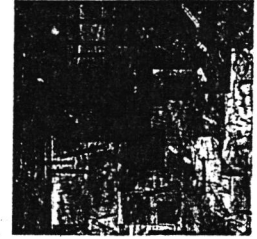




Applying Type



Type and Career Choice

People tend to be attracted to, and have the most satisfaction in, careers that provide them with opportunities to express and use their psychological type preferences:

- If your daily work needs the kind of perception you naturally prefer, you are likely to handle the job more effectively and find it more energizing.
- If your daily work needs the kind of decision making that comes most naturally to you, your decisions are likely to be made more quickly and confidently.

The table at the top of p. 33 suggests some of the careers most attractive to people of different types. The *kind* of work a person chooses within a field may relate to the Extraversion–Introversion preference; and how people organize and complete the tasks in their particular job is often influenced by their J–P preference. For example, Introverted Sensing Thinking Judging (ISTJ) people usually like to organize facts and principles, which is useful in a career such as law, while Extraverted Sensing Thinking Judging (ESTJ) people prefer to organize their environment (people, objects, tasks), which is very useful in careers such as business and industry.

In thinking about career choice, it is important to remember that psychological type doesn't explain everything, and that other factors such as interests and skills need to be included in the decisions. *All types make contributions in every career field.*

Type and Relationships

The principles for using psychological type to enhance relationships are the fundamental values within which the MBTI is appropriately used:

- Recognition and respect for differences between people
- Appreciation for the value the differences bring

Intimate Relationships

In intimate relationships, the best use of type knowledge is for understanding and appreciating the differing gifts of your partner and yourself. The relationship can be built on recognizing that each person has a right to remain different and on the willingness to concentrate on the virtues of the other's type, rather than the weaknesses.

There are no “good” or “bad” combinations of types in intimate relationships. Each particular combination—all preferences in common, all preferences opposite, or a mixture—has its unique joys and problems.

Those with similar preferences usually

- Communicate easily
- Understand each other's perspective
- Share common values

They also, however, may share the same blind spots, and often one will feel pushed to play out “missing” preferences in the relationship. Resentment can result when one of a couple is able to operate within the preferred type, while the other must frequently act in nonpreferred and less comfortable ways.

Those with different preferences

- May sometimes have trouble understanding each other
- May disagree and argue about priorities
- May find their interests leading in different directions

They also, however, may experience the continuing joy and vitality of their differences and may find themselves developing their own nonpreferred areas.

Relationships with Children

It is particularly important to apply the ethics and values of type to relationships with children. Often, in trying to meet a child's needs, adults assume that what has worked best for them will also work best for the child. Lack of validation or acceptance of one's preferences as a child can lead to low self-esteem, defiance, or an adaptation that creates strain. Using knowledge gained through the MBTI can identify the type-related needs of children and allow adults to support them in expressing their natural preferences.

Type and Learning Styles

From their earliest years, individuals demonstrate different ways in which they learn best:

- Some children prefer to get careful, complete instructions before they begin a new game or task.
- Some like to observe others playing with a toy before they try it themselves.
- Some like to plunge in right away and learn as they go along.
- Some prefer to learn while interacting with others.
- Some prefer to focus by themselves.
- Some like to know all the rules and follow them.
- Some like to create their own rules and change them frequently.

Psychological type identifies some of the normal differences in learning styles, providing a rational structure for designing activities for children and adults that encourage their learning—whatever style they prefer.

Individuals can develop skills in their nonpreferred areas. Such development is beneficial in creating the balance adults need to function effectively in the world. However, Jung's model suggest that people will be at their best when they have effective command of their dominant function. To develop facility and confidence in the dominant function, children need encouragement and support for learning in their most natural, preferred ways. Adults learn most effectively, especially when approaching new or difficult topics, when they are given opportunities to use their most effective learning style.

