

SOCIALSTYLESM

TRACOM Sneak Peek

Excerpts from

Improving Sales Effectiveness with Versatility

The Application of SOCIAL STYLE



APPLICATIONS GUIDE

 TRACOM GROUP

The creator of SOCIALSTYLE



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Introduction

PREREQUISITES

This Applications Guide is designed to provide you with guidelines for applying SOCIAL STYLEsm and Versatility concepts, with customers of different behavioral styles, at each phase of the sales process. The guide assumes that you have already: attended a SOCIAL STYLE training session, profiled using a SOCIAL STYLE Instrument, and have a solid grounding in both SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts.

A GUIDE FOR YOU

This Applications Guide helps you apply your knowledge of SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility in ways that will increase your interpersonal effectiveness and the likelihood that your customer will commit to buying from you. The guide does not focus on any one specific industry or type of selling but it does take into consideration the important fact that every interaction involves at least two SOCIAL STYLES: yours and your customer's.

As a sales professional, you have probably seen all types of sales training programs and you may already have "a system that works for you." So, you may well be asking yourself "how is Improving Sales Effectiveness with Versatility different from the training that I've already had?"

Most sales training focuses on the different steps involved in the selling process. The knowledge from this Applications Guide will enable you to tailor your approach to your individual customers during each step of your sales process.

Typically you have a set of behaviors or approaches that you use to achieve your sales objectives. By relying on these approaches, which are usually driven by your own needs and comfort levels, you're not establishing a mutually productive relationship with the customer.

Unsuccessful sales outcomes can occur when a salesperson fails to help the customer meet their style needs in addition to their business needs. If you fail to plan or monitor your style interactions, your customer realizes, consciously or subconsciously, that their style needs are not being met. Tension builds and both you and the customer may end up in an unproductive, lose-lose interaction.

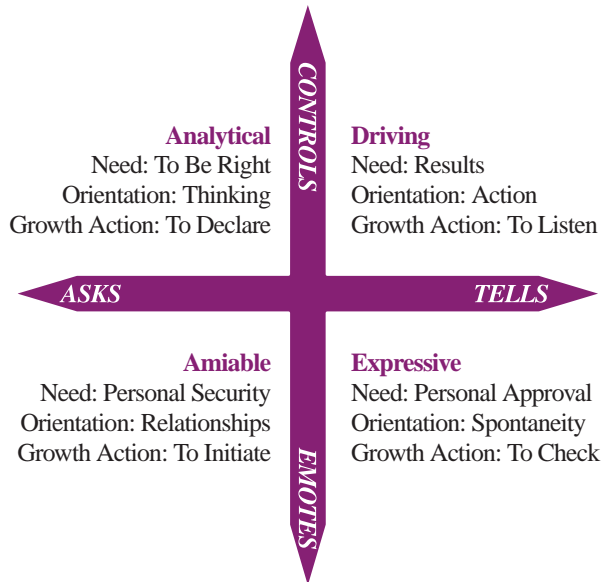
This guide shows you how different styles can interact successfully and how, in the process, you can become more than just a better salesperson; you can become the salesperson who the customer supports and respects and with whom your customer prefers to do business.

Identifying the SOCIAL STYLE of Your Customers

KNOWING THEM BY THEIR ACTIONS

To develop an appropriate and effective strategy for interacting with your customers, requires knowing both your SOCIAL STYLE and that of your customer. To identify a customer's SOCIAL STYLE you need to observe what the customer actually says and does in different situations. This observation will give you clues about the customer's behavioral preferences under different levels of tension. In addition, because people tend to do things that are characteristic of their particular SOCIAL STYLE, you need sufficient observations for a pattern of behavior to reveal itself.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL STYLE



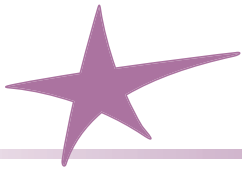
STYLE NEED AND ORIENTATION

No matter how skilled you are at tasks such as account planning or cold calling, or how knowledgeable you are about your industry, organization, and the products or services you sell, you must be able to accommodate the SOCIAL STYLE Need and Orientation of your customers. And, when necessary and appropriate, help them to take their Growth Action.

Style Need—This is the general goal of each style, indicated by the observed behaviors associated with that particular SOCIAL STYLE.

Style Orientation—This is the typical/observed behavior of each SOCIAL STYLE, used to obtain the style Need.

Style Growth Action—Those behaviors that are infrequently used in favor of the more preferred behaviors of each style — viewed by others as the greatest weakness of that particular style. Not taking a style Growth Action can lead to unproductive interpersonal relationships.



