

# Supervisor NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program

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## Getting to Know the 4 Colors of Communication

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Social scientists appear to be fond of constantly coming up with new ways to evaluate communication styles, whether it's with the Meyers-Briggs Inventory, the Performax Inventory, or the famously in-depth Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. While the bevy of personality inventories reflects the complexity of humans, it hasn't made it any easier for managers to figure out easy ways to understand their team members.

To help with this task, Rhonda Hilyer, in her book *Success Signals*, has proposed a color system. This color system relates to some general traits that styles of communication tend to fall in, and how the different colors interact and collide with one another. If you're looking for a little direction in understanding your team, identifying their color might just be the place to start.

### The Blue Style

#### COMMUNICATORS

- Tend to embrace sensitive, supportive, relationship-focused communication
- Avoid conflict, seeing it as a threat to cohesion, and not a means to an end
- Tend to make decisions based on how that decision will impact others
- Can bring cohesion and a "human element" to their work groups

### The Green Style

#### COMMUNICATORS

- Tend to be logical, factual, and analytical; being fairly literal thinkers, they operate best by the motto "trust, but verify."
- Approach conflict from an indirect, depersonalized standpoint. They will not start conflicts, and will withdraw from them when possible
- Prefer to not make "a" decision, but the "right" decision
- Can help a group make thoughtful, wise decisions

### The Red Style

#### COMMUNICATORS

- Tend to be creative, fun-loving, and sometimes flamboyant
- Do not mind conflict, and may tend towards rebelliousness or towards high emotionality in conflict
- May make many decisions on a single topic, and have no problem changing their previous decisions
- Can help push a group to explore new ideas, or get out of a thinking "rut"

### The Brown Style

#### COMMUNICATORS

- Tend to be decisive, direct, action-focused, and even authoritarian at times
- Sees conflict as a way to solve problems, and tends to be blunt and unilateral in their approach to conflicts
- Prefers to have facts before making a decision, but can also decide without all the facts present
- Can move goals forward more quickly with their approach

Consider how you might learn more about your team members' specific styles. Try **observing** the words they use, or their general demeanor and affect on others when they speak to you or others on their team. **Ask** questions in a way that speaks to their primary

style. Knowing how to use your color palette will help you be a better leader in your organization!

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