

## Extended DISC Australasia *FactSheet*

### *Greetings*

At a recent training session, we discussed workplace stress, and this reminded me of an actual case study sent to us by one of our affiliates some months ago.

It is a classic case of a manager employed in a role that simply didn't suit his natural behavioural style and was one of the reasons our affiliate was consulted by the CEO of the organisation involved. The case study relates to the motor vehicle industry but it could well apply to any business or workplace situation. We have featured this specific case in this month's newsletter.

The New Zealand Herald reported on Thursday, October 7, 2010, *"A study by Sydney University's Workplace Research Centre found that the nation's casual workforce has grown to about two million, with non-permanent work outstripping standard full-time employment. At work, stress from high workloads, lack of control over how jobs are performed, employment insecurity, lack of reward for effort and little social support in the workplace are hammering workers' mental health. A study released yesterday by the Victorian Government agency VicHealth said about 1.5 million employees suffered work-related mental strain and depression – most of which could be avoided. It also said the impact was much wider than these figures suggested. Work-related mental illness hit family life and child-rearing, ate into leisure time and cost an estimated A\$209 million a year in compensation claims for psychological injury."*

We are not immune to the effects of stress in Australia and New Zealand and we will provide some interesting statistics in next month's newsletter. (See National Stress Indicator™ in our November issue).



While on the subject of stress, we thought it is worth taking a look at the causes of workplace stress so have featured an article on this subject in this month's issue.

So the main topic this month is all about stress and we are fortunate to be part of an international organisation that has the ability to calculate stress in various countries and compare the results. The National Stress Indicator™ ("NSI") is one outcome of Extended DISC International's continuous global research and interest in understanding not only individuals, teams and corporations but also the NSI of whole nations. We will look at this next month.

Although we considered the signs of stress in the main four behavioural styles in a recent newsletter, it seems appropriate that we take a quick look at these to finish up our "stressful" issue this month!

### *A classic case of Workplace Stress and its cause*

Stress is a prevalent and costly problem in today's workplace and this is just another case that we have come across through one of our Extended DISC consultants.



Bill (not his real name) is a highly skilled motor engineer with a university degree. He has spent many years tutoring at a well known technical institute and is widely respected by his peers.

For obvious reasons we cannot disclose where he is located, but some 12 months ago he decided that he would apply for a managerial position with a large new car franchise as the remuneration offered was significantly higher than he was earning and he felt that it was time for a change from his academic role.

The CEO of the motor vehicle dealership was impressed with Bill's academic knowledge and employed him without conducting any behavioural style analysis and without considering how he would fit into the team he would be leading.

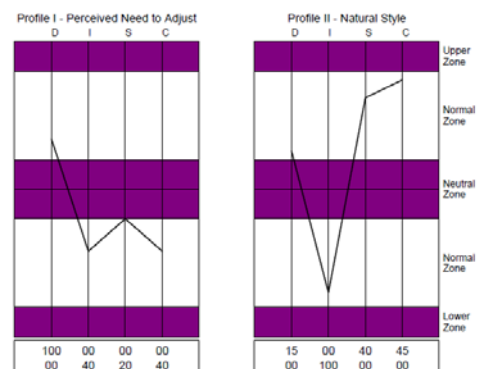
The failure to consider Bill's behavioural style proved to be a vital omission.

Bill took up the new role on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 as the CEO had decided that the quiet time the firm normally experienced during the first couple of weeks in January would give Bill a chance to become familiar with the firm's systems. His job description was prepared by the CEO during the first week and his main responsibilities involved managing a branch of the company which employed 10 motor mechanics, a small administration staff and 15 sales staff.

The role required a "hands on" involvement being available to help assist in supporting the service department and becoming actively involved in the sales process. The firm had (and still has) a strict budgetary control system which was heavily focused on a sales budget. The budget was, despite difficult trading conditions, considered to be realistic and achievable.

