Interpretation of Results

At its core, the DiSC® model is designed to be simple to understand and easy to remember. The respondent needs to be able to leave a DiSC experience with clear, simple principles that can be understood and applied in the real world. For this reason, the DiSC map is divided into four basic quadrants, even though there is a diversity of behavior represented in any single quadrant. For instance, the upper portion of the D quadrant captures bold, enterprising behavior, and the lower portion of the D quadrant captures direct, challenging behavior. The use of quadrants is an organizing principle that is designed to make abstract psychological constructs more memorable and applicable for a general audience.

Likewise, the *Everything DiSC®* assessment describes respondents as having a particular style, rather than placing a participant on a continuum, which is more customary in psychological measurement. The use of styles to present information (rather than continua) is an attempt at simplification that does (like all simplifications) result in the loss of some information. In a similar manner, the representation of an individual on a unidimensional continuum (which is common in academic and clinical assessment) is a simplification that inherently suggests that the individual's pattern of behavior, emotions, and thoughts exists at one and only one place on the continuum. A more accurate alternative might be to represent the individual's tendencies as a range rather than as an average. Nonetheless, the single point on a continuum is the most common method of representing an individual's standing on a trait because this simplification makes assessment results more interpretable and applicable, even for audiences that might have a strong background in measurement theory. Within the *Everything DiSC* model, the use of styles creates results that are more memorable for respondents and a simple language that helps people have meaningful conversations about interpersonal differences. As discussed in Chapter 4, however, the validity of these style assignments is crucial to the successful implementation of any tool such as this. Also, note that facilitators are encouraged to treat the two-dimensional DiSC circle as a continuous space (much like a one-dimensional continuum) where one style gradually transitions into neighboring styles.

Interpretations that describe the styles as fixed or rigid should be avoided. The shading on each respondent's *Everything DiSC* map is designed to reinforce the continuous nature of the model and of human nature.

Interpretation of Style

Dot placement conveys two pieces of information: (1) DiSC style and (2) style inclination. To start, the angle of the dot within the circle determines the assignment of style. As can be seen in Figure 8.1, the *Everything DiSC* map can be broken into 12 equally spaced segments, each corresponding to a set of angles. The iD style, for example, is represented by 0 to 30 degrees on the DiSC map. A person whose dot is located at the 45-degree angle would be assigned an i style. A person whose dot is located at the 338-degree angle would be assigned a Di style.

Each person who takes the *Everything DiSC* assessment is plotted on the *Everything DiSC* map with a dot. The example in Figure 8.2 shows a person (represented by the dot) who tends toward the D region, but also somewhat toward the i region. This represents a Di style. This person, therefore, is probably particularly active, bold, outspoken, and persuasive, as these qualities generally describe people who share both the D and i styles.
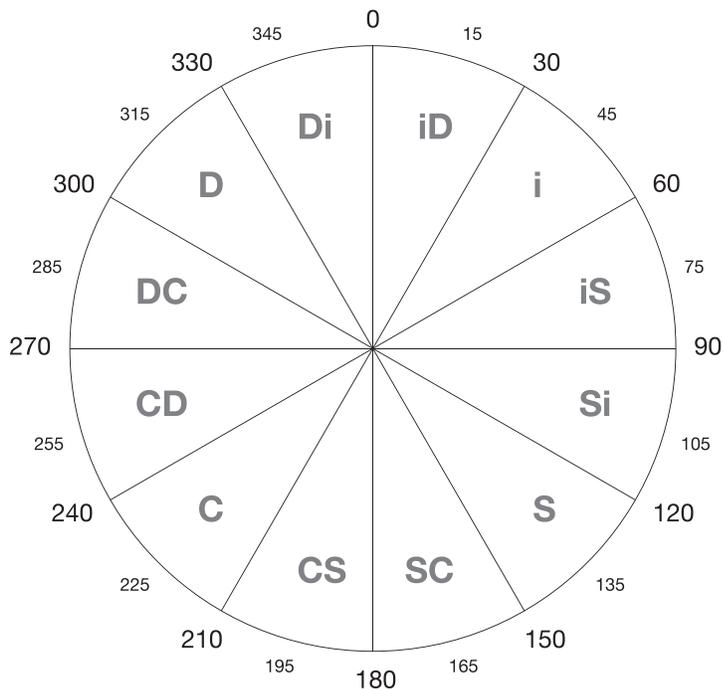

