



# Dealing with Difficult People

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# Agenda for Today's Workshop

- ◆ Introductions
- ◆ Identifying your Personality/Communication Style
- ◆ Identifying the Personality/Communication Style of Others
- ◆ Understanding Difficult Behavior
- ◆ How to Deal with Different Personalities
- ◆ Do's and Don'ts for Managing Difficult Interactions
- ◆ Suggestions for Solving Issues Effectively
- ◆ Conflict Management



# Personality Matrix

- ◆ Take a few minutes to complete this exercise before we proceed

## FINDING YOUR BEHAVIORAL STYLE

### PASSIVE/DOMINANT AXIS

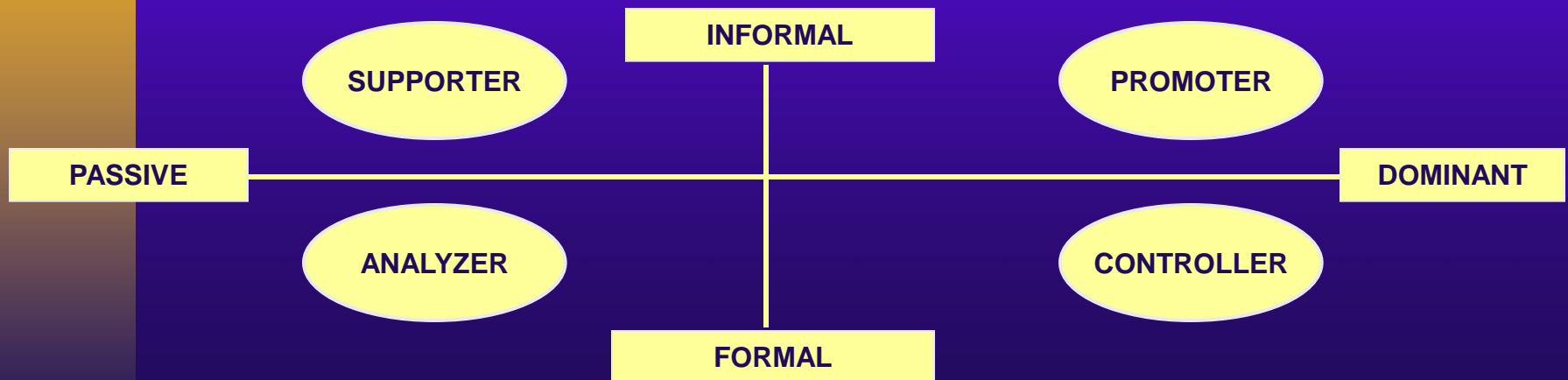
PLACE AN "X" ON THE PASSIVE/DOMINANT AXIS FOR EACH QUESTION. NOTE THE FIRST OPTION IS MORE PASSIVE.

- ARE YOU RELATIONSHIP – OR TASK-ORIENTED?
- ARE YOU PASSIVE OR AGGRESSIVE?
- ARE YOU EASY-GOING OR TAKE CHARGE?
- ARE YOU ACCEPTING OR CHALLENGING?
- ARE YOU SUBTLE OR DIRECT?
- ARE YOU QUIET OR TALKATIVE?
- ARE YOU AN INTROVERT OR EXTROVERT?

### FORMAL/INFORMAL AXIS

PLACE AN "X" ON THE FORMAL/INFORMAL AXIS FOR EACH QUESTION. NOTE THE FIRST OPTION IS MORE FORMAL.

- ARE YOU DISCIPLINED OR SPONTANEOUS?
- ARE YOU RESERVED OR FUN-LOVING?
- DO YOU WITHHOLD FEELINGS OR EXPRESS THEM?
- ARE YOU CAUTIOUS OR IMPULSIVE?
- ARE YOU COOL OR WARM?
- ARE YOU ORGANIZED OR UNORGANIZED?





# The Personality Matrix

- ◆ Identifying Your Personality
- ◆ Supporter
- ◆ Promoter
- ◆ Analytic
- ◆ Controller
- ◆ Any Surprises?



