



## Using DISC Personality Profiles to Hire Better Staff and Better Manage Your Existing Staff

By Kevin Lawrence, Business Coach ([www.CoachKevin.com](http://www.CoachKevin.com))

Wouldn't you love it if there was a sure fire, 100 per cent accurate tool that would guarantee hiring only the most suitable staff? Well, even though I would love to find it, I do not know of such a perfect device. But I will share with you highly effective tools for helping you make better, more informed hiring and management decisions.

### Introducing DISC personality profiling...

The DISC system has been around for decades and was first introduced by Dr. William Moulton Marston, an American psychologist, and author of *The Emotions of Normal People* (1928).

The idea was to find the similarities in different personalities that could be measured and predicted, giving insights into which candidates may be best suited to a position. For example, if you are looking to hire another accounting clerk at your company, are not sure where to start and do not want to make another costly hiring mistake, consider using the DISC system. DISC profiling allows you to profile your best existing accounting staff to create a benchmark which will be used to compare future hires for suitability. As well, there are tools you can use to define the role and the ideal candidate from scratch. Either way, you come up with a specific profile of what you are looking for.

When you are interviewing, you can then require the top three to five candidates to complete a personality profile. Next compare their personality traits with those you are looking for in the position. The best part of a DISC personality profile is that it will help you get a highly accurate perspective of candidates' work and behavioural styles. It is very hard (if not impossible) to fool the DISC instrument.

The key here is that there are no good or bad personality traits, it is just a matter of what a person is naturally like. Obviously, if we were all the same, things would not work well. Ideally, you will learn to appreciate your differences and use them to their greatest effect. See the example on page three "*Hiring a New Accounting Technician.*"

### What DISC Stands For

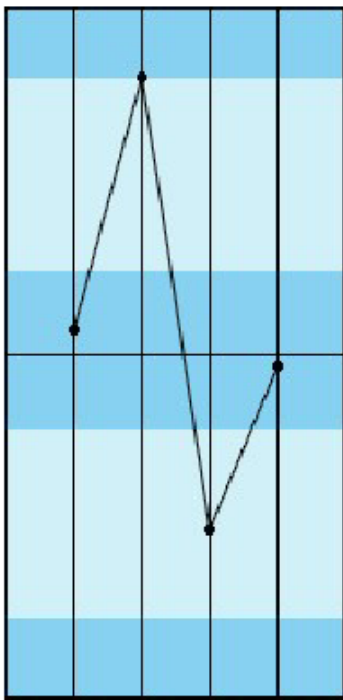
- D – DOMINANCE** This scale measures the aggressiveness (or lack of) in the candidate. For example, most technicians score low (passive on this scale) and most entrepreneurs score high (aggressive).
- I – INFLUENCE** This scale measures a personal tendency and ability to influence others verbally. Again, accounting technicians tend to be low on this scale and entrepreneurs and salespeople tend to be high.
- S – STEADY** This scale measures a person's likelihood to work in a steady consistent manner. Accounting technicians tend to be mid to high (steady and consistent) on this scale, whereas entrepreneurs tend to be low (fast paced) on this scale.

**C – COMPLIANT** You know this one – this measures a person’s likelihood to follow established rules...you guessed it... an accounting technician tends to be high (some 100%) and entrepreneurs very low.

For example, a person with high “I” and low “C” is likely great at building relationships and getting work done fast, but may do sloppy work. In contrast a low “I” and high “C” person is just the opposite – they both make great team members if they are in the right position and can learn to appreciate their differences.

