

Knowing about people's natural learning styles can be invaluable in helping you sell products and services and build and develop your business. Knowing three learning styles will increase your effectiveness in sales meetings and interviews and many other situations with clients, customers, employees, co-workers, etc.

In small or large group settings, there are things you can pick up about how people use their senses that will help you present to them more effectively. You can then help them to understand your product or service more fully, learn instructions and directives more effectively, employ methods and procedures correctly, and get more out of your sales pitch.

Three Styles of Learning

1. Visual Learning (most common)

You - and others like you - learn best by using the eyes. Looking and visually inspecting are your chief sources of information. Words may not resonate fully or bounce off more often than not. Touching is limited in providing enough stimulus for adequate learning. Looking things over carefully is a must. If we relate it to eating, visual learners like feasts for the eyes. Visual learners can take in many details at once. Visual learners read people well by being aware of micro-movements and make decisions quite quickly based on what they have absorbed quickly.

How to Identify a Visual Learner

- will be looking and inspecting you closely as you talk,
- looks at what you hand him/her but doesn't read it until later,
- reacts positively to animated communications,
- enjoys visual presentations,
- may react emotionally to what you show,
- learns in an all-at-once fashion and quite often the learning is permanent,
- details are gathered after the big picture is clear,
- doesn't like structure and organization,
- can find things readily in his/her "mess,"
- comes to conclusions very quickly,
- often creatively gifted,
- technologically, mathematically inclined,
- enjoys puzzles and mazes,
- loves to build things,
- counts everything,
- plays chess,
- designs scientific experiments,
- programs computers,
- takes things apart to see how they work,
- abstract thinker,
- imaginative,
- good sense of humor,
- thrives on difficult work

How to Accommodate to the Needs of Visual Learners

You can maximize your chances of doing business when in the company of visual-spatial learners by doing any of the following:

- guided tours to see how things work and interact
- show layouts, blueprints, charts, diagrams, models, the real thing
- do live demonstrations to show how something works
- take things apart to show what is inside
- provide summary documents that also include related pictures
- as a visual learner, draw pictures and diagrams to aid memory. Notes do not have to all be in words.
- use videos, movies, demo tapes, internet visuals, PowerPoint presentations
- sales pitches should have more visuals than words

2. Auditory Learning

- You - and others like you - learn best when learning with the ears. Listening is the main source of your information. The ears are powerful listeners and the brain absorbs information from them quickly and effectively.

How to Identify an Auditory Learner

- will seem deep in concentration as you talk,
- may not look at you but is listening attentively,
- questions what you say,
- repeats what you say to ensure understanding,
- eyes are closed in order to listen more attentively,
- when given something in the hand will care more about listening to you,
- will stop to think about what has been said before answering,
- very precise answers,
- likes step-by-step methods,
- logical and sequential thinker,
- has concrete ideas and concepts,
- slow to react in discussions because he/she is thinking about what is said

How to Accommodate to the Needs of an Auditory Learner

You can maximize your chances of doing business when in the company of auditory learners by finding the opportunity to do any of the following:

- provide verbal instructions and directions along with some visuals
- use phone calls to discuss business
- soft background instrumental music may be distracting
- use audio-visual tools with detailed verbal descriptions
- discuss products or services freely
- during sales pitches don't move around very much and focus on using your best voice

3. Kinesthetic Learning

- You - and others like you - learn best when doing something with your hands. These people absorb information and translate it into ideas by touching things. Instead of just looking at the piece of art, these people need to touch it to fully appreciate it.

How to Identify a Kinesthetic Learner

- will talk about what is touched
- moves fingers all over an object to inspect what is in the hand
- talks about how objects feel
- plays with his/her pencil/pen
- the athlete plays sports with real objects e.g. ball, racket, etc. instead of engaging in non-tactile sports e.g. running
- unorganized
- oblivious to time
- Moves hands gracefully and will probably touch many things including people

How to Accommodate to the Needs of a Kinesthetic Learner

You can maximize your chances of doing business when in the company of kinesthetic learners by doing any of the following:

- provide paper and pens at the beginning of a business meeting
- at conferences give them things to draw, fill-in the blank forms, pen-paper exercises
- have creative company promotional materials with interesting moving parts and that are fun to touch
- let customers feel products and/or eat samples in your store
- put your book or product directly into their hands
- put a business card, brochure, pamphlet, flyer, etc. into his/her hands during a sales pitch
- use few words, be concise, say exactly what you need to say,
- use 3D pictures and diagrams
- consciously prepare creative, hands-on experiences i.e. interesting utensils for eating, touching opportunities in your factory, textured paper in your advertising, use of stickers,
- allow customers hands-on use of some product(s) for a trial period
- regroup and include movement from table to table during business presentations
- engage them in active hands-on games and sports

General Tips for Large Group Presentations (mixture of learning styles)

Large groups will obviously have a mixture of learners. Plan accordingly. Include some or all of the following:

- use graphs, charts, photos, pictures and/or PowerPoint presentations as a main guide.
- Be concise in your words. Say it and move on. At times, however, go into greater detail.
- include discussions on themes or topics, question and answer period, sharing sessions
- give out papers to add to a folder rather than just having them in the folder at the start, use creative manipulative items during the presentation, incorporate movement to discuss or demonstrate, writing on chart paper, put ideas on Post-It notes that can be moved around the room
- use a pointer to guide the learning