# Supporter

- ◆ Characteristics
- ◆ Advantages
- ◆ Pitfalls



# Recognizing Supporters

- ◆ Slow at making decisions
- ◆ Likes close, personal relationships
- ◆ Avoids conflict
- ◆ Good listeners
- ◆ Seeks security
- ◆ Works at a steady pace
- ◆ Responsive to others ideas, tries to be fair



# What Do Supporters Want?

- ◆ Motivated by stability
- ◆ People Oriented
- ◆ Often perceived as stubborn
- ◆ Demonstrates patience
- ◆ Specializes
- ◆ Concentrates on task
- ◆ Listens well
- ◆ Calms excited people
- ◆ Performs accepted work pattern
- ◆ Fears change





# Recognizing Analytic Style

- ◆ Cautious actions and decisions
- ◆ Likes organization and structure
- ◆ Asks questions, wants detail, relies on data
- ◆ Wants intellectual, task-oriented work
- ◆ Wants to be right
- ◆ Thrifty with time, money
- ◆ Works slowly and precisely alone



# What do Analytics Want?

- ◆ Motivated by logic, details
- ◆ Attends to key directives
- ◆ Concentrates on detail – task oriented
- ◆ Works best under known conditions
- ◆ Diplomatic with people
- ◆ Checks for accuracy
- ◆ Thinks critically
- ◆ Critiques performance
- ◆ Complies with authority
- ◆ Often perceived as unemotional
- ◆ Fears criticism, being wrong



# Recognizing Promoter Style

- ◆ Very expressive and spontaneous
- ◆ Likes involvement with others
- ◆ Dislikes being alone
- ◆ Exaggerates and generalizes
- ◆ Seeks harmony
- ◆ Makes quick decisions
- ◆ Wants to belong and have fun!
- ◆ Energetic, flexible and charming



# Promoters-What They Want

- ◆ Motivated by recognition
- ◆ Likes people contact – People oriented
- ◆ Makes favorable impression
- ◆ Verbalizes, articulates
- ◆ Motivates
- ◆ Generates enthusiasm
- ◆ Entertains – Often perceived as flighty
- ◆ Wants to help
- ◆ Participates in Groups
- ◆ Fears loss of influence



# Recognizing Controller Style

- ◆ Decisive actions and decisions
- ◆ Needs freedom to manage himself and others
- ◆ Cool, keeps emotions to himself
- ◆ Competitive, independent
- ◆ Believes in “time and place” for personal problems
- ◆ Efficient, competent



# What do Controller Styles Want?

- ◆ Motivated by time
- ◆ Gets immediate results – Task oriented
- ◆ Causes action – Problem solver
- ◆ Accepts challenges
- ◆ Makes quick decisions
- ◆ Questions status quo
- ◆ Takes authority/control
- ◆ Often perceived as rude
- ◆ Fears being taken advantage of

# Understanding Difficult Behavior

- ◆ People have different motivations
- ◆ People have different needs
- ◆ People communicate difficult issues differently
- ◆ People have different fears







# How to Deal with Different Personalities

- ◆ The “Sherman Tank”
- ◆ The “Exploder”
- ◆ The “Complainer”
- ◆ The “Clam”
- ◆ The “Wet Blanket”
- ◆ The “Know-It-All”
- ◆ The “Staller”





# How They Behave

- ◆ **“Sherman Tank” – Attack, abusive, intimidating and contemptuous manner**
- ◆ **“The Exploder” – Temper tantrum. Outbursts filled with rage. Can lose control**
- ◆ **“The Complainer” – Finds fault with everything**
- ◆ **“The Clam” – The silent one, a grunt, or just responds yes or no**
- ◆ **“The Wet Blanket” – Responds with a quick or negative response. “It won’t work”**
- ◆ **“The Know It All” – The expert on all matters**
- ◆ **“The Staller” – Habitually indecisive**



# Sherman Tank

- ◆ Stand up to them but don't get into a fight – Don't argue
- ◆ Give them time to run down
- ◆ Get your point across any reasonable way you can
- ◆ Get them to sit down and discuss the problem
- ◆ Maintain eye contact
- ◆ State your opinions forcefully and without apology
- ◆ Don't try to cut them down
- ◆ Be ready to be friendly and receptive to negotiation



# The Exploder

- ◆ Get them to wind down and then switch to problem solving mode of interaction
- ◆ Give them time to run down and gain self control
- ◆ If they don't, shouting a neutral phrase such as "Stop" or "Quiet, please!"
- ◆ Show that you take them and their concerns seriously
- ◆ Active listening
- ◆ If necessary, suggest moving to private setting for further discussion



# The Complainer

- ◆ Insist that issues be handled in a problem solving manner
- ◆ Listen to their complaints even if you feel guilty or impatient
- ◆ Acknowledge, paraphrase to ensure perceptions are correct
- ◆ Don't agree with or apologize for their complaints
- ◆ Avoid the accusation-defense-re-accusation pattern
- ◆ State the facts without comment
- ◆ Try to move to problem solving mode by asking specific questions, assigning fact-finding tasks, or asking for certain complaints to be put down in writing
- ◆ If all else fails, ask the Complainer “How do you want the discussion to end?”



