

PERSUASION STYLES ASSESSMENT

By G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa

MARK EACH STATEMENT BELOW AS FOLLOWS:

- 0 = Rarely true for me
- 1 = Sometimes true for me
- 2 = Equally true and not true for me
- 3 = Usually true for me
- 4 = Always true for me

- ___A. I am known for saying exactly what is on my mind.
- ___B. I am an enthusiastic, assertive person.
- ___C. I have insights into others' feelings and needs that often surprise them.
- ___D. I let others do the talking at meetings.
- ___A. I express my point of view, even if it means upsetting people.
- ___C. I cultivate a wide network of contacts and relationships.
- ___B. I am told I am very assertive.
- ___D. I am quietly effective.
- ___B. I like to be out front, leading the charge.
- ___A. I devote more time to understanding ideas than to understanding people.
- ___D. I prefer a quiet conversation to interacting with big groups.
- ___C. I excel at understanding other people's feelings.
- ___B. I have an outgoing personality.
- ___A. I get right to the point without a lot of small talk.
- ___C. I can easily sense the other person's mood.

___D. People tell me I am reserved.

___A. I concentrate on my message more than on the audience.

___B. I am outspoken and expressive.

___C. I read other people's feelings accurately.

___D. When I speak, I do so forcefully but quietly.

ADD UP YOUR SCORES

Now add up the total of the numbers next to each letter. Your total scores for letters A through D should fall between 0 and 20.

A (MORE SELF-ORIENTED) = ____

C (MORE OTHER-ORIENTED) = ____

and

B (LOUDER) = ____

D (SOFTER) = ____

Evaluating Your Scores on the Persuasion Style Assessment - Personal Scores

		Self-Oriented	Other-Oriented	Loud	Soft		
High 25%	100%	20 – 17	20	20	20	100%	
		16		19			
		15	19	18			
	90%	14	18	17	19	90%	
					18		
			17	16	17		
	80%	13			16	80%	
			16	15			
					15		
Mid 50%	70%	12		14		70%	
			15		14		
	60%	11		13	13	60%	
			14		12		
	50%			12	11	50%	
		10	13		10		
	40%			11	9	40%	
		9	12		8		
	30%			10	7	30%	
			11				
Low 25%	20%	8		9	6	20%	
			10		5		
		7		8	4		
	10%	6	9	7	3	10%	
			8	6	2		
		5	7	5	1		
	0%	4 – 3	6 – 5	4	0	0%	
		2 – 0	4 – 0	2 – 0			

*Scores are graphed in relation to the scores of 550 global business executives and professionals.

Scoring Your Persuasion Style Baseline

1. Circle your numbers. USING THE ATTACHED “EVALUATING YOUR SCORES ON THE PERSUASION STYLES ASSESSMENT” handout, circle the raw score number you received under the appropriate heading for each the four persuasion traits – self-oriented, other-oriented, loud, and soft. Example: If you received a 12 for “Self-Oriented, find the 12 in the first column on the left of the handout and circle the 12. Repeat this process for all four traits.

2. Find your percentiles. Reading from the sides of the handout, note what percentiles your circled raw scores are associated with:

Pair #1

My “Self-Oriented” raw score was ____ and that puts me in the ____ percentile.

My “Other-Oriented” raw score was ____ and that puts me in the ____ percentile.

Pair #2

My “Loud” score is ____ and that puts me in the ____ percentile.

My “Soft” score is ____ and that puts me in the ____ percentile.

3. Discover your “dominate” trait in each pair above. To find out how much one trait dominates the other in each pair above, subtract the smaller percentile from the larger percentile in each pair. Example: If, in Pair #1, your Self-Oriented score put you in the 30th percentile, and your Other-Oriented score put you in the 70th percentile, your Other-Oriented facet would dominate the Self-Oriented by 40 percentile points.

