



"Global Work Styles Inventory" Guide

A Personal Profile of Work Styles

Introduction

The Global Work Styles Inventory (GWSI) is an individual assessment tool that provides a personal profile on eight different global work styles. The Global Work Styles Inventory is a self-evaluation instrument based upon extensive anthropological research, the work of noted international authors as well as years of global training and consulting experiences.

The GWSI was developed as a tool for assessing personal work styles and their implications for working globally. Understanding your own personal work styles is the first step in working across cultures. Differences in global work styles can result in miscommunication, ineffective meetings and delays in meeting project deadlines.

The GWSI allows individuals and teams to analyze the implications of their personal or group work styles and develop action plans to improve specific business and management situations on a global basis. For example the GWSI can help you prepare for:

- global leadership development
- global alignment
- global teambuilding
- change management
- global diversity initiatives
- negotiating across cultures
- overseas assignments

Description

The GWSI is a self-administered questionnaire that takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. The GWSI has 24 questions that require you to choose one of five corresponding statements that best represents your preference to the given business situation. There are three questions for each of the eight global work styles. By completing the self-assessment users can plot their personal profiles on a continuum of global work styles.



The GWSI focuses on general preferences, not behaviors or competencies. By communicating preferences and focusing on business situations users can improve their communication and management processes.

The GWSI provides a profile of your personal preferences along a continuum of global work styles. The results allow you to compare your preferences with the preferences of a customer, colleague or co-worker leading to greater understanding.

Identifying and understanding another person's work style preferences can assist you in strategizing how a person will behave, think or feel in a given business situation. However, the GWSI needs to be self-validated by examining your behaviors and the behaviors of others at work and in given business situations.

Utilization

The Global Work Styles Inventory can be used:

1. To understand the impact of culture in global business
2. To prepare individuals and teams to meet the challenges of global business
3. To assist managers in leveraging cultural diversity for competitive advantage
4. To develop self-awareness of your own work styles
5. To strategize ways to adapt behaviors or processes to improve team effectiveness and performance
6. To minimize the use of negative stereotypes or judgments when expectations are not met when working across organizations or cultures
7. To sensitize team members and coworkers by leveraging a common language to describe work style or cultural differences
8. To diagram your personal profile and compare it with general country profiles to show gaps or differences in global work style preferences
9. To identify those global work styles where differences are at their greatest requiring adaptation for individual, team and organizational success



Validating Your Profile – Step One

To get the most out of your profile you should think about specific work or business situations where you interact with others. Try to think of situations where you and other individuals or groups differ in thinking or approach. What were your preferences? Theirs?

Questions to ask.

1. What were your preferences? Their preferences?
2. Provide a descriptive example of such a situation.
3. What did you observe? How did he/she/they behave?
4. How did you interpret their behavior?
5. How successful were you or others in the given situation?
6. What were your expectations of their behavior in that situation?
7. What strategy or action would you take to become more effective in the future?

Validating Your Profile – Step Two

Are their preferences on your inventory that you disagree with? If so, why? Provide an example of where your behavior doesn't support your stated preference.

Your self-rating may have been influenced by the following.

1. How you would like to be seen by others.
2. A recent event or work situation that is new.
3. Behaviors required at work or by others at work.
4. Your actual preference or style.

You need to validate your preferences with real behaviors in a work setting. Only then can you be confident that your stated preferences match your behaviors and vice versa. Once you have validated your results you can start using the results to analyze how your behavior or expectations will match those of individuals or team members you work with.



Comparing and Contrasting Your Profile – Step Three

Take the following steps to compare and contrast your profile with another person or team member.

Step One

Find a partner who has completed the Global Work Style Inventory. Compare your preferences with your partner. Where are they similar? Different?

Step Two

Validate your preferences by providing examples where your behavior at work or life supports your indicated style. Share these examples with your partner.

Step Three

Ask your partner to validate their preferences with examples.

Step Four

Where do your preferences and those of your partner differ the most?

Step Five

Select a work style where you differ. How could this difference affect your interactions at work? For example, in meetings, resolving conflict, working together, etc.

Step Six

Select a potential work interaction or business situation. How should you adjust your behavior or work style to better meet the expectations of your partner?

Step Seven

Some preferences may be difficult to adjust or to change in a given business situation. Of the nine stated preferences on your Global Work Styles Inventory, which one(s) do you feel would be difficult or impossible for you to change? Why? Which one(s) would be easier to adjust or change? Why?

Step Eight

To develop your ability to adjust your work style you should:

1. Observe the behaviors of others who you work with on a daily or periodic basis.
2. Choose a behavior - actions or words - that represents that work style or preference used by the other person.



