



# Workspace and personality Type

A quick guide to creating a work environment that everyone will love

I'm only happy with our open plan because they provided focus rooms - where 40% of my work gets done. If we didn't have them, I'd be miserable!

I loathe open plan offices...

Other people's noise and enthusiasm distracts me when I need to be quiet.

I like being in an open office as it makes it easier to go to my colleagues and ask questions or discuss a topic we are working on.

Having lots of light and plants in the office is important to me.

I have to hot-desk so am not able to have any personal items, which I miss. However I enjoy the opportunity to sit next to someone new every day.

# Ever wondered what makes a **happy workplace**? Or whether the trend to open-plan offices and hot-desking suits some more than others?

As experts in personality, OPP teamed up with leading furniture manufacturers KI Europe to find out more about the links between personality Type and the environments in which we work.

An illustration of a stack of papers on the left and a bookshelf with several books on the right, both rendered in a stylized, flat design. The papers are white with orange outlines, and the books are in various colors (grey, blue, orange, black).

We surveyed  
311 people who  
knew their **MBTI®**  
**Type** – the world's  
most popular and  
well-known personality  
assessment.

The results reveal that different personality Types have different views about their workplace, and work more effectively when certain environmental conditions are met. We've come up with a few useful strategies for organising and designing office space to promote effective working for everyone.

# MBTI Type explained

The MBTI framework identifies four basic preferences that reveal how we see and interact with the world around us.

Each MBTI preference is represented by a letter (E for Extraversion, S for Sensing, etc), and these combine into the 16 MBTI Types, shown below.

EXTRAVERSION + INTROVERSION

Where do you get your energy from?

SENSING + INTUITION

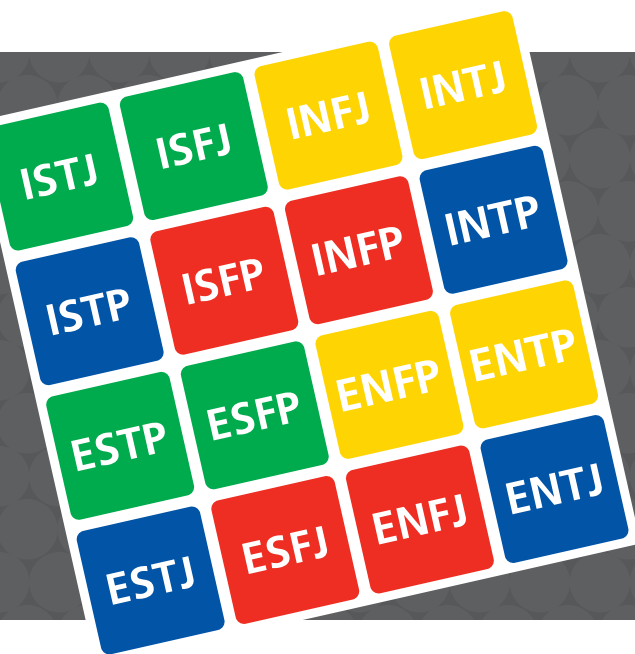
What kind of information do you prefer to use?

THINKING + FEELING

What process do you use to make decisions?

JUDGING + PERCEIVING

How do you deal with the world around you?



example

INFJ

INTJ

For each four-letter MBTI Type one letter is dominant – the characteristic that is used and trusted most – and this dominant preference is shared with one other MBTI Type. For example, **INFJ** and **INTJ** Types share a dominant preference for focusing on ideas, possibilities and the big picture, or **iNtuition**, and are highlighted in yellow accordingly.

We considered the workplace likes and dislikes of our sample in terms of the MBTI framework's eight dominant functions.

# Job **satisfaction** and **happiness** at work

“I have a great deal of job satisfaction”



“I’m very happy at work”



Are modern offices better suited to Extraverts than Introverts?  
And what other factors are important to different personality Types?

# dominant preference SENSING

## Conservers (ISTJ, ISFJ)

These personality types are practical, organised and thorough. They prefer a conventional workspace that they can keep neat and tidy and value storage solutions such as filing cabinets and trays to help them order and record their work.

Conservers are quiet and keep themselves focused on the task so may use walls and furniture to create their own defined area of the office.



Working with lots of people

Sitting still

EXTRAVERTS



## Activists (ESTP, ESFP)

Activists are spontaneous, social animals who enjoy the buzz of the workplace. They are energetic people who live in the moment, enjoying interaction with others to get tasks done with as much fun as possible.

They are unlikely to stay sitting at their desk for long periods, instead preferring to migrate to where things are happening.

# dominant preference INTUITION

## Visionaries (INFJ, INTJ)

These personality Types are creative and conceptual, and value workspaces that give them the opportunity to reflect and form thoughts in their heads. They enjoy gadgets and interesting objects to inspire original thinking.

They won't appreciate others in the office being loud and distracting and are likely to gravitate towards a quiet area in the office to think if they can't find it at their desk.

