

# LAER-S Style Assessment

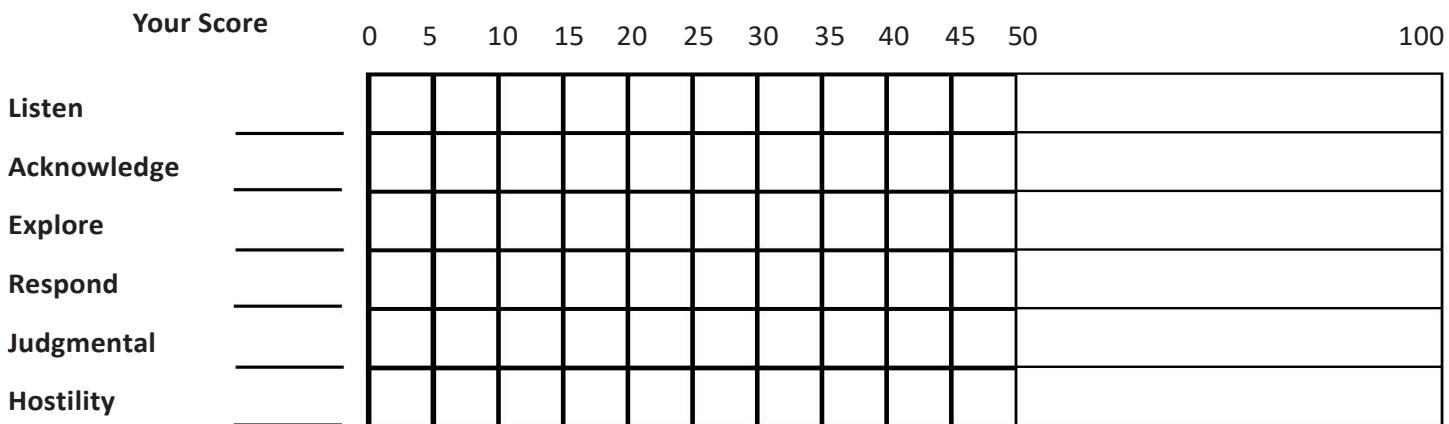
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Transfer your scores from the **LAER-S instrument** into the appropriate spaces below and mark an (X) where your score falls on the graph.



**Purpose:** The **LAER-S Style Assessment** is designed to provide you with feedback on the effectiveness of your style in handling customer objections during a sales call. Presented here are six ways of handling customer complaints: **listening, acknowledging, exploring, responding, judgmental, and hostility**.

**Listening** involves non-judgmental attention to the customer's message. It requires concentration and an honest attempt to understand the customer's concern. Listening is another-centered behavior that shows interest, sensitivity, and care. It is a bonding behavior.

**Acknowledging** involves reflecting what is heard in supportive, summarizing, and validating ways. It requires letting the customer know that the sales professional has received the customer's message. Acknowledging is another-centered behavior that demonstrates understanding and concern. It is a bonding behavior.

**Exploring** is empathy and involves identifying, clarifying, and verifying the concerns underlying the customer's objections. It requires a sincere effort by the sales professional to know and understand exactly what the customer's problems are in all their complexities. Exploratory behavior is another-centered behavior that is bonding, because it shows interest and involvement.

**Responding** is empathy and involves offering a recommendation, an alternative, a solution, or a next step designed to resolve the customer's concerns and put closure on the transaction. Responding behavior is another-centered behavior that is an outgrowth of **listening, acknowledging, and exploring**. Responding is a bonding behavior that is sensitive to the customer's **operating reality**.

**Empathy** each of the four behaviors discussed above is essentially empathic. That is, **listening, acknowledging, exploring, and responding** each focus on the **operating reality** of the customer. These behaviors are intended to meet objections gently and responsively, and they have an effect of maintaining rapport.

**Judgmental** behavior represents a self-centered reaction to the customer's objection or concern. It is insisting, telling, dictating, and directing. It is expressing an opinion or proposing an answer without all of the facts. Judgmental behavior reflects preoccupation with one's own **operating reality** and causes the customer to feel uninvolved and parented.

