SMALLIFY TRUST-BUILDING 101 (Communication Styles)
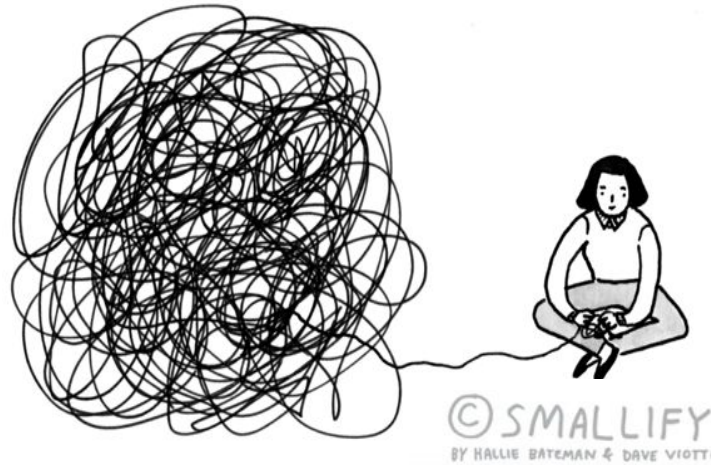
© SMALLIFY
BY HALLIE BATEMAN & DAVE VIOTTI

SMALLIFY

Change Moves at the Speed of Trust

Change

———————
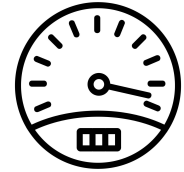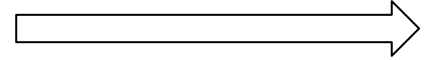
Trust

5 Ways of Being to Build Trust (What I DO)

GENEROSITY
I give freely of my time and resources.

TRUSTWORTHINESS
I can be counted on to keep confidences.
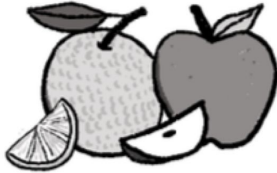
RELATABILITY
I'm aware, vulnerable and in tune with people and places.

CREDIBILITY
I have relevant knowledge or lived experience to share.
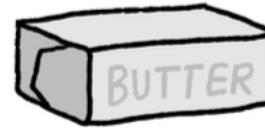
RELIABILITY
I do what I say I'm going to do.

SMALLIFY™

5 Communication Styles to Build Trust (What I SAY)

FUTURE STYLE
Sounds like: "In 10 years time..."

INCLUSIVE STYLE
Sounds like: "What do you think?

DATA STYLE
Sounds like: "The research shows that..."

PERSONAL STYLE
"My best friend always tells me..."

ACTION STYLE
Sounds like: "Please have this to me by Friday at 3pm."

SMALLIFY

Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

Future (Vision): Paints a compelling picture of possibility. Oriented toward big ideas and long-term goals. Inspires through aspiration.

Strength: Use to motivate, align around a North Star, or create energy for change.

Shadow: Can feel vague, unrealistic, or ungrounded if not backed by a plan or credibility.

FUTURE STYLE
Sounds like: "In 10 years time..."

SMALLIFY

Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

Data (Analytical): Grounded in facts and structure. Clarifies with logic and metrics. Necessary when more certainty needed.

Strength: Use to build credibility, support recommendations, or explain complex issues with clarity.

Shadow: Can feel cold, overly technical, or disconnected from people if not paired with context or connection. Can seem manipulative or biased if methods or assumptions aren't transparent or agreed.

DATA STYLE
Sounds like: "The research shows that..."

SMALLIFY

Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

Personal (Relatable Storytelling):
Uses story, emotion, and personal experience to create connection. Makes abstract ideas feel real, human, and relevant.

Strength: Use to build trust, connect across roles or silos, and make the message stick.

Shadow: Can feel unprofessional or off-topic if not well-framed or aligned to the moment.

PERSONAL STYLE
"My best friend always tells me..."

SMALLIFY

Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

Action (Directive): Clear and decisive, focused on results. Moves quickly from idea to execution. Speaks in next steps, outcomes, and accountability.

Strength: Use when there's urgency, ambiguity, or a need to make decisions and drive momentum.

Shadow: Can come across as pushy, impatient, or dismissive of input.

ACTION STYLE
Sounds like: "Please have this to me by Friday at 3pm."

SMALLIFY

Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

Inclusive (Collaborative): Engages others, listens, builds consensus. Fosters connection and belonging. Uses questions and open frames.

Strength: Use to build alignment, foster trust, and bring diverse voices into the conversation.

Shadow: Can slow things down or appear indecisive if overused.

INCLUSIVE STYLE
Sounds like: "What do you think?"

SMALLIFY

Practical ways to get better at each communication style?

- Future (read an article on future trends and tell someone)

- Data (find a statistic about your work and share it with someone)

- Action (write very short emails with numbers or bullet points)

- Personal (tell a story about your day at dinner)

- Inclusion (pause to ask someone what they think)

SMALLIFY

Practical ways to get better at actions that build trust

- Generosity (offer to do someone a favor, check in on them, give)

- Trustworthiness (keep confidences, don't gossip, apologize, be honest)

- Relatability (be curious about other people's experiences, talk less, listen more and mirror, be vulnerable and share your experiences)

- Credibility (read, build a new skill, try a new "stretch" experience, say when you "don't know," then find out)

- Reliability (show up for a meeting or turn something in on time)

SMALLIFY

You Gain Empathy Through Active Listening

SMALLIFY

Tool #1: Planning for Trust

- Whom do you need to build trust with?

