



Considerations when  
feeding back on Wave  
where an individual  
disagrees with part of their  
profile



At Saville Assessment, we are passionate about supporting our Wave user community and committed to ensuring you get the most out of your assessments.

We run a regular program, bringing together Wave users to share hints and tips around interpreting and feeding back different profiles and to discuss any other points of interest we might come across when using the tool, creating a great sense of community in which to learn from each other. Sessions focus on specific topics and we have turned the key learnings from each topic into a library of Wave Hints & Tips.

The current guide summarizes hints and tips for: Dealing with disagreement on a profile.

If you are an accredited Wave user and would like to be a part of this community or book on to an upcoming session, please contact:

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If you are not already Wave trained and would like to be, please contact

**[info@savilleassessment.com](mailto:info@savilleassessment.com)** for information about accreditation courses.

# 1

**Ensure communication prior to the assessment is clear and sets the right expectations both of and for the individual to avoid any issues related to not completing properly.**

- Highlight that they will need to set aside 45 minutes to an hour and that they should be somewhere quiet, where they can concentrate without distraction.
- Ensure they understand that they need to commit to investing time and effort into their completion to get the best out of the process.

# 2

**In the introduction, before you look at the report, ask “What do you see as your strengths?” and then also “What do you see as your challenge areas?”**

- This can be useful as usually, when you then get to a lower scoring area, they've already mentioned it. You can link back to their comments in the introduction and the individual is less likely to be defensive about it.

# 3

**Explore their experience of completing the questionnaire.**

- If they were distracted or were having a bad week, this may have impacted how they responded, and you might find there is more that feels odd for that individual.
- In circumstances where they completed several months ago, significant changes may have shifted self-perception and parts of the profile may resonate less.
- Keep the reliability of the tool in mind though. Whilst it can sometimes be useful to offer another completion, in reality you often just get the same profile, and this then makes for an even more challenging second feedback conversation.
- If they found the experience frustrating and long, you may need to work a little harder to build rapport and trust before tackling trickier areas of the profile.

# 4

**Start the session with the higher scoring areas, as people are less likely to disagree with these scores. Once you have built trust, it might be easier to tackle lower scoring areas that individuals might disagree with.**

# 5

**Remind them that it is a self-report assessment and that the data comes from their own input. Explain that it is interesting that they don't agree with what they are seeing. Say something like “Let's discuss why this might have happened and work through it together”.**

- Ask them what they think might have made them respond in this way.
- Explore the context/situation when completing to see if this has had an impact. Were they distracted? Was there something else going on?
- Ask them how they might have interpreted a particular question. Remember that the facet verbalizers are very close to the questions in the assessment and that you can use these to provide an example of what the questions were if someone can't remember responding to a particular concept e.g. I enjoy giving presentations and I am good at giving presentations.

# 6

**Remind them that there is no clear right and wrong with personality questionnaires and that there will be pros and cons to being anywhere on the profile, dependent on the context. Ask them to think of advantages to sitting at the bottom end of the scale and disadvantages to sitting at the top end of the scale to help them see this.**

# 7

**Highlight that the styles profile is a representation of their preferred workplace style, rather than an assessment of their effectiveness in a certain area (although it is predictive of this!)**

- Acknowledge that it is possible to learn to behave in different ways (which is why 360s can sometimes tell a different story) but that having to constantly 'lean in' to learned behaviors rather than leverage natural style can have consequences on energy levels, overall job satisfaction and those around us.
- Helping them to see the difference here may help them to accept a lower score as a natural preference rather than a marker of their capability and provide you with more scope to explore the impact of this.

# 8

**Think about how to challenge in a way that is thought provoking but not aggressive.**

- Build rapport and trust before tackling more difficult conversations.
- Challenge with a smile.
- Start with "If I was to play devil's advocate here..."
- "We tend to find that people who are high on X tend to be lower on Y; it is actually very difficult to be both." (Look at the Wave correlation matrix to check on relationships between behaviors).
- "It is really interesting that you say that as it is your responses that are driving what we see here and typically the profile tends to resonate. Let's explore this together..."

# 9

**You can use information gathered in the session to push back on challenge to lower scores, which is why asking for examples is so key. For example:**

- When talking about Supportive, in an example they might say they were overly trusting and as a result a deadline was missed. Later, if they question being so low on Reliable, you can reflect back on the example from Supportive.

# 10

**You can even use behavior within the session to push back on disagreement. For example:**

- If someone is disagreeing with a high score on Challenging but has been highly challenging in the session, you can feed back how you are experiencing more challenge from them compared to in other feedback sessions.
- The same could be done for Receptive, as well as some of the other scales within Sociable and Impactful.
- This should be done with caution though. You need to be clear that you have the evidence to back up your feedback and you need to have established rapport, trust and credibility.

