

VIEW: An Assessment of  
Problem Solving Style<sup>SM</sup>



# The Power of Preference

Understanding and Applying Your  
Problem Solving Style

SAMPLE



# Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help you understand and apply your results from VIEW: An Assessment of Problem Solving Style (VIEW). It explains the dimensions VIEW assesses, and benefits, risks, and implications for each style. It also shows how your preferences integrate and gives tips for improving teamwork and collaboration.

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## Orientation to Change: Explorers and Developers

The Orientation to Change dimension of VIEW deals with your preferences when you are perceiving and approaching change – and the many kinds of challenges and opportunities that change creates. This dimension addresses:

- ▶ How do I prefer to respond and deal with originality?
- ▶ How do I react to structure and authority?
- ▶ How do I prefer to search for information and alternatives?

You will find a description of both Explorers and Developers below. See the *Preferences in Action* section beginning on page 11 to learn about potential benefits and risks, as well as general implications for both styles.



### Explorers prefer to

- ▶ Break new ground
- ▶ Do things differently – ask “Why?”
- ▶ Challenge the problem definition
- ▶ Be seen as ingenious and unconventional
- ▶ Novelty: Emphasize novelty that is original and unique
- ▶ Structure: See detailed structure as limiting or confining
- ▶ Authority: Challenge or ignore authority, bend the rules and go their own way
- ▶ Search Strategy: Search broadly for novel information and options

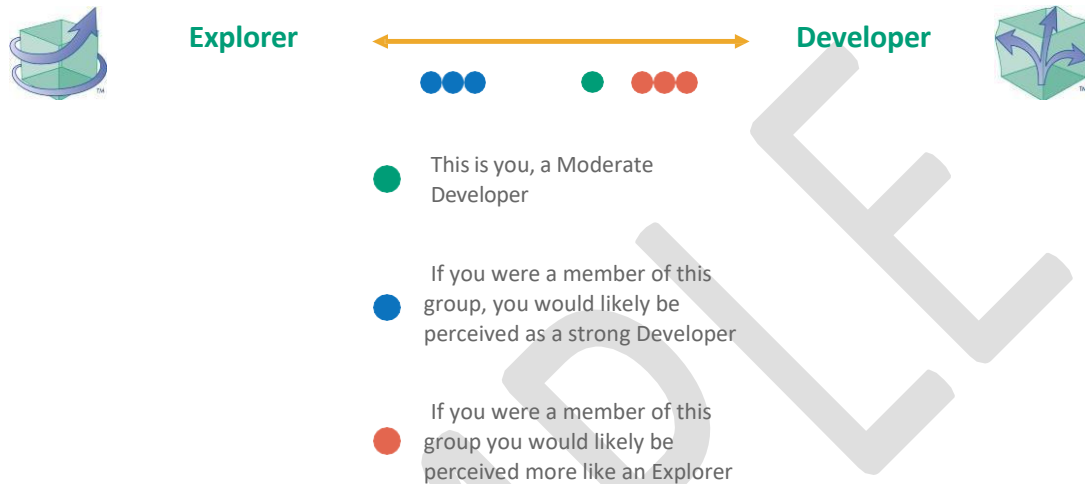


### Developers prefer to

- ▶ Bring tasks to fulfillment
- ▶ Do things better – ask “How?”
- ▶ Clarify the problem definition
- ▶ Be seen as precise, thorough, and dependable
- ▶ Novelty: Emphasize novelty that creates improvement and usefulness
- ▶ Structure: See detailed structure as beneficial and supportive
- ▶ Authority: Seek and appreciate sources of authority and work within the rules
- ▶ Search Strategy: Search narrowly and deeply for relevant information and options

## How do your Preferences Fit with Others?

In a group situation, the meaning of your VIEW results is relative to those around you. The following example shows some results for Orientation to Change, but this would play out in the same way for all three dimensions.



While knowing your personal results is useful, seeing how your results fit within a particular group helps you all be productive. Understanding your style relative to others helps you:

- **Move beyond ‘clash.’** It is often natural to see others who are different from you in a negative light. This can create destructive tension that ultimately affects your ability, and the ability of others to be productive. Use your understanding of your results to identify ways to appreciate and value the differences that others bring to the party.
- **Cope when needed.** Coping is what you do when you must work outside your own style preference. This takes energy, concentration and often has other costs. You may find that the work you do when coping is not as easy, productive, or as high quality as when you work within your natural preference. Everyone copes at times, and as we gain life experience, we often pick up tools and techniques that make coping easier. Use your understanding of VIEW to become aware of when you and others around you may be coping.
- **Cover yourself.** When you find yourself in a coping situation, it is helpful to take advantage of the natural style differences of others. This is known as coverage. Identify those who may have more natural preferences for the situation at hand and collaborate with them to increase the likelihood that you will be successful.

