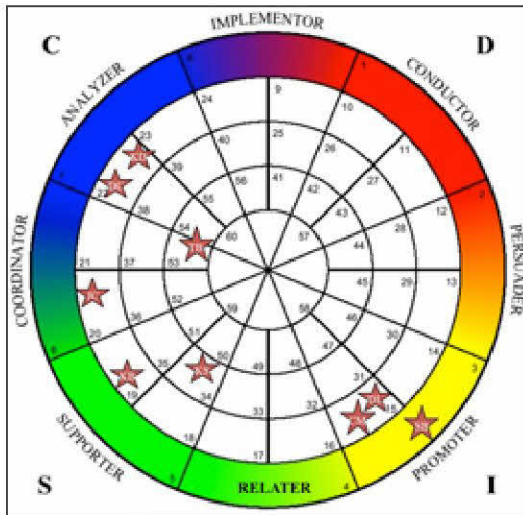


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Four Steps to Building Leadership Capacity

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While leadership is often recognized as an important factor in school improvement, the ability of district (or school) leaders to help those around them to also take on leadership roles is gaining more attention. And when it comes to building leadership capacity in one's "leadership team," understanding leadership styles is key.

Since 2006, [Future Management Systems](#) has been gathering and analyzing leadership data on 550 school leaders, including principals, administrators, and school board members. Our analysis supports the premise that a principal or superintendent who knows how to build capacity for change has a much better chance of sustained improvement than one who leads from a top-down stance.

We have also identified four steps that can greatly assist principals or superintendents looking to enhance the capacity of their leadership team in order to attain system goals in instruction, management, community relations, fiscal management, and human resource development.

Step 1: Leaders examine their own leadership style. In our work, school leaders use three well-regarded tools: the [Myers Briggs Type Indicator \(MBTI\)](#), the [DISC Behaviors profile \(DISC\)](#), and a values inventory called the [Personal Motivation and Engagement tool](#). Although they are rarely used in the education sector, hundreds of companies in health care, high technology, real estate, airlines, and manufacturing use these tools, which have been validated by research studies for use in hiring and team development. To summarize them briefly, the MBTI provides a leadership profile on your problem solving style at work and in life, the DISC indicates your natural behavior and how you adapt to the workplace, and the values inventory shows values that define who you are.

A trained human resource specialist or other certified professional can review this data and help leaders understand their problem-solving styles, their behaviors at work, and their value systems. This analysis enables leaders to better understand the patterns of behavior that make them successful and the areas that can derail their attempts to achieve the results they desire. Are they too top-down in their leadership, creating an environment where people are afraid to offer new ideas or are worried about retribution for expressing their point of view? Are they too sensitive to personnel issues and therefore holding back from making tough decisions concerning staff? Are they so detailed or compliance oriented that they are neglecting to delegate? Is their tendency to be analytical about data preventing them from actually making decisions? Once leaders know and are comfortable thinking and talking about their own style openly and honestly, other team members can provide feedback for improvement.