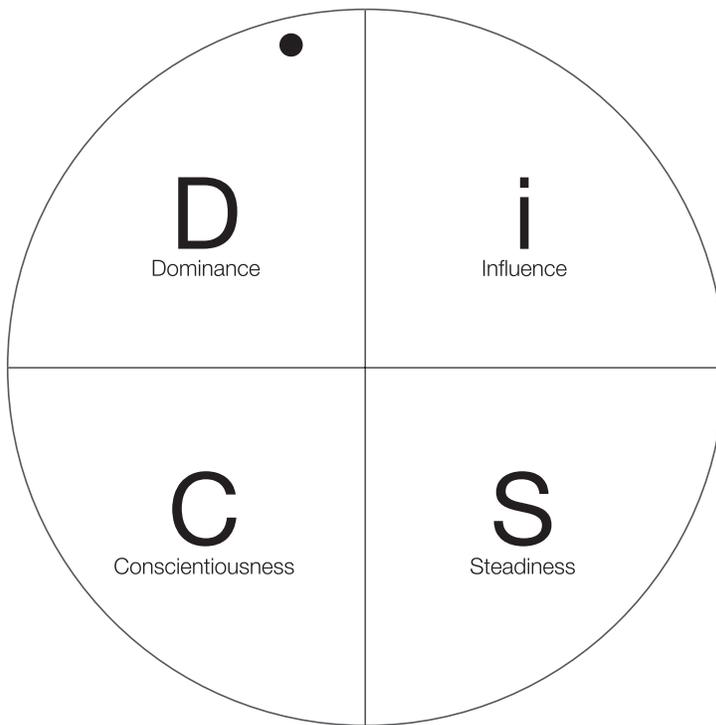**Figure 8.1** The Everything DiSC Map by Angle

Figure 8.2 Everything DiSC Map with Plotted Dot

Interpretation of Inclination

The distance of the dot from the center of the circle is also meaningful. People whose dots fall toward the edge of the circle are said to be much more "inclined" toward their DiSC styles. On average, the characteristics (e.g., active, bold, outspoken, persuasive) associated with their style (e.g., Di) will be much more pronounced for them than they are for someone whose dot is closer to the center of the circle. By way of comparison, imagine a continuum that ranges from extrovert (on the left) to introvert (on the right). We can have two introverted people that are located on the right side of the continuum, but one (who is more introverted) will be placed further to the right than the other person (who is less introverted). One person will be expected to show more pronounced introverted traits than the other. In the context of DiSC, then, using our Di example, the person whose dot is close to the edge of the circle has a more pronounced Di style than someone whose dot is close to the center of the circle. The person whose dot is close to the center of the circle will be more likely to demonstrate characteristics (e.g., being cautious, deferring) of the style that is on the opposite side of the circle from his or her dot (SC in this example), although these opposite-side characteristics are not expected to be pronounced in either individual.

Interpretation of Shading

Each *Everything DiSC* map includes shading that surrounds the respondent's dot. This shading provides a rough approximation of the individual's comfort zone—behaviors and attitudes that will come naturally to the person and require little conscious effort. Figure 8.3 shows a person with a CD style. As with all maps, the shading includes the three priorities closest to his dot: accuracy, challenge, and results. These three priorities quickly explain some core behaviors associated with the CD style (e.g., speaking up about problems even when they are sensitive, insisting on efficiency even when it will upset the status quo).

