



Points of View™, Focus Point® and Starting Point™ Research Report

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The “Points” Family of Products

Research Summary

Three new instruments have been developed to measure DiSC[®] Dimensions. They include a Web-based product, *Points of View*[™], and two paper products, *Focus Point*[®] and *Starting Point*[™]. This family of products is based on the same large research sample and reflects the same findings and objectives.

These products offer respondents a chance to apply DISC learning to changing personal and interpersonal circumstances. They assist in understanding the meaning of events as they are experienced. This family of products is designed to be sensitive to the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that particular situations evoke and to guide the respondent through a process of interpreting and applying what he or she learns.

Interpretations follow closely the actual responses of persons who obtain a common profile. They have been developed expressly for this family of products and focus on the respondent’s current experience.

Development was based on responses from a sample of 1032 people who are diverse in age, ethnicity, education and occupation. Use of a rating scale format instead of forced choice allowed nine, relatively independent DISC scales to emerge. New scales are highly reliable, and scores approximate a normal distribution.

All nine of the new scales are available in the Web-based, computer-scored product, *Points of View*, which contains ninety items. *Focus Point* with sixty items and *Starting Point* with forty items offer the four DISC Dimensions scored by hand.

In all its forms, the Points family of products is designed as a confidential tool to help individuals bring their thoughts, feelings, and behavior into clearer focus. They also assist people in deciding how they might act on their insights and whether to share them with others.

Theoretical Background

DiSC[®] Dimensions are based on the work of William Moulton Marston, Ph.D., as published in 1928 as *Emotions of Normal People*. Dr. Marston spent considerable time observing people’s behavior and asking them about the thoughts and feelings they were experiencing at the time. His observations generated the theory described below. It offers an enduring explanation for human behavior based on emotions. More contemporary research in psychology strongly confirms his findings.

Marston himself did not develop the tools to measure his theory. Instead, he turned his attention to other matters of interest at the time, such as learning more about people's physiological response to perceived events. He is the inventor of the lie detector test, based on measures of the galvanic skin response. He wrote other professional articles and more than one novel, but the contribution that endures today is his theory of human emotions.

Marston's Model of Human Emotion

Many times, each of us has been surprised to find someone else perceives a shared event differently from the way we do. Often their behavior offers the first clue that we are not in sync. If we're interested in creating a shared understanding of "what happened," we inquire into the reasons for the other person's behavior and explain our own. We realize we saw and felt different things in the same context and that our perceptions are somewhat unique.

Marston set out to learn if there were systematic ways that people's perceptions and responses vary. By this means he could help individuals see more clearly what made them different. He could help people recognize each other's differences and reduce misunderstanding. This is the power of DISC theory that over 30 million people around the world have found helpful.

What he found was that two kinds of perception are particularly useful for explaining people's responses in a particular situation: perception of environment and perception of one's self.

Perception of the Environment

The environment contains all that is outside the person, including the demands of the situation and the people in it. Marston theorized that individuals would react to their surroundings differently, depending on how favorable or unfavorable they felt their surroundings were to personal interests. He expected that the environment for any individual would change over time, and that individual responses would vary along with it. When the environment felt unfavorable, people were likely to respond one way, and when it felt favorable, another.

Perception of One's Self

Marston also recognized differences among people in the way they positioned themselves within their environment, particularly in relation to other people. He theorized that people have different perceptions of themselves in relation to others and to events as they unfold.

People may not be aware of many of their assumptions about themselves, because they are based on a lifetime of experience in the world. They are revealed when people try to explain themselves to others or to themselves. They form a basis on which one decides whether to initiate or hold back, whether to trust or not, whether to give up or try again, and so forth. They offer justification for putting one's effort into one kind of task versus another, based on expectations one has of the likelihood she or he will succeed.

Marston theorized that people were likely to respond one way when they felt they were more powerful than the forces around them and another way when they felt less powerful.

These two kinds of perception interact, according to Marston, to describe an individual's emotional response to a situation, as follows:

Dominance: When the environment is perceived as unfavorable and the person feels more powerful than the environment, he or she experiences a Dominant response. This means the person is motivated to initiate action, respond quickly, take certain risks, and go straight to the point. She or he may be less preoccupied with examining alternatives, building consensus, or taking the time to win people over to a point of view.

Influence: When the environment is perceived as favorable and the person feels more powerful than the environment, he or she experiences a desire to Influence. This means the person is likely to approach other people, volunteer to lead, solicit help, speak persuasively, and attract attention. He or she may be less preoccupied with planning and problem solving or ensuring that others have a chance to share attention.

