

(Law Firm) Lawyer DISC Personality Types: 'The Winner' (D)

After reading this article's title, it's highly likely that you already question its utility. And why not? After all, the legal profession is known to rely so much on psychometrics during the hiring process that it is generally thought that there is a [unique lawyer personality](#). However, and you will agree with me, even the most Puritan Big Law firm is very personality diverse, whether intentionally or otherwise.

From an empirical standpoint, therefore, this article and indeed the entire series we've done dealing with law firm personalities is not only necessary but crucial. From a pragmatic point of view, law practices are businesses. Your law firm is no more immune to the laws of economics than is Adam Smith's proverbial pin factory. And as you well may know, ours is a people business, so unsurprisingly, human capital is a law firm's highest cost. Therefore, if there is even the slightest chance that this article may help you have your [lawyers working more efficiently](#), isn't it logical that you read it?

We like to dilute raw pragmatism with a little humanism. It is, after all, now generally accepted that human labor isn't merely a factor of production. A humanistic approach imposes upon you, the leader, an obligation to see that your employees are fulfilled through the work they do for you. How then would you know your employees' deepest aspirations if you don't even understand the inner workings of their personalities?

Using personality archetypes derived from the (DiSC) assessment, we share vital information on how different personalities present in the workplace and how best to lead them for yours and their success. This particular piece focuses on the Winner (D) personality type. In dissecting this (DiSC) personality type, we shall briefly define and explain how (DiSC) works. We shall then describe the Winner and share the personality's key motivators, strengths, and weaknesses with you. In a concluding section, we shall give you tips on how to lead 'Winner' lawyers. Keep reading!

The (DiSC) Assessment

The (DiSC) assessment is a personality test founded on behavioral psychologist William Moulton Marston's behavioral theory of the same acronym. Marston's theory suggested that human personality is based on four foundational personality traits. They include:

D- Dominance

I- Influence

S- Submission/Steadiness and,

C- Compliance/Conscientiousness

The (DiSC) personality test utilizes Mouton's principles to formulate 12 unique personality types. One's personality is estimated using an assessment questionnaire. It's important to note that the (DiSC) assessment test is not intended to be used as a tool for deciding someone's suitability for a job. Instead, the assessment's objective is to increase workplace [productivity and synergy](#) by helping workers better understand each other and themselves.

Where Does the 'Winner' Fall in the (DiSC) Chart?

(DiSC)'s twelve personalities can be loosely grouped into four families known as [personality styles](#). They include the D style, I style, S personality style, and C style. Personalities grouped are usually similar but not

the same. Grouping is based on a personality's outer trait.

All but 4 personalities have two defining characteristics. The Winner (D) is one of the exceptions. The (D) personality type's singular defining trait determines where it falls, in this case - the dominant style family.

Dominant Style Personalities

This personality style comprises 3 personalities. They include:

'The Challenger' - (DC)

'The Seeker' - (Di) and,

'The Winner' - (D)

Dominant-styled individuals are typically highly independent, decisive, and driven. They are goal-oriented and value accomplishment. This personality style is comprised of fierce competitors who thrive off challenges. People with Dominant personality styles are direct and demanding in communicating with others and, above all, confident and self-assured.

An In-depth Look at the 'Winner' (DiSC) Profile

In (DISC) theory, everyone's personality style is a combination of the 4 foundational traits. Even then, some people present traits more consistent with one foundational trait than any other. Such is the case for the Winner. (D) personality types have the dominance trait more pronounced than any other quality. Because of that, common (D) style traits are more animated in the (D) personality.

Winners are task-oriented self-starters who pursue personal freedom more so than all other (D) personalities. Their hallmark characteristic is their competitive nature, characterized by their insatiable appetite for success. Winners value achievement and strive towards goals tirelessly. Lawyers with this personality type exemplify the saying "go big or go home" as they are known for their obsession with ambitious projects.

