#### Key concepts for working with the Role Behavior Analysis®

The Role Behavior Analysis® (RBA), the companion instrument to the Personal Profile System® (PPS), uses specific DiSC® behavioral statements for defining, describing and discussing expectations for role-based behavior. The RBA collects and processes perceptions of the behavioral expectations of *how* a job, position, or role needs to be fulfilled to achieve maximum effectiveness. These perceptions are based on the role, *not* the person in the role. The Role Behavior Analysis® focuses on *how* the role needs to be fulfilled *regardless* of who is in the role.

The RBA is used to bridge the gap between the *how* and *what* of role expectations. Position descriptions or job descriptions tend to focus on the `what' of a job, defining tasks, duties, or responsibilities. Individuals may be able to define clearly "what" should be done in a position, yet be unclear on "how" those activities or tasks should be done. The RBA provides a specific set of DiSC statements to clarify and define role expectations, or *how* the job needs to be done, eliminating the confusion that comes from using generalized, vague, judgmental or unclear statements to describe role expectations.

#### Confusing personalities with professions

Many people confuse role-based behavior with an individual's personality or behavioral style. This can be observed in comments like "all accountants must be S's" or "we need a high D for this job." Both of these statements demonstrate what happens when someone generalizes or confuses role-based behavior with a person's behavioral style. unlikely that all people who study accounting and become accountants are high S's. Often people with styles other than S studied accounting for reasons that had more to do with role models of perceived career opportunities that with behavioral style. While many accounting positions may require considerable S role behavior, not all accounting positions will require it. Some accounting positions may be characterized by more D, I or C role behavior depending on the other role functions. For example, an accounting position that involved making and communicating tough credit approval decisions may involve more D role behaviors such as "move forcefully even though others may be offended" or "take higher risks based on potential payoffs". Or, the role may include some standard accounting functions, as well as some interaction with people, such as financial counseling or tax and investment advising. This type of accounting position may require more Influencing role-based behaviors such as "resolve conflict through initiating and facilitating discussion" or "influence people through positive verbalization."

### Why use both the PPS and the RBA?

Frequently training and development professionals are asked to provide interventions for improving performance. Naturally, the PPS is seen as an essential part of the performance improvement process; however, the RBA may be as necessary for improving performance. By using the PPS exclusively, practitioners may be using the wrong tool for the task and get a result like using a hammer when they should be using a wrench.

In order to clarify when to use which assessment tool, it is necessary to reexamine the intention and philosophy behind training and development interventions. In training we

are not trying to change *people*, we are trying to change *behavior*. The PPS focuses on how a person sees him or herself as a *person*. The RBA focuses on what behavior a *role* requires regardless of the person in the role. When we are talking about changing behavior we are not talking about changing *who* the person is, which is described in the PPS, but *how* the person behaves in a specific role for which the expectations have been defined in the RBA. The success of training and development is not measured by changes in the PPS but by observing changes in the person's ability to produce the behaviors required by the role.

#### **Ethical considerations**

In addition to the practical aspects of using the right tool for the right task to get the right results, there is also an ethical and philosophical issue involved. If we attempt to change who someone is we are violating the integrity of the person because we have implied that they are "not okay" as they are and need to be changed as a person to be acceptable. Communicating that someone is not okay as a person and needs to be changed or fixed has a negative effect on self-esteem and does not demonstrate a respect for differences. However, if rather than changing people, our approach is to provide both clarification of the behaviors required for a role and the coaching necessary to develop those behaviors—while validating the dignity and integrity of who the person is as a unique individual—then we not only improve performance but contribute to creating a climate of respect and empowerment which will result in sustainable performance improvement.

#### What is a role?

According to Webster, the term role comes from the French word rôle meaning literally "from a roll containing an actor's part". The contemporary definition includes "a part, or character, that an actor plays in a performance, a function or office assumed by someone" as well as "a socially expected behavior pattern usually determined by an individual's status in a particular society". The use of the term 'role' in the RBA is very close to all three Webster definitions. The RBA is used to define and 'script' how the part should be played by the person in the role. The RBA process clarifies how the role needs to be played to meet the goals of the 'script' and the needs of the 'audience'. Additionally, the clear definition of role expectations provided by the use of the RBA helps in "casting the part" and in "coaching the actor".

