



## COMMUNICATION STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE (WORK)

### Special guide

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## DESCRIPTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Communication Style Questionnaire tracks the four basic areas of using assertiveness when solving standard as well as demanding communication situations: adequate self-assertion; ability to stand by one's decisions or opinions and not letting oneself be manipulated; ability to give and receive feedback along with the art of establishing and developing social relations.

The theoretical basis behind this questionnaire is the modern concept of assertiveness. The questionnaire is meant as a diagnostic tool for positions, which emphasize dealing with other people (giving feedback, negotiating with suppliers, dealing with clients, complaint settlements, project managing and so forth) as well as for the consultancy area.

Questionnaire of Communication Style – Assertiveness covers personality tendencies to solving both standard and difficult social communication situations, either in known or unknown environments. This questionnaire is related to four basic areas of communication and behavior:

- ✓ adequate self-assertion (“I can assert myself”);
- ✓ the ability to stand by one’s decision or opinion and not let himself/herself be manipulated (“I stand by my own decisions and opinions”);
- ✓ the ability to give and receive feedback (“I can work with feedback”);
- ✓ the ability to build and develop social relationships (“I develop my social relationships”).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The essence of assertiveness is a pragmatic communication style, which can help an individual to confront criticism, manipulation and aggression. Assertive training addresses how to express, assert and defend oneself correctly. This training is designed for two key groups of people:

1. shy and unassertive individuals who tend to be caught off guard by their counterpart or opponent and are not able to put their own views forward; they withdraw and clear the way for others; they experience fear and lack self-belief;
2. overly aggressive individuals who come across as choleric and irritable and tend to overreact to any criticism; they also have a tendency to respond to and escalate tensions, putting off others from communicating with them as a result.

It is important to address at this point the difference between assertive and aggressive behavior. To illustrate, the table below shows the feelings of the speaker and the listener using the non-assertive, assertive and aggressive styles as outlined by Alberti and Emmons (2004, p. 48.):

Non-assertive behavior	Assertive behavior	Assertive behavior
<b>Speaker</b>		
self-denial	increases own value at the expense of others	increases own value
timid	bold	clear and bold
hurt, afraid	decides for others	feels good about themselves
leaves choices to others	reaches the desired goal at the expense of others	decides for themselves
does not reach the desired goal		might reach the desired goal
<b>Listener</b>		
guilty or angry	self-denial	increases own value
undervalued	hurt, defensive, embarrassed	bold
increases desired goal at the expense of others	does not reach the desired goal	might reach the desired goal

## DESCRIPTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL DIMENSIONS AND SCALES

All the below scales are divided according to the relationship to familiar people as well as the wider social environment. The output may then be used to monitor how an individual behaves in both these contexts.

### I know how to assert myself

This dimension measures the ability of adequate self-assertion both in the family context or when communicating with familiar people, as well as in the wider social environment. It maps the overall ability to communicate clearly, communicate one's requirements and ask others for help. It also affects the willingness to make decisions and take responsibility for those decisions.

### I assert my views and demands

This scale measures reasonable self-assertion and the ability to say what an individual requires and expects.

### I say what I like and what I do not like

This scale maps whether an individual expresses themselves clearly and intelligibly and whether they are also able to appreciate others.

### I can ask others for favors

This measures the ability to ask people in one's surroundings for assistance in a non-manipulative way.

### I stand behind what I say

This dimension focuses on the overall ability not to be influenced or manipulated and the ability to politely reject the request of another party. At the same time, it questions the ability to withstand a verbal attack.

### I will not let others manipulate me

This deals with the question of the extent to which the respondent recognizes manipulation and can effectively defend themselves against it.

### **I can refuse politely to things I do not want**

This scale focuses on the ability to politely say no to someone.

### **I deal appropriately with aggression or attack**

The scale maps the ability to handle a sudden attack – not to back down and withstand the situation, which can earn respect from the attacker and strengthen one’s self-confidence.

### **I know how to process feedback**

This dimension contains scales focused on processing feedback when both giving and receiving. It maps the ability to formulate feedback clearly and with a specific goal regarding the feelings of the other party. At the same time, it determines to what extent the individual is able to accept criticism and praise without negative feelings - anger, shame, etc.

### **I can give criticism without hurting other people’s feelings**

This focuses on the ability to articulate criticism clearly and comprehensibly, while taking into account who the respondent is criticizing, and at the same time guiding the criticism so that it leads to the desired goal.

