



Be An Influential Actuary

David C Miller, MSc, FMA, FIC



# CPD National Tour – Be an Influential Actuary and the Influential Leader

David Miller presenting in Sydney

**Renowned international speaker David Miller recently visited Australia as key presenter of the Institute's CPD National Tour – the following are reviews by some participants at the various national venues...**

## PERTH

On Monday 10 September Perth welcomed David Miller all the way from the US, along with selected travellers from the Actuaries Institute, including the President and CEO. Perth was the first stop on the national CPD tour – *Be an Influential Actuary and The Influential Leader*.

It's good to see events reaching over to Perth and the Institute being active in its aim to connect more with members.

David's session was based around the DISC assessment method, with focus on personality types and understanding the environment we are most comfortable in. This allows us to adapt how we work and interact with others to be more effective.

We started the session with a chance to look at our own preferences and to discover where we sit in the 'DISC world' quadrant. This gave a chance for the penny to drop as we looked around the room to see how other people liked to work and how this translates to our everyday workplaces.

With our own style in place, we had a chance to go through a series of interactive tasks to practice recognition of other styles and then how best to tailor our approach to these. Through this tailoring we can become more influential in our day-to-day lives, ably connecting with those around us and achieving the desired outcomes from our conversations and interactions with others.



Elmeare Joyce, Janice Jones, Yan Zhao – Perth

Cocktails and an informal chance for networking, 'DISC world' style, followed the session – a good chance for the small group of Perth actuaries to get together.

Interestingly, the support act, our own David Goodsall adorned with presidential medal, regaled a large networking crowd, with his actuarial Boardroom 'war stories'.

A good turn out and an interesting session, thanks for coming across and hope to see you back this way again soon.

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Ian Hyland, Geoff Baars, Stephen Long – Perth



Adelaide

## ADELAIDE

The CPD National Tour hit Adelaide on Wednesday 12 September. Many of the local actuaries (and an interstate guest) had an enjoyable dinner with the President and CEO the night before. While not all who attended the dinner were able to attend the morning session, we had a total of 10 attendees which represented a good cross-section of the local actuarial community. It was pleasing to see the appearance of the presidential medallion in the morning after it was missed the night before.

The session itself was a big success. There were initial concerns that we would all be typecast into only one or two personality groupings, but as Melinda Howes had assured us, there was a good distribution of dominance, conscientiousness and steadiness amongst us. However, no-one fitted the influential mould.

The older members mixed with the younger ones and as the morning progressed it was clear from our behaviour and comments, that most of us had made the correct choice. I am sure we all obtained some valuable insights into what makes ourselves and our work colleagues tick. Preparation for internal and external meetings should now involve some time spent assessing the personality of the attendees to stand a better chance of influencing the outcome. I also observed the value of having a mix of different personality types in the one organisation. Too many of one type could spell trouble.

Many thanks to David Miller for leading the session and to David Goodsall and Melinda Howes for their participation across both days.

### Stuart Mules

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## MELBOURNE

Working in the corporate world, you would have come across many instances where you would have had to convince or influence someone. Being the 'typical' actuary who struggles with communication, I thought attending the sessions *Be an Influential*

*Actuary and The Influential Leader* would help improve my ability to communicate with – or better yet, convince someone.

During the course, we were first shown two posters with descriptive words – one tacked on the front of the room and the other at the back. We were then asked to stand by the poster we thought best described ourselves. This was such that people in the front of the room were more active and fast-paced, while people in the back were more thoughtful and careful.

Another two posters were shown on either side of the room. People who were more logical and objective would belong to the left side and people who were more empathising and agreeable were on the right side. This is where we were introduced to the 'DISC' model. People in the front left corner were 'D's, they were more results-oriented and direct. In the front right corner were the 'I's, who were more social and 'ready to party'. In the back left corner stood the 'S's, who were agreeable and disliked conflict. Finally, everyone in the 'C' corner were more detail-oriented and careful.

The concept behind the DISC model was that influencing one 'type' of person required different techniques from another 'type'. For example, small talk would work well with an 'I' person, but not as well with a 'D'. In another instance, a 'C' would appreciate a lot of details, but an 'I' would not.

Overall, it was an interesting concept to help us find ways to influence people according to the way in which people think and behave. Perhaps I'll put some of this to good use!

### Cheryl Lin

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David Goodsall (far right) with Melbourne delegates



Brisbane

## BRISBANE

I recently had the opportunity to attend the session *The Influential Leader* presented by, US actuary and author of *The Influential Leader*, David Miller in Brisbane. What made this session memorable was the interactive way in which it was presented and the entertaining acting involved in portraying the various scenarios. In a typical actuarial manner, there were various opinions involved in interpreting the scenarios which added another dimension to the session. David introduced various tools that can be used in evaluating anyone including colleagues, clients or even spouses to influence and motivate them. Watch this space as I will let you know how it goes with my husband...

