

Self-Test: Your Buying Style

Answer the following questions to analyze what kinds of characteristics you'll need in a consultant. Don't over-think your answers. Go with your instincts.

- 1. When you earn recognition for a project or presentation, it's most often for:**
 - a. The quality of your work.
 - b. The accuracy of your data.
 - c. The consistency of your style.
 - d. The quality of your ideas.
- 2. During a meeting, people discuss a new product idea. You would be happiest if you could:**
 - a. See a prototype of the product so you can understand how customers will perceive and use it.
 - b. Review the product specs, target customer profile data, and a run-down of key features.
 - c. Get detailed notes and a list of clear action items once the meeting is over.
 - d. Talk about the idea.
- 3. When vendors and co-workers get frustrated with you, it's usually because:**
 - a. Your standards for a final product are so high.
 - b. You don't like to start a project until it's fully defined.
 - c. Other people don't understand that skipping sequential project steps is a very bad idea.
 - d. You take on more work than you can finish.
- 4. When you come back from a trip, you are most likely to tell friends about:**
 - a. Climate, location and interesting buildings or transportation.
 - b. Historical information, background about the area and the museums you visited.
 - c. The itinerary you followed
 - d. An unexpected adventure.
- 5. When you got in trouble as a kid, it was usually for:**
 - a. Taking things apart or not keeping your hands to yourself.
 - b. Wanting to know everything that was going on or asking too many questions.
 - c. Resisting change and sticking to old rules when new ones were enacted.
 - d. Being bored and acting out or talking too much.
- 6. Your department will move to expanded office space next quarter. You start planning by:**
 - a. Walking through the new space and reviewing the floor plans with the facilities manager.
 - b. Asking your managers to submit lists of their requirements for office and cube allocations, computer systems, etc.
 - c. Asking the facilities manager to develop a project plan for all phases of the construction and move.
 - d. Calling a meeting with your entire staff to announce the project.
- 7. You want to show the key features of your company's accounting system to your newly-hired controller. You:**
 - a. Give your own demo, showing the shortcuts you use to generate the most important reports.
 - b. Recommend he/she read the user's manual before meeting with you.
 - c. Have him/her follow the online tutorial starting at the beginning.
 - d. Go over the most useful features and skip the rest since they're not really important.
- 8. When you buy a new car, you're most likely to:**
 - a. Get out and test-drive the top three or four models you're interested in.
 - b. Comparison-shop on the Internet before picking the models you want to test-drive.
 - c. Develop a checklist of your must-have features and performance requirements.
 - d. Test-drive cars that use the most innovative technologies, like night-vision enhancements or the new hybrid gas-electric models.
- 9. The reward that would most motivate you at work:**
 - a. The corner office, your own assistant and a dedicated parking space.
 - b. A better job title.
 - c. Stock options and a retirement plan that will set you for life.
 - d. Promotion to an international position that will require travel to all the countries you've always wanted to see.
- 10. The board of directors is having an unscheduled meeting. Your CEO gives you 20 minutes to pull together a presentation on this quarter's sales figures. Normally, you'd spend two hours on this project. Instead you:**
 - a. Show up and simply answer any questions the board puts to you. Any presentation you could have created would have been so bad as to be worthless.
 - b. Gather some background information and get as many facts in place as possible.
 - c.
 - d. Start creating the presentation at the beginning and get as much done as you can – stopping when you run out of time.
 - e. Pull together a complete presentation, but hope the board doesn't ask for a lot of detail because you don't have it.

Scoring

Count the number of a, b, c, and d responses you've marked.
If you circled:

Mostly a

You solve puzzles by getting physically involved. You like to touch things and move the parts to see how they work. You need a product demo. You can't buy until you really see what makes it tick. Ask your consultant to spend an entire afternoon showing you how the product works. Ask for specific examples and use the system yourself to see how you like it.

Mostly b

You solve puzzles by gathering data. You like to get background information before you start on any project. You need concrete data. Ask your consultant for timelines and comparisons in chart form. You need specific feature lists and a detailed, organized product specification.

Mostly c

You solve puzzles by putting a process in place. When you hear a new idea, you think about the steps that will be required to complete the task. You need a plan. Your consultant should present you with a timeline that shows all of the roles and responsibilities associated with the project. Your consultant should provide you with a detailed cost forecast showing each project step, the time it takes and the expenses involved.

Mostly d

You solve puzzles by trying new ideas. You like to imagine possibilities and you are hard to pin down. You need flexibility. Ask your consultant to participate in some "blue sky" task force meetings to help make sure all the possible options are discussed. Tell your consultant to expect changes, which will impact deadlines and costs. Ask your consultant to provide regular status updates so you can make sure you stay in sync in the face of changes.