



The Art of Leadership

DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEADERS

The challenges and the strengths of each DISC style.

This booklet is ideal for leaders, managers, and HR professionals looking to understand different leadership styles through the lens of Extended DISC[®], helping them enhance team dynamics and leadership effectiveness.

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Introduction

This booklet explores leadership through the Extended DISC® framework, helping leaders, managers, and HR professionals understand how natural behavioural tendencies shape leadership styles. By increasing self-awareness, leaders can adapt their approach to better engage and motivate their teams.

WE COVER

TEN LEADERSHIP STYLES,

EACH WITH UNIQUE STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES:

D-Style (Authoritative Leader):

Direct, results-driven, thrives in high-pressure situations but may need to soften their approach.

D/I-Style (Change Leader):

Visionary and persuasive, energises teams but may overlook details in pursuit of big-picture goals.

I-Style (Informal Leader):

Leads through charisma and positivity, fostering a fun environment but may struggle with structure.

I/S-Style (Participative Leader):

Encouraging and team-oriented, thrives on collaboration but may avoid confrontation.

S-Style (Supporting Leader):

Stable, patient, and service-focused, providing consistent guidance but may resist rapid change.

S/C-Style (Planning Leader):

Thoughtful and structured, excels in careful preparation but may struggle with flexibility.

C-Style (Quality Leader):

Detail-driven and process-focused, ensuring high standards but may appear overly critical.

C/D-Style (Power-Centred Leader):

Highly structured with strong expectations, ensuring efficiency but may seem detached.

D/S-Style (Demanding-Systematic Leader):

Experience-based, logical and persistent, but can become overly demanding.

I/C-Style (Friendly-Accurate Leader):

Balances enthusiasm with precision, excelling in training but may struggle between rules and relationships.

By understanding these styles, leaders can **leverage strengths, manage challenges, and create an effective leadership approach.**

THIS BOOKLET IS A PRACTICAL RESOURCE FOR LEADERS, MANAGERS, AND HR PROFESSIONALS LOOKING TO ENHANCE LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS USING EXTENDED DISC® INSIGHTS.



Beyond the Title: The Heart of Leadership

Is there a perfect leadership style?

No, there isn't one single perfect leadership style. Successful leaders come in many forms, and their effectiveness depends on their natural behavioural style, the team they lead, and the challenges they face.

What are the key traits of effective leaders?

Research shows that two primary factors build trust in leadership:

- Competence – The ability to get the job done.
- Character – How they go about achieving results.

What's the difference between management and leadership?

- Management is often task-oriented, focusing on efficiency, structure, and processes.
- Leadership is more people-focused, inspiring and guiding teams.
- The best leaders balance both, adapting their approach based on the situation.

Does DISC determine if someone will be a good leader?

No, DISC doesn't determine leadership success. Instead, it helps identify a leader's natural strengths and development areas, allowing them to adapt and become more effective.

How do different DISC leadership styles impact teams?

Each Extended DISC® leadership style influences how a leader communicates, motivates, and manages their team. Some styles may naturally connect with certain team members, while others may need to adapt their approach to build trust and engagement.


Why is self-awareness important for leaders?

Great leaders understand their own behavioural style, recognise how others may perceive them, and learn how to adjust their leadership style to different people and situations.

A close-up photograph of several sharpened pencils. One yellow pencil is positioned vertically in the center, standing out from a group of other pencils in various colors like red, brown, and black. The pencils are set against a dark blue background.

Explore leadership styles through the lens of the Extended DISC[®] framework

Leadership comes in many forms, and no single style is “perfect.” However, understanding behavioural styles can help us better appreciate the strengths and challenges each leader brings to the table.



D-Style Leader



D-Style Leader the Authoritative Leader

- ✓ Results-driven, decisive, and bold
- ✓ Takes charge, focusing on speed, achievement, and efficiency
- ✓ The authority is often based on power and distance
- ✓ Operates effectively under pressure and in crises



Leader in Charge

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THE AUTHORITATIVE LEADER

A D-Style leader is **bold, decisive, and results-driven**, always striving for **fast progress and high achievement**. They thrive on **challenges and competition**, pushing their team toward ambitious goals with **confidence and determination**. These leaders operate with **a strong sense of authority**, expecting their team to follow their lead without hesitation.