The shading also communicates which regions of the map might require extra effort for the person. For instance, this person's shading does not come very close to the support priority, suggesting that listening empathetically may not be a natural strength for him or might make him uncomfortable. Likewise, the shading does not come very close to the enthusiasm priority, suggesting that outward displays of joy or excitement are probably infrequent. Not all people with the CD style, of course, are the same. For that reason, the *Everything DiSC* assessment measures every priority and will include extra shading for an individual if his or her score on the priority is over a pre-set threshold. This threshold was designed such that approximately one-third
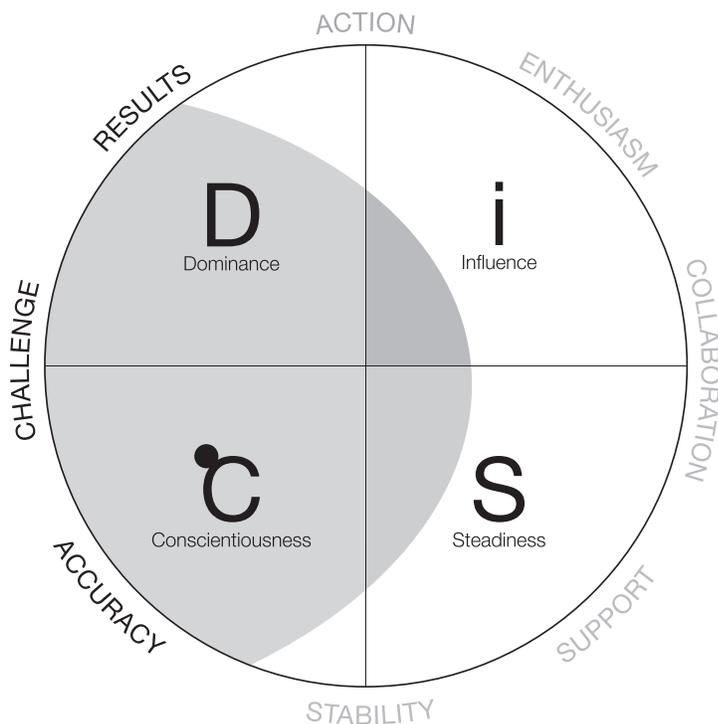

Figure 8.3 Example of Shading on an Everything DiSC Map

of respondents would receive an extra priority in their report. An example of extra shading is included in Figure 8.4 in the following section. As well, shading does reflect the respondent's inclination. Respondents with dots closer to the center will find that their shading is larger and more oblong than the shading illustrated in Figure 8.3. In such a case, the individual's dot is closer to priorities on the opposite side of the map, and, consequently, the individual would likely be more comfortable adopting those behaviors when they are needed. As mentioned earlier, however, the *Everything DiSC* shading is only designed to be a rough approximation of an individual's comfort level with different regions of the map.

Case Studies

The hypothetical case studies presented in this section are designed to (1) illustrate the relationship between profile results and real-life behavior and (2) model the appropriate interpretation of profile results. Note that these cases include specific characteristics that should not necessarily be generalized to every person sharing a particular style. In one of the cases, for instance, Andrea, who has a D style, is defensive and arrogant about receiving feedback. This should not be taken to mean that every person with a D style is defensive and arrogant in response to receiving feedback. This is simply one possible manifestation of that DiSC style.

The case studies presented here include the individual's *Everything DiSC* map, but also an umbrella graph. The umbrella graph shows the person's scores on the eight DiSC scales and can give a practitioner additional insight into the respondent's DiSC style. On this graph, scale scores are plotted such that higher scale scores are closer to the edge of the circle. Scale scores that are average are plotted at the halfway mark on each radius. These umbrella graphs are not included in the respondent's *Everything DiSC Profile*, but are available in the *Everything DiSC Supplement for Facilitators*.

