RESPONSE STYLE INDICATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Read the following five short situations which depict statements from people who might be your subordinates, and five sets of five responses to the statements. You are to choose the response that you feel you would be most likely to make. Be honest with yourself -- there are no simple ‘right’ answers -- and you have everything to gain from an honest analysis of your behaviour.

When you have read Situation A choose one of the five responses which follow it, and circle the appropriate number. Do the same for situations B - E

# Situation A

Man, aged 35 years

“I have a lot of ambition. Every job I've had I been successful at, and I intend to be successful here even if it means walking over a few people to do so. I'm going to prove myself and really go places.”

1. You feel you're very ambitious man, is that right?
2. Why a do you think you have such strong needs for success?
3. That's good. You should soon get to the top with that attitude. Let me know if I can help you in any way.
4. It seems to me that your needs for success are so strong that they outweigh your needs to be popular.
5. It will make you very unpopular here if you maintain that attitude… that's not how we do things here at all.

**Situation B**

Woman aged 26

“Two years at business school have equipped me to be professional manager. Competing with men there has convinced me that women who get as far as I have are more than a match for most men. If this organisation wants to keep me it'll have to fit in with my own career progression.”

1. A business school education is a great asset, but if you ask me it doesn't make you a good manager. You have to learn the hard way.
2. What difficulties do you foresee being female in this organisation?
3. I'm sure you're right. We are really in need of people with your skills and drive. Let's get together next week and I'll help you plan out how you can get the experience you want in this department in the shortest possible time.
4. If I'm hearing you correctly you feel that you are well equipped as a professional manager and expect the organisation to respect this.
5. It appears to me that you have some worries about being accorded the status you think you deserve.

# Situation C

Man aged 44

“I used to be very ambitious but, as I've got older, success is not so important to me. I may not have been a success with the company, but I've put all my real effort into my family. I'm a very happy family man.”

1. That sounds like a very sensible attitude, after all, very few people get to the top. Is there any help I can give you in this?
2. Yes, you reached the point where you decided to switch goals -- from your career to your family -- but you feel perhaps that something is missing?
3. You’re absolutely right. A man is a fool to keep struggling when nobody cares a damn. You did the right thing and I’d do the same in your position.
4. As you have got older you find more and more satisfaction with your family.
5. Why do you feel you were not a success with the company? What do you mean by success?

# Situation D

Woman aged 41

“When I moved to this town I thought I'd make lots of new friends. Being single and living alone I've always had quite a social life but it doesn't seem to happen somehow. The work is fine, but people here aren't interested in socialising much. I think it must be me I'm getting more closed up and into myself.”

1. Can you tell me more about how you go about making friends? Have you made any efforts recently to meet people?
2. Living alone is okay if you have lots of friends, but without them it's very lonely -- is that what you are saying?
3. it looks as though you may be really worried about the future, perhaps you've lived alone for so long that you have dropped out of the habit of getting close to people.
4. That sounds really sad, to be lonely and without friends. What you have got to do is get out and about and make some. If I were you a get started straight away.
5. Well let's see there are lots of ways in which you could get involved with the staff social club. Next month there is the annual outing and I could get you on the organising team, how would you like that?

# Situation E

Man aged 32

“I'm telling you Lewis has really got his knife into me. I got the blame for the whole of the Brown and Williamson affair and there were eight of us involved. Now he's trying to insinuate I'm falling down on the job. I had a good name in this office until he came here -- he just doesn't like me and he's determined to do me down.”

1. You are getting paranoiac feelings about Lewis, could it be that you are working out your frustrations at not getting the job you both applied for?
2. Your right, he can really be a mean so and so when he chooses, but I wouldn't go about it with your attitude.
3. Are there any other occasions when he's tried to show you up in a poor light?
4. If I understand you correctly you feel persecuted by Lewis and think that he intends to wreck he your reputation.
5. Right, you need to protect yourself from situations like this. Do you know that the union is becoming very strong among our grades, in fact, I’ve got some application forms here, I'll help you fill them out.

# Scoring Instructions

Using the following matrix, the letters on the left-hand side represent the Situations, and the responses (1 – 5) fall into one of the five categories **E, I, S, P, U** along the top. Look at the responses you selected for each situation and note which letter it falls under. For example, if you chose response 3 to situation A then you note 1 under ‘**S**’ in the scoresheet. Do this for all five Situations. Total up the number of **E, I, S, P, U** scores you have.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Situation** |  | **E** | **I** | **S** | **P** | **U** |
| A | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| B | 1 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| C | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 4 |
| D | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| E | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 |

### Scoresheet

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Situation** |  | **E** | **I** | **S** | **P** | **U** |
| A |  |  |  |  |  |
| B |  |  |  |  |  |
| C |  |  |  |  |  |
| D |  |  |  |  |  |
| E |  |  |  |  |  |
| Totals |  |  |  |  |  |

This exercise is based on the work of Carl Rogers who developed these five response categories from studies done on face-to-face communications. These categories accounted for around 80% of all messages sent between people and generally speaking are used as follows:

E Most Used

I Used next most

S Used third most

P Fourth most

U Used least

The categories are as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **E** | Evaluative Response | making judgements |
| **I** | Interpretative Response | reading between the lines, having hunches |
| **S** | Supportive Response | agreeing, backing up, offering psychological and actual support |
| **P** | Probing Response | questioning, asking for more and often deeper information |
| **U** | Understanding Response | non-directive, non-evaluative response which reflects back to the speaker what they have said. |

The actual categories are not ‘good’ or ‘bad’. They can all be appropriate in particular situations.

However, there are some important points to bear in mind:

* We tend to have habitual, fixed ways of responding, therefore we tend to over-use some categories and under-use others.
* People tend to pigeonhole those they come into contact with. Rodgers found that if we habitually use any one response for more than 40% of the time, then we are always seen as behaving like that.

Therefore, if you scored 2 or more for any one of the E, I, S, P, or U categories then you are likely to be using this sort of response consistently and often. This is also the image your staff may have of you! If you have scored 0 for any response – are you aware that you might be avoiding this particular style of responding.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help you develop some insight into the way you tend to respond, and to give you a framework to experiment with alternative types of response. In an appraisal situation, often it is best to be more ‘probing’ and ‘understanding’ but perhaps less appropriate to be making judgements (evaluative) or to be ‘reading things into’ (interpretative) what people are saying.