D-style leaders are not afraid to **make difficult decisions**, even under pressure, and they value **efficiency and directness** over excessive discussion. Their leadership style is often **no-nonsense and high-expectation-focused**, and they believe that **speed and performance matter more than process**. While their demanding nature can drive outstanding results, their **direct approach may feel intimidating** to some team members, especially those who prefer a more collaborative work environment.

KEY TRAITS OF A D-STYLE LEADER:

- ✓ **Decisive** – Makes fast, confident decisions.
- ✓ **Goal-Oriented** – Focuses on results over process.
- ✓ **Competitive** – Thrives in challenges and high-pressure environments.
- ✓ **Direct Communicator** – Speaks clearly and assertively

TAKAWAY

Their strength lies in speed and action, but they may need to balance results with relationships to ensure long-term team engagement.

D/I-Style Leader

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D/I-Style Leader the Change Leader

- ✓ Blend of decisiveness and charisma
- ✓ Natural visionaries
- ✓ Excels in building excitement and momentum
- ✓ Creates a positive atmosphere that inspires their teams to embrace change and innovation

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Leader as Pioneer

THE CHANGE LEADER

A D/I-Style leader is an **energetic, visionary innovator** who thrives on **persuasion, influence, and rapid progress**. They excel at **motivating teams**, rallying people around **big ideas and bold changes**.

These leaders **embrace the future**, constantly looking for **new opportunities and ways to improve**. They are **charismatic and engaging**, making them natural influencers who **inspire others to follow them enthusiastically**. Unlike a pure D-style leader, they use persuasion rather than force, focusing on **building excitement and momentum**.

However, their **fast-paced approach can sometimes create instability**, as they may jump from idea to idea without fully seeing them through. They may also struggle with **details, structure, or long-term planning**, preferring instead to keep things flexible and adaptable.

KEY TRAITS OF A D/I-STYLE LEADER:

- ✓ **Persuasive** – Inspires and energises people.
- ✓ **Fast-Paced** – Moves quickly and embraces change.
- ✓ **Visionary** – Thinks big and aims for continuous improvement.
- ✓ **Risk-Taker** – Willing to try new things and push boundaries.

TAKAWAY

Their enthusiasm drives innovation, but they may need to slow down, focus on details, and ensure long-term consistency.

I-Style Leader



I-Style Leader the Informal Leader

- ✓ Natural charisma & energy
- ✓ Ability to create a positive atmosphere
- ✓ Inspire teams through connection, enthusiasm, and optimism
- ✓ Talent for building relationships

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Leader as Friend



THE INFORMAL LEADER

An I-style leader is an **outgoing, charismatic leader** who believes that **leadership is about relationships, inspiration, and positivity**. They create a **relaxed and open environment** where people feel encouraged to contribute ideas without fear of criticism.

These leaders lead through **motivation rather than authority**, often taking on the role of a **friend and cheerleader rather than a strict manager**. They are **high-energy, enthusiastic, and naturally engaging**, which makes them effective at **keeping morale high and building team spirit**. However, their focus on **positivity and fun** can sometimes **lead to a lack of structure or accountability**.

They may **struggle with enforcing rules or addressing conflicts**, preferring to **keep things light-hearted and friendly**. While their natural optimism is infectious, they might need to **develop a firmer approach to ensure productivity and discipline** within their teams.

KEY TRAITS OF A I-STYLE LEADER:

- ✓ **Charismatic** – Draws people in with enthusiasm and energy.
- ✓ **Encouraging** – Motivates others through inspiration and positivity.
- ✓ **Sociable** – Builds strong personal relationships.
- ✓ **Creative Thinker** – Prefers innovative, flexible approaches.

TAKEAWAY

Their strength lies in nurturing strong teams, but they may need to develop more assertiveness and decisiveness when challenges arise.



