EVERYTHING DiSC WORK OF LEADERS®

Work of Leaders Profile

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Introduction

WELCOME TO WORK OF LEADERS®

Everything DiSC Work of Leaders® provides a simple, compelling process that helps leaders get real results. The program improves self-awareness in key areas that will help you get better outcomes as a leader.

Where did Work of Leaders come from? This program is based on a four-year development effort that began by analyzing and distilling the work of leadership researchers from the last three decades. With the help of 300 subject matter experts from more than 150 organizations, we identified a specific set of leadership best practices.

How do we define leadership? Work of Leaders approaches leadership as a one-to-many relationship, as opposed to the one-to-one relationship of management.

How does leadership connect to DiSC®? Your DiSC style influences how you approach each of the steps of the process. DiSC doesn't imply that you can or can't do any of the steps. It simply tells you how much energy will be required to do the different aspects of each step.

How is this different from other DiSC profiles? Unlike other DiSC reports, which emphasize understanding the differences between people, Work of Leaders focuses on understanding how your tendencies influence your effectiveness in specific leadership situations.

CORNERSTONE PRINCIPLES

- Work of Leaders focuses on tangible steps directed at **leading a group or organization** toward desired outcomes.
- The concepts in this report are relevant for **leaders at all levels**.
- Your leadership is influenced by a **variety of factors** such as character, life experiences, cognitive abilities, and maturity.
- All four DiSC styles **contribute to leadership success**, and most likely your strengths reflect **your own DiSC style**.
- Your report focuses on developing **preferred behaviors** that are based on **best practices**.
- The best practices are **context specific**, so the preferred behaviors will change depending on the needs of the situation.

WORK OF LEADERS: VISION, ALIGNMENT, AND EXECUTION

Work of Leaders provides a simple, three-step process to help you reflect on how you approach the most fundamental work of leaders: Creating a Vision, building Alignment around that vision, and championing Execution of the vision.

The work of leaders includes crafting a vision of new possibilities for the future through exploration, boldness, and testing assumptions.

Leaders build alignment by communicating with clarity, engaging in dialogue, and providing inspiration, so everyone is moving in the same direction.

Finally, leaders need to champion execution through momentum, structure, and feedback, to enable the group to capitalize on its talents while making the vision a reality.

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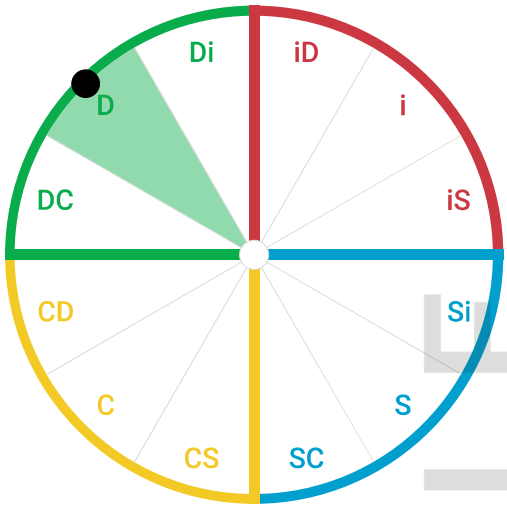
Your DiSC® Overview

YOUR DOT

This report is personalized to you, Denard. In order to get the most out of your Everything DiSC Work of Leaders® Profile, you'll need to understand your personal map.

The Everything DiSC® model is made up of four basic styles: D, i, S, and C. Each style is divided into three regions. The picture to the right illustrates the 12 different regions where a person's dot might be located.



Your DiSC® Style: D

Your dot location shows your DiSC style. **Because your dot is located in the middle of the D region, you have a D style.**

Keep in mind that everyone is a blend of all four styles, but most people tend strongly toward one or two styles. Whether your dot is in the center of one style or in a region that borders two, **no dot location is better than another**. All DiSC® styles are equal and valuable in their own ways.

CLOSE TO THE EDGE OR CLOSE TO THE CENTER?

A dot's **distance from the edge** of the circle shows how naturally inclined a person is to encompass the characteristics of his or her DiSC style. A dot positioned toward the edge of the circle indicates a strong inclination toward the characteristics of the style. A dot located between the edge and the center of the circle indicates a moderate inclination. And a dot positioned close to the center of the circle indicates a slight inclination. A dot in the center of the circle is no better than one on the edge, and vice versa. **Your dot location is near the edge of the circle, so you are strongly inclined and probably relate well to the characteristics associated with the D style.**

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WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that you know more about the personalization of your Everything DiSC Map, you'll read more about what your dot location says about you. Then you'll learn about your personal map shading and priorities and discover how this affects your leadership style.

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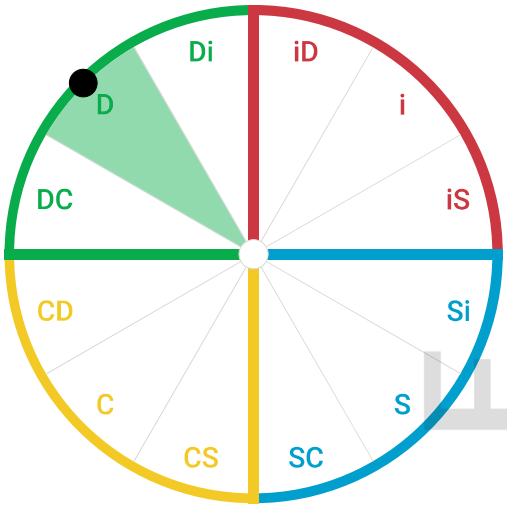
Your D Style

YOUR DOT TELLS A STORY:



Because your style is D, your natural ambition helps you blaze a trail toward your goals. The promise of victory compels you to move quickly and to set high expectations for yourself and others.