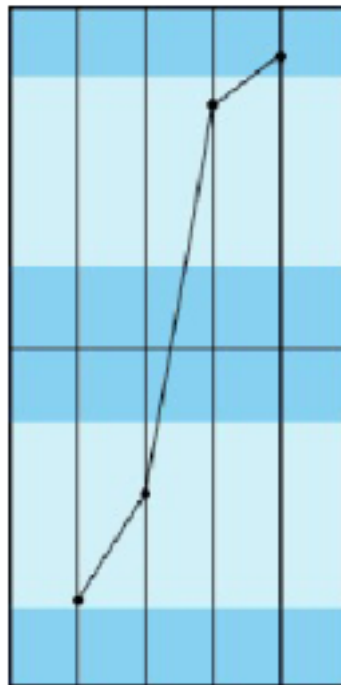
**Entrepreneur**

**D I S C**



**Accountant**

**D I S C**



*The above charts are generalization and not true for all people.*

Many entrepreneurs have a DISC profile like the one above: people orientated, aggressive, fast paced, not so concerned with the rules...maybe you know one! A typical accounting clerk is almost the opposite – you can see why it is tough for them to work well together sometimes.

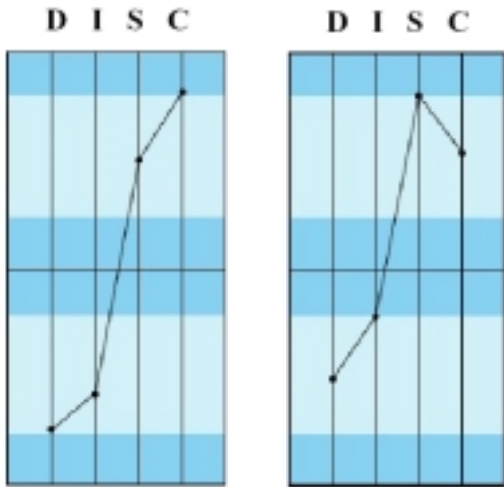
Interestingly, in many personal relationships, the same is true...opposites attract.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

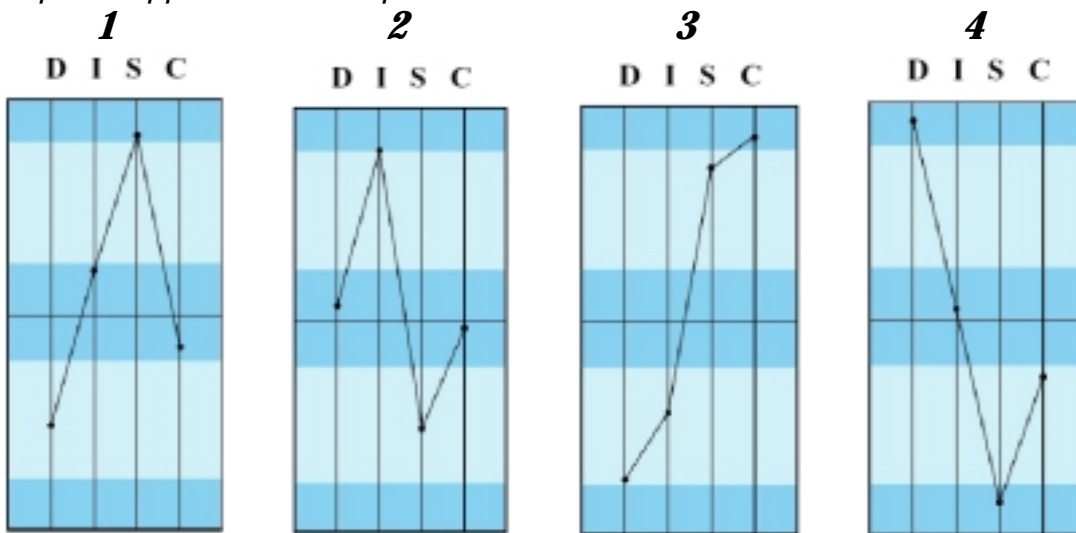
*A DISC profile is a tool to help guide you in a hiring decision and does not make a decision or recommendation for you. It is a tool to use in conjunction with your existing interviewing tools, checking references and your gut feel or intuition, etc.*

**Example: Hiring a New Accounting Technician**

Profiles of your best two existing accounting clerks:



Top four applicants for the position



As you can see, of all the candidates, number three is the most similar to the existing employees. This does not guarantee they are going to be the best person for the job. It means they will have a similar work and behaviour style to your existing clerks. Based on personality profiling, it is more likely that if all other factors are the same, candidate number three could perform most like the existing clerks profiled above.



