

# Influence Style<sup>TM</sup> Indicator

Leverage Impact

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**Donald Sample**

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**Company Sample Name**

Consultant Sample Name

# Influence Style Indicator™ (ISI) Workbook

## Introduction to Influence

A key behavior of effective leaders is the capacity to influence those around them. To influence effectively you must be adept at getting your opinions and ideas heard, recognized and considered by others. Influence inherently means that you are able to impact the ideas, opinions and actions of others. Influence strategies can range from reliance on position and power to education, encouragement and collaboration. When you influence effectively you increase trust, support and ownership for your priorities. When you influence ineffectively you increase mistrust, intimidation and resentment. From the perspective of the Influence Style Indicator we are defining influence as the interpersonal behaviors that we use to have a positive impact on another party's choices.

## Why Influence Matters

Today's workplace is characterized by levels of change and complexity. Workplace realities such as identifying shared goals, leading complex and often dispersed teams, boundary spanning, coordinating matrixed projects and integrating diverse people and interests require the capacity to influence others. Good leadership has a positive and unifying impact. Whether you are leading, following, and/or collaborating, chances are you need to influence others to be successful. The ability to influence effectively is emerging as a key skill for a new generation of leaders.

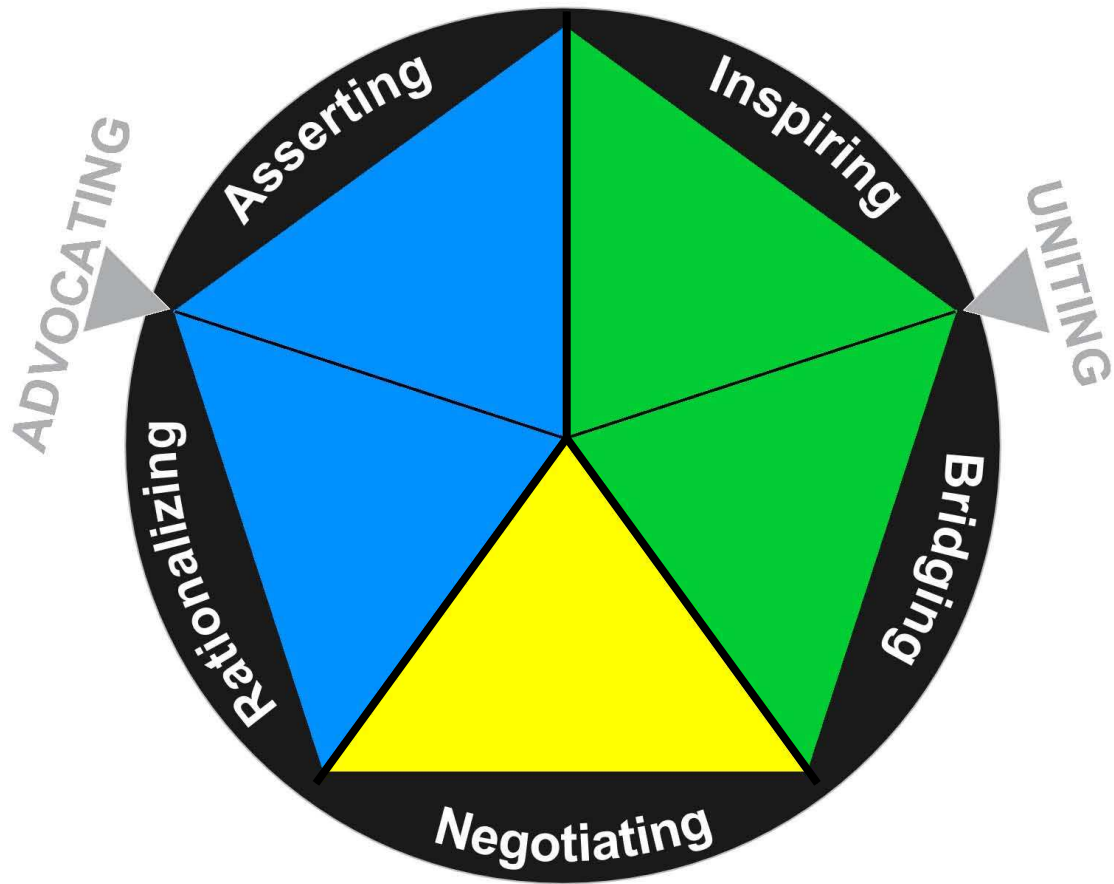
## Influence Preferences

We are all aware of the distinctive influence styles that people demonstrate. Some of these styles we instinctively understand and appreciate and others we may find confusing, unclear and frustrating. Our research has definitively identified five styles of influence. These five distinctive styles are Rationalizing, Asserting, Negotiating, Inspiring and Bridging. You can improve your leadership effectiveness if you know when to modify your style, understand what situations your style works best in, and when it may prove ineffective.

## Background Research

In 2009 and 2010 Discovery Learning, Inc. and Innovative Pathways conducted research to identify and measure influence preferences. This research clearly identified five influence styles and resulted in an assessment tool, Influence Style Indicator, which effectively and efficiently measures an individual's preferred influence style or styles. The complete Influence Style Indicator Research and Development Report is available from Discovery Learning, Inc.

# ISI Model



## **Rationalizing**

You put forward your ideas and offer logical, rational reasons to convince others of your point of view

## **Asserting**

You insist that your ideas are heard and considered and you challenge the ideas of others

## **Negotiating**

You look for compromises and make concessions to reach outcomes that satisfy the greater interest

## **Inspiring**

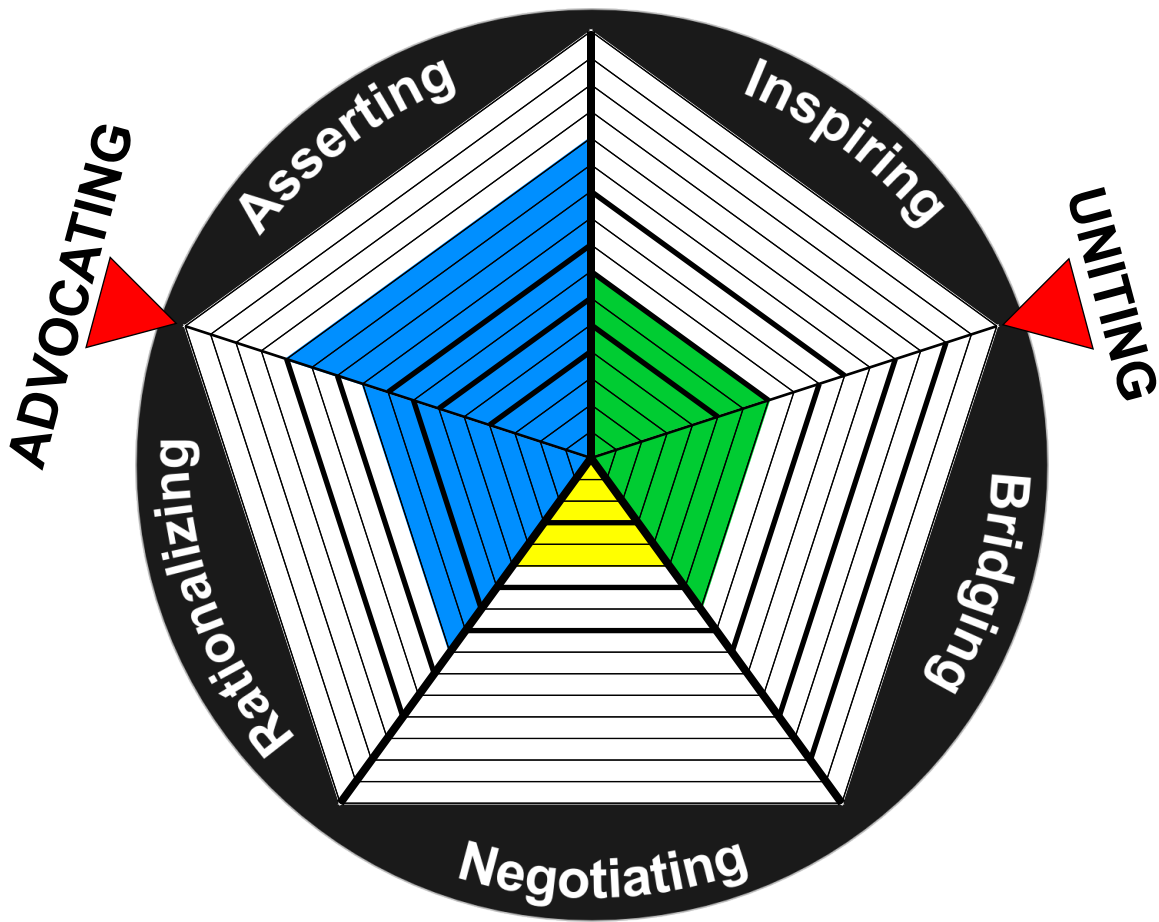
You advocate your position and encourage others with a sense of shared mission and exciting possibilities