Most likely, you're driven to accomplish great things. In fact, this might be the **first thing people notice about you**. Leaders with the D style are rated by their followers, peers, and managers as being more results-focused than any of the other DiSC® leadership styles. Because of this determination to triumph, you may become impatient and in turn frustrated if your expectations aren't met. In your pursuit of measurable results, you don't hesitate to pressure the group to keep pushing forward. You tend to exhibit a direct, take-charge approach, and people probably know what you expect of them.

Like other leaders with the D style, you initiate action and help the group maintain momentum. You're probably comfortable introducing abrupt change, especially if it will get ideas off the ground. In addition, you're a quick thinker, so you have little trouble making on-the-fly decisions based on gut instincts. You're eager to find new opportunities, and you possess the courage to act on them quickly. Furthermore, you instill a sense of urgency in the group, pushing them to reach deadlines and achieve speedy results.

You gain satisfaction from clearing a path through obstacles, doubt, and resistance. You tend to wear your skepticism on your sleeve, and you're often the first to point out flaws and inconsistencies in other people's arguments. Research shows that the most pronounced strength of leaders who share your D style is a willingness to speak their minds. However, you're so focused on the challenge of finding flaws that you may not stop to think about the impact of your words. In fact, one of the most common pieces of constructive feedback for leaders with your style is that they sometimes fail to take other people's feelings into account.

Furthermore, because you have a competitive edge, you likely have a high tolerance for conflict. In fact, you may sometimes be eager to engage in a battle of rapid-fire ideas. Most likely, you'll fight tenaciously for your viewpoints in order to satisfy your win-at-all-costs instincts, especially if you see your ideas as most beneficial for the organization.

Leaders with the D style have a high level of confidence. This allows you to act decisively and maintain your drive to achieve. You strongly believe in your abilities, so once you've chosen a direction, you likely bury any pesky doubts that surface. However, keep in mind that at least 50% of leaders who share your D style get low marks for not being able to recognize their limitations and acknowledge when they're wrong. Still, because you have such a firm, steadfast approach, people often instinctively trust that you have a solid understanding of what's important, which may give you more credibility.

Denard, your **most valuable contributions as a leader** may be your tendency to move forward quickly, speak with conviction, make tough decisions, and step up to the plate when the group lacks direction. In fact, these are probably some of the qualities that others admire most about you.

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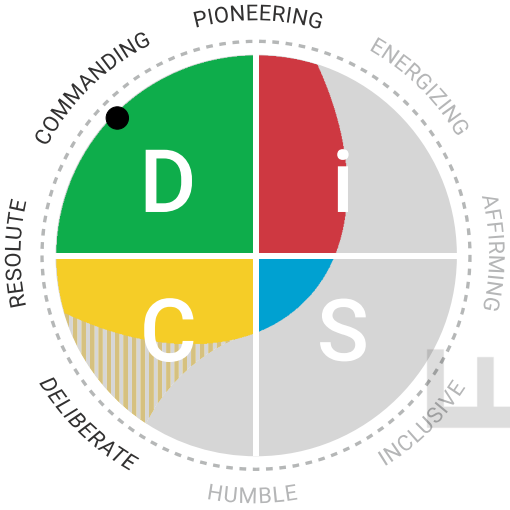
Shading & Priorities

YOUR SHADING EXPANDS THE STORY

Denard, while your dot location and your DiSC® style can say a great deal about you, your map **shading** is also important.

The eight words around the Everything DiSC® map are what we call **priorities**, or the primary areas where people focus their energy. The closer your shading comes to a priority, the more likely you are to focus your energy on that area. Everyone has at least three priorities, and sometimes people have four or five. **Having five priorities is no better than having three, and vice versa**.

Typically, people with the D style have shading that touches Commanding, Pioneering, and Resolute. Your shading stretches to include Deliberate, which isn't characteristic of the D style.



WHAT PRIORITIES SHAPE YOUR LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE?

Being Commanding
Denard, leaders with your D style feel a strong sense of responsibility to get results, and you expect others to share your focus on achievement. At times, your confident and driven style may cause you to come across as somewhat demanding or intimidating. And once you accomplish your goals, you may strive toward the next objective rather than taking time to celebrate.

Being Pioneering
As a leader who values innovation and growth, you prefer to seek out bold new opportunities rather than rely on steady progress from existing methods. You probably avoid getting bogged down in details and tend to act decisively. And because you like to hit the ground running, you may become frustrated with people who appear to be standing in the way of rapid forward progress.

Being Resolute
Leaders with your D style are often very strong-willed about their beliefs, and they may hold their ground even when others don't share their goals. You tend to show great persistence to overcome any obstacles that stand in your way. Most likely, you set high expectations for yourself and others, and you aren't afraid to speak up when you spot a flaw or inefficiency.

Being Deliberate
You tend to value being deliberate as well, which isn't typical for someone with your style. Most likely, you prefer to give people the time to make thoughtful decisions based on facts and logic. Quality outcomes are important to you, and because you want to ensure efficient and accurate results, you probably strive to communicate your expectations as specifically as possible.

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Overview of DiSC®

The graphic below provides a snapshot of the four basic DiSC® styles.

