

PREFERRED DECISION-MAKING STYLES

We each have our own preferred style of decision making. Each style is prone to certain habits in making decisions. Knowing your style, and being aware of the pitfalls of each style, is an important step in becoming a leader—and helping build the skills of the people around you.

The Straight Talk® system of communication styles (<https://GoStraightTalk>) that I developed in 1995 can give you insights into your preferred style of decision making. Each of the four primary styles favors a certain approach to making decisions.



Each of these styles prefers to make decisions a certain way.

- **Directors make decisions quickly.** They aren't afraid to take risks. They tend to see the big picture rather than the details, so like making long-term decisions.
- **Expressers like to brainstorm.** They're outgoing and creative. They don't mind taking risks. They tend to think "out of the box" more than others might like.
- **Thinkers focus on details.** They prefer to make decisions carefully, after considering all the implications of each option. They like to focus on solving one problem at a time and consider each step logically, making lists of exactly what needs to be done.
- **Harmonizers like to do what's good for the team.** Harmonizers don't like to rock the boat or upset the status quo. They want to fix the problem, but do it in such a way that no one's feelings get hurt.

Naturally, each of these styles prefers certain kinds of decision. Directors like decisions that focus on big strategic issues. Thinkers like to solve problems. Expressers like brainstorming. Harmonizers like decisions that focus on helping people work together better.

Understanding each of these styles will help you manage decisions well. For example, in any kind of decision-making process, it helps to have a balance of all four styles. Too many Directors and Expressers in a room can result in a lot of loud voices and conflict. Too many Thinkers and Harmonizers in the room can result in analysis paralysis. As in anything, the art lies in finding the proper mix and balance.

Taking it to the next level, each individual should become aware of his or her style and learn how to flex that style according to the situation. I'm not talking about behaving in a way that's uncomfortable for you. But if a Director can exercise more patience, if an Expresser can listen more, if a Thinker can be more open to hearing out of the box options, and if the Harmonizer can be more open to change, this is a major step toward building trust.

Discover your communication style at <https://GoStraightTalk>.

Learn more about building trust in my new book, [*The Leadership Equation: 10 Practices That Build Trust, Spark Innovation, and Create High-Performing Organizations*](#).