

# MBTI® FAQ

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## What is MBTI?

MBTI is a self-report instrument that reports on 4 preference pairs or dichotomies, of your personality. Each dichotomy consisting of 2 opposite ends or poles. The 4 dichotomies are:

- The direction of your energy and attention (**E**xtraversion or **I**ntroversion)
- The way you prefer to take in information (**S**ensing or **I**Ntuition)
- The way you prefer to make decisions (**T**hinking or **F**eeling)
- How you like to live your life in your outer world (**J**udging process or **P**erceiving process)

Each preference in the 4 dichotomies is represented by a single letter resulting in a 4 letter type code. The theory behind MBTI says that we use both sides of ourselves at different times, but not both at once and not with equal confidence and that we are innately predisposed towards one. People tend to develop behaviors, skills and attitudes associated with their type. When we use our preferred methods, we are generally at our best and feel most competent, natural and energetic. It is similar to handedness. A right-handed person can use their left-hand, it just may not feel as natural, but with practice they may become very good at using their non-preferred hand. The MBTI instrument identifies valuable differences between normal, healthy people.

## Who developed the MBTI instrument?

The MBTI instrument was first developed in 1943 by Katharine Cook Briggs (1875-1968) and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers (1897-1980). They studied Swiss Psychologist Carol Jung's (1875-1961) ideas on psychological type and interpreted and refined his ideas to understand people around them. Myers sought to create a tool that would make this information accessible to others.

## What was Jung's theory?

Jung's psychological type theory explained the differences between normal healthy people. Based on his observations, he concluded that differences in behavior result from people's inborn tendencies to use their minds in different ways. As people act on these tendencies they develop patterns of behavior.

## How many people use this instrument?

After more than 60 years of research the current MBTI assessment is the most widely used instrument for understanding normal personality differences. It is used by 1.5 million people each year and has been translated into more than 30 languages.

# MBTI® FAQ

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## Is the MBTI tool valid and reliable?

The Myers-Briggs instrument meets all requirements for psychological tests, and CPP (the Center for Applications of Psychological Type), the exclusive publisher of the Myers-Briggs instrument since 1975, freely publishes information substantiating its validity and reliability at [www.cpp.com/MBTIvalidity](http://www.cpp.com/MBTIvalidity) . The test-retest correlations for the most recent versions of Myers-Briggs are in the range of .57 to .81, which is considered quite good for psychometric assessments.

## What can it do for me?

MBTI can help you identify your unique gifts. The information provides an opportunity to learn more about you, your natural strengths and potential areas for growth. It helps you understand why you are a certain way. It also creates awareness and understanding about people and why they do and say the things they do.

## Can it tell me if I am crazy?

No, this instrument only looks at normal healthy behavior.

## Is there a best or worst personality type?

No. There are no right or wrong to each person preferences. Each type represents a valuable and reasonable way to be. Each type has its own potential strengths as well as potential blind spots.

## How can MBTI be used in organizations?

Improving productivity and teamwork requires team members to understand themselves and their co-workers better. The MBTI tool provides a framework and common language for understanding differences and helps identify what each team member brings to the team. Our understanding of and reaction to others is key to our effectiveness. Organizations use MBTI to:

- Help people in the organization understand themselves and their behaviors
- Recognize employee's unique contributions
- Leverage individuals' natural strengths
- Improve teamwork
- Understand and adapt to differences in leadership/management style
- Enhance effective communication between supervisors, peers, employees and customers
- Resolve conflict
- Coach individuals
- Skill development in areas of time management, conflict management, sales and more
- Career development

# MBTI® FAQ

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## **Can MBTI be used to improve decision making and problem solving?**

Yes. Type can help both teams and individuals make better decisions. According to type theory the best decisions use both sides of your preference for taking in information (S and N) and both sides of your decision making preference (T and F) to confirm that all factors are being considered. We tend to focus on our way and lose the contributions of our nonpreferred way.

## **How can using MBTI at work be helpful?**

Learning, understanding and appreciating the differences each co-worker brings provides an opportunity to leverage those differences constructively. Applying type can move co-workers from irritation with differences to acceptance. Opposites can complement each other and balance decision making.

## **How can MBTI help me with my people interactions?**

Learning, understanding and adapting to a person's type can increase your personal effectiveness and improve your relationships with others.

## **How can MBTI be used in leadership development?**

Leadership research suggests that the best leaders are those who can skillfully adapt their styles to meet the needs of not only the situations they encounter, but the people they lead.

Understanding your personality type and how it influences your thinking, behavior and relationships will help you become a stronger leader – by helping you better:

- Understand yourself
- Manage your behavior
- And relate to others

## **How can using MBTI help me with time management?**

Time management is part of self-management. Self-management begins with knowing yourself. A key component to improving your time management skills is understanding the impact your preferences have on your ability to manage your time. Understanding yourself better will help you identify time management strategies and tactics that are more likely to work with your preferences.

## **How can I use MBTI in business development?**

If you can understand and identify the different personal-approach needs of your customer, you can increase your sales effectiveness. Personal approach can be the key factor that wins or loses you a sale. By focusing your attention on your customer's personal-approach needs you can:

- Understand how customers are different
- Hear the customer's needs and talk their language

# MBTI® FAQ

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- Build the relationship by developing trust through adapting your selling behaviors to match your customer's preference
- Build and maintain loyalty and long-term customers

## **How can MBTI be used in conflict?**

By incorporating type awareness, and particularly awareness of how people of the sixteen different personality types tend to present themselves in conflict, you can better strategize how to approach conflict, communicate when in conflict with others' and resolve conflict situations.

## **How can MBTI be used in career selection?**

People tend to be attracted to, and have the most satisfaction in careers that provide them with the opportunity to express and use their preferences. It is important to note that psychological type does not explain everything. It is also important to remember type is about preferences, not about knowledge, skills, interests or ability, which all should be considered in a career decision.

