

CASE STUDY: DISC Assessments & Hiring in the Trucking Industry



A Collaboration Between:

Hiring Solutions LLC 

Occupational Assessments and Services to Support Selection, Coaching, Training, and Development



ASSESSMENTS 24x7

A Global Leader in Online Assessments

Executive Summary

The case study below highlights a large Trucking company that had issues with retention, profitability and production. Through strategic help from Hiring Solutions and Assessments 24x7's versatile DISC Assessment platform, this company was able to improve communication, selection and retention for this population of drivers.

Overview:

- **Timeline:** 3 years
- **Resources:** Hiring Solutions and Assessments 24x7
- **Average drivers retained per year:** ~120
- **Minimum net savings (hard costs):** ~\$1,020,000 per year

About the Company and Industry

Industry: Trucking

Company overview:

A leading fleet, owner-operator, equipment leasing division for a large trucking company in the United States. They are one of the fastest growing and most profitable leasing organizations in the country, primarily supporting their parent company with quality owner-operators.

Key Employee:

One of the key players in this study was [Dan Kleiser](#), who was instrumental in getting the program started, monitoring and utilizing the information in day-to-day and strategic decisions for all driver and equipment related actions for his organization.

Dan's insights into how the information could provide long term advantage to his staff and client base, were invaluable in the handling and distribution of data from the DISC system and other support services.



The Challenge

This company needed help with screening, interviewing and supporting independent contractors. The main area with which the independent contractors needed help was finance and leasing contracts for their trucks and trailers. Additionally, there were challenges with converting new owner-operators into profitable independent contractors in order to support the primary organization's fleet growth and profitability.

The relationships were dynamic on two key levels: First, as a client, with the financial services that were provided to drivers to lease and possibly purchase their own trucks; and second, as independent contractors to support the parent company.

The company was doing very well and is a large player in the space. However, they needed guidance in a few key areas. They reached out to Dave Haddox at Hiring Solutions. Dave has over thirty years of Heavy Truck Industry experience. That depth of understanding translates into real world utilization and application of the information, data and analysis that is available when using the Assessments 24x7 DISC model.

A relationship of trust led to coaching opportunities and custom training, followed by extended conversation concerning retention of their lease clients/drivers, with a goal of minimizing exposure to dropped contracts. Dropped contracts bring the potential for abandoned, damaged, abused assets, and/or equipment that is not maintained. This, in turn, results in assets that are extremely expensive to recondition for sale, or to lease again.



The Solution

After many conversations and years of client frustration, Hiring Solutions suggested that the key problem areas of retention, profitability and production for the parent company needed targeted correction to include the following:

- Change the relationship between the owner-operators and their client service representative.
- Provide a standard reference point based on the DISC Styles that everyone brings to those interactions.
- Benchmark the client population
- Train for best practices in how to support the driver population.
- Ongoing analysis to identify gaps between top and bottom performers.
- Additional coaching and online support to provide ready access to information on how to support all types of clients, in order to create, improve and maintain quality relationships.

The solution needed to be a scalable program that would enhance relationships, both internal and external. A series of workshops were developed with a focus on interviewing, customer service, communication and using the DISC model to support these conversations.

Training was also supplemented with the following support elements and products:

- Weekly newsletters
- A specific DISC website with hours of audio and video content, as well as articles, newsletters and educational items for all DISC participants.
- Weekly analysis of data from the DISC export using the metrics that were provided by the client as part of the filtering and tracking process.
- DISC Assessments from [Assessments24x7.com](https://www.assessments24x7.com) to provide a baseline of reference to support all communication between individuals.
- [Dr. Tony Alessandra's Virtual Training System](#)
- [Hiring Solutions DISC Support](#)



DISC Assessment Implementation

The DISC implementation was crucial in order to help facilitate the process and support communication, as the assessment provides a baseline of reference to support mutually beneficial relationships. Training was provided for staff members to learn the foundation of the model.