### **I can praise others naturally**

This scale measures the ability to praise others, to notice good performance and small details, which leads to improved social relationships.

### **I can accept criticism and praise**

In contrast to the scale “ I can give criticism without hurting other people’s feelings”, this scale focuses on the other side of the coin - the extent to which the respondent is able to accept criticism and praise.

## I cultivate social relationships

This dimension maps the ability to actively and empathetically listen, the willingness and level of ability to communicate with strangers and establish new relationships, as well as the respondent's legibility in emotional expression.

### I can listen actively

This scale measures sensitivity to the expressions and problems of others, the ability to give enough space to the other party in communication and the development of one's own empathy.

### I deepen and build relationships

This scale focuses on the ability to have a casual conversation with a stranger, quickly find a common theme and at the same time estimate whether the other party is interested in communicating.

### I openly express my feelings

This scale deals with the legibility of an individual for others resulting from the ability to express authentic feelings.

## Control scales

The questionnaire works with two control scales. One scale follows the tendency to choose socially desirable answers, i.e., a lie score. If this tendency is high, the outputs of the questionnaire are less relevant and there is a risk that the respondent answered in order to be positively perceived.

The second control scale follows the tendency to choose an aggressive rather than an assertive form of action, i.e., a tendency to assert oneself at the expense of others.

The results of both control scales are given in the introduction to the final report. The first overall graph Main Areas of Communication and Behavior also draws attention to the increased tendency to assert oneself at the expense of others.

## ITEM ANALYSIS

### Item difficulty and item-total correlation

By a rule of thumb, all items with a difficulty lower than 0,1 and higher than 0,9, should be checked. The item total correlation is a correlation between the question score and the overall assessment score. A small item-correlation provides empirical evidence that the item is not measuring the same construct measured by the other items included. A correlation value less than 0,2 indicates that the corresponding item does not correlate very well with the scale overall and, thus, it may be dropped or replaced.

I know how to assert myself		
I assert my views and demands		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
11Rn	0,53	0,58
11Rp1	0,53	0,58
11Rp2	0,62	0,59
11Vn	0,62	0,56
11Vp1	0,61	0,62
11Vp2	0,57	0,59
I say what I like and what I do not like		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
12Rn	0,74	0,59
12Rp1	0,70	0,65
12Rp2	0,67	0,36
12Vn	0,61	0,63
12Vp1	0,68	0,62
12Vp2	0,62	0,64
I can ask others for favors		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
13Rn	0,67	0,58
13Rp1	0,43	0,57
13Rp2	0,80	0,54
13Vn	0,44	0,55
13Vp1	0,72	0,58
13Vp2	0,60	0,62



I know how to process feedback		
I can accept criticisms and praise		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
33Rn	0,44	0,45
33Rp1	0,72	0,49
33Rp2	0,58	0,53
33Vn	0,53	0,52
33Vp1	0,62	0,52
33Vp2	0,65	0,52
I can praise others naturally		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
32Rn	0,65	0,56
32Rp1	0,64	0,55
32Rp2	0,79	0,54
32Vn	0,70	0,55
32Vp1	0,79	0,55
32Vp2	0,39	0,45
I can give criticism without hurting other people's feelings		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
31Rn	0,73	0,44
31Rp1	0,67	0,53
31Rp2	0,61	0,37
31Vn	0,44	0,40
31Vp1	0,48	0,58
31Vp2	0,61	0,50

I cultivate social relationships		
I can listen actively		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
41Rn	0,76	0,39
41Rp1	0,66	0,59
41Rp2	0,77	0,50
41Vn	0,78	0,36
41Vp1	0,79	0,53

41Vp2	0,76	0,57
<b>I deepen and build relationships</b>		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
42Rn	0,61	0,44
42Rp1	0,84	0,53
42Rp2	0,85	0,52
42Vn	0,65	0,68
42Vp1	0,62	0,65
42Vp2	0,66	0,62
<b>I openly express my feelings</b>		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
43Rn	0,65	0,55
43Rp1	0,66	0,52
43Rp2	0,49	0,62
43Vn	0,61	0,53
43Vp1	0,59	0,61
43Vp2	0,71	0,59

