

# Which Animal Are You? Personal Behavioral Style Assessment Instructions and Animal Style Information

## Individual Instructions

1. Complete the Which Animal Are You? Behavioral Styles Inventory Questionnaire (provided in a separate document). *Note: This model was first called the Behavioral Styles Model, developed by Phillip Hunsaker and Tony Alessandra, and later adapted by Tony Alessandra and Michael J. O'Connor into this form.*

**STOP here and complete the Which Animal Are You? Personal Behavioral Style Assessment Inventory Questionnaire (separate document) before you read any further.**

2. Determine your primary style using the Which Animal Are You? Personal Behavioral Style Assessment Inventory Scoring document (separate document).
3. Discover the corresponding animal for your primary style and learn more below about the traits that are common for people with this same style.
4. Remember: The description of your primary style may not be a perfect fit. Only about 20 percent of people fall solely within a single style. The rest are a combination of styles and those combinations can be determined to define more precisely how you are likely to act and be perceived by others. Additional information about mixed styles, and other model specifics, can be found in *The Platinum Rule* by Alessandra and O'Connor which is available for download at <http://www.alessandra.com/products/productdetails.asp?productid=9>.
5. To help understand how you can learn to flex your personal style to work more successfully with others, refer to the last section of the overview document called *Behavioral Flexibility*.

## Team Exercise

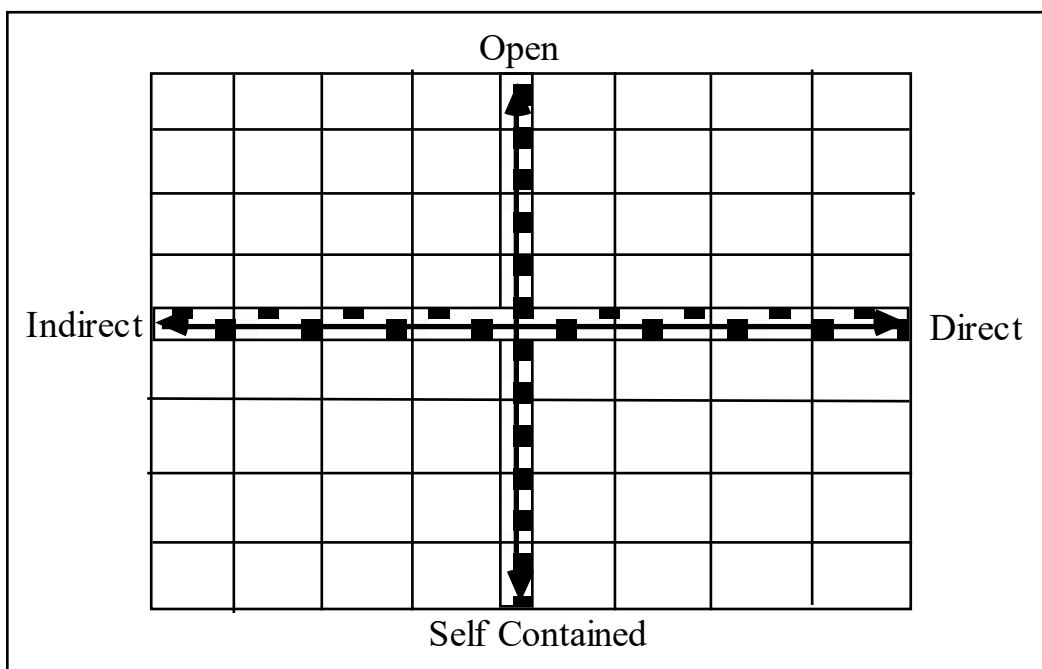
1. All members of your team complete and score the inventory to determine their predominant style.
2. Break out into groups of people who share the same styles.
3. Each group discusses the questions below and notes responses so it can be shared back with the entire team:
  - a. What do people with your style contribute to the group at large?
  - b. What do others need to know about working with you?
  - c. What do you find most difficult about working with people who have a different style?
4. Reunite team and a selected representative of each group reports out the highlights of their discussions.
5. The exercise facilitator reviews what each style could do to learn to flex their style to work better with people who have different styles.