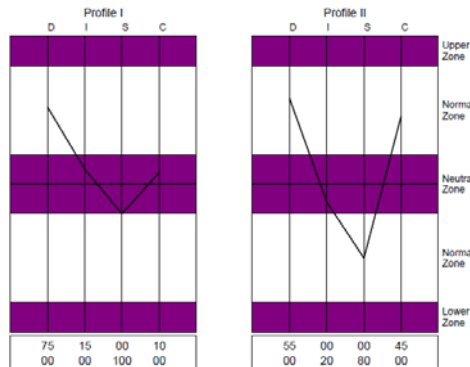
It had been decided that Bill and the CEO would meet after three months and review the branch's performance. Unfortunately, despite a lot of hard work and very long hours, Bill had been unable to meet sales targets and the atmosphere at the branch had become uncomfortable with a basic breakdown in communication between management and staff.

Both the CEO and Bill wanted the management role to work and for this reason the CEO then decided to contact a consultant and this is where our involvement began. The advisor was an accredited Extended DISC consultant and he was engaged to provide the CEO on a workable solution to the challenges involved at the branch.



The very first step the consultant took was to obtain Personal Analysis Reports for the entire staff of thirty-two people and he also decided to obtain a report from the CEO as well. Bill's Profiles are shown above and the very significant movement from his natural behavioural style to his adjusted style is immediately obvious. Several of the staff's Profiles exhibited stress, insecurity and frustration.

Bill has felt the need to suppress his natural CS style and focus on his D characteristics. This is of course a clear indication of the stress that he was currently experiencing.



The other interesting point in this situation is that the CEO, (whose Profiles are opposite) did not identify the fact that Bill's management style was bound to be quite different from his during the interview process because he did not realise that the style Bill conveyed at his interview was that of a D style although this was only a small percentage of his unconscious behavioural style.

He obviously decided that the CEO would want a strong manager and this is the impression he left with the CEO; - a typical situation in the recruitment process. The CEO was therefore left with the clear impression that he was a direct, decisive, competitive individual quite capable of managing a group of servicemen and salesmen. He also felt that he would have no difficulty in communicating with him. It will be noted that the CEO shared Bill's C traits but his D characteristics were much stronger than Bill's.

Bill had no experience in management and his approach was to become demanding and blunt rather than diplomatic, systematic and conservative which would clearly fit his natural behavioural style as a CS person. This was influenced in no small way by the natural style of the CEO whose adjusted style was focused heavily on his D traits.

The change in Bill's style caused him very real stress but just as importantly, the team at the branch saw him as difficult to communicate with and the stress was affecting his relationship with them. His effectiveness was diminished because of his stress.

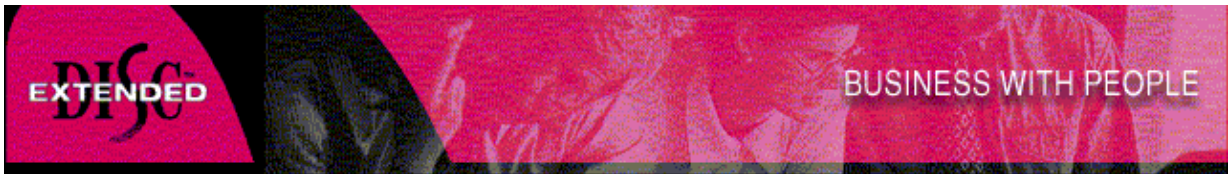
Bill was clearly in the wrong job. The cost to the firm in replacing Bill, and his loss not only in self-esteem but in loss of income if he was to move on was something neither party wished to face, but clearly the situation could not continue.

Fortunately this case had a happy outcome. The CEO, recognising now the difference in Bill's style and understanding from the consultant what the change in his behavioural style meant it created a new position within the organisation, giving him the role of trainer and technical advisor for the group, assisting each service department as a consultant and trainer. No longer did he have to take a dominant role, and the advisory role suited his style. It is fortunate that the company had seven separate locations otherwise the company would not have had a position for him.



