CAPS Study -- A Summary of Personal Styles

This was adapted from: Merrill, David W., Ph.D., and Reid, Roger H., M.A. (1981) Personal Styles and Effective Performance. Bradner, PA: Chilton Book Company

C.A.P.S. PERSONAL STYLE INVENTORY

The following instrument is designed to assess your tendency to behave in a manner consistent with one of the four quadrants in the C.A.P.S. Model. As in any model, such as the C.A.P.S. Model, there may be a tendency to regard them as indicating there is one “better” way to behave. This tendency must be avoided if the Model is to be useful. It is designed to simply illuminate “different” styles of behavior, not to imply that one is superior to others. Please keep this thought in mind as you assess yourself by the results of this instrument.

The following items are arranged in pairs (a and b), and each member of the pair represents a preference you may or may not hold. Rate your preference for each item by giving it a score of 0 to 5 (0 meaning that you really feel negative about it or feel strongly about the other member of the pair, 5 meaning that you strongly prefer it and do not prefer the other member of the pair). The scores for a and b MUST ADD UP TO 5 (0 and 5, 1 and 4, 2 and 3, etc.). Do not use fractions such as 2 1/2.

I PREFER:

1a. ______ making decisions after finding out what others think.
1b. ______ making decisions without consulting others.

2a. ______ being called imaginative or intuitive.
2b. ______ being called factual or accurate.

3a. ______ making decisions about people in organizations based on available data and systematic analysis of situations.
3b. ______ making decisions about people in organizations based on empathy, feelings, and understanding of their needs and values.

4a. ______ allowing commitments to occur if others want to make them.
4b. ______ pushing for definite commitments and ensuring that they are made.

5a. ______ quiet, thoughtful time alone.
5b. ______ active, energetic time with people.

6a. ______ using methods I know well that are effective to get the job done.
6b. ______ trying to think of new methods of doing difficult tasks.

7a. ______ drawing conclusions based on unemotional logic and careful step-by-step analysis.
7b. ______ drawing conclusions based on what I feel and believe about people and life from past experiences.

8a. ______ avoiding making deadlines.
8b. ______ setting a schedule and sticking to it.

9a. ______ talking awhile and then thinking to myself about the subject.
9b. ______ talking freely for an extended period and thinking to myself at a later time.

10a. ______ thinking about possibilities.
10b. ______ dealing with actualities.
11a. ______ being thought of as an exciting person.
11b. ______ being thought of as a feeling person.
12a. ______ considering every possible angle for a long time before making a decision.
12b. ______ getting the information I need, considering it for a while, and then making a fairly quick, firm decision.
13a. ______ inner thoughts and feelings others cannot see.
13b. ______ activities and occurrences in which others join.
14a. ______ the abstract or theoretical.
14b. ______ the concrete of real.
15a. ______ helping others explore their feelings.
15b. ______ helping others make logical decisions.
16a. ______ change and keeping options open.
16b. ______ predictability and knowing in advance.
17a. ______ communicating little of my inner thinking and feelings.
17b. ______ communicating freely my inner thinking and feelings.
18a. ______ possible views of the whole situation.
18b. ______ factual data about each part of a situation.
19a. ______ using common sense and conviction to make decisions.
19b. ______ using data, analysis, and reason to make decisions.
20a. ______ planning ahead based on projections.
20b. ______ planning as necessities arise, just before carrying out plans.
21a. ______ meeting new people.
21b. ______ being alone or with one person I know well.
22a. ______ ideas.
22b. ______ facts.
23a. ______ convictions and beliefs.
23b. ______ verifiable conclusions.
24a. ______ keeping appointments and notes about commitments in notebooks or in appointment books as much as possible.
24b. ______ using notebooks and appointment books as minimally as possible.
25a. ______ discussing a new, unconsidered issue at length in a group.
25b. ______ puzzling out issues in my mind, then sharing the results with another person when I am sure of my answer.
26a. ______ carrying out plans quickly and immediately.
26b. ______ designing plans and structures without necessarily carrying them out.
27a. ______ lively people.
27b. ______ feeling people.
28a. ______ being free to do things on the spur of the moment.
28b. ______ knowing well in advance what I am going or expected to do.
29a. ______ being the center of attention.
29b. ______ being reserved and in the background.
30a. ______ imagining the nonexistent.
30b. ______ examining details of the actual.
31a. ______ experiencing emotional situations, discussions, movies, music, etc.
31b. ______ participating in lively events.
32a. ______ starting meetings punctually at a prearranged time.
32b. ______ starting meetings when all are comfortable or ready.
33a. ______ speaking loudly so that everyone is certain to hear me.
33b. ______ speaking in a low voice so that I don’t stand out.
34a. ______ taking over the leadership of a group when it is poorly organized.
34b. ______ waiting for someone else to lead the group.
35a. ______ being patient when solving people problems or conflicts.
35b. ______ quick solutions to problems or conflicts between people.
36a. ______ that my decisions be carried out without being questioned.
36b. ______ that people question my decisions before acting.
37a. ______ to stay distant from people when I first meet them.
37b. ______ to quickly get to know people very well.
38a. ______ letting people work out the details of plans and goals I give them.
38b. ______ to work with people until plans are very carefully laid out.
39a. ______ that I do most of the talking when working with people on problems.
39b. ______ to let people talk when we are working together.
40a. ______ to use my authority to achieve goals.
40b. ______ to rarely use my authority to get things done with people.
**C.A.P.S. PERSONAL STYLE INVENTORY SCORING SHEET**

INSTRUCTIONS: Transfer your scores for each item of the pair to the appropriate blanks. Be careful to check the a and b letters to be sure you are recording the scores in the right blank spaces. Then total the scores for each dimension in the spaces at the bottom of each column.