**Hostility** is an indulgence in one's own **operating reality**. It represents a degree of impatience and/or anger. Hostility is manifested by arguing, criticizing, or confronting the customer. Hostility is also represented by the subtle implication, or punitive probe. This self-centered reaction causes the customer to feel hurt, confused, and angry.

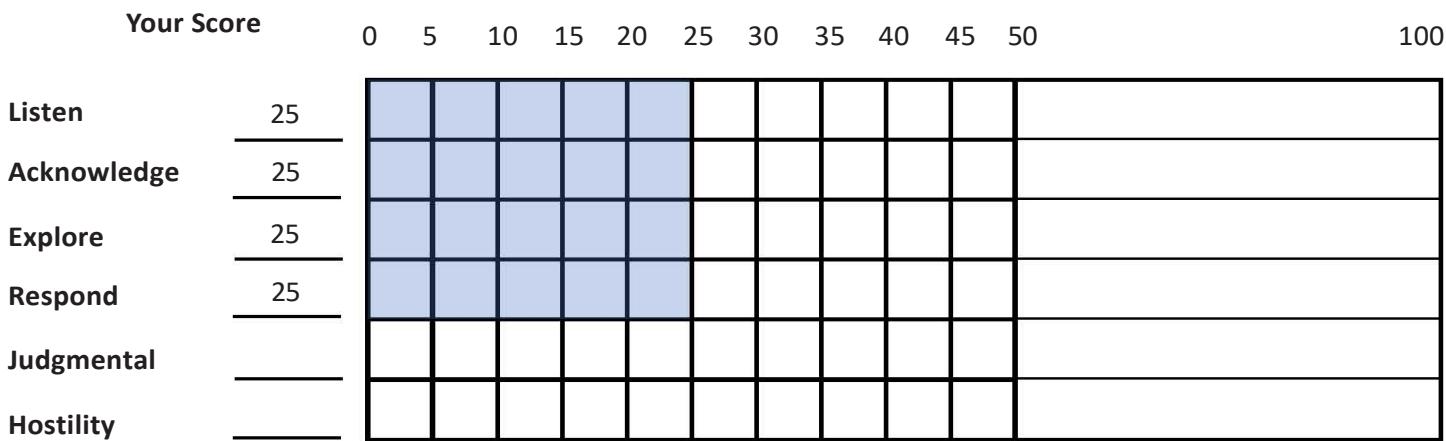
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**Interpretation:** For purposes of the LAER-S Style Assessment, the following LAER-S scores represent degrees of sensitivity and balance when handling objections.