<b>I stand behind what I say</b>		
<b>I can handle aggression or attack relatively well</b>		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
23Rn	0,76	0,50
23Rp1	0,76	0,49
23Rp2	0,65	0,30
23Vn	0,58	0,50
23Vp1	0,58	0,48
23Vp2	0,64	0,55
<b>I can refuse politely to things I do not want</b>		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
22Rn	0,23	0,34
22Rp1	0,55	0,60
22Rp2	0,55	0,52
22Vn	0,62	0,60
22Vp1	0,65	0,58
22Vp2	0,66	0,50

I will not let others manipulate me		
Item	Difficulty	Correlation
21Rn	0,44	0,39
21Rp1	0,62	0,59
21Rp2	0,51	0,50
21Vn	0,91	0,36
21Vp1	0,71	0,53
21Vp2	0,70	0,57

## RELIABILITY

Cronbach  $\alpha$  is an estimate of the internal consistency of a psychometric test. It is a function of the number of items in a test, the average covariance between item-pairs, and the variance of the total score.

The alpha coefficient for questionnaires should be 0,7 and higher.

Total reliability	I know how to assert myself	I stand behind what I say	I know how to process feedback	I cultivate social relationships
0,91	0,83	0,70	0,72	0,83

## SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

The normative group consists of european english speaking population (N = 7426).

Sex	
60 % women	N = 4434
31 % men	N = 2293
9 % unspecified	N = 699

Age	
39 % to 29	N = 2881
36 % 30–44 years old	N = 2671
16 % 45+ years old	N = 1208
9 % unspecified	N = 666

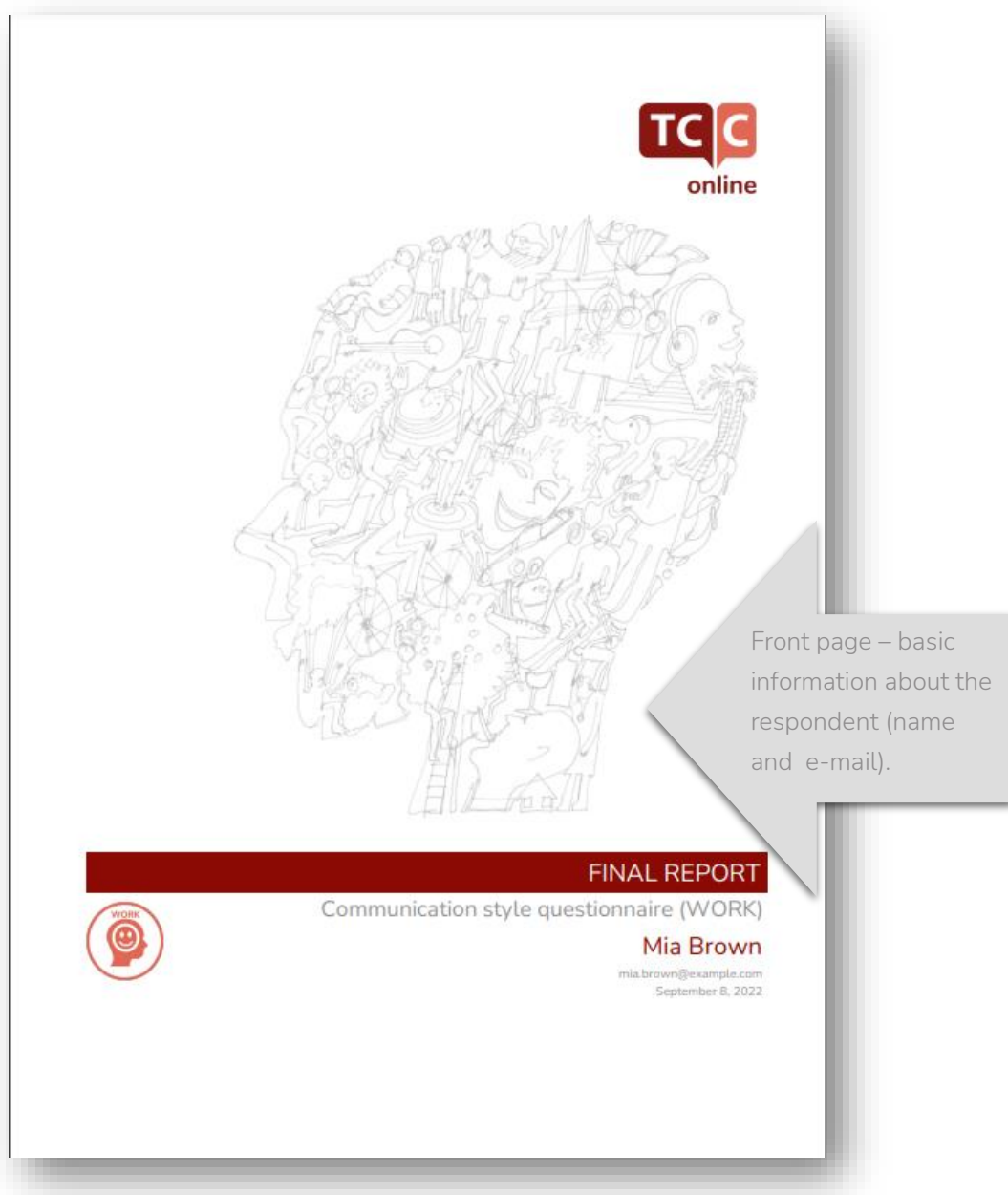
Education	
0,2 % primary	N = 15
50 % secondary	N = 3711
32 % university	N = 2358
4,8 % higher education	N = 272
13,8 % unspecified	N = 1070