Dominance

Priorities: being commanding, being pioneering, being resolute

Motivated by: power and authority, competition, winning, success

Fears: loss of control, being taken advantage of, vulnerability

You will notice: self-confidence, directness, forcefulness, risk-taking

Limitations: lack of concern for others, impatience, insensitivity

Influence

Priorities: being energizing, being pioneering, being affirming

Motivated by: social recognition, group activities, friendly relationships

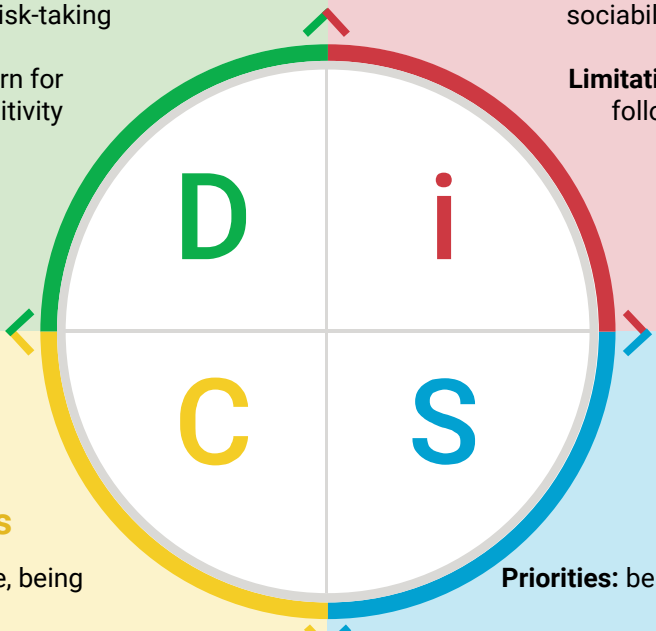
Fears: social rejection, disapproval, loss of influence, being ignored

You will notice: charm, enthusiasm, sociability, optimism, talkativeness

Limitations: impulsiveness, lack of follow-through, disorganization

Active
Fast-paced
Assertive
Dynamic
Bold

Questioning
Logic-focused
Objective
Skeptical
Challenging



Accepting
People-focused
Empathizing
Receptive
Agreeable

Conscientiousness

Priorities: being deliberate, being humble, being resolute

Motivated by: opportunities to use expertise or gain knowledge, attention to quality

Fears: criticism, slipshod methods, being wrong

You will notice: precision, analysis, skepticism, reserve, quiet

Limitations: overly critical, tendency to overanalyze, isolates self

Steadiness

Priorities: being inclusive, being humble, being affirming

Motivated by: stable environments, sincere appreciation, cooperation, opportunities to help

Fears: loss of stability, change, loss of harmony, offending others

You will notice: patience, team player, calm approach, good listener, humility

Limitations: overly accommodating, tendency to avoid change, indecisiveness

Thoughtful
Moderate-paced
Calm
Methodical
Careful

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Vision, Alignment, & Execution

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

- Three steps: Vision, Alignment, and Execution
  - Three drivers for each step (e.g., Exploration, Boldness, Testing Assumptions)
    - Two behavioral continua for each driver (e.g., Remaining Open, Prioritizing the Big Picture)

EXPLORATION

- Remaining Open
- Prioritizing the Big Picture

BOLDNESS

- Being Adventurous
- Speaking Out

TESTING ASSUMPTIONS

- Seeking Counsel
- Exploring Implications

CLARITY

- Explaining Rationale
- Structuring Messages

DIALOGUE

- Exchanging Perspectives
- Being Receptive

INSPIRATION

- Being Expressive
- Being Encouraging

MOMENTUM

- Being Driven
- Initiating Action

STRUCTURE

- Providing a Plan
- Analyzing In-Depth

FEEDBACK

- Addressing Problems
- Offering Praise

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What is "Vision"?

VISION is an **IMAGINED FUTURE CONDITION** for the organization or team

At any level of leadership, a vision is a ***condition that is imagined—a future state*** in which the organization or team creates something of unquestionable value, serves customers in unparalleled fashion, or reinvents the way it does business.

A well-crafted vision is broader in scope than a typical goal. For example, a goal might be: "Sell 20 million widgets this year."

Whereas, a vision is: "Be the world leader in widgets while maintaining the highest safety standards in the industry."

The terms "vision," "mission," "goals," and "values" are sometimes used interchangeably. However, in the context of this report, we will focus our discussion around the term "vision."

VISION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE

- It **expands assumptions** about what can be done.
- It **provides purpose** for organizations, teams, and individuals (including the leader).
- It **drives** the development of specific, vision-supporting **goals.**
- It **unifies people.**

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LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS HELP CRAFT THE VISION

While we think of vision as coming from the top down, crafting a vision is ideally a **shared process** that combines contributions from leaders at all levels. While visions may seem to spring full-blown from one person's head, they are generally the result of ongoing efforts over a period of time by a larger group.

> While the CEO may be responsible for the overall vision, each leader within the organization needs to define a vision for their group that supports the main vision.
>
> For example, the CEO's vision for the organization may be, "We will grow from domestic leader in the industry to international leader in the industry within five years."
>
> A customer service manager within the same organization might have the following supportive vision: "Our customer service will grow to offer 24-hour support in six major languages in the next three years."

