

DiSC: A Tool to Improve Communication in the Workplace

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Background

The delivery of high-quality eye care in an ophthalmology department depends on effective communication, teamwork, and interpersonal dynamics among healthcare professionals.

Miscommunication or interpersonal conflict can impact workflow efficiency, patient satisfaction, and clinical outcomes. The DiSC personality assessment is a widely used behavioral profiling tool that categorizes individuals into four primary personality styles: Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C). By understanding their own behavioral tendencies and those of their colleagues, team members can communicate more effectively, resolve conflicts constructively, collaborate more harmoniously, and include AI models to help with more efficient communication.

Hypothesis

Incorporating DiSC assessments into the ophthalmology department's professional development initiatives can enhance:

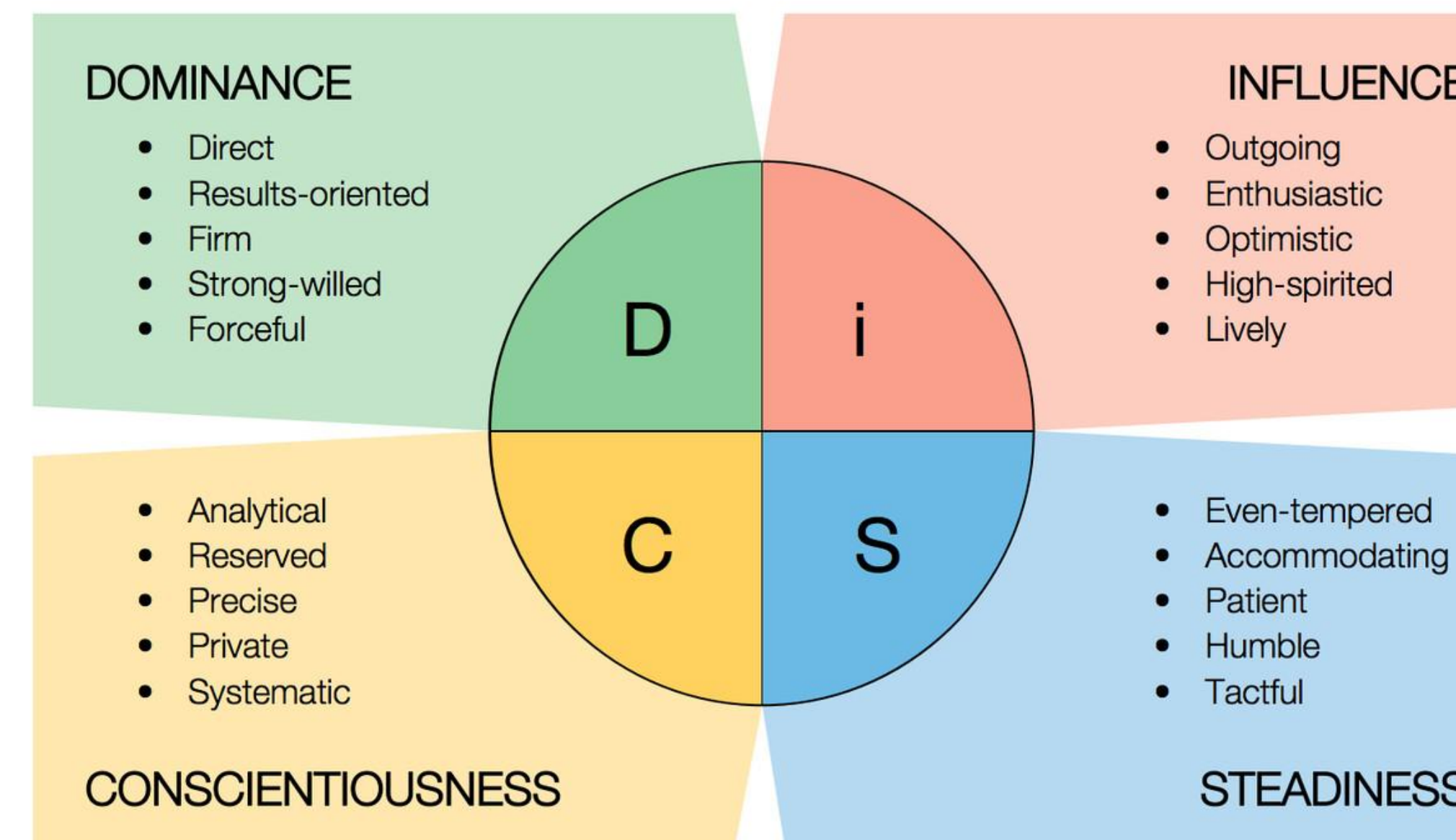
Team Communication: Tailoring communication strategies to different personality styles reduces misunderstandings and improves information exchange across roles and shifts.