- 👍 Quirky workspaces
- Lack of collaborative space 🙅



EXTRAVERTS



INTROVERTS



Quiet areas and new gadgets

Loud people 🙅

## Explorers (ENTP, ENFP)

Also highly creative, Explorers relish opportunities to bounce ideas and possibilities off others and will love workspaces that enable them to brainstorm, perhaps using flip/charts or whiteboards.

As well as thriving in a shared office, they like an environment that's a bit quirky or different. Bright colours and interesting or unusual design will hold particular appeal.

# dominant preference THINKING

## Analysts (ISTP, INTP)

Independent, detached and objective, Analysts like to have their own desk or work area but are unfazed by the close proximity of co-workers.

While their workspace may appear cluttered and untidy, this is organised chaos; they will know the precise location of the document or file they need. Storage is not a priority.



👍 Their own desk, quiet  
'Clear desk' policy 🗑️



👍 Always being on the go

Separation of teams that  
should work together 🗑️

## Directors (ESTJ, ENTJ)

Decisive, clear and assertive, Directors like to be in charge, organise others, and make things happen.

Their workspace needs clear pathways to allow them to move around the office, and meeting space where they can gather their troops, to provide instruction.



# dominant preference FEELING

## Consciences (ISFP, INFP)

Although caring and compassionate, these personality Types usually like to work alone but will surround themselves with a collection of personal mementoes.

For them, office partitions are ideal, not only to keep the noise and distraction of others at a distance, but also to provide a surface upon which to keep those special items that mean something to them personally.

👍 Personalising  
their workspace

Having lots of  
people around 👎

INTROVERTS



EXTRAVERTS

👍 Their own desk

Hot desking 👎

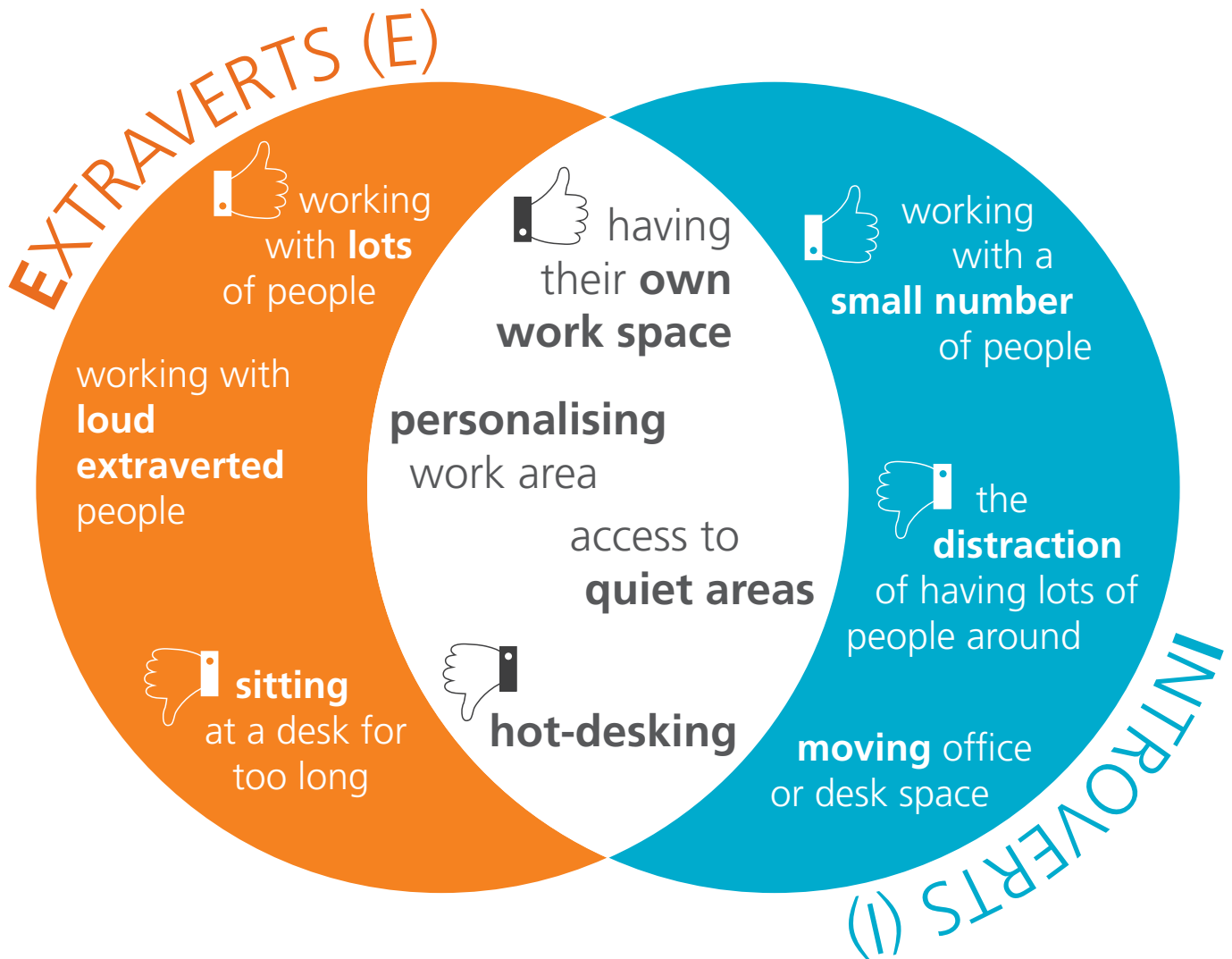
## Nurturers (ESFJ, ENFJ)

Supportive and friendly, Nurturers love to have colleagues around and enjoy interaction so may not care for partitions or cubicles.