Your Score: Pair #1 (Self/Other)

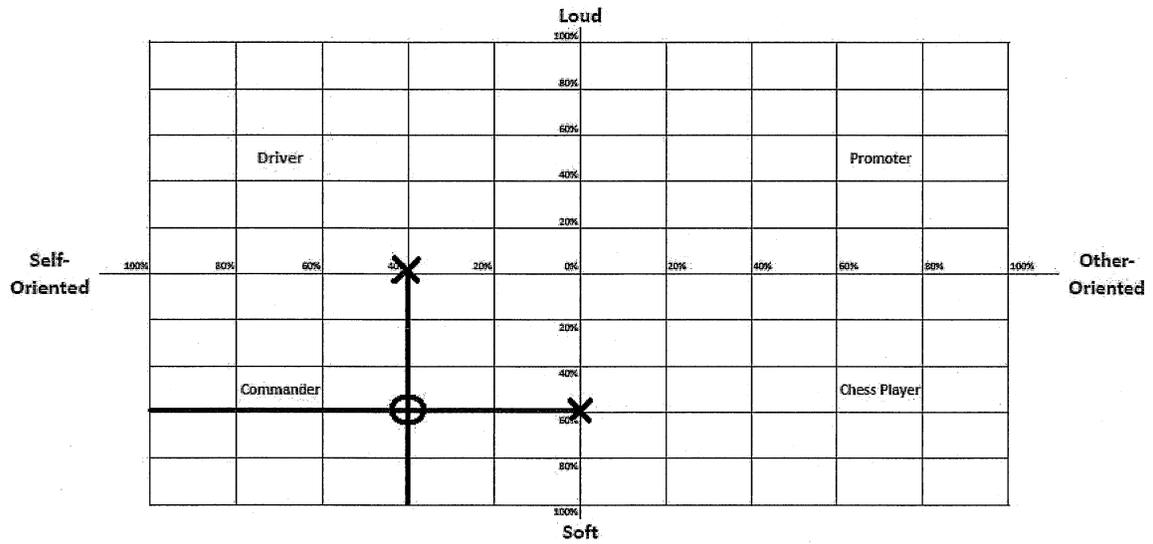
My (circle one) Self-Oriented -- Other-Oriented trait dominates by _____ percentile points.

Your Score: Pair #2 (Loud/Soft)