When you know your own style and that of others, VIEW is proven to increase creative collaboration and cooperation. The following section shows how your preferences play out in both individual and team situations.

# Your Preferences in Action

## ORIENTATION TO CHANGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL



### Explorers



### Developers

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#### POTENTIAL BENEFITS

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- ▶ Likely to provide highly original ideas and options
- ▶ May challenge others to be bolder in their thinking
- ▶ Provide fresh or surprising points of view
- ▶ Supply departures from tradition
- ▶ Readily deal with the unexpected
- ▶ Offer radical changes or breakthrough thinking
- ▶ Seen by others as ingenious and unconventional

- ▶ Likely to provide workable ideas and options
- ▶ May challenge others to be more precise and thorough
- ▶ Focus on organizing and detailing points of view
- ▶ Supply insights helpful to implement
- ▶ Provide stability and continuity
- ▶ Offer incremental changes or more practical thinking
- ▶ Seen by others as precise, thorough, and dependable

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#### POTENTIAL RISKS

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- ▶ May be seen as impractical or abrasive
- ▶ Others may have challenges in understanding their ideas
- ▶ May disregard or overlook vital details
- ▶ May be impatient in gaining acceptance
- ▶ Quick to reject or dismiss ideas as boring or uninteresting
- ▶ May confuse or overwhelm others with an abundance of options
- ▶ May be impatient with others who seek greater levels of detail

- ▶ May be seen as timid, cautious, or rigid
- ▶ Others may see them as too focused on deadlines and rules
- ▶ May be so focused on details that they lose the 'big picture'
- ▶ May be impatient when focusing on future possibilities
- ▶ Quick to reject or dismiss ideas that are too novel or original
- ▶ May resist keeping things open or making changes – seek closure too early
- ▶ May be impatient with others who seek to redefine or change the current paradigm

## ORIENTATION TO CHANGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL (cont.)



### Explorers



### Developers

#### IN GENERAL

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- ▶ Thrive on novel, ill-defined, and ambiguous situations and challenges
- ▶ Demonstrate little concern for details, order, efficiency, or prescribed procedures
- ▶ May surprise others when coming up with seemingly irrelevant insights and ideas

- ▶ Thrive on well-defined challenges and opportunities, generating relevant input
- ▶ Be challenged by unexpected obstacles or ill-structured situations
- ▶ May dig deep and thoroughly examine a narrow range of alternatives



#### WHEN PROBLEM SOLVING

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- ▶ When defining challenges and opportunities, may focus too much on the desired future and ignore current reality
- ▶ Generate many novel ideas and be challenged to move to closure and focusing
- ▶ May overlook key sources of assistance or resistance
- ▶ Prefer generating and divergence over focusing and convergence

- ▶ When defining challenges and opportunities, may focus too much on current reality and ignore the desired future
- ▶ Generate practical and useful ideas and be challenged to avoid premature closure
- ▶ May need help in challenging the rules when this is necessary
- ▶ Prefer focusing and convergence over generating and divergence



#### WHEN WORKING

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- ▶ Focus on: possibilities rather than facts; what might be more effective for the future
- ▶ Enjoy and stimulated by learning new skills, and last-minute pressure of a deadline
- ▶ May seek work opportunities that provide a range of new opportunities and challenges and choose enterprising and management areas like research and development and strategic marketing

- ▶ Focus on: facts and current reality; precision; what might improve efficiency in the short term
- ▶ Enjoy applying existing expertise, and following established ways of doing things in a planful manner
- ▶ May seek work opportunities that focus on maintaining and improving established ways of doing things and choose business operations or more structured areas like accounting, finance, and programming

## ORIENTATION TO CHANGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL (cont.)



### Explorers



### Developers



#### WHEN LEARNING

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▶ Thrive on a variety of choices and challenges, with options that lead to new or unusual outcomes

▶ Seek to restructure assignments to be more personally engaging, working on several projects at once, providing unpredictable responses and/or questions

▶ Benefit from: Learning to manage and keep track of multiple activities and work-arounds; latitude for originality; being challenged to demonstrate the efficacy of unusual ideas in reaching goals, and meeting expectations

▶ Thrive on knowing how new content fits into and extends what is known, looking for realistic examples and applications of the learning

▶ Seek clear and detailed assignments and expectations supported by sequential, well-organized materials, and a near-by authority to ensure they are on track

▶ Benefit from: Structure and a predictable work routine; being able to address one thing at a time; detailed instructions that provide guidance, being challenged to look at the bigger picture

## ORIENTATION TO CHANGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR YOU IN A TEAM

The strengths and limitations of your Orientation to Change preference within a group or team may vary depending on the collective Orientation to Change preferences of the group or team.