S/I-Style Leader the Participating Leader

- ✔ Leadership is rooted in building relationships and empowering team
- ✔ Ability to create a positive & safe atmosphere
- ✔ Empathetic and patient
- ✔ Natural charisma & energy and supportive approach

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Leader as Facilitator



THE PARTICIPATIVE LEADER

An I/S-Style leader is a **collaborative and inclusive leader** who focuses on **team harmony and support**. They prioritise **creating a positive team environment where everyone feels valued and heard**.

Unlike more authoritative leaders, I/S leaders see themselves as **facilitators rather than commanders**. They believe that the best results come from **teamwork and mutual respect**, and they are always willing to **listen, encourage, and offer support**.

However, because they prioritise **relationships over confrontation**, they may **struggle with tough decisions or addressing underperformance**. Their **desire to please everyone** can make it difficult for them to **assert authority when necessary**.

KEY TRAITS OF I/S -STYLE LEADER:

- ✔ **Empathetic** – Values people's feelings and well-being.
- ✔ **Team-Oriented** – Encourages collaboration and group decision-making.
- ✔ **Supportive** – Builds strong trust and relationships with their team.
- ✔ **Patient and Understanding** – Takes the time to guide and mentor.

TAKEAWAY

Their strength lies in nurturing strong teams, but they may need to develop more assertiveness and decisiveness when challenges arise.

S-Style Leader



S-Style Leader the Supporting Leader

- ✓ Deeply committed to their teams
- ✓ Authority is often rooted in their experience & expertise
- ✓ Takes time to understand team members' needs
- ✓ Create a sense of security and trust

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Leader as Helper

THE SUPPORTIVE LEADER

An S-Style leader is a **calm, patient, and people-focused leader** who prioritises **stability, trust, and teamwork**. They create a **safe and structured work environment** where employees feel **supported, valued, and included**.

Unlike high-energy or highly authoritative leaders, S-style leaders **lead with empathy and consistency**. They believe that **loyalty and collaboration** are the foundation of strong teams and will go out of their way to **support their team members' growth and well-being**.

However, because they **avoid conflict and sudden change**, they may **struggle with tough decisions or taking bold actions**. Their **desire to maintain harmony** can sometimes lead to **hesitation or reluctance to challenge the status quo**.

KEY TRAITS OF A D/I-STYLE LEADER:

- ✓ **Empathetic and Caring** – Prioritises relationships and well-being.
- ✓ **Consistent and Reliable** – Provides a steady and supportive environment.
- ✓ **Loyal and Team-Oriented** – Values long-term relationships.
- ✓ **Conflict-Averse** – Prefers to mediate rather than confront.

TAKEAWAY

Their strength is in building trust and stability, but they may need to develop more assertiveness and adaptability to navigate change effectively.



S/C-Style Leader the Planning Leader

- ✓ Quiet planners who ensure their teams achieve results
- ✓ Outwardly steady, they provide a sense of stability.
- ✓ Calm demeanour & a strong focus on getting things done correctly
- ✓ Excel in roles requiring precision, consistency, and careful planning

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THE PLANNING LEADER

An S/C-Style Leader is a **meticulous, patient, and structured leader** who **values stability, accuracy, and long-term planning**. They combine the S-style's **warmth and steadiness** with the C-style's **analytical and detail-focused approach**, creating a balanced leadership style that is both **supportive and process-driven**.

These leaders **thrive in well-organised environments**, ensuring that **processes run smoothly and consistently**. They set **clear expectations**, provide **thorough instructions**, and take a **methodical approach to problem-solving**. They are **highly dependable**, and their team members know they can rely on them for **guidance and thoughtful decision-making**.

However, because they **prefer structure and predictability**, they may struggle with **rapid change or high-pressure situations**. Their **desire for perfection and caution can sometimes slow down decision-making**.

KEY TRAITS OF A D/I-STYLE LEADER:

- ✓ **Precise and Organised** – Ensures everything is done methodically.
- ✓ **Patient and Reliable** – Takes a steady, thoughtful approach.
- ✓ **Prefers Predictability** – Can be cautious about change.
- ✓ **Supportive but Structured** – Balances relationships with logical decision-making.

