

WHITE PAPER

Understanding DISC :

How talent and behavioural assessments unlock the hidden drivers of collaboration, engagement, and business success.

Just because your team doesn't all work the same way doesn't mean they're broken. They're just wired differently.

As an organisation grows, so does complexity. As the team expands, miscommunication, misaligned decisions, and overall operational frustration often increase as well. This is usually not due to a team's lack of talent or commitment, but because they simply approach work differently. Most leadership challenges are not rooted in strategy or skill gaps; they stem from how people communicate, respond to pressure, and work together.

Business leaders are often eager to fix processes, restructure roles, or add training when performance lags. But the underlying issue often lies within behaviours and communication. Understanding how people naturally operate and how those differences show up in daily interactions creates clarity and opportunity for improved engagement.

DISC assessments provide leaders with a practical framework for understanding these behavioural differences. DISC helps explain patterns of communication, decision making, and collaboration that directly impact performance. When leaders understand these patterns, they can lead more intentionally, reduce friction, and bring out the best in everyone on their team.

This white paper explores what DISC is, how it works, what insights it provides, and how organisations use this powerful tool to strengthen leadership, improve teamwork, and drive better results.



How a DISC Assessment Works

At first glance, a DISC assessment can feel deceptively simple. Most DISC assessments consist of a series of short questions or statements that require you to choose which options feel most and least like you. The questions might feel arbitrary or repetitive, but that's intentional. DISC does not measure skills, intelligence, or experience, rather it identifies behavioural patterns, then categorises and quantifies them.

What to Expect When Taking the Assessment

DISC assessment questions are straightforward and designed to be answered quickly. You are encouraged not to overthink your responses and there are no right or wrong answers. The goal of the Q&A is to identify a person's instinctive behaviour rather than what they believe their ideal behaviour should be.

Most assessments generally take 20-30 minutes to complete.



Why Simplicity Matters

Behavioural tendencies operate largely below conscious awareness. Overthinking responses when taking a DISC assessment can distort results by reflecting one's aspirations for certain behaviours or reactions rather than the reality of how these factors manifest themselves.

DISC results are most accurate when people answer honestly and instinctively.



Understanding Your DISC Report

Upon completion of the assessment, a detailed DISC Report is generated. While the amount of detail gleaned from such seemingly simple questions and answers might feel voluminous, the information is remarkably accurate and reliable, and offers understanding into the individual's communication styles, strengths, and potential blind spots. These insights help explain why this person approaches work the way they do, how they are apt to respond under pressure, and how they are likely perceived by others.

Rather than focusing solely on personality traits, DISC reports emphasise behavioural styles, which are observable actions and tendencies that show up in one's daily interactions. This distinction is important because behaviour can be understood, anticipated, and adapted, which can enhance communication and connection when dealing with oneself and others.

Foundational to every DISC report are four core behavioural factors that comprise the DISC acronym and that are rated, charted, and colour coded. Understanding these four elements of DISC is key to unlocking the true value of a DISC assessment.

The DISC Framework Explained

A DISC assessment measures how a person approaches work, interacts with others, and handles obstacles based on their natural tendencies. DISC profiles are based on four behavioural factors: **Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Compliance, each on a scale of 1-100**. By quantifying one's proclivity for each of these factors, DISC reveals a person's natural work style, communication preferences, and how they approach challenges and collaboration. While some of these factors can be very dominant, everyone possesses elements of all four DISC traits. For example, a person may score very high in Dominance and Influence but will still exhibit some measure of Steadiness and Compliance behaviours in certain situations. The following are the four factors further explained:

DOMINANCE (D)

Dominance reflects how a person approaches challenges, decision making, and results. High D individuals are often direct, decisive, and focused on outcomes. They value efficiency, take charge quickly, and are comfortable with risk.

INFLUENCE (I)

Influence reflects how a person interacts with others and expresses enthusiasm. High I individuals are outgoing, persuasive, and relationship oriented. They energise teams, generate ideas, and communicate with optimism.

STEADINESS (S)

Steadiness reflects how a person responds to pace, consistency, and collaboration. High S individuals are dependable, patient, and supportive. They value harmony, stability, and teamwork.

COMPLIANCE (C)

Compliance reflects how a person approaches structure, accuracy, and quality. High C individuals are analytical, detail oriented, and methodical. They value correctness, data, and well defined processes.