Now that you have a better idea of what we mean by vision, let's look at each of the **three drivers** of vision: **Exploration, Boldness,** and **Testing Assumptions.**

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Vision > Exploration

HOW EXPLORATION DRIVES VISION

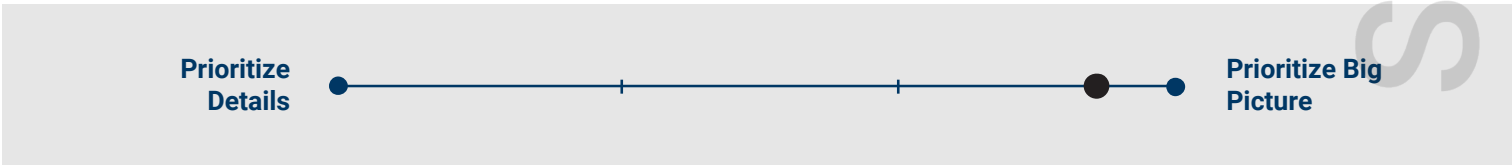
Although a great vision often sounds simple and elegant, a good deal of effort and insight has usually gone into developing it. There is a discipline to exploring new ideas that involves thinking at a big-picture level. It also involves resisting the temptation to choose the "right" idea too quickly.

- Leaders need to be intentional about exploring new directions.
- It may help to suspend judgment and consider a variety of ideas.
- Exploration involves giving oneself the time to weigh options.

REMAINING OPEN & PRIORITIZING THE BIG PICTURE

When we talk about driving a vision by exploring, we can look at two important **behavioral continua**, as illustrated by the graphics below. First, some leaders have a tendency to remain open, and others seek closure. Also, some leaders prioritize the big picture, while others prioritize the details. **In the context of exploration,** the behaviors on the right-hand side of these scales are leadership best practices. Any movement toward remaining open and prioritizing the big picture will help when exploring a vision.

Denard, you probably like to remain open and unstructured. This can pose some leadership challenges, but when it comes to creating a vision, your tendency to avoid locking in on one idea too quickly is a real benefit. You don't need to fully understand how an idea could be executed to explore and appreciate it. Rather, you continue to develop the concept and gain understanding of the logistics as you go. Because you don't rush for closure, you're less likely to settle on a less than ideal solution, and this willingness to explore often leads to a solid vision.



You tend to focus more on the big picture than on the details. This means that you think broadly about how everything fits together rather than concentrating on individual elements. This perspective allows you to better understand the relationships among different ideas and goals. When it comes to exploration, you are well equipped to see where a particular course *might* lead in the future or how new ideas *might* fit into current plans. Further, when you embrace a big-picture view, you are more likely to notice when outdated assumptions or practices are hindering your team or organization.

Since you see yourself as open and big-picture focused, you may already be doing a good job of exploring new ideas to create a vision.

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Vision > Boldness

HOW BOLDNESS DRIVES VISION

Creating a bold vision doesn't necessarily mean doing something on a big scale. But it does mean that the leader has a willingness to go out on a limb to champion bold new directions. Great leaders stretch the boundaries of what seems possible and challenge people to rise to the occasion.

- Leaders don't make a big impact without being a little adventurous.
- People look to leaders for a compelling vision that excites them.
- Every great accomplishment begins with a bold idea.

BEING ADVENTUROUS & SPEAKING OUT

When we talk about driving a vision with boldness, we can look at two important **behavioral continua**, as illustrated by the graphics below. First, some leaders have a tendency to be adventurous, and others are more cautious. Also, some leaders aren't afraid to speak out with their bold ideas, while others tend to hold back. **In the context of boldness,** the behaviors on the right-hand side of these scales are leadership best practices. Any movement toward being adventurous and speaking out will help when creating a bold vision.

Denard, you probably don't mind trying new things, as long as there is a reasonable chance of success. Because you fall somewhere between being cautious and adventurous, you are usually willing to take chances when you have ample information and the right people in your corner. In situations where there are too many unknowns, you may be hesitant to create a bold vision. To help your group expand its reach, you may need to take more chances, even in the face of uncertainty.

You're usually ready to speak out, particularly when you feel that you have something important to say. Because you're willing to take chances socially and put your credibility on the line, you're likely to speak up about your ideas, even if some people may not agree with you. Your willingness to go out on a limb probably helps create a culture where others feel comfortable suggesting unconventional ideas as well. When crafting a vision, this quality no doubt helps you push toward new directions.

Since you see yourself as willing to speak out but only moderately inclined to be adventurous, you may need to be a bit more willing to take chances to create a bold vision.

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Vision > Testing Assumptions

HOW TESTING ASSUMPTIONS DRIVES VISION

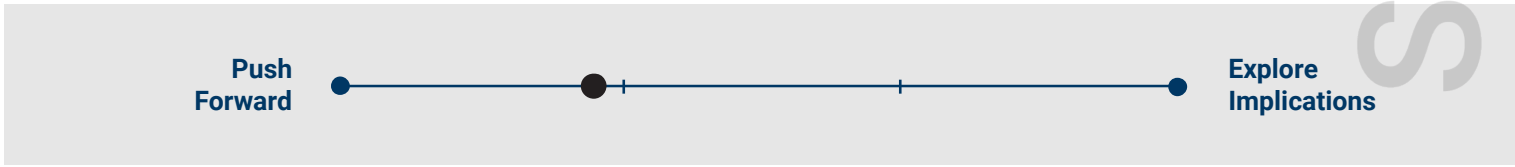
Creating a vision requires exploring ideas and being bold, but it's also crucial that the vision be grounded. Leaders can test their assumptions through several means, including seeking others' advice and doing more formal research. This is not about looking for support, but instead is about soliciting objective input and surfacing potential problems.