## **Bridging**

You build relationships and connect with others through listening, understanding and building coalitions

## Influence Profile For: Donald Sample

Category	Strength of Preference																
Rationalizing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Asserting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Negotiating	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Inspiring	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Bridging	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Underutilized				Slight					Moderate				Dominant			



### Style Preference

You do not have a dominant influence style, however you show a moderate preference for Asserting (p.5) and Rationalizing (p.4). Even though you show a preference for more than one style your most preferred style (s) is likely to be Asserting (p.5).

With a Rationalizing preference you will almost always push your perspectives, ideas and beliefs using logical and rational reasoning to convince others of your point of view. You use relevant facts and data to persuade others and you use expert views and historical data to support your argument.

## Value of the Rationalizing Style

- Brings the facts of a situation into clearer focus
- Uses analysis to propose a logical solution
- Moves discussion to a more logical, less emotional plane
- Takes initiative to suggest solutions to problems

## Rationalizing is best used when...

- You are perceived as having unique status or competence – recognized expertise.
- You have information or insights not readily available to others.
- The issue being considered is open to logical discussion – probably a “right” way.
- People involved are not emotionally committed to a predetermined outcome or to having certain values upheld.
- Others do not see you as directly competing with them (i.e., jobs, rewards, career paths).

## When Rationalizing is used effectively

- You calmly and fairly present data and logic that enhances the understanding and awareness of other stakeholders.
- You base your position on accurate and relevant facts.
- You give other stakeholders time to ask clarifying questions.
- You avoid direct competition with those you want to influence.

## When Rationalizing is used ineffectively

- Frequent repeating of logical proposals can feel like pressure and generate a negative emotional response.
- You do not account for value-based solutions.
- When overused it can be seen as competitive or self-serving and people may oppose your proposals regardless of the merits of the facts and your expertise.
- You may generate a competitive response from others.
- Stakeholders may feel that their values and feelings are ignored or are not important.
- People may assume you value your data more than their feelings.
- People feel they are being pressured and their perspectives are not being heard.

With an Asserting preference you will almost always push your perspectives, ideas and beliefs by insisting that you are heard and by being willing to challenge the ideas of others. You will put forth your ideas even when you know they might be unpopular and you will challenge ideas or suggestions with which you disagree. You appreciate debate and do not mind having your position challenged in a respectful way. You know how to use power, rewards and consequences to get resolution.