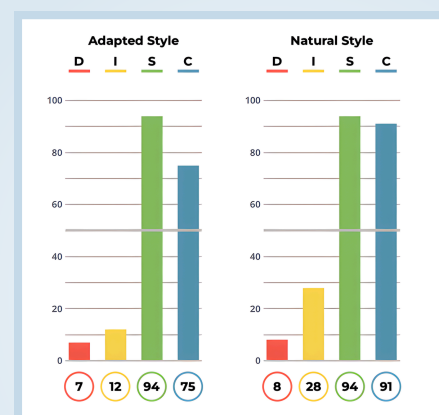
Natural vs. Adapted Styles

Most DISC reports display results in two charts:

Natural Style: How a person behaves instinctively.

Adapted Style: How a person adjusts behaviour based on role, environment, or certain expectations.

You can see in this bar graph how DISC factors are reflected.



Individual and Team Reports

In addition to individual reports, many DISC providers also offer team reports that combine and contextualise the assessment results of multiple employees. These reports include both individual insight and how members of the team work together. By analysing the collective behavioural patterns of a group, team reports provide insights into potential communication gaps, complementary strengths, possible friction points, and opportunities for better understanding and collaboration.

Rather than guessing why certain interactions feel effortless while others are stressful or ineffective, a team report allows business leaders and their teams to better discern behavioural dynamics at play. Team reports reveal who drives decisions, who influences momentum, who ensures stability, and who safeguards quality, as well as how all the players work best together. This insight makes it easier to align roles, improve collaboration, and intentionally design how work gets done.

For organisations looking to improve team performance, reduce misunderstandings, or strengthen cross functional collaboration, DISC team reports provide clarity and cross organisational actionability that individual reports alone cannot offer.



A Day in the Life of DISC Behaviours & Communication Styles

To gain a better understanding of the different DISC styles and how those behaviours manifest in a real world setting, let's take a look at a hypothetical business team that completed DISC assessments. While DISC is gauged on a spectrum of all four characteristics, each member of this team had very high scores in a particular style:



At their team meeting, Deon announces a new product that he is excited to get off the ground. His goal is to launch in the next 60 days. Deon directs the team, “Inez, we need an effective marketing strategy STAT. Sam, get the team ready to run. And CiCi, can you generate our sales projections by end of day tomorrow?”

Inez is excited by the news and immediately starts brainstorming buzz worthy, and perhaps costly, marketing ideas. She naturally has an idea. “That influencer we contracted with last year would be a fantastic campaign partner!”

Sam speaks up and says that he will ensure an even distribution of workload amongst the team. “I’ll check in regularly with R&D, and also confirm that we are adequately staffed. I really don’t want anyone to feel overwhelmed.”

CiCi quietly offers, “I can pull data and work with my accounting team on determining the ROI on Inez’s influencer, but I will need several days to ensure it is accurate.” While Deon would like this information tomorrow, he understands this might not be a reasonable expectation and admires CiCi’s commitment to precision. “The sooner the better,” he replies. “But I trust you.”

Thanks to DISC, the team finds comfort and clarity as they move forward with the company’s new product. They leverage everyone’s known strengths, communicate better, and navigate challenges more effectively, leading to a smooth, collaborative, and successful launch.

Our Preferred DISC Assessment Provider:



The Alternative Board has partnered with TTI Success Insights, a global leader in research backed psychometric assessments, since 1998. As a foundational part of their engagement, every The Alternative Board Member receives a TTI Talent Insights Assessment and is debriefed by their business coach on what the data means and how to leverage DISC to elevate communication, leadership skills, and overall organisational success.

TTI's DISC assessment is scientifically validated through neuroscience research and continuous improvement. The company offers an impressive suite of assessments or sciences that meet the scientific threshold for evidence collection, study, and validation. These include:

[DISC \(Behaviours\)](#), [12 Driving Forces \(Motivation\)](#), [EQ \(Emotional Intelligence\)](#), [DNA \(Competencies\)](#), and [ACI \(Judgement\)](#).

The Alternative Board Members are so impressed with the insights gained from their own TTI Talent Insights and DISC reports that many of them choose to leverage assessments to enhance their inter office communication, support leadership development initiatives, and act as an essential element in their business's hiring process.

The Alternative Board is a global organisation operating in more than 27 countries, so we greatly value that TTI offers assessments in 48 languages. TTI has also been named Training Industry Top 20 Assessment & Evaluation Company every year for the last six years.

The Alternative Board continues its partnership with TTI because we believe they are the best, most comprehensive DISC and Talent Insights provider in the industry.

[Click here to learn more about TTI Success Insights.](#)



The Alternative Board (TAB) offers a **[Comprehensive Suite of Services](#)** that meets business owners where they are at and helps them advance to where they want to be. From **Peer Advisory Boards and Private Business Coaching to Leadership and Management Development Programs**, The Alternative Board provides business owners and C levels with the tools they need to navigate complexity, solve real world challenges, and build stronger, more resilient organisations.

[Click here to learn how The Alternative Board can help propel you and your business to greater success.](#)