- Leaders need to look beyond their own thinking to test assumptions.
- It's important to recognize obstacles when developing a vision.
- Consider a variety of methods in checking your hypotheses.

SEEKING COUNSEL & EXPLORING IMPLICATIONS

When we talk about driving a vision by testing assumptions, we can look at two important **behavioral continua**, as illustrated by the graphics below. First, some leaders have a tendency to seek counsel, and others like to decide independently. Also, some leaders focus on exploring implications, while others prefer to push forward. **In the context of testing assumptions,** the behaviors on the right-hand side of these scales are leadership best practices. Any movement toward seeking counsel and exploring implications will help when it's time to evaluate the vision.

Denard, you tend to process your decisions independently, and this makes it easy to rely too heavily on your own assumptions. As a leader, you may believe that you have a handle on the issues that will affect the vision. While you may enjoy the responsibility of making major decisions autonomously, you may miss out on tapping into valuable resources. Seeking counsel may make the process less smooth in some ways, but it's a great way to get the fresh perspective that is often needed to make sound decisions.



You have a tendency to jump right into a project, and you may not always take the time to explore the implications by carefully examining your ideas. Leadership is often about pushing forward, but when you are creating a vision for your group, gathering objective data is an important step. Doing your homework takes time, and you may see it as unnecessary busy work when you are eager to keep things moving. However, evaluating your ideas helps test your assumptions against reality, and it also gives you the facts you need to gain alignment.

Since you see yourself as tending to decide independently and push forward, you'll need to test your assumptions more by seeking counsel and exploring implications as you create a vision.

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What is "Alignment"?

ALIGNMENT is **GAINING BUY-IN** from the organization and your team

Alignment refers to the act of getting buy-in for the vision from everyone who will have a role in making it a reality. Alignment ensures that people are on the same page, both from a task and an emotional perspective.

Alignment requires ongoing one-way and two-way communication. In fact, the failure of a vision, no matter when it happens, can often have more to do with a lack of alignment than with the strength of the vision or the efficiency of execution.

Too often, leaders treat alignment as something to check off a to-do list. In reality, alignment is a dynamic, ongoing process that requires the leader to continually monitor and realign as conditions and needs change.

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ALIGNMENT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE

- It **sets the stage** by proposing a plan for effective implementation.
- It **provides a forum** for questions and concerns.
- It **brings people together** behind the vision.
- It **generates excitement** for the vision.

ALIGNMENT IS FOR LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS

Gaining and maintaining alignment is a critical role for leaders at all levels. Alignment requires attention to upward, downward, and lateral communication. Leaders in certain positions may need to use more time and energy to maintain alignment at all levels.

ALIGNMENT IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

A number of structural and cultural factors can affect how you go about creating and maintaining alignment. Consider how these affect alignment within your organization.

- Formal vs. informal communication
- Face-to-face and virtual environments
- Lateral and hierarchical organizational structures
- Negotiating competing interests

Now that you have a better idea of what we mean by alignment, let's look at each of the **three drivers** of alignment: **Clarity, Dialogue,** and **Inspiration.**

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Alignment > Clarity

HOW CLARITY DRIVES ALIGNMENT

When communicating with others, it's important to deliver a rational, structured message. Some leaders have trouble translating their great ideas into words. Others struggle to stay on topic or fail to relay the most important points. When people don't understand your vision, how can you expect them to get on board?

- Clear communicators explain the reasoning behind their ideas.
- When people understand a message, they can more easily buy in.
- Consider thinking the message through all the way to the end.

EXPLAINING RATIONALE & STRUCTURING MESSAGES

When we talk about driving alignment with clarity, we can look at two important **behavioral continua**, as illustrated by the graphics below. First, some leaders have a tendency to explain their rationale, and others offer their intuition. Also, some leaders tend to deliver structured messages, while others tend to deliver impromptu messages. **In the context of clarity,** the behaviors on the right-hand side of these scales are leadership best practices. Any movement toward explaining your rationale and structuring your message will help when you need to be clear to get people's buy-in.

Denard, you tend to be highly intuitive when making decisions, and this can make it more challenging to communicate the vision with clarity. While relying on your personal experience and insight can have many advantages for you as a leader, when it's time to get alignment, you also need to be able to explain the rationale behind the vision to others. When not checked against logic, your intuitive approach can fail to give people the data and reasoning they need to truly buy in to the vision.

You have a tendency to deliver your ideas without a lot of structure, and this might cause people to get lost in your message. You may be quite good at thinking on your feet, but this communication style doesn't always help when the goal is gaining alignment. Leaders who tend to deliver impromptu messages often provide unnecessary details and go off on tangents. If people have trouble identifying your main point, you may lose their attention. To improve your communication when it's time to get buy-in, take the time to fully organize your thoughts before presenting the vision.

Since you see your communication style as intuitive and impromptu, you may need to put more effort into explaining your rationale and structuring your messages to provide the clarity that others need.

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Alignment > Dialogue

HOW DIALOGUE DRIVES ALIGNMENT

One of the simplest ways to get others aligned around the vision is to engage them in a rich dialogue about the "who," "what," "why," "where," "when," and "how" questions. When leaders involve others in two-way conversations like this, it not only increases buy-in, but also gives leaders invaluable information.

- True alignment requires openness to others' ideas and concerns.
- People want the chance to ask questions and share their insights.
- Dialogue helps leaders identify potential problems or disconnects.

