

Are you speaking the Right Language?

CCI Special Installment

Do you ever feel you are talking to a blank wall? Or that the person before you has moved into a state of glazed eyes? Or that you both agree, but when it comes to action, each goes in a different direction? Or that you say or think to another “You just don’t get it, do you?” The odds are that even though you may be using English with an English-speaking person, you are not using the right language. There are four different versions of English. Why not learn how to use all of them to your advantage?

1. We are all Different

In 350 BC, Hippocrates, of the famed doctors’ Hippocratic oath, suggested that four different personality types captured, more or less the entire spectrum of human behavior. It turns out that many people confirmed him to be right, as the basics of modern psychology application and testing stems from them, including Jung’s behavioral techniques as well as the Myers-Briggs profiling. While the latter breaks the human dimension into 16 categories, they all stem from four basics. CCI and its sister company CCCC have created its proprietary method¹ details based on the four types of Hippocrates character analyses. Since each of the four can have a value from 0 to 100, about 95 million distinct profiles scores are possible. We have found about 35 to be a practical limit for explanations to the average person. Yet, each is quite different and well they should be. Your human brain, formed of 750 trillion synapse connections², is not likely to be the same as anyone else’s trillions – we are all different.

2. Explaining the Differences

The practical nomenclatures we use for two of the four personality types are *Analyzer* and *Visionary*. The *Analyzer* (let’s call her Alice) is typified as, generally, having many of the characteristics of: being a logical, well-organized person, careful, cautious, thorough, plans ahead, is good at fine detail and leans towards being introverted. She likes to stay on top of things and of people who report to her. Whereas, Vincent, the *Visionary*, tends, for the most part, to be optimistic, outgoing, likes variety in his work, is visually impressed, seeks to improve things, is curious, enquires ‘why?’ and ‘why not?’ takes risks and is highly adaptable. His way of organizing things is to simply add to his pile. He is emotional and spontaneous.

How do they view each other? (Shown below is each with the opposite person’s characteristic in brackets.)

Alice looks at Vincent’s characteristics as being on the other side of the spectrum to her own value system – since most people place value in their own behaviors. Looking through Alice’s eyes, using the characteristics above, she sees Vincent, the *Visionary* as having a naive optimism (optimistic), being show-offish (outgoing), limited attention span (likes variety), is flamboyant (visually impressed), can’t leave well-enough alone (seeks to improve things), pokes his nose in where it doesn’t belong (is curious), asks dumb questions (‘why?’ and ‘why not’), takes unnecessary risks and is unable to be tied down (adaptable). She thinks he is in total disarray (adds to his piles), explosive (emotional) and speaks before he thinks (spontaneous). Instead of seeing the positives of a *Visionary*, she would probably view him negatively, if not with hostility.

But it doesn’t stop there. Vincent’s view of Alice is that of a person who is way off base

¹ See Reference 1 at the end of this paper.

² See Reference 2 at the end of this paper.

because her behaviors offend Vincent's sense of how the world should be. Looking through Vincent's eyes, Alice the *Analyzer* comes across as stoic and inflexible (logical), rigid as she arranges even her CD collection alphabetically (well-organized), dawdling (careful), overly-cautious, with machine-like precision (thorough), takes no chances whatsoever (plans ahead), is stiflingly meticulous (good at fine detail), quiet as a mouse (introverted) and pessimistic (optimistic). She, as his boss, he finds controlling (likes to stay on top of things) and micromanaging (stay on top of people who report to her). Because of his opposing view, Vincent, instead of defining her as a positive *Analyzer*, he might use unflattering words to describe Alice.

3. One more Pair

We have another pair to consider and first is Peter the *Producer*, who is recognized by his busyness, his juggling of a thousand things at once, his directness, his results-orientation, that he does not suffer fools gladly and his ants-in-the-pants restlessness. Then along comes Fiona the *Friend* who is more laid back, likes people and has genuine empathy with them. She is pleasant and non-conflictive, as well as helpful and cooperative – a real team player and one who makes an effort to please people. Thus, Fiona's decisions await the development of consensus among her group members.

Peter's view of Fiona is that she is wishy-washy never making up her mind (non-conflictive, trying to please all), spends too much time listening to the whiners (empathy) and takes forever to get things done (awaits consensus). In a word she is simply too nice and too *Friendly*. He can't stand idle people (in a hurry) and Fiona's laid-back ways irk him.

However, Fiona is not without a strong view about Peter, the *Producer*. She sees him often as a bull in a china shop (in a hurry) who is totally insensitive towards others (direct). She thinks that he should pause more to smell the roses (busy, juggling) and he ought to relax now and then (ants-in-the-pants).

Strong differences lead to negative feelings about the inappropriateness of the other.

4. Meeting the Differences

In each of the four cases above we have the same person and same situation but two opposing viewpoints. And ne'er the twain shall meet, or so it would seem. I imagine that by now you can anticipate the difficulty of communications, especially if the two people have reached a point where they can't stand each other. They are in a different world and seem to speak a different language – what is positive for one appears to be negative for the other.