### How is a role different than a job or position?

Typically, jobs or positions are defined by the *what* of the position— the tasks, duties, accountabilities, responsibilities or objectives of the position. Defining a role focuses more closely on the *how* of the role or the description of the behavior that is desired in completing the *what* of the position. The differentiation of the two terms is essential for a number of reasons. One reason is that there may be significant differences in how a role is to be fulfilled from one organization to another even though the position title and job description are essentially the same in both organizations. Or, the roles may be different from department to department even within the same organization based on different needs and behavioral expectations.

For example, two organizations may have very similar job descriptions for the position of salesperson, yet have very different behavioral expectations, or 'scripts', for how that role needs to be 'played'. The differences in role behavior expectations may have to do with the type of product, the type of customers or how the company would like to be perceived in the marketplace. One company may want to be seen as the "hard-charging, results-oriented people" while another may want to be seen as "the friendly, helpful partner". The job description, or the *what* may be very similar in both companies, yet the *how* is quite different.

Also, a job or position may involve several different roles based on the number of needs met by that job. For example, the position of Manager of Accounting may involve multiple roles. One role might involve managing the activities of others, a technical/analytical function might comprise another role, and consultative support to other departments as yet another role. In addition, the job may include a role as a member of a management team, as well as another role as a member of a cross-functional quality team. Each team role may require different team member behavior based on the needs of the team.

#### What is role-based behavior?

Role-based behavior is the behavior required to perform a specific role within a specific position/job/function, defined within a specific organizational culture. The cultural framework of the social unit (company, family, nationality, community, agency, etc.) contributes to the behavioral expectations of the role by defining what are the norms for behavior in that culture. In other words, the culture defines how "people like us" behave when performing a specific role. As cultures change, expectations for how roles are performed also changes. This is particularly relevant as companies go through mergers, acquisitions and become increasingly global. It is relevant also as expectations for social roles (spouse, parent, partner, etc.) change with changing social conditions

As a result of this confusion between role-based behavior and a person's behavioral style, people may not have a clear perception when they first begin looking at what behavior a role actually requires. This may result in a RBA response in which all four role-based appear to be about equal. While this may be an accurate description of the behaviors required to be effective in that role, it may also indicate a lack of skill in defining role-based behavior or a lack of clarity in expectations due to role confusion or conflicting expectations. Further discussion of the following topics will help gain the clarity necessary to accurately assess roles.

## How many roles comprise a position or job?

One of the challenges facing people today in our environment of complexity and rapid change is the need to fulfill many roles in both their work and social life. Each role may have a different set of expectations, not only in *what* we do, but also, in *how* we do it. Behavioral expectations can change considerably from one role to another. Behavior that may be very successful in one role may be very ineffective in another role. For example, if we take the behavior that is very successful in our job and attempt to use it at home, we may not be effective at all. Or, if we use the behavior that is effective in the role of a

parent with small children with our peers at work, we may experience conflict. Using behavior that is effective when managing others may not work well when in a role that requires more peer behaviors such as a member of a work group or team.

While the number of roles in a position is different from position to position, however, the general trend seems to be an increase in the number of roles within each position as work becomes more complex and collaborative. Also, as the rate of change increases, redefining roles frequently is essential because while the formal position title may not have changed, the behavioral expectations for the role may have changed significantly. Changes in market conditions or customer populations (internal and external), downsizing, flattening of the organization and corporate culture change, all may contribute to a change in how the role needs to be performed behaviorally.

#### How does shifting roles affect performance?

If an individual is unaware of the differences in behavior required for each of the roles he/she needs to perform, he/she is less likely to shift to the appropriate behavior when necessary. What tends to happen most often is that either the person uses the behavior which is most natural for him/her in all the roles, or he/she uses the behavior perceived to be required for the *primary* role in all roles. In either case, the behavior used is not likely to be the behavior most effective for meeting the behavioral expectations of the role resulting in a gap between the expected behavior and the actual behavior is likely to affect performance. Conscious awareness and understanding of the different behaviors required by each role can be used to increase effectiveness. By selecting and performing the behaviors required by the role, the person is able to do both *what* is required and perform it *how* it is required for maximum effectiveness in the role.

