

## **Phone Skills Still Vital for Business Success (Part II)**

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In addition to the professional phone image I discussed in Part I, it is also vital to be able to read people over the phone to increase your chances for personal and business success. Using the leading-edge DISC (Dominant, Influencing, Steady and Conscientious) communication styles, I'll help you recognize the other person's natural communication style so you know how to respond. It works even better when both of you are cognizant of each other's style.

The principle is simple: When you communicate naturally you may be naturally conflictive with others. Since your pace and priority may differ from the other person, you can run into roadblocks as you play the roles of "sender" and "receiver" on the phone. This information is helpful in two major ways as you learn to:

- Adapt and flex your own style when you find yourself "guilty" of any of the less-than-effective communication techniques that follow.
- Adapt and flex to the other person's style when s/he is determined to keep on communicating naturally with little regard to how it affects the outcome.

### **How to Recognize Dominant People on the Telephone**

Their blunt, confident, decisive, direct, impatient and take-charge style leads them to:

- Choose time/date/place to meet.
- Think and speak quickly.
- Dislike interruptions, yet interrupt frequently.
- Get right to the point, may bypass "hello".
- Have a clear purpose in mind ahead of time and speak in bullet style.
- Speak authoritatively and powerfully.

### **How to Respond to "Ds" on the Telephone**

- Be clear and succinct.
- Be immune to their brusqueness.
- Don't give details, unless asked.
- End the conversation when they appear to quit responding; undoubtedly, their attention span has waned.
- Plug your remarks into their goals.
- Summarize, summarize, summarize.

### **How to Recognize Influencing People on the Telephone**

Their enthusiastic, optimistic, energetic style leads them to:

- Begin with an upbeat "hello".
- Hold side conversations with another person in office/at home while talking on phone; may have radio and/or TV on, too.
- Show wide range of emotions through rate, pitch, tone, rhythm, inflection.
- Speak faster and faster as excitement mounts.
- Talk about weather, the weekend, vacations, whatever - before getting down to business.

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### **How to Respond to high “Is” on the Telephone**

- Ask them to repeat if they speak too quickly during an outburst.
- End the conversation - even if they called you.
- Respond quickly when given a chance to speak.
- Set a timer beforehand.
- Try to get in more than “hello”.
- If a business call, keep steering them back to topic at hand.

### **How to Recognize Steady People on the Telephone**

Their amicable, cooperative, harmonious tendencies may lead them to:

- Begin with a warm “hello”.
- Convey a calm, friendly environment.
- Listen well.
- Personify good customer service.
- Speak slowly and carefully.
- Think before speaking; be comfortable with long pauses.

### **How to Respond to “Ss” on the Telephone**

- Be amicable and sincere.
- Don’t demand or push.
- Ask about their family.
- End the conversation if you are the caller.
- Provide information slowly, methodically.
- Refrain from unloading on them; they will listen politely until you’re done.
- Don’t finish their sentences, even when they take a while to convey their thoughts.

### **How to Recognize Conscientious People on the Telephone**

Their cautious, precise and reserved qualities may lead them to:

- Begin formally: “Good morning, Ms. Bjorseth. This is Jean Doe. I am returning your call from Friday.”
- Critique and analyze what you have said before responding; be comfortable with long, silent periods.
- Give you facts rather than opinions.
- “Observe” your tone and words to get the meaning.

### **How to Respond to “Cs” on the Telephone**

- Allow them time to analyze, and refrain from filling the silence.
- Avoid small talk.
- Don’t ask personal questions, and keep your personal affairs to yourself.
- Have facts in order before you call.
- Use their titles - Dr., Mr., Ms. - unless well acquainted.

People respond much better when spoken with in their style, even if it makes you more uncomfortable in the short run. You can return to your natural style when you hang up. Your desire to return to your natural style, in fact, can speed up the call and save you time. When you are talking with Influencing people, you will likely have to

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expend extra effort to speed up the call! Like that famous bunny, they can go on and on and on.

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**Lillian Bjorseth was among the first people in the world to be certified as a DiSC® trainer by Inscape Publishing. She has helped tens of thousands of people in often life-changing ways and can prepare customized applications for your boards of directors, management and employees and sales staffs to improve communication, productivity and profitability. Her published works include *Breakthrough Networking: Building Relationships That Last*, *52 Ways to Break the Ice & Target Your Market* and the *Nothing Happens Until We Communicate* CD/workbook series. [lillianspeaks@duoforce.com](mailto:lillianspeaks@duoforce.com), [www.duoforce.com](http://www.duoforce.com), 630-983.5308**

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