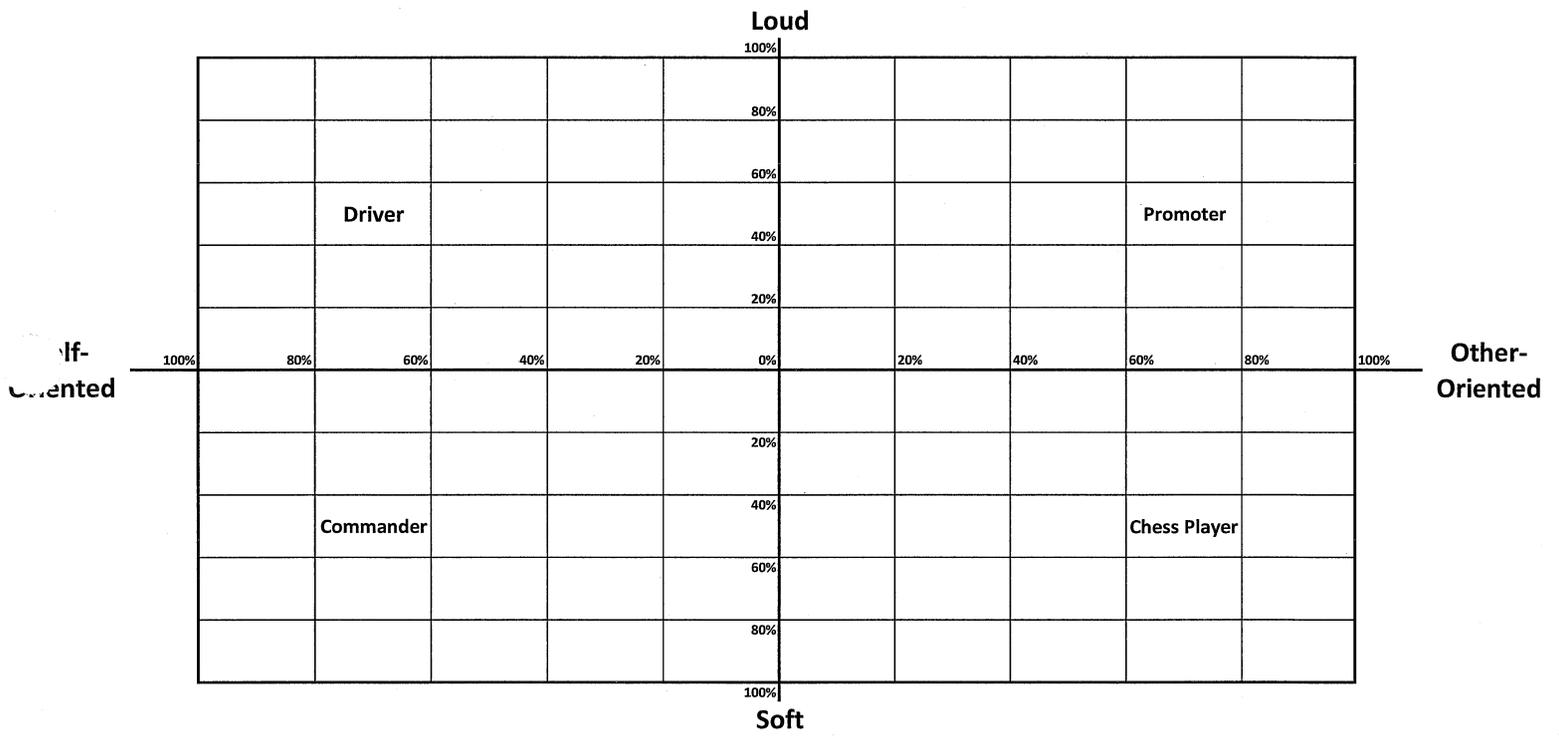
My (circle one) Loud-- Soft trait dominates by _____ percentile points.

4. Put the two traits together to find your “baseline persuasion style.” Using the attached “PERSUASION STYLES GRID” box handout, note that the “0%” point for each of the four traits is at the center of box. Mark an “X” at the point on horizontal mid-line where you find your dominant percentile number for Self-Oriented (Left) or Other-Oriented (right). Do the same on the vertical mid-line for your percentile score for Loud (up) or Soft (down). Extend your two marks into the grid with lines to see where they meet. Read your baseline style in the quadrant where the two lines meet.

Example: If your "Self-Oriented" percentile dominated by 40% and your "Soft" dominated by 60%, your Persuasion Style Grid would look as follows:



Persuasion Styles Grid



Appendix A

Six Channels Survey

Without giving the matter too much thought (and without revising your answers for any reason!), please select the statement in each pair below that MOST ACCURATELY describes what you do to exercise influence. Pick ONE STATEMENT in each pair of statements and record the letter associated with that statement in the “I select ___” space.

There are two columns for recording your choices:

- Column 1 is for the statement that describes **what you feel you must do in your organization to be effective most of the time**;
- Column 2 is for the statement that describes **what you would feel more comfortable doing** and would prefer to do if you had complete freedom to act as you would like.

For both columns, select the statement you think is more accurate—even if you think neither statement is very accurate or both are very accurate. If you do not currently work for an organization, you can skip Column 1 and record your choices only in Column 2.

Please note that you can select the same statement for both columns if what you generally do at work to influence others is also what you prefer doing.

Warning: Do not pick the statement you “ought” to agree with—just pick the one your gut tells you is more accurate most of the time. In addition, some statements repeat, but you should not worry about answering consistently. Just keep going. All answers are equally “correct.” Summarize your selections at the very end.

