DISC Style D: Forceful and direct

Introduction to DISC

The DISC test is one of the most popular personality tests used in the workplace. This test shows how someone is likely to behave in their work environment and is therefore valuable in understanding candidates more deeply in preparation for interviews. The model uses the basic styles of **Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C)**, which may appear alone or in combination with another style. The letters of the personality types correspond with these four styles.

D type description

Ds could easily be considered the “alpha” due to their forceful, intense, and ambitious approach. They are firm and objective in their decisions, do not take “no” for an answer, and are a force of nature in the way they choose their own path. They love difficult situations and seize opportunities where they are.

In personal relationships

Ds are the most individualistic of all types and will encourage others to be autonomous. They are often unwilling to collaborate with others if they don’t see the value for themselves in the endeavor. They are open communicators, though they will not be emotionally vulnerable. They are competitive and work through punishment and reward.

At work

Their desire to win is their main drive, and this factor is more important than relationships or collaboration in the workplace. With an individualistic approach, they find it more challenging than others to work with colleagues and empathise with their needs and feelings. They like positions of power and authority.

Ds are self-sufficient leaders and provide a clear chain of command. They give the team the direction it needs in highly competitive situations, and faithful followers are rewarded.

They don't like to be “just part of a team” and will often play devil's advocate then. Meaningful change is accepted and firm leadership is needed, as the D will show resistance to a weak leader.

Their best attributes

Ds are good communicators. They are focused individuals who operate with a sense of urgency. They are not easily defeated, and as a means to express their sense of control, can take charge of any situation if they are under pressure. These attributes often lead to great success and independence.

Their main challenges

Their autonomy and neglect of others is a difficult challenge to navigate at work and in relationships. They set high standards for themselves, as well as for others, culminating in outbursts of impatience and possible aggression when they feel threatened.

Tips for communicating and working with a D

Ds respond best to direct, factual communication. When you communicate with them:

- Keep conversations straightforward and succinct.
- Speak in a confident and assertive tone.
- Focus on being goal-directed and support what you say with facts.

To help them achieve their potential at work:

- Work through any problems that surface logically and analytically and with direct communication.
- Set boundaries on what you allow Ds to say to you, even in times of conflict.
- Recognise that they work best when they are allowed to make decisions and show leadership.
- Provide them with challenges in their role to help them retain interest.
- Allow them to work with other individualistic and success-driven types, but also with those who can help model strong team collaboration and relationship building.

Possible coaching points:

- Ds may need coaching to be more understanding and empathetic. It can help them see that a war path is not always the best way to convince others.
- They may need encouragement to see others as participants rather than followers, which will help them better recognise colleagues' contributions and see their objections as opportunities.