



ChangeWise

Pioneer in Leadership Agility

“Power Style Profile” Guidelines for Client Preparation & Debrief

Before purchasing the Power Style Profile to use with clients, review the guidelines below on how to prepare your client and debrief the results with them.

What is the Power Style Profile?

[Read](#) the Power Style Profile (PSP) brochure for coaches and leadership development professionals.

Preparing your client for the PSP

Whether you’re working with an individual client or a group, we recommend that you:

- Limit what you say about power style, and especially an optimal power style. This is because, unlike the Leadership Agility 360 and the Leadership Agility Accelerator, knowing the ideas behind the PSP is more likely to bias this self-assessment than increase its accuracy.
- Do describe what pivotal conversations are: moderately to highly stressful decision-making discussions, where two people each have a stake in the outcome, need to come to an agreement, but disagree about what to do. Say that the PSP provides a quick way to self-assess one’s own style in dealing with differing viewpoints in pivotal conversations.
- Say that, because the PSP is a self-assessment, its purpose is to serve as a conversation-starter about effective pivotal conversations, not as a definitive, objective assessment. Say that, accordingly, there are no “right answers.”
- Drawing on page 2 of the PSP brochure, tell them they will get a PDF report, which they should email to you and read in preparation for a debrief conversation.

Debriefing the PSP with your client

- Read your client’s PSP report thoroughly before the debrief conversation.
- Form your own tentative opinion on how accurate their self-assessment is, based on your own knowledge of this person and how they usually approach pivotal conversations.

- A person's power style is not always the same. People often adapt their power style for different people and situations. Your client will likely point this out during your debrief conversation. The best response is to acknowledge that this is true for everyone, and to use this as an opportunity to clarify how your client tends to express their assertiveness and receptivity in different situations and relationships. At the same time, it can also be valuable to look at the PSP results as a possible generalization about your client's power style, an attempt to step back and see what their overall tendencies may be in this area.
- Hold the PSP results and your own opinion lightly, keeping in mind that the primary purpose of this self-assessment is (a) to introduce your client in a hands-on way to the concepts of pivotal conversations and power style, and (b) to feed into a practical coaching conversation that will enhance your client's effectiveness in these kinds of conversations.
- You can stress that a primary benefit of becoming more aware of one's habitual power style is that this increased self-awareness makes it easier to consciously choose to modify one's habitual style when that would likely be a more effective approach.

Resources for coaching using the power style concept

- In the Leadership Agility book, power style refers to one of the eight cognitive/emotional capacities that develop with each new stage and level of agility. It is one of two capacities that underlie Stakeholder Agility, the other capacity being stakeholder understanding. Each type of agility has an awareness aspect (taking in the environment) and an intentionality aspect (acting to affect the environment). For Stakeholder Agility, stakeholder understanding is the awareness aspect, and power style (how one attempts to resolve differences) is the intentionality aspect.
- A leader's power style in pivotal conversations evolves as they develop new levels of agility. At the Expert level, leaders tend to be either highly assertive or highly accommodative (at least outwardly). They may also flip back and forth between these two extremes. At the Achiever level, leaders tend to adopt a style that's primarily assertive or accommodative, but also use its complementary opposite to balance their primary style to a certain extent. At the Catalyst level, leaders become comfortable and skillful in expressing both their assertiveness and their receptivity. This allows them to move throughout the assertive-receptive spectrum. They can also to balance and combine these two tendencies. For example, Catalyst leaders are able to express their views, then immediately invite others to express differing views, which they can hold in mind and seriously consider alongside their own initial views.
- Unlike the Leadership Agility 360 and Leadership Agility Accelerator, the PSP does not assess level of leadership agility, but it does provide a self-assessment of the balance between assertiveness and receptivity in pivotal conversations.
- To study these ideas in greater depth in a real-life case study, [download](#) "From Disconnect to Dialog" from the ChangeWise.biz website.
- Two stories about power style in the Leadership Agility book that are worth reading are those concerning Carlos and Sarah. (See the Index for exact pages).