SURVEY

Column 1 Column 2

		What I must do to be effective within my organization	What I would be more comfortable doing if I could choose
1.	A. I sometimes assert my control. B. I let the data do the talking.	I select ____.	I select ____.
2.	C. I present the big picture. D. I reach out to be friends with the people I need to influence.	I select ____.	I select ____.
3.	B. I use detailed information to support my points. D. I establish good relationships with others.	I select ____.	I select ____.
4.	A. I use the authority I have to help me accomplish my goals. E. I negotiate so everyone wins.	I select ____.	I select ____.
5.	B. I show people the logic of my proposal. E. I engage in a little give-and-take to get things done.	I select ____.	I select ____.
6.	C. I try to inspire others. F. I assemble coalitions when necessary.	I select ____.	I select ____.
7.	E. I negotiate to obtain others' support. C. I emphasize the broader goals of the organization.	I select ____.	I select ____.
8.	A. I rely on whatever authority I have. D. I do favors to create good relationships.	I select ____.	I select ____.
9.	B. I construct a tight case to argue for my ideas. F. I gather support by approaching key people.	I select ____.	I select ____.
10.	D. I get to know people personally. F. I work hard to make sure "people who matter" support my idea.	I select ____.	I select ____.

		What I must do to be effective within my organization	What I would be more comfortable doing if I could choose
11.	A. I use the authority of my position. B. I present the data, point to the precedents, and argue the pros and cons.	I select ____.	I select ____.
12.	D. I socialize with people I want to influence. C. I show where my idea fits into the overall scheme.	I select ____.	I select ____.
13.	E. I find ways to negotiate so everyone wins. F. I establish a wide network of organizational contacts.	I select ____.	I select ____.
14.	B. I make my case with data and evidence. F. I focus on people and groups who can sway opinion.	I select ____.	I select ____.
15.	B. I use reasoned argument. D. I reach out to understand how other people feel.	I select ____.	I select ____.

16.	A. I use my position to get things done. F. I work behind the scenes to get support.	Select ____.	I select ____.
17.	D. I rely on relationships to accomplish my goals. E. I sometimes ask for a bit more than I expect to get.	Select ____.	I select ____.
18.	A. I get things done efficiently by using my authority. C. I inspire others to feel as I do about the proposal.	Select ____.	I select ____.
19.	B. I present objective information to convince others. C. I remind people of what the organization stands for.	Select ____.	I select ____.
20.	D. I win friends and influence people. F. I target key decision-makers.	Select ____.	I select ____.

		What I must do to be effective within my organization	What I would be more comfortable doing if I could choose
21.	A. I use whatever formal authority I have. E. I seek the middle ground when there are disagreements.	Select ____.	I select ____.
22.	B. I base my arguments on objective information. E. I negotiate so everybody wins.	Select ____.	I select ____.
23.	E. I provide incentives to gain support. F. I build momentum by winning over key individuals and groups.	Select ____.	I select ____.
24.	A. I assert the authority that goes with my position. C. I get people excited about the future.	Select ____.	I select ____.
25.	B. I use data and logic to make my case. C. I emphasize our common purpose.	Select ____.	I select ____.
26.	C. I frame my ideas in terms of our organization's goals. F. I take time to consult key individuals.	Select ____.	I select ____.
27.	A. I rely on my formal position to get things done. D. I make sure that others know I care about their needs.	Select ____.	I select ____.
28.	E. I give concessions and expect others to do the same. C I remind people that what we do matters.	Select ____.	I select ____.
29.	A. I assert my authority. F. I anticipate the politics and work around them.	Select ____.	I select ____.
30.	D I establish rapport and pay attention to feelings. E. I make deals that work for both sides.	Select ____.	I select ____.

RESULTS

NOW ADD UP ALL YOUR “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” “E,” and “F” ANSWERS ABOVE AND PUT THOSE TOTALS BELOW:

Column 1

What I need to do to be effective within my organization:

A's = _____
B's = _____
C's = _____
D's = _____
E's = _____
F's = _____

_____ **TOTAL (should equal 30)**

Column 2

What I would be more comfortable doing if I could choose:

A's = _____
B's = _____
C's = _____
D's = _____
E's = _____
F's = _____

_____ **TOTAL (should equal 30)**

De-Coding Your Results

Each of your scores for the six letters represents a tendency to use (Column 1) or preference for using (Column 2) one of six important channels of influence inside organizations. If you can determine which of these six come to you most naturally, which require the most effort, and which you can improve most readily, you will be well on the way to Below, we introduce each channel.