## Value of the Asserting Style

- Specifies needs and requirements
- Clearly communicates your position on an issue
- Benefits and consequences are clear
- Moves a resolution forward with speed based on positional authority

## Asserting is best used when...

- There are limited acceptable outcomes and time is critical.
- You have a high need to get important issues resolved and are prepared to take interpersonal risk.
- You are willing to settle for compliance from others versus commitment.
- You have the ability to reward people with incentives.
- You are in a position of higher power or are the decision maker.

## When Asserting is used effectively

- You clearly communicate your expectations and requirements.
- You clearly state your position and are able to identify where there is no room for compromise.
- You can reward people for their agreement and/or compliance.

## When Asserting is used ineffectively

- Unreasonable demands can sometimes lead to deadlock.
- This style can be seen as evaluative – others may feel you are judging them.
- It can feel pressured, cause annoyance and if overused can create the desire for people to get even.
- This style can be experienced as aggressive and may unintentionally push people away.
- You get compliance from other stakeholders when you need commitment. It can be seen as self-serving and competitive with little interest in the needs of other stakeholders.
- It may be seen as heavy handed and dominating.

With a Negotiating preference you will almost always be willing to compromise and negotiate to reach an outcome. You will bargain to reach agreement when something is important to you and you are willing to make compromises to reach your ultimate goal. You will make tradeoffs to reach agreement and you are willing to help someone else in exchange for their future support. You readily recognize areas of mutual agreement and support.

## Value of the Negotiating Style

- Identifies mutual points of agreement
- Points out the advantages to others of moving to a solution
- Offers help or resources to others in order to reach a solution or take action
- Finds steps and ways to get momentum in a complex situation

## Negotiating is best used when...

- Issues are of moderate importance and there is opportunity to give and take.
- Power is equal and there is mutual commitment to get a solution.
- There is a need for a temporary solution or action to a complex situation.
- A back-up approach is needed when there is time pressure.
- There are important issues that everyone agrees are open for negotiation.
- The situation requires an agreement to move forward and the stakeholders have diverse and unyielding positions.

## When Negotiating is used effectively

- You encourage people to talk and discuss possible solutions.
- You can suggest a process to reach a settlement.
- You suggest tradeoffs that can be made. You maintain a neutral position.
- You show appreciation for the other party's issues.

## When Negotiating is used ineffectively

- You may lose sight of the bigger picture and long-term goals.
- It may appear that what is moderately important to you is more significant than what is of great importance to others.
- The process of compromising may confuse others about your real position.
- You give up something that is critical to your interest or the interest of those you represent.
- You may communicate that you are less concerned about an issue than you really are.
- You appear willing to give in to the demands or needs of other stakeholders to avoid conflict.

With an Inspiring preference you will almost always pull people toward you and toward your point of view. You advocate your position by encouraging others with a sense of shared purpose and exciting possibilities. You are enthusiastic about your ideas and you help others see their exciting possibilities. You can effectively communicate your vision for the best outcome and you appeal to people's hopes and dreams to gain their support. Stories and metaphors are used to support your position.

## Value of the Inspiring Style

- Appeals to common hopes and aspirations by articulating shared interests
- Builds solidarity by fostering awareness of higher goals and objectives
- Leads to increased appreciation of shared interests between opposing parties and lays the groundwork for joint problem solving

## Inspiring is best used when...

- There are values and aspirations that appeal to all stakeholders.
- A high level of ownership/commitment is required.
- Collaboration is not against anyone's self-interest.
- People's hopes and values can be aroused.
- There already exists a basic foundation of trust and there are no hidden agendas.

## When Inspiring is used effectively

- You help other stakeholders see how their interest is aligned with yours.
- You appeal to the common aspirations and hopes that all stakeholders hold in common.
- You use stories and personal events to create interest in your ideas.
- You enable stakeholders to see how mutual collaboration is in everyone's best interest.
- You build a higher level of trust among the stakeholders so that personal interests are shared.