The company now uses Extended DISC for all recruitment situations and for retention and motivation of all staff and we are told that they are advocates of the Extended DISC system.

At the risk of repetition, it is worth remembering that an independent study conducted on CEOs, by Stanford Research Institute and Carnegie Mellon in the US, found that long-term job success depends 75 percent on people skills and only 25 percent on technical knowledge. Another study done by Harvard University had even more startling results - 85 percent of jobs and promotions happened because of the candidate's attitude and only 15 percent due to the facts and figures he packed under his belt.



## *The Causes of Workplace Stress*

A number of studies have found that job stress results from the interaction of the worker and the conditions of work.

While views differ on the importance of worker characteristics (behavioural styles) versus working conditions as the primary cause of job stress there is overwhelming evidence that individual worker's characteristics such as personality (including behavioural style) and coping skills are very important in predicting whether certain job conditions will result in stress.

In other words, what is stressful for one person may not be a problem for another person.

For this reason it is possible to minimise the risk of stress by using behavioural style analysis and selecting the candidate whose style best fits the role. The Extended DISC Job Comparison tool, used in conjunction with the Personal Analysis Report is an ideal solution for this challenge.

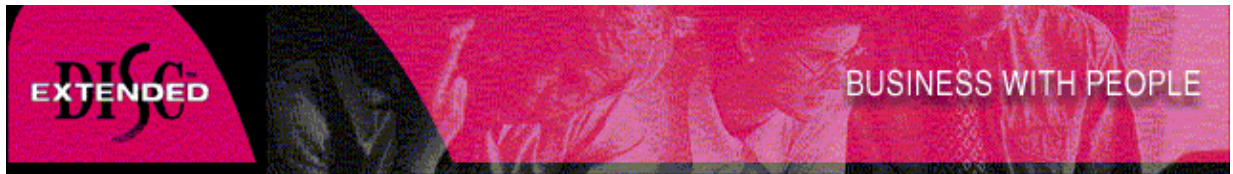


It would be naive to suggest that a person's behavioural style not fitting the role is the only cause of stress, but it is a major reason.

Other reasons include:

- Certain working conditions, which can be stressful to the majority of people regardless of behavioural style. These include an increase in work intensity, and although the statistics are some ten years old, 60% of employees in the European Union reported that they work against tight deadlines at least 25% of their time.
- Working long hours. By one estimate in the US, more than 26% of men and 11% of women worked 50 hours or more per week in 2000.
- A person's status in the workplace. Less "powerful" employees (that is, those who have less control over their jobs) are more likely to suffer stress than the decision makers
- Economic factors that employees are facing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have been linked to increased stress levels. Researchers and social commentators have pointed out that the computer and communications revolutions have made companies more efficient and productive than ever before but this boon in productivity has caused higher expectations and greater competition putting more stress on employees.
- Bullying in the workplace is also recognised as a cause of stress.

Regardless of the causes for stress listed above, the easiest and single most important solution to overcoming stress is to select a candidate that best suits the role. The case study in this newsletter is an example of just how easy it is to misjudge the suitability of a job applicant, and yet the problem can easily and cost effectively be avoided through using behavioural style analysis tools.



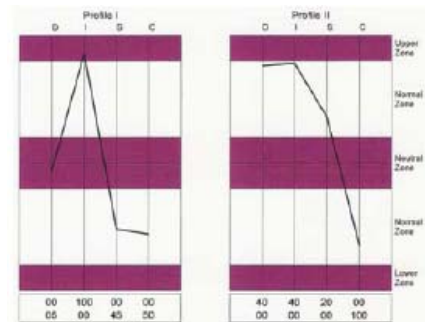
## Signs of Stress in different Behavioural Styles

It is important that we remember always that only one third of one percent of the population's natural behavioural style is 100% D, I, S or C, but there is always one trait dominating the other two or three traits.

The following is an analysis of how to identify the signs of stress in the four main styles.

