

**Your best  
team-building tool?  
The power of personality**



Product designer Matt Eng started his [Ted Talk](#) with a story about Paul Azinger, former captain of the U.S. Ryder Cup golf team. Azinger had to build a team out of golfers—people accustomed to working as individuals. Instead of taking the traditional approach of pairing people based on their individual skill sets, he decided to try something innovative.

Azinger set out to pair golfers based not on their skill sets, but on their personalities. He believed that the better team members were able to communicate with one another, the more able they would be to “propel each other across the green for the win.” He was right, and his unconventional approach resulted in a tournament victory for the team.

Team members usually understand perfectly well what skillsets are needed and what the team’s goal is. But when they’re offered an opportunity to go beyond that, toward better connection and stronger communication, those who take advantage will become the core members of the team. Inevitably, some won’t find such a tight-knit team a good fit, and they may depart. However, what remains will be a highly effective, interconnected team ready to take on challenges as a coordinated unit.

Human connection is the magic ingredient in the happiest, most effective teams. Here’s how to build that connection based on personality.

## Use professional psychometric assessments

The first step in any personality-based team building comes in two parts: 1) for team members to understand themselves, and 2) to understand how they’re similar or different to others.

Team members must understand their own:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Personal workplace tendencies

Completing a scientifically-validated personality assessment, such as the [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®](#) (MBTI®), can help team members know themselves better and, consequently, break the code on maximizing their own potential as well as that of their teams.



Understanding your motivations, your own brand of emotional intelligence, and how you communicate with others is the natural point of departure for establishing relationships with other team members. Self-awareness breeds better awareness of others.

An [analysis conducted by Korn/Ferry International](#) aimed to identify “blind spots” in individuals’ characteristics. They defined a blind spot as a skill in which individuals saw themselves as highly effective, while their coworkers cited the same skill as a weakness.

The study showed that organizations that enable their employees to see their own blind spots can largely mitigate these weaknesses. The study also indicated that organizations able to retain employees with higher levels of self-awareness tend to exhibit higher rates of financial return.

A higher degree of self-awareness is also shown not only to benefit individuals, leaders, and their teams, but also has company-wide benefits such as:

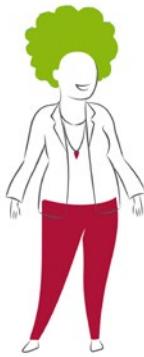
More effective employees



Better on-the-job relationships



Higher skills in recognizing and managing emotion



Lower levels of workplace stress



# Learn how and what different team members contribute

Individual team members offer distinct contributions to a team. Identifying each person's personality type—and characteristics of each—gives leaders a good starting point for understanding how the team operates and how they could work best together.

Let's look at three examples of MBTI personality types and how each fits and often behaves in a team.

## ENFJ

ENFJ types have preferences for Extraversion, Intuition, Feeling, and Judging. They tend to be adept at working closely with other members of a team, respecting others' opinions and values, and building consensus.

As leaders, ENFJ types tend to be inspiring individuals capable of getting the most out of a team. Sometimes referred to as "compassionate facilitators," ENFJs are empathetic, collaborative, friendly, and can be quite persuasive.

As a member of a team, the ENFJ type excels at a variety of workplace roles. They can be warm, friendly, and show an affinity for making a professional environment better for others, leading to greater productivity. Their extraverted orientation means they're adaptable and get their energy by interacting with others. However, ENFJ types will probably never be content in a situation where their teammates are abrasive or under a lot of stress, regardless of how much they might otherwise enjoy the job itself. On teams, those preferring ENFJ often play the role of confidant, or the cheerleader with occasional encouraging words.



# ESTJ

Another extraverted personality type are those preferring ESTJ (Extraversion, Sensing, Thinking, Judging). They enjoy being an integral part of their workplace. And they often want to be part of something greater and more important than themselves, coming to work ready to add value to their organization. ESTJs prefer structure and predictability, and when they find an employer who will provide it, they're more likely to stick around and be happy in their position.