## Creating a Consensus RBA

The most effective way to clarify behavioral expectations of a specific role is to have several people familiar with the role participate in a consensus discussion of the role behavioral expectations. This discussion is conducted by having each person individually complete an RBA, rank-ordering each group of statements on the RBA response form. When the participants in this consensus process view the results in both the individual RBA and RBA-RBA Comparison, they are likely to see differences in perception. These differences are resolved through a *consensus dialogue*.

In the consensus dialogue for a specific role, the group discusses their individual responses (using the printed response form) and comes to consensus on the ranking of each the eight groups of role behavioral statements. As each group of behavioral statements is discussed, each person has to present the rationale for their ranking. In this part of the process people frequently discover areas where they had clearly different information about the role or clearly different expectations about *how* the role needs to be performed behaviorally. (This discussion is modeled in the DiSC Management Strategies DMS video.) This difference in perceptions or expectations frequently comes as a

surprise because they had thought they were dealing with a clearly defined position description.

The problem is that position descriptions define the *what* of a role, defining tasks, duties and responsibilities. However, seldom does the position description describe *how* the *what* should be performed, which may result in a hidden source of conflict. This conflict on expectations or perceptions remains hidden because people don't have a process or system for discussing role-based behavioral expectations. As a result of this lack of tools and lexperience, most people initially are not very skilled at defining role-based behavior. However, by using the RBA process, people very quickly develop skills in defining the behavioral expectations for a specific role, including negotiating consensus decisions.

#### Using the Specific language of the RBA

The language of the Role Behavior Analysis response form has been carefully selected to accurately reflect specific DISC correlates of role-based behavior. Each phrase is designed to be used as it occurs, with little or no editorial freedom. People frequently unknowingly distort the meaning of the phrases when summarizing or re-stating the phrase. For example, the first phrase on the RBA Comparison Grid says "take unprecedented risks" which someone might restate as "Yes, we want people to take unprecedented risks in this role after they have had a chance to gather information and think about it for a while." This restatement changes the intent of the original statement from a D behavior to either an S or C behavior. Remaining close to a word-for-word use of the statement in the consensus discussion ensures an accurate DISC description of the role.

### Using the RBA with the PPS for coaching and development

When the role expectations have been defined by a consensus process, the RBA can be used with the PPS for performance management in the areas of selection, career development, training, coaching and performance counseling. For each of these activities the RBA profile for a specific role can be compared to the individual's behavioral style as determined by the PPS. The Comparison of the RBA and PPS result in description of three categories of person-role performance `matching'.

The first category of performance matching is called *Good Fit*. These are the behaviors where the role requires about the same amount of the behavior as the person has naturally occurring (scores within 20%). The next category is called *Stretches*. These are the behaviors that the role requires more of than is naturally occurring in the person's behavioral style (greater than 20% difference). The third category is *Redirect*. These are the behaviors that the person has more of naturally occurring than the role requires (greater than 20%), which means he/she may overuse these behaviors and may need to redirect his/her naturally occurring behaviors to those behaviors required by the role.

For example, some one may have a high D behavioral style which would mean the person would have a natural tendency to use behaviors such as "speculate on untested ideas" and "move forcefully even though others may be offended." However, the role may require considerably less of those behaviors so the person would need to *redirect* his/her natural

tendency to use these behaviors, using instead those behaviors required by the role that may represent a *stretch*. The RBA/PPS Comparison Grid can be used to identify those behaviors requiring additional training, coaching or mentoring. The Performance Coaching Questions will help structure the coaching dialogue.

## Implementation of Performance Coaching Using PPS/RBA

#### Phase 1: Build Role Database

#### Step 1: Define the roles that comprise the position

Most jobs/positions contain more than one role. Each role needs to be defined separately in terms of tasks, duties and activities because each role is likely to require distinctly different DiSC<sup>TM</sup> behavior. For example, the *position* of Accounting Manager may include four distinctly different *roles*. One role in the position of Accounting Manager may be defined as the tasks, duties, activities and behavior used to manage others, while a second role may involve performing technical accounting tasks and activities. There may be a third role that is defined by the tasks, duties and behavior required by the role of a management team member and a fourth role may be defined by the tasks, duties and behavior that comprise the role of support staff to other departments. Additional roles may involve other team or group involvement such as a special project team member or as a member of a network of affiliation within the organization. Each role is likely to have different behavioral requirements, as well as different activities, duties and responsibilities.