Position at work	
17 % I have subordinates	N = 1278
66 % I do not have subordinates	N = 4936
16 % unspecified	N = 1212

Contact with clients	
51 % I am in direct contact with clients	N = 3763
31 % I am not in direct contact with clients	N = 2306
18 % unspecified	N = 1357

## FINAL REPORT

The output of the questionnaire includes a statement of the person's degree of assertiveness, a chart of the overall degree of assertiveness and a chart of the degree of assertiveness in various areas of communication. In addition, there is a text which includes an interpretation of the general profile as well as an overview of advantages and recommendations. It is based on two control scales, including a check of aggressive tendencies, i.e. the assertion of oneself at the expense of others.



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confidential

You now hold in your hands a report from Questionnaire of Communication Style - Assertiveness, which covers personality tendencies to solving both standard and difficult social communication situations, either in known or unknown environments. This questionnaire is related to four basic areas of communication and behaviour: adequate self-assertion ("I can assert myself"), the ability to stand by one's decision or opinion and not let himself/herself be manipulated ("I stand by my own decisions and opinions"); the ability to give and receive feedback ("I can work with feedback") and the ability to build and develop social relationships ("I develop my social relationships").

### VALIDITY SCALES

In addition to the main scales measuring the degree of assertive skills, the questionnaire also contains desirability scales that tell both about reliability of the results and the risk of asserting oneself and one's needs. The results of the 2 scales are presented below:

1. **SOCIAL DESIRABILITY** - A validity scale, "social desirability," warns of the possible tendency to offer socially desirable answers.
2. **AGGRESSION** - Highlights the higher frequency of responses indicating a tendency to choose rather aggressive approaches at the expense of others.

If the **SOCIAL DESIRABILITY** score exceeds the 85% threshold, the questionnaire results are not valid and tell more about the respondent's tendency to be perceived. Similarly, if the **AGGRESSION** rate is above 85%, there is a tendency to choose inappropriate approaches and replace assertive behavior with rather aggressive behavior. Such behavior can cause conflict and interpersonal disharmony. Therefore, scores above 85% are considered high on both scales.



SOCIAL DESIRABILITY



AGGRESSION

The answers are indicative of reasonable openness.

At the same time, answers point to a reasonable way of acting without negatively impacting others.

The total level of Aggressiveness and Social Desirability Scale.

### ASSERTIVENESS



- overall assertiveness
- in familiar environment
- in unfamiliar environment

### MAIN AREAS OF ASSERTIVENESS



The graphs express the level of assertiveness and its distribution in the four basic areas in the form of percentiles, i.e., in comparison with the reference group. More information on the questionnaire, norms, and population against which the results are compared can be found at <https://www.tconline.cz/psychodiagnostika/>.

The graphs show the overall level of assertiveness and the ability to apply assertive behavior in relation to loved ones or the wider environment in general. Where exclamation marks appear within the graph, they highlight areas where there is a higher risk of mistaking assertive behavior for aggression, i.e., asserting oneself at the expense of others. The number of exclamation marks can range from one to three.

