



# Introduction to the FIRO Business<sup>®</sup>

I N S T R U M E N T

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# INTRODUCTION

## What Is the FIRO Business® Instrument?

The FIRO Business® instrument is a powerful personality assessment that measures how you typically behave with other people and how you expect them to act toward you. Its interpretation can dramatically increase your understanding of behavior in areas such as

- How you come across to others—and why this may not be the way you see yourself
- How and why conflict develops between well-meaning people
- How to understand your own needs as you interact with others
- How to manage your own needs in most interpersonal interactions

FIRO Business results provide a mirror that helps you understand the difference between how you affect others and how you would like to be perceived.

The FIRO Business instrument evolved and was adapted from an earlier tool, the *Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation–Behavior*™ (FIRO-B®)

instrument, developed in the late 1950s by Will Schutz, PhD. For many years, leading organizations have used the original instrument to examine interpersonal needs and how they affect behavior. Now, in response to organizational requests across international borders, the FIRO-B instrument has been customized to target interpersonal needs as they specifically relate to workplace behavior—helping people better understand themselves and how they can be more effective with others.

Supported by a wealth of continuing research to validate its results for international use, the FIRO Business tool is usefully applied in areas such as

- Team building
- Productivity in meetings
- Professional development
- Interpersonal skills development
- Communication
- Management and leadership development
- Executive coaching
- Board functioning up and down the line
- Finding the job that fits you best

## Aims of the FIRO Business® Instrument

The FIRO Business instrument is based on Schutz's underlying theory that beyond our survival needs—food, shelter, and warmth—we each have unique interpersonal needs that strongly motivate us. These needs relate to the areas of *Involvement*, *Influence*, and *Connection*, which will be defined in the next section. Just as with our biological needs, we become uncomfortable and anxious if our own unique “set point,” or set of psychic needs, is not being met.

The FIRO Business instrument offers you a way of identifying the set of interpersonal needs that is most comfortable for you. Since each person's set point is unique, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions asked.

According to present psychological theory, your current circumstances, repeated experiences, and responses to both encourage or reinforce the way you behave. The FIRO Business instrument expands on this theory by maintaining that you are not necessarily bound by your typical behaviors. Being aware of your natural tendencies allows you to choose whether a particular behavior is (or isn't) appropriate at a specific time. Therefore, FIRO Business results may change when you form new behavior habits or in response to what is currently happening in your life.

FIRO Business results can be used to

- Show current patterns of interpersonal behavior and expectations
- Raise questions about how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with these patterns
- Suggest alternative ways of behaving to increase your effectiveness if you are not satisfied with your current patterns

## What the FIRO Business® Instrument Measures

The FIRO Business instrument identifies three areas of interpersonal need.

### Involvement

This need indicates how much you generally include other people in your life and how much attention, contact, and recognition you want from others. Involvement is about you in relation to groups—small or large. These are the kinds of questions it raises: Do you like to include others in what you do, or do you prefer to leave people to their own devices? Do you give people a lot of attention by asking them to take part in your activities? Do you want to belong? How much do you want to be “in” or “out”? Do you prefer togetherness or solitude? Do you like people to pay attention to you, or do you prefer to remain more detached? Do you need a little or a lot of recognition? The area of Involvement is different from emotional closeness or authority.

*Words associated with Involvement:* participation, joining, inviting, interaction, association, extroversion, introversion, membership, togetherness, identity, individuality, popularity, meeting people, involving others, belonging, being accepted, being rejected, status, prestige, fame, prominence, acknowledgment, significance, insignificance, exclusion, loneliness, isolation, outsider, privacy, detachment

### Influence

This need indicates how much authority and responsibility you want and how much you want others to lead, direct, or provide structure for you. Influence is about both your one-to-one relationships and your behavior as part of a group. These are the kinds of questions it raises: How much do you want to have authority or power, to be in charge, or to take the lead? How much responsibility do you tend to take? How much direction do you want to have over others, and how much impact do you want them to have on you? Do you prefer being a follower or being a leader, or do you prefer a combination of both roles? How do you react to being given orders? How much structure do you like in situations? The area of Influence is different from how much participation, prominence, or emotional closeness you want.