Andrea: D Style

Andrea is a 31-year-old medical device salesperson. Over the past eight quarters, she has consistently been among the top five salespeople in her division. She is seemingly fearless when it comes to initiating contact with potential clients and pushing for their business, even in the face of repeated rejection. She particularly enjoys the part of her job that involves charming and persuading others. Some clients, however, have reported that her approach feels manipulative and insincere, and have asked to switch to other representatives from her company. The leadership at her organization has shown concern that her aggressive tactics may be hurting the company's brand in its tight-knit industry. Her response to this feedback has been perceived as defensive and, to some degree, cocky.

Ultimately, however, her history of results has allowed her to get away with some behaviors that might not be tolerated in others.

The assessment suggests that Andrea has a D style with an extra priority in Enthusiasm and a strong inclination toward her style (see Figure 8.4). Further, the umbrella graph indicates that her pattern of scores on the DiSC scales is as expected for someone with her dot placement and shading (see Figure 8.5). That is, she scored high on the D, CD, Di, and i scales and low on the S, CS, and C scales. This profile is associated with people who are bold, forceful, and enterprising. Her level of drive is typical for people with this style and, given her current level of immaturity, much of her self-worth may be wrapped up in her ability to achieve results. At her current stage of development, she has an exaggerated sense of her own rights, particularly relative to the rights of others. Likewise, she often only shows interest in the emotional experience of other people to the degree that it will help her achieve her goals.

The aspects of her behavior and personality that are entrepreneurial and charismatic are reflected in the extra priority of Enthusiasm. The D style is typically associated with more forceful persuasion tactics, whereas Andrea's atypical results suggest that she is also accustomed to smooth talking and charming others. Her approach is still heavy-handed, though, and consequently she can come across as manipulative in her relationships.

It is important to note that Andrea represents an immature example of the D style. Her arrogance and insensitivity is characteristic of people with the D style who also have a low level of ego integration and self-realization. The *Everything DiSC* assessment, however, does not measure psychological maturity or emotional intelligence. This is to say, by simply looking at her dot placement and shading, we would not know how healthy or adaptive Andrea's unique manifestation of the D style is. We would, however, expect
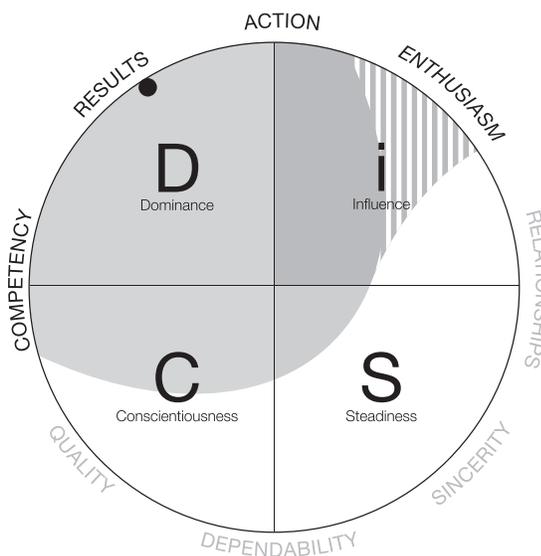

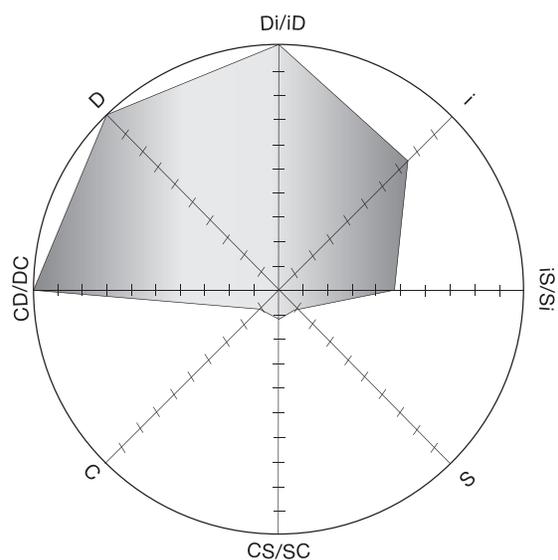**Figure 8.4** Andrea's DiSC Map

Figure 8.5 Andrea's Umbrella Graph

to see a predictable pattern of priorities, tendencies, and preferences (e.g., forcefulness, directness).

