

Selling to the Four Temperament Styles

Have you ever wondered why you seem to hit it off right away with some customers, while with others it's more like oil and water? That's because we respond intuitively to the natural chemistry or lack thereof, between temperament styles. Our temperament style not only determines our behavioral traits, body language patterns and buying style, but it also influences our compatibility with other people.

 By [John Boe](#) 15 Sep 2011

Today we have access to innovative tools such as the internet, cellphones, faxes and voicemail all designed to enhance our communications and support us in selling more effectively. Nevertheless, even with all of these technological tools at our disposal, the alarming number of failed relationships, dissatisfied employees and lost sales all reflect the fact that none of us are as effective at understanding others as we would like to believe.

For example, what about that sale you thought you had made, but for some unknown reason your prospect changed their mind and didn't buy... or at least they didn't buy from you. Chances are you lost that sale because of your inability to recognize and adjust to your prospect's preferred buying style. This temperament mismatch is often referred to as a "personality conflict."

Four primary temperament styles

Research in the field of psychology tells us that we are born into one of four primary temperament styles (Aggressive, Expressive, Passive or Analytical). A person's temperament style is determined genetically and has nothing to do with his or her astrology sign, birth order or childhood experiences.

Our temperament style is also unrelated to race or gender. Each of these four primary behavioral styles requires a different approach and selling strategy. Ancient Wisdom Hippocrates, the father of medicine, is credited with originating the basic theory of the four temperament styles 2400 years ago. Since the days of ancient Greece there have been many temperament theories and a wide variety of evaluation instruments, but essentially they utilize the four temperament styles that Hippocrates identified. Hippocrates observed that these four styles have a direct influence on our physiology, character traits and outlook on life.

The Aggressive or Worker style is:

- Extroverted
- Determined
- Demanding
- Domineering
- Controlling
- Practical
- Self-reliant
- Decisive
- Insensitive

Their major weakness is "anger management". Under pressure the Worker will work harder and may

become ill-natured or explosive.

The impatient and goal-oriented worker prefers a quick, bottom line presentation style. They expect you to be on time and well prepared. They like it when you avoid small talk and get right down to business.

Workers are generally quick to make a decision. They are focused on results and ask "what" questions. Keywords to use when presenting to a worker are 'results', 'speed' and 'control'. Give them options so you don't threaten their need for control.

The Expressive or Talker style is:

- Extroverted
- Enthusiastic
- Emotional
- Sociable
- Impulsive
- Optimistic
- Persuasive
- Unorganised

Their major weakness is "emotional management". Under pressure the Talker will talk more, shop or eat, and may display an emotional outburst.

The playful and friendly Talker prefers a fast paced and enthusiastic presentation style. Use a short warm up and allow extra time in your presentation for them to talk. Talkers can be impulsive shoppers and are generally quick to make a decision. The key to making a sale to a Talker is to keep them focused on the presentation and allow time for them to express their feelings.

Talkers seek social acceptance and are concerned about what other people think of them. They ask "who" questions. Keywords to use when presenting to a Talker are 'exciting', 'fun' and 'enthusiastic'. Keep your presentation big picture and avoid giving them too much detail. Consider using colorful pictures, pie charts or graphs when presenting to this style.

The Passive or Watcher style is:

- Introverted
- Accommodating
- Harmonious
- Indecisive
- Patient
- Polite
- Uninvolved
- Friendly
- Sympathetic

Their major weakness is "self-esteem management." Under pressure the Watcher will avoid conflict by sleeping in longer.

The peaceful and stoic Watcher prefers a slow, deliberate presentation style. Watchers, unlike the impatient Worker, require extra time to warm up before you begin talking about business. Watchers are very sensitive to conflict or "sales pressure." They have a need to accommodate others and tend to ask "how" questions. Keywords to use when presenting to this style are 'family', 'service' and 'harmony'. Help the Watcher make a decision by giving them assurance. They dislike having to make decisions and are natural born procrastinators who love the status quo.

The Analytical or Thinker style is:

- Introverted
- Thoughtful
- Organised
- Critical
- Shy Detailed
- Pessimistic
- Introspective
- Secretive
- Aloof

Their major weakness is "stress management." Under pressure the Thinker becomes withdrawn, depressed and worries more (panic attacks). They "stress out" and seek perfection.

The Cautious Thinker

The cautious Thinker prefers a slow, detailed presentation style and warms up slowly. They are skeptical and typically research before they purchase. Thinkers want detailed information and they tend to ask "why" questions. Keywords to use are 'logical', 'safety' and 'quality'. Because they are concerned about making a wrong decision and appearing incompetent, you can expect the Thinker to want to take their time.

Their frugal nature will cause them to "shop your numbers" to make certain they are not paying too much. Because of their desire for research and their need to avoid making a mistake, Thinkers often get bogged down in details. They get what is called "paralyzes from analysis." Close the sale with the Thinker by reducing their fear of making a mistake. Give them evidence, facts, testimonials and guarantees.

While there are certainly many factors that influence the selling process, by far the most important factor is to identify your prospect's preferred buying style. Once you learn how to quickly and accurately determine your prospect's temperament style using body language, you will be able to close more sales in less time!

ABOUT JOHN BOE

American John Boe presents a wide variety of motivational and sales-oriented keynotes and seminar programs for sales meetings and conventions. John is a recognized sales trainer and business motivational speaker with an impeccable track record in the meeting industry. For more information, go to www.johnboe.com. Free newsletter available on website. View my profile and articles...