Historically, the company was using a comprehensive selection tool from Hiring Solutions for their internal hires. The only exposure they had had with DISC was a few workshops over the years that focused only on communication. They had been using an online safety screening questionnaire specifically for truck drivers that had a simple rating system for the hiring process. After nearly 3 years of using the tool, they found no

improvement in retention, profitability or production of the clients/drivers. It became apparent that a different approach was necessary.

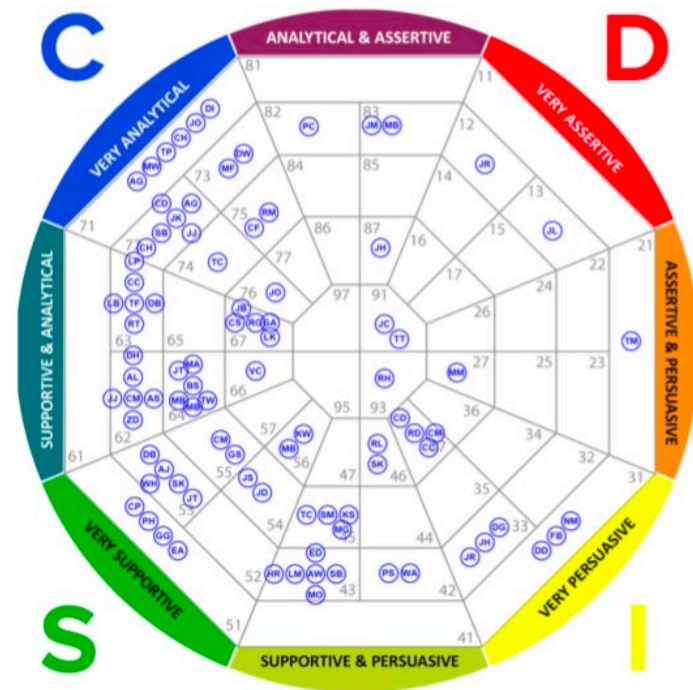
Once the decision was made to move forward with the DISC program, all internal employees completed the assessment, were provided their report and attended a one-half day DISC training with Dave to understand themselves and each other from a new and enlightening perspective.

Once the basic training was completed, the client base was offered the opportunity to participate in the DISC Assessment tool in a variety of ways, including:

- Links in staff email signatures when emailing drivers
- Email and newsletter campaigns

Behavioral Style Group Report - Natural

HSDS



- Online links on the support website
- Phone, text and email recommendations and reminders to the driver base to participate in the DISC Assessment

Once sufficient data on the driver population was gathered, reports were generated, including the Team Wheel pictured above. The Wheel clearly shows a distribution of participants that are Indirect (S and C Styles) in the majority of this sampling.

Even this bit of information was very helpful in highlighting the need to slow down the interactions between staff members and clients; a communication preference for S and C Styles. Awareness of this single core behavior helped avert a number of minor disputes, conflicts and communication pitfalls that might have led to larger issues.

Classic Styles Analysis

Natural DISC Style						
Distribution % of working population by Classic DISC Styles	Number of Drivers in Study	Distribution % of driver population by Classic DISC Styles	Number of drivers retained	% retained based on total population (656) by Style	Number of drivers termed by Classic DISC Styles	% of turnover based on termed drivers over total drivers in each Style
Assessor 7%	25	4%	23	4%	2	8%
Coach 20%	59	9%	53	8%	6	10%
Dynamo 3%	9	1%	6	1%	3	33%
Examiner 4%	55	8%	49	7%	6	11%
Explorer 3%	26	4%	18	3%	8	31%
Fact-Finder 4%	56	9%	48	7%	8	14%
Finisher 3%	21	3%	15	2%	6	29%
Formalist 15%	183	28%	151	23%	32	17%
Harmonizer 3%	18	3%	14	2%	4	22%
Influencer 5%	8	1%	6	1%	2	25%
Networker 9%	17	3%	15	2%	2	12%
Planner 5%	60	9%	53	8%	7	12%
Producer 2%	10	2%	7	1%	3	30%
Results-Driven 2%	7	1%	6	1%	1	14%
Technician 14%	102	16%	79	12%	23	23%
Totals	656		543		113	

Key Data Points (from chart above)

There are 15 Classic DISC profiles (far left column) that help define characteristics of those who have similar scores. This table shows the correlation between the general population and who gravitates toward the driver position. Additionally, it shows the number and percentages of drivers Retained, Terminated

and overall turnover for each of the Classic Styles. The data reveals a great deal of information which, in turn, informs potential recruitment and coaching strategies.