Though each preference has some predictable effects on learning styles, the most significant difference is between

Sensing and Intuition. Sensing types can be confused by an Intuitive type's use of metaphor and symbolic language, as well as by the Intuitive tendency to associate from one idea to another. For Sensing types, the associations often leave gaps in the development of understanding. Intuitive types, on the other hand, can become restless and inattentive with the tendency of Sensing types to carefully build toward conclusions, to include a wealth of concrete facts and specific detail, and to focus on present reality or past experience. The table below summarizes some of the most important patterns related to learning styles of the MBTI function pairs.

The E-I and J-P dichotomies influence learning styles as well:

- Extraverted types learn by talking things out and interacting with others.
- Introverted types need time, quiet, and space for internal processing.
- Judging types want structure, an orderly schedule, a time frame, and closure on one topic before going on to the next.
- Perceiving types want flexibility, the opportunity to explore and to follow interesting tangential information as it comes up.

Adding the effects of the E-I and J-P dichotomies clarifies the dramatic differences in learning styles between the Sensing Judging types (ISTJ, ISFJ, ESTJ, and ESFJ) and the Sensing Perceiving types (ISTP, ISFP, ESTP, and ESFP). For the SJs, Sensing is usually used in the Introverted attitude, while SPs use Sensing in the Extraverted world. Both prefer the practical and realistic; however, SJs need structure, clarity, and order, while SPs need action, freedom, and spontaneity. Traditional learning environments are all too often ill-suited to the needs of the SP.

Learning Styles Associated with the MBTI Functions

People who prefer:	ST	SF	NF	NT
<i>Interested in:</i>	Facts about real things—useful, practical information about everyday activities	Useful, practical information about people, and a friendly environment	New ideas about how to understand people, symbolic and metaphorical activities	Theories and global explanations about why the world works the way it does
<i>Learn best by:</i>	Doing, hands-on activities	Doing, hands-on activities with others	Imagining, creating with others, writing	Categorizing, analyzing, applying logic
<i>Need:</i>	Precise, step-by-step instructions; logical, practical reasons for doing something	Precise, step-by-step instructions; frequent, friendly interaction and approval	General direction, with freedom to do it their own creative way; frequent positive feedback	To be given a big problem to solve, an intellectual challenge, and then to be allowed to work it out
<i>Want from teacher:</i>	To be treated fairly	Sympathy, support, individual recognition	Warmth, enthusiasm, humor, individual recognition	To be treated with respect, to respect the teacher's competence

Using Type in Organizations

Use of the MBTI personality inventory in organizations has grown rapidly in the last decade, as leaders and employees have come to recognize its practical usefulness in solving organizational problems. Psychological type as identified by the MBTI provides the following organizational benefits:

1. MBTI results and interpretation focus on how people take in information (perception) and how they prioritize that information to make decisions (judgment)—basic personality facets that underlie most work tasks and training.
2. MBTI type enhances people's clarity about and comfort with their own work styles while constructively identifying possible blind spots and areas of vulnerability.
3. Type theory and the MBTI give a logical, coherent structure for understanding normal differences between people in a host of work-related areas—communication styles, working on teams, project management, time management, preferred supervision style and work environment, responses and needs during organizational change, preferred learning styles, and many more.
4. Type theory presents a dynamic picture of individual functioning, including recognition of the dominant function as the basis of motivation and identification of customary responses to stress.
5. Type theory outlines a model of lifelong individual development, and the MBTI identifies likely paths for development, useful with work groups and in coaching individual leaders and managers.
6. The MBTI provides a perspective and data for analyzing organizational culture, management structures, and other organizational systems.
7. The MBTI and supporting type resources demonstrate the value added by diversity within the organization or work group. This ethic—the constructive use of differences—is particularly applicable in today's global and diverse organizations.