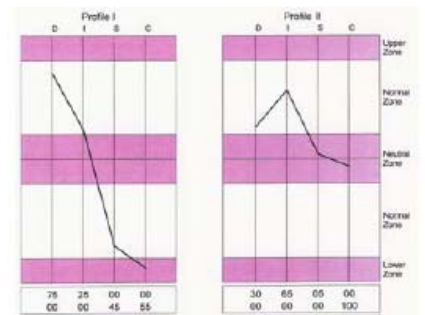
### D style

- Becoming aggressive and pressuring
- Pressuring people
- Focusing on immediate results and action
- Becoming impatient
- Changing things hastily, becoming irritating, blunt and stubborn, inflexible and demanding



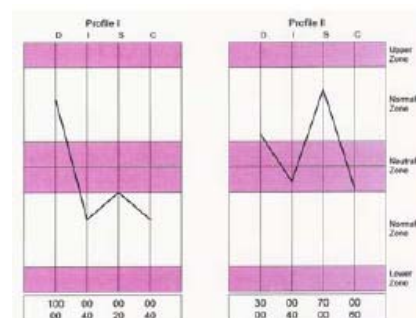
### I style

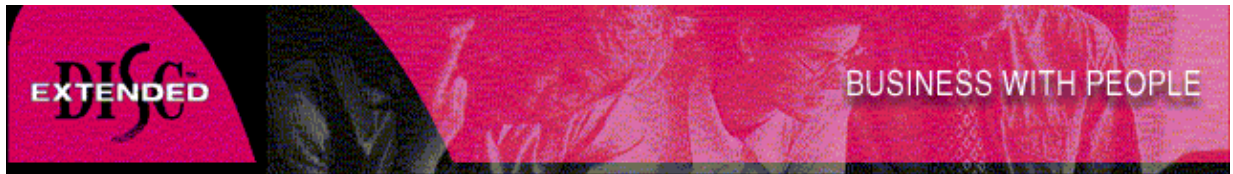
- Becoming overly concerned with relationships
- Talking a lot
- Seeking attention from everywhere
- Being too interested in other people's attention
- Having strong opinionated views that they defend emotionally



### S style

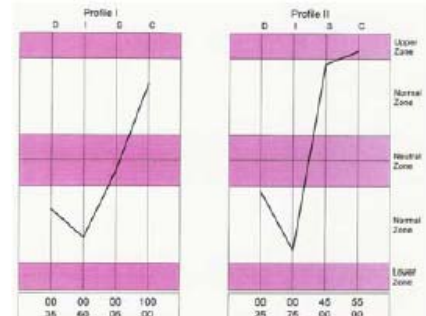
- Becoming overly cautious
- Wanting to retain current situation
- Objecting aggressively to any attempt to change things
- Basing everything on justice and avoiding risks
- Distancing themselves and opposing everything
- Being difficult to approach and stubborn





## C style

- Questioning everything
- Becoming overly considerate
- Becoming interested in cause-effect relationships
- Trusting only facts, and doubting even them
- Being afraid of the worst
- Withdrawing one-self and becoming aloof.



The profiles shown in this section are taken from actual reports. Those who have completed Extended DISC training will recognise the indicators, but the Present Situation page together with the Suggested Interview Questions, which form part of the Extended DISC Personal Analysis Report, identify stress indicators as well as insecurity, and uncertainty of role and provide other vital information for consultants, recruiters and employers.

## November Webinar

*Hosted by: Kelly Fairhurst*

In November, we focus on practical matters surrounding the use of our Extended DISC Online System (EDOS).

The Webinar will focus on central questions from Client Administrators (those with the capacity to manage Client Users under them in EDOS). Learn how to process reports, create Client User accounts and effectively manage your EDOS Client Administrator account.

This Webinar is open to individuals who manage Client Administrator accounts within EDOS. The November Webinar is scheduled for **Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM Wellington time.**

Spaces are limited. Email us to register.



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October 2010

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