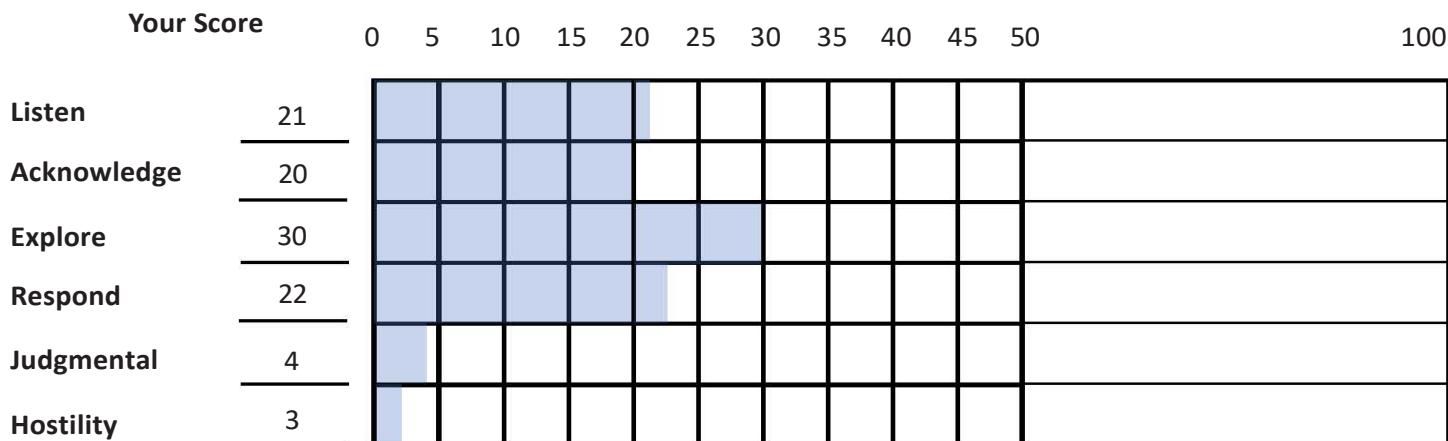
## OPTIMAL BEHAVIORAL CHOICES



### Optimal sensitivity and balance

This style represents optimal sensitivity and balance due to equal emphasis placed on all four bonding behaviors.

This style represents an optimal standard from which all other behavioral choices can be interpreted in terms of productivity.



### Personal sensitivity and balance

Any combination of scores that are within 5 points of balance (25) can be accounted for by differences in personal style and can be considered in the context of this inventory as productive behavioral choices, that is, if the judgmental or hostility scores do not exceed 5 points each.

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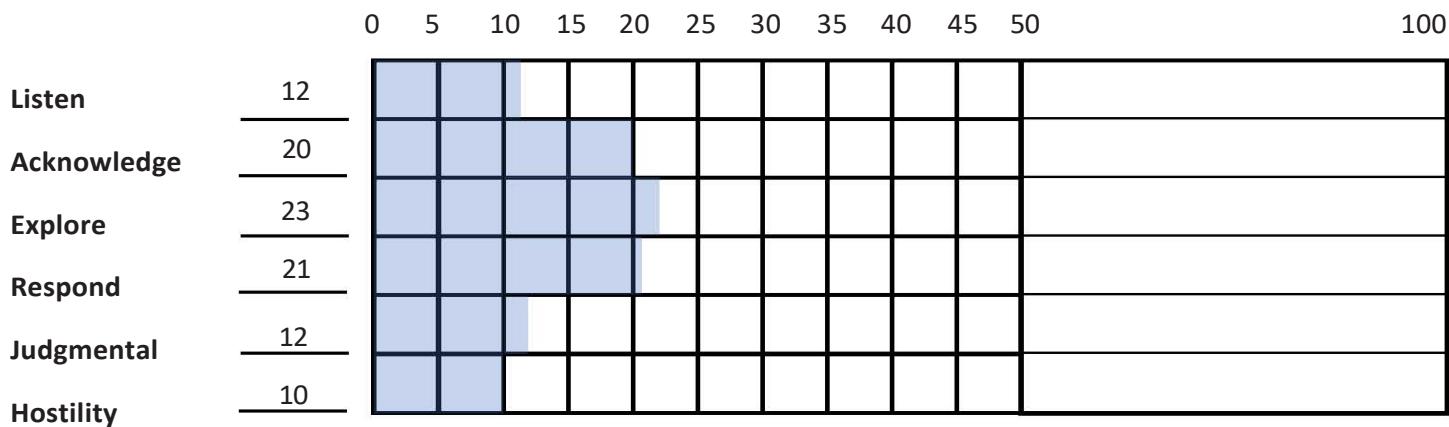
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## SUB-OPTIMAL BEHAVIORAL CHOICES