Like all (D) personality types, Winners are notoriously poor communicators, at least in the estimation of their peers. Their painfully direct and to-the-point communication style frequently rubs people the wrong way.

Winners are not highly analytical or strategic thinkers. They are focused on the big picture. They, however, balance this trait with their tendency to be hyper-focused on the task at hand.

Strong-willed by nature, Winners often have a tough time accepting input or information from others in their decision-making process. This (DiSC) personality needs to feel in control. Winners are typically the first to speak, last to listen, and least likely to change their minds. They can be pushy in interacting with others, especially if they feel the person is not giving them their undivided attention. Be that as it may, leadership runs in the Dominant style family. The 'Winner' excels at [leading and managing others](#).

What Motivates the (D) Personality Type

The word "motivation" is used as an umbrella term for many closely related concepts. Derived from the word motive, this term is used to communicate one's desires, wants, and drive. This article primarily uses it to reveal what drives 'Winner' personality lawyers to behave as they do.

Of the many motivating factors Winners have, there are two which stand out; progress and achievement. In the subsections below, we illustrate how the need for purpose and success influences the (D) personality type's behavioral traits and, ultimately, their personality.

Goal-Oriented

We recognize that this quality is by and large viewed as an asset in the workplace. Even then, in this context, we won't comment on its value as that would deny the chance of detailing how the quality influences

Winners' mannerisms.

Goal-oriented people do everything for a purpose- usually an end that they deem to be worthwhile. They don't act for the sake of acting and will rarely partake in activities that don't help them further a particular goal. A goal-oriented person's life is organized into tasks, objectives, and milestones, all geared toward accomplishing an end goal. Because of this, goal-oriented people come across as highly motivated, no-nonsense, competitive, and sometimes aloof individuals.

True to their name, Winners are the archetypal goal-oriented types. This personality is driven by an intense need to overcome challenges. Anything that slows them down in this quest is viewed as an obstacle and dealt with accordingly. The type (D) personality's sense of urgency and aura may be attributed to this drive. So too can the personality's blunt communication style as well as their overly serious and demanding nature.

Lastly, understanding this personality type's goal-oriented nature demands one consider a different interpretation of the personality's controlling and 'dominant' nature. Winners don't necessarily want to rule the world. They must achieve their goals! Accordingly, any attempt to alter their plans is met by fierce opposition.

Winning

It's in the name! People with this (DiSC) personality are driven by a need to succeed above all others, to set records, to stand out in their success.

Type (D) personality types tend to define achievement comparatively. Everyone is motivated by achievement, definition notwithstanding. Hence Winners may only be satisfied with an accomplishment when it stands out from the others.

This personality type tends to excel in situations that resemble competition. Winners may find it hard to cooperate with colleagues because they always need to be better than others.

The Winner's Greatest Fear

What one fears most is a factor of their unique life experiences. As such, the term greatest is not here to imply that all Winners share one fear; instead, we mean to talk about a fear shared by many, if not most (D) personalities.

Knowing what your employee fears is important, as far too often, our greatest fears tend to be our greatest motivators. In this section, we discuss how the [fear of vulnerability](#) influences a Winner's personality traits.

Vulnerability

The (D) personality type's insistence on shielding themselves against external threats may seem like reservedness. Still, it's actually borne from fear- specifically the fear that opening up leads one into danger and harms them more than it helps.

While it may not seem like an obvious conclusion at first, this fear of vulnerability is what fuels the type (D) personality to be both ambitious and competitive. With a need to protect themselves, Winners are driven by their compulsion for success at all costs; they will do anything or take any risk necessary to win.

This fear also explains why most D personalities don't readily share thoughts and feelings without a clear purpose. This is because they're afraid of being vulnerable, a state that traditionally leaves one open to external threats like criticism or judgment.

What Frustrates the Winner?

The rationale behind this section is that understanding your lawyers' stressors should allow you to place

them in situations where they can be most efficient. Therefore, in this section, we discuss this personality type's key stressors.