### **Step 2: Prioritize the roles**

After each role has been defined, a Role Behavior Analysis® needs to be completed for each of the roles. In addition to using the RBA to define and assess the behavioral requirements of each role, the roles may need to be evaluated in terms of importance or frequency of use. The importance or emphasis on a particular role may change periodically as a result of changing organizational needs. Also, the roles and the priority of a particular role in a position may be different from organization to organization or within divisions of the same organization, even though the position has the same title. For example, the position of Accounting Manager in one organization may place the greatest emphasis on the technical accounting activities role, with secondary emphasis on technical support to other departments and much less emphasis on the roles of managing others and team member. Another organization may define the position of Accounting Manager in their organization with the role of managing others and member of special project teams as most important and place much less emphasis on the technical accounting activities role. The RBA can be used to clarify and define these differences.

Differences in role expectations and in the priority of each role involved in the total position description can clearly impact the effectiveness of the person in the position based on the *degree of fit* the person has with each of the roles. Because of the behavioral differences in the roles, it is likely that a person will have a *good fit* with one or two of the roles in a position but will need to develop additional behaviors to be effective in the

remaining roles. Development of the additional behaviors required by the role then becomes part of a performance development and management plan. The RBA is used to define for each role the potential behaviors that may require *stretching* and/or *redirecting*. The potential behaviors listed in the *stretch* or *redirect* categories of the PPSS PPS/RBA Comparison Report need to be evaluated by interviewing or by observing performance to determine whether the person has already developed these behaviors or whether the behaviors will require additional training and coaching to be performed successfully. The behaviors identified as requiring additional skill development then become part of a written performance management plan with a specific learning plan and performance objectives with scheduled dates for review.

#### **Step 3: Complete RBA for each role**

There are a number of ways to develop an RBA for each position. One person can fill out the RBA— either a person in the position or a person managing the position. However, a single person response is less likely to be accurate than a multiple person response, so multiple person responses are the preferred approach. When using a multiple person response, the group evaluating the role can include a 360° view of the role: people in the role, people managing the role, customers of the role (internal and external) and direct reports.

## **Step 4: Defining the behavioral expectations for the role using multiple RBA responses**

The preferred process is to have each person fill out the RBA individually, eliminating the 'group think' effect. After completing the RBA individually, the group response can be displayed. It is likely that there will be considerable difference in the responses. The next step is to have a dialogue about these differences in role behavior expectations and come to consensus on one RBA perception for the role which then becomes the entered in the PPSS role database as the Consensus RBA for the role. It is suggested that in all further application of RBA data, such as for career development and performance management, that the Consensus RBA be used rather than individual perceptions.

Using a dialogue process to come to consensus on role expectations is the preferred method for defining role expectations because the dialogue process frequently uncovers hidden expectations or a reasoning process that had not been considered by others. Hidden expectations or differences in logic may contribute to on-going conflict about performance expectations. Therefore, a valuable by-product of the consensus dialogue process is the uncovering and resolution of these conflicts on role behavior expectations. While it may seem to be a time-consuming process, clients who use the consensus process to define role expectations report that it has provided valuable insights on performance expectations that were unlikely to have occurred without the RBA consensus dialogue.

## **Conducting an RBA Consensus Dialogue Process**

After each person has responded individually and the multiple perceptions have been compared on the RBA Comparison Grid (PPSS RBA/RBA Comparison), each group of response items on the response form is discussed and the rank order of the response items is agreed upon by the respondents. This process is completed for each of the eight groups

of response items. It maybe helpful to post each person's individual ranking of Group 1 response items on RBA on a flipchart prior to discussing the items. Also you may want to use the paper response forms for this exercise (W-533) When discussing individual preferences for ranking, each person presents his/her rationale for his ranking. The group listens to and discusses the various rationales and comes to a new consensus ranking based on the information provided in the discussion. This procedure is followed for each of the eight groups of response items on the response form. After completing the consensus dialogue for the eight groups for the first role, the group uses the same process for each of the remaining roles that comprise the position. At the conclusion of this exercise, there will be several clearly defined roles that comprise a specific position, for a specific department within a specific organization. Each role will have clearly defined DiSC behavioral expectations, in addition to the defined tasks, duties, responsibilities and activities of the role. The consensus RBA then should become part of the position/role database for that department which will be used for performance management, career development and HR decision support.

