

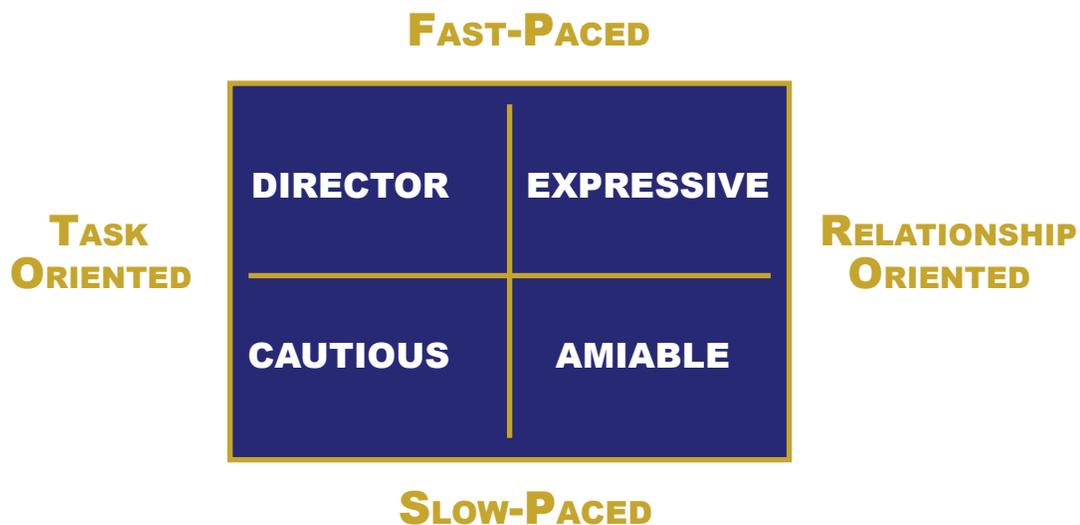


## Effective Communication Strengthens Partnerships

One of the most frequent complaints in business revolves around communication. It seems that everyone feels like the company mushroom. They don't know anything and are kept in the dark about everything. While no situation is ever that severe, it is one of the most commonly cited reasons for ineffectiveness in partnerships. There are four keys to understanding how to communicate more effectively. To do so we must recognize that:

- ▶ People communicate in different ways
- ▶ To understand others, we must first understand our method/style of communication
- ▶ Communicating with others in their dominant style of communication improves the effectiveness of our communication
- ▶ The over use of any strength limits communication

Once we understand the four dominant styles of communication, we can automatically begin to utilize the four keys identified above. The four dominant communication styles are depicted in the diagram below and explained following the diagram.



**1. Cautious (Task Oriented and Slow Paced)**

- ▶ Prefers to talk about the business situation at hand
- ▶ Has little or no interest in making small talk
- ▶ Does not like to feel pushed into making a quick decision
- ▶ Equates quick decision with wrong decision or a mistake
- ▶ Likes to have and analyze all details prior to making a decision
- ▶ Wants a lot of data to validate/justify the decision
- ▶ Loves accuracy

**2. Amiable (Relationship Focused and Slow Paced)**

- ▶ Takes time to develop personal relationships
- ▶ Does not like to feel pushed into making a quick decision
- ▶ Prefers small talk before addressing the business issue at hand
- ▶ Appreciates someone taking the time to develop a personal relationship
- ▶ Likes information to be given verbally, face-to-face is best
- ▶ Sees themselves as a team player, as do their peers
- ▶ Is usually very agreeable

**3. Expressive (Relationship Focused and Fast Paced)**

- ▶ Takes time to develop personal relationships
- ▶ Tends to have a strong out-going personality
- ▶ Likes to tell stories based upon personal experiences
- ▶ Prefers summary of key points instead of lengthy explanations
- ▶ Likes stimulating conversations that are engaging
- ▶ Generally makes decisions quickly based upon relationships

**4. Director (Task Oriented and Fast Paced)**

- ▶ Wants to get down to business right away
- ▶ Values efficiency
- ▶ Prefers summary of key points instead of lengthy explanations
- ▶ Will sometimes ask a lot of questions based upon the facts
- ▶ Tends to make decisions quickly based upon the facts presented
- ▶ Is more interested in getting the job done than becoming your friend

Almost everyone shares some of the characteristics of each style, but we all have a dominant style that we use for the majority of our communication. To communicate more effectively, we must first identify our dominant style. Then identify the dominant style of the partner to whom we wish to communicate more effectively, and determine which style components that we have in common. Those components are maintained and can even be strengthened for this communication. Look for ways to better our communication through the components of our partner's communication style that are not common with our style. One or two changes to accommodate their preferred communication style will significantly improve our communication. Once the style differences are identified, it is much easier to approach the communication effectively.