Rafael: CS Style

Rafael is a 54-year-old claims adjuster. He has worked at the same company for the past 9 years and in the same position for the last 6 years. He consistently receives positive reviews on his performance evaluations, and he is regarded as professional and competent by both clients and colleagues. His coworkers see him as the "go-to guy" for answers when they get stuck, and his manager enjoys the fact that she has to spend very little time supervising him. Despite his clear expertise and follow-through, however, Rafael has been passed up for promotion three times; twice these promotions went to colleagues with less seniority and skill than him. In addition, some coworkers feel that he can be unrealistically rigid about procedures. Although he doesn't force these views on others, they can slow down his team's progress.

The assessment indicates that Rafael has a CS style, with a strong inclination (see Figure 8.6). Further, his umbrella graph indicates that his pattern of DiSC scale scores is consistent with a strong CS style (see Figure 8.7). That is, he received very high scores on the C, CS, and S scales, moderate scores on the iS and CD scales, and very low scores on the D, Di, and i scales. This profile is associated with someone who is modest, self-controlled, and systematic. Like others with this style, Rafael places a particularly strong priority on stability and accuracy. He takes steps to create a predictable environment for himself and may be overly wedded to systems and routines that provide comfort for him. He has a
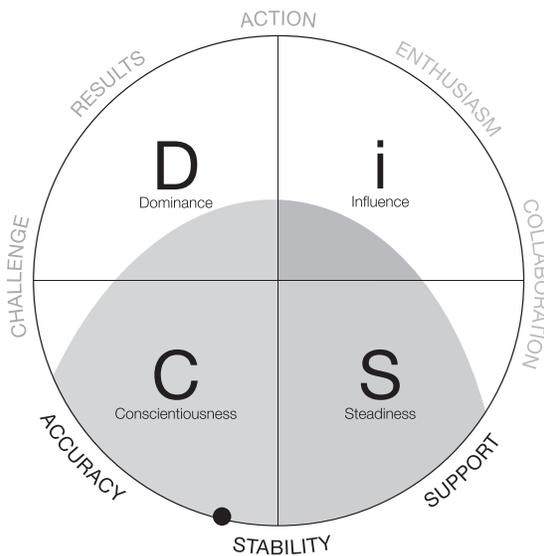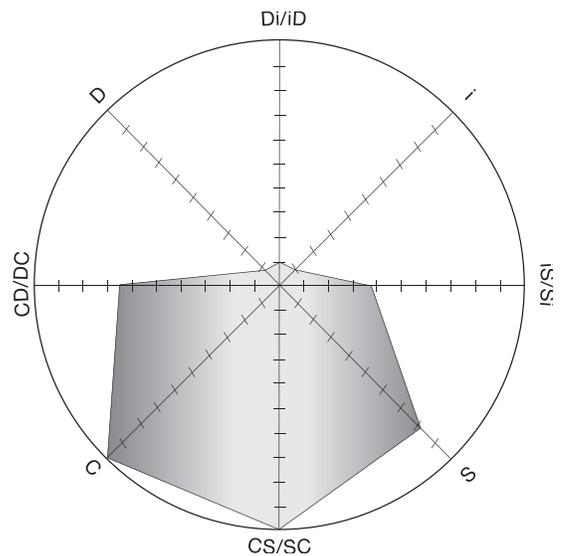

Figure 8.6 Rafael's DiSC Map

Figure 8.7 Rafael's Umbrella Graph

strong task orientation but is not challenging or argumentative with his colleagues when he disagrees with them. This is largely reflected by his middling placement on the horizontal dimension of the *Everything DiSC* map (skeptical to accepting), but also by his lower placement on the vertical pace dimension (moderate-paced to fast-paced).