A Slow Paced Work Environment

Winners are high-energy individuals. They thrive in dynamic environments that present unlimited access to opportunities for them to use their problem-solving skills. Only then can they feel accomplished by the end of their day.

A slow-paced work environment with little to no opportunity for growth or [professional development](#) is frustrating because it leaves them feeling stagnant and unfulfilled. To avoid this, you must offer your (D) employees opportunities to take on new projects from time to time.

Moreover, Winners thrive in fast-paced environments where quick decisions often have to be made. They do well in stressful situations and are particularly energized by tight deadlines.

Details and Analysis

Though people with this personality type are known for their high expectations, they detest mulling over small details. As ironic as it may seem, this trait is common to most (D) personality types. Their focus lies on the bigger picture. Hence, with all their great qualities, Winners need support from more analytical personality types.

No Control

Like all dominant personalities, Winners gravitate toward leadership positions. They are not good followers and don't thrive in law firms where all decisions are made. Winners will spend most of their productive hours claiming more independence in such environments than focusing on the work.

How Understanding Your Employees' Motivations Can Impact Your Leadership

How can the information shared in the section above improve your leadership? In this section, we share 3 ways to understand your lawyers' motivations to [improve your leadership](#).

Create Motivating Work Environments

Recent developments in legal [practice management](#) suggest that law firms must transition from thinking of their human capital as a collective workforce to thinking of it as being made up of unique individuals, sometimes with varying aspirations. Doing so ensures that law firms such as yours will get the most out of their team.

When you know what drives an employee, you inadvertently gain insight into the best work environment. Ensuring that a worker is granted a [suitable work environment](#) is less about pampering them than ensuring efficiency. Numerous studies point out that an employee working in an optimal environment is more productive than their counterpart.

Offer Appropriate Incentives

Whereas money is an effective incentive, it is not a sufficient one. Work is more than a means to an end. Understanding what motivates your employees will help you figure out how to keep them satisfied with their job. A satisfied employee is a more efficient employee.

Improved Conflict Avoidance and Management Strategies

Conflict in the workplace is expected. Even then, there is no denying the fact that it results in stressful and unproductive work environments. Even when a conflict has been successfully managed, irreparable damage may have already been caused. All this to say that if instances of conflict can be reduced, or better yet,

eliminated, law firms can be more productive.

Understanding your employees' motivations is crucial to developing a [conflict avoidance](#) and management strategy. When you know your lawyers' behavioral traits, you are better equipped to anticipate and prevent conflicts.

The Winner (D) as an Asset to Law Firms

This series was inspired by our conviction that a personality diverse workplace is a more productive workplace. We believe that every personality, given room to shine, can be an asset to your law firm. As you shall see below, the Winner (DiSC) type is a great validation of the sentiment above.

A Problem Solver

Matters of faith are similar to matters of law in that to the vast majority. The law is as obscure as divine nature. When clients approach you, they are at your mercy and look to you for guidance on proceeding, just like a penitent to a priest.

Lawyers are professional problem solvers, and the Winner personality takes to challenges as a bloodhound to the scent!

Results-Oriented

A result-oriented person is at heart a pragmatist. Result-oriented people tend to be focused on the outcome more than the process. This trait has obvious negative ramifications, but be that as it may, it can yield dividends when harnessed properly.

For instance, result-oriented people never seem to be phased by complicated circumstances. They are calm under pressure, a quality that makes them ideal candidates for leadership under crisis. And in a fast-paced environment, such as that in the legal profession, Winners are invaluable.

Leadership

As the archetypal dominant personality type, leadership is the Winner's birthright. At law firms, the type (D) personality both demands and commands respect. The Winner's aura alone is enough to command a room. And like all effective leaders, Winners walk the talk. The high standards they demand from their coworkers are seen in their own work and accomplishments.

Shortcomings of the Winner Personality

Perfection is a cruel mistress, and those who insist on courting her are often left empty-handed. The unattainability of perfection is mirrored in our own character, the Winner included. In this section, we discuss the shortcomings of an otherwise well-rounded personality type.