#### Constructing a composite RBA from multiple RBA responses

Many people have expressed a desire to construct a mathematical composite from multiple RBA responses. Unfortunately, behavior is not additive and cannot be averaged with any degree of accuracy. Additionally, the question arises whether each person's perception should be weighted equally or might the person in the position have a more accurate perception than someone two levels removed? In that case, some manner of weighting of the scores would be necessary. If someone desires to use a mathematical composite rather than the consensus process, it could be done by evaluating the frequency of the value associated with each response associated with each group. However, using the consensus process is not only likely to be more accurate, but it is not only likely to surface hidden differences in expectations but also is likely to generate results that have greater acceptance or "buy in" by the people in the roles as well as those who manage the roles. This increase the success potential using PPS/RBA Comparison information in performance management and HR decision support.

## Phase 2: Using the RBA/PPS Comparison for Performance Management

### Step 1: Administer the Personal Profile

Have the person respond to the PPS (either DiSC Classic or DiSC PPSS)

## Step 2: Identifying the 'Degree of Fit' between the role and the person

The consensus RBA for each role in a specific position can be compared to an individual's PPS to determine the *degree of fit* between the person's behavioral style (or potential for the behavior) and the behavioral requirements for each role. The RBA/PPS Comparison generates three categories of statements of potential behavior for each role: *Good Fit, Stretch* and *Redirect*. The *Performance Coaching Questions* for the *Stretch* and *Redirect* can be used to discuss whether the person has already developed those behaviors or if the behaviors will require additional training. The person's ability to demonstrate the

behaviors in real-life situations—what we call behavioral competence—can be determined through interviewing and observing performance., focusing on the person's ability to perform the specific DiSCTM behaviors identified as requiring 'stretching' or 'redirecting'. The RBA Comparison Grid and the Performance Coaching Questions only indicate potential behavior. A person's actual ability to Stretch or Redirect a specific behavior needs to be determined through observation. Using the Performance Coaching Questions as behavioral interviewing questions may provide information about the person's ability or the interview responses may represent idealized rather than actualized performance. It is also possible that the person's responses to the Performance Coaching Questions may represent how the person thinks he should be able to perform rather than how he is able to perform. Ultimately, observation is the most accurate measure for determining behavioral skill.

#### Describing intensity levels of role behavior

The results of the RBA are displayed on the RBA Comparison Grid which has four different levels of intensity: moderately low, moderate, moderately high and high. When describing a particular behavior required by a role, the intensity level needs to be specified. For example, a role might require moderately high levels of the behavior "cite evidence emphasizing a specific point of view or desired results" and moderately low levels of the behavior "achieve results by overcoming the objections of others." When comparing an individual's Personal Profile to the behavioral requirements of a role, both need to be stated in terms of the level of intensity. For example, John may have to *stretch* his naturally occurring moderate level of the behavior "cite evidence emphasizing a specific point of view or desired results" to the moderately high level required by the role. John may need to 'redirect' his naturally occurring high levels of "achieve results by overcoming the objections of others" to the moderately low levels required by the role.

## Using the specific behavioral language of the RBA

The language of the Role Behavior Analysis has been carefully selected to accurately reflect specific DiSC<sup>TM</sup> correlates of role-based behavior. Each phrase is designed to be used as a complete statement exactly as it occurs, with little or no editorial freedom. People frequently unknowingly distort the meaning of the phrases when summarizing or re-stating the phrase. For example, the first phrase on the RBA Comparison Grid says "take unprecedented risks" which someone might restate saying, "Yes, we want people to take unprecedented risks in this role after they have had a chance to gather information and think about it for a while." Such rephrasing changes the intent of the original statement that was a D behavior to either an S or C behavior. Or, people may summarize the eight specific Influencing role behavior statements by saying, "John needs to stretch his people skills." The statement "improve people skills" in not used in the RBA because it is not an accurate statement of a specific, observable DiSC<sup>TM</sup> behavior, even though many of the behaviors listed are commonly referred to as "people skills". Remaining close to a word-for-word use of the statement ensures an accurate DiSC<sup>TM</sup> description of the role.