3. Think of how you should adjust your work style to meet the other person's expectations in that work or business situation?
4. What behaviors should you change or use to be more effective?
5. Practice, practice, practice.

GWSI Descriptions

CONTROL: Inner versus Outer Directed Control

An inner directed person believes that they have control over their immediate environment. You often assume that your approach to solving issues and problems should be followed by others. You are proactive, take initiative and actively engage in problem solving at work. You want to take charge of situations and do not shy away from conflict and risk.

An outer directed person believes that forces outside of their control determine outcomes in their immediate environment. You often adjust your approach to problem solving based on the expectations of others and the conditions that exist in our environment. You tend to be flexible, avoid conflict and focus on relationships to resolve problems at work. You avoid conflict and risk by adjusting your behavior to meet the expectations of others.

RULES: Universalistic versus Particularistic

Universalistic people place a high value on standards, procedures, rules and law. You believe that everyone has the same rights or should be treated equitably and fairly. Rules and law are considered more important than relationships.

Particularistic people place a high value on the difference and uniqueness of individuals and groups. Standards, procedures, rules and law are applied to these individuals on a case-by-case basis. Relationships and social obligations triumph over rules or law.

IDENTITY: Independence versus Interdependence

Independence is emphasized by individualism, personal motivation and achievement. You prefer to act on your own. You don't rely on others to do the work and expect to be rewarded and recognized for individual achievement. You value and admire self-driven, determined and self-motivated individuals.



Interdependence is emphasized by group affiliation, motivation and achievement. You prefer to act after reaching consensus with others. You rely on the team to do the work and are uncomfortable when where you alone are rewarded for the efforts of the group. You have a strong sense of social responsibility and obligations.

COMMUNICATION: Direct vs. Indirect Styles/Informal vs. Formal

A direct style emphasizes the use of explicit communication that is precise in both speaking and writing. You tend to be expressive in interactions and this may be seen as emotional. You confront others or situations in straightforward manner. You like to resolve problems and conflicts in a constructive and positive way for quick results.

An indirect style emphasizes the use of implicit communication that relies heavily on nonverbal cues, symbolism or stories. You tend to be less expressive in interactions and this may be seen as impersonal. You avoid confrontation and tend to see direct criticism as a threat to personal dignity and integrity. You believe that open conflict is not beneficial and would rather use a third party to resolve problems or issues.

APPROACH: Task versus Relationships

A task-oriented person tends to emphasize action and the importance of task- and achievement-oriented behaviors. You are motivated by achievement and completing tasks quickly. You often feel any action is better than no action. You build relationships through the completion of tasks.

A relationship-oriented person tends to emphasize building and maintaining good relationships before taking action. You are motivated by creating good, trusting interpersonal relationships. You are slow to trust others and tend to complete tasks after reflection. You complete tasks through existing relationships.

POWER: Equality versus Hierarchy

An equality orientation minimizes the power structures in an organization and emphasizes the equality of status among individuals. You downplay differences at the business and social levels. You tend to bypass lines of authority to get tasks completed. You prefer to work in a “flat” organization. You are uneasy about formality or the use of official titles. You expect that everyone is included and has the same opportunities.

A hierarchical orientation places a high value on power structures in an organization and emphasizes the power and status differences among individuals. You assume that ranks, titles and positions or age bestows certain authority or status in business and society. You



follow lines of authority to accomplish work and would be uneasy about bypassing the chain of command. You prefer to work in a “vertical” organization. You prefer formality in dress, speech and actions. Power and status has privileges.

TIME: Single Focused/Fixed versus Multi-Focused/Fluid

A single focus approach is one that emphasizes doing one task at a time and demonstrates a precise commitment to schedules and timelines. You prefer to break work into a series of tasks that can be completed sequentially. You are generally analytical to your approach to problem solving. You tend to define and manage time precisely. Punctuality is important to you. Your way of thinking, planning and preparing for work is connected to time.

A multi-focused approach is one that emphasizes doing multiple things at the same time and demonstrates a preference to see time as a loosely defined and abundant resource. You prefer to work on a variety of tasks and/or relationships at the same time. You are easily bored when focused on one issue exclusively. You are open-ended in your approach to planning as it relates to time. Punctuality is less important and you don't feel the need to be bound by time.

CHANGE: Uncertainty vs. Certainty (also Flexibility vs. Stability)

A person who is flexible tends to be more comfortable with uncertainty or ambiguity, values change, takes risks and adapts quickly to uncertain situations. You expect things at work to change and see risk as an opportunity for growth. You are willing to adjust to new situations and seek out new relationships readily. You value innovation and open to new behavior patterns.

