

## Team Building and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

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The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one of the most trusted and universally used measures of “well person” personalities available today. General uses are reported in counseling and clinical settings, educational and learning settings, religious and spiritual contexts, and employee training, management and organizational development in both the public and private sectors (Sample, 2017).

One of the most extensive uses of the MBTI in organizations continues to be for developing leaders, managers, and organizations and for training teams to manage the change process in organizations. Extraverted types, thinking types, and judging types were over-represented when compared to the general population. Lower-level managers were more likely sensing types and proportions of intuitive types increased with succeeding levels of management, and intuitives predominated among executives. Organizations can be “psychologically typed” which enables employees and stakeholders to more effectively characterize the nature of a business, public agency, or nongovernmental organization (Hirsh, Hirsh, Hirsh, 2012).

### Teambuilding

A team is a group of two or more people working together to accomplish a task. With the explosion of knowledge in the information age and the greater interdependence of different work groups, it has become clear that team members need to work together more effectively to align information and people in order to accomplish tasks. In the past, emphasis was put on direct interactions between manager and an employee. Teams usually had one acknowledged leader from whom each person took work direction. Today many teams are cross-functional and composed of peers with no one having direct authority over others. Thus, team members may be less certain of their respective roles. The MBTI can help team members manage these roles and contribute to the team in their own unique style (Hirsh and Kise, 2006).

A team that works well together is not a chance event. When team members understand their styles and those of others, they are likely to be more effective. For example, on sports teams, a person who plays his or her own position contributes more readily to goal accomplishment than one who tries to play all positions. As a team member, a business can use type preferences to better understand the self and others and how to function more effectively in a team setting. Additionally, a business can use psychological type to understand team members and the contributions they may make to the team. A business can also analyze the collective personality preferences of all team members and can look for potential areas of strength and limitations (Sample, 2008).

According to McCaulley (1975), certain consistencies about teams allow for predictions based on psychological type:

- The more similar the types on a team, the sooner the team members will understand each other; the more different the types, the slower the understanding.
- Groups with high similarity will reach quicker decisions but are more likely to make errors due to inadequate representation of all viewpoints. Groups with many different types will reach decisions more slowly (and painfully) but may reach better decisions because more viewpoints are covered.
- Leadership roles may shift as the tasks to be accomplished require the skills of different types on the team.
- Team members who are opposite on all four preferences may have special problems in achieving understanding; members who share two preferences from each of the opposites may be “translators.”
- The person who is the only representative of a preference (e.g., the only Introvert) may be seen as “different” from the other team members.
- Teams that come to appreciate and use different types may experience less conflict.

- Teams that are “one-sided” (i.e., have few different types) will succeed if they use different types outside the team as resources or if they make the effort to use their own less-developed functions as required by the tasks. One-sided teams may fail if they overlook aspects or problems that other types would have pointed out or if they stay “rigidly true to type” and fail to use other resources.
- Good decisions will be made when basic facts and realities have been addressed (Sensing), when new possibilities have been discovered (Intuition), when unforeseen inconsistencies have been exposed (Thinking), and when important values have been protected (Feeling).

### Ethical Guidelines for Using the MBTI with Teams

Because the MBTI is a powerful tool, it is important that organizations follow these ethical guidelines whenever the MBTI is used for teambuilding (Hirsh and Kise, 2006):

- Type preferences are best used to understand oneself first and then to understand others.
- Resist stereotyping individuals based on their MBTI type. There is great variation within type.
- Remember that the MBTI indicates preferences, not behavior. We sometimes use behaviors that are not based on actual preferences to adapt to specific situations.
- Avoid using the MBTI alone as the basis of selection for team membership or team task assignments. Remember that the MBTI sorts preferences; it does not measure abilities, success, or intelligence.
- Use the MBTI as a starting point for discussion and understanding, not as an end in of itself. The purpose of the MBTI is to help people recognize their own gifts and to value those of others. It can prompt valuable discussion among team members and lead to more effective working relationships.

### Objectives for Teambuilding

Teambuilding with the MBTI serves many purposes, objectives and valued business results. Consider the following when developing and facilitating teambuilding with the MBTI:

- Get better acquainted with one another, the team leadership, and the team climate
- Become aware of individual and team preferences for taking in information and making decisions
- Discover individual and team problem-solving styles
- Encourage the exchange of viewpoints and perspectives
- Analyze the team’s strengths, blind spots, and areas for improvement
- Learn and practice better ways of working together
- Unify the team around a common purpose, understanding, and vision for the future
- Develop action plans for individual and team growth

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### **MBTI Teambuilding Workshop**

**Prior to the workshop**      Participants complete the online version of the MBTI prior to workshop.

**7:30 am to 8:00 am**      **Continental breakfast**

**8:00 am**      **Workshop Overview**  
 Introductions  
 Purpose of Workshop  
 Shared Guidelines  
 Canvassing Team Expectations  
 Review the Agenda

<b>8:30 am</b>	<b>Introduction to the MBTI</b> Concept of Preference Self-selection of Preferences
<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Mini break</b>
<b>9:35 am</b>	<b>Introduction to the MBTI® Assessment Tool and Best-Fit Type Process</b> Type Verification – Predict MBTI Type Return MBTI Results Determine Best-Fit Type Build a Team Type Table
<b>10: 45 am</b>	<b>Mini break</b>
<b>10:45 am</b>	<b>MBTI Team Analysis</b> Living Type Table Exercise Lens Approach and Activity Tuckman’s Phases of Team Development
<b>12:00 am</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>1:00 pm</b>	<b>Exploration of Team Member Interview Data</b>
<b>1:45 pm</b>	<b>Teambuilding Activities (any two activities identified by the team)</b> Communication and Engagement Leadership Initiating/Sustaining Change Problem Solving and Decision Making Conflict Resolution Stress
<b>3:15 pm</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>3:30 pm</b>	<b>Review of Team Strengths and Challenges</b>
<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>Action Planning</b>
<b>4:45 pm</b>	<b>Wrap-Up and Evaluation</b>
<b>5:00 pm</b>	<b>Adjournment</b>

## References

- Hirsh, E., Hirsh, K. W., & Hirsh, S. K. (2012). *MBTI teambuilding program*. Sunnyvale, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Hirsh, S. K., Kise, J. A. G. (2006). *Work it out: using personality type to improve team performance*. Mountain View, CA: Davies-Black Publishers.
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