Supportiveness: When the environment is perceived as favorable and the person feels less powerful than the environment, he or she experiences an opportunity to be Supportive. This means the person is motivated to contribute toward goals shared with others, assuming that what is good for someone else is good for him or her, too. The person may be less inclined to be the focus of attention and prefers a more equal distribution of effort and rewards.

Conscientiousness: When the environment is perceived as unfavorable and the person feels less powerful than the environment, he or she responds Conscientiously. This means the person works within an area of personal discretion to ensure that standards are met and personal integrity is maintained, and he or she acts in ways that are comfortable for him or her. The person is less inclined to try to change the environment but may plan how to take advantage of change when it occurs.

Everyone, according to Marston, may experience each of these responses, depending on the particular situation in which they find themselves. An environment can change from favorable to unfavorable and back to favorable over time. A person may change environments. His or her function within an environment may change, from a position of more to less control, for example. Most people are probably comfortable in one kind of situation more than another, even though they may adapt their behavior to the situation they are in. The Points products offer a way to clarify what the current situation means for the individual and highlight whether and why it may be more or less comfortable.

DISC theory, as described here, offers a way to understand experience as a response which expresses (a) how one sees his or her environment in a particular situation and (b) how one sees himself or herself in relationship to that environment. The environment may contain one other person or many or no one. Most environments of importance to people are interpersonal environments, but they don't have to be. How one perceives tasks and responsibilities also constitutes a situation in which one may respond emotionally.

Distinguishing State from Traits

The DISC theory of Dr. Marston has been used to explain human behavior in two ways. One approach views human behavior as a set of traits. Traits are implied when someone is described by words such as “She is a high D” or “You can tell I am a high I.” In this application, the DiSC[®] Dimensions are used to describe a person as consistently dominant, influencing, supportive, or conscientious in their behavior. However, few if any people behave in the same way in all situations.

Another way of thinking about DISC theory is to use it as Marston developed it, to explain people's emotional reactions to a particular situation or event. This application views human behavior as a reflection of the state a person is in at the time. Since the environment is dynamic, a person's responses are expected to be dynamic. Again, it is unlikely that anyone always responds the same in varied situations.

Consider how it feels to have an argument with one's boss. That person has some control over one's career, so a person is likely to perceive the other as *more powerful*. And it's about an argument, so the environment (i.e., the relationship with the boss) is seen as *unfavorable*. Chances are, one will respond thoughtfully and carefully and will anticipate consequences before he or she acts. One tries to avoid mistakes and is also likely to avoid another encounter with the boss for a while.

Now consider how a person is likely to respond when the boss apologizes for getting defensive and acknowledges the person had a good point. If the relationship has been collegial before the argument, the environment now feels more *favorable*, and the person *acquires power* to forgive the boss for being defensive and accept the apology. He or she may be gracious about accepting the apology and suggest how they can move forward together (thereby exercising influence) and/or reinforce their support for the boss's mission (demonstrating supportiveness).

The Points products are specifically designed for the second application. They are intended as a sensitive measure of the state one is in, in response to a particular happening in the person's life. To achieve this purpose, respondents must focus clearly on the thoughts and feelings they are experiencing *inside*, rather than on the role they think they're playing or the behavior they are demonstrating *publicly*. This focus can prove informative in a number of ways, not only to clarify a situation in which the person is uncomfortable but also to capture the thoughts and feelings they are having when an experience is particularly positive.

Research

The development of the Points products began along two tracks simultaneously, both using Inscape Publishing's DiSC[®] instruments. One strategy was to analyze responses of 812 persons to the *Personal Profile System[®] 2800* (PPS 2800) for the purpose of identifying the underlying dimensionality of the scales. The other strategy uses *Personal Development Profile[®]* (PDP) data and is described on page 9.

Research using Personal Profile System[®] 2800 data

Method:

Using the PPS 2800, "Most" and "Least" responses were combined by assigning "Most" choices a value of 4 and "Least" choices a value of 1. Word choices that were ignored were assigned a value of 2.5. Sets of responses were submitted to factor analysis using the Principle Components Method, and initial results were rotated by the Varimax criterion. An eight-factor rotated solution was selected for further analysis, to ensure all systematic variance was accounted for.

Six of the rotated factors offered meaningful information. Factors I to III were bipolar and described six scales of the D, I, S, and C dimensions. Factor I contrasted items subjectively labeled D-Direct with S-Sympathetic, based on the words associated with each pole of the factor. Factor II contrasted sets of words labeled D-Decisive with S-Accommodating. Factor III contrasted word sets labeled I-Outgoing with C-Reserved. Words associated with Factors IV, V, and VI are rather independent of the words that define Factors I through III. They appear to measure distinctly different characteristics which, based on associated words, were subjectively labeled I-Optimistic, C-Precise, and C-Reflective.