A person who has a need for stability is one who values certainty, the status quo, and predictability and tends to avoid risks. You expect things to stay the same and for your work environment and relationships to remain stable over time. You value rules, regulation and systematic procedures to your work. You are threatened by irregularities, uncertainty and change.



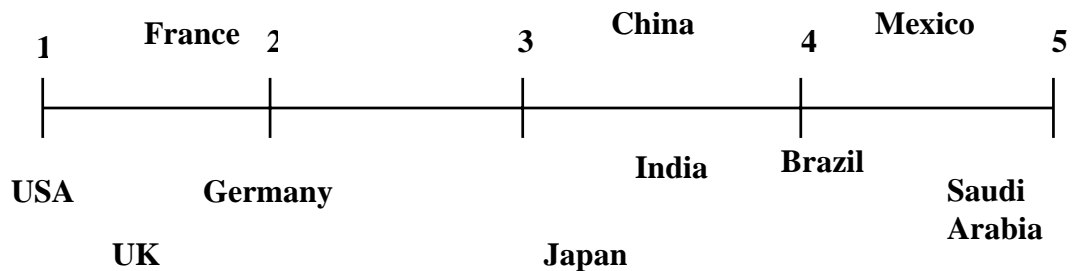
GWSI Graphs

The following graphs represent profiles of national cultures on work styles and provide a general overview for discussion purposes only. It is important to validate not only your own profile but also the individual profiles of those you work with in those countries. Remember that there is generally a wide distribution even within a single country.