A -- Authority. Your “A” scores denote your tendency to use influence moves based on authority -- both your authoritative, formal position in your organization and your reliance on authoritative rules, regulations, and standards. Research tells us that, predictions of its demise notwithstanding, the Authority channel is the one most commonly used in organizations and has been since scholars began investigating organizational behavior. If you scored high (7 or above) for this role under Column 1 (what your job requires you to do), you probably occupy a position that requires you to give directions or orders – whether as the leader of a unit or as the designated enforcer of

some set of rules. If you also scored high in this category under Column 2 for your personally preferred style, then we would say that you are probably comfortable using your authority as an influence mode and your job “fits” you well. If you prefer this role but your job does not offer you a chance to play it, you may feel frustrated by your lack of positional power. And if you do not prefer this role but are called upon to play it at work, you may feel some stress and conflict at having to issue blunt directives when you would prefer to use some other, perhaps more inspiring or consensus-based, method to gain others’ cooperation.

B -- Rationality. Your “B” scores represent your tendency to rely on data-oriented reasons to persuade, the second (along with authority) of the two most common persuasion styles used in organizations. Research suggests that this persuasion mode is most often invoked in “bottom-up” or “peer-to-peer” situations, when people try to influence others over whom they have no formal authority. Once again, the two different columns give you a comparative sense of how much your job requires this mode of influence and how much you prefer it irrespective of what your job demands.

C -- Vision. Your “C” scores indicate your use of what we call the “visionary” channel. This mode is perhaps the most overtly emotional of the six we will investigate. When you persuade others based on shared purposes, hopes, fears, and dreams, you are squarely in this role. If you are working in an organization that values Visionary persuasion, it helps to be enthusiastic about your initiatives. Otherwise, people may not take them seriously.

D -- Relationships. Your “D” scores relate to the Relationship channel. People who have a strong personal preference for this mode enjoy establishing genuine one-on-one connections with others and like to call them “friends” as well as “co-workers”. A relationship-builder leverages the fact that people are much more inclined to say “yes” to others they know and like. Moreover, part of friendship is doing small favors in the name of the relationship. These favors tend to trigger feelings of gratitude and obligation on the part of people receiving them. Mutual obligation then forms the foundation for persuasive influence and helps explain why working relationships are the lubricants that make the gears of so many organizations turn more smoothly. People with high Column 2 scores in this category don’t mind going to office social occasions, are likely to reach

out to new employees on their own to make them feel welcome, and seem, more often than others, to be genuinely willing to help colleagues with extra work. People with low scores in this mode (0, 1, 2, or 3) are the opposite. They are more likely to see the social side of work as an obligation and need to be asked to do things others might volunteer to do in the name of good relationships. In an organization that places a premium on blending social with working life, people who score low in this category will find corporate socializing tiresome and may acquire a reputation for being somewhat aloof.

E -- Interests. Your “E” scores denote how much you refer explicitly to interests, needs and incentives as a mode of getting things done. Some organizations with highly decentralized structures depend on daily horse-trading within and between business units to advance their goals; others rely on processes that require relatively little bargaining. But virtually everyone who works will, at one time or another, need to negotiate to resolve some resource allocation problem or conflict involving salary, head count, work assignments, hours, or technology. If your Column 2 score for this mode is low, these bargaining moments may be a source of anxiety. As we noted in the introduction, nearly 50% of executives who come to Wharton workshops to sharpen their negotiation skills are struggling with inside-the-organization issues. Which division will take the biggest budget hit to meet the new cost-cutting initiative? Who can negotiate most effectively when there are many deserving candidates but only limited funds in the raise pool? Who will work late on the final report?

F -- Politics. Organizations are, by their nature, political. There is only so much power to go around, so an inevitable amount of winning and losing comes with political battles. Your “F” scores indicate the amount of politics you see in your organization (Column 1) and your comfort level with maneuvering within your group to manage this aspect of organizational life (Column 2).