TAKEAWAY

Their strength is in creating structured, well-functioning teams, but they may need to develop more flexibility and quicker decision-making skills in fast-moving environments.



C-Style Leader the Quality Leader

- ✔ Highly focused on delivering exceptional results
- ✔ Authority stems from their expert knowledge, emphasis on quality, and consistency
- ✔ They place importance on compliance and clear expectations.
- ✔ Create an environment of clarity and accountability

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Compliance Leader

THE QUALITY LEADER

A C-Style Leader is a **methodical, detail-focused leader** who believes in **precision, accuracy, and high standards**. They **lead by setting expectations clearly** and ensuring that their team follows best practices.

These leaders **value structure, processes, and thorough planning**, ensuring that everything is done **correctly and efficiently**. They are **not ones for emotional leadership**; instead, they rely on **logic, data, and analysis** to make decisions.

While their **focus on quality and precision is invaluable**, they may **struggle with flexibility and emotional engagement**, sometimes coming across as **too rigid or distant**.

KEY TRAITS OF A D/I-STYLE LEADER:

- ✔ **Detail-Oriented** – Ensures accuracy and high standards.
- ✔ **Logical Thinker** – Makes decisions based on facts and data.
- ✔ **Rule-Focused** – Prefers clear guidelines and structure.
- ✔ **Reserved** – May not be naturally expressive or emotional.

TAKEAWAY

Their strength is in precision and structure, but they may need to develop more flexibility and interpersonal connection to enhance their leadership impact.

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D/C-Style Leader the Power-Centred Leader

- ✔ Thrives on structure, authority, and high standards
- ✔ They prioritise achieving results efficiently and effectively
- ✔ Maintains a formal environment, ensuring goals are met
- ✔ Brings a unique combination of discipline and determination to leadership

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Leader with Authority

THE POWER-CENTRED LEADER

A C/D-Style Leader is a **highly driven, structured leader** who values **authority, order, and performance**. They prefer a **formal leadership approach**, where **rules and expectations are strictly followed**.

They **set very high standards** for themselves and others, expecting their team to **operate with discipline and efficiency**. Their leadership is **firm, systematic, and uncompromising**, ensuring that everything is done **correctly and consistently**.

However, their **strict and logical approach can sometimes feel impersonal**. They may need to **balance their high expectations with a more people-focused approach** to maintain morale and engagement.

KEY TRAITS OF A D/I-STYLE LEADER:

- ✔ **Highly Structured** – Emphasises order and discipline.
- ✔ **Rule-Driven** – Focuses on compliance and efficiency.
- ✔ **Authoritative** – Leads with confidence and control.
- ✔ **Strategic** – Thinks long-term and values logical planning.

TAKEAWAY

D/I leaders are exceptional at leading their teams into the future. Their charisma and vision energise their people, but a little extra focus on planning and execution can take their leadership to the next level.



D/S-Style Leader the Demanding - Systematic Leader

- ✔ Clear & structured leadership
- ✔ Guides their teams methodically to achieve high standards
- ✔ The authority is based on on knowledge and past successes
- ✔ Strong belief in their own expertise

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THE DEMANDING-SYSTEMATIC LEADER

A D/S-Style Leader is a **firm, disciplined leader** who **balances drive with structure and fairness**. They **combine the D-style's ambition and decisiveness** with the S-style's **methodical and people-focused approach**, making them **goal-driven yet practical leaders**.

These leaders are **highly organised, consistent, and strong-willed**. They expect their team to **perform efficiently and follow clear guidelines**, but they are **not reckless or impulsive** like some high-D leaders. They **believe in following a structured plan and maintaining control** over outcomes, ensuring that **results are achieved steadily and reliably**.

However, because they **blend high expectations with a need for order**, they may **struggle with flexibility** and be **less tolerant of ambiguity or improvisation**. Their **direct, no-nonsense style may sometimes come across as too rigid**, especially for teams that thrive on creativity and adaptability.