Results:

The number of useful factors, plus the finding that D and S items loaded on both the same and different factors, provides strong evidence for the presence of relatively independent scales in the word lists comprising the current response page of the PPS 2800.

Reliabilities for scales range from $r_{yy'} = .59$ (based on only 9 items) to $r_{yy'} = .85$, with a mean of $r_{yy'} = .74$. These are almost as high as reliabilities for the longer, 20-plus-item scales assessing D, I, S, and C in the PPS 2800.

Intercorrelations between scales of D, I, S, and C ranged from $r_{xy} = .24$ (C-Reflective and C-Reserved) to $r_{xy} = .66$ (D-Direct and D-Decisive). These figures are only an approximate estimate of the true correlation between scales, because the forced-choice response format restricts the variance among PPS 2800 responses. As expected, the negative intercorrelation between bipolar constructs (Dominance and Supportiveness, Influence and Conscientiousness) is lower and sometimes considerably lower between some scale combinations than between dimensions. This means that combinations of D with S, and C with I are more likely to appear among scales than among dimensions.

Implications:

The value of these findings is that they improve the accuracy of DISC measurement while they lay the groundwork for identifying more unique patterns of behavior among nine scales. For example, an SC profile based on high scores for S-Sympathetic and C-Reflective is likely to mean something different from an SC profile based on high scores on S-Accommodating and C-Precise.

Concurrently, Inscape Publishing was interested in updating the PDP by replacing word cues with phrases to ensure respondents, including those with lower reading levels, would understand the intended meaning of the cues.

**Research using
Personal
Development
Profile® Phrase
Version data**

Method:

A small team of item writers was identified whose typical responses on the PDP collectively emphasized D, I, S, and C. They were asked to write brief definitions of words used on the PPS 2800. These were edited for wording, variety, and representation of the construct. A total of 136 items were written, 34 for each DISC dimension. Reading difficulty was at the sixth grade level.

Word and phrase items are considered equivalent. For example, for *accurate*, the phrase *like to do things accurately* is used; for *observant*, the phrase *notice things around me* is used. The phrase alternative is not only easier to read, it also lends itself to more accurate translation into a non-English language.

In preparation for beta research on this new instrument, phrases were grouped into 34 boxes, with one D, I, S, and C phrase to a box. All possible combinations of scales were assembled, and item inter-correlations within a box fell in the range of $-.28$ to $.23$. Respondents were instructed to rank all four items in a box from Most- to Least Accurate. A research form of this instrument was administered to 928 respondents ages 17 to 60. It was a racially diverse sample that included 65% Caucasian respondents, 11% African American, 11% Hispanic, and the remainder Asian, Native American, or multi-racial. Education level and employment status varied considerably.

Results:

Statistical analysis of these 928 protocols via factor analysis and internal consistency analysis produced new, 28-item scales with reliabilities of $.80$ to $.88$ with all items scored. The scale factor structure that was found for PPS words was replicated on phrases using a Principle Components Analysis. Inter-dimension correlations are also similar for both forced-choice instruments—in the upper $-.70$ s for D-S and for I-C combinations and under $\pm .30$ for all other pairs of scales.

Implications:

Even with a ranked response format, the dimensions D and S and the dimensions I and C are forced to perform as bipolar measures that generally prohibit profile combinations of DS or IC. The use of phrases improves reliability while lowering reading level. However, changes in response format were needed to improve the independence among scales and permit greater variance in results, and thus improve the validity of a DISC measure.

Research on Points Products

Research on the Points products began with these two studies as the base and proceeded to develop tools that used a rating scale instead of a forced-choice response format. It employed phrases developed during PDP research and the model of nine DISC scales identified. Equally important, it incorporated new research on the meaning of DISC profiles. *Points of View*[™] takes advantage of Web technology to offer the most sensitive version of the instrument. *Focus Point*[®] and *Starting Point*[™] are designed to accommodate both the limitations and opportunities offered by paper products.

Research on Points of View[™]

Method:

A set of nine scales was identified based on factor analysis of both words and phrases from the PPS 2800 and the PDP Phrase—two each for D, I, and S and three for C. Each scale consists of ten phrases. Later interpretation of their meaning made use of word associates as well.

A ninety-item research form was administered to a diverse sample of 1032 respondents using a rating scale format (See Table 3).