Also consistent with his lower placement on the pace dimension is a relatively passive disposition. He is not highly assertive and does not feel comfortable self-promoting. Likewise, he comes across as soft-spoken and avoids the limelight. As a result, his contributions can be overlooked, and he may not come to mind when the organization's leadership is trying to identify its high-potential employees.

Amira: i Style

Amira is a 28-year-old nurse practitioner. She's just started her first job out of school at a large metropolitan hospital and has already made strong connections with most of the people inside her department. Her coworkers find her to be cheerful, warm, and thorough. Her favorite parts of the job are meeting new people, providing support for them, and giving them the medical information that can help relieve their anxiety. Her least favorite part of the job is dealing with a small subset of her coworkers who are cynical, condescending, and sometimes sloppy in their work with patients. Their behavior is deeply unsettling for her, but she does her best to gloss over her objections and remain positive.

Amira's results suggest that she has an i style, with an additional priority on accuracy (see Figure 8.8). In most instances, extra priorities are adjacent to the solid shading within the *Everything DiSC* map. As such, Amira's profile is uncommon, and the conflicting priorities are conceptually more difficult to reconcile compared to a more traditional profile. One theme common among people with this pattern of results is a desire to present a polished appearance. This manifests itself on both a task and interpersonal level. With regard to her work, Amira is attentive to deadlines and ensures that her output is beyond reproach. With regard to relationships, she wants to come across as poised and affable.

Amira has a moderate inclination toward her style. Although she has a clear preference for the i style, the more pronounced characteristics often associated with the i style (e.g., striking up conversations with strangers, being the life of the party) are less likely to be true for her. For instance, although Amira is sociable and has quickly formed relationships with many in her department, she has not necessarily branched out of her department to befriend people with whom she has less frequent contact. The umbrella graph indicates a moderately high score on the C scale (see Figure 8.9), but because she received an extra priority in Accuracy, it is reasonable to assume that she scored high on the Accuracy priority scale in the *Workplace* assessment. The umbrella graph also shows relatively low scores on the D and CD DiSC scales, which may explain why she prefers to
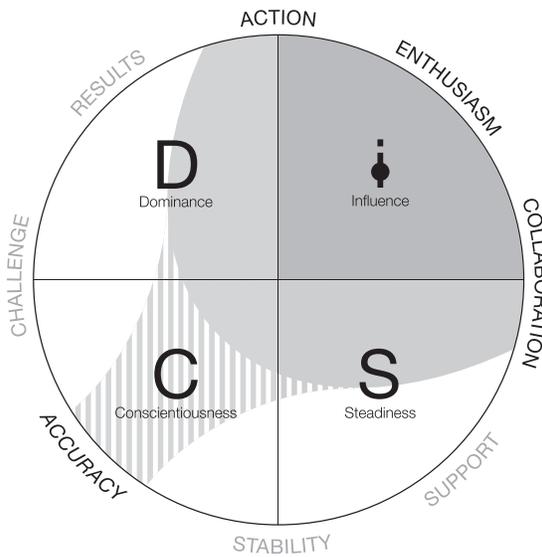
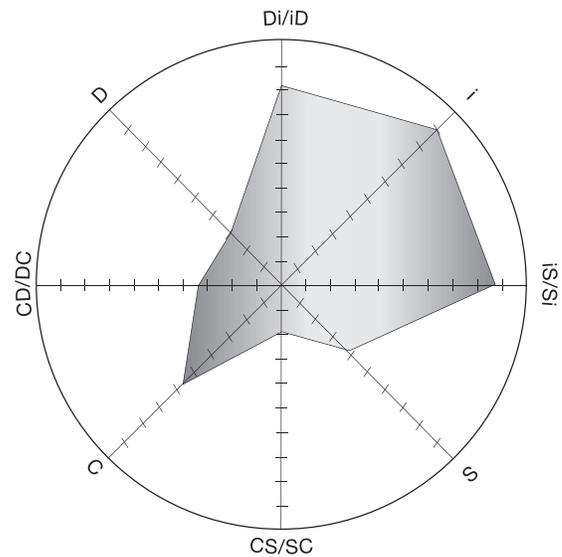**Figure 8.8** Amira's DiSC Map

Figure 8.9 Amira's Umbrella Graph

avoid a potentially contentious confrontation with her coworkers, despite being deeply troubled by their behaviors.