*Words associated with Influence:* dominance, control, persuasion, coercion, leadership, making decisions, taking charge, power, authority, winner, ruler, competence, achievement, independence, rebellion, follower, submission, line of command, anarchy, superiority, bully, demanding, dependency, taking direction

## Connection

This need indicates how approachable and friendly you are with others and how warm and congenial you want others to be with you. Connection is about the need to establish comfortable one-to-one relationships (whereas Involvement measures your needs for interacting with groups). These are the kinds of questions it raises: Do you behave in ways that show your friendliness, or do you keep your distance? Do you want people to show you warmth, or do you prefer more impersonal relationships? Do you disclose your feelings to other people? Do you like others to disclose their feelings to you? Are you comfortable in both roles? The area of Connection does not relate to how much prominence, participation, or authority you prefer.

*Words associated with Connection:* emotional warmth, personal closeness, rapport, fondness, depth, likability, friendship, confidante, personal interest, encouragement, support, openness, confiding, sharing feelings, care, concern, consideration, reassurance, dislike, emotional distance, coolness, hostility, rejection, being impersonal

The FIRO Business instrument measures two dimensions for each need: *expressed* and *wanted*.

## Expressed

This dimension indicates how much you prefer to initiate the behavior. It is about what you actually do and may be easily observed by others.

- *Expressed Involvement:* How often do you act in ways that encourage your participation in situations?
- *Expressed Influence:* How often do you act in ways that help you direct or impact situations?
- *Expressed Connection:* How often do you act in ways that encourage warmth and closeness in relationships?

## Wanted

This dimension indicates how much you prefer others to initiate the behavior toward you. It is about what you really want from others—whether or not you show it openly.

- *Wanted Involvement:* How much do you want to be part of others' activities?
- *Wanted Influence:* How much leadership and authority do you want others to assume?
- *Wanted Connection:* How much warmth and openness do you want from others?

The numerous resulting combinations of Expressed Involvement, Wanted Involvement, Expressed Influence, Wanted Influence, Expressed Connection, and Wanted Connection scores contribute to the richness of the FIRO Business instrument's insights.

# INTERPRETING YOUR FIRO BUSINESS<sup>®</sup> RESULTS

To make interpretation of your FIRO Business results easier, this booklet offers interpretive information to help you understand the meaning of high, medium, and low score results. No value judgments are implied by any of these scores.

## The Overall Score

The Overall score simply summarizes how strong your need is for general interpersonal contact and interaction. The scoring range is categorized by percentile. Table 1 can help you interpret your score in more detail.

## Total Expressed and Total Wanted Scores

Your Total Expressed score shows how much you usually like to initiate action in relating to others, while your Total Wanted score shows how much you prefer that others take the initiative. Comparing your Total Expressed score to your Total Wanted score can show how you generally satisfy your interpersonal

needs—the blend you prefer in taking initiative or having others do so. The scoring range is categorized by percentile. See Tables 2 and 3 to help you interpret your results.

## Total Need Scores for Involvement, Influence, and Connection

The Total Need scores show the relative strength of your needs in the areas of Involvement, Influence, and Connection. The scoring range is categorized by percentile. Table 4 can help you interpret these results.

It is usually meaningful to look at which of the three areas has the highest Total Need score. That area may be the most important interpersonal need for you, therefore predominating in your behavior and having the greatest impact on your relationships. Similarly, the area that has the lowest score may be either the one you try to avoid or the one that reflects situations from which you try to escape.