- High Turnover styles and recruitment strategies
 - Highest turnover styles include Dynamo, Explorer, Producer and Finisher.
 - Adjustments could be made in the recruiting phase to downplay the position responsibilities which might appeal to applicants with these styles.
- High Retained styles and strategies for success
 - Identify the Classic Style descriptive qualities and include those behavior descriptors in advertising and recruiting programs. In this study, the Formalist would be a good example.
 - Coach all other styles on the team to react to their responsibilities in a manner that is consistent with the highest retention style; the Formalist.
 - Train supervisors and support personnel on communicating and supporting the behaviors for Formalists, playing to their strengths.
- Coach all current employees to modify their natural styles to accommodate the behaviors that are most like the high retention, high producing styles.
- Identify high performing styles, their pace and priority, then steer your culture, goals and objectives to capitalize on, draw out and support those desired behaviors from all of your employees.

What the Data Shows

The average turnover for this specific group of 656 drivers is 17%, which is half of the general population of drivers at 34%, according to the overall culture database. This is significant.

The Formalist Style is the largest single group at 183, or 28% of the total driver population. This is almost double the 15% of Formalists in the general population and matches very well with the random 100 driver wheel report shown as an example. This suggests that Formalists:

- Seem naturally attracted to the driver position at a level that is 12% higher than the 2nd place Technician Style.
- Are the 2nd most populace group in the general population behind the Coach Style at 20%, which represents a very large population from which to recruit.
- Have the highest retention rate of any style group at 23%, with the 2nd highest being Technician at 12%.
- Represent almost 40% (183) of all 462 low turnover drivers in this group.

Analysis of the data clearly identifies a single group of prospects who will have the greatest potential for success. With this information, we can be intentional with marketing, using the characteristics explained and supported in a number of DISC reports. If used wisely, this can have a significant impact on the organization and applicants from the beginning of the relationship.

Formalist vs the Technician – Overview and Graphs

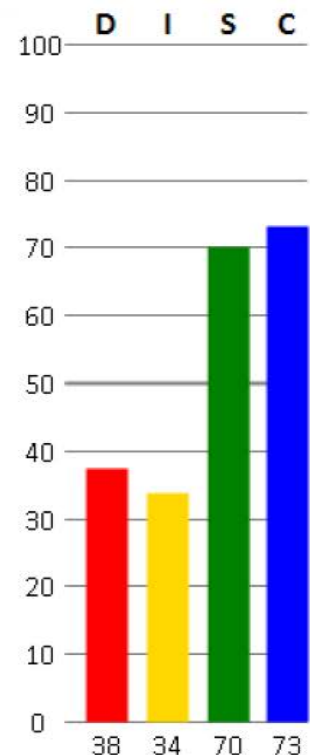
Let's take a close look at the overview pages for the lowest turnover of drivers by style (Formalist) and the highest (Technician), and what we can conclude about the comparison.

Job Profile (Benchmark): Formalist Overview

Behavioral Style: **Formalist**

Formalist Style Overview

- **Emotional characteristic:** Internally focuses energy on holding themselves to exacting standards and doing things right; may appear reserved and restrained.
- **Goals:** To achieve stable and reliable accomplishments.
- **How others are valued:** The consistent ability to be precise and accurate.
- **Influences group:** Through detailed and accurate input to team efforts.
- **Value to the organization:** Will embrace and support high quality and expected standards.
- **“Watch-out-for”:** Rely too much on past procedures; can become rule bound.
- **When under pressure:** May revert to too much diplomacy and overly careful maneuvering.
- **Fears:** Aggressive, risky and confronting interactions; superficial personal relationships.



