, a computer programmer who is most comfortable working in isolation on one specific project at a time may not be very happy if she is promoted to manage a group of other programmers.

To a large degree an accurate self-assessment comes with time and experience. As we progress in our careers, we learn the things we like to do most and the things we avoid when possible. However, another crucial component of self-assessment is getting candid feedback from the people we work with. Some of you may say to yourselves that you are already getting enough information about your performance! But there is really no such thing as too much feedback. Perhaps what is most surprising is how little feedback most people actually receive, and this tends to get worse the higher one moves in an



Driving Style

Need: **Results**

Growth Action: **To Listen**

Orientation: **Action**

Backup Behavior: **Autocratic — Takes Control**

Driving Style and Self-Awareness

Driving Style people are fast paced and sometimes impatient. Because of this constant rush to take action, they can come across as being motivated mainly by external forces. For example, the goals that they move toward are often motivated by such factors as achieving sales quotas, meeting aggressive deadlines, and personal ambitions. This can be true of all people, of course, but it is particularly noticeable with these individuals. Because of this, they can sometimes be seen as lacking subtlety. When they slow down and pay close attention to others, they can often be successful in sharing insights with others about their own abilities and motivations.

Because they are typically very driven, these individuals may be less likely than some others to take the time and effort necessary to assess their own strengths and weaknesses. Their growth action is to listen, so they may not make the effort to slow down and ask for feedback from their co-workers. When they do receive feedback, they usually prefer information that focuses on their ability to achieve goals rather than their ability to work effectively with others. However, when they have taken the steps to understand their abilities, they tend to make the most of this information by capitalizing on their strengths.

Driving Style people are focused on taking action, and therefore, they can come across as highly self-confident, even if this is not the case. They tend to be very decisive, without spending too much time mulling over issues before deciding on a course of action. The fact that they are Tell Assertive means that they are more likely than some other Styles to openly state their opinions and try to influence others. This type of behavior will often be interpreted by others as self-confidence.



Self-Management (Control Yourself)

Self-management encompasses the focus and drive that a person needs to succeed. It is a direct result of self-awareness — understanding what motivates us and what our strengths are, we can then channel that awareness into activity. But we have to know what we are feeling in order to manage those feelings. And, of course, managing feelings also means controlling behavior.

Emotional Self-Control

Sometimes our emotions get the best of us. This can be perfectly okay when we're excited, happy, and engaged in our work. But it can be disastrous when we're overcome by anger, frustration, or anxiety. From your previous experience with SOCIAL STYLE you might remember a concept called Tension Management. Essentially, there is an optimum level of tension that leads to high productivity, both in terms of our work and our interactions with others. Too little tension leads to boredom and little productivity, while too much tension is stressful and also leads to low productivity.

Self-control is all about managing our impulses and staying composed and productive, especially in trying times when this skill is most challenging. It also means having control over our Style-related behaviors. Think about what would happen if you began an interaction with a co-worker and behaved solely in a way that satisfied your own Style need. This would immediately force him out of his comfort zone, having to respond to your Style behaviors. On the other hand, if you consciously limited your own Style behaviors during the initial encounter, you would give your co-worker time to become comfortable with you rather than having to react to your behavior. This would also give you an opportunity to observe and learn about your co-worker's Style, since he would be in his comfort zone.

Learning to control Style behaviors by applying “Style brakes” is particularly important for people who display extreme Style behaviors. For example, an Expressive Style person's co-workers might view her as personally intrusive due to her extremely outgoing mannerisms. She may share too much personal information about herself without realizing that others find this unwelcome. She could increase her interpersonal skills by controlling the amount of personal information she shares and trying to subdue her behavior. Likewise, an extreme Amiable Style individual might be viewed by his co-workers as overly compliant for always going along with the group and not speaking his mind. This person could exert more control over his Style behavior by asserting himself more often and sharing his opinions.

Of course, you do not need to put the brakes on every Style behavior, or in all situations. This would be unrealistic and unnatural. You only need to do this when your behavior gets in the way of productive relationships. What is most important is to understand

yourself well enough to recognize your Style tendencies and control them when necessary to maintain productive relationships.

Transparency

A transparent person is someone who is open to others in an authentic way about his feelings, beliefs, and actions. This is an important characteristic for any person but is particularly vital for leaders. People with this competency behave ethically, are reliable, and are not afraid to admit their own mistakes.

On the surface it might seem that acting with high ethics and being transparent is independent of Style, and that's true. Any Style of person can be transparent or not. But Style plays a large role in how people display their transparency, and this impacts how people perceive them. For example, Driving Style people are direct but they can be perceived as guarded and aloof. Depending on how skillfully they use their natural behaviors, others can see them as either highly transparent or elusive. On the other hand, Amiable Style people are characterized by their approachability and concern for others, which makes it likely that they will be seen as transparent.