Even 'yes' and 'no' are different. For example if Vincent asks Alice about moving forward with one of his new ideas, she will respond 'no' almost automatically. Why? Because, as an *Analyzer*, she needs time to process information slowly and to logically form a proper decision. When that is done, she will answer 'yes' or 'no' depending on her conclusion. That is, for Alice the *Analyzer* the 'no' response means 'maybe'.

On the other hand, should you present a new concept to Vincent the *Visionary*, his emotional enthusiasm for the ingenuity of it, especially if it is novel will see him respond immediately with a loud 'yes'. But a few days later when you try to get the go-ahead for the project, Vincent will be racing off on another tangent and no longer interested in your project. His 'yes' becomes 'no'; it could also become confirmed as 'yes'. Thus 'yes' for Vincent really means 'maybe'.

5. Dealing with Fears

While all humans are made up of bit and pieces of all four characteristics (*Producer*, *Analyzer*, *Visionary* and *Friend*), most people have a stronger leaning towards one than the other three. You, regardless of your own disposition, are likely to run into all four types. Our postulate is that you have to speak differently to each of the four if you want to communicate effectively because otherwise they will not really understand you.

If you speak about rules and regulation, you will drive the *Producer* quite crazy because Peter understands only speed and directness. If you talk about a venture with risk you will never impress Alice the *Analyzer*, in fact you will paralyze her with fear. For the *Visionary*, Vincent, there is a need to get other people's recognition of his uniqueness and if you fail to give him the credit that he thinks is his due, he will stop listening to you. And, if you want to terrorize Fiona the *Friend*, just imply you don't approve of her or that she is not part of the in-crowd.

That is, we must deal with each type of person's primordial fear first (as indicated above), put it to rest and then they will listen and only at that time can you begin to communicate.

6. How do I know which type I am dealing with?

While it does take experience to identify each kind of person, it is not as difficult as it might seem because there are some early clues. None is conclusive, so operate with care. The test is that, when all is said and done, if the person's eyes light up with your ideas or suggestions you are probably on the right path.

The clues:

	<i>Producer</i>	<i>Analyzer</i>	<i>Visionary</i>	<i>Friend</i>
Fears	Not getting it done	Chaos, risk and disorganization	Not being appreciated as unique or special	Not being included in the group. Fears conflict.
Loves	Results	Details	Ideas	People
Office Arrangement	Sparse	Neat	A mess	Lots of pictures of people
Clothes	Regular	Subdued colours	Loud colours	Approved by others (fashionable)
Enjoys	Delivering the goods	Getting things 'right'	Praise and recognition	Belonging to the group
Hobbies	Solo activities – skiing, jogging, etc.	Detailed activities – chess, computer games, etc.	Daring or creative games or activities	Group endeavors

7. Speaking the Four Languages

So now, with each of a *Producer*, *Analyzer*, *Visionary* and *Friend* (*P*, *A*, *V* and *F*), we must speak their distinct languages or we will not be listened to³, as we would like to be heard. Let's look at each of the characters.

a. Encountering a *Producer* (*P*)

P's are the engines that drive an organization. Bosses love them, while others fear them. Because they get results, they are common in results-oriented enterprises. Theirs is a black-and-white world--"Don't bother me with details."

Because they are achievers, they have an implied status within the company that often exceeds their actual rank; so when they speak, others feel they must listen. Thus, their black-and-white arguments or just-let-me-do-it attitude can be influential and often disruptive.

Try to communicate with the P as follows:

Dealing with P's

- Keep any message to P's brief; they are impatient with details.
- Start with the results or the answer first, to satisfy their impatience. Supply details later, if asked.
- If the P is your superior and you're having trouble getting through, remember that you have to hit P's hard to get their attention. Suggest some degree of urgency; P's are in their milieu responding to immediate crises.
- P's can be brutally frank towards you, and you can be brutal back (but fair); they have thick skins.
- P's look at what things do--the functionality of the idea; so sell P on what the idea does.
- "Yes" from P's means yes.
- "No" from P's means no.

b. Encountering an *Analyzer* (*A*)

A's thoroughness and careful attention to detail, while crucial to the success of any enterprise, can lead them off the main issue and quickly into the minutia of the situation.

It can drive mere humans crazy. Their logic will present a picture that is inarguably factual but may be inappropriate to the situation--the lining up of the deck chairs while the *Titanic* is sinking.

In situations with A's, you will confront computer-like minds that are always working, always analyzing, minds that need to be fed a constant stream of data. If the picture is not absolutely clear, down to the last detail, A's will not be satisfied. Even in everyday life, A's salads have to have the right mix of vegetables and the right dressings on the side--so they can apply the right amount. Exactly the right fluffiness of pillows accompanies A's to their bedtimes.