Let us look at how the existing accounting technicians are similar:

- D – DOMINANCE** Both are lower on this scale (approx 15-25%) and would be considered more passive, modest, mild, and agreeable
- I – INFLUENCE** Both are lower (approx 2-40%) and are less people orientated, cautious, calculating and skeptical
- S – STEADY** Both existing clerks are between 75 and 95% steady and would be considered patient, passive and resistant to change.
- C – COMPLIANT** Again, both clerks in this case are highly compliant (approx 75-95%) and would be considered cautious, conventional and careful.

So, as you might agree, these traits make for a great accounting technician. A simple analysis of each of the candidates in relation to the traits of the existing accounting clerks produces the following:

- Candidate 1** is similar on the D and S scale, but is different in the I and C scale. This person is likely more social (higher I scale) as well as less compliant and not as likely to follow set rules and procedures (lower on C scale).
- Candidate 2** is almost the opposite of the existing two clerks. This person would be described as people-orientated, fast paced, driven, and independent – more like a person running a company than an accounting technician. This does not imply that they could not do the job, they just would not use their natural strengths or gifts.
- Candidate 3** is very similar to the two existing staff. Again, this does not guarantee they will be an excellent employee. Other interviewing techniques, your instinct, and background checks can help you make a decision from here. Based on their profile, this is someone to consider seriously for the position. In the detailed report that comes with DISC profile reports, there are suggested areas to look out for as well as optional interview questions to use.
- Candidate 4** is a classic Type A personality — someone that would likely be aggressively running a company. This person would be described as demanding, sociable, hypersensitive and opinionated. Not ideal for this position at all. They are a powerhouse and can also be a bull in a china shop, demanding and forcefully getting things done at the expense of others!

In the DISC reports there are many more deeper and detailed insights to help you understand the people you are looking at hiring or managing. This is also an excellent tool for managing the conflict or dynamics between partners in a business or accounting practice. I have seen many partnerships with profiles like the four listed above. As you can imagine, there can be combinations that are powerful and others that are downright explosive!

### **How to Use DISC Profiles for Staff Management**

All DISC profiling systems generate written reports with specific tips on the strengths and weaknesses of the person as well as tips to best manage the person.



In one example, a client of mine was frustrated with the performance of a key employee and did not know what to do. After reviewing the employee's profile, it was absolutely clear that they would respond best to specific additional training. With that insight, my client provided the training required and the employee's performance increased immediately. Issue resolved.

In another example, a partner in a firm was frustrated with another partner. "Why can't he just take more initiative?" my client asked. Upon reviewing the profile, my client found that their partner had the profile of someone who followed the lead rather than taking it. He realized he was barking up the wrong tree and if he wanted this partner to take more on, he had to work with him in specific ways to make things change.

### **For Business or Personal Use**

The key here is that personality profiles are invaluable as a hiring and management tool. With each person I coach, a current DISC profile is mandatory because they are so rich in information and insights as to how a person operates. And because our personality stems from who we are, personality profiling has great value in our private life too!

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### **Learn more about using DISC profiling as a tool in your company or complete your own profile**

If you need five or fewer personality profile reports and/or help understanding and using the information from them, contact Janice at my office at 604-313-2229 ext.1 or by email at [Janice@CoachKevin.com](mailto:Janice@CoachKevin.com).

For 10 or more reports and more information on Discus products, please visit [www.axiomssoftware.com](http://www.axiomssoftware.com). To view an actual Discus Online account, please visit [www.discusonline.com](http://www.discusonline.com) and click **browse**. For more information on DISC itself, please visit [www.discusonline.com/udisc](http://www.discusonline.com/udisc) and [www.discusonline.com/dalg](http://www.discusonline.com/dalg).

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**Kevin Lawrence is a business coach and speaker**, who works with accountants & entrepreneurs to help them create their personal version of an "Ideal Business" and achieve the balance, fulfillment and other results they desire in an "Outrageous Quality of Life."

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