As you can see from these brief examples, some Styles may have what seem to be natural advantages. However, every Style has potential strengths and weaknesses in how they practice the competencies of Self-Management, and emotional intelligence in general. The Style-specific descriptions that follow in the next section point out these details.

Adaptability

There's a saying that the one constant in business is change. Being flexible in how we handle the multiple demands of work is important. Adaptability includes handling multiple demands and changing priorities, and responding to rapid change. People with this skill are able to adapt their strategies to fit changing circumstances, and are flexible in their viewpoints.

Once again, this is a crucial ability for leaders since they are constantly having to adjust to multiple demands and changes. In fact, the skill with which a company's leadership responds to change can determine that company's ability to succeed. History is replete with examples of companies that failed to adapt to changing environments and those that thrived on change. Think about the differences between certain auto companies.

Achievement

Central to success in any endeavor is personal motivation to reach a goal or meet a standard of excellence. Without this fundamental desire people would not be able to work through obstacles and do what is necessary to achieve their ambitions. Not everybody has a high level of achievement motivation, and this is only natural. After all, not everybody



Expressive Style

Expressive Style and Self-Management

Because they are so outgoing and obvious in their emotions, Expressive Style people are more likely than others to be challenged in terms of controlling their emotions and behavior. Their natural enthusiasm can be delightful for others and lead to a willingness on the part of others to work with these people. By maintaining a friendly atmosphere they can make the workplace more enjoyable and also increase people's energy levels toward their work. However, when they are feeling overcome by stress these individuals can become very emotionally charged and combative. When in backup behavior they will attack, which is a quick and certain way to alienate others. If exposed to this lack of control too many times, these individuals' co-workers may become permanently disengaged and go out of their ways to avoid further interaction with the Expressive Style person.

On the surface, these individuals can come across as highly transparent because they are very communicative and like to interact with others. They generally will not shy away from expressing what they are feeling, and this can communicate to others that they are up-front and honest. However, there may be times when their behavior has the consequence of making others believe that they are not being honest. This can happen if an Expressive Style person acts defensively or does not admit to shortcomings. These people will sometimes attempt to cover up their own lack of knowledge or awareness, and when this becomes apparent to others they can lose credibility.

These individuals are active and spontaneous, so they can seem to move from situation to situation with ease. They usually aren't as concerned with establishing routines as some other people, so they can appear to be flexible in how they approach different situations and changing priorities. This can be an advantage because people may see them as dealing effectively with such changes. They tend to be oriented toward the future and different possibilities, so when confronted with organizational change they may approach it as an exciting opportunity, especially if it involves the possibility of self promotion or of enlarging one's role. However, if they are feeling resistant to change, they will usually respond in a very vocal and emotional way. They may react impulsively, venting their feelings before thinking through the situation in a rational way.

Expressive Style people are forceful and like to make their presence known. They are very assertive in their attempts to influence others, and this can be interpreted by others as a strong motivation for personal achievement. They tend to make decisions quickly, based on intuition rather than careful consideration, so when these actions result in success others might view them as highly motivated. The converse of this is that sometimes these individuals can make mistakes because of their impulsiveness. By basing their actions on opinions and intuition rather than facts, others may view them as undisciplined and

scattered in their behavior. This is particularly true if these individuals consistently fail to meet their objectives due to their lack of focus.

Due to their outgoing nature and ability to appeal to the emotions of others, Expressive Style people can be very skilled at getting others to support their causes. This can be valuable for them because it assists in their ability to meet their goals. By enlisting others in their efforts, they increase the chances that they will achieve their objectives while also gaining the support of their co-workers. Their personal initiative can be obvious to others, since these individuals tend to be competitive. Their Style need is to gain personal recognition, so they are highly motivated in this regard, and others will notice this as a very obvious aspect of their behavior. This can backfire on occasion if they are so competitive that they undermine or offend others.

For most of us, behaving in an optimistic way is an outcome of our beliefs and emotions. Because Expressive Style people are very emotional, their optimism can be palpable. They can be very warm and approachable, not to mention enthusiastic and lighthearted. Research has shown that emotions are, in fact, contagious, so the optimistic outlook of these individuals can have a meaningful impact on their co-workers, leading to enhanced performance and a willingness to support these people's efforts. However, these individuals need to be careful that their optimism is displayed consistently, rather than fluctuating frequently as a result of their moods.

How Can Expressive Style People Improve Their Self-Management?