- What's your desired outcome? (your win)

- What do they need? What motivates them? (their win)

- What trust-building communication styles might engage them? (what's your hunch)

- Prepare at least one talking point for each communication style (e.g., for inclusion, list a question you want to ask them).

5 Communication Styles to Build Trust (What I SAY)

FUTURE STYLE
Sounds like: "In 10 years time..."

INCLUSIVE STYLE
Sounds like: "What do you think?"

DATA STYLE
Sounds like: "The research shows that..."

PERSONAL STYLE
"My best friend always tells me..."

ACTION STYLE
Sounds like: "Please have this to me by Friday at 3pm."

SMALLIFY

#2: Assessment

SMALLIFY TRUST-BUILDING STYLES ASSESSMENT

The Five Trust-Building (Communication) Styles

Read the five trust-building styles below. Which one do you tend to default to (or prefer) in your current role when communicating with others? Which styles are you really good at? Which styles would you like to get better at?

1. The Data Style (Reasoning)	2. The Action Style (Directing)	3. The Inclusion Style (Collaborating)	4. The Future Style (Visioning)	5. The Personal Style (Humanizing)
Logical, factual, objective	Expert, authoritative, clear	Inclusive, cooperative	Inspiring, innovative	Relatable, heartfelt
You use this style to provide analysis, data, or expertise in support of a position.	You use this style to make clear statements, give orders or provide directions.	You use this style to build consensus and gather input before action is taken.	You use this style to inspire and guide people toward an ideal or future state.	You use this style to make something easier for people to relate to at a human level.
A preferred style if you: Tend to be analytical Prefer to use facts and logic Are focused and concise Enjoy a good debate	**A preferred style if you:** Tend to be action-oriented Focus on getting the job done Like directing people Prefer getting to the point	**A preferred style if you:** Tend to be consensus-oriented Seek lots of diverse input Find group work energizing Avoid conflict when possible	**A preferred style if you:** Tend to be future-oriented Prefer "big picture" thinking Focus on "what could be" Get excited by possibilities	**A preferred style if you:** Find personal stories uplifting Tend to be open and vulnerable Share success & failure openly Value heart-felt, relatable stories
Sounds like: "The research shows that ..." "These are the facts ..."	**Sounds like:** "Please do the following ..." "This needs to be done by ..."	**Sounds like:** "What do you think of this?" "I'd like to get your opinion ..."	**Sounds like:** "Imagine if we could ..." "In 10 years, I believe we'll ..."	**Sounds like:** "This is my story ..." "This is a story about [name]..."

SMALLIFY

Tool #3: An Exercise You Can Do with Your Team

- Have a discussion about when each communication style (action, data, future, inclusion, or personal) is (1) most effective and (2) least effective (e.g., the action style is most effective in emergency situations or when you've got to get things done to meet a deadline; it's least effective when you don't have formal authority, strong relationships or when collaboration and diverse points of view are needed)

- Share your trust-building strengths and growth areas with your team and (a) what you will commit to the team and (b) what you will need from the team

- What are your team's strengths? Where are there gaps to fill? What styles are most needed in the current environment? (have a growth mindset about it)

SMALLIFY

SMALLIFY TRUST-BUILDING STYLES ASSESSMENT

The Five Trust-Building (Communication) Styles

Read the five trust-building styles below. Which one do you tend to default to (or prefer) in your current role when communicating with others? Which styles are you really good at? Which styles would you like to get better at?

1. The Data Style (Reasoning)

Logical, factual, objective

You use this style to provide analysis, data, or expertise in support of a position.

A preferred style if you:
Tend to be analytical
Prefer to use facts and logic
Are focused and concise
Enjoy a good debate

Sounds like:
"The research shows that ..."
"These are the facts ..."

2. The Action Style (Directing)

Expert, authoritative, clear

You use this style to make clear statements, give orders or provide directions.

A preferred style if you:
Tend to be action-oriented
Focus on getting the job done
Like directing people
Prefer getting to the point

Sounds like:
"Please do the following ..."
"This needs to be done by ..."

3. The Inclusion Style (Collaborating)

Inclusive, cooperative

You use this style to build consensus and gather input before action is taken.

A preferred style if you:
Tend to be consensus-oriented
Seek lots of diverse input
Find group work energizing
Avoid conflict when possible

Sounds like:
"What do you think of this?"
"I'd like to get your opinion ..."

4. The Future Style (Visioning)

Inspiring, innovative

You use this style to inspire and guide people toward an ideal or future state.

A preferred style if you:
Tend to be future-oriented
Prefer "big picture" thinking
Focus on "what could be"
Get excited by possibilities

Sounds like:
"Imagine if we could ..."
"In 10 years, I believe we'll ..."

5. The Personal Style (Humanizing)

Relatable, heartfelt

You use this style to make something easier for people to relate to at a human level.

A preferred style if you:
Find personal stories uplifting
Tend to be open and vulnerable
Share success & failure openly
Value heart-felt, relatable stories

Sounds like:
"This is my story ..."
"This is a story about [name]..."

SMALLIFY

THANK YOU!

www.smallify.it
daveviotti@gmail.comt
@viottidave (Instagram)

SMALLIFY