# 11

**Sometimes asking whether you think other people would agree with what is in the profile can be interesting – we've had many instances of people coming back to us saying "Actually I showed this to my partner and they said it was spot on!"**

**Look out and prepare well for potentially challenging sessions by checking some key scales that can give you a sense of how the feedback session might go. For example:**

# 12

- Analytical: those higher in this area are likely to want to know exactly how their score has been derived and may have lots of questions; they may also naturally be a bit more skeptical.
- Factual and Rational can also feed into Analytical.
- Interactive and Engaging: these scales can give you a sense of how easily you might build rapport with an individual.
- Challenging: those higher on this scale are likely to be more vocal about parts of the profile with which they disagree.
- Self-assured: sometimes very high scores on this scale can be challenging if the individual struggles to see any development needs.
- Receptive: those lower on this scale may be more dismissive of parts of the profile with which they disagree.

## **Some specific examples and how to deal with them:**

### **An individual disagrees with most of the lower scores on their profile.**

- Remind the individual that you can't be high across the profile as the questionnaire forces you to choose between behaviors and that in reality, we all have strengths and challenge areas.
- Ask what they would pull down if they were to push something up (most of the time they then want to leave the profile as it is).

### **An individual disagrees with a low score because "Nobody likes doing that".**

- This can happen on several different scales, most commonly: getting involved in arguments, Resolving Conflict (dealing with upset and angry people), Self-promoting, Change Oriented ("No-one likes dealing with uncertainty!")
- Usually it's simply a case of reminding them of how the benchmarking works.
- It can then be useful to probe around what this gap between their own view of 'normal' is and where the benchmark sits. What does that mean for them and how it might impact them in their role and others in their team?

### **An individual disagrees with high scores on the Self-promoting dimension.**

- Explain that this scale has a lower mean and so it's easier to get a higher score here.
- Remind them of the link to performance and highlight that people who are high on this scale tend to be rated as more effective in terms of performance.
- Ask how it has helped them in the past and how they might use it to help others who are maybe less effective in this area.
- Once you have got them onside, probe for overplayed strengths if they are very high.

### **An individual disagrees with low scores on the Principled dimension.**

- Explain that the scale is highly socially desirable and that it has a very high mean. It is, therefore, very easy to get a low score; highlight that you don't have to disagree in the ratings exercise to get a low score.
- Recognize that this can be a highly sensitive area and if you are faced with a very strong reaction, don't spend too long there and don't be overly challenging; it is probably not worth the risk of losing them on the whole profile over a disagreement on that one scale.
- Remember that the scale still has validity – those who score higher here tend to be seen by others as people who are more likely to uphold standards and those who score lower tend to be seen by others as less likely to do so.
- Picking out Maintaining Confidentiality can be a useful facet to explore as sometimes you do have to break this for the greater good of something else; a question such as “When have you had to break confidentiality?” can be useful if you are trying to explore where their ‘line’ might be
- Ultimately, go back to the questionnaire and try to understand why they have responded in the way they have. Some people describe it just being such a given that they don't prioritize it.

### **An individual disagrees with low scores on the Receptive dimension.**

- Ask about the feedback culture within their team or organization; remember they may have a micro culture within their team that is different from the wider organization.
- Asking for examples of where they have dismissed feedback can be interesting, exploring the reasons why.
- And then asking for some examples of where they have taken feedback on board, really probing around what they did differently (they may find it more difficult to produce these examples).
- Ask them how much they give feedback to other people.
- Look at other areas of the profile to explore what might be driving a lower score here – e.g. Self-Assured.

### **An individual disagrees with low scores on the Learning Oriented dimension.**

- Curiosity and learning agility are hot topics now and so whatever someone's role, most will feel they should be doing this and can react badly when they get a lower score.
- Explore how they have interpreted the questions here. How much emphasis have they put on formal learning vs the broader concepts of curiosity and on-the-job learning.
- Explore whether they are time poor and formal learning has fallen to the bottom of the priority list.

### **An individual disagrees with low scores on the Practically Minded dimension.**

- Some people see the items that link to the facet around practical work and think of DIY or manual labor, which can then bring them down on this dimension overall if that isn't their profession.
- Ask what practical work means to them – take them back to the questions (which you can have a good guess at because you have the report) and ask how they would interpret those now.

### **An individual disagrees with low scores on the Teamworking dimension.**

- Understand how much of this they must do in their role, and how much they actually do.
- Probe around motivation first, which is sometimes easier to accept – “What do you find most frustrating about having to work with others?” and “What do you enjoy about it?”
- Ask how they would feel if they had to do these things every day.
- Ask them what they have done to develop in this area over the years.