An inclination toward this form of influence may not be all that important in an organizational culture free of power games and turf wars, but research shows that this is more the exception than the rule. In an average corporate culture where politics forms at least a modest part of the background of everyday life, some willingness to use this channel may be necessary for success. And in highly politicized organizations (such as

you find in corporate matrixes, government agencies, universities, and even some nonprofits), this is a survival skill.

People with high scores in this category tend to pay attention to the social networks that channel power and influence, know how to form coalitions within those networks, and realize the importance of gaining access to key decision makers. They also work harder to receive credit when it is due and push their priorities so they get on the right agendas. You should understand that brokering power is neither inherently good nor evil as an organizational activity. It is just one of the ways organizations operate. As the philosopher Plato summed it up, “Those who are too smart to engage in politics are condemned to being governed by those who are dumber.”

The Psychological Foundations for the Six Channels: Research Note

For those curious to know how we derived our six channels framework, the following paragraphs provide a research path.

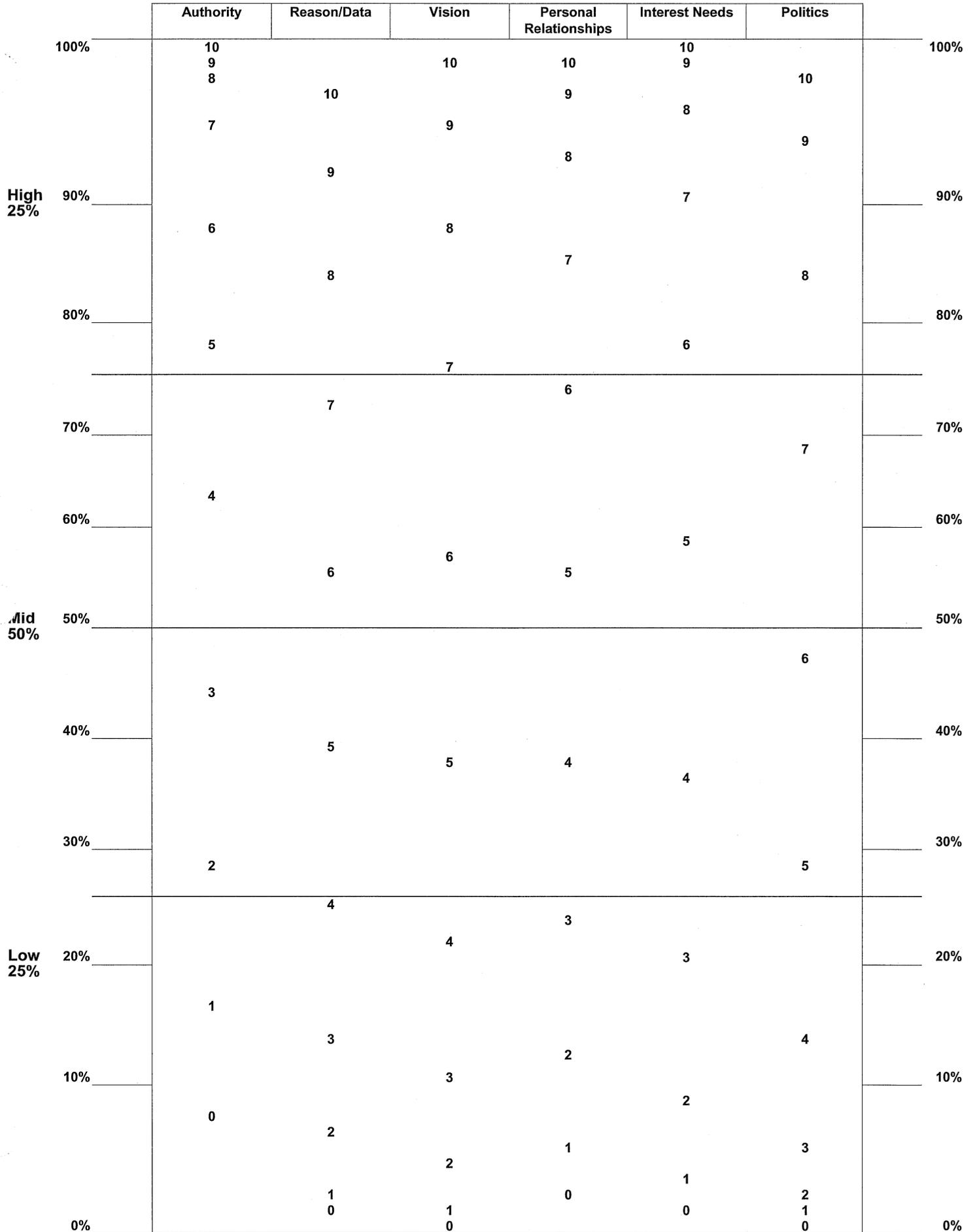
Different scholars have listed a variety of different influence taxonomies, all of which form the foundations for our six channels. One influential study of different persuasion moves identified 16 distinct influence tactics: promise, threat, positive expertise, negative expertise, liking, pre-giving, aversive stimulation, debt, moral appeal, positive self-feeling, negative self-feeling, positive altercasting, negative altercasting, altruism, positive esteem, and negative esteem. See G. Marwell and D.R. Schmidt, “Dimensions of compliance-gaining behavior: An empirical analysis,” *Sociometry*, Vol. 30 (1967), pp. 350-364.