Most ESTJ types won't be as fulfilled in a position that lacks structure and requires lots of creative thinking. Give them authority and autonomy and they can work amazing results by organizing people, systems, and resources. To keep ESTJ types happy on the team, create an organized, structured environment free of frequent, unnecessary changes, turnover, or upheaval.



# ISTJ

The ISTJ types (Introversion, Sensing, Thinking, Judging) take their jobs seriously. They come to work prepared to give their maximum effort and focus. ISTJ types typically aren't worn down by expending so much energy on their tasks. On the contrary, they thrive in situations that call for a sense of duty and dedication. ISTJ workers enjoy strict routine and structure in the workplace, and often will play the devil's advocate on teams. Their preference for Introversion (getting energy by spending time alone) is paired with extraverted Thinking, and the combination generally means an ISTJ as part of a team is going to get the job done, whatever it takes.

Those preferring ISTJ don't care for change and may even try to avoid or push back against it. This can present a challenge for teams undergoing some sort of evolution or drastic change. Uncertainty in the workplace can cause major stress to all personality types, but can be especially difficult for this personality type. However, because ISTJs are so dedicated, they'll tend to stick around even if they may be somewhat unhappy in a particular position. For teams that need someone to hold the line, enforce rules, and hold others accountable, the ISTJ types shine in that role.

## Recognize your whole team's strengths and vulnerabilities

Just as individuals have strengths and vulnerabilities, so do teams. After you've learned more about individual MBTI personality types, you can map all those personality types into a team type. This way you can look at each of the different personality preferences and see what preferences are more dominant on a team or what perspectives you might be lacking.

[Want to see how this works in real life?](#) Check out this video of Jeff Hayes, CEO of The Myers-Briggs Company, talking about how he used an MBTI team building event for his executive team.

But remember, while the MBTI tool is valuable for team development, it should never be used for selection of a team. To many, it seems like you should have one person of each type on a team, but that's not the case. Because everyone can use both sides of their preferences, the value here comes from the team knowing how they should flex to their non-dominant preferences or make space for different perspectives. The MBTI assessment should never be used as a tool for hiring or selecting employees or team members.