James: S Style

James is a 41-year-old manager in a customer service department. For the past 3 years, he has overseen a team of eight employees, before which he was a customer service representative for 12 years. He is highly regarded among his direct reports for his support and flexibility. Further, they respect his wealth of knowledge about the organization's products and processes. Several of his direct reports, however, have expressed frustration at his unwillingness to confront team members that are not pulling their weight. Two employees in particular have stopped answering calls when they are busy and this increases the workload on everyone else. The brunt of the extra work, however, has been picked up by James himself. The director of the department is pleased with the consistency of James' team but notes that he has done little to innovate or advance the group's productivity, even when given a company mandate to do so.

The assessment indicates that James has a fairly typical S style, with a strong inclination (see Figure 8.10). The umbrella graph shows moderate scores on the C and CD scales and low scores on the D, Di, and i scales (see Figure 8.11). James' discomfort with interpersonal tension is reflected in his low CD and D scores, and his discomfort with assertiveness is reflected in his low D and Di scores.

James' willingness to put his own needs aside for the sake of others or for the sake of preserving harmony is typical of the S style. He prefers a calm, peaceful environment
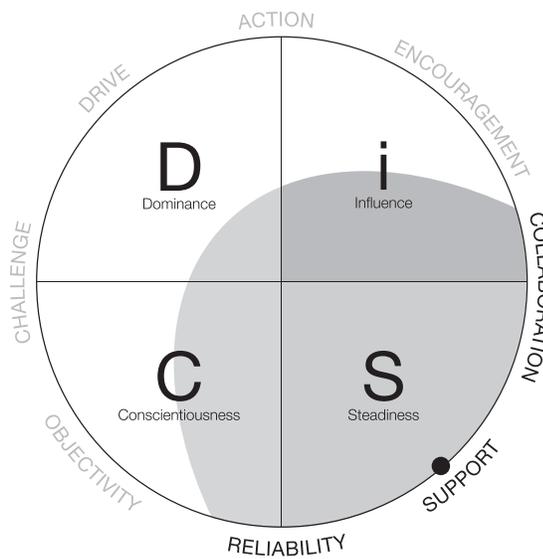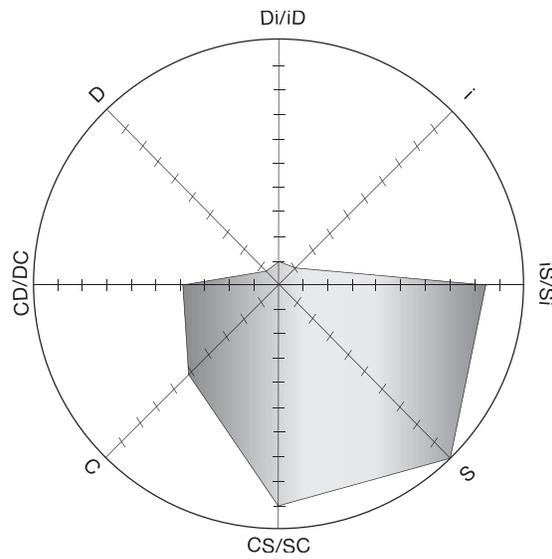
Figure 8.10 James' DiSC Map

Figure 8.11 James' Umbrella Graph

where everyone gets along. Consistent with this preference, he has little drive to initiate large-scale change in his department or take chances on untested processes. Likewise, he is very reluctant to push his direct reports to work harder or move outside their comfort zones. As a result, the culture on his team is pleasant and low key, but not particularly results-oriented.