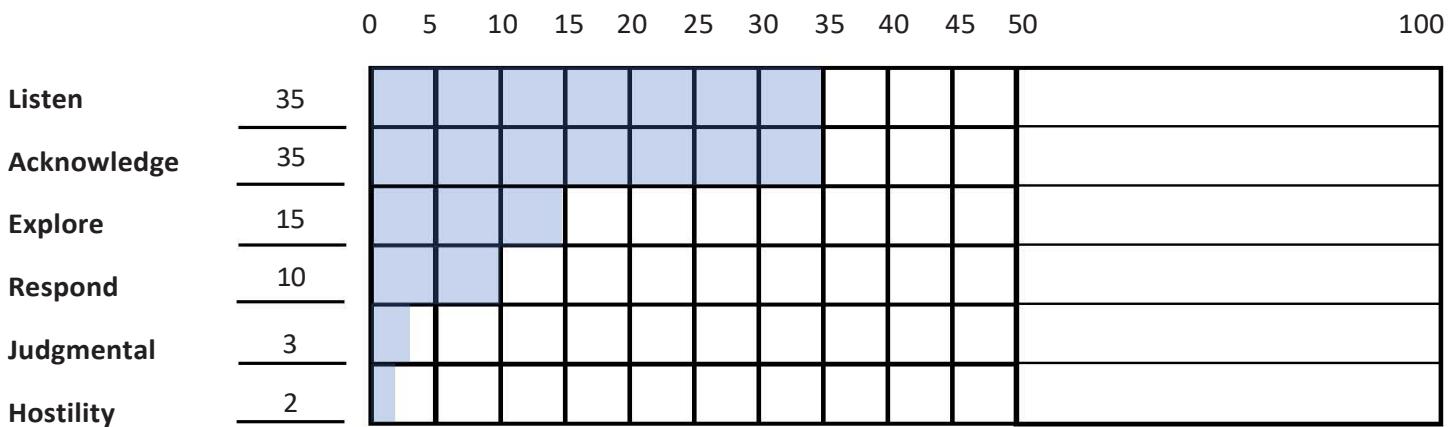
### Excessive deviation from sensitivity and balance

The extent to which the deviation from sensitivity and balance across the combination of styles (scores) exists can result in predictable negative consequences whose ultimate severity is determined by the degree of deviation. Excessive deviation from balance can be, in some cases, unproductive behavioral choices because of the reactions they would evoke.



### Excessive use of judgmental or hostility behaviors

Any styles that include scores of 5 or above in **judgmental** or **hostility** categories could be considered less than optimal, because of the eventual negative outcome that could take place in the transaction.



### Excessive use of listening and acknowledging behaviors

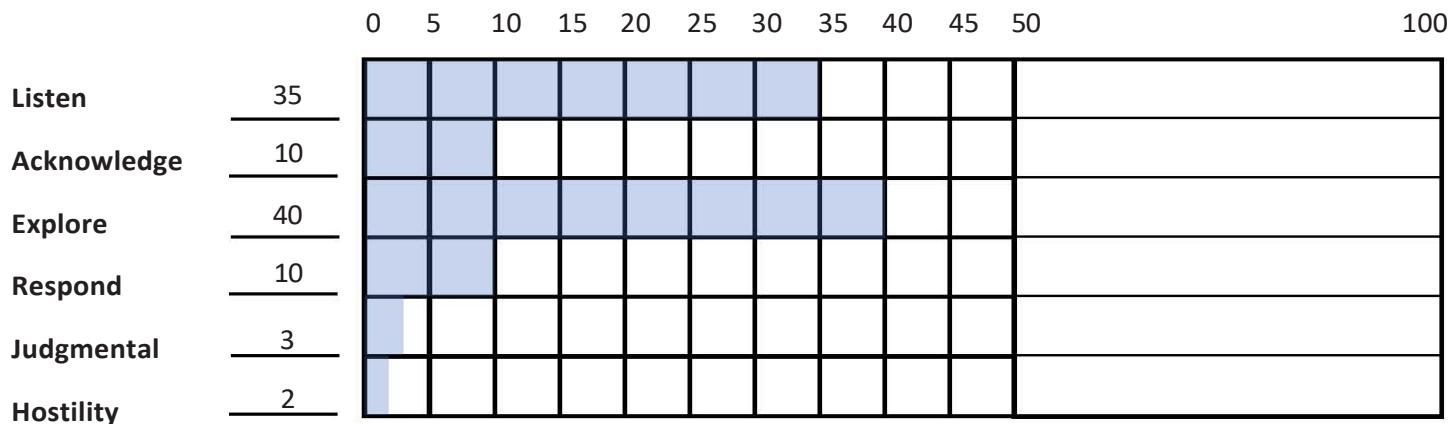
This style could be interpreted as somewhat vague and decision-less. The customer could feel listened to and patronized, but frustrated because the sales professional did not develop a keener understanding of the issues through more active exploratory behavior and make a recommendation through **responding** behavior.