Perhaps the most widely cited study of influence moves started with 370 moves and, through subsequent analysis, reduced this list to eight: assertiveness, ingratiation, rationality, sanctions, exchange of benefits, upward appeal, blocking, and coalitions – a set they later classified into three groups: hard tactics, soft tactics and rational tactics. See D. Kipnis, S.M. Schmidt and I. Wilkinson, “Intraorganizational influence tactics: Explorations in getting one’s way,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 65 (1980), pp. 440-452; D. Kipnis and S.M. Schmidt, “The language of persuasion,” *Psychology Today*, (April 1985), pp. 40-46.

In 1982, Kipnis and Schmidt developed a profiler measuring six “upward influence” tactics called the “Profile of Organizational Influence Strategies,” measuring rationality, ingratiation, coalition behavior, bargaining, appeals to higher authority and assertiveness. The first five of these correlate, in a rough way, with our Rationality, Relationship, Politics, Authority and Interest channels.

Professors Yukle and Falbe later reconceptualized Kipnis’s work and added two dimensions we consider important: inspiration appeals (our “Vision” channel) and consultation (included mainly in our “Politics” channel). See G. Yulke and C.M. Falbe, “Influence tactics and objectives in upward, downward, and lateral influence attempts, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 75 (1990), pp. 132-140. We owe a substantial debt to all of these scholars and their empirical work, which provided the basis for our pragmatic list of six channels.

Evaluating Your Scores on the Six Channel Assessment Tool - Organizational Profile