Formalist Strengths:

- You take your responsibilities seriously and exercise your authority in a sincere and conscientious manner.
- You are patient in working with others on the team and demonstrating detailed methods for completing a project.
- You have an excellent, considerate, analytical listening style.

Formalist Potential Areas For Improvement:

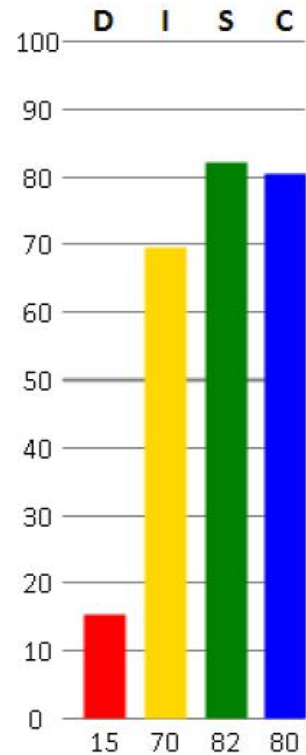
- You may be perceived as slow in making decisions and tentative when it comes to making changes.
- You may be perceived by some as rigid, inflexible, and overly strict regarding procedures and options.
- You could demonstrate a bit more spontaneity and take yourself a bit less seriously.

Job Profile (Benchmark): Technician Overview

Behavioral Style: **Technician**

Technician Style Overview

- **Emotional characteristic:** Need to be current and keep pace with others.
- **Goals:** High expectations for their own growth and advancement.
- **How others are valued:** Through demonstrated self-discipline, position and authority.
- **Influences group:** Projecting confidence in ability to create, implement and expand the correct activities and actions.
- **Value to the organization:** Skilled problem-solvers and experts in identifying solutions for their own area(s) of experience.
- **“Watch-out-for”:** Over-focus on personal goals and may expect too much from others.
- **When under pressure:** Can become inhibited and overly sensitive to critical feedback.
- **Fears:** Being too predictable or being unrecognized for their contributions.



Technician Strengths:

- You combine people skills, patience in working with others, quality control, and attention to details in a versatile blend of talent and expertise.
- You are excellent at motivating others toward team goals with your enthusiasm and optimism, as well as your sensitivity to their needs and concerns.
- You can be depended upon to do what you say you will do.

Technician Potential Areas For Improvement:

- You may demonstrate a "superior" attitude, especially toward those whom you perceive as having lower skills, or lower attention to quality.
- You may react on impulse rather than thinking things through before responding.
- You may need help in prioritizing. Under pressure, all items may be ranked as most important.

