

Productivity Style

PRIORITIZER

A Prioritizer prefers logical, analytical, fact-based, critical, and realistic thinking. He or she tends to use time effectively and efficiently, focusing on the highest-value task and on achieving project outcomes. A Prioritizer is generally able to accurately complete significant amounts of work and effectively prioritize tasks.

Strengths:

- Prioritization
- Thorough analysis and logical problem solving
- Goal orientation and decisiveness
- Consistency

Pet Peeves:

- Meaningless chatter
- Inaccurate or missing data
- Inefficient use of time
- Vague, ambiguous approaches or instructions
- Overt sharing of personal feelings

Undying Loves:

- Critical analysis
- Robust, fact-based debate
- Spending time wisely and efficiently

Famous Prioritizers

Philosophers Aristotle and Kant, scientist Sir Isaac Newton, executives Sheryl Sandberg and Marissa Mayer

Classic Quote:

“Being busy is a form of laziness – lazy thinking and indiscriminate action. Being selective – doing less – is the path of the productive. Lack of time is actually a lack of priorities.”

— Tim Ferriss, author of *The 4-Hour Workweek*

Communication Style:

If you listen closely, you can detect discernible patterns of speech used by Prioritizers. Prioritizers often use facts to illustrate points, speak in a matter of fact tone of voice, and frequently use technical jargon, acronyms, and buzz words. They speak clearly and logically and will ask direct questions about the value

Communication Style (continued):

- and function of products. For example, a Prioritizer might say, “Give me the bottom line. How well does this product work?” Or they might say, “I only want to hear the most relevant data.”

A Prioritizer prefers to have information presented in a form that is brief, precise, clear, and technically accurate. For example, Steve Yankovich, VP of Innovation & New Ventures eBay, describes how he prefers communication this way, “I want constant, real-time communication. I want people to be concise. A small screen and less efficient keyboard force people to get the point across. You’re not going to type four paragraphs on a phone. Hours matter.”

Prioritizers do not like assumptions and fluff—they follow the motto, “Just the facts, ma’am.”

Prioritizers typically ask “What” questions when they’re making decisions:

- “What does this product or service do?”
- “What are the problems?”
- “What are the results?”

A Prioritizer will react unemotionally to feedback and wants precise facts when receiving it.

Use of Space:

A Prioritizer’s office environment and personal work space is typically very business-like, with a professional look and feel. There are clean, functional lines and no excess artwork or decorations. The desk top is clean and orderly, containing just a few professional items.

Decision-Making Style:

A Prioritizer makes decisions by gathering all of the facts, analyzing the issues, and developing theories. Prioritizers argue rationally and solve problems logically. They work precisely with numbers, statistics, and data.

Preferred Productivity Tools:

Productivity tools that appeal to Prioritizers include the iPad (which they can customize to streamline their work flow) and productivity apps like:

- **Evernote**
- **Noteshelf**
- **To Do**
- **LogMeIn Ignition** (which allows them log into their PCs and complete work remotely)
- **ScanBizCards** (which lets them scan business cards on the run), as well as classic low-tech tools like legal pads and a label maker.

PLANNER

A Planner prefers organized, sequential, planned, and detailed thinking. A Planner budgets the time required to complete tasks, sequentially organizes tasks, and prepares accurate, detailed project plans. He or she doesn't waste time on tasks and projects that are unproductive or unimportant, and creates project plans that are sequential, detailed and concise. A Planner is usually careful about consulting and complying with laws, policies, regulations, and/or quality and safety criteria when planning projects. A Planner maintains detailed lists and frequently completes work in advance of deadlines.

Strengths:

- Action orientation, consistency, and practicality
- Finding overlooked flaws in plans or processes
- Organizing and maintaining data
- Developing detailed processes and plans

Pet Peeves:

- Lack of a clear agenda; disorganization and topic-hopping
- Late or last-minute work
- Lack of closure or follow-through and indecisiveness
- Unclear instructions, ambiguous language, typos and other errors

Undying Loves:

- A schedule and action plan
- Thorough, timely follow up
- Scheduled appointments and timely arrivals
- Getting to the point

Famous Prioritizers

Philosopher Plato, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, British politician Margaret Thatcher

Classic Quote:

When I am in a situation where there are lots of things to do, I am very organized. I relentlessly check and double check that all of the little pieces are moving the way they're supposed to be moving. Holding it together is clearly part of my pathology. I like to be in control. Even on summer vacation I write a menu of what I'm going to be cooking for dinner."