Maintaining control over emotions and behavior is one of the major challenges for Expressive Style people. These individuals can improve their self-management by paying careful attention to their emotions and how these are affecting their behavior on a daily basis. A small but helpful exercise is to force oneself to pause before reacting to situations when a strong negative emotional response is being felt. Instead, these individuals can take time to process what they are feeling and consider ways that they can respond in a rational way. Likewise, they can build on their natural abilities to show positive emotion and communicate with others. By emphasizing their talent for expressing their feelings and beliefs, they can build solid support from their co-workers. Central to this is taking their Style growth action, which is to check the appropriateness of their behavior toward others. This simple step will go a long way toward improving their interpersonal effectiveness.



Driving Style

Driving Style and Relationship Management

Due to their natural assertiveness, Driving Style people's leadership behavior will be noticeable to others. If their goal-driven agenda is motivated by a vision of where the team or organization should go, these individuals can be persuasive in describing this vision to others and gaining their commitment. However, because they can come across as aggressive at times, they need to be careful not to force their visions or beliefs on others, or to use the power of their leadership positions to coerce others into buying into their programs.

Driving Style people are very direct in their approach to others, and they will usually attempt to influence people in obvious ways. This can be effective as long as they are also using empathy to recognize the undercurrents of situations and people's feelings. If this is the case, these individuals can be persuasive in their deliveries. They may need to be cautious that they do not inappropriately challenge the beliefs of others when attempting to influence them. This can happen as a result of their competitive natures, and can backfire when trying to persuade others to their viewpoints.

Because they tend to be focused on the present and achieving their immediate goals, without considering the future, these individuals might not put as much effort into developing others as they could. Mentoring and coaching other people requires a great deal of listening, which can be a challenge for these people. However, when they do make the effort to help develop the talents of others, they can be quite effective. This is because they are very upfront in their opinions and are emotionally controlled. Therefore, they can be seen as objective in their descriptions of behavior and in their recommendations for development.

When it comes to acting as change catalysts, Driving Style people can be very focused and tenacious. If driven by a strong vision of how things should be, they generally will not give up in their efforts to see their desires realized. Their combination of aggressive activity and self-sufficiency can help propel them through obstacles, not to mention their willingness to take risks. These individuals are impatient by nature, so they need to be careful that they do not become too frustrated by temporary setbacks or by the efforts of others to block the change.

These individuals generally have calm demeanors, so they can be skilled at heading off conflict or even mediating difficult situations. They prefer to focus on the reasoning and logic behind actions, and this can help them to maintain a calm and objective persona while engaged in conflict. This, in turn, can help to defuse tense situations. However, when experiencing a great deal of tension these people run the risk of falling into their backup behavior — taking control. In these instances their signs of tension may include increased facial animation, physical impatience and movement, and assertively stating

their objections. They generally will not be open to listening to others while in backup mode, and therefore, might not consider alternative viewpoints. Like backup behavior for all Styles, this behavior has a high likelihood of leading to a deteriorating situation and further conflict.

When Driving Style people actively build networks and form close bonds with others, they can be quite successful in utilizing their networks to achieve their objectives. Though these individuals are not outwardly emotional, this does not mean that they are unfriendly. When skilled in this area, they tend to keep track of the people in their networks and follow up with them regularly, not to ask for favors but just to stay in touch. Over the long-term this can pay dividends when they need to rely on others for help or information. One area of caution for these individuals is that they may get so busy and involved in their day-to-day work that they neglect opportunities to build good relationships with others.

Similar to networking and building close bonds with others, Driving Style people can help their teams by developing personal relationships with other team members. This can help others recognize a less serious side to these individuals, and opens them up to become more personable. These individuals can sometimes come across as very formal and serious, so displaying a more casual and fun aspect of themselves can help other team members be more at ease around them. They can sometimes be aloof and very task-focused, so they need to be careful that they do not get so carried away by their work that they neglect the interpersonal relationships with others that can ultimately benefit them.



How to Display Emotional Intelligence to Each SOCIAL STYLE

People of each Style not only display EQ differently, they also interpret EQ behaviors in their own ways. Though it may seem challenging to have to adapt behavior for different people, this ability can be very valuable when having to work closely with specific individuals. By learning these individuals' Styles and preferences, you can make slight adjustments to your behavior that will appeal to them.

In this section we provide tips for working effectively with people of each Style.



Driving Style

Showing EQ to the Driving Style

Self-Awareness

Driving Style people respond positively to people who display confidence in their own abilities. When individuals show signs that they lack self-assurance, this may cause these individuals to question their abilities. Just as important as showing self-confidence, however, is backing it up by performance. You need to prove to these individuals that you have what it takes, and once you have proven your competence to them, they will be much more accepting of you and willing to trust you.