## When Inspiring is used ineffectively

- If trust does not exist, it can be seen as a smoke screen or an attempt to mislead.
- If there is an adversary relationship, one side's exciting possibility may be the other side's disaster.
- When you are an outsider, this can lead to distrust or suspicion.
- If there is no common goal then trust may be eroded and credibility can be lost.
- If you approach this with hidden agendas then it can engender distrust and contempt.



With a Bridging preference you will almost always pull people toward you and toward your point of view. You influence outcomes by building coalitions and communities of interest based on common, mutual interest. You listen to what others have to say and work to establish a climate of trust. By acknowledging the needs and concerns of others you show appreciation for other people's issues and interest.

### Value of the Bridging Style

- Draws out the intentions, goals and positions of others
- Shows appreciation for others' problems, difficulties and needs
- Ensures clarity and mutual understanding
- Builds trust through open communication and acceptance of feelings

### Bridging is best used when...

- The situation is complex and the perspective of all stakeholders is needed.
- There is no apparent right answer and you welcome insights from others.
- You respect and are open to the involvement and collaboration of others.
- You need the commitment of others to move forward.
- You have time to build a power coalition.

### When Bridging is used effectively

- You facilitate collaborative problem solving.
- You show sincere interest in the positions and concerns of others.
- You strive to ensure that others are heard and understood.
- You seek out all relevant stakeholders.
- You help stakeholders see how their larger, common interest can supersede smaller interest.

### When Bridging is used ineffectively

- Lack of time: Time and discretion are important considerations in building openness, confidence and trust.
- It can be perceived as manipulative and dishonest if you are not really sincere about others' involvement or their position.
- You may cause feelings of impatience when time is of the essence.
- You use what you learn from others to manipulate the situation.
- You start by listening/communicating and then run out of time and/or interest.
- There may be frustration when there is a lack of time for consensus.

## Influence Orientation

In addition to your influence style preference, you may also have an influence orientation.

### Advocating

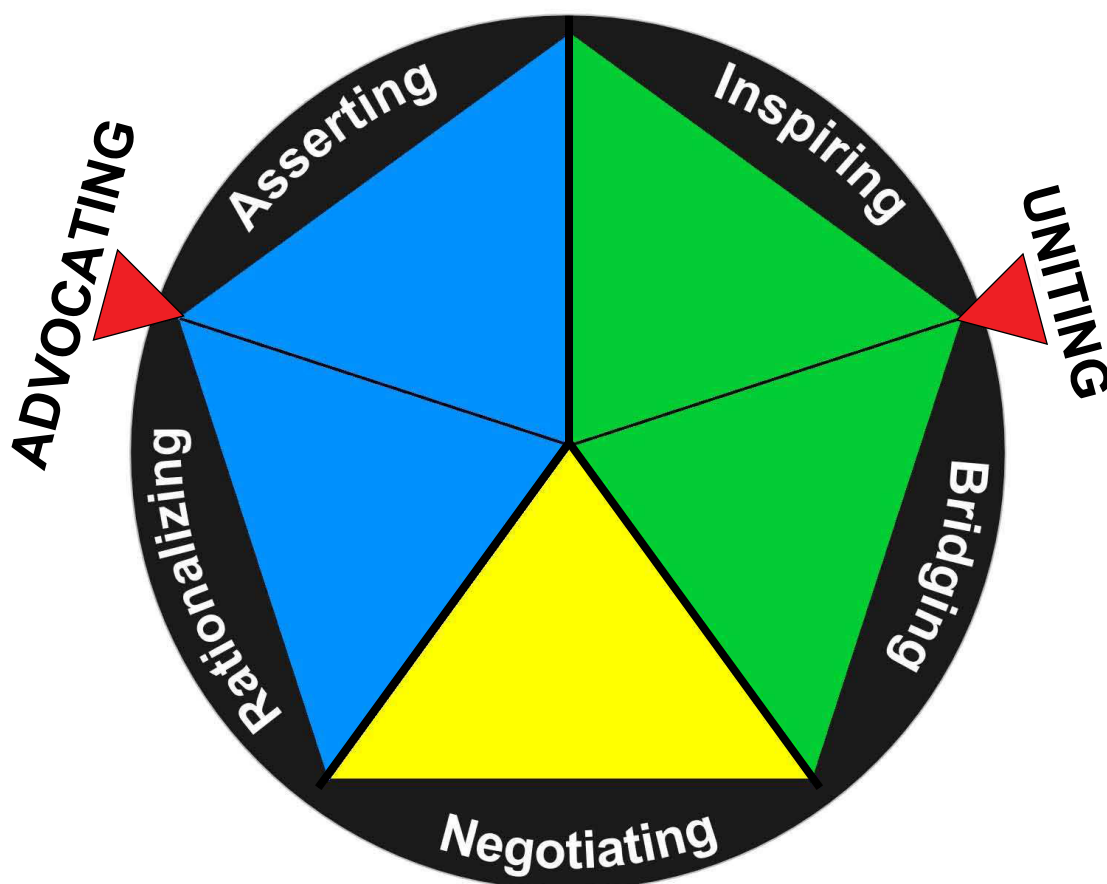
If your combined Rationalizing and Asserting score is 25 or higher, then you likely influence through Advocating.