CONTROL

Inner-Directed Control

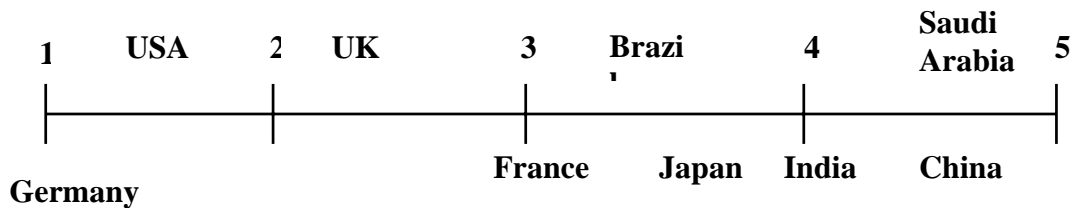
Outer-Directed Control



RULES

Universal

Particular

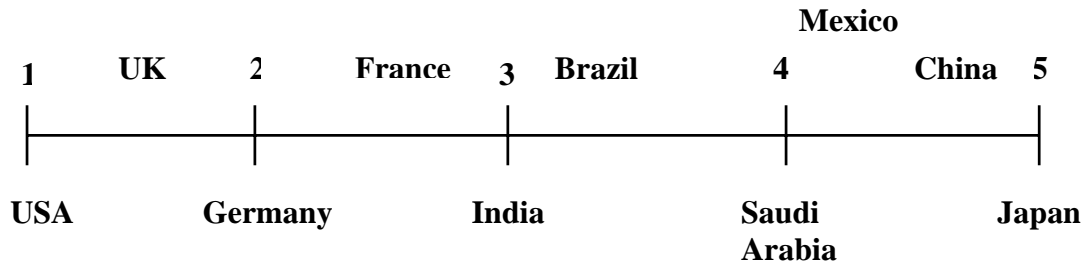




IDENTITY

Independence

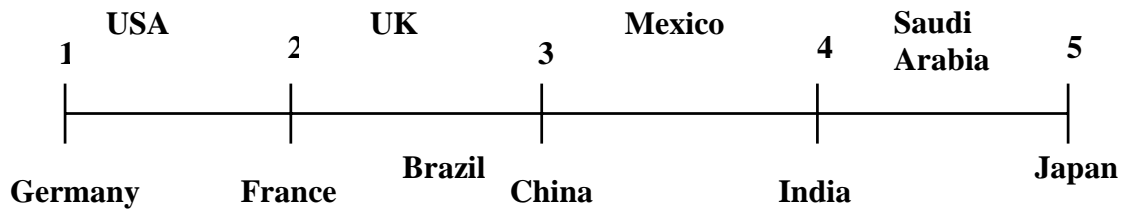
Interdependence



COMMUNICATION

Direct

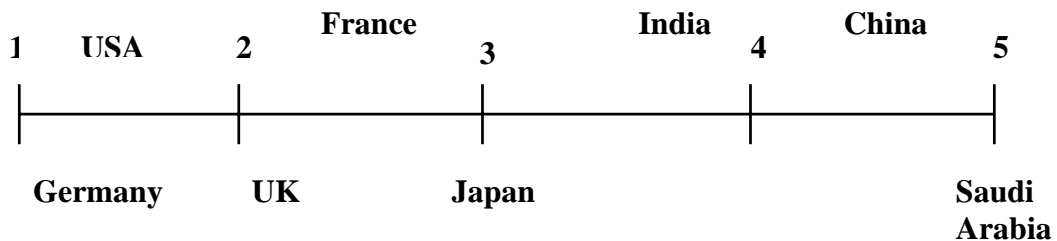
Indirect



APPROACH

Task

Relationships

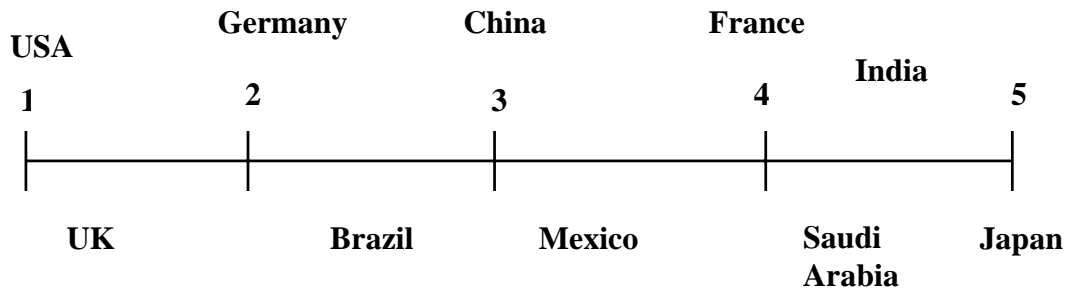




POWER

Equality

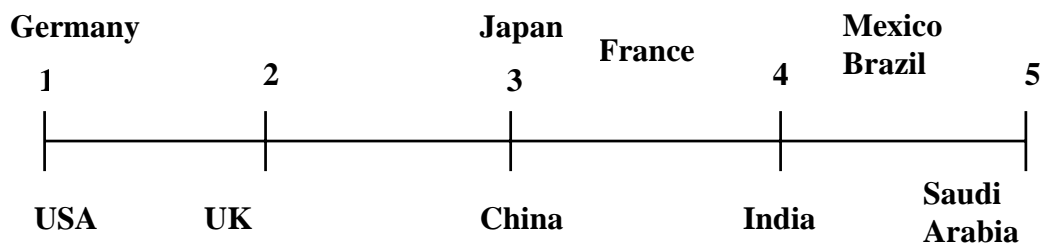
Hierarchy



TIME

Single Focus/ Fixed

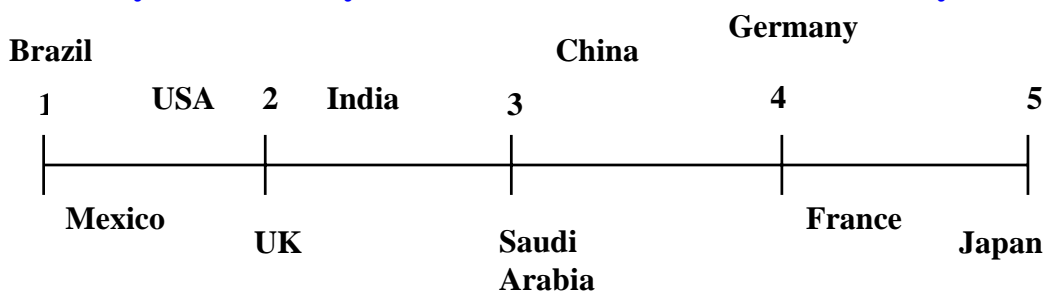
Multi-Focused/ Fluid



CHANGE

Flexibility/ Uncertainty

Stability/Certainty





Conclusion

By completing the GWSI you will begin your journey of becoming globally and interculturally competent. How far you have to go to will depend upon your past and future experiences. The distance you may now feel between yourself and others in working across cultures can be attributed to differences in work styles.

What are your work preferences or work styles? This is a simple question, but difficult to answer unless you are put in a situation where your preferences come into conflict with others who have a different set of preferences in getting work done.

Our work preferences or styles are a result of culture – individual, team, organizational, functional and global. Often these styles are unconscious and unstated. By completing the GWSI and completing the related exercises you will increase your awareness of your self and others. Knowing where preferences or styles clash in a work environment is the path to becoming more effective at working across cultures in a global marketplace.

Asking yourself how to enhance communication skills or maximizing productivity across cultures is the first step in your journey. Your journey begins with small insights and leads to larger understanding over time. The GWSI will assist you in building strong global business relationships and in setting realistic strategies to meet your business goals in a constantly changing global environment.