ADAPTING YOUR WORK STYLE: DIRECT - INDIRECT

Explore proven inclusion strategies to use when working with people who are either more *direct* or *indirect* communicators.

Direct VS Indirect

DEFINING YOUR WORK STYLE

Direct
- Direct communicators come to the point quickly
- Are forthright in asking questions and giving feedback
- Feel comfortable disagreeing with others

Indirect
- Indirect communicators spend more time giving context before coming to the point
- Avoid giving feedback publicly
- Express disagreement in subtle ways

ADAPTATION SKILLS

Direct
- Be forthright in giving feedback, as they are likely seeking this kind of input from you.

Indirect
- Don't assume that you will get straightforward feedback in an initial conversation, especially if it is something they think you may not want to hear.

Direct
- Don't assume they are being rude when they say things in a more "frank" manner than you might.

Indirect
- Understand that their style is useful for building relationships, and giving, saving, or maintaining "face" for themselves and others.

Direct
- Privately explain why you may avoid expressing disagreement directly. For example, the level of your directness can depend on how close or distant your relationship is.

Indirect
- Encourage them to give you direct feedback, and explain that you are genuinely interested in what they have to say – whether or not they agree with you.

INCLUSIVE ACTIONS

To be inclusive of team members who may be on different sides of this Direct-Indirect continuum, consider:

Giving Feedback
Demonstrating what you expect with regard to how feedback should be given to your team members.

Meeting Participation
Clarifying your expectations around what kind of participation you are looking for in both virtual and face-to-face interactions. Additionally, try to balance speaking time in meetings to get input from everyone.

Open-ended Questions
Practicing using more open-ended questions, as they will help uncover more information from those who are less direct.

Communication Rhythm
Establishing a communication rhythm to provide a dependable, reliable pattern for team members to exchange information.

Interested to see what *your* communication style is and how you can be inclusive of all types of communicators?

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