Your overall orientation is to push your perspectives, ideas and beliefs. The techniques you use typically include: logical reasoning, rational persuasion, use of relevant facts and data, insistence that your ideas are considered and a willingness to challenge the ideas and opinions of others. You can be a strong advocate for your position and others understand exactly where you stand. You may be seen by others as a leader who is bold and forceful.

### Uniting

If your combined Inspiring and Bridging score is 25 or higher, then you likely influence through Uniting.

Your overall influence orientation is to pull people together and toward your perspectives, ideas and beliefs. The techniques you use typically include: rallying support, communicating possibilities, clarifying shared interest, building coalitions and understanding the positions and interest of others. You can be a catalyst for building support for your position through excitement, common interest and shared purpose. You may be seen by others as a leader who is an enabling facilitator and motivator.



## Tips for Influencing

### Rationalizers

- Provide evidence-based facts and figures in a clear and concise manner.
- Ask questions to understand what relevant data, facts/figures are important to the subject at hand.
- Demonstrate understanding of statistical and financial information.
- Identify critical themes in large quantities of information and explain what the themes point to.

### Asserters

- Be direct and decisive in your approach.
- Demonstrate your competence and expertise by articulating your knowledge of the issue at hand.
- Be solution oriented when raising an issue (steps, timelines, costs, etc).
- Be transparent and open about where you stand on an issue.
- Demonstrate that you understand their position by summarizing your understanding of their position.

### Negotiators

- Look for win/win solutions and ways to help the other party in some way.
- Be willing to give something up in order to move forward to a mutually agreeable solution.
- Point out where there are areas of agreement.
- Be willing to follow through on tradeoffs or concessions made.
- Avoid win/lose language and attitudes.

### Inspirers

- Tell stories or use metaphors to demonstrate your position or why something is important to you.
- Connect on an emotional level.
- Point to the positive outcome that can be achieved that you and others care about.
- Understand what is important to others in the situation and demonstrate that you see it as important too.

### Bridgers

- Find ways to involve people in the development of the solution.
- Listen carefully, ask lots of open-ended questions and summarize what you have heard.
- Show you understand the needs and concerns of others.
- Recognize others' contributions in getting to a solution and give credit where credit is due.
- Attempt to understand others before you attempt to be understood.

## Developing Underutilized Styles

### Developing Your Rationalizing Style

- Learn your subject area. Ensure you have data to support your requests and/or statements. A thorough familiarity with the details of the situation you are influencing will enable you to present objective support for your position and to propose alternatives when faced with an impasse.
- Practice problem solving by collecting relevant data, generating multiple options, doing a benefits/issue analysis on each option before recommending a solution.
- Depersonalize your disagreements with others. Practice focusing on related issues, facts, and data, rather than personal differences or your feelings toward the people involved.
- When you are faced with new, complex or expansive problems, think through the chain of causes leading to the problem.
- Always find at least one fact to support your position.
- Identify someone you think uses a logical and rational problem-solving style and ask them about the kind of details they would want to know in your specific situation. Go and find this information.