EXCHANGING PERSPECTIVES & BEING RECEPTIVE

When we talk about driving alignment with dialogue, we can look at two important **behavioral continua**, as illustrated by the graphics below. First, some leaders have a tendency to exchange perspectives, and others present information. Also, some leaders tend to be receptive to input, while others tend to challenge new ideas. **In the context of dialogue,** the behaviors on the right-hand side of these scales are leadership best practices. Any movement toward exchanging perspectives and being receptive will help when creating an atmosphere of open dialogue.

Present Information — **Exchange Perspectives**

Denard, because you tend to be more directive when communicating, you probably don't focus on soliciting others' opinions and input. This can be a positive thing when you need to deliver a straightforward message, but when it comes to gaining alignment around a vision, a participatory approach is often more effective. When you communicate the vision without inviting people to respond, they may think their perspectives or concerns don't matter. And if they don't feel like they're part of the process, engagement and morale can suffer.

Challenging — **Receptive**

You have a tendency to challenge other people's ideas. While this helps ensure that your solutions are logical, it can also leave people feeling deflated when their ideas or concerns are criticized or minimized. This may create a culture where people are afraid to share, even if they are asked, and it could limit the exchange of knowledge that can be so valuable in gaining alignment. People want to know that their words will be met with openness when they decide to speak up.

Since you see yourself as challenging and inclined to present information, you may need to be more receptive to ideas and focus on exchanging perspectives to provide the dialogue that others need.

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Alignment > Inspiration

HOW INSPIRATION DRIVES ALIGNMENT

How do leaders get people truly excited to start a new project or initiative? They inspire others by painting an exciting picture of the future, sharing their own passion, and showing confidence in the team's ability to succeed. Leaders who are able to inspire others in this way are much more successful in gaining and maintaining buy-in.

- Real buy-in isn't just getting people to go through the motions.
- When you express your passion, others become more committed.
- People need to see how their efforts will contribute to success.

BEING EXPRESSIVE & BEING ENCOURAGING

When we talk about driving alignment with inspiration, we can look at two important **behavioral continua**, as illustrated by the graphics below. First, some leaders have a tendency to be expressive, and others are more reserved. Also, some leaders tend to communicate encouragement, while others tend to be more matter-of-fact. **In the context of inspiration,** the behaviors on the right-hand side of these scales are leadership best practices. Any movement toward being expressive and encouraging will help when people need to be inspired to get on board with the vision.

Denard, you probably don't worry about filtering your emotions, and when you're excited, your passion can be contagious. When people see your confidence about an idea, they're more likely to believe the vision is worthy of their attention. With your expressive approach, you help create a dynamic environment that brings up the group's energy level. Your willingness to share your emotions makes it easier for people to relate to you, and it also makes it clear that you really care about the vision for the group.

You probably provide encouragement to others when you spot a specific need for it. For example, you may concentrate more on encouraging those who are down rather than making a point to provide steady encouragement. Because you don't tend to place a heavy focus on this kind of support, you may miss out on opportunities to inspire others to try new things or help people find their inner strength when things get difficult. When it comes to gaining alignment around a vision, you may find it more effective to show more support by maintaining a consistently positive tone.

Since you see yourself as expressive but only moderately encouraging, you may need to place a bit more emphasis on optimistic support to provide the inspiration that others need.

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What is "Execution"?

EXECUTION is turning the **IMAGINED FUTURE CONDITION** into reality

At the most basic level, execution is making the vision a reality. The leader must make sure that all conditions are in place so that everyone can do the work necessary to fulfill the vision.

Often people think of execution as something that happens in the trenches, while the leader sits in an office thinking up the big ideas. But the truth is that successful execution of a vision can't happen without the deep commitment and support of the leader.

EXECUTION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- It propels the development of concrete strategies.
- It makes the vision actionable.
- It gives people a sense of achievement.
- It fulfills the promise of the vision.

EXECUTION IS FOR LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS

The role of the leader at every level is to make sure the strategies and people are in place for the vision to become a reality. However, certain aspects of this role may look different depending on where you are in the organization.

SAMPLE

YOUR ROLE IN EXECUTING THE VISION

Your position in the organization can affect how you participate in ensuring execution. Consider which of the following best describe your role in the process.

- More hands-on or less hands-on
- Advocating for resources or providing resources
- Creating strategy or following strategy
- Establishing culture or supporting the culture

Now that you have a better idea of what we mean by execution, let's look at each of the **three drivers** of execution: **Momentum, Structure,** and **Feedback.**

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Execution > Momentum

HOW MOMENTUM DRIVES EXECUTION

Leaders often set the pace for the group, so when they tend to be too low-key, people may not feel the sense of momentum that's needed to realize the vision. By being driven and proactive—and also by acknowledging others who take initiative—leaders send the message that getting things done at a brisk pace is important.

- Leaders often set an example when it comes to momentum.
- People tend to perform to the level of momentum that's expected.
- Without a sense of momentum, projects can stall out and fail.

BEING DRIVEN & INITIATING ACTION

When we talk about driving execution with momentum, we can look at two important **behavioral continua**, as illustrated by the graphics below. First, some leaders have a tendency to be driven, and others are more low-key. Also, some leaders tend to initiate action, while others tend to be more reactive. **In the context of momentum,** the behaviors on the right-hand side of these scales are leadership best practices. Any movement toward being driven and initiating action will help create the momentum your group needs.