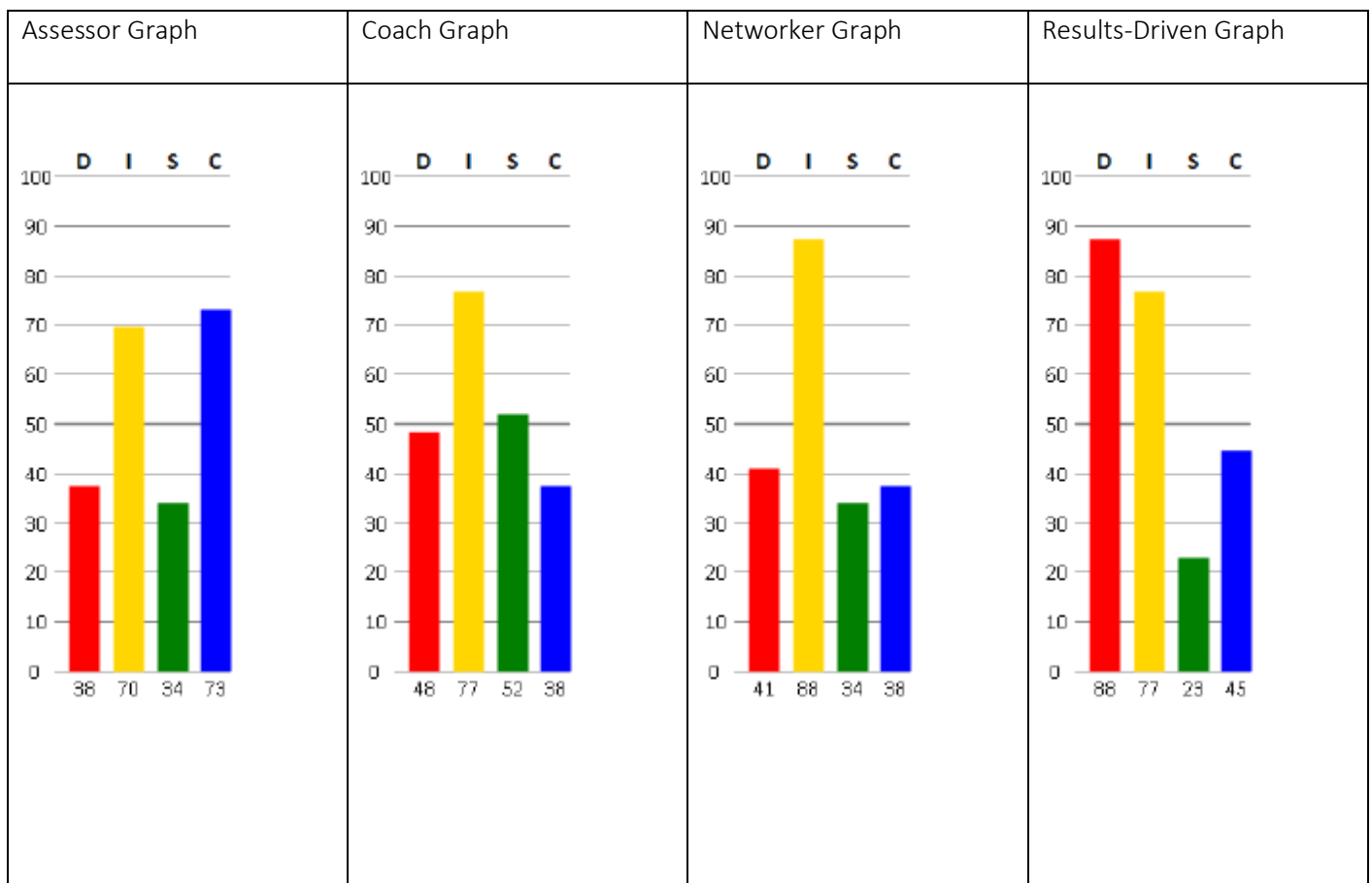
Here we can see that the Technician graph shows a much higher “I” and a lower “D” score than the Formalist. This need to interact with, motivate and receive recognition with others does not match well with the indirect behaviors that help define a long-term successful driver. The slightly lower “D” when coupled with a high “I” might indicate a tendency to want to “look good” over delivering a good result.

DISC Styles that do NOT Gravitate Towards Drivers

While there are seven Classic Styles that have a lower turnover percentage than the Formalist, we need to take a few more facts into consideration when analyzing and targeting these groups. They represent a smaller segment of the general population with the exception of the Coach Style and they do not seem to naturally select for, or gravitate towards the driver position. Let's look at the data for the Assessor, the Coach, the Networker and the Results Driven Styles:

Classic style	Percentage of General Population	Percentage of Driver Population	Total Drivers by Style (Out of 656 overall)
Assessor	7%	4%	25
Coach	20%	9%	59
Networker	9%	3%	17
Results Driven	2%	1%	7

Graphs for the Coach, Networker, Assessor and the Results Driven



A commonality of all four of these styles is a high “I” score in each. All but the Assessor also have a low “C” score. Both of these characteristics show up as a determining factor in the Termination table analysis shown previously.

Styles that Gravitate Towards Drivers

There are three other styles that have a lower turnover percentage than the Formalist Style: the Planner, the Fact-Finder and the Examiner Styles. Notice in the data chart below that a common thread for each is that they are attracted to the driver position at almost twice the rate that their group appears in the general population.