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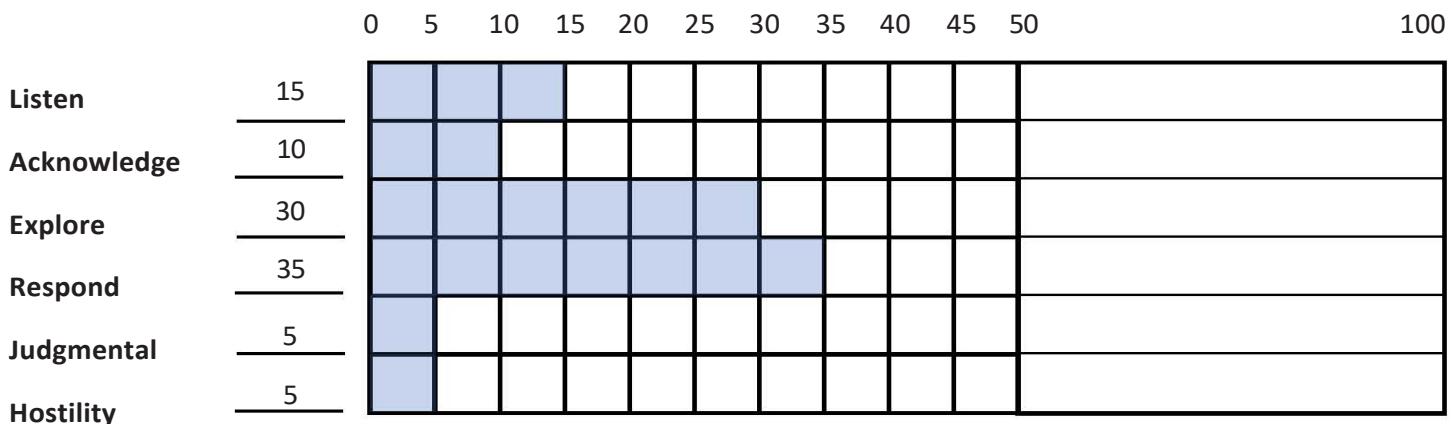


## SUB-OPTIMAL BEHAVIORAL CHOICES CONT.



### Excessive use of listening and exploratory behaviors

This style represents an excessive use of **listening** and **exploratory** behaviors to the extent that **acknowledging** and **responding** behaviors are not utilized. This style could be interpreted as manipulative probing, and the customer could feel interrogated and become defensive.



### Excessive use of exploratory and responding behaviors

Although this style can be productive in terms of identifying the problem and providing the answer, the lack of emphasis on **listening** and **acknowledging** behaviors combined with the over-emphasis on the task elements of the issue, could leave the customer feeling unattended to as a person.

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## Summary

Sales professionals generally tend to use one or two styles to the exclusion of other possible productive style combinations. The sales professional should avoid judgmental and hostile styles and invest more equally among the four bonding styles of **listening, acknowledging, exploring, and responding**.

**Avoiding judgmental and hostile behaviors make it more likely that you will be able to work with objections more productively.**

Notes:

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## Processing Assignment (with a partner)

Compare your profile with the six types presented in the LAER-S Style Assessment.

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Have your partner interpret your style and predict its impact.

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Reflect on the difference between your style and your partner's. What might you learn from each other?

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How can you modify your style to make it more sensitive, balanced, and bonding?

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