Patient Interaction: Staff who understand their own behavioral styles are better equipped to adapt their approach to diverse patient needs, fostering more empathetic and personalized care.

Leadership and Staff Morale: Managers and supervisors can apply DiSC insights to lead more effectively, delegate tasks appropriately, and support staff in ways that align with their natural preferences.

Conflict Mitigation: Recognizing individual differences in communication and decision-making helps reduce friction and promotes a culture of mutual respect and collaboration.

Methods/Model



DiSC training was provided to 25 employees from one satellite office, including faculty, technicians, opticians, and administrative staff.

Participants first completed a behavioral tendencies survey to determine their communication styles.

They then attended a DiSC training session led by a certified DiSC facilitator.

After the session, participants completed a baseline survey to assess how the training affected their views on communication and conflict resolution. Three months later, they completed the same survey again to see how their perspectives had evolved after applying their communication skills in real situations.

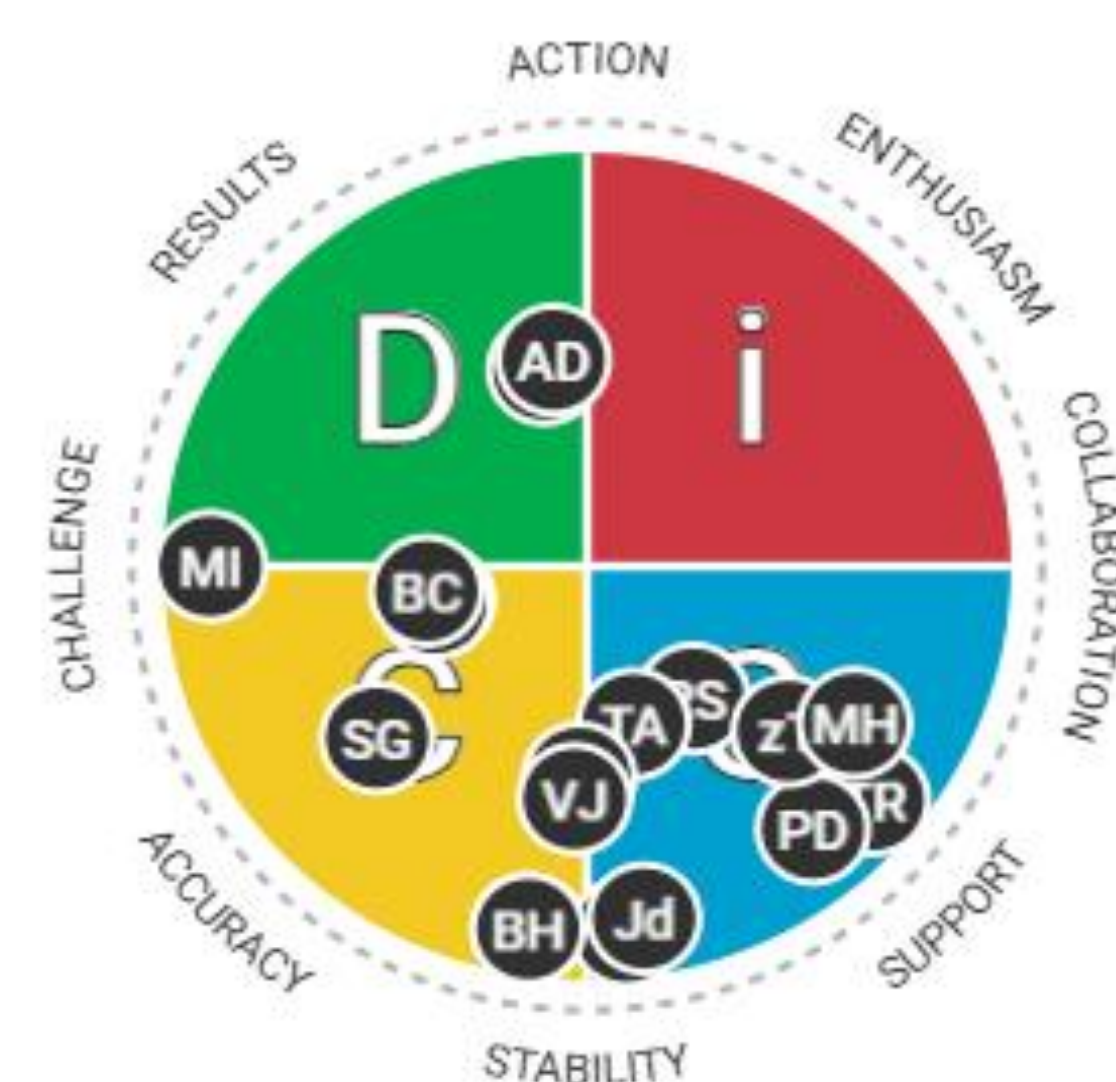
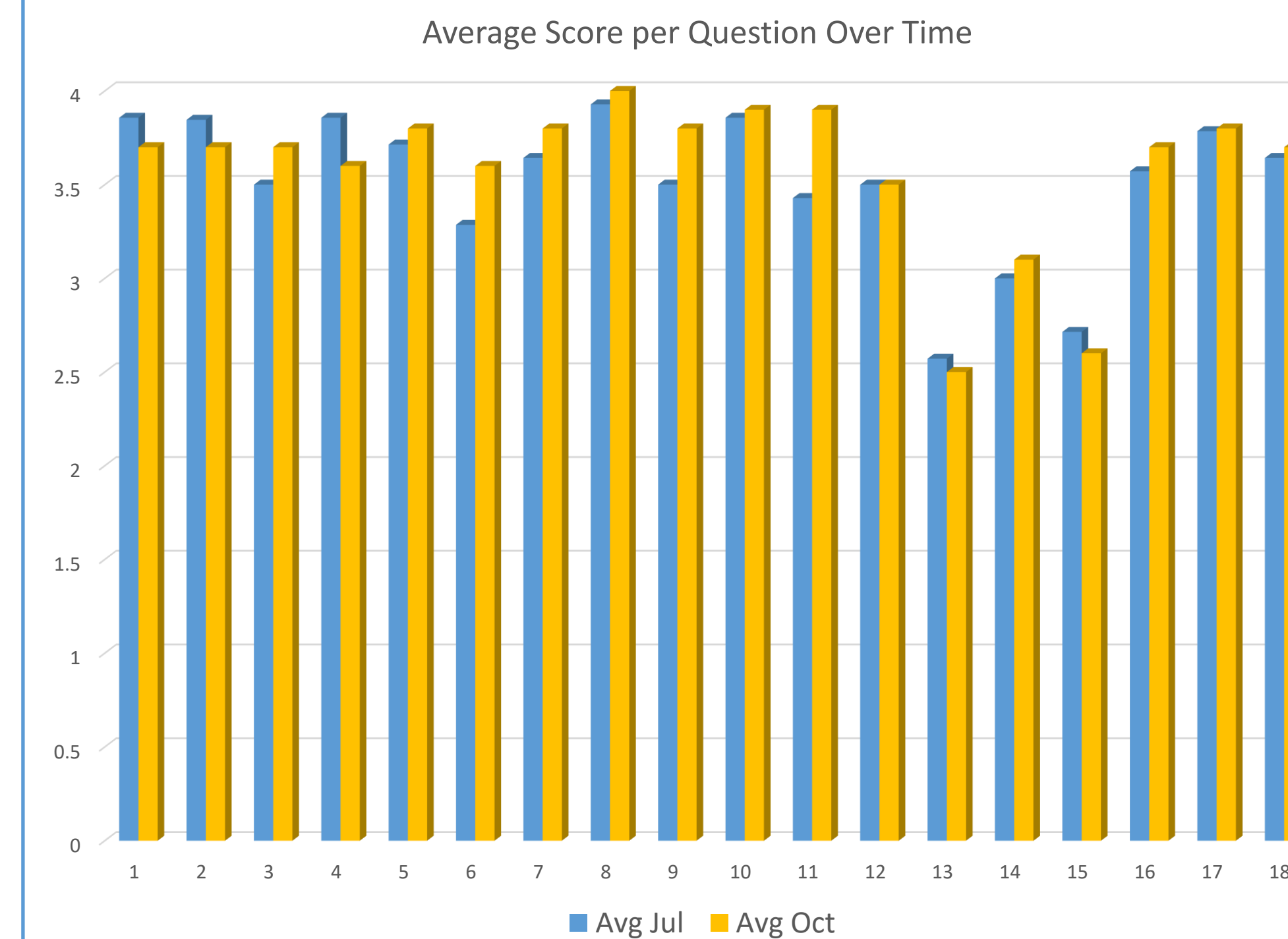


