

# Trailblazer

Prefers direct conversation, decisive action, and ownership of results.

Helps them engage: A meaningful challenge, a clear result, and authority to choose the approach.

Creates frustration: Close supervision, unnecessary approvals, or responsibility without authority.

Communicate: Lead with the decision or outcome. Agree on the deadline and which decisions belong to them.

Avoid: Burying the point, giving vague expectations, or controlling every step.

Try saying: Here is the outcome we need by Friday. Which approach would you take?

Watch for overuse: Moving quickly sometimes leaves others without a chance to contribute. Pause before deciding for the group.

# Connector

Prefers conversation, shared possibilities, and getting people involved.

Helps them engage: Interaction, variety, opportunities to share ideas, and specific appreciation.

Creates frustration: Isolation, dismissed ideas, or repetitive detail with no clear purpose.

Communicate: Start with connection. Discuss how the idea affects people, then confirm decisions and commitments in writing.

Avoid: Opening with a wall of data or assuming an enthusiastic yes means every detail is settled.

Try saying: Talk me through your idea. Then let's agree on who will do what.

Watch for overuse: Enthusiasm sometimes runs ahead of the agreement. Check capacity and confirm the next action.

# Anchor

Prefers a steady pace, dependable relationships, and time to adjust.

Helps them engage: Trust, a sense of belonging, clear expectations, and preparation for change.

Creates frustration: Repeated surprises, unexplained changes, or public pressure to respond immediately.

Communicate: Explain changes early and calmly. Give time to think, invite their view, and follow through on what you agree.

Avoid: Rushing an answer, using an aggressive tone, or treating quietness as agreement.

Try saying: Here is what is changing and why. What do you need to make it work?

Watch for overuse: Keeping things comfortable sometimes leaves a concern unspoken. Make room for a respectful disagreement.

# Architect

Prefers accurate information, thoughtful preparation, and clear standards.

Helps them engage: Challenging work, reliable information, room to analyze, and recognition of quality.

Creates frustration: Unsupported claims, artificial urgency, or changing the definition of success.

Communicate: Share the facts and reasoning. Define what good work looks like and allow time for questions.

Avoid: Vague instructions, exaggerated claims, or dismissing detailed questions as negativity.

Try saying: These are the requirements. What information would change your recommendation?

Watch for overuse: Review sometimes continues after the important questions are answered. Agree on the information needed to decide.

# The community event

60 neighbors

6 volunteers

\$600 planning budget

A venue ready for your plan

Agree on the goal, the welcome experience, and ownership of next actions.

# The plan changes

Two volunteers are unavailable.  
Rain means everything moves indoors.  
You have three minutes to revise.

The attendance expectation and planning budget stay the same.

# A request someone could act on

What happened?

What effect did it have?

What specific action would help?

Listener: say what you heard, then ask for the context you need.

# What would you do?

Choose a question and compare answers. Ask what mattered to the other person. These conversation starters are unscored.

1. We're going on a road trip. What's your job?
2. You have a completely free Saturday. What are you doing?
3. We're ordering pizza for the group. How do you decide what to order?
4. You're putting together IKEA furniture. What's your approach?
5. You're planning a vacation. What do you do first?
6. The meeting was supposed to end 15 minutes ago. What are you thinking?
7. You get \$500 that you have to spend on something fun. What do you do with it?
8. You walk into a party where you barely know anyone. What do you do?
9. Your group has to pick a restaurant for dinner. How do you make the decision?
10. Someone says, "I have a surprise for you!" What's your first reaction?