They value the ability to personalise their workspace and may seek to encourage others to stop by for a chat and catch up.

# Meeting the needs of Introverts and Extraverts

As you might expect, our research found some key differences between the workplace likes and dislikes of Introverts and Extraverts. But surprisingly, there were some things that everybody agreed on.



# Tips for improving your workspace

Our research suggests that developing a workspace strategy that accommodates personality Type preferences in addition to aesthetic and financial considerations can go a long way to creating a happier, healthier and more productive workforce. Here are our tips for addressing five common issues:



Activists  
Directors



Visionaries  
Consciences

## Large, high density open plan layouts

While open-plan offices are space-saving and may be seen to encourage interaction, our study reveals that those working in open-plan offices were among the least satisfied.

### Tips

Create 'neighbourhoods' within open plan offices using partition panels, booths or storage. This will give the feel of smaller, more intimate, work zones and prevent large and noisy groups from overwhelming any one area.

Acoustic panels on storage units, walls and ceilings will also help to mitigate against noisy distractions in large open plan layouts.

# 2

## Hot-desking

Although an increasingly common solution to escalating real-estate costs, some people are more likely than others to enjoy the variety and interaction that hot-desking provides. It was distinctly unpopular with the majority of our respondents – particularly those with an Introverted or Judging preference.



Activists  
Directors



Conservers  
Analysts  
Nurturers

### Tips

Provide generous, mobile storage solutions enabling people to quickly and easily establish a productive, personalised workspace anywhere in the office.

Create variety in the scale and intimacy of hot desk zones to provide opportunity for individuals to find a workspace where they'll feel most comfortable, and will be most productive.



# 3



Conservers



Analysts  
Consciences  
Nurturers

## Clear desk policies

For reasons ranging from the need to express ones identity, to being reminded of a loved one or an important event, many people like to personalise their workspace. Those who are not allowed to do this are significantly less satisfied with their work environment and report less job satisfaction.

### Tips

Clear desk policies need not completely eliminate opportunities for employees to personalise their workspace. Provide personal storage so people can keep personal items around them but easily clear them away at the end of the day.



# 4



Explorers  
Visionaries  
Nurturers

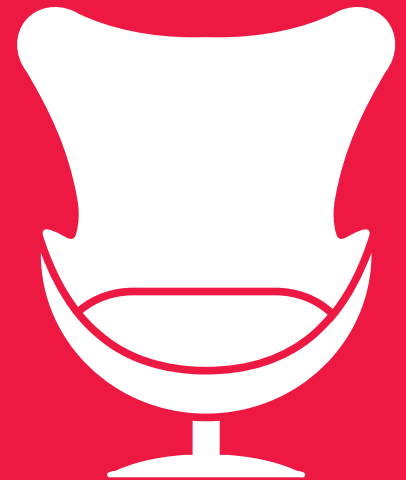


## 'Cool' offices

Well-designed, aesthetically pleasing offices were almost universally appreciated by those we surveyed and for many it does relate to job satisfaction. The presence of new gadgets, quirky objects and statement decor will be particularly highly valued by some.

### Tips

Invite those who value 'office cool' highly to suggest ways to improve and enhance the workspace. Balancing these suggestions with organisational needs can create facilities that will be used and appreciated by everyone. From quirky lounge chairs in breakout zones, to well-equipped dining and refreshment areas, or state-of-the-art technology such as 3D printers, workspace can instil a sense of pride and belonging amongst employees.





Visionaries  
Analysts  
Consciences

## Quiet areas

Noise and movement around the office is unavoidable but can be extremely distracting and impact productivity for some. Our research showed that even those who enjoy being around loud and enthusiastic colleagues also want space to get away from it all at times.

### Tips

Designate quiet zones to provide a much-needed oasis for employees. Small meeting rooms, breakout booths and informal seating areas will offer variety and choice for those looking for space to think.

Remember, 'quiet' doesn't necessarily mean 'private', so consider the requirements for both types of workspace.



## About OPP

OPP specialises in personality assessment, enabling people and organisations around the world to increase their effectiveness through the innovative application of psychological tools and techniques. Our market-leading psychometric instruments include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®, 16PF® and FIRO® assessments, and are used by thousands of organisations globally, including the majority of the FTSE 100, to deliver high-impact selection and personal development.

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## About KI Europe

KI Europe's furniture helps the world's leading organisations create working and learning spaces that people love. Designed and manufactured in the UK, our portfolio of functional, durable furniture forms the backbone of a physical environment that is space efficient, adaptable, productive, and promotes wellbeing. With its Headquarters in London, KI Europe is part of one of the world's largest independent furniture manufacturing groups, Krueger International, Inc.

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