

What's Your Learning Style?

Introduction

Every person has a preferred learning style. Knowing and understanding your personal preference is an essential step towards becoming a successful business professional – allowing you to quickly overcome obstacles and maximize your productivity in the workplace. Managers also need to be familiar with their employees' learning styles so that they can customize training materials to adequately address individual learning needs. According to a research study conducted by B. McPherson and L. Willis (2007), understanding and adapting to employees' preferred learning styles is critical to the success of an organization, especially in light of recent growth in the global workforce. A standardized, routine approach should not be used to train and educate employees with diverse abilities, cultural backgrounds, educational levels, personalities, and aptitudes. In order to adapt to these employee differences, a manager may choose to hold a verbal staff meeting for auditory learners and incorporate a power point presentation for visual learners. Employees should also play a role in identifying their own needs so that they can assist with this process. For example, employees that learn best by visual presentation of material may opt to read a book on the topic of interest in lieu of listening to a professional speak on the subject. Remaining open to new and different learning styles enables both managers and employees to discover innovative techniques that will improve the existing learning environment. Learning is not a onetime event, but a lifelong process. The more we understand about our preferred learning style, the better equipped we are to become lifelong learners.

Beginning on page 2 of this reading, there is a learning style questionnaire. Please print and complete this questionnaire to identify your learning style. The questionnaire will allow you to determine if you prefer one of the three different learning styles listed below:

- **Visual** – learning through sight
- **Auditory** – learning through sound
- **Kinesthetic** – learning through touch and feel

Learning Styles

There are three basic types of learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. These styles describe how we use our senses to process and absorb information that we need to learn. A detailed description of each learning style follows:

- **VISUAL:** A visual learner prefers to learn by seeing and observing. This type of learner likes when pictures, diagrams, films, and presentations are used. Often, these learners are very detailed and organized individuals. They tend to take good notes, work from lists, and prefer written instructions when learning new tasks.
- **AUDITORY:** An auditory learner prefers to learn by hearing or listening. This type of learner is best able to process information through sound. Auditory learners will read aloud to learn a new task or listen to a lecture to study for a test. Frequently, these types of learners can memorize material by just listening to the words.
- **KINESTHETIC:** A kinesthetic learner prefers to learn through touch, feel, and hands-on experiences. These learners will often use hand gestures when speaking and may find it hard to sit still in a classroom setting. Kinesthetic learners like to learn new tasks through experimentation and will often try out various approaches in order to determine the best method for a given task. People with this type of learning style seldom read directions before they begin a new project or task.

It is not uncommon for individuals to have a primary learning style, but still regularly rely on a mixture of all three approaches depending on a given situation. Additionally, some people may have one distinct learning style preference, while others may exhibit a more blended mixture of two or three of the styles. It is important to note that there is no one right answer. Knowing your learning style is an individual process that enables you to select the most appropriate learning environment for you. Learning style preferences are not permanently fixed – a person can develop their ability in less prominent styles or further improve their abilities in styles that they already prefer.

Learning Style Questionnaire

Note: The following learning style questionnaire was adapted from [here](#).

PRINT this questionnaire and complete manually.

CIRCLE the answer that best represents how you generally behave in these scenarios.

1. When I operate new equipment I generally:

- a. read the instructions first.
- b. listen to an explanation from someone who has used it before.
- c. go ahead and have a go; I can figure it out as I use it.

2. When I need directions for travelling I usually:

- a. look at a map.
- b. ask for spoken directions.
- c. follow my intuition and maybe use a compass.

3. When I cook a new dish, I like to:

- a. follow a written recipe.
- b. call a friend for an explanation.
- c. follow my instincts, testing as I cook.

4. If I am teaching someone something new, I usually:

- a. write instructions down for them.
- b. give them a verbal explanation.
- c. demonstrate first and then let them have a go.

5. I tend to say:

- a. watch how I do it.
- b. listen to me explain.
- c. you have a go.

6. During my free time, I enjoy:

- a. going to museums and galleries.
- b. listening to music and talking to my friends.
- c. playing sports.

7. When I go shopping for clothes, I tend to:

- a. imagine what they would look like on.
- b. discuss them with the shop staff.
- c. try them on and test them out.

8. When I am choosing a vacation spot, I usually:

- a. read lots of brochures.
- b. listen to recommendations from friends.
- c. imagine what it would be like to be there.