Respondents indicated on a scale of 1 to 5, how accurate the statement was for describing a particular focus. Experience with this form demonstrated that a narrow, situational focus produced the most informative and accurate results. Scaled ratings permit more accurate statistical analysis and remove constraints imposed on an individual's profile by a forced-choice response format. The tendency to give socially desirable responses is offset by an adjustment for social desirability in the total scores. The amount of adjustment reflects the degree to which a particular rating was popular among the respondent sample as a whole.

Results:

Once more, a Principle Components factor structure was obtained, which clearly separated phrases into nine relatively independent scales. Statistical results for the nine-scale *Points of View* instrument are excellent.

Reliabilities for the nine scales range from $r_{yy'} = .73$ to $r_{yy'} = .90$, with a mean of $r_{yy'} = .84$, based on ten items each. These are as high as reliabilities for the 28-item scales measuring D, I, S, and C in PDP Phrase and higher overall than reliabilities for the PPS 2800.

Implications:

The nine-scale *Points of View*[™] instrument is the most detailed and informative DISC measure produced to date, and it demonstrates a high level of reliability and validity in a user-friendly response format (ten items per scale).

Table 1: *Points of View*[™] Scale Intercorrelations and Reliabilities

	Dominance		Influence		Supportiveness		Conscientiousness		
	Dir.	Dec.	Out.	Opt.	Emp.	Acc.	Prec.	Refl.	Resv.
Direct	.84								
Decisive	.57	.83							
Outgoing	.25	.42	.90						
Optimistic	-.02	.27	.55	.82					
Sympathetic	-.19	.14	.45	.55	.85				
Accomm.	-.43	-.20	-.00	.21	.43	.73			
Precise	.09	.28	-.03	.12	.18	.26	.86		
Reflective	-.08	.18	.01	.23	.50	.39	.57	.85	
Reserved	-.28	-.27	-.56	-.18	-.07	.41	.22	.29	.82

NOTE: Reliabilities are shown in bold. Intercorrelations between scales within D, I, S and C dimensions are indicated by double outlined boxes.

Research on *Focus Point*[®]

Method:

This paper product is based on the same research as *Points of View*. It offers a measure accessible on paper and preserves the best features of *Points of View*: (a) it offers phrases that are easy to interpret and translate; (b) it provides new interpretative information that follows closely all of the research studies reported above; it reflects what respondents actually say about themselves; and (c) it represents a higher level of validity than previously available in a paper instrument. The major difference between *Focus Point*[®] and the Web-based *Points of View* is the results provided. *Focus Point* offers scores on D, I, S, and C and interprets all combinations of one, two, and three dimensions. It does not provide information on the nine scales.

A feature unique to *Focus Point*[®] is *DiSC*[®] *Insights*, a descriptive index offering feedback on each of the four scales regardless of score level (i.e., low, middle, or high). *DiSC Insights* helps capture some of the subtlety of individual responses. It provides finer and richer insights allowing for greater understanding of the focal situation and more meaningful comparison between two focal situations. Even if a person takes *Focus Point* twice on two different situations and receives the same response pattern, *DiSC Insights* can reveal meaningful differences between their responses.

This index has been developed based on what respondents actually say about themselves. Specifically, feedback was developed for each score by examining items that were strongly endorsed or rejected by research respondents who received the particular score. For example, research respondents who received a score of 56 ± 1 on the “I” scale gave nearly uniform high ratings to specific items best characterized by the statement “readily speak up about an issue.” This statement was then made the descriptor for that score. When an item was endorsed at more than one level on the dimension (e.g., low and middle), it was placed where it received the most uniform and distinct response. Responding at any level on one dimension includes thought, feelings, and behaviors related not only to that dimension but often to the other dimensions as well. For example, research respondents who described themselves as high in Dominance in a given situation frequently rated as accurate the following Conscientiousness scale items, “want to do things well” and “learn from experience.” In fact, respondents with a high Dominance pattern more frequently endorsed these Conscientiousness items than some of the Dominance items. The popularity of these Conscientiousness items is simple to explain. Part of responding with high Dominance is the desire to succeed quickly which requires both wanting to do things well and learning from experience. This clearly shows that each dimension is related to all others. *DiSC Insights* capitalizes on this fact and provides respondents information based on their scores for each dimension using information from all dimensions.

Results:

Reliabilities for dimensions range from .81 to .89 based on 15-item scales.

Intercorrelations between Dominance and Supportiveness (-.31) and between Influence and Conscientiousness (-.25) are considerably lower than between these pairs of dimensions measured in a forced-choice format. Other dimension intercorrelations range from -.15 to .35. This means that all dimensions are relatively independent; and combinations of scores will occur as frequently as they should to offer a valid representation of an individual’s reaction to a particular situation.

