Compass Points Activity

Purpose: This activity allows us to better understand our own work preferences and styles in a group setting (as opposed to individual personality tests like MBTI) – as well as helping us to understand the work styles of our colleagues. This increased understanding will help us approach group work more effectively.

Process:

1. The room is set up with 4 signs on chart paper, one on each wall – North, South, East and West (arranged in the correct relationship to each other).

2. Participants take the two personality “quick tests” on pages 2 & 3 to determine their own alignment on the work style personality compass (visible on page 4). This should take approximately 7-10 minutes.

3. Participants move to stand near their dominant choice – aware that no one is fully any one choice. Each group answers the 5 questions (see page 5) on chart paper. When complete, they report back to the whole group.

4. Optionally, participants may now arrange themselves in a circle – nearest to their dominant type, but on the side closest to their “subdominant” type. The group may refer to page 6 and discuss whether this feels more accurate – and if it’s more useful.

5. Debrief. Group processing can include answering the following prompts:
   - Note the distribution among the directions – what does this mean for our group?
   - What is the best combination for a group to have? Does it matter?
   - How do we best enable working together effectively without being “driven crazy” by other types?
   - How might you use this activity with other groups?
Quick Test to Identify Your Compass Point: Part 1

Are you more North or South?
For each set of words, circle the word that describes you more often than the other one (even though you may have both characteristics at times)

b. Helpful  b. People-centered  b. Supportive

b. Understanding  b. Listener  b. Faithful

b. Easy-going  b. Unselfish  b. Volunteer

b. Team player  b. Patient  b. Sensitive

a. Decisive  a. Results-focused  a. Challenger
b. Diplomatic  b. Relationship-focused  b. Mediator

b. Non-confrontational  b. Friendly  b. Communicator

b. Cooperative  b. Generous  b. Values-driven

a. Leader  a. Task-oriented  a. Achiever
b. Loyal  b. Peace-oriented  b. Caregiver

Total # of A’s circled: _______ (if this number is higher, you’re more North)
Total # of B’s circled: _______ (if this number is higher, you’re more South)
Quick Test to Identify Your Compass Point: Part 2

Are you more East or West?
For each set of words, circle the word that describes you more often than the other one (even though you may have both characteristics at times)

c. Organized
d. Creative
c. Creative
d. Flexible
c. Quality-centered
d. Idea-centered
c. Logical
d. Visionary
c. Reserved
d. Innovative
c. Planner
d. Spontaneous
c. Perfectionist
d. Free-spirited
c. Traditional
d. Risk-taker
c. Factual
d. Fun-loving
c. Analytical
d. Cheerful
c. Consistent
d. Versatile
c. Serious
d. Humorous
c. Efficient
d. Dreamer
c. Reliant
d. Delegator
c. Precise
d. Inventive
c. Improving
d. Improvising
c. Persuasive
d. Adventurous
c. Persistent
d. Imaginative
c. Systematic
d. Carefree
c. Finisher
d. Motivator
c. Rule-follower
d. Option-provider
c. Efficient
d. Dreamer
c. Protocol-focused
d. Methods-focused

Total # of C’s circled: ____  (if this number is higher, you’re more West)
Total # of D’s circled: ____  (if this number is higher, you’re more East)

Now that you have a number for each of the four types (North, South, East, West)...

This type has the highest number ___________ (this is your Dominant Type)

This type has the second highest number ___________ (this is your Subdominant Type)
**Compass Points Chart**

**NORTH**
A leader; Goal-centered; Fast-paced; Task-oriented; Assertive; Decisive; Confident; Determined; Competitive; Independent

**WEST**
A careful thinker; Quality-centered; Analytical; Organized; Logical; Focused; Exact; Perfectionist; Industrious; Structured; Detailed

**SOUTH**
A team player; Process-centered; Slow-paced; Good listener; Non-confrontational; Sensitive; Patient; Understanding; Generous; Helpful

**EAST**
A speculative thinker; Idea-centered; Creative; Innovative; Flexible; Visionary; Spontaneous; Enthusiastic; Free-spirited

**North:** You take charge. • You run the daily operation. • You have lists of things to do and you need to get started and get them done. • You don’t have to ask questions to begin your work or assignment. • You teach our children a complete curriculum. • You will stitch the mosaic together and do the work.

**East:** You have the big picture. • You need to see the final product and will work with the end in mind. • You believe in working backwards, understanding by design. • You don’t get a project started until you are clear about the final product. • You teach our children the big concepts. • You know what the mosaic looks like in the end.

**West:** You ask the hard questions. • You live by inquiry. • You challenge us to identify the details. • You don’t start a project until you are clear about the details. • You make our picture more complete. • You engage in thoughtful discourse. • You make us think and teach detailed concepts to our children. • You fill in the details of the mosaic.

**South:** You slow us down, and make sure everyone has voice and is heard. • You bring up our affective domain. • You make sure the emotional side of our work is heard. • You teach our children with strong relationships and care. • You add beauty to the mosaic, make sure everyone participates in the creation, and keep us all comfortable.
Dominant Compass Point Discussion

Once everyone has chosen a dominant compass point to join, spend 15 minutes answering the following questions as a group.

1. What are the strengths of your style? (4 adjectives)

2. What are the limitations of your style? (4 adjectives)

3. What style do you find most difficult to work with and why?

4. What do people from the other directions or styles need to know about you so you can work together effectively?

5. What do you value about the other 3 styles?
The Compass Points: Dominant-Subdominant Types

The Personality Compass
Dominant – Subdominant Type

Now see what the compass has to say about you based on your Dominant type combined with your Subdominant type.

Your Dominant type is the one listed first; your Subdominant is the second.

NORTH – WEST
Assertive, Decisive, Structured, Detailed, Organized

WEST – NORTH
Structured, Detailed, Assertive, Decisive, Fast-Paced

WEST – SOUTH
Structured, Detailed, Friendly, Helpful, Slow-Paced

SOUTH – WEST
Friendly, Caring, Structured, Detailed, Organized

SOUTH – EAST
Friendly, Caring, Flexible, Creative, Adventurous

NORTH – EAST
Assertive, Decisive, Flexible, Creative, Adventurous

EAST – NORTH
Flexible, Creative, Assertive, Decisive, Fast-Paced

EAST – SOUTH
Flexible, Creative, Friendly, Caring, Cooperative

So, even two people who are both primarily NORTH, can still be very different if they have opposite subdominant types: WEST versus EAST.

Does your combined type seem to even more closely describe you than just your Dominant type? Is including this subdominant type useful, or just more complex?