### Developing Your Asserting Style

- Practice challenging the status quo. Back up your opinions by researching the issues thoroughly, talking to the parties involved and understanding the purpose behind the decisions. After assuring yourself that your perspective is valid, present your findings to the appropriate individuals in a well-thought-out manner.
- Learn to ask clarifying questions. Use What, Why and How to frame your questions. Good questions can challenge your adversary's position without appearing aggressive.

- Once you've stated your position, check in with others to ask if they understand. Ask them to repeat what you've just stated.
- Be willing to act on your views, even though your views may be unpopular. Try to lead with your ideas rather than merely responding to others' ideas. Take more opportunities to be the first to put your ideas on the table rather than listening for a long time and eventually adding something to an already developed consensus.
- Interview others who are faced with pressure to make decisions constantly. Ask them what methods they use to make a decision, the criteria that they use to evaluate the quality of a decision and the lessons they have learned.
- Force yourself to make decisions within a specified time period even when all data may not be available. Think about what information may not be necessary or may be impractical because of resulting delay. Think about the consequences of not making the decision today.

### Developing Your Negotiating Style

- Understand the feelings and position of the other side. Gather as much information as possible on the other negotiating party (i.e. competing products and solutions). Use this information so that you can effectively establish your position and frame a complete solution for everyone at the table.
- Know whom you have to convince. Find out who the key influencers and decision makers are in a given situation and develop a plan to obtain their support and commitment. If you don't know them or are not familiar with what interests them, talk with people who do know them and can tell you what their "hot buttons" are.

## Developing Underutilized Styles

- Interview others who are excellent negotiators. Ask them to describe the negotiation techniques they use. Discuss ways of handling a situation that you're facing. Think about their statements and incorporate the lessons into your own negotiation activities.
- Make sure you know your BATNA (best alternative to a negotiated agreement).
- Make a list of the pros of your position and make sure you can articulate each one.
- Make a list of the outcomes you can live with and the ones you cannot before entering into a negotiation. Prioritize the outcomes.

## Developing Your Inspiring Style

- Practice telling stories and using metaphors to describe to people something that is important or complex.
- Think of stories that are personalized that support your point of view. Make sure you can tell the story quickly.
- Develop your visioning skills. Use tools and techniques to create a compelling vision and facilitate others in the development of one.
- Develop your EQ (Emotional Quotient) by understanding your feelings and the feelings of others in different situations.
- Find out what motivates others and build this into your story. Listen carefully to the language used by others and the stories they tell.

## Developing Your Bridging Style

- Build relationships. Take the time to get to know the individuals on the project. Consider a team-building session.
- Recognize the need to be patient and work through differences.
- Promote positive working relationships and the development of mutual trust by encouraging candid discussions and acknowledging other people's feelings. Set the standard of treating each other with respect despite stress, tight deadlines and tough deliverables.
- Make sure you understand the perspectives of the people you are trying to influence. Consider each of the individuals involved and what their likely responses will be in reaction to your proposals. Where you are lacking information about their reactions, try to find out more about their position and perspective via informal conversations with them.
- Reframe a problem or issue to avoid looking at a situation from a single perspective. Try reframing the problem from the other stakeholders' perspectives, from the perspective of the outcome you desire or from the perspective of a key constituent or customer.
- Complete a Stakeholder Analysis. List all the key stakeholders that you need to have on board for the project or vision. Determine what is required to get stakeholders involved and committed to the work. Create a stakeholder action plan.
- Develop your listening and open-ended questioning skills.
- Develop your facilitation skills to help with collaboration in groups of people.

**NOTES:**