## **Behavioral Styles**

(Excerpted from Teaming Technologies' *Team Dynamics* and based on model developed by Phillip Hunsaker and Anthony Alessandra.)

There has been a lot of work done over the last several centuries in trying to understand and define various *behavioral styles*. Many thinkers have taken a stab at it, from Hippocrates to Carl Jung. Modern researchers and philosophers have added their theories on behavioral differences as well. All of these concepts and theories have one common thread—the grouping of behavior into *four categories*. The four categories may have different names, depending upon the author, yet there are strong similarities in the content of each category. A behavioral *style*, for the purpose of this work, looks at how you treat people and how you want to be treated.

One concept that is easy to understand uses two major dimensions of behavior—*Openness* and *Directness*—to develop the four categories. The two dimensions can be shown on two continuums that look like this:



*Figure 1-2. Behavioral Grid*

Continuum means that there are *degrees* of specific behavior from being Self-Contained to being Open and from being Direct to being Indirect. Behavioral styles can be anywhere along these continuums. Most people have all of the behaviors to some degree, although one style will usually be more natural and comfortable. There is no right or wrong. The degree of openness and directness you display most of the time will determine which of the four

categories, described later in this section, is your dominant behavioral style. *Figure 1-2* can be viewed as having four quadrants, combining different degrees of openness and directness. Those quadrants will be explained and described further in this text.

The vertical bar represents *openness*. This bar is a continuum from *open* to *self-contained*. Openness refers to the readiness and willingness with which a person expresses emotions and enters into and develops relationships. Openness shows in the degree of self disclosure, the readiness and willingness to outwardly show thoughts and feelings and accept openness from others.

At one end of the continuum are *open people*, who tend to be animated and enthusiastic. They communicate physically as well as verbally and “open up” right away. They want to get close to you both physically and mentally. Their priority is *relationships*. Open people are more casual and flexible about time. Their time perspective is built around the needs of people, not tasks. They tend not to be as specific in terms of some of the facts or the logic they use. They base decisions on intuition, gut feeling and emotions.

At the other end of this bar, *self contained* people take a little longer to warm up to relationships. Their priority is *tasks*. These people are work-oriented, well organized, and enjoy the planning process. They like structure and want to know the guidelines and procedures. They are generally more punctual and disciplined than open people. They are rational, logical individuals. They base decisions on logic and data.

The horizontal bar represents *directness*. It is the way a person deals with information or situations. The bar represents a continuum from *direct* to *indirect*.

On one end of this bar are *indirect* people. They are *slow-paced* and reserved. Indirect people are more patient and cooperative than direct people. They are cautious, supportive, and better listeners than their more direct associates. Indirect people tend to ask questions for clarification, support, and information and go step-by-step.

On the other end of that bar are *direct* people. They are *fast-paced* and spontaneous. Direct people express opinions readily and can be very emphatic. They are risk takers who want results now and pride themselves on overcoming obstacles to accomplish results. Direct people tend to be impatient—they move at a quick pace and jump right into things.

In these short descriptions, we have identified several behavior qualifiers—degree of *openness* and *directness*, *priorities* (relationship or task orientation), and *pace* (fast or slow). If you put those together on a grid you can begin to identify the four behavioral styles that fit in each quadrant:

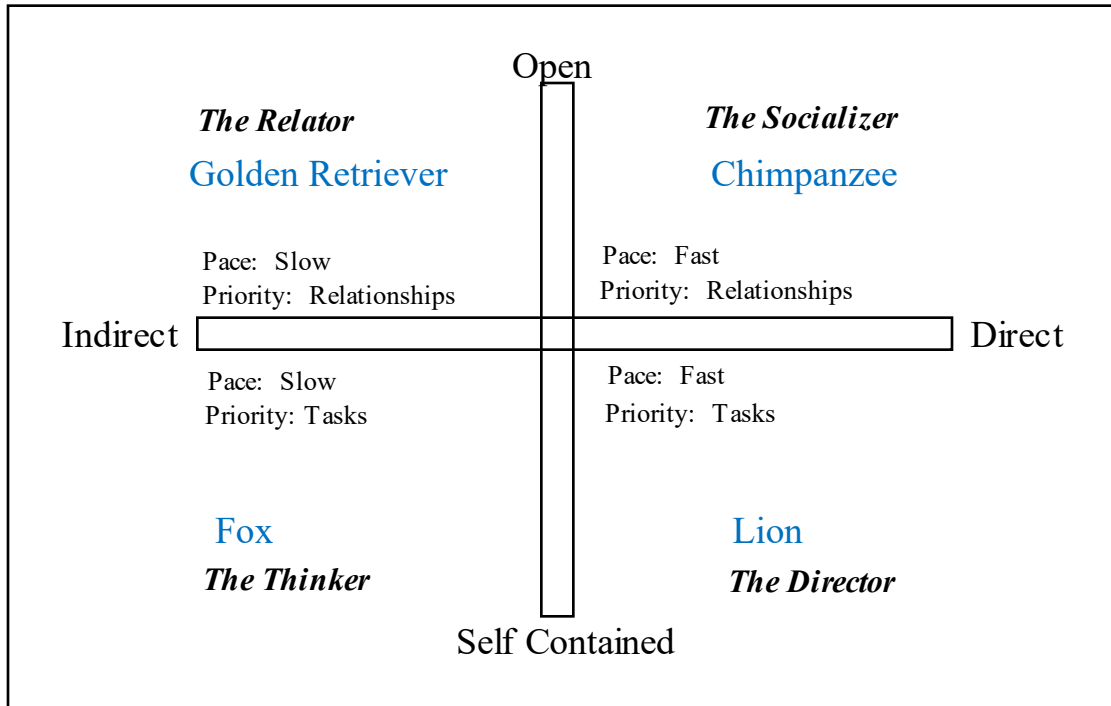


Figure 1-3. Behavioral Styles

The following is a brief summary of each of the four behavioral styles and their unique contribution to a team.

### **Golden Retriever – The Relator**

The relator is *open, indirect, slow-paced, and relationship-oriented*. This person is well liked and extremely cooperative. They are steady, calm, very warm, and accepting. They are good listeners and have great counseling skills. They have excellent ability to gain support from others. Relators dislike interpersonal conflict and are slow to take action and make decisions.

**Contribution to team:** Relators are the ones that keep peace within the team and help bring the team to consensus.

### **Chimpanzee – The Socializer**

The Socializer is *open, direct, fast-paced, and relationship-oriented*. They are stimulating and spontaneous in actions and decisions. They work quickly and excitedly with others and are very creative. They are risk takers, enthusiastic, optimistic, and have good persuasive skills. Socializers are undisciplined about time and not good at follow-through.

**Contribution to team:** Socializers add energy and creativity to teams.

### **Fox – The Thinker**

The thinker is *self-contained, indirect, slow-paced, and task-oriented*. They focus on the details and the process. They are structured and organized and like problem-solving activity. They usually prefer objective, task-oriented, and intellectual work. Thinkers follow directions and standards and check for accuracy. Thinkers are very cautious about actions and decisions and dislike too much personal involvement. They want to be right and may rely too much on data collection.

**Contribution to team:** The thinker brings problem solving and analysis skills to the team.

### **Lion – The Director**

The director is *self-contained, direct, fast-paced, and task-oriented*. They are looking for fast results. Directors are very decisive and goal-oriented. They are cool and competitive and accept challenges. They like control and dislike inaction. Directors may have a low tolerance for feelings, attitudes and the advice of others.

**Contribution to team:** Directors will see that the goals of the team are achieved in a timely manner.

The most important point about behavioral styles is not which one is yours or which one is someone else's. It is acknowledging that people have behavioral style *differences* that make them unique and wonderful with important contributions to make to team and personal relationships. These differences mean that other people may not want to be treated as you would. If you treat someone exactly as you would want to be treated and their behavioral style is different than yours, you may not get the outcome you wanted. The probable result is an uncomfortable relationship which causes tension, and when tension goes up, trust, cooperation and productivity goes down. The way to get positive results from people is to help them be comfortable and at ease with you. This means learning about and respecting normal behavioral differences in people.

Understanding these differences allows you to be flexible in how you deal with others. When you are able to acknowledge that a difference may be *behavioral style* and not personal, you can choose to be flexible in *your* style to get the outcome you want from a relationship.