Denard, creating a sense of momentum is probably second nature to you. Because you like to make rapid progress, you may grow restless when energy seems to lag. As a leader, you tend to create a culture with a substantial focus on results. This keeps people on their toes and provides a sense of drive and a competitive spirit. You tend to root out complacency and inaction, and you expect people to strive to succeed, even if it means going beyond their comfort zones. By creating a sense of momentum for others, you encourage them to push themselves to do their best.

As a leader who tends to initiate, you identify fresh opportunities, call attention to areas for improvement, and kick off new projects. Your entrepreneurial spirit probably helps create a culture where being proactive is valued. In this kind of climate, people don't just wait for their next responsibility—they are constantly on the lookout for new ways to contribute. When a leader shows initiative, the group is more likely to grow and extend its reach rather than simply maintain the status quo.

Since you see yourself as driven and initiating, you may already be doing a good job of providing a sense of momentum.

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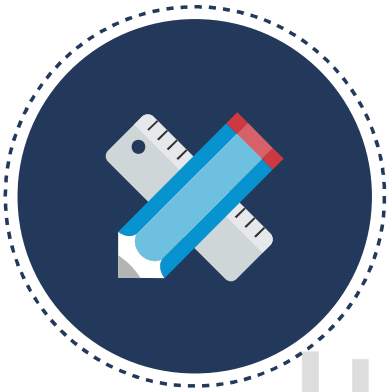
Execution > Structure

HOW STRUCTURE DRIVES EXECUTION



To execute on a vision effectively, leaders need to ensure that people have enough structure to follow. Without appropriate processes, policies, and expectations in place, teams operate inefficiently and are less likely to create high-quality outcomes. To create structure, leaders need to make well thought-out plans and analyze complex problems.

- To work productively, people need to know what is expected.
- Effective leaders respond to the structure needs of their teams.
- Structure helps to produce predictable, reliable outcomes.

PROVIDING A PLAN & ANALYZING IN-DEPTH

When we talk about driving execution by providing structure, we can look at two important **behavioral continua**, as illustrated by the graphics below. First, some leaders have a tendency to plan, and others like to improvise. Also, some leaders tend to analyze in-depth, while others tend to follow their first impressions. **In the context of structure,** the behaviors on the right-hand side of these scales are leadership best practices. Any movement toward planning and analyzing in-depth will help when it's time to create the structure needed to execute well.

Denard, you have a tendency to improvise and figure things out along the way. This can be beneficial in situations where preparation isn't possible, such as in emergencies or social situations. On the other hand, even if a lack of planning doesn't bother you, many people get very anxious when they don't have a well-defined structure to depend on. Without clear processes, your group can suffer considerable inefficiencies, redundancies, and frustrations that can threaten the successful execution of the vision.

Even though you're not inclined to provide a structured plan, you still tend to dig deep and analyze the complex issues surrounding systems and policies. By thinking through all of the implications and contingencies associated with a decision, you get a better handle on all of the moving parts. You can anticipate problems, and you aren't afraid to do the messy, oftentimes consuming work of analyzing root causes. When necessary, you're probably willing to stop progress to make sure that a problem is really understood before moving on.

Since you see yourself as having a tendency to analyze in-depth but also an inclination to improvise, you may need to spend more time planning in order to provide the structure that others need.

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Execution > Feedback

HOW FEEDBACK DRIVES EXECUTION

In order to ensure that the vision is executed, leaders must provide both critical and positive feedback. When inefficiencies and complications are evident, leaders need to be willing to speak up. And, when people are performing well, it's equally important to provide the appropriate praise and recognition to keep everyone engaged.

- Feedback from leaders helps people know how they're performing.
- Leaders need to be willing to address problems head-on.
- Recognizing contributions encourages ownership and engagement.

ADDRESSING PROBLEMS & OFFERING PRAISE

When we talk about driving execution by providing feedback, we can look at two important **behavioral continua**, as illustrated by the graphics below. First, some leaders have a tendency to address problems, and others like to maintain harmony. Also, some leaders tend to offer more praise, while others tend to offer less praise. **In the context of feedback,** the behaviors on the right-hand side of these scales are leadership best practices. Any movement toward addressing problems and offering more praise will help you be more effective with feedback.

Denard, when you see a problem, you're unlikely to sweep it under the rug. In fact, because you're so focused on successfully executing the vision, the problem will probably bother you until it's fixed. When it comes to giving feedback, you're usually willing to let people know when things aren't being done to your standards. In fact, you may be more concerned with things being done right than with protecting people's feelings. As a leader, this quality helps you ensure that inefficiencies in processes get addressed.

You don't see yourself as particularly open with praise and recognition. Perhaps giving praise just doesn't occur to you since you have little need for it yourself. Or, you may be so task-oriented that recognition seems like a distraction. It's also possible that you feel that compliments aren't meaningful unless they're used sparingly. Be honest with yourself about what keeps you from showing your appreciation for others' work. If you don't positively reinforce good behavior, people are less likely to be motivated, loyal, and engaged.

Since you see yourself as ready to address problems but less inclined to offer praise, you may need to spend more time giving positive feedback to make people feel appreciated.

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Your Leadership Strengths

Playing to your strengths is an important starting point for improving your leadership effectiveness. Below you will find descriptions of your three strongest areas in the process of Vision, Alignment, and Execution. Take a moment to read and reflect on how to maximize your use of these strengths in your current role.