**TABLE 1.** Interpreting Your Overall Score

<b>An Overall Score of</b>	<b>Is Regarded as</b>	<b>And May Mean That</b>
75–100	High	You probably enjoy engaging frequently with others in all areas of Involvement, Influence, and Connection. You are very likely to actively seek out, work on, and enjoy your interpersonal relationships. You tend to value very warm and friendly one-to-one relationships. You may prefer to share decision making and generally like involving others in what you do. Being without other people’s company may make you feel uncomfortable.
50–74	Medium High	You generally find that interacting with other people in all areas of Involvement, Influence, and Connection is a source of satisfaction and that your interpersonal relationships help you attain the goals you want to reach. You may consult others without actually handing over authority to them. You are likely to enjoy a fair amount of teamwork and to value forming warm one-to-one relationships. You probably find that people’s company becomes overwhelming occasionally and that you then need to get away for some time alone.
26–49	Medium Low	Interaction with others in all areas of Involvement, Influence, and Connection may appeal to you on a selective basis. You are likely to be choosy about how, when, and where you associate with others—and to be cautious about how you use or share authority. Some close relationships are probably important to you, but there are likely to be times when you prefer to concentrate on the more impersonal demands of the task instead of the more personal ones.
0–25	Low	Interaction with others in all areas of Involvement, Influence, and Connection is not likely to be a strongly felt need. You may prefer to concentrate on more impersonal and objective concerns than on relationships with people. Your personal style may be rather cool, and you may have a strong preference for your own company, for making decisions independently, and for being close to only a few people you have known for a long time.

**TABLE 2.** Interpreting Your Total Expressed and Total Wanted Scores

<b>Scores of</b>	<b>Are Regarded as</b>	<b>And May Mean That</b>
65–100	High	<b>For Total Expressed:</b> You usually initiate activities with others. <b>For Total Wanted:</b> You usually like others to initiate activities with you.
36–64	Medium	<b>For Total Expressed:</b> Sometimes you initiate activities with others; sometimes you don’t. <b>For Total Wanted:</b> Sometimes you want others to initiate activities with you; sometimes you don’t.
0–35	Low	<b>For Total Expressed:</b> You usually do not initiate activities with others. <b>For Total Wanted:</b> You usually do not want others to initiate activities.

**TABLE 3.** Comparing Your Total Expressed and Total Wanted Scores

<b>Total Expressed and Total Wanted Scores in the Following Relationship</b>	<b>May Mean That</b>
When your Total Expressed score is higher than your Total Wanted Score	You probably like taking the initiative more than having others do so.
When your Total Wanted score is higher than your Total Expressed score	You probably prefer that others take the initiative more than doing so yourself.
When your Total Expressed score and your Total Wanted score are equal	You probably prefer to take the initiative part of the time, but at other times you prefer that someone else does so. You may also adopt a wait-and-see attitude toward others; e.g., What do they want? What seems appropriate at the time? What do you feel like doing at the moment?

**TABLE 4.** Interpreting Your Total Need Scores

<b>Scores of</b>	<b>Are Regarded as</b>	<b>And May Mean That</b>
65–100	High—and can be important to you because this area tends to be a priority for you	<p><b>For Involvement:</b> You usually have a high preference for being involved in social situations, no matter who initiates it.</p> <p><b>For Influence:</b> You generally prefer a structured situation where there are clear lines of authority and responsibility in order to get things done.</p> <p><b>For Connection:</b> You generally like a lot of warmth and closeness in your one-to-one relationships.</p>
36–64	Medium—and can be moderately or sporadically important to you; or more important concerning some people and less important concerning others	<p><b>For Involvement:</b> You usually prefer a balance between time alone and time with others, no matter who initiates it.</p> <p><b>For Influence:</b> You generally like a moderate amount of structure and clarity around authority in order to accomplish tasks.</p> <p><b>For Connection:</b> You usually prefer a realistic amount of warmth and closeness in one-to-one relationships, no matter who initiates it.</p>
0–35	Low—and can be important because you may tend to avoid this area	<p><b>For Involvement:</b> You generally have a low preference for being with others, no matter who initiates it.</p> <p><b>For Influence:</b> You usually prefer less-structured situations and have a laid-back attitude toward authority, generally preferring not to give or receive orders.</p> <p><b>For Connection:</b> You generally like to keep things impersonal and prefer more formal and businesslike relationships.</p>

TABLE 5. Grouping the Six Need Scores

Scores of	Are Regarded as	And May Mean That
65–100	High	You have a strong preference for this behavior.
36–64	Medium	Your preference for this behavior is moderate.
0–35	Low	Your preference for this behavior is very selective.