Diagram: DiSC style distribution among training participants in the satellite office.

Results



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|-----|---|
| Q1 | I feel comfortable expressing my ideas and opinions in team discussions. |
| Q2 | There is mutual respect among team members regardless of role. |
| Q3 | Team members collaborate effectively to solve problems. |
| Q4 | I feel psychologically safe when communicating with colleagues. |
| Q5 | Our team is supportive during high-pressure situations. |
| Q6 | Conflicts within the team are handled constructively. |
| Q7 | I feel that my communication style is understood by others. |
| Q8 | I understand how to adjust my communication approach with different colleagues. |
| Q9 | Team communication is clear, timely, and effective. |
| Q10 | I am confident in my ability to resolve misunderstandings when they arise. |
| Q11 | I feel listened to and acknowledged by my peers and supervisors. |
| Q12 | Communication breakdowns are rare in our day-to-day operations. |
| Q13 | I frequently feel stressed due to interpersonal issues at work. |
| Q14 | I feel emotionally drained at the end of the workday. |
| Q16 | Miscommunication contributes significantly to my work-related stress. |
| Q15 | I have tools and strategies to manage interpersonal challenges. |
| Q17 | I feel supported by my team during difficult situations. |
| Q18 | Overall, my level of work-related stress is manageable. |

Table 1: Questions asked for data collection

Acknowledgements/References

Everything DiSC Workplace Profile. John Wiley & Sons, Inc
Mini Z Supportive work environment subscale, Autumn Gallegos PhD

Conclusions and Discussion

Although the results were not statistically significant, improvements were observed in team members' collaboration, communication, and conflict management. By understanding both their own and others' communication styles, participants were able to build stronger working relationships and enhance daily collaboration.

Beyond the survey, participants reported using AI tools to tailor emails according to specific DiSC styles.

Integrating DiSC assessments into staff development initiatives can strengthen team culture and, ultimately, improve patient care.

Future Directions/Scalability

Departmental Expansion: Comprehensive Implementation Across Ophthalmology Extend DiSC training beyond the initial pilot group to encompass all members of the ophthalmology department, including physicians, residents, nurses, technicians, and administrative staff. This department-wide rollout will create a unified communication framework and establish consistent behavioral expectations across all roles and levels.

Systematic Onboarding Integration: Quarterly New Hire Training Program Implement structured quarterly DiSC sessions as a standard component of the onboarding process for all new department hires. This ensures continuous reinforcement of communication principles and maintains cultural consistency as the team grows. Each session will be tailored to integrate new team members while refreshing existing staff knowledge.

Enhanced Communication Visibility: Email Signature Integration Initiative Introduce DiSC style indicators in email signatures to promote awareness and improve written communication effectiveness. This simple yet powerful tool will help staff quickly identify communication preferences, leading to more targeted and productive email exchanges while reinforcing DiSC principles in daily interactions.

Accessibility and Resource Optimization: Universal Access to DiSC Profiles Establish a comprehensive system where DiSC styles are readily accessible to all faculty and staff for interpersonal communication reference. This may include digital dashboards, quick-reference guides, or integrated systems that allow team members to easily identify colleagues' communication preferences, fostering more effective collaboration and reducing communication barriers across the department.