The ABC's of Supporting Your Customer's Style Need

EXPRESSIVE STYLE

A **Actions Toward Others**

The **Expressive Style** appears communicative, fun, exciting, warm, approachable and competitive.

Expressive customers often involve you and others with their feelings and thoughts. Their actions suggest they want you as a friend — but in the role of a follower and personal supporter of their dreams rather than as someone who might compete with them. Expressive customers consider power and politics important because they can enhance personal recognition and help recruit supporters to the cause. While relationships and people count to the Expressive Style, these relationships may lack depth and be short-lived.

To deal most effectively with an Expressive Style customer:

- Plan a sales strategy that will ***provide support for dreams and intuitions.***
 - Plan to ***ask questions about the Expressive customer's opinions and future goals.*** Have this customer tell you what others need to do to achieve objectives. Then, let them tell you what they are personally doing to reach those objectives. Thus, people and their future goals become the subject of this discussion rather than just results in terms of cold, factual, present realities.
 - The Expressive customer tends to form an opinion on almost everything. ***Look for points of agreement*** and give this customer credit for his or her good ideas. Indicate what you can and will do to implement the ideas you agree upon. Ask the Expressive customer what you can do personally to help put his or her ideas into action.
- ***Be sure you agree on specifics.*** Avoid the temptation to proceed on a warm feeling that everything will somehow work out for the best. Take the initiative to formally summarize your discussions in writing. Let the Expressive customer know you will provide a summary even if he or she may want to make a few alterations. Consolidate the new information and move on. This is a subtle but effective way to help your Expressive customer stay on track with you and can reduce the amount of time it takes you to move the sale to closure.
 - Spend time ***exploring mutually stimulating ideas*** and possible solutions. At this point, don't rush a conversation; instead, have a discussion that builds ideas together. Let the Expressive customer take as much of the credit for the ideas developed as he or she cares to. Remember, individuals with an Expressive Style are creative, fun, and exciting. As they build their vision and ideas, your task is to help make their dreams a reality!

The ABC's of Supporting Your Customer's Style Need

EXPRESSIVE STYLE

You will use different tactics to move an Expressive Style forward depending on if you agree or disagree with them:

- If you **agree** you should work out specific details such as “who,” “why,” “what” and “how.” The Expressive Style customer will show little interest in how agreed-upon objectives are reached and usually has limited interest in details. Thus, you should offer to **summarize the discussion** and suggest ways to implement the actions you have both settled upon. Your willingness to take the initiative to handle details will strengthen your relationship with the Expressive customer and speed up your selling process.
- If you **disagree**, **avoid arguing** with Expressive customers since they feel a strong need to win an argument. Look for alternate solutions that you can both share with excitement. Avoid competing with these customers, even when their behavior seems to encourage competition.

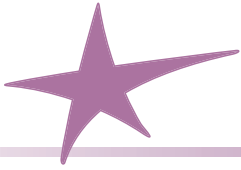
Tip: Expressive customers may communicate excitement about many issues. Make sure you use your action taking skills to determine how critical an issue really is to the Expressive before proceeding. These skills will also enable you to skillfully guide the discussion.

B

Best Use of Time

Expressive Style customers tend to move quickly in their actions with less discipline about time. You should expect to get rapidly into a social interaction. **Try to be stimulating** by developing and presenting clear pictures. Motivational stories about people or situations that support ideas in a positive way will help. But if you provide this motivational stimulation, you may find that the meeting ends on an up-tone without ever arriving at any specifically agreed-upon action or commitment. So, be sure to maintain the point of your meeting.

The Expressive customer acts quickly and can change a course of action rapidly. Thus, you should **develop and present a clear picture for agreement about the time tables for action and on the specifics of “who,” “what” and “how.”** The Expressive will not show great interest or concern with these kinds of specifics, so you will probably have to take the initiative in maintaining the relationship on a friendly and enthusiastic basis while pinning down the details. It can help in these instances for you to put the specifics in writing. If you don't agree on the details, don't be surprised or disappointed if the Expressive customer changes signals on you. Changeableness is part of their style and you should prepare for it. And remember, a thirty-minute appointment with an Expressive customer is only a guideline from their point of view. If this customer gets excited about the content of the discussion, you can find a meeting going significantly longer and flowing in many directions. Should you need to cut short a meeting with an Expressive, do so with respect and let them know how much you would like to continue the discussion—and be sure to set up another appointment before you leave.



