Understanding Change Styles

People have different reactions to change. This brief instrument measures how people react to change. People actually react along a continuum:

| Extreme conserver | Conserver | Pragmatist | Originator | Extreme Originator |

What we know from research is that there is no relationship between change style and effectiveness. Leaders can have any of the styles. The secret is to appreciate your own reaction to change and to understand that others will have different reactions – and then knowing how to work with those with different styles.

**Conservers** general approach to change is to:
- Appear deliberate, disciplined, and organized
- Start with traditional ideas when problem solving
- Appear cautious and inflexible
- Focus on details and implementation
- Value tradition (how it has been done) and best practices
- React negatively to surprises and uncertainty
- Want structure, certainty, schedules, clarity about process
- Want change to be incremental

**Pragmatists** general approach to change is to:
- Appear practical, agreeable, flexible
- Value change that produces readily visible results
- Operate as mediators and catalysts for understanding the change
- Are open to both sides of the argument
- Take more of a middle-of-the-road approach
- Appear more team-oriented to their co-workers
- Want change to be functional

**Originators** general approach to change is to:
- Challenge the existing structure
- Appear unorganized, undisciplined, unconventional, spontaneous: react in the moment
- Dismiss traditional idea when problem solving
- Enjoy risk and uncertainty
- May appear impractical and miss important details
- Dismiss established practices with little regard
- Want change to be transformational (big, novel)

**Tips for Dealing with Those of a Different Change Style**
- Know your own reaction to change (change style) and appreciate different styles
- Consult with a person who has a different style to get their reaction before proceeding
- Make an effort to understand the perspectives of those with different styles, imagine putting on a hat
- Meet others need for structure, schedules, understanding process, having criteria for decision-making, clear outcomes

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Understanding Influence Styles

The way we lead change is by influencing others. We try to persuade them that reducing infections or improving discharge instructions is important. Or we try to persuade them that a new staffing model would work in the clinic. So how do we influence others? We often try to influence others the same way that we would be influenced. If stories influence you, you would tend to lead with a story. If data influences you, you would tend to lead with data, facts, expert opinion. The purpose of this brief assessment is to provide perspective on your own influence style – and to have a framework for dealing with those of different styles. Based upon your answers, you may have a strong style or be balanced across the styles. This is really a measure of how likely you would be to use a specific style.

Inspirers

• Tend to influence others with a sense of shared purposes and possibilities, a vision, a mission
• Offer a vision of the future ideal state if change is successful
• “Imagine if we could only….” “If we solve this, we will have an error-free process…”

Bridgers

• Tend to influence others by building relationships, building coalitions, connecting with others
• Offer stories of current problems, future stories of ideal care
• “I had this same issue last year and we…..” “I understand your situation and we can…..”

Negotiators

• Tend to influence others by thinking about “what’s in it” for the other person
• Argue for change based upon win-win outcomes, selling the idea by personalizing the advantage
• “If you will do this, then I will…..” “We can both come out ahead…..”

Rationalizers

• Tend to influence others with data, information, expert opinion
• Offer logical, rational explanations to convince others
• “The only logical solution is…..” “The data is convincing that we should”

Asserters

• Tend to influence others by using structure (policies, past practice, annual goals
• Offer reasons based upon connection to the mission, past practice, standards, requirements
• “The policy requires that...” “JC standards are...” “We need do this because our goal is....”

Influencing Tips

• Understand and personally align to the organization’s direction and priorities, culture, values
• Understand the organization’s decision-making process
• Take action even if you don’t have the authority over resources
• Build confidence with teams through proven execution, use tools effectively
• Demonstrate concern for others as well as self
• Understand key stakeholders influencing styles

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