Classic Style	Percentage of General Population	Percentage of Driver Population	Total drivers by Style (Out of 656 overall)
Planner	5%	9%	60
Fact-Finder	4%	9%	56
Examiner	4%	8%	55

In addition, none of them have a “D” or “I” score above the center/energy line of the graph included on the overview pages.

This result matches the Formalist style, the random 100 driver team wheel analysis, and our initial hypothesis that people on the Indirect side of the DISC are better suited for, more comfortable with, and are naturally attracted to the driver position. Below, we provide the full overview and graphs for each, as they give us more insight into the behaviors that gravitate towards the driver role.

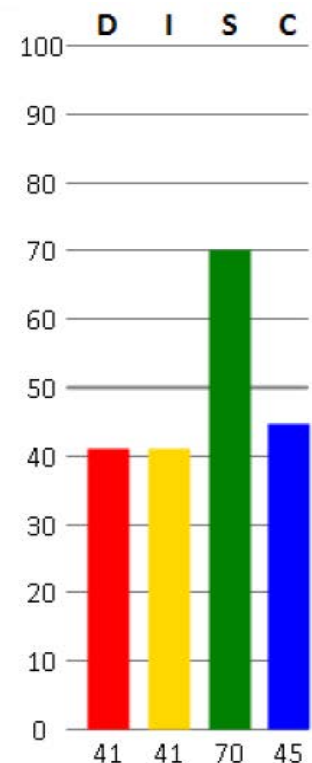
Overview and Graphs for the Planner, Fact-Finder and the Examiner

Job Profile (Benchmark): Planner Overview

Behavioral Style: **Planner**

Planner Style Overview

- **Emotional characteristic:** Will often bring balance, temperance and composure to interactions.
- **Goals:** Consistency and retention of the status quo with a minimum of disruptive change.
- **How others are valued:** Through quality of relationships and demonstrated competency.
- **Influences group:** Reliable and consistent performance that can be counted on.
- **Value to the organization:** Reliable and consistent efforts that can be counted on.
- **“Watch-out-for”:** Unlikely to take risks; will quietly resist change.
- **When under pressure:** Likely to adapt to a power figure or group direction; avoid "first to try" actions.
- **Fears:** Rapid changes; chaotic and haphazard activities.



Planner Strengths:

- You can be depended upon to do what you say you will do.
- You have a rare ability to calm people who are angry or upset.
- You are an excellent teacher or coach to others on the team, especially in situations requiring patience and specialized skills.

Planner Potential Areas For Improvement:

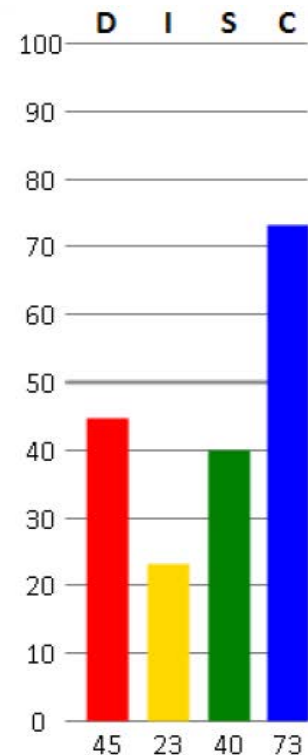
- You may need help prioritizing tasks when under pressure or facing deadlines.
- You may tend to hold back and wait for others to initiate ideas and processes.
- You have a long memory for wrongs committed, and thus may be considered by some to be a grudge-holder.

Job Profile (Benchmark): Fact-Finder Overview

Behavioral Style: **Fact-Finder**

Fact-Finder Style Overview

- **Emotional characteristic:** Avoid unsafe or risky ideas or relationships.
- **Goals:** Safety and accomplishment through correctness.
- **How others are valued:** Others' ability to effectively use logic and data.
- **Influences group:** Encourages and supports attention and focus on quality of evidence and analytical thinking.
- **Value to the organization:** Gets the facts, reviews the findings and brings analytical clarity to the project.
- **"Watch-out-for":** Subject to "analysis paralysis"; may try to indirectly impose a more controlled environment.
- **When under pressure:** Can become overly alarmed and anxious in risky or uncertain work situations.
- **Fears:** Other's erratic behavior or facing strong criticism or blame.