# The Clam

- ◆ Get them to open up and begin to discuss what they want or what's bothering them
- ◆ Ask open-ended questions
- ◆ Wait for a response
- ◆ Do not fill the silence with chatter
- ◆ Plan for extra time
- ◆ Ask more open-ended questions if no response
- ◆ Comment on what is happening in the interaction
- ◆ Develop your skills in eye contact



# The Wet Blanket

- ◆ Engage them in rational problem solving without getting drawn into the negativism or pessimism
- ◆ Make optimistic but realistic statements about past successes in handling similar problems
- ◆ Don't try to argue out of their pessimism
- ◆ Don't offer solutions until problem has been thoroughly discussed
- ◆ When alternatives are being discussed, raise questions—offer consequences or outcomes
- ◆ View the negativism as problems that can be solved
- ◆ Be prepared to take action on your own – Develop plan



# The Know-it-All

- ◆ Get them to consider alternatives without directly challenging their alleged expertise
- ◆ Do your Homework – They want details
- ◆ Listen and paraphrase
- ◆ Don't be dogmatic or over-generalize
- ◆ Be tentative in any disagreements-Raise questions
- ◆ Ask exploratory questions
- ◆ Watch out for your own "Know-it-all" responses
- ◆ As a last resort, choose to give in, in order to avoid protracted conflict and build a relationship





# The Staller

- ◆ Recognize that this is their preferred method of problem solving
- ◆ Attempt to engage them in problem solving
- ◆ Don't take on their problems yourself
- ◆ Listen for issues and create problem solving solutions
- ◆ If reservations involve you, acknowledge past problem and then proceed with problem solving
- ◆ Concentrate on examining the facts of the situation
- ◆ Give support for any decision they can offer
- ◆ Delineate who is responsible for what in resolving problem





# Exercise – Conflict Questionnaire

- ◆ Twenty Questions
- ◆ Scoring
- ◆ Conflict Management Strategies
- ◆ Five Basic Methods for Resolving Conflict
- ◆ Managing Conflict



# Five Basic Methods for Resolving Conflict

- ◆ Withdrawal
- ◆ Smoothing
- ◆ Forcing
- ◆ Compromise
- ◆ Collaboration



# Withdrawal

- ◆ Neither the goal nor the relationship are important to you
- ◆ You withdraw from interaction



## Withdrawal Method for Resolving Conflict

- ◆ What Happens When Used:
  - Person Tries to Solve Problem by Denying Its Existence
- ◆ Appropriate to Use When:
  - Issue is Relatively unimportant; timing is wrong; cooling off is needed
- ◆ Inappropriate to Use When:
  - Issue is important; when issue will not disappear but build



# Smoothing

- ◆ The relationship is more important than the goal
- ◆ You want to be liked and accepted



# Smoothing Method for Resolving Conflict

## ◆ What Happens When Used:

- Differences are played down; surface harmony exists. Results in win/lose resentment situation

## ◆ Appropriate to Use When:

- Issue relatively unimportant, also when preservation of the relationship is more important at the moment

## ◆ Inappropriate to Use When:

- Reluctance to deal with conflict lead to evasion of an important issue; when others are ready and willing to deal with issue



# Forcing

- ◆ The goal is important but not the relationship.
- ◆ Use all your energy to get the job done



## **Forcing Method for Resolving Conflict**

- ◆ **What Happens When Used:**
  - **One's authority, position, majority rule, or a persuasive minority settles the conflict. Results in win/lose if the dominated party see no hope for self**
- ◆ **Appropriate to Use When:**
  - **When power comes with position of authority; when this method has been agreed upon**
- ◆ **Inappropriate to Use When:**
  - **Losers have no way to express needs; could result in future disruptions**





# Compromise

- ◆ Both goals and relationships are important - but there is a lack of time
- ◆ You both gain and lose something



# Compromise Method for Resolving Conflict

- ◆ **What Happens When Used:**
  - Each party gives up something in order to midway. Results in win/lose if differences aren't recognized
- ◆ **Appropriate to Use When:**
  - Both parties have enough leeway to give; resources are limited; when win/lose stance is undesirable
- ◆ **Inappropriate to Use When:**
  - Original inflated position is unrealistic; solution is watered down to be effective; commitment is doubted by parties involved



# Collaboration

- ◆ Goals and relationships are equally important
- ◆ You define the conflict as a problem solving situation



# Collaboration Method of Resolving Conflict

- ◆ **What Happens When Used:**
  - **Abilities, values, and expertise of all are recognized; each person's position, is clear but emphasis is on group solution. Results in win/win for all**
- ◆ **Appropriate to Use When:**
  - **Time is available to complete the process; parties are committed and trained in use of the process**
- ◆ **Inappropriate to Use When:**
  - **The conditions of time, abilities, and commitment are not present**

# Questions?

- ◆ Your HR office is always available to work with you
- ◆ Confidentiality