— *Celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain*

Communication Style:

A Planner's pattern of speech is characterized by the use of precise, detailed words. A Planner speaks in complete sentences or paragraphs and frequently expresses skepticism and concern for quality, asking precise questions that require concrete answers. You can expect to hear Planners say things like

Communication Style (continued):

“I believe in using proven products that have passed the test of time,” or “I’m a creature of habit, and I don’t easily change how I do things.” A Planner prefers to have information presented in a concise, consistent, detailed, and step-by-step format—and he or she expects it to be delivered on time, in writing, and with ample references. A Planner also prefers detailed action plans (including contingency plans) and expects to follow those plans precisely, with few deviations.

Planners typically ask “How” questions:

- “How frequently do problems occur?”
- “How do you want to approach this project?”

A Planner will react cautiously when receiving feedback and requires neatness and punctuality.

Use of Space:

A Planner’s office environment and personal work space typically have a traditional look and feel, with no impractical or unnecessary items. The layout and the decorations are very practical. The work area is very neat, orderly, and organized, with few personal items cluttering the space. Professional credentials, plaques, and company-issued items are often on display.

Decision-Making Style:

A Planner approaches decision making in a spirit of practicality. He or she often finds overlooked flaws by reading the fine print in documents and contracts. Once a Planner has made a decision, he or she will stand firm, providing stable leadership and articulating plans and ideas in an orderly, consistent fashion. You can count on a Planner to organize and keep track of data, maintain accurate financial records, and develop detailed plans and procedures.

Preferred Productivity Tools:

Productivity tools that appeal to Planners include digital lists and project planning apps like:

- **Tom’s Planner**
- **Omnifocus** (which lets them create and track projects by project, place, person, or date)
- **Agendas** (which lets them create interactive agendas and broadcast them to iPad users)
- **Ziplist** (which creates both personal and shared family shopping lists, organizing items both by category and by the store that carries them).

Planners also like low-tech tools like label makers, file folders, filing cabinets, drawer organizers, pen holders, and other office organizational supplies. It is fun to turn Planners loose in a Staples or Office Depot store and watch them stock up on all of their favorite productivity toys!

ARRANGER

An Arranger prefers supportive, expressive, and emotional thinking. He or she encourages teamwork to maximize work output and makes decisions intuitively, in real time, as events unfold, blocking out time to complete work. An Arranger excels at partnering with people to get work done and is an effective communicator with project teams. He or she likes to maintain visual lists, often using color, and intuitively knows what tasks must be completed.

Strengths:

- Anticipating how others will feel and understanding their underlying emotions
- Intuition
- Persuasion
- Teaching

Pet Peeves:

- Lack of eye contact and other personal interaction
- Impersonal approach or examples, relying solely on data and facts
- Tone of urgency or demand

Undying Loves:

- Interactive conversation and approach
- Opportunity to process feelings and emotions
- Acknowledgement and appreciation
- Opportunity to discuss questions and concerns

Famous Prioritizers

Composer Chopin, non-violence advocate Mohandas K. Gandhi, humanitarian Mother Teresa, media mogul Oprah Winfrey, musician and activist Bono

Classic Quote:

“Listen to your gut, no matter how good something sounds on paper. Instincts play a special role in any kind of business you engage in. They are your guide in the decision making process and the backbone of your thoughts. Following your instincts is as simple as giving them a voice, challenging yourself to look at things differently and learning to look before you leap.”

— *Real estate entrepreneur and author Donald Trump*

Communication Style:

The typical Arranger tends to be talkative, often using stories about people to illustrate points and speaking with warmth about personal issues. An Arranger expresses concern about people and will frequently ask questions about the way a particular project or task will benefit others.

Communication Style (continued):

An Arranger prefers to have information presented through an open, informal discussion. Arrangers prefer eye-to-eye contact; they generally listen actively and appear devoid of hidden agendas, using expressive body language and tone of voice to engage and connect with others.

Arrangers typically ask “Who” questions:

- “Who are the primary stakeholders in this project?”
- “Who will benefit most from this process?”
- “Who else is involved?”

An Arranger will react with emotion when receiving feedback and needs to feel enthusiasm.