Table 2: *Focus Point*[®] Scale Intercorrelations and Reliabilities

	D	I	S	C
D	.89			
I	.34	.88		
S	-.31	.30	.81	
C	-.15	-.25	.35	.84

Implications:

The four-dimension *Focus Point*[®] instrument is the most valid DISC measure available to date as a paper product, and it demonstrates a high level of reliability in a user-friendly response format (sixty items total).

**Research on
Starting Point[™]**

Method:

This paper product is based on the same research as *Points of View*[™] and *Focus Point*. It offers a measure accessible on paper that is quickly completed and scored. It represents a higher level of validity than previously available in a short paper instrument. *Starting Point*[™] is a shorter instrument than *Focus Point*, four pages with only ten items on each of four scales. *Starting Point* also offers less interpretation of various score combinations than the more detailed, 24-page *Focus Point*. Items are presented in sets of four, and the respondent rank orders his or her choices within each set. This approach is taken as a means of controlling for social desirability.

Results:

Reliabilities for dimensions range from .75 to .86 based on 10-item scales and a sample size of 1032.

Item intercorrelations were within a set range from -.22 to .25, indicating that items are quite independent of each other. For this reason, choices among them are determined more by their individual meaning for the respondent than by any association between them.

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of beta test respondents (N=1032)

Characteristic	Number	Percent	Characteristic	Number	Percent
<u>Gender:</u>			<u>Age:</u>		
Male	559	56%	under 18	10	1%
Female	434	44	18-25	129	13
			26-35	254	25
			36-45	385	39
			46-55	167	17
			56 or older	55	5
<u>Education:</u>			<u>Heritage:</u>		
Up to high school grad	14	1%	African-American	86	9%
High school graduate	81	8	Asian-American	25	3
Some college	264	26	Caucasian	796	80
Technical/trade school	95	10	Hispanic	40	4
College graduate	394	39	Native American	15	2
Graduate/professional degree	152	15	Other	27	3
<u>Employment:</u>			<u>Industrial classification:</u>		
Secretarial/clerical	54	5%	Manufacturing	96	10%
Executive	38	4	Finance/ins./real estate	38	4
Mid-level management	168	17	Public administration	27	3
Supervisory	117	12	Wholesale/retail trade	38	4
Professional	186	19	Business services	242	25
Mechanical/technical	53	5	Educational services	104	11
Skilled trades	12	1	Health services	42	4
Warehouse/gen'l labor	7	<1	Transportation/utilities	78	8
Assembly worker	1	<1	Other	306	31
Customer service	122	12			
Sales	53	5			
Health care worker	15	2			
Teacher/educator	54	5			
Custodial/housekeeping	4	<1			
Work at home	6	<1			
Other	109	11			

Note: Any variation of column totals from N=1032 is the direct result of missing data.

Appropriate Use

Participants

Participants for whom the Points products are appropriate are individuals eighteen years and older who are interested in learning from experience. A seventh-grade reading level is necessary to fully appreciate both the items and pattern interpretation.

The main purpose of the Points family of products is to assist individuals on their own path of human growth and discovery. We believe “you are the expert on you.” We assume people are capable of setting their own goals, directing their efforts, and appraising results. We advise people to read their feedback and consider it carefully. After doing so, people are encouraged to make use of the information they find helpful and to disregard the information that is not. Again, “you are the expert on you.”

The Points products are not meant to be a substitute for mental health services. It is assumed that those completing a Points product are in reasonably sound mental health, because no interpretations are available that would offer guidance in dealing with significant emotional issues. Persons seeking mental health counseling should obtain that help from a licensed counselor or therapist. None of the Points products replaces this source of aid.

Facilitators

Individuals with advanced degrees and state licensure in counseling or psychotherapy are qualified to interpret results on any Points product, using materials in this report and in the instrument itself as guides. Non-licensed facilitators are limited to *administering* these products without adding their own interpretation. Sufficient material is available on paper or Web site to help respondents interpret results for themselves. The lay facilitator can encourage respondents to consider the feedback, arrange for participants to share results if they choose, provide experiential exercises designed to provoke discussion, and offer illustrative examples. The primary role of facilitator is to set the scene for participants to explore their feedback and its meaning in their lives.

Applications

The Points products are intended as a sensitive measure of one’s emotional reaction to a particular situation or event. Since the environment is dynamic, we can expect a person’s responses to be dynamic. It may be helpful for individuals to be able to focus on their emotional response in a particular situation and gain insight into their thoughts, feelings, and behavior in that situation. Thus, *Focus Point*[®] and *Points of View*[™] can be used in a wide variety of applications.