## The Six Need Scores

Need Scores are the scores for the expressed and wanted aspects of Involvement, Influence, and Connection. There are six Need scores, as follows:

- Expressed Involvement
- Expressed Influence
- Expressed Connection
- Wanted Involvement
- Wanted Influence
- Wanted Connection

The scoring range is categorized by percentile for each of the six Need scores. Table 5 illustrates the groupings of the scores into *high*, *medium*, and *low* and outlines their fundamental differences.

Examining each score separately gives you important information about yourself. Notice what each one indicates. Then look for your highest and lowest results among your six Need scores. These scores probably represent your most compelling interpersonal needs.

The way the scores combine also yields meaningful insights into your personality. This aspect of the score interpretations is reflected in Part 3 of this guide, which gives brief descriptions for combinations of Expressed and Wanted scores.

## Interaction Among Your Scores

Your Involvement, Influence, and Connection scores interact and affect one another. While there are many possible sets of score combinations, the fol-

lowing examples may help you better understand this concept.

### Example 1

If you have scores indicating

- High Wanted Connection (need for a lot of warmth and caring in one-to-one relationships) *and*
- Low Expressed Involvement (reluctance to initiate contact with others)

... *the result may be* that you find it difficult to meet individuals with whom you wish to form closer relationships.

### Example 2

If you have scores indicating

- High Expressed Influence (need to exert responsibility and influence or to direct others) *and*
- Medium Expressed Connection (preferring to show a realistic amount of warmth and openness toward others)

... *the result may be* that others are more accepting of your direction because you show tact and understanding in your efforts to influence them.

### Example 3

If you have scores indicating

- High Expressed Involvement (participating actively in the group and behaving in ways that draw attention to yourself) *and*

- High Wanted Involvement (enjoying others' attention and wanting others to consider you a valued member) *and*
- Low Expressed Influence (preferring not to assume authority or responsibility in the group) *and*
- High Wanted Influence (wanting others to assume primary leadership for the group)

... *the result may be* that your active participation in groups could be misinterpreted as a desire to influence and lead.

These are only three examples of how a person's FIRO Business Need scores can interact with one another. The professional who administered your FIRO Business instrument should be able to explain the way your scores influence one another.

## Comments About Your Results

Like with any other self-report tool, your results on the FIRO Business instrument can be affected by a number of factors. These could include some of the following:

- Stress, mood at the time you took the instrument, or unusual personal circumstances
- Trying to answer as you would like to be rather than how you feel you truly are
- Trying to answer as you think someone else might want you to, or in ways that might seem appropriate in different employment situations
- Trying to impress someone else with the results
- Fear about what the results might say about you
- Not understanding the questions—for instance, because of cultural factors or language difficulty
- Being irritated by the way some of the questions are phrased or what might look like redundancy

- Other circumstances, such as having too little or too much time to complete the instrument, having a low opinion of personality questionnaires in general, or not taking this one seriously

In spite of these factors and their possible influence, most people who take the FIRO Business instrument more than once report very similar results from one administration to the next, regardless of the time interval between administrations. However, current life events can cause your scores to change, as can purposely changing your behavior habits.

Although the FIRO Business instrument is usually an excellent reflection of your interpersonal needs and actions, remember that it is neither an all-embracing personality indicator nor a measure of ability or intelligence. While it implicitly compares you with others, the FIRO Business instrument is based on the assumption that people have different needs and behaviors in relation to their interaction with others.

## Responding to Your Results

Your FIRO Business results give you a snapshot of yourself though the lens of your interpersonal needs. Remember that, in themselves, there are no good or bad FIRO Business profiles. It is the way you respond to your basic needs and manage the appropriateness of your behavior that makes your interpersonal behavior effective and satisfying for you. Also remember that while some profiles may seem more appropriate than others within a given job or work group, the FIRO Business instrument does not measure skills. The instrument is therefore most valuable in individual development, giving you a chance to review and change your behavior if you wish. When you examine your results, here are some useful things to consider:

- Do your results seem to represent an accurate picture of how you really are? Can you think of specific examples of the behavior described?
- In what ways do your results not represent important ways you behave?

