

Do a Basketball Team and Your Organization Have Anything in Common?

by Markku Kauppinen

Tomorrow will be a very exciting day. It is time for basketball playoffs! My nine-year-old son, Cole, plays in the local competitive basketball league and if his team, the Celtics, wins the morning game, they will play for the championship in the afternoon. I am not sure who is anticipating the games more: Cole or me. However, one thing is certain. We will have a lot of fun, win or lose.

At the games and practices, I cannot help but identify the DISC-styles of the players, coaches and the family members. It is very interesting to observe how the style of the coach impacts the young players and their entire season, and how the individual styles of the 9-10 year-olds impact their playing style. Finally, observing a wide range of “fan” behavior gets a little worrisome at times, especially when the games are close. But it is always fun to watch the different and sometimes conflicting behavioral styles play out their dynamics in front of everyone’s eyes.

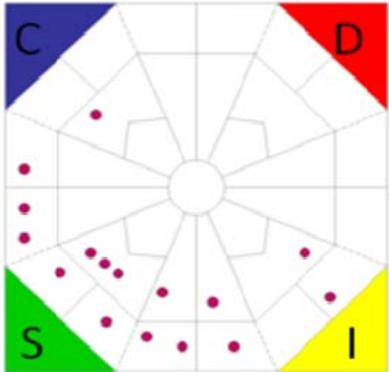
Among our wide range of client organizations are sports teams. They are quite interesting clients to work with as the *Extended DISC*[®] tools can be applied in clearly defined environments with specific rules and time limitations. The winners and losers are established.

But do a sports team and your organization have something in common? In business, the “rules” are blurred, there is no definite end to the “game” and the “teams” come in many different forms.

Let’s consider a case of two professional basketball teams. Unfortunately, both teams were having rather mediocre and disappointing seasons with about an equal amount of wins and losses. Most analysts considered the teams to have equally talented players and from a physical and financial resources standpoint, the teams looked the same on paper as well

But the two teams played the game very differently. One team had hot and cold streaks, while the other had a more consistent, albeit average, success. What could explain these significant differences? Let’s take a closer look.

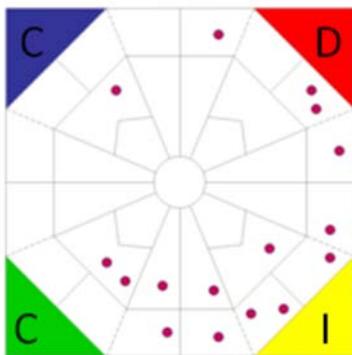
Team A:



The coach's comments:

- Easy team to coach
- They do as I say and as we plan
- The team wants to work together and at their own pace
- They plan their practices well
- A consistently performing team
- Difficult to change the tempo in the middle of the game
- A defense-oriented team
- Players on the bench follow the game quietly

Team B:



The coach's comments:

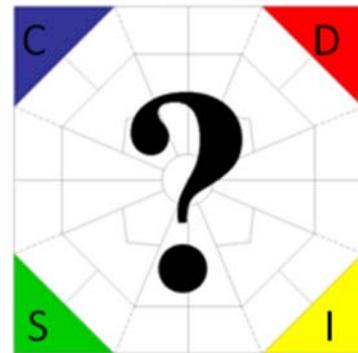
- Challenging team to coach
- Strongly reacting players who are very different from each other
- "Engaged" in practice sessions
- Fluctuating mood levels
- Many "stars" on the team

- Able to change playing style and aggression level
- An offense-oriented team
- Players assume unique roles with the team

Your organization:

If this information is valuable to a basketball coach to lead the team better and help to win more games, could it be valuable to you? Would it help you to achieve your goals if you knew:

- How to motivate and lead the different styles of employees?
- What are their unique strengths and weaknesses?
- Who are the right people for the key tasks?
- Who should be doing what?
- What styles of individuals you need to bring into your team to make it better?



What does your team look like? Do you know how to coach your players and to help your team win more?

It is very easy to find out.

Go Celtics!

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