Fact-Finder Strengths:

- You are deadline conscious, with excellent time-management skills.
- You're an excellent critical thinker, frequently asking "Why?"
- You have a strong ability to clarify complex issues, and to define the essence of a problem or solution.

Fact-Finder Potential Areas For Improvement:

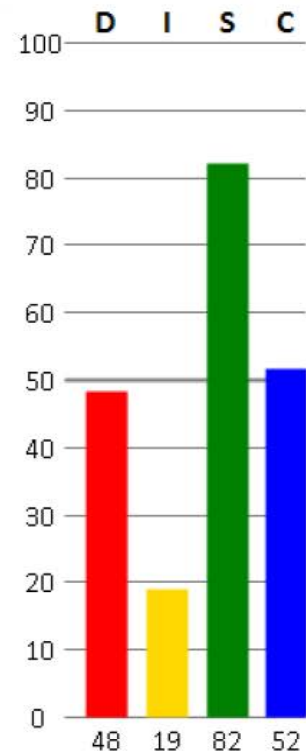
- You may be too cautious when making decisions, tending to second-guess yourself, rather than standing firmly behind your decision.
- You do not like to make waves and thus may not be verbal with your feelings and opinions, especially if they run contrary to the group.
- You may allow yourself to get bogged down in the details, especially when the climate becomes pressured.

Job Profile (Benchmark): Examiner Overview

Behavioral Style: **Examiner**

Examiner Style Overview

- **Emotional characteristic:** May appear disinterested and behaviorally restrained.
- **Goals:** To gain the authority from identified organization structures and positions.
- **How others are valued:** Other's ability to effectively use logic and data.
- **Influences group:** Through persistence, tenacity and steady focus.
- **Value to the organization:** Brings a fact-based grounding to a team combined with the ability to work individually or with others effectively.
- **“Watch-out-for”:** Can become undiplomatic and question other motives.
- **When under pressure:** Can internalize stress, be slow to let go of mistakes and become non-communicative.
- **Fears:** Loss of ability to focus individually on the facts and supporting theoretical rather than practical concepts



Examiner Strengths:

- You always follow through, with a strong emphasis on completeness.
- You excel at solving technical or abstract problems and are at your best when dealing with multi-faceted processes.
- You are able to assimilate complex information and develop conclusions based on data, rather than emotions.

Examiner Potential Areas For Improvement:

- You may become rather stubborn once your mind is made up on a decision.
- You may affect morale with your tendency to focus on results over attention to team members. You may need to take a softer approach at times.
- You may dispense strong criticism, and even sarcasm, when others don't measure up to your standards.

These three styles represent 27% of the driver population (171), nearly equal to the overall number of Formalist Style drivers. Additional key facts about all four of these styles:

- Along with the Formalist, these additional three styles represent 54% of the driver population
- They all seem naturally attracted to the driver position
- The current recruiting practices seem to be working

- The styles are similar enough, that if the client ramps up recruiting to appeal more to the Formalist style, the Planner, Fact-Finder and Examiner will also be attracted because of their similarities

The overview pages for each of these low turnover Classic Styles identify key behaviors, goals, values and strengths. This clear and concise information can support an approach in marketing and recruiting to attract more applicants that fall under these productive driver styles.

The worksheet below shows a number of gap analysis points for the Natural and Adapted DISC styles using a 100-point scale, with 1 representing the lowest score, and 100 representing the highest score. Each of the DISC scores are the average score on the four scales of the assessment for that specific group.

As with any gap analysis, there can be many related benefits as long as there is a consistent gathering of scores followed by a comprehensive set of metrics to sort and compare the data for trends.