- If you feel angry or defensive about a particular score, perhaps you think it is accurate but do not like what the interpretation says about you. Alternatively, you may decide that the results are not accurate in describing you.
- Do your FIRO Business results highlight ways in which others see you that you wish to change? Or do you choose not to change your behavior?
- What can your results tell you about the way you act in trying to fulfill your needs for being part of a group, for control, and for closer relationships?
- It is also a good idea to compare your FIRO Business results with data from other reputable instruments, such as the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) and *Strong Interest Inventory*® instruments, and to look at common themes and areas of difference.
- Your insights from the FIRO Business assessment can be enriched by discussion with a knowledgeable and experienced practitioner, who should be able to bring your results to life in a way that is beyond the scope of this introductory booklet.

**CONNECTION****SCORES****HIGH EXPRESSED (65–100)****LOW WANTED (0–35)***Reflects—*

- How warm and friendly you are with others
- How supportive and familiar you want others to be with you

**In General**

Your Connection results suggest that you demonstrate a great deal of warmth and familiarity to others—yet you keep most of your relationships on a just-friendly basis. While you probably talk openly to people about personal issues, you may not really care whether they tell you about themselves. Even so, people are likely to think of you as friendly and encouraging. You probably believe that people need and respond to your expressions of warmth and diplomacy, and when you behave in a friendly way it not only makes them happier but also helps you satisfy your own desires. While your personal warmth can be a charming asset, it may also pose difficulties. People may take your friendliness as an invitation to be closer than you prefer, and this in turn may lead to their making emotional demands on you that you find difficult to manage.

**At Work**

You probably enjoy working in an environment where you can use your warmth and friendliness yet not be expected to establish close ties. You may be skilled at making, but not necessarily maintaining, personal contacts. Jobs that capitalize on your ability to put people at ease or charm them most likely suit you well, while jobs that require you to maintain deeper or longer-term close relationships are probably not for you.

**At Your Best**

Operating at your best means not only honoring your own needs but also altering your behavior when it is appropriate. Some of the examples below illustrate being true to the typical needs of someone in this score category. Others illustrate ways to adjust behavior in order to operate optimally. Given your scores, you probably function best when you are able to do the following:

- Establish relationships with people who enjoy your openness and warmth but who do not necessarily offer the same familiarity to you

- Find paid or volunteer situations where you are respected for your ability to form quick connections with others but where you are not expected to maintain long-term relationships
- Maintain some distance from people in ways that do not upset or hurt them
- Use discrimination in offering reassurance, praise, openness, and warmth
- Develop the ability to listen for the feelings of close friends and coworkers

**Areas of Possible Challenge for You**

You may feel comfortable with your scores and have no wish to change anything in your behavior. On the other hand, your results can be used to understand common problems that might limit the effectiveness of your relationships or interfere with some of your other important needs. Check any items below that you wish to consider for further attention and action:

- It may be hard for you to make your real wishes clear early on in a relationship.
- Others may think that you are manipulative in one-to-one relationships.
- You may need to overcome the suspicion that when other people demonstrate warmth to you, they are not sincere.
- The fear of being hurt if you develop real depth, loyalty, and long-term rapport may cause you to avoid close relationships.
- It is possible that your reluctance to seek mutual closeness is based on underlying doubts about how likable you really are.

## CONNECTION

### SCORES

**HIGH EXPRESSED (65–100)**

**MEDIUM WANTED (36–64)**

### Reflects—

- How warm and friendly you are with others
- How supportive and familiar you want others to be with you

### In General

Your Connection results suggest that you enjoy a realistic amount of closeness in your relations with others; however, your manner may imply that you want to develop closer connections than is really the case. You probably don't mind making the first move or openly sharing your feelings with others, yet you are apt to want only a moderate amount of support and warmth from them. People probably see you as very friendly, supportive, cooperative, open, and easy to confide in. They may be completely unaware that you need less closeness than you indicate. You very possibly believe that others appreciate and expect a great deal of empathy, reassurance, and consideration from you, so you respond to their needs with expressions of warmth. While your responsiveness may be an asset in many cases, it can also be confusing or hurtful to others if you fail to follow up on your friendliness.

### At Work

You may enjoy working in an environment where there is an easygoing, companionable atmosphere. You will probably want to use your abilities to put others at ease, to comfort them, or to inspire them with encouragement and praise. However, being personally involved with others on a frequent basis is not apt to appeal to you. People at work may mistakenly think you want to extend your relationship with them into your personal life, or they may interpret your friendliness as an invitation to claim more of your time than you wish.

