Decision-Style Inventory[1]

There are several decision making styles, and knowing which style you use naturally can help you understand how to use your style best in certain situations, or gain counsel from other people in other situations. Read the instructions below, complete the assessment carefully, and then review your results.

Instructions:

- Answer each question in every line.

- Use the following numbers to answer each statement in each line: 1, 2, 4, and 8

- 1 represents the LEAST and 8 represents the MOST.

- Each box following the answers to each question must contain a number.

- DO NOT repeat any number on a given line. You must force-rank each statement using only 1, 2, 4 or 8.

    o Example: An answer for one row might be 8, 2, 1, 4

    o Notice that each number has been used only once in the answer for a given question.

- In answering the questions, think of how you NORMALLY act in a particular context. Most people choose work as the context for this assessment.

- Stick to one context (either work OR family life), because people's styles often differ between contexts.

- Use the first number that comes to your mind when answering the question. DO NOT dwell on any item.

- There is no time limit in answering the questions and there are no right or wrong answers

- Your responses should reflect how you feel about the questions and what you prefer to do, not what you think might be the right thing to do.
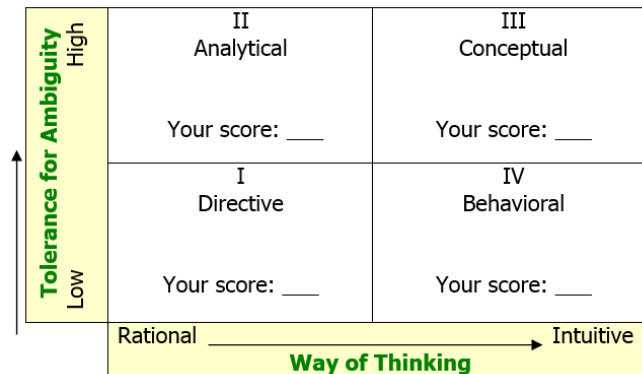
ASSESSMENT ON NEXT PAGE

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[1] Rowe, A. J., Mason, R. and Kickel, K. (1982). Strategic Management and Business Policy. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley

#	Question	I		II		III		IV	
1	**My prime objective is to:**	Have a position with status		Be the best in my field		Achieve recognition for my work		Feel secure in my job	
2	**I enjoy jobs that:**	Are technical and well defined		Have considerable variety		Allow independent action		Involve people	
3	**I expect people working for me to be:**	Productive and fast		Highly capable		Committed and responsible		Responsive to suggestions	
4	**In my job, I look for**	Practical results		The best solutions		New approaches or ideas		Good working environment	
5	**I communicate best with others:**	In a direct one-to-one basis		In writing		By having a group discussion		In a formal meeting	
6	**In my planning, I emphasize:**	Current problems		Meeting objectives		Future goals		Developing people's careers	
7	**When faced with solving a problem, I:**	Rely on proven approaches		Apply careful analysis		Look for creative approaches		Rely on my intuition and feelings	
8	**When using information, I prefer:**	Specific facts		Accurate and complete data		Broad coverage of many options		Limited data which is easily understood	
9	**When I am not sure about what to do I:**	Rely on intuition		Search for facts		Look for a possible compromise		Wait before making a decision	
10	**Whenever possible I avoid:**	Long debates		Incomplete work		Using numbers or formulas		Conflict with others	
11	**I am especially good at:**	Remembering dates and facts		Solving difficult problems		Seeing many possibilities		Interacting with others	
12	**When time is important, I**	Decide and act quickly		Follow plans and priorities		Refuse to be pressured		Seek guidance or support	
13	**In social settings, I generally:**	Speak with others		Think about what is being said		Observe what is going on		Listen to the conversation	
14	**I am good at remembering**	People's names		Places we met		People's faces		People's personality	
15	**The work I do provides me:**	The power to influence others		Challenging assignments		Achieving my personal goals		Acceptance by the group	
16	**I work well with those who are:**	Energetic and ambitious		Self confident		Open minded		Polite and trusting	
17	**When under stress, I:**	Become anxious		Concentrate on the problem		Become frustrated		Am forgetful	
18	**Others consider me:**	Aggressive		Disciplined		Imaginative		Supportive	
19	**My decisions typically are:**	Realistic and direct		Systematic or abstract		Broad and flexible		Sensitive to the needs of others	
20	**I dislike:**	Losing control		Boring work		Following rules		Being rejected	
	Totals	**I**		**II**		**III**		**IV**	

Scoring:

1. Add the points in each of the four columns: I, II, III, and IV.
2. The sum of the four columns should be 300 points. If your sum does not equal 300 points, check your addition and your answers.
3. Enter your answers in the appropriate quadrants.

Tolerance for Ambiguity High	II Analytical Your score: ____	III Conceptual Your score: ____
Low	I Directive Your score: ____	IV Behavioral Your score: ____
	Rational ⟶ Intuitive	
	Way of Thinking	

Interpretation:

Each style brings unique personality and experiences to the decisions-making process. For example, one who is conservative and uncomfortable with uncertainty will likely value decision alternatives differently from one who enjoys uncertainty and risks. Rowe, Boulgarides and McGrath (1984) sought to identify individual decision styles along two dimensions: a person's way of thinking and a person's tolerance for ambiguity. When these two dimensions are placed on an x and y-axis, they form four styles of decision-making. Rowe, et.al., labeled these styles Directive, Analytic, Conceptual, and Behavioral.

DIRECTIVE STYLE – People using the directive style have a low tolerance for ambiguity and seek rationality. These are efficient and logical. These make decisions fast and focus on the short-term results. Sometimes their concerns for efficiency result in decisions made with minimal information and with gathering and assessing few alternatives.

ANALYTIC STYLE – Those using the analytic style have much greater tolerance for ambiguity than the directive decision styles. This leads to the desire for more information and consideration of more alternatives than would those using the directive style. Analytical decision makers would be characterized as careful decision makers with the ability to adapt or cope with new situations.

CONCEPTUAL STYLE – Individuals using the conceptual style tend to be very broad in their outlook and consider many alternatives. Their focus is long-term and they are very good at finding creative solutions to problems.

BEHAVIORAL STYLE – Using the behavioral style, these people work well with others. They are concerned with the achievement of their team and are receptive to suggestions from others. They rely heavily on meetings as the means of communicating with their team. This person tries to avoid conflict and seeks acceptance.

SUMMARY:

Rowe, et.al., point out that while the four categories of decision styles are distinct, most leaders have characteristics that fall into more than one category. Therefore, it is recommended to think in terms of a person's "dominant style" rather than the only style used. Some rely almost exclusively on their dominant style; others make shifts, depending on the situation. Refer to your score grid above. The box with the highest score reflects your dominant style. The closer your score is to 75 in each category, the greater flexibility you show.

It should be noted that research shows that business students, lower-level managers, and senior executives tend to score highest in the analytic style—probably because of the emphasis of formal education on developing rational decision-making skills.

Understanding decision styles can help in understanding how two intelligent people can view the same information yet differ in the ways they approach decisions and choices. The knowledge can also explain many conflicts between spouses, managers, and leader-followers. Imagine the directive manager who expects work to be performed rapidly leading a team of analytic workers. The manager will feel and express frustration at the slowness and deliberate actions of the team. Meanwhile, the analytic team might criticize the directive leader for incomplete work or acting too hastily.

Thus, understanding the strengths and challenges of your own decision style increases your capacity to not only make effective decisions, but also to understand and work with the dominate decision style of others. To learn more of your decision style, conduct a search at the University library or (carefully) the Internet.