#### PARTIAL CONTROL SCALES



The responses suggest a tendency to act more forcefully under pressure. A moderate tendency to aggression on the I STAND BY WHAT I SAY scale may result in the following manifestations in some situations:

- acting sternly and unapproachably in response to praise from others, interpreting praise as an attempt to please and flatter
- firmly defining oneself and rejecting others when asked for help or favours
- a tendency to escalate conflicts and disputes, and to react to conflicting behaviour in a confrontational manner



The responses show a tendency to impatience and little willingness to listen. A high tendency to aggression in the I CULTIVATE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS scale may have the following manifestations in some situations:

- inaccessibility to others, apparent unwillingness or refusal to be drawn into dialogue
- tendency to give in easily and quickly to negative emotions, especially anger or resentment



### INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The overall level of assertiveness is average.

The results indicate very good ability to stand up for one's opinions and attitudes and defend them, whether in a familiar or unfamiliar environments, i.e., the ability to deal appropriately with aggression or attack. Such people can usually defend their views even when others disagree or convince them otherwise. They do not give in to pressure and maintain a steady position. They can appear firm or even unapproachable to others.

At the same time, the results show very good ability to assert oneself and one's needs, whether in a familiar or unfamiliar environments, i.e., the ability to ask others for favors. People with this profile can usually persuade and get their way. They can appear confident to the point of self-assuredness. They have good negotiating skills and are not afraid to present their views. They can take on the role of spokesperson or speak in front of a large group.

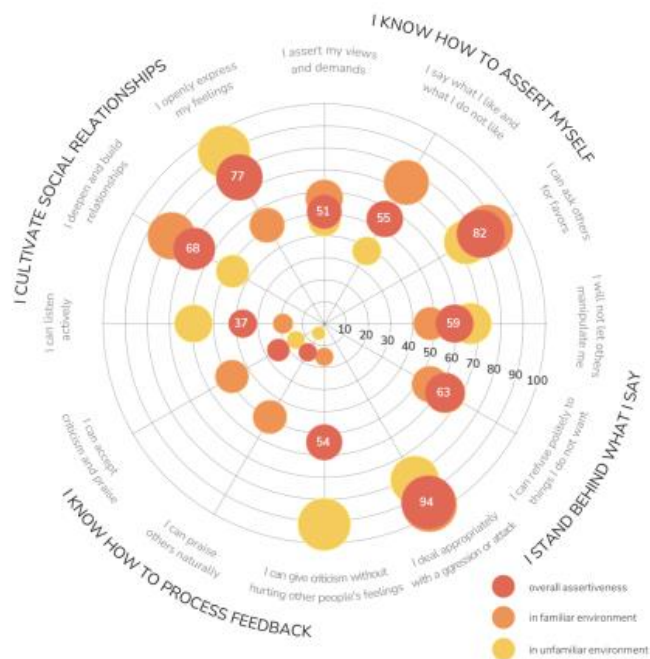
Further, the results point to good ability to develop relationships with other people. People with similar results express their feelings in situations with which they are comfortable. They can listen well if they want to, but it can cost them more energy. They maintain good relationships, which are important to them but do not always actively develop them.

At the same time, the values indicate lower ability to work with feedback, whether in a familiar or unfamiliar environments, i.e., the ability to praise others and accept feedback. People like this are apprehensive about feedback. They find situations where feedback is given stressful and tend to avoid them. They are not only uncomfortable with criticism but also with praise, which makes them uncomfortable.

Interpretation of results – overall assertiveness and main areas

**PARTIAL SCALES OF ASSERTIVENESS**

The graphs express the level of assertiveness in the twelve sub-scales in the form of percentiles, i.e., in comparison with the reference group. In addition to the overall level of assertiveness, results show whether a particular skill is more developed in relation to strangers or in relation to close people and what the variance is.




#### STRENGTHS

- the ability to respond appropriately in conflict situations without giving in to verbal attacks or aggression; the ability not to be drawn into an argument
- the ability to gain support and secure resources; the ability to cope with more difficult situations, to ask for help
- the ability to act naturally and authentically; transparency with others; the ability to engage and 'infect' others with emotion

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

You probably don't praise others very much. Consider that praise and appreciation contribute to motivation and good relationships, are important to people, and make them feel that others appreciate their efforts and work. Choose simple and natural wording, and try to be authentic. Watch out for overly expressive language or overly general phrasing (e.g., "Perfect!"), which can come across as insincere or artificial.

You tend to take criticism personally and sensitively. You may become unnecessarily burdened or distressed by criticism. Likewise, you may be unable to enjoy praise because it makes you uncomfortable. Try to focus, despite your emotions, on how feedback can benefit you. Praise will help you name what you're doing well and what you should continue doing. Negative feedback can direct you and help you be more successful.



Strengths and  
recommendations  
for personal  
development

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