Dealing with A's

- When presenting information to A's, don't go on to the next step until they understand and you thus have A's acceptance so far. If you lose them at the beginning, you will lose them altogether.
- Go much more slowly than usual, to let A's process information. Watch if they are paying attention. If the A's eyes are wandering, it means they are processing information. Pause to allow that to happen.
- Ensure the conventional method or process is in place, or, if different, that it is carefully explained to the A's.
- A's like to have the meeting start and end at the agreed time.
- A's want to begin with the overall plan of where you are going--an exact schedule of events for the topic at hand. Make sure A's have copies of your meeting agenda or your plan of attack.
- When A's ask detailed questions, go to great lengths to acknowledge the question without answering it (unless time permits) and write it down to deal with later. Keep to your overview or you'll not get done on time--and A's want you done on time. You must answer the questions, or set a mechanism or a time to answer the questions later.
- Use precise numbers; A's will catch you on simple errors easily (and lose confidence in you). It isn't "around 300." It's "308"; or it's not "308" but "317."
- Since A's focus on the details of the plan, go into one of the details and sell them on the precision of it.

³ See Reference 3 at the end of this paper.

- A's dislike the unpredictability of V's and they dislike flashy presentations.
- "Yes" from A's means yes.
- But "no" from A's means maybe. Most of the time A's will answer a question with "no." That is because "no" from an A is derived from: "I am not sure at this time, so I need to assess the information more. To be safe, I will tell you 'no' at this moment. Later, when I have finished my analysis, I may give you a 'yes' for the issue, if my analysis points that way." So don't be put off by a stream of "no's" from an A; "no" can turn into "yes," later.

c. Encountering a Visionary (V)

V's are driven to be front and center, to have the audience eating out of their hands. This type of obvious recognition fuels the engine of V's. With a limited attention span and a constant need for variety and change, V's are the agents of change of any enterprise. They are the trailblazers leading to new paths where others would fear to tread.

Overall, you do not want to compete for the limelight with V's, but leave them alone in the spotlight--as the hero, the genius, the creative innovator, or the star of the show.

Dealing with V's

- V's reject ideas that are not theirs. V's want to participate in the excitement of the new idea. Therefore, have creative aspects within your presentation or tasks for V's to work on, to keep them involved and their limited attention spans engaged.
- Don't expect V's to write things down or to remember things.
- V's change their minds daily, if not hourly. Keep tabs on them later.
- V's enjoy conflict, so expect them to try and get you flustered. Stay calm and do not vent your anger at the V's; they are behaving normally for V's.
- V's focus on excitement or innovation. Sell them on the grandness or the uniqueness of your idea.
- V's dislike the challenge of other V's. V's will compete with other V team members for your attention.
- If you present V's with an inflexible situation or answer, they will resist the straitjacket and react strongly.

- For V's, "I want" means "I have." That is, if V's want something, they consider it to be done. For example, if V's want a sale from a particular client, they will talk as if the sale is already in the bag (and be spending the money long before it arrives).
- V's need to repeat communications back for confirmation (because they are not good listeners).
- "Yes" from V's means "maybe." When V's say "yes," they are saying: "I think your idea is great and I love it. Now if all the stars are aligned, I will go ahead with it. However, if later I find I don't have the time or the money or am not distracted with other things, we can move forward on your project." Thus upon getting a "yes" from a V, you have to keep on checking to ensure it is still a "yes" situation right up until implementation.
- "No" from a V means 'no'.

d. Encountering a Friend (F)

F's spell reliability for companies. They can be counted on to stabilize situations, smooth ruffled feathers, and work towards the goals of teamwork and cooperation. They take charge of companies' social events to assist in overall togetherness within corporations. They attempt to put out the fires of destructive conflict. In an effort to put out those fires, driven by their high need for approval, they appear to give in to whoever makes the most noise, and hence can be viewed by others as "wishy-washy."

Dealing with F's

- If F's are involved in the decision, establish contact with all other influential people before you pass your ideas to F's. Since F's focus on those who have influence, you should sell F's the concept of belonging-- show that the key players agree on the idea. For the extreme F, the key is universal agreement.
- F's greatest PAVF conflict styles are with the directness and solo style of P's.
- "Yes" from F's means "maybe" because there are so many issues to consider in evaluating all the influential factors before determining directions.
- "No" from F's means "maybe" for exactly the same reason as above; there are just too many factors.

8. The Test

As you speak to the individual, you need to test that you are going down the right path. One test, as mentioned in para 4 above, is that if the person's eyes light up with your ideas or suggestions you are probably on the right track.

More specifically, ask them P, A, V or F questions and see if they respond with enthusiasm. For example:

P: Is this idea going to deliver the kind of results you want?

A: Has this concept the degree of care and thoroughness you would like? Is it organized enough? Is it safe and risk-free enough?

V: Will this idea enhance your image (or your department's image)?

F: Can this sort of approach turn out to be effective with your team members?

In all cases, each personality will care about that question. If they are indifferent to the question, you may be barking up the wrong tree. Test another one.

Good luck.

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