Use of Space:

An Arranger’s office environment and personal work space is typically welcoming and inviting. It often includes photos, personal objects, or mementos, and has music playing. When you walk into an Arranger’s office you can get a sense of who they are from the personal memorabilia, pictures, and tchotchkes that surround you.

Decision-Making Style:

An Arranger tends to approach decision making by intuitively sensing how others will feel. An Arranger recognizes interpersonal difficulties and picks up on non-verbal cues of stress. He or she is skilled at using an understanding of the emotional elements of a situation in persuading and teaching others.

Preferred Productivity Tools:

Productivity tools that appeal to Arrangers include voice-translation dictation apps like:

- **Dragon Naturally Speaking**
- **Dragon Dictation**
- **Copytalk** (the web-based application)
- Collaboration tools like:
 - **Go To Meeting**
 - **WebEx**
 - **SharePlus Office Mobile Client** (an app that enables them to collaborate with their team from anywhere and sync their Sharepoint files automatically)
 - **Join.me** (an app with a mobile viewer that lets them quickly and easily attend meetings)

They also love visually and kinesthetically pleasing office supplies—things like notebooks with unlined pages and pens in a variety of ink colors.

VISUALIZER

A Visualizer prefers holistic, intuitive, integrating, and synthesizing thinking. He or she sees the big picture and has the ability to work very quickly. A Visualizer adroitly manages and juggles multiple tasks and projects. A Visualizer is also able to synthesize disparate ideas into a cohesive whole, generating creative, innovative project ideas. A Visualizer thinks strategically about projects, effectively managing multiple ideas simultaneously while being efficient in task execution. A Visualizer maintains visual lists, often using color.

Strengths:

- Open mindedness
- Ability to see the big picture, recognizing new opportunities and integrating ideas and concepts
- Innovation; willingness to challenge the status quo

Pet Peeves:

- Repetition, slow pace
- Rigid, highly structured project plans with no flexibility
- Excessive detail; too many numbers
- Being told “You can’t” or “We’ve always done it this way”

Undying Loves:

- Spending minimal time on details
- Broad conceptual frameworks
- Connections to other approaches

Famous Prioritizers

Scientist Albert Einstein; artists Pablo Picasso and Leonardo di Vinci; entrepreneurs Steve Jobs, Richard Branson, and Larry Page

Classic Quote:

“Some look at things that are, and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask why not?”
 — *Playwright George Bernard Shaw*

Communication Style:

A Visualizer uses visual language when speaking—words and phrases like see, look, envision, imagine, and the big picture. They typically speak in abstract phrases and frequently use metaphors. They also tend to ask general, broad-based questions about concepts and innovative aspects of a particular task or project.

A Visualizer prefers to have information presented using metaphors or visual aids that place specific details within a big-picture overview or conceptual framework, often aligned to the organization’s long-term strategy. Visualizers value the flexibility to move away from a planned agenda in search of new, fun, and

Communication Style (continued):

imaginative approaches.

Visualizers typically ask “Why” questions:

- “Why is this process better?”
- “Why do we do things this way?”

A Visualizer will react spontaneously to feedback and prefers concepts.

Use of Space:

A Visualizer’s office environment and personal work space is typically informal, casual, and non-traditional, with an emphasis on space and light and a decorative scheme that is typically colorful, varied, and aesthetically pleasing. A Visualizer prefers original art and playful objects and toys. The space is typically cluttered with piles of paper, personal memorabilia, and collectables.

Decision-Making Style:

Visualizers make decisions by inventing imaginative, intuitive solutions to problems. They are perceptive and skilled at reading signs of coming change, which sometimes leads them to challenge established policies. They tend to recognize and seek out new possibilities, embrace ambiguity, and integrate ideas and concepts that others may consider incompatible or unrelated.

Preferred Productivity Tools:

Productivity tools that appeal to Visualizers include:

- **Digital white board apps**
- **Sketchbook Pro** (an app that lets them capture ideas while working with a complete set of sketching and painting tools)
- **iThoughts HD** (a digital mind-mapping tool)
- **Concur** (an app used to photograph and save expense receipts and create expense reports)
- **Noteshelf** (a digital notebook tool).

They also love visually vibrant low-tech tools—multicolored Post-It notes, colored folders, notebooks with unlined pages, pens in a variety of ink colors, large white boards, baskets, folders, and bags and clipboards for keeping papers visible and organized. A classic Visualizer would enjoy nothing more than an afternoon in an art supply store with an unlimited budget to spend!