Impatient

[Impatience](#) is the by-product of this personality's hunger for the win! The irony of there being an impatient Winner is not lost on us, yet, it is an affliction that ails many!

True to their name, impatient Winners will still win. However, because true success takes time, this lot often has to be content with second-rate success. Almost successful is an apt descriptor for them.

Must Win Mindset

There's no point in playing the game for most winners if they can't play to win. A winning mindset certainly has merit in some situations. However, life is not always an all-or-nothing affair. If it were, well, frankly speaking, there wouldn't be any life at all.

This fact is reflected in some unspoken rules of our profession. For instance, settling is generally the first course of action. Moreover, recent developments in the legal industry point out that lasting justice is seldom achieved through retribution. All this to say that a must-win mentality hurts more than it benefits a lawyer.

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills speak to more than speech. Winners know how to communicate effectively in that they often get what they desire. They also speak to the ability to [maintain professional](#) and romantic relationships through teamwork and empathy.

Because of their preoccupation with control and independence, type (D) personality types tend not to make ideal teammates. Moreover, this personality is famously associated with an inability to express or understand others' feelings effectively.

Strong-Willed

A strong-willed attitude is a perfect prerequisite for a win. But when unchecked, it becomes decidedly less so. The implacable need to dominate can lead to very unenviable outcomes in interpersonal relationships and at work.

The irony of this personality trait appears as we discuss how one might identify themselves as 'determine.' In reality, what they are saying is that they cannot be persuaded by logic or reason!

Leading a Winner (D) Lawyer Effectively

When Larry Richard said that managing lawyers are like herding cats, he must refer to type (D) lawyers. While we frown on zoomorphism in his comparison, we must admit that he is quite accurate.

Winners like cats are fiercely autonomous, dominant, and not very social. Managing such a personality may seem a tall order, yet surprisingly, according to a 1998 study by Larry Richard, the personality makes up most lawyers!

Moreover, in keeping with Richard's recommendations, [managing lawyers](#) is an exercise in futility. Instead, he recommends leadership, the distinction being that while the former focuses on control, the latter focuses on inspiring people to act. We agree, and in this section, we share a few tips on effectively leading a Winner lawyer.

Communicate Your Expectations Clearly and Directly

Winners respond positively if you establish clear expectations and lead by example, following without hesitation. If you are vague about your expectations or inconsistent in their implementation, they will take it as a sign of weakness and not respect you.

It is often said that lawyers need to know the rules before they break them. So too must leaders adhere strictly to their own set of guidelines to achieve success with this personality type.

Criticize in Private

Being a dominant style personality, type (D) is associated with fear of losing control. Winners are highly conscious of how their peers estimate them. Public criticism is the surest way of permanently demoralizing this personality.

Challenge Them

A Winner will never be interested in a proposition that is too easy. This personality thrives on competition and challenges. In the same way, they are not motivated by incentives for which there are no feasible chances of winning. To keep them motivated, set clear goals with achievable outcomes.

Advantage of their Leadership Capabilities

The Winner is a [natural leader](#). Put them in charge of an important project, and they will execute it flawlessly. That, and it'll ensure that they are not preoccupied with gaining control instead of being productive!

Do Not Micro-manage

This personality type needs to be given significant independence and autonomy; otherwise, they will feel stifled. Setting high expectations and then stepping back is the best way of leading a Winner lawyer.

Conclusion

We hope that this article will help you lead your Winner lawyers more effectively. All the best!

See also:

[Behavioral Interviewing Techniques to Help Your Law Firm Get Great Laterals](#)

[Avoiding Conflicts of Interest: Experts Speak Out on Conflicts Checks](#)

[The Art of Managing a Law Firm](#)

[Must You Be A "Type-A" Personality To Succeed In A Law Firm?](#)

[Top 32 Reasons Attorneys Lose Their Jobs Inside of Law Firms](#)