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THE C.A.P.S. MODEL

The thrust of this exercise is to expand upon the process described earlier. The exercise provides a way of holding the "why" behind what people do. To a productive manager or supervisor, however, the why of people's action is not as important as the "what." It is far easier to work with people at the level of action than it is at the level of interpersonal motivations. In other words, what we are concerned about as managers is changing what people do, how they behave on the job -- not why they do it. To do this we must interact with people more effectively, and to do that, we must have greater insight into where they are "coming from."

The C.A.P.S. (or CAPS) model is designed to help give some insight into this element of human behavior. There have been many models that seek to simplify and categorize human behavior in a meaningful way. Entire "catalogs" have been created with this goal in mind. An entirely new jargon has been created in an effort to describe the various "styles" that people exhibit. Unfortunately, many of these models have served to merely obfuscate that which they sought to clarify.

In order for a model to be useful, it must be specific enough to be meaningful yet broad enough to be widely applicable. It should also address the issue of behavior styles in a language that is easily understood by everyone. The CAPS model meets these requirements.

THE QUADRANTS OF THE CAPS MODEL

The CAPS Model divides observable behavior into four basic and easily recognizable categories. These categories, or a combination of any two, include nearly everyone and can be readily observed in normal, day-to-day social interplay. The quadrants describe typical "modes of operation" that we all will exhibit on the job and at home.

While quite obviously people can exhibit an infinite range of behaviors, much of the time they will fall into one of the CAPS modes. This will be referred to as their high or primary behavior. Another way of looking at it is that while people may, in any given instance, act in any manner, they will, however, still find it easier to act in certain predictable ways. These might be referred to as "comfort zones." That is, while they are capable of doing things differently than they normally do, it is much easier and "safer" for them to do things in a cheering way. This is particularly true in those situations that people may feel are threatening, unusual, unique, or stressful. And, of course, these are precisely the situations that a manager must handle carefully and wisely, and the ones that usually aren't handled that way. Thus, we see even greater importance being attached to this model.

The four modes of operation, the CAPS quadrants, are:

Controllers   Analyzers        Promoters     Supporters

Each one, with their distinguishing characteristics, is detailed below.

CONTROLLERS

Controllers are often seen as "take charge" people. They are often quite demanding and insistent that things be done "their way." They are usually outgoing socially, and typically are not afraid to speak out or give their opinion on an issue, often unsolicited. They demand fast action from people who work for and with them, often without being willing or able to give real guidance about how they expect those people to accomplish what is demanded of them. They are not afraid to use authority
to get the job done. They will sometimes make quick, shortsighted decisions and statements, and do not apologize easily. They will occasionally overlook the "human elements" in management in pursuit of what they consider important. RESULTS: They are real doers and highly value getting the job done. Their traits magnify under pressure and they can get very intense at times. They greatly fear having their control usurped by those around them and can be very territorial. They don't take criticism gracefully and absolutely detest being pinned down to providing detailed plans of action.

ANALYZERS
The analyzers are the real "thinkers" of the organization. They are logical, rational, linear-sequential types of people. They carefully weigh and consider numerous options before making a decision or acting. While this may sometimes be a strength, it can, if carried too far, also be seen as their greatest weakness. Analyzers are usually socially reserved and tend to be "observers" at social events and group meetings rather than participants. They rarely voice their opinion on an issue unless they are absolutely certain of their position. They tend to be organized, accurate, and very careful of details. They make great planners and forecasters, but many times fail at the task of execution. They highly value concrete plans, goals, objectives, benchmarks, milestones, deadlines, schedules, etc., and demand that proposals be well thought-out and specific. They fear quick decisions and proceeding with what they consider to be insufficient information. As a result, they are often slow to act and miss many opportunities because of it. Analyzers can be difficult to be with because they will often appear to be scrutinizing and assessing you rather than listening to what you have to say.

PROMOTERS
Promoters are usually the "cheerleaders" of organizations. They are enthusiastic, high-energy people who approach tasks with spirit. They tend to look at the "big picture" and as a result can be very sloppy with details and follow-up. They are oriented towards the future, with "what comes next," and because of this, often leave tasks unfinished. They are usually quite creative (sometimes to a fault), and tend to make elaborate, often unworkable, plans. They will often have several projects going on at the same time, some quite successful and others disastrous. They are impatient and will occasionally make great intuitive leaps forward. They can be overly vocal and are, as a rule, very outgoing and personable. They are movers who highly value continuous action. They have a terrible fear of boredom and detest back-tracking.

SUPPORTERS
Supporters are the "people-people" of organizations. They are seen as the "really nice" people that everyone likes and speaks well of. They are empathetic and very considerate of other people's feelings. They can be quite emotional, excitable at times, and feel things very deeply. It is easy to wound these people with a thoughtless comment though they would never let you know. Supporters are warm and easy to be with and are usually good listeners. They are communicators who can receive and send messages with good effect. They will sometimes be overly honest, and open and as a result, can sometimes be embarrassed easily. Many times supporters will be the real leaders of groups, through at first it may not be obvious. They highly value personal relationships and close contact with other people. They fear being alone and are particularly subject to peer pressure. They are also afraid of being taken advantage of, many times with good reason.