If the composition of your group or team is:	If you are a well-defined Explorer, you may:	If you have a Moderate preference, you may:	If you are a well-defined Developer, you may:
<p><b>Primarily Explorers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Feel energized by group norm of thinking 'out of the box' and lack of structure.</li> <li>▶ Feed on originality and unique ideas of others.</li> <li>▶ Feel understood and encouraged.</li> <li>▶ Seldom have your ideas challenged as being too impractical.</li> <li>▶ Not cut off idea generation in a reasonable time-frame.</li> <li>▶ Have a low probability of successful implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ (If you are a Moderate Developer), be perceived as a more well-defined Developer than you really are.</li> <li>▶ Push the group to have a modicum of structure.</li> <li>▶ Risk being viewed as relatively boring, despite being important to successful implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Help the group to plan, organize, refocus.</li> <li>▶ Help others by being precise, accurate, and thorough.</li> <li>▶ Be the lone voice seeking some structure; find yourself asking, "How?"</li> <li>▶ Have difficulty sharing the group's view of the future.</li> <li>▶ Be seen as timid, rigid, too careful, and inflexible.</li> <li>▶ Be considered boring, even though you may be the key to successful implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Primarily Developers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Feel a need to challenge others to consider bold ideas, providing others with a new perspective.</li> <li>▶ Often ask, "Why not?"</li> <li>▶ Be the source of originality and uniqueness.</li> <li>▶ Be tuned out due to what others consider to be your impracticality.</li> <li>▶ Consider others boring.</li> <li>▶ Not be viewed as a team player.</li> <li>▶ Stretch others to consider bold ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ (If you are a Moderate Explorer), be perceived as more of a well-defined Explorer than you really are.</li> <li>▶ Feel a need to push others to stretch their thinking.</li> <li>▶ Be seen as somewhat impractical.</li> <li>▶ View others as being boring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Feel very comfortable with group norms embracing structure, being well-organized, and attending to details.</li> <li>▶ Piggyback on others' ideas involving incremental change.</li> <li>▶ Be appreciated for dependability and thoroughness.</li> <li>▶ Generate realistic and workable ideas; may not anticipate future needs.</li> <li>▶ Urge staying focused on the current task.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fairly even distribution of Orientation to Change preferences</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Argue for less structure.</li> <li>▶ Provide new perspectives.</li> <li>▶ Not listen carefully, dismiss ideas as boring.</li> <li>▶ Extend idea generation, causing tension.</li> <li>▶ Not fully engage in implementation details.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Contribute to team harmony, valuing and appreciating the strengths of well-defined styles.</li> <li>▶ Help others vary their approach to maximize effectiveness and productivity through your understanding of the task at hand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Argue for more structure.</li> <li>▶ Push for early closure to idea generation, causing tension.</li> <li>▶ Quickly dismiss ideas you consider impractical.</li> <li>▶ Be instrumental in an implementation phase.</li> </ul>



## Tips for Working with Opposite Preferences

“ A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

**Katzenbach and Smith**  
Authors of *The Wisdom of Teams*

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Research and experience clearly show that when solving complex and non-routine problems, groups and teams are more effective when they have diverse skills, knowledge, and points of view – and can effectively manage that diversity. Here are some tips for working with others who may have preferences different from your own.

### EXPLORERS WORKING WITH DEVELOPERS

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- ▶ Try not to overwhelm others by providing too many options or options way outside the boundaries
- ▶ Appreciate closure efforts to allow others to get to a conclusion
- ▶ Be patient with detail – allow others to get into the specifics

### DEVELOPERS WORKING WITH EXPLORERS

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- ▶ Be open to surprises – try not to judge or dismiss unexpected options or novel perspectives
- ▶ Be patient when others try to redefine the task – even when you thought a decision had been made
- ▶ Ask for what you need – Don't assume that others know what you need

### EXTERNALS WORKING WITH INTERNALS

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- ▶ Resist temptation to interject – particularly before hearing everything others wish to share
- ▶ Seek to understand the points of view of others, as well as how they feel
- ▶ Engage in active and generous listening to ensure accurate and complete understanding

### INTERNALS WORKING WITH EXTERNALS

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- ▶ Buy time for reflection – acknowledge, yet give yourself time to fully respond
- ▶ Do not retreat – avoid allowing others to ignore your point of view
- ▶ Ask probing questions to help get to the heart of the matter

### PEOPLE DECIDERS WORKING WITH TASK DECIDERS

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- ▶ Focus on the task and work to come to agreement on 'what' to accomplish
- ▶ Avoid the urge to 'shut down' by buying some time to cool off when tension is high (you can always agree to disagree)
- ▶ Avoid making too many trade-offs to achieve harmony

### TASK DECIDERS WORKING WITH PEOPLE DECIDERS

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- ▶ Prioritize relationships versus 'winning the argument' and maintain high levels of respect
- ▶ Focus on the present – what you can do here and now
- ▶ Release the urge to 'punish' and be willing to forgive to move forward