Vision > Boldness > **SPEAKING OUT**

You're not afraid to say what you think, and as a result, you are likely to champion a bold vision. You're willing to take chances socially, even if it means sharing ideas that might put your credibility on the line. You may often step forward with thoughts and theories that others would hold back, and this can have a big impact. People probably appreciate that you:

- Set an example for others to be bold
- Show your passion by putting your credibility on the line
- Speak up with possibilities that excite the team

Execution > Momentum > **INITIATING ACTION**

You like to initiate action and get new projects moving. Leaders like you don't sit around waiting for someone else to tell them what to do—they act. Because you're often so proactive, you help create a sense of momentum for others, and your colleagues probably appreciate that you:

- Provide an entrepreneurial spirit
- Encourage others to find new ways to contribute
- Create an environment conducive to initiative and growth

Alignment > Inspiration > **BEING EXPRESSIVE**

You're not afraid to be expressive when interacting with others. Your passionate, enthusiastic approach can help people feel good about the group's direction, and this is invaluable when it comes to gaining alignment around a vision. Your energy and excitement can inspire others, and people probably appreciate that you:

- Create an open, energetic environment
- Readily share your positive emotions with the group
- Rally others around an exciting vision for the future

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Your Leadership Challenges

Now that you have a better idea of your strengths as a leader, let's take a closer look at the three behavioral continua where you have the greatest opportunities for improvement: **Being Receptive, Exchanging Perspectives, Offering Praise.**

Alignment > Dialogue > **BEING RECEPTIVE**

Since you see yourself as challenging, you may need focus on being more receptive to provide the dialogue that others need.

TIPS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Avoid challenging or completely dismissing other people's opinions. Being receptive will create a culture in which the group feels comfortable contributing.
- Be proactive about thanking people for their feedback, even if you don't agree with what was said. This will help people feel that it's worth their efforts to be a part of the dialogue.
- Make sure your tone of voice and your body language verify your receptiveness. It's not always what you say but how you say it that will have the biggest impact.

CASE IN POINT

Evelyn's Example:
When Evelyn's colleague, Ian, pointed out problems with the new direction she had proposed for her team, her initial reaction was to argue with him. However, she took a step back and remembered that Ian had a unique perspective on the work they did. Instead of pushing back, she urged him to elaborate on his concerns.

Michael's Example:
As Michael communicated a new vision to the team, people shared ideas that he and other senior leaders had already worked through and rejected. Rather than dismissing the ideas outright, he tried to make the team members feel valued and included by thanking them for contributing to the discussion and taking the time to explain the rationale behind the vision.

HOW CAN YOU ADAPT YOUR BEHAVIOR TO BECOME A BETTER LEADER?

How would your group and/or organization benefit if you were doing more of this behavior?

Write action steps based on the tips you found most useful.

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Your Leadership Challenges

Alignment > Dialogue > **EXCHANGING PERSPECTIVES**

Since you see yourself as inclined to present information, you may need to focus more on exchanging perspectives to provide the dialogue that others need.

TIPS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Even if your first instinct is to dismiss an opinion, encourage a discussion so you can understand what's behind it. Not only will this help people feel that they are being heard, it might give you fresh insights as well.
- Highlight great ideas that people bring to the table, even if they don't end up being implemented. If you show your appreciation when people weigh in, they'll feel more comfortable participating in the discussion.
- Remember that you may have to give up some control in order to facilitate discussions along the way. If new information arises, be flexible to changing directions.

SAMPLE

CASE IN POINT

Evelyn's Example:
Evelyn worried that open dialogue would invite criticism, so she was tempted to explain her department's new direction without leaving room for comments. However, because she needed the team's buy-in, she urged them to express their concerns, even though it made her nervous. This led to a lively dialogue, and afterward, Evelyn realized that she had gained some new understanding that would make the change more effective.

Michael's Example:
When Michael presented the idea to his team members, their body language suggested that they weren't on board. He urged them to voice their hesitations, and after a few denials, one member of his team finally admitted that they were concerned about the effect that the potential changes could have on morale. After clearing up some misunderstandings, Michael continued the dialogue until he was certain they were on the same page.

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How would your group and/or organization benefit if you were doing more of this behavior?

Write action steps based on the tips you found most useful.

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Your Leadership Challenges

Execution > Feedback > **OFFERING PRAISE**

Since you see yourself as less open with praise, you may need to spend more time giving positive feedback and making people feel appreciated.

TIPS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- When you notice that improvements have been made, commend the people responsible for a job well done. If an accomplishment is significant enough to be noticed, then it's significant enough to be applauded.
- Ease into the habit of giving recognition by regularly praising someone you're more comfortable with, or someone you're less familiar with, whichever helps make the process more rewarding.
- Build recognition into your plans and remind yourself to celebrate accomplishments before moving on. Placing praise on your to-do-list might prevent you from overlooking it.

SAMPLE

CASE IN POINT

Evelyn's Example:
Evelyn came to realize that she needed to give more frequent recognition to the people on her team, so she decided to start small. She set a goal of complimenting each person's performance at least once a week, and after a while, she found herself looking for even more opportunities to praise others. It no longer felt like a chore, and she didn't have to remind herself to do it.

Michael's Example:
Michael outlined his plans for a new project, and at the end of each step, he tacked on a note that said, "acknowledge a job well done." After each phase of the project had been accomplished, his notes reminded him to thank the team and applaud specific contributions that had led to meeting the benchmark.

HOW CAN YOU ADAPT YOUR BEHAVIOR TO BECOME A BETTER LEADER?

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