Common Organizational Uses

In addition to increasing self-understanding and development, organization development professionals and their clients have found value in using the MBTI to deal more effectively with organizational concerns such as the following:

- Improving communication
- Enhancing problem solving and decision making
- Dealing with conflict
- Planning, implementing, and managing organizational change
- Recognizing and managing stress
- Team development activities
- Leadership and management development and coaching
- Analyzing organizational tendencies

In all these areas, the positive and affirming nature of the MBTI encourages self-disclosure and respect for differences. It facilitates negotiating what each individual needs in order to work at his or her best and gives leaders a rational structure for understanding the needs of the people of the organization.

Applying Ethical Principles in Organizations

Myers and Briggs' basic purpose in developing the MBTI was to give individuals access to the self-understanding that comes from recognizing one's own preferred ways of functioning. Organizational uses of the MBTI need to keep that focus foremost at all times.

It is important to ensure that completing the inventory is voluntary for all employees, that results belong to respondents and will be shared only as they wish them to be, and that type is never used to select, promote, or fire individuals. Failure to thoroughly institutionalize and uphold these principles is a violation of professional ethics.

Additional Information

The basic resource for organizational use of the MBTI is *Introduction to Type in Organizations*, by S. K. Hirsh and J. M. Kummerow (1998). The last few years have seen the publication of a host of books and training materials related to all the above applications. The *MBTI Manual* (1998) lists resources for practitioners related to specific organizational uses.

Type and Problem Solving

Type can be used to improve problem solving in organizational settings, especially with intact work groups and teams; it can also provide a guide to help individuals make better decisions.

According to type theory, the best decisions use both kinds of perception (S and N) in order to gather all useful information and both kinds of judgment (T and F) to ensure that all factors have been weighed. Because we prefer one particular kind of perception and one kind of judgment, we are likely to focus on our preferred ways and lose the positive contributions of our nonpreferred ways:

- Those preferring Sensing may overrely on their experience and on how things have been done, forgetting to look for new options and neglecting the wider implications.
- Those preferring Intuition may find a new theory so exciting that they forget to consider experience and neglect the realities of the resources available.
- Those preferring Thinking may focus so exclusively on the logical, efficient solution that they forget to consider the impacts on individual people and assessment in terms of values.
- Those preferring Feeling may be so caught up in empathizing with people and their own personal values that they forget to look at logical consequences or find it difficult to make hard but necessary decisions.

Using all the perspectives identified by type can feel awkward at first, but with practice this approach is likely to result in sounder, more considered decisions. In the beginning, it is useful to follow the steps outlined below.

1. Define the problem by using Sensing to see it realistically. Avoid wishful thinking.

Typical Sensing Questions

- What are the facts?
- What have you or others done to resolve this or similar problems?
- What has worked or not worked?
- What resources do you have available?

2. Consider all the possibilities using Intuitive perception. Brainstorm. Don't leave out a possibility because it doesn't seem practical. You can evaluate later.

Typical Intuitive Questions

- What other ways are there to look at this?
- What do the data imply?
- What are the connections to larger issues or other people?
- What theories address this kind of problem?
- What are all the possible ways to approach the problem?

3. Weigh the consequences of each course of action by using Thinking judgment. In a detached and impersonal way, analyze the pros and cons of each alternative.

Typical Thinking Questions

- What are the pros and cons of each option?
- What are the logical consequences of each?
- What are the consequences of not deciding and acting?
- What impact would deciding on each option have on other priorities?
- Would this option apply equally and fairly to everyone?

4. Weigh the alternatives using Feeling judgment. Assess how each option fits with your values and the values of others. Use empathy to understand the impact of each option on the people involved.

Typical Feeling Questions

- How does each alternative fit with my values?
- How will the people involved be affected?
- How will each option contribute to harmony and positive interactions?
- How can I support people with this decision?

5. Make a final decision, based on your information and assessments.

6. Act on the decision.

7. Evaluate the results. Was it a good decision? Did you consider all the facts, possibilities, impacts, and consequences? How can you improve your decision making in the future?

Keep remembering to use the steps, and don't hesitate to ask for help from people with perspectives different from yours. The process may take longer this way, but the result is likely to be more sound.

