

It's a zoo around here!

Performance coach Nigel Risner suggests that people can be divided into 4 groups based on their preferred communication style – Lions, Monkeys, Dolphins and Elephants. “With monkeys trying to joke with long-suffering elephants, and impatient lions at odds with nurturing dolphins, the result is chaos” Nigel comments.

Why not take the quiz and find out what animal you are?

1. What keeps you engaged in a presentation?

- **Clarity, solid, well-researched data and depth of information.**
- **Visual representation of data, graphics and amusing anecdotes.**
- **Lots of real-life examples – the closer to home, the better.**
- **A brisk, logical presentation leading quickly to a conclusion.**

2. How do you influence people to do what you'd like them to do?

- **Be honest and straightforward – state what you want and what you're prepared to give in return.**
- **Give them the information that shows the benefits of your course of action.**
- **Persuade charm, maybe flatter a little and talk them round to your point of view.**
- **Use empathy and sensitivity and be generous with concessions.**

3. What kind of positive feedback makes you feel most valued?

- **Warm friendly comments – maybe some physical contact too.**
- **Public praise and celebration.**

- **Brief, sincere, and to the point – no fuss.**
- **Detailed comments on exactly what was done well and how it's made a difference.**

4. A colleague shows you the birthday present he's bought for his wife and asks your opinion; you think it's awful. How do you handle it?

- **Make a jokey comment.**
- **Come straight out with your opinion – say it like it is.**
- **Bend over backwards to be tactful.**
- **Be completely stuck for what to say and end up being non-committal.**

5. And finally, pick 3 or 4 traits from the list below that you think best describes you. To help you be objective, imagine what a friend would say if they were asked about you.

- **Good listener**
- **Firm**
- **Noisy**
- **Supportive**
- **Lacking assertiveness**
- **Sensible and reliable**
- **Fussy about details**
- **Energetic and enthusiastic**
- **Blunt**
- **Gets bored easily**
- **A good laugh**
- **Logical**
- **Truthful**
- **Hides feelings**

Over-sensitive

Assertive

Now check the coloured dots besides the answers – the colour you chose most often corresponds to your preferred style. For more information on your style and how best to communicate with colleagues with other styles, contact nigel@nigelrisner.com www.nigelrisner.com

Lions are straight-forward, tenacious and purposeful. They make visionary leaders and love to be in charge. They are excellent at making tough decisions and meeting deadlines. People can perceive them as being stubborn, impatient and uncaring. When talking with Lions, be brief and focus on the task in hand. Make a point of honouring all agreements to the letter.

Monkeys are dynamic, creative and energetic. They can inject liveliness and humour into the duller of situations. Because of this, others sometimes feel they don't take things seriously enough. They often have trouble with timekeeping. When talking with Monkeys be enthusiastic, tap into their ideas and give them space to think flexibly and change their minds.

Elephants are capable, analytical and often more sensitive and vulnerable than they let others see. They are extremely reliable and value clarity, gentleness and quiet. They have difficulty expressing themselves and people can see them as overly formal and fussy. When talking with Elephants, allow them to save face and be prepared for lots of questions about detail.

Dolphins are very supportive and perceptive of others' emotions. They are excellent at building rapport and are often also skilled in handling detail. People can perceive them as being weak or over-emotional. When talking with Dolphins, pay attention to social and personal aspects as well as the task and remember they find change unsettling.

Whilst you have found out your dominant style, remember to communicate well knowing who *you* are not the issue – understanding how to become an effective zoo keeper is. In our book, *It's a zoo around here*, there are many more details and examples of how to use this with your family and in your workplace and we can tailor make a presentation for your company should you so desire. We have Licensed and trained zoo keepers ready to support you in your quest for better communication.