#### Step 2: Assessing Behavioral Competence through Interviewing

The RBA/PPS Comparison generates statements that can be used to determine what degree of behavioral competence an individual has already developed in the behaviors identified as *potential* 'stretch' and 'redirect' requirements. The *Performance Coaching Questions* are framed to elicit a description of how the individual has produced the *Stretch* in behavior or *Redirected* a behavior in a prior situation. By using the specific behavioral language of the question, the interviewer can target his/her questioning to the specific behavioral competencies required by each role in the position. The RBA/PPS Comparison defines *potential* degree of fit between the role and the person's behavioral style based on the responses to the RBA and the PPS, however the *actual* degree of fit can only be determined through interviewing and observing behavior.

#### Step 3: Observing Behavioral Competence

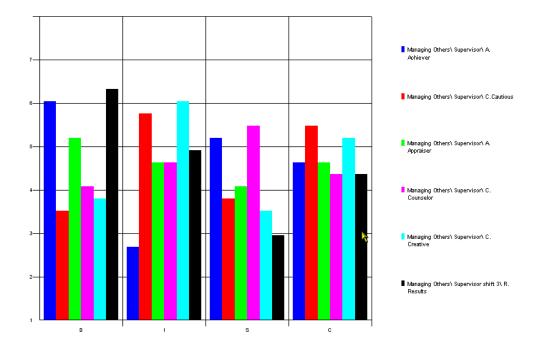
After the behavioral expectations for the various roles in a specific position have been identified and used to develop an individual performance management plan, the RBA provides the language for observing and assessing development of specific DiSCTM role-based behavioral competencies. For example, suppose it was identified that an individual needed to Stretch the behavior "remain neutral when conflict first arises" and Redirect the behavior "move forcefully even though others may be offended". A learning plan for developing these specific skills was created for the person which included classroom training in assertiveness skills and peer coaching within the next 60 days. At the end of sixty days, the degree of skill that the individual had or had not developed could be observed in his ability to perform the specific behaviors in real life interactions. If the level of demonstrated behavioral skill remained low or nonexistent, alternate training and coaching plans would need to be implemented. The RBA statements describe observable behaviors that can be trained and assessed with a goal of increasing role-based behavioral skill competence.

## Step 4: Using the RBA/PPS Comparison to develop learning plans

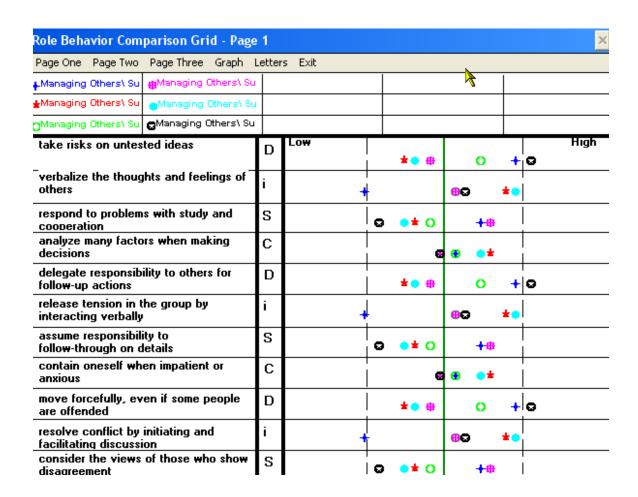
The RBA/PPS Comparison provides the information necessary to develop specific learning plans for developing specific behavioral competencies. The development of behavioral competence can be used as a pre and post skill assessment and will meet the level 3 criteria for measuring the effectiveness of transfer of training. By using the behaviors identified as *Stretch* and *Redirect* as the desired performance outcomes, a particular learning method can be evaluated to determine how effective it will be in helping the individual develop a specific behavioral skill. For example, if an individual needed to *Stretch* her moderately low naturally occurring level of "facilitate interaction with others to achieve results" to the moderately high levels of that behavior required by the role of managing others in the position of Accounting Manager, the learning activity would need to be targeted to developing that specific behavioral skill. The key question in designing a learning plan is where and how would a person learn to do this—"facilitate