The ABC's of Supporting Your Customer's Style Need

EXPRESSIVE STYLE

C

Customized Approach to Decision-making

The Expressive Style tends to take risks and base those risks on personal opinion. The opinions of other people considered important, prominent or successful by an Expressive will often mean more in the decision-making process than all of the facts and logic you might introduce. Whenever possible, ***provide testimony from prominent persons and organizations*** that supports the opinions you want to use. Also, provide unique features and exciting ideas, when appropriate. In addition, Expressive customers tend to respond to special, immediate and extra incentives for their willingness to take risks and move rapidly in making a decision. Some personal social recognition or prestige might provide the extra incentive necessary for making the decision to buy. And remember, always allow the Expressive customer to take a risk on their personal opinions.

The Phases of the Sale

This section pulls together the SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility concepts you have already learned and puts them in the context of the sales process: the various interactions you go through as you move from initial customer interaction (after prospecting) toward closing the sale and following up.

THE STYLE ADVANTAGE IN THE SALES PROCESS

Applying what you know about SOCIAL STYLE and Versatility to the sales process can give you a significant advantage: the ability to predict how your customer will typically react during the sales call and what you can do to help the customer feel comfortable doing business with you. Of course, being able to make these predictions does not mean you will be 100 percent accurate. And, you must always stay in tune with the individual differences your customers will express. You will, though, have a reference point for knowing your customer and knowing what you can do for your customer in the sales situation.

THE PHASES OF THE SALES PROCESS

The sales process seldom proceeds as a straight line from opening to presentation to close. It is more likely to start and stop, double-back on itself, and change course depending on the complexity of the product or service you are selling, the cost to the customer, the number of people involved in the purchase decision, etc. For purposes of this discussion, the sales process is broken into three stages.

- **The *Open*** is the beginning of the sales call when you introduce yourself and establish initial rapport with the customer. Some sales systems call this stage the ***approach***. At this point, you may be dealing with an existing customer or a fresh prospect.
- **The *Body*** is the stage during which you probe for the needs of your customers as those needs relate to your product or service. This is sometimes called ***fact-finding*** or ***probing***. During this stage, you also present relevant information about the features and benefits of the product or service you are selling and how they will help solve the customer's problems.
- **The *Close*** is the stage when you summarize the features and benefits of your product or service as they relate to your customer's needs and ***obtain the customer's commitment*** to your request for action. At this stage, you might obtain or get agreement on a proposal or a formal presentation at a future date.

These three stages in the sales process are not meant to oversimplify the sales process, but rather to demonstrate how style concepts can assist you in moving through the process more effectively.



The Phases of the Sale

THE BODY: PROBE

2. Probe With Style

Selling with style means that you approach probing differently depending on your customer’s style’s key characteristics. Refer to the Best Use of Time characteristic for a guideline to monitor the pace of your probing. Supporting the Best Use of Time means that you take time to be accurate with the Analytical; efficient with the Driving Style; stimulating with the Expressive; and agreeable with the Amiable.

Probing/questioning techniques you can use when probing with each of the four styles are:

<p style="text-align: center;">ANALYTICAL STYLE CUSTOMER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Take time to ask questions ■ Encourage a two-way conversation; give the customer a chance to question you ■ Be prepared to answer questions in a specific, accurate and organized manner ■ If you don’t have the information, commit to getting it to them and then do it ■ Listen to their questions for hints about what is important to them ■ Don’t make statements about your solutions that are overly general—accuracy is best ■ Present your questions in a logical sequence 	<p style="text-align: center;">DRIVING STYLE CUSTOMER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make the points about your solution in a simple, direct and efficient manner ■ Don’t overdo your questions so that it feels like an interrogation ■ Expect direct and specific questions ■ Let the customer feel they have some control over the discussion ■ Be aware of the time ■ Begin with open questions that enable the customer to set the direction of the discussion ■ Avoid too many questions that can be answered by a yes or no
<p style="text-align: center;">AMIABLE STYLE CUSTOMER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoid using too many closed questions that could cause the customer to feel interrogated ■ Ask general questions that encourage the customer to talk ■ Listen for hints about key relationships that are important to the customer ■ Avoid being too formal and data-oriented with the customer ■ Recognize the importance they place on feelings and relationships ■ Be on the look-out for behavior that might indicate the customer is acquiescing rather than agreeing with your comments ■ Don’t promise more than you can deliver 	<p style="text-align: center;">EXPRESSIVE STYLE CUSTOMER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Start with general questions that encourage the customer to talk ■ Allow some time for sharing personal topics ■ If the conversation wanders too far off topic, use closed questions to return the customer to the purpose of the call ■ Reinforce the customer’s favorable responses about needs that your product or service can meet ■ Let the customer know about well-known individuals or organizations that use your solutions ■ Look for hints about what is exciting and innovative to your customer and reinforce how your solution can help them achieve their dreams and aspirations