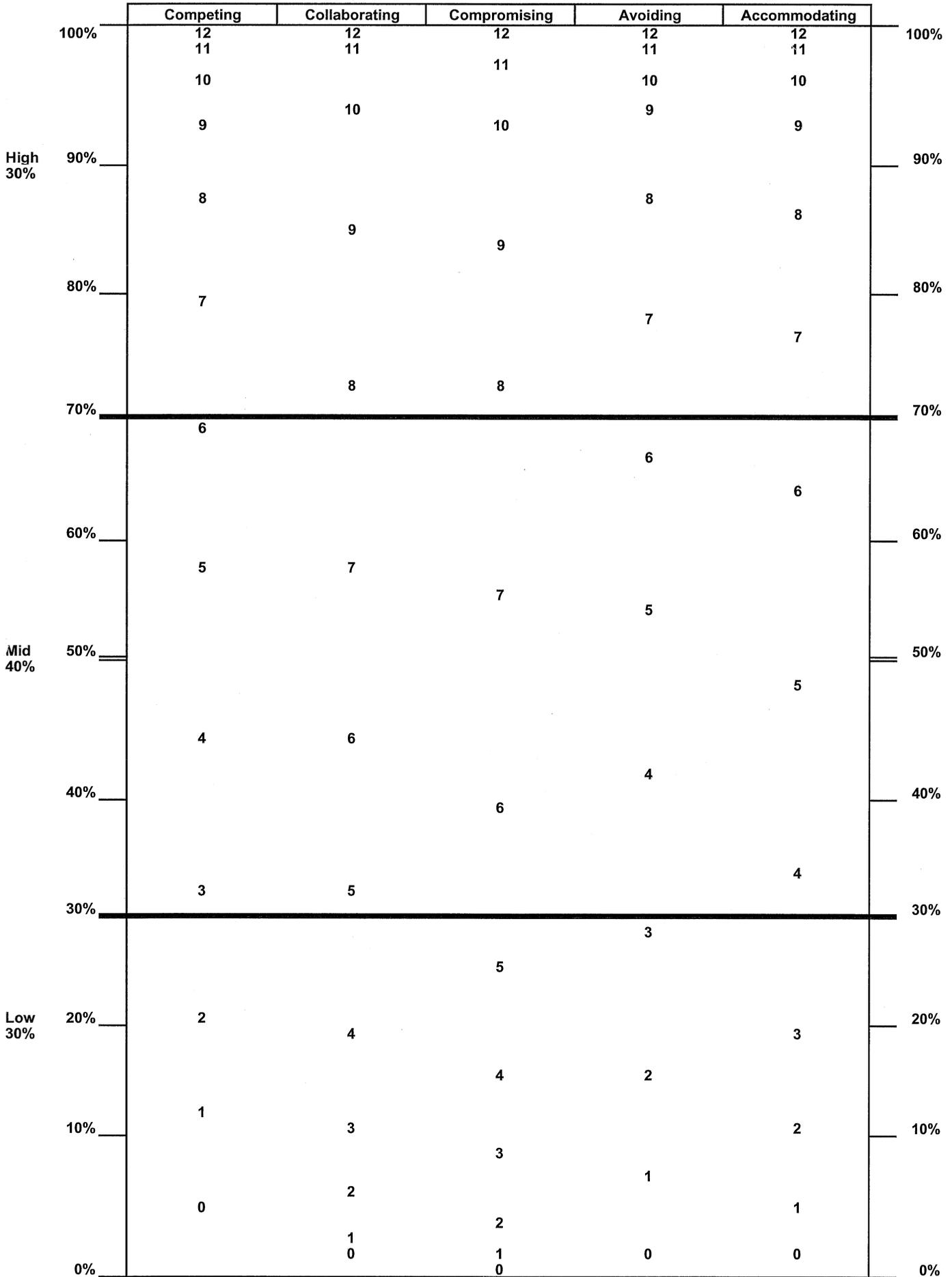
*Scores are graphed in relation to the scores of 300+ global business executives and professionals

Evaluating Your Scores on the Six Channel Assessment Tool - Personal Profile

		Authority	Reason/Data	Vision	Personal Relationships	Interest Needs	Politics		
High 25%	100%	10				10	10	100%	
		9				9	9		
		8		10	10	10			
		7	10			8			
		6					8		
				9		9			
				9					
		90%	5				7		90%
						8		7	
				8	8				
	80%					6		80%	
		4							
					7				
	70%		7				6	70%	
				7					
	60%					5		60%	
		3			6				
	50%		6					50%	
Mid 50%				6			5		
		40%	2			5	4	40%	
				5					
		30%			5			30%	
						4			
		20%	1				3	20%	
Low 25%			4						
				4					
		10%	0			3		10%	
							3		
				3					
					3				
						2			
				2			1	2	
					2				
		0%		1	1	1	0	1	0%
			0	0	0		0		

*Scores are graphed in relation to the scores of 300+ global business executives and professionals

Evaluating Your Scores on the Bargaining Assessment Tool - Total



*Scores are graphed in relation to the scores of 3211 global business executives and professionals. Compiled by Professor G. Richard Shell at the Wharton School of Business.

