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Fleet Safety – How To Manage the Interactive Driver

You know your drivers who have the core I (Influencing) behavioral style. They're the ones who are always talking! These drivers need to be around other people because socializing and verbalizing are two of their strongest needs.

They'll get fidgety and bored if they have to drive a long way without interacting with other people. So, they may stop more often and take longer breaks to get energized, especially if their S factor is low. The person low in the S factor tends to be fast-paced, mobile, active, and restless.

There are ways to effectively manage and motivate this type of driver. Keep in mind you can't change other people's natural behavioral style or attitude, but you can help these drivers work on the negative aspects of their core I style and become better drivers.

Understanding their desire to interact with others, you can manage them effectively by knowing that they need:

- People with whom to work and associate.
- To focus their conversations of work activities with less socializing on the job. Don't "dream" with them or you'll lose time.
- Better organization of record keeping.
- To communicate more logically, with less emotion.
- To get annual physicals, pace themselves, and take breaks and vacations.
- A friendly work environment.
- A supervisor who lets them participate in the decision-making process.

Effectively motivate core I drivers by understanding that they want:

- Recognition for their ideas and results.
- Freedom to move around and talk to people.
- Freedom to participate in meetings as an important member of the team.
- Freedom from control and detail; provide them with a support system to do the detail work
- Independence; no close supervision. Don't micromanage them.
- To be measured by results; judge them by the results they get, not how they get them.

These are things that will make you a better manager. The people who work for you appreciate knowing you understand their wants and needs and provide them in the workplace. Good managers manage by needs and motivate by wants.

It's also important to learn how to (and how not to) communicate with drivers who have the core I behavioral style. Here are tips on how to interact most effectively with your drivers (and others) who have Core I behavioral styles:

DO these things:

- Listen to them. Let them talk and share their experiences.
- Understand they have sporadic listening skills and don't take that personally.
- Put projects in writing, with deadlines.
- Plan interaction that supports their dreams and intentions.
- Be stimulating, fun-loving, fast-moving.
- Provide ideas they can implement into action.
- Give strokes for their involvement.
- Verify that your message was heard; get feedback.
- Ask for their opinions/ideas regarding people.
- Deal with details in writing; have them commit to modes of action.
- Speak to them in a friendly, outgoing manner.

DON'T do these things:

- Assume they heard what you said.
- Dictate or talk down to them.
- Over-control the conversation.
- Be impersonal, judgmental, or too task-oriented.
- Leave decisions hanging in the air.
- Take credit for their ideas.
- Drive on to facts, figures, alternatives, or abstractions.
- Be curt, cold, or tight-lipped.
- Use a paternalistic (or maternalistic) approach with them.
- Let them change the topic until you're finished.

The ideal work environment for drivers with core I behavioral styles includes freedom of movement, assignments with many people contacts, variety in work tasks, a democratic supervisor, and knowing they are liked by the people they work with and for.

Behavioral style analysis and values assessments can give you crucial information you need to know to determine whether to hire particular drivers; and if you do, how to manage them so they will stay with your company and be outstanding employees.

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