### At Your Best

Operating at your best means not only honoring your own needs but also altering your behavior when it is appropriate. Some of the examples below illustrate being true to the typical needs of someone in this score category. Others illustrate ways to adjust behavior in order to operate optimally. Given your scores, you probably function best when you are able to do the following:

- Moderate the amount of warmth and closeness you show to others so that it better matches your own needs
- Use your social skills in a job or situation where your warmth and charm can assist you in making contacts quickly
- Reserve your emotional energy for the circle of colleagues, family, and friends that you really care about
- Find environments where there is plenty of open communication without too much emotional intensity
- Use discretion about how much you disclose to others

### Areas of Possible Challenge for You

You may feel comfortable with your scores and have no wish to change anything in your behavior. On the other hand, your results can be used to understand common problems that might limit the effectiveness of your relationships or interfere with some of your other important needs. Check any items below that you wish to consider for further attention and action:

- It is possible that others think of you as manipulative in your relationships and that your charm is only a way of getting what you want.
- Because you appear so open and warm, others may seek your help and attention more than you like.
- You may feel that others are not always sincere when they demonstrate warmth to you.
- You may find it difficult to be clear in your own mind, and to make it clear to others, about how many close relationships you can manage.
- It may be hard for you to make time for solitude and reflection without causing offense to others.

**CONNECTION****SCORES****HIGH EXPRESSED (65–100)****HIGH WANTED (65–100)***Reflects—*

- How warm and friendly you are with others
- How supportive and familiar you want others to be with you

**In General**

Your Connection results suggest that you clearly enjoy a great deal of warmth and closeness in your one-to-one relationships. You are likely to have a genuine interest in others and to feel comfortable with a high degree of self-disclosure and warmth early in a relationship. It probably gives you pleasure to encourage and please others, to do considerate things, to show your appreciation to them, and to have them return the same kind of behavior. You are likely to want plenty of attention in your close relationships and may be disappointed if you do not get it. Although you are apt to do everything you can to establish individual closeness, your need may fall short of fulfillment because it is so great. Even so, your belief in a positive outcome is likely to prevail.

**At Work**

You may prefer working in an environment where getting to know people and showing personal interest in them is valued—and be least comfortable in one where impersonality is the rule. You probably want to use your abilities to make others feel comfortable, welcome, or valuable. You are likely to appreciate feedback, reassurance, support, and praise and may try to motivate others in the same way. Resolving conflicts or encouraging others is apt to come easily to you.

**At Your Best**

Operating at your best means not only honoring your own needs but also altering your behavior when it is appropriate. Some of the examples below illustrate being true to the typical needs of someone in this score category. Others illustrate ways to adjust behavior in order to operate optimally. Given your scores, you probably function best when you are able to do the following:

- Work in an environment where closeness is accepted or even expected
- Develop a wider range of emotional responses to others—including more impersonal kinds of behavior where it is appropriate

- Show respect for those who are more private than you by being less emotional and by not discussing personal issues
- Think twice before quickly disclosing your personal thoughts to others
- Get involved in work or other activities that focus on making people feel comfortable or welcome
- Surround yourself with people who are comfortable giving and receiving warmth and care

**Areas of Possible Challenge for You**

You may feel comfortable with your scores and have no wish to change anything in your behavior. On the other hand, your results can be used to understand common problems that might limit the effectiveness of your relationships or interfere with some of your other important needs. Check any items below that you wish to consider for further attention and action:

- Many people may legitimately prefer less closeness than you display—and may find your easy self-disclosure, your need for personal connection, and your desire for frequent reassurance overwhelming.
- You may experience disappointment because the other person in an important relationship cannot accept the intensity you need and offer.
- You may find it difficult to maintain perspective on where the boundaries of professionalism are and to not cross these boundaries with inappropriate displays of closeness.
- You may need to be alert to the danger of smothering people and depriving them of the opportunities to be self-sufficient.
- Overcoming some people's opinions that your warmth is not sincere may be difficult for you.