



HOW EVERYTHING DISC CAN HELP

Using Everything DiSC personality profiles to improve communication within work teams and resolve personality conflicts can make a company culture more positive and productive. The following case study is fictional but presents a common employee problem DiSC profiles can help resolve. After your employees complete their DiSC profiles, use the case study and discussion questions to brainstorm solutions for the problems in the scenario. All teams are different, so solutions for resolving conflicts and improving communication may vary significantly depending on the people involved.

A Multistore Operation **CASE STUDY**

Why did a rising star turn out to be a flop as a manager?

Bill's Hardware has five urban stores and a high turnover rate in most positions except management.

Bill and his team don't often get to promote strong employees who stick around long enough to become next-in-line managers for existing stores or for future Bill's Hardware locations.

Then Dreka, one of Bill's managers, hires Nate, a cheerful college student who needs a summer job. Nate quickly stands out to Dreka among the seasonal hires because Nate is committed to his work stocking shelves, has a great attitude, cares about his co-workers and customers and is eager to take on new responsibilities. By the end of the summer, Dreka has moved Nate to the salesfloor to work directly with customers every day.

Nate stays during his next three years of college. By the time he graduates, he has done nearly every job at the store and filled in at other locations when needed. His co-workers admire how adept he is at appeasing challenging customers and learning new tasks. Some shoppers ask specifically for Nate's help when they shop.

Bill and Dreka identify Nate as future manager material. The more responsibility they give Nate and the more they praise his work, the better he performs. He is their rare rising star.

When Bill promotes Nate to an assistant manager role, he says the management team is planning to open a new store within the next two years and think Nate may be the right person to manage that store if he does well as assistant manager.

Nate has a business degree now and could pursue a career elsewhere, but his conversations with Bill and Dreka convince him that continuing to grow with Bill's Hardware is an opportunity to build on his experiences and advance in a company he already likes.

However, in his assistant manager position, Nate isn't quite as shiny a star. He is highly responsible, continues to excel at completing tasks and takes care of customers well, but he begins to frustrate co-workers who used to be his peers.

Nate liked being a standout employee, and although he isn't arrogant about his promotion, he also doesn't get along with his direct reports as well as he did when they were his co-workers. He comes across as nitpicky about their work, and his personality is more abrasive than they realized before he had authority over them.

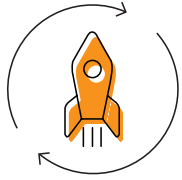
The complaints Bill and Dreka hear about Nate seem minor, so they move forward with transferring him to the operation's new store as the manager.

Within a year of Nate managing the new store, Bill realizes he has a problem. Nate is frustrated in his new role, and the employees who report to him complain that he seems harsh. They feel like Nate doesn't trust them to do their jobs well, rarely communicates feedback on how they can improve and doesn't notice what they're doing right.

Nate is still an ideal employee in most ways, but he can't get his team to mesh with him or each other and none of the store associates like him as their boss. Bill wonders what went wrong. Why did such a standout employee flop as a manager?

Discussion Questions

- What do you think Nate's DiSC personality type is?
- Why do you think Nate performed well until he became a manager?
- What did Bill and Dreka fail to do to help Nate become a successful manager?
- How might the management team use Everything DiSC to help Nate grow as a leader and mesh with his team better?
- How might Everything DiSC help Nate and the employees who report to him communicate their work expectations and needs to each other?



LEADERSHIP SERIES

HOW EVERYTHING DISC CAN HELP

Using Everything DiSC personality profiles to improve communication within work teams and resolve personality conflicts can go a long way to make a company's culture more positive and improve employee productivity. The following case study is fictional but presents a common employee problem DiSC profiles can help resolve. After your employees complete their DiSC profiles, ask them to think about which personality types each employee in the scenario might have. Use the case study and discussion questions to talk about solutions for working out conflicts and improving communication.



A Single-Store Operation **CASE STUDY**

Why do employees work great with some co-workers and terribly with others?

Sarah's Paint is a single store in a comfortable middle-class suburban area. The store is beautiful, most of the employees have been loyal for five years or longer and business is strong.

Throughout the 25 years since Sarah opened the store, she has occasionally had personality conflicts with employees, but the rare problem person has always left after a short time, leaving Sarah in peace. Sarah knows turnover in retail jobs tends to be high and not everyone is a good fit for her business.

When tenured employee Pedro and a recent hire, Carla, begin to complain about each other to Sarah and ask not to be scheduled to work on the same days as the other, Sarah feels annoyed. Why can't they just get along? Why is Pedro so irritated and why are Carla's feelings hurt so often?

The store staff is small, so Sarah tells Pedro and Carla individually that she can try to accommodate their requests, but they will need to treat each other respectfully on the inevitable days they have to work together.

Sarah wonders if Carla was just a bad hire, but watching her work and seeing how she interacts with other employees and customers make Sarah question that. Carla is a great employee and so is Pedro. Sarah likes both of them, but she can't force them to like each other. She doesn't understand why they constantly seem to frustrate each other.

Discussion Questions

- Considering what you've learned about DiSC profiles, what are some personality-related reasons why Pedro and Carla might not like each other? (For example, they could be opposites on the DiSC spectrum.)
- How could DiSC assessments help Sarah and her team understand themselves better?
- How could DiSC assessments help Carla and Pedro understand each other better?
- In what ways might understanding each other help Carla and Pedro get along?
- Why might opposite personalities become strong work teams when they understand how to communicate with each other?