This session formed part of the CPD National Tour hosted by David Goodsall and Melinda Howes. The enthusiasm shown by both David



David Quinn-Watson, Jan Brewer, Hazel Barnett - Brisbane

true sense of fellowship. I look forward to the President's dinner that will be hosted in Brisbane later this year to meet up with everyone.

In closing, I want to encourage the rest of the Brisbane actuarial community to attend the future CPD sessions. As we all know if there is a demand for something, the supply will follow and hopefully the opportunity to take another glimpse of David's medal...



**Bianca Schutz**

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Ralph Collins, Paul Sivyier, Bil Konstantinidis - Brisbane

and Melinda on the future of the actuary makes me believe that this profession still has some places to go. And the profession in Brisbane is along for the ride as is evident on its

inclusion in the National Tour dates.

With such a group of enthusiastic actuaries who attended the session and of course the network drinks afterwards, there was a

## SYDNEY

With high IQs, great numeracy skills and superior problem solving abilities, actuaries are undoubtedly an intelligent bunch. But what about when it comes to emotional intelligence? How good are we at understanding people (including ourselves), at reading situations, and at relating and communicating to others in the workplace?

I see room for improvement in those areas, both personally and in the profession generally. And so I attended the Sydney hosting of the CPD National Tour event *Be an Influential Actuary* and the more advanced session *The Influential Leader* presented by David Miller. Due to high demand I had missed out on these same sessions last year and I was keen to make amends.

The CPD National Tour was facilitated by David Goodsall and Melinda Howes, who opened proceedings on the day. David and Melinda reminded us of some of the good



private, education and government sectors all represented as well as a wide range of levels of experience. (Yes, there is a private sector in Canberra and it does employ actuaries!)

David brought us quickly back up to speed on the different behavioral 'styles' of people. We then went through the techniques he recommends help bring about desired outcomes when one needs to influence someone: be it a manager, a peer, a team member, or even in a personal relationship. David used three differing but complementary 'lenses' for how to view a given situation. The tools used to bring about change essentially boiled down to a few key factors – perhaps the most prominent was that people make decisions in life in order to gain more control. So where a decision is required, ensuring that someone 'stays on board' with a shared goal requires recognition be given to this need.

As a small group there was a high level of participation and interaction – everyone had something to say through the course of the session. The scenes were almost jovial when discussing the video examples of one manager dealing with the various personality types in her team.

I wasn't able to stay for the drinks afterwards, but by all accounts this was a highlight. Thanks to the Actuaries Institute for making the effort to bring this type of event to Canberra: we're a small actuarial community and opportunities to get together are appreciated.

work that the Actuaries Institute is doing, including the recent release of the White Paper 'Australia's Longevity Tsunami – What Should We Do?' which has generated good discussion. David told us that being on a national tour he felt a bit like a rock star, even relating a story of how 'groupies' in one city asked if they could touch his presidential bling! But that's another story...

We were then in the hands of David Miller, who over the course of the day gave us insights into various styles of human behaviour, including identifying which style best described each of us. David is the founder and CEO of Leadership Growth Strategies and is an actuary and internationally recognised expert in human development. Using the DISC framework, David soon had the room divided into decisive, direct and daring doers (the D-types); intuitive, inclusive and interactive I-types; steady, supportive and security conscious S-types; and compliant, cautious, careful checkers (the C-types). All groups were represented, but some clearly in greater numbers than others (no prizes for guessing!)

David acknowledged that the divisions were approximate (and he provides a more comprehensive on-line assessment for those interested) but they were still highly indicative and informative. Each of the behavioural styles has a different preferred style of communication. Understanding your own style, and the various styles of people that you interact with, provides a powerful means by which your communication can be tailored to become much more effective and influential. As we found out on the day, effective communication is consistently cited as *the* most important factor in the careers of successful and influential actuaries.

If you get an opportunity to attend these sessions in the future, then I recommend that you take it. With an actuarial background, David clearly understood the communication challenges faced by the profession, and the tools that he provided, while not unique, were well targeted and very useful in meeting these challenges. Kudos also to the Actuaries Institute, both for recognising this common gap in the actuarial skill set and for organising David to undertake this national tour.

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## CANBERRA

Canberra was the last stop on the CPD National Tour, so the team was well-practiced when they reached us. There was a good mix of attendees with

**Bridget Browne**  
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David Miller, Debbie Hansen, Tracy Thomas, Jonas Lloyd, Melinda Howes – Canberra