

How to Work in an Open Office Environment

Active, Fast-paced, Assertive, Dynamic, Bold	
Questioning, Logic-focused, Objective, Skeptical, Challenging	<h3>Dominance</h3> <p>Priorities: immediate results, taking action, challenge of self and others.</p> <p>Motivations: responsibility and achievement.</p> <p>Fears: loss of control and failure.</p> <p>You will notice: self-confidence, directness, forcefulness, risk-taking.</p> <p>Limitations: lack of concern for others, impatience, insensitivity.</p> <p>Under Pressure: may overlook how their actions affect others.</p>
	<h3>Influence</h3> <p>Priorities: enthusiasm, taking action, collaboration.</p> <p>Motivations: recognition, group activities, friendly relationships.</p> <p>Fears: rejection, disapproval, loss of influence, being ignored.</p> <p>You will notice: charm, enthusiasm, sociability, optimism, talkativeness.</p> <p>Limitations: impulsiveness, disorganization, lack of follow-through.</p> <p>Under Pressure: focus on people and overlook details.</p>
Thoughtful, Moderate-paced, Calm, Methodical, Careful	
Questioning, Logic-focused, Objective, Skeptical, Challenging	<h3>Conscientiousness</h3> <p>Priorities: accuracy, stability, challenge assumptions.</p> <p>Motivations: opportunities to use expertise or gain knowledge, attention to quality.</p> <p>Fears: criticism, slipshod methods, being wrong.</p> <p>You will notice: precision, analysis, skepticism, reserve, quiet.</p> <p>Limitations: overly critical, tendency to overanalyze, isolates self.</p> <p>Under Pressure: focused on details and often find mistakes and errors.</p>
Accepting, People-focused, Empathizing, Receptive, Agreeable	<h3>Steadiness</h3> <p>Priorities: giving support, maintaining stability, collaboration.</p> <p>Motivations: stability, appreciation, cooperation, opportunity to help.</p> <p>Fears: loss of stability, change, loss of harmony, offending others.</p> <p>You will notice: patience, team player, caring approach, good listener, humility.</p> <p>Limitations: overly accommodating, tendency to avoid change, indecisiveness.</p> <p>Under Pressure: will be accommodating and polite and likely to say "yes" too easily.</p>

Open office environments are an incredible concept for grooming collaborative teams to work together and share ideas immediately as they arrive. They create a sense of team unity that separate offices failed to cultivate in the past. As a contribution to this culture, Iron Age Office has created some incredible furniture designs with desks, cubes, and stack designs.

The dark side of open offices

With everyone out in the open, individual personalities are on full display. If you're lucky, these personalities create a feeling of harmony on the team. More often, however, clashes are likely to become more prominent. If left unchecked, the conflict results can lead to ongoing strife and resentment across the group, often for no specific reason except for personality clashes.

Understanding personality types

Working proactively with your team to understand personality differences and learn how to work effectively makes an astonishing difference in team harmony, which leads to higher productivity.

There are many, MANY personality tests to consider, but I can tell you that they all break down to four categories: dominance, influence, steadiness, and compliance, otherwise known as DISC, so skip the colors, seasons and farm animal personality tests, because they all break down to DISC.

Take a free [DISC personality test](#) here. In fact, have everyone in your organization take the test and make their results public so everyone will know how to work effectively with each other. It really DOES make a difference with your team dynamics.

Your team, decoded

You will notice by people's test results that many have a combination of prominent personality types, so keep that in mind as you continue reading.

Four quadrants

When you look at the chart (pictured at the top), the top two quadrants (D and I) are the ones who can thrive in a fast-paced environment. These are your extroverts in the group. They are comfortable making decisions (correct or not) when the rest of the team is uncertain. They can jump to action and change on a dime with little notice or explanation.

The bottom half (C and S) are your introverts and move at a slower pace and are more resistant to change. The fast pace of the top half makes them a little nervous sometimes. They may not refuse, but they need reassurances as to why, and that everything is well planned and aligned, ready for the change.

The left quadrants (D and C) are very task-oriented. They have the gift of not taking things personally and are likely not in tune with how their words and actions affect others and can hurt the feelings of others on their team.

The right quadrants (I and S) are your social team members. How people are affected and what others will think are on their minds with their actions and decisions. These are your sources of sympathy and empathy on the team.

Dominant: “Let’s do it now.”

The Ds have a natural drive to push forward and not waste any time. They are great when a decision needs to be made. It may not be the best decision, but they’re going to make it with little hesitation if you ask them to.

- They solve problems very quickly.
- They take an active and direct approach to obtaining results.
- They like immediate feedback and are likely to concentrate on the subject or goal instead of the team members, because of their result-driven orientation.

Influence: “Let’s do it together.”

This group shares that same drive to push forward, but will also round up the troops to get them on-board with the idea. They are your natural social types, and the art of persuasion and influence comes easily to them.

- They are the smiley ones who show enthusiasm and manage to focus on the positive and make most tasks fun in some way that the rest of us will never understand. Just roll with it – their optimism and engagement are valuable to the rest of the team, too.
- They like to talk if you haven’t noticed. They are socially assertive with new people.
- They are big-picture people, so don’t boggle them down with the details.

Steadiness: “Let’s do it in a caring way.”

These people are your rocks. They are dependable and reliable people-persons who appreciate team harmony. They also represent the personality most likely to stay with a company the longest time.

- They prefer a solid structure around how things are done. They appreciate predictability.
- They dislike or even fear insecurity and change, so while they are probably the most patient of us all, we must give them some patience with change, instead of pressure, in return.

Conscientiousness: “Let’s get it right.”

These are your skeptics, but not necessarily in a bad way. Think a calculating and analytical mind. In fact, C is also known to stand for calculating, cautious, or even compliance. They want things in order and want information around decisions.

- Have patience with their questions, for those answers will convince them to move forward. The last thing you want to do with them is to omit information.
- They are the ones who will always adhere to rules, standards, and procedures.
- This group exercises some of the highest quality control interests.
- These people are quiet and may appear to lack emotion but don’t be fooled. They have emotion but do not show it the same way that others might. They may even get confused with another’s emotions.

Learn how to excel together

I’ve been called in as a crisis interventionist in the past to address problems around teams in crisis, and DISC is always the first step. 95% of the time, once the teams learn how to work effectively together,

positive change comes very quickly. An open office environment puts all personalities front and center for embrace or battle. You don't need an intervention, however. Just some open conversation about how personalities react to different situations as a means to foster greater understanding. Better yet – start DISC discussions proactively and see your productivity soar through the roof.