

Recognise people styles and grow your dental practice

By Nathan Chanesman



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Dentistry is a people business. It’s about interacting with patients, staff and suppliers. Like most professions, the art of interacting and reading peoples’ styles is totally overlooked by the universities and other teaching institutions.

For centuries, scientists have recognised that we each, although different, fit into certain personality styles. We regularly behave in a consistent manner. It’s a habit that is hard wired into our being from a very early age. It’s what defines us as a person. Ancient Greeks believed it was the temperature and speed of a persons blood and today we still use terms originating over 2000 years ago when we say someone is “hot blooded” or “cold blooded”.

We all act out of character from time to time. We can get angry and stress will often cause our persona to change. Interestingly, when we do, our friends who know us can spot our different moods. If we are conservative and usually reserved and we end up dancing on the table, our friends will say “what’s got into you”? On the other hand if we’re loud, talkative and the life of the party and our friends see us as quiet, they say “what’s the matter, you’re not your usual self”?

These style differences can be classified into four major style groups. These are Drivers, Promoters, Supporters and Analysers. We all comprise of each of the four styles. We are a little bit of every style, however one or two styles are more dominant. The style most dominant defines the way we act most of the time.

Here’s a summary of the four personality styles:

Drivers are self-motivated achievers with a desire to win and get results. They want to be in control and in charge. They are the aspirers, the entrepreneurs willing to take risks. Drivers are strong willed and assertive.

Promoters are fast-paced expressive people who are approachable and competitive. They enjoy working with others and appreciate attention. They are inspirers and will motivate others to succeed. They are talkative and enthusiastic and have a gift of working with people.

Supporters are dependable, practical and kind people who are ready to help when asked. They enjoy being part of the team though not necessarily taking the limelight for their achievements. Supporters are family oriented and keep the world running.

Analysers are perfectionists who seek systems, rules and order within a structured environment. They take their time and read all the details before making a decision. They are accurate, precise, and logical, and are talented problem solvers.

Discover your style and people will listen to you

Knowing your personal style is vital to your success with others. You cannot do it alone and so need to work with colleagues and staff, You need to purchase from suppliers and you need patients to treat otherwise you don’t have a business.

The key is to recognise the styles of others and modifying your style to ensure your communication is heard and understood. Each style communicates in different ways. You could say each person speaks a different language. Your language is statistically different to 75% of the people you meet, so you need to recognise this and adapt your presentation to be in tune with their style requirements.

Dealing with patients

This is critical when dealing with patients, when giving a case presentation or getting treatment acceptance. Your results will significantly

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improve if you present your case in a way that is most likely to end in a positive response.

As an example, if a patient has a Promoter style and you were recommending a treatment based on facts, costs and historical data, you’d probably fail. When presenting to a patient with a Promoter style you need to focus on outcomes. How good they’ll look, show them the work you’ve done on other patients. If you’ve treated a celebrity, tell them.

They want to know because Promoters make decisions based on gut feel and emotion and, what it will do for them. It’s not about the cost, it’s about the outcome and the pleasure they’ll receive from the compliments they’ll get. Present smarter for greater success.

Smart practices will train their staff to recognise the different styles patients have from the conversations they have over the phone and during their visits. You don’t need to be a psychologist to do this. Identifying each of the four primary styles is not difficult. I teach it all the time.

Do you really know your staff?

I always ask the question: “how many of your problems would disappear if you had the right people in the job and they all got along”? The answer I get is a resounding MOST.

To become a cohesive well-disciplined team, each member should understand how they relate to the others. Each should know their style and the style type of their colleagues. Once staff learn about each other and what makes them tick, the light comes on. It’s an enlightening experience for both the Dentist and their team to discover their styles and why they act the way they do. Once this is known, staff can adapt and each functions more positively. They realise it’s not about “them”, it’s about the way other people like to function, act and behave.

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What style is a dentist?

Let’s look at the style the dentist is most likely to be. Dentists as a group are precise organised people, good with instruments and who have a high attention to detail. They stick to proven procedures and take pride in their craft. The dentist is typically an Analyser style.

There are four types of Analysers. Those who are direct no nonsense people who are comfortable with facts and figures but not strong in social skills. They cut to the chase, are competitive, results driven, don’t like wasting time and they want things done now. They are Analyser Driver dentists.

Dentists who have high social skills, interact well with people, are chatty and enthusiastic are Analyser Promoter styles.

The Dentist who likes to get along with every one, is not demanding, avoids arguments, is a caring person with strong family commitment, is very cautious and doesn’t like change or surprises, is an Analyser Supporter type.

Finally there’s the type of dentists who focuses on the detail, is precise and compliant, is proud of their technical skills and craftsmanship, is the kind of person who is not hurried, who wants to do it once and do it right. This dentist reads all the literature and asks lots of questions and does not want to take a risk or take a chance on anything. This dentist is a 100% Analyser!

About the author

Nathan Chanesman conducts workshops on “reading people styles” and “relationship selling”. He is a published author on relationship marketing and teaches sales people how to improve their effectiveness by improving their people skills. Nathan is co-founder and CEO of Myprofile, an online personality assessment service. His company Employnow is a specialist recruiter assisting dental supply companies find the right people. He can be contacted on 0418-100-012 or nathan@employnow.com.au