Group	# in Group	Adapted D	Adapted I	Adapted S	Adapted C	Natural D	Natural I	Natural S	Natural C
Tops	23	42	45	64	73	36	41	69	65
All Termed	113	39	48	65	68	41	44	64	59
Gap between Tops and all Termed		3	-3	-1	5	-5	-3	5	6
Safety Termed	9	47	46	65	69	43	54	65	45
Gap between Tops and Safety Termed		-5	-1	-1	4	-7	-13	4	20

There are three groups represented:

- **Top Performers**- Top performing Drivers based on earnings, safety, ease of admin support, timely deliveries, lack of complaints, etc. These are the cream-of-the-crop as they say.
- **All Terminated** - This group represents both voluntary and involuntary terminations without specific data to support the decision. In other words, a catch-all of ending employment outside of Safety Termed.
- **Safety Termed** - These individuals either caused an accident or were caught breaking a primary safety rule and were terminated immediately. This is a highly specific data point.

Now to the value statements concerning the data. All of these drivers “looked” the same during the screening process. By reviewing the adapted scores for each group, you can see that they all have similar scores across

the four Adapted DISC Styles scores. The largest gap is only 5% between the three groups in the Adapted scores.

The adapted behaviors that they portrayed during the interview and screening events were very similar as they all knew what the position called for and had experience in the role. Consequently, recruiters based their decisions on these observed behaviors. Once on board, safely in their own truck, their natural behaviors come to the forefront.

When you compare the Top Performer group to the All Terminated group, you can see that there are increases in the gaps for the four styles. While not a major shift, we do see a division starting even with this generic group.

Safety Terminated vs. Top Performers

Reviewing the Top Performer group scores against those from the Safety Terminated group we see the largest gaps between groups. There is only one score with a gap of less than 5 points, and that is the “S” scale with a gap of 4. The other three scales are all above a 7-point split with a high of over 20 points in the “C” style between the Top Performer group and Safety Terminated group.

This comparison tells us two very important details. First, the difference between Natural and Adapted scores can be critical when making placement decisions. Second, the more specific the metrics and details, the more powerful the analysis can be.

Benefit of this data for current Drivers

Training, recruiting and support programs that encourage the focus away from the higher “I” behaviors, while encouraging a greater focus on the detail, data tracking and analysis of the “C” type behaviors will result in a higher success rate for current drivers.

The Outcome

By implementing the process and solution, the client outcome was extremely positive. Right away, the organization saw improvement in their interviewing and relationship building. As the implementation began to take hold, higher quality drivers were matched to the best suited support manager for a long term, profitable relationship. Over the course of the contract, this not only boosted conversions and profits, but it also increased retention. Larger client portfolios developed since there were fewer “high maintenance” relationships for the Client Relationship Managers to handle. This resulted in higher volume, higher profits, better retention and reduced stress for all people involved.

Turnover numbers for the client were already low at 62% compared to industry standards of 85%. After implementing our process along with two additional changes and enhancements internally, turnover was reduced by an additional 28% down to 34%. This is 51 points below the industry average at the time of this publication. Internal enhancements included a single point of contact for Drivers for all issues, and better marketing for the load board for owner- operators.

The company attributed more than 1/3 of the improvement directly to the DISC program, coaching, support and training efforts. A conservative estimate would be that a 10% increase in retention was due specifically to this program.

- **Average population count:** ~1,200
- **Drivers retained per year:** ~120
- **Average refurbished cost savings per unit:** ~\$8,500 (does not include cost of recruiting and training new owner-operators)
- **Minimum net savings (hard costs):**
~\$1,020,000 per year

Closing Remarks

The end results speak for themselves but only tell part of the story.

Please remember that this study is specific to a single culture. Your organization may find success with a completely different set of styles and scores that reflect successful drivers in your culture. Every company is different.

As we gain new insight from the data analysis, the depth and value of the collected data will increase on an ongoing basis. The continuing change and addition of useful metrics evolves as the database grows. This creates a tool that grows and develops in a manner that we could not have foreseen or considered at the start of the project but is hugely beneficial as it evolves and is monitored and managed.