KEY TRAITS OF A D/I-STYLE LEADER:

- ✔ **Disciplined and Systematic** – Maintains structure while driving results.
- ✔ **Clear Communicator** – Sets firm expectations and follows through.
- ✔ **Hardworking and Reliable** – Leads by example with dedication.
- ✔ **Prefers Predictability** – Values consistency and control.

TAKEAWAY

Their strength lies in structured leadership and steady performance, but they may need to become more open to change and adaptability to keep up with evolving demands.

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I/C-Style Leader the Friendly - Accurate Leader

- ✔ Detail-oriented but people-focused
- ✔ People-focused approach with a strong emphasis on rules, accuracy, and training
- ✔ Leads through coaching and developing team members
- ✔ Prioritises clear explanations, fairness, and accuracy

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THE FRIENDLY-ACCURATE LEADER

An I/C-Style Leader is a **warm yet precise leader** who believes in **guiding others through a combination of encouragement, clear rules, and high standards**. They balance the I-style's **social, people-focused** approach with the C-style's emphasis on **accuracy, structure, and quality**.

These leaders **enjoy explaining the "why"** behind rules and processes, ensuring their team understands both **the importance of standards and how to achieve them**. They are **naturally supportive and approachable**, and they take pride in **mentoring, training, and helping others grow**.

However, because they **care about both relationships and correctness**, they may **struggle with balancing warmth and authority**. They may hesitate to enforce rules too strictly for **fear of damaging relationships**, or they **may over-explain concepts** when a direct approach would be more effective.

KEY TRAITS OF A D/I-STYLE LEADER:

- **Persuasive and motivating:** They energise and inspire their teams.
- **Big-picture thinkers:** They focus on long-term goals and results.
- **Adaptable and forward-looking:** They embrace change and lead with positivity.

TAKEAWAY

Their strength is in guiding and developing others, but they may need to become more decisive and assertive when setting boundaries and enforcing standards.

A photograph of a long, straight asphalt road stretching into the distance. A small white car is visible in the distance on the road. The road is flanked by dry, scrubby vegetation and hills in the background under a clear sky.

From Insight to Impact: Strengthening Your Leadership

Every Extended DISC® leadership style has unique strengths and challenges.

Some leaders inspire with energy and vision, while others lead with logic and precision. Some are relationship-driven, while others focus on results and structure.

There is **no single “best” leadership style** - what matters most is understanding your own leadership tendencies and adapting to different situations. The best leaders know when to lean into their strengths and when to flex outside their comfort zone to bring out the best in their teams.

By **embracing self-awareness and continuous development**, leaders can become more adaptable, effective, and inspiring - no matter their natural style.



Self-Reflection & Action Plan

NOTE

Understanding your Extended DISC® leadership style is just the beginning. The most effective leaders continuously reflect on their behaviours, adapt to their team’s needs, and refine their approach. Use the prompts below to assess your leadership strengths and create a personal action plan for growth.

Step 1: Identify Your Leadership Style

- Which leadership style described in this booklet do you resonate with the most?
- How does your natural behavioural style influence the way you lead?
- Are there situations where you feel particularly confident in your leadership?

Step 2: Recognise Strengths & Development Areas

- What are three key strengths that you bring to your leadership role?
- Are there any behaviours that may create challenges for you or your team?
- How do your leadership strengths align with the needs of your team?



Step 3: Adapt & Grow

- How can you adjust your leadership style to better support those with different Extended DISC® styles?
- What strategies can you use to improve communication with team members who have different behavioural preferences?
- Are there any leadership skills you want to develop further (e.g., delegation, decision-making, coaching)?

Step 4: Set Actionable Goals

- What is one leadership behaviour you will focus on improving in the next month?
- How will you measure your progress?
- Who can support you in your leadership development (e.g., mentor, coach, colleague)?

FINAL THOUGHT

Leadership is not about changing who you are but about understanding your natural strengths and knowing when to adapt. The more self-aware you become, the more effective and impactful your leadership will be.



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