

WORKTypes

By Jean Kummerow, Nancy Barger and Linda Kirby.

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In 'WORKTypes', three Myers-Briggs experts look at common work situations and activities, such as meetings, leadership, time management, team-working, handling change, stress and conflict...and suggest practical strategies to solve the day-to-day problems that arise in any workplace.

A common enough approach in popular business literature. The difference is that they do it from a 'Type' perspective, showing that conflict and misunderstandings at work may not be simply a clash of personalities, more a clash of 'Type' and different preferences for the way things are done.

If you're a newcomer to Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), it is a psychological assessment tool designed to help you to identify some significant personal preferences in the way you:

- Receive and direct your energy – is it outward to others (**E**xtraversion) or inward to the self (**I**ntroversion)?
- Take in or gather information – do you pay attention to what is actual and real (**S**ensing) or to the 'big picture', patterns and connections (**I**Ntuition)?
- Make decisions – through logical, objective analyses (**T**hinking) or through applying person-centred values (**F**eeling)?
- Organise your life – through plans and structures (**J**udging) or through spontaneity and flexibility (**P**erceiving).

A couple of quick health warnings: the above is an extremely superficial description of a psychological model which has spawned a whole industry of practitioners and a wealth of research. Secondly, the word 'preferences' is critical – the person with an introverted preference can still perform superbly as a people-person, but their *preference* would be to have time to themselves to recharge and reflect.

At work, these preferences could manifest themselves as follows...

- ▶ You need peace and quiet to work effectively (**I**) and might lock yourself away in a quiet meeting-room; while others thrive from the interruptions that are part and parcel of an open-plan office (**E**).
- ▶ You learn best by getting stuck in and trying out new things (**S**); while your colleague prefers to sit and read up on the subject first (**N**).

- ▶ You feel too much time is wasted on consultation rather than getting on with the job in hand (T); whereas the boss thinks she should sound out everyone likely to be affected by a decision (F).
- ▶ You prefer to have the coming week fully planned out (J); while an associate likes to take life as it comes and leave room for the unexpected (P).

The underlying message of 'WORKTypes' is 'different strokes for different folks' – what works for me doesn't necessarily work for you. Obvious perhaps – but sometimes the obvious needs spelling out.

So, if you read just one book on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, make it this one. It will certainly make you look at your colleagues or clients in a new light and, perhaps, work more effectively with them.

This book review was written by Margaret Cain of M Squared Corporate Communications. For more information on how Margaret can help you to promote your business, please call 0118 969 9389, email margaret@m2cc.co.uk or visit www.m2cc.co.uk.