Self-Management

Maintaining control over behavior tends to be important for these individuals. While they are not opposed to having fun, they expect people to maintain a professional demeanor. So be careful that your use of humor or other outward behavior does not cross the line with them.

These individuals will usually respond well to transparency and honesty. They would rather that you tell them your opinions, even if they disagree, than keeping them to yourself. Just be sure to share your thoughts in a non-challenging and straightforward way.

Because they move fast and are willing to take risks, they will respond particularly well to people who show that they are flexible. Working with these individuals, particularly if they are in a position of authority, can be challenging because they expect results quickly and can be pace-setters. Be flexible enough to respond to these challenges, but do not be afraid to tell these individuals if the pace is too rapid.

Driving Style people are driven by results and therefore, they appreciate similar behavior in others. This does not mean that you have to be just like them in your drive, but displaying a commitment to reach goals will appeal to them.

Similarly, signs of initiative are important when working with these people. If you are less assertive in your approach, you may be able to form an effective partnership with these individuals to move projects forward. By displaying your tenacity and enlisting their support, they may be able to help you achieve your objectives.

Optimism for Driving Style people is best expressed as an attitude that you and the team will succeed, backed up by behavior. By actively working toward the team's goals, you are showing them that you are confident and optimistic.

Social Awareness

You can show empathy by reflecting these people's need for results. Let them know that you understand what the goals and plans are. Help them use their time efficiently by communicating with them in short emails (bullets and summaries without too much detail). Ask direct questions to better understand their motives, since they may not reveal this information unless prompted.

Show good organizational awareness by displaying an understanding of the realities of situations. For example, indicate that you understand how a new product fits in the organization's line and how it will benefit customers and the organization. Be aware of the Driving Style person's status and his or her relationship to other key individuals.

Similarly, you can display your service orientation by linking your work back to the customer or client. Share ideas for improvements with these individuals, and when you do this, highlight the bottom-line impacts the improvements will have.

Relationship Management

Even if you are not in a leadership role, you can display your leadership abilities to these individuals through leading by example. For instance, showing a willingness to join the team and get work done, even if it is not your direct responsibility, will indicate that you are committed and can lead when necessary. When leading Driving Style people, you can increase their confidence in your abilities by relating their work to the team's goals. Regularly reinforce how their efforts contribute to the team's objectives.

You can best influence these individuals by providing them with your opinion, followed by evidence for your conclusions. If feasible, allow them to maintain control by making a decision based on your input. Simply provide each alternative along with the impacts of each, and allow them to make up their own minds.

If you are developing a Driving Style person, conduct an honest assessment of his or her strengths and weaknesses, and give this feedback in a supportive but straightforward manner. Provide them with facts to support your claims, and focus on how their actions impact the team's results and bottom line. If the feedback is difficult and involves their interpersonal skills, remind them that these abilities can be developed through practice and will have beneficial impacts for them personally, as well as their abilities to achieve their goals.

If you have an idea for an important change, provide these individuals with your idea, but do not go into too much detail, at least not initially. Give them the overview of your idea along with the impacts it will have on the team or organization. Follow up with them later to discuss more of the details.

If you find yourself in conflict with Driving Style people, you can reduce their tension by identifying specific problems they are concerned about. Empathize with their need for results, but be willing to stand up to them if necessary. Even though this may be uncomfortable for you, these individuals usually respect self-assertion. Offer them options about how the team or situation can best move forward.

To build a close relationship with these individuals, you will usually need to first prove your abilities to them. If they have confidence in your abilities, they will be more open to getting to know you on a more personal basis. They are not outwardly emotional, so even if you are friendly, be cautious about becoming too personal with them.



Expressive Style

Showing EQ to the Expressive Style

Self-Awareness

Because they are so willing to express their emotions, these individuals are comfortable when others do the same. In fact, people who control their emotions too much and never display their feelings may make them uncomfortable in the long term. On occasion, allow yourself to show a more personal and fun side of yourself around these people since they will interpret this as showing your human side and will help them interact more comfortably with you. It will also help them to get to know you better, and this is important for these individuals.

Self-Management

Expressive Style people will usually be more tolerant of emotional displays than other people. They want to know how you feel. They respond particularly well to enthusiasm and humor, and creating a lighthearted atmosphere can help them work more effectively with you and others.

Similar to displaying emotional openness, these individuals tend to respond well to transparency. Keep in mind that transparency is different from displaying feelings. Transparency involves behaving with ethics, as well as reliability. You can tell these people how you feel, even if you disagree with them. In these situations, you should be less emotional in your approach. Discuss matters in a straightforward way without challenging them on a personal basis.

These individuals are sometimes impulsive. You can show your flexibility by supporting their preference for spontaneity and going with the flow of events. Show enthusiasm for