interaction with others to achieve results"—what learning design would be optimal. The term learning is used rather than training because the learning design may or may not use training as a method for achieving behavioral competence. The desired outcome is learning *not* training; training is one *method* for achieving learning, not a performance outcome in itself. Training may not be the most effective learning method for developing the behavioral skill of "facilitate interaction with others". Mentoring and peer coaching may be a more effective method for developing competence in that skill.

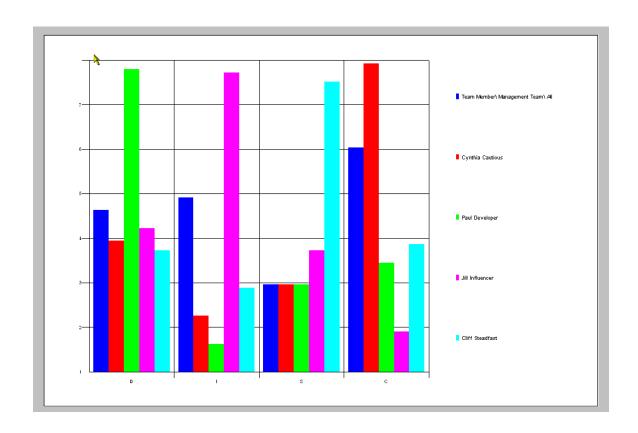
DiSC®, Personal Profile System $^{TM}$ , Personal Profile System $^{TM}$  for Windows $^{TM}$  (PPSS), Role Behavior Analysis $^{TM}$ , DiSC® Management Strategies, and DiSC® Sales Strategies are all registered trademarks of Inscape Publishing, Inc..



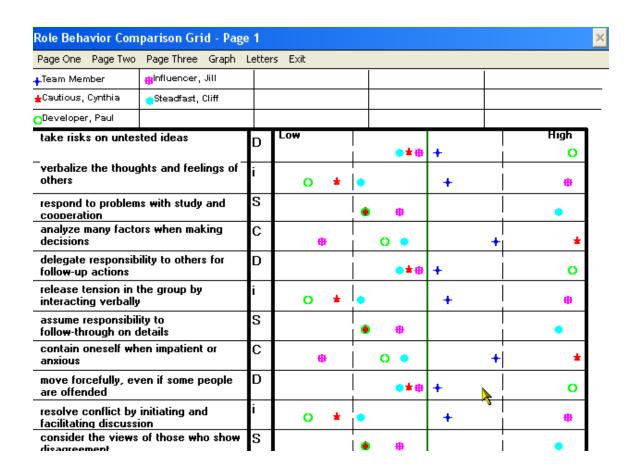
# Example of multiple perceptions of the role of Managing others before consensus dialogue



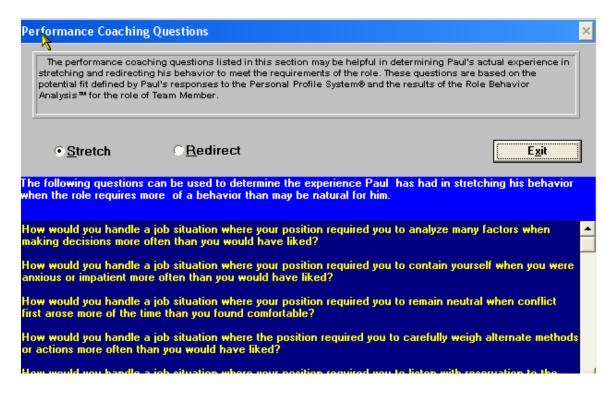
## **Example of RBA Comparison with Multiple Perceptions of the role**



PPS/RBA Comparison with Consensus RBA



PPS/RBA Comparison Grid using the consensus RBA and four PPS



Performance Coaching Questions with consensus RBA and Paul