



TEAM DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

How Maxwell DISC Improves Team Communication, Collaboration and Engagement

A practical guide to helping people understand themselves,
understand one another and work better together.

WHY UNDERSTANDING COMES FIRST

Great Teams Don't Just Communicate More - They Understand Each Other Better

Most workplace communication problems are not caused by people deliberately refusing to communicate. They often happen because people communicate differently.

One person wants to get straight to the point. Another wants time to discuss ideas and build rapport. Someone else prefers a calm, supportive conversation, while another wants facts, detail and time to think before responding.

None of these approaches is necessarily wrong. The challenge begins when we assume that everyone should communicate, make decisions and respond exactly as we do.

At Virstaf Leadership, we use the Maxwell DISC assessment to help individuals and teams better understand these behavioural differences and turn that understanding into stronger communication, collaboration and engagement.

UNDERSTANDING DISC

A shared language for behavioural differences

DISC is a behavioural assessment that helps people understand how they tend to communicate, respond to challenges, interact with others and approach their work.

D	Dominance Often direct, decisive, results-focused and comfortable taking action.	I	Influence Often enthusiastic, relational, persuasive and energised by interaction with others.
S	Steadiness Often patient, supportive, dependable and focused on cooperation and stability.	C	Compliance Often analytical, systematic, quality-focused and attentive to accuracy and detail.

Most people are not simply one style. We have a combination of behavioural characteristics that contributes to the way we naturally interact with the world around us.

The value of DISC is therefore not about putting people into boxes. It is about developing self-awareness and awareness of others - and that awareness can transform the way teams work together.

1

CONNECT BEFORE YOU COMMUNICATE

DISC Improves Communication

Imagine a manager who naturally has a highly direct communication style. They value speed, clarity and results. Their emails are short. Their meetings move quickly. They expect people to get to the point.

Now imagine one of their team members prefers more context, careful consideration and an opportunity to ask questions before acting.

The manager may interpret the employee's approach as slow or indecisive. The employee may experience the manager as impatient or dismissive. Neither interpretation necessarily reflects reality. They may simply have different behavioural and communication preferences.

A BETTER QUESTION

Instead of thinking, 'Why are they so difficult to communicate with?' we can begin asking, 'How can I communicate in a way that makes it easier for this person to understand and respond?'

DISC gives teams a common language for recognising those differences. It helps people replace assumptions with curiosity and adapt their approach without losing authenticity.

Effective communication is not simply about saying what we want to say. It is about helping the other person receive and understand the message. Leaders who develop this awareness learn to adapt without becoming inauthentic.

PRACTICAL LEADERSHIP SHIFT

FROM	TO
Communicating in the way that feels natural to me	Communicating in the way that helps the other person understand
Assuming reluctance or poor intent	Exploring preferences, context and the needs behind a response

2

LEVERAGE DIFFERENCES

DISC Strengthens Collaboration

A high-performing team does not need everyone to think alike. In fact, behavioural differences can become a significant advantage.

A strong D style may help the team make decisions and maintain momentum. A strong I style may generate enthusiasm, relationships and creative ideas. A strong S style may strengthen cooperation, consistency and team support. A strong C style may identify risks, challenge assumptions and ensure quality.

The problem arises when we fail to appreciate what different people bring. DISC helps teams move from judging differences to leveraging differences.

THE COLLABORATION QUESTION

Instead of asking, 'Why aren't they more like me?', teams begin asking: 'What does this person bring that our team needs?' That question can change the quality of collaboration.

3

LEAD THE PERSON, NOT THE STEREOTYPE

DISC Helps Leaders Engage People Differently

One of the biggest mistakes leaders can make is assuming that everyone is motivated in the same way. They are not.

Some people enjoy autonomy, challenge and opportunities to achieve. Others are energised by recognition, relationships and interaction. Some value stability, belonging and knowing that their contribution matters to the team. Others become more engaged when expectations, standards and information are clear.

DISC gives leaders additional insight into how their people may prefer to be communicated with, recognised, supported and involved. Instead of relying on a one-size-fits-all leadership approach, managers can become more intentional about how they lead different members of their teams.

The result can be stronger relationships, greater trust and better engagement.

4

REPLACE ASSUMPTIONS WITH UNDERSTANDING

DISC Can Reduce Unnecessary Conflict

Conflict is not always negative. Healthy disagreement can improve decisions, challenge assumptions and generate better ideas. But many workplace conflicts are intensified by misunderstandings about behaviour.

What appears to be aggression may sometimes be a preference for directness. What looks like indecision may be someone's need to analyse information before committing. What appears overly conversational may come from a highly relational communication style. What looks like excessive questioning may reflect a strong focus on accuracy and risk.

Understanding does not remove accountability or excuse inappropriate behaviour. Instead, it gives teams a better starting point for addressing differences constructively.

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

DISC explains behavioural preferences; it does not excuse harmful conduct. Insight and accountability belong together.

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LEADERSHIP BEGINS WITHIN

DISC Builds Self-Awareness

DISC is not only about understanding everyone else. Its greatest value often begins with understanding ourselves.

How do I behave under pressure? How might my communication style affect other people? What are my natural strengths? Where might those strengths become weaknesses if overused? What types of people do I find difficult to work with - and why? What adjustments could make me a better colleague or leader?

These questions move DISC beyond being simply an assessment. They turn it into a tool for development.

For leaders, this is particularly important because the behaviour of a leader often influences the culture experienced by everyone around them.

FROM INSIGHT TO APPLICATION

From Assessment to Team Transformation

Completing a DISC assessment should not be the end of the process. It should be the beginning of a conversation.

At Virstaf Leadership, our approach is focused on helping teams move from insight to application. We help individuals understand their behavioural profile, but we also explore what those insights mean for the wider team.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Communication preferences across the team + Potential areas of misunderstanding or conflict + Individual and collective strengths + Leadership and management approaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + How different behavioural styles respond to change + Opportunities to improve meetings and decision-making + Strategies for stronger collaboration + Practical actions for improving team engagement |
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THE OBJECTIVE

The objective is not simply for everyone to know their DISC style. The objective is to help people work better together.

THE DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

01 SELF Understand my patterns	02 OTHERS Recognise their needs	03 TEAM Adapt how we work	04 CULTURE Sustain better habits
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THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION

Leadership is about people

PAUSE AND REFLECT

'Am I communicating with people based on how I prefer to communicate, or am I learning how they need to be communicated with?'

Leadership is about people. And when leaders understand their people better, they are better positioned to create environments where individuals feel understood, valued and equipped to contribute.

Better understanding can lead to better communication. Better communication supports stronger collaboration. Stronger collaboration contributes to greater engagement. And engaged teams are better positioned to perform.

UNDERSTANDING	COMMUNICATION	COLLABORATION	ENGAGEMENT
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BUILD A TEAM THAT UNDERSTANDS HOW TO WORK TOGETHER

Turn behavioural insight into practical change

If your organisation is experiencing communication breakdowns, team friction, low engagement or challenges with collaboration, the solution may not simply be another team meeting.

Your people may need a better understanding of themselves and each other.

Virstaf Leadership provides Maxwell DISC assessments, individual debriefs and facilitated team workshops designed to turn behavioural insight into practical improvements in the way people communicate, collaborate and lead.

Because when people understand not only what their colleagues do, but also how they naturally approach what they do, working together becomes easier.

READY TO START THE CONVERSATION?

Get in touch today and DISCover more.

MAXWELL DISC ASSESSMENTS | TEAM WORKSHOPS | LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