9. If I am buying a new car, then I will:

- a. read reviews in newspapers and magazines.
- b. discuss what I need with my friends.
- c. test-drive many different types.

10. When I am learning a new skill, I am most comfortable:

- a. watching what the teacher is doing.
- b. talking with the teacher in order to determine what exactly I am supposed to do.
- c. giving it a try myself and working it out as I go.

11. If I am choosing food off a menu, I tend to:

- a. imagine what the food will look like.
- b. talk through the options in my head or with my partner.
- c. imagine what the food will taste like.

12. When I listen to a band, I mostly:

- a. watch the band members and other people in the audience.
- b. listen to the lyrics and the beats.
- c. move in time with the music.

13. When I concentrate, I often:

- a. focus on the words or the pictures in front of me.
- b. discuss the problem and the possible solutions in my head.
- c. move around a lot, fiddle with pens and pencils, and touch things.

14. I choose household furnishings, because I like:

- a. their colors and how they look.
- b. the descriptions that the sales-people give me.
- c. their textures and what it feels like to touch them.

15. My first memory is of:

- a. looking at something.
- b. being spoken to.
- c. doing something.

16. When I am anxious, I:

- a. visualize the worst-case scenarios.
- b. contemplate in my head what worries me most.
- c. cannot sit still, fidget, and move around constantly.

17. I feel especially connected to other people because of:

- a. how they look.
- b. what they say to me.
- c. how they make me feel.

18. When I have to study for an exam, I generally:

- a. write lots of revision notes.
- b. talk over my notes, alone or with other people.
- c. imagine writing out the formula.

19. If I am giving an explanation to people, I tend to:

- a. show them what I mean.
- b. explain to them in different ways until they understand.
- c. encourage them to try and talk through my idea as they do it.

20. I really love activities like:

- a. watching films, photography, looking at art, or people watching.
- b. listening to music, listening to the radio, or talking to friends.
- c. taking part in sporting activities, eating fine foods, and dancing.

21. Most of my free time is spent:

- a. watching television.
- b. talking to friends.
- c. doing physical activity or making things.

22. When I first contact a new person, I tend to:

- a. arrange a face-to-face meeting.
- b. talk to them on the telephone.
- c. try to get together while doing something else, such as an activity or a meal.

23. I first notice how people:

- a. look and dress.
- b. sound and speak.
- c. stand and move.

24. If I am angry, I usually:

- a. keep replaying in my mind what it is that has upset me.
- b. raise my voice and tell people how I feel.
- c. stamp about, slam doors, and physically demonstrate my anger.

25. I find it easiest to remember:

- a. faces.
- b. names.
- c. things I have done.

26. I think that you can tell if someone is lying if:

- a. they avoid looking at you.
- b. their voice changes.
- c. they give you funny vibes.

27. When I meet an old friend:

- a. I say, "it's great to see you!"
- b. I say, "it's great to hear from you!"
- c. I give them a hug or a handshake.

28. I remember things best by:

- a. writing notes or keeping printed details.
- b. saying them aloud or repeating words and key points in my head.
- c. doing and practicing the activity or imagining it being done.

29. If I have to complain about faulty goods, I am most comfortable:

- a. writing a letter.
- b. complaining over the phone.
- c. taking the item back to the store or mailing it to the head office.

30. I tend to say:

- a. I see what you mean.
- b. I hear what you are saying.
- c. I know how you feel.

Interpreting the Results

Once you have completed the learning style questionnaire, add up how many A's, B's, and C's you selected.

A's =

B's =

C's =

If you chose mostly A's, you have a **VISUAL** learning style.

If you chose mostly B's, you have an **AUDITORY** learning style.

If you chose mostly C's, you have a **KINESTHETIC** learning style.

For a description of each of the three learning styles, please refer back to page 1 and 2 of this lesson guide.

Remember that in some cases, people may find that their learning style is a blend of two or three styles. Please read the description for all potential styles to better understand your individual learning style.

Summary

- Understanding your learning style preference is important to learn new things effectively.
- There are three basic learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.
- A visual learner prefers to learn by seeing and observing.
- An auditory learner prefers to learn by hearing or listening.
- A kinesthetic learner prefers to learn through touch, feel, and hands-on experience.
- Most often, people have a dominant learning style but may still utilize other approaches depending on the situation.
- The learning style questionnaire included in this lesson guide will help you identify your preferred learning style.