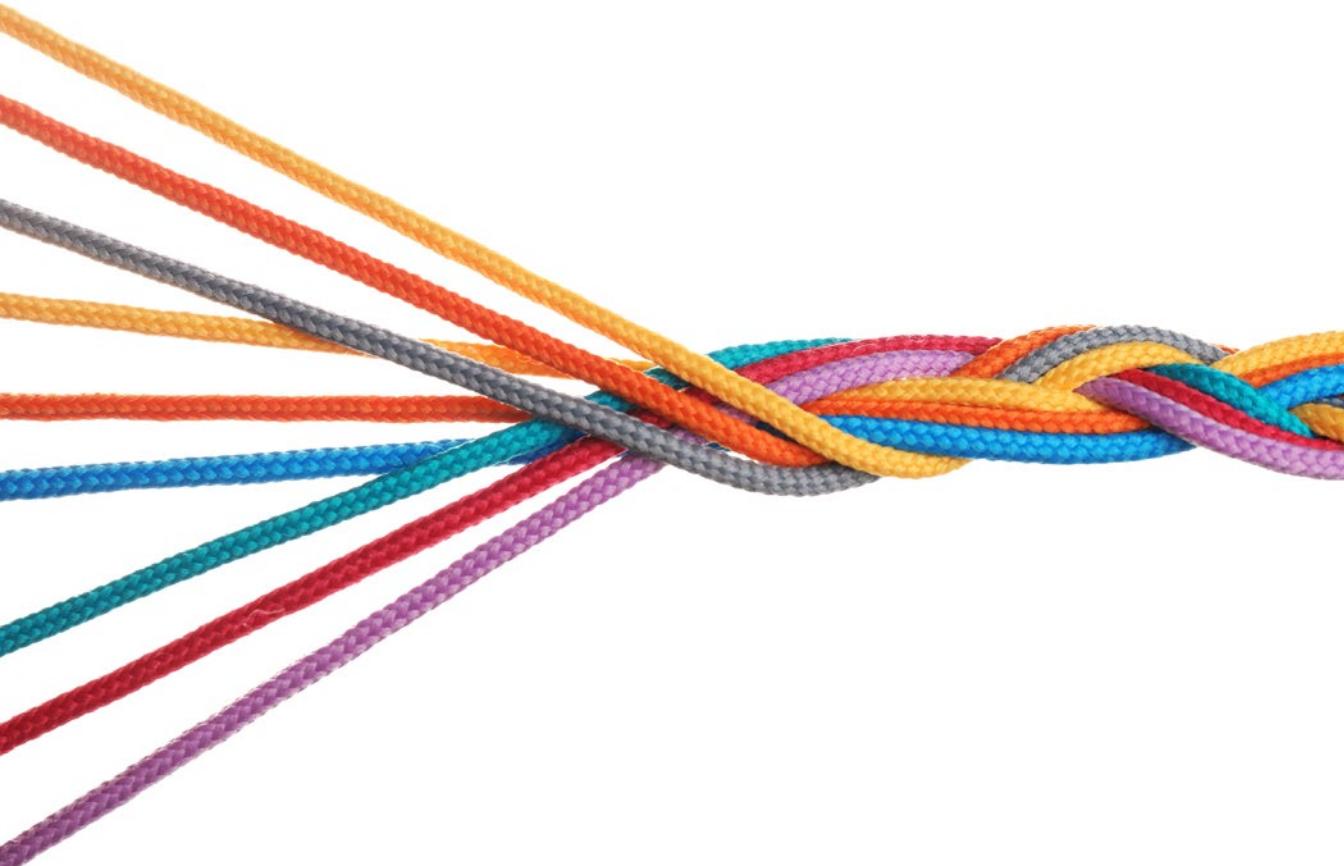
## Set attainable team goals

"Just like anything else, if you don't know where you're going, you're probably not going to get there," says Harvard Business School Professor Ethan Bernstein in an interview with Harvard Business Review. "It sounds overly simplistic, but that summarizes why goals are important."

Bernstein teaches the PACE model as a guide for targeting effective goals. PACE is an acronym, and can be applied to team goals like:

1. Pick a team goal.
2. Apprise others in your team of the goal.
3. Collect specific ideas on how to improve.
4. Elicit feedback on how you're doing.

As you work to define and orient on your most important goals, establish milestones along the way to help measure your progress, keep you on track, and occasionally give you small victories to celebrate.



## BONUS: Take time to get to know your team

When the team has been working together for a period of time and a new team member is added, it could be beneficial to ask team building questions—for example, “How would you describe your ideal vacation?”

Having a common structure that the entire team can relate to with a common language, such as the MBTI assessment, can be especially helpful when asking team building questions. Questions and many other examples of team building MBTI applications can be found in the [Introduction to Type® and Teams booklet](#).

Team building questions like the one above will often showcase a particular MBTI preference pair. In this instance, the Judging and Perceiving preferences are often illustrated. The answers of those who prefer Judging will often include mention of planning, schedules, and “making the most of my time.” On the other hand, those with a preference for Perceiving will often include mention of wanting free time, preferring not to schedule things every day, and leaving room for spontaneity.

Other team building question examples could be:

**If you were a kitchen appliance or implement, what would you be, and why?**

**What are three things that no one in this room knows about you?**

**When you were a child, what did you want to be when you “grew up”?**

The point of team building questions is to establish a connection between team members by having different members of the team talk to and listen to each other, share things about themselves that may not relate directly to their job or involvement with the team, or demonstrate differences in thought processes or how they approach questions.

For example, in the case of the first question above in blue, is the answer humorous or straightforward? Why did the person choose the object that he or she did? Was the object utilitarian? Questions such as these can seem trivial, but their goal is to focus on helping team members open up to other members and ideally build a stronger, better-communicating team.

# Get MBTI Certified

Want to learn more about how you can get certified in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment?

Becoming an MBTI Certified Practitioner allows you to administer the assessment and use it in your own leadership and team development programs. With it, you can give your people a basic framework for understanding interpersonal differences with a common language and help them develop the self-awareness to become the best versions of themselves.

[eu.themyersbriggs.com/en/Training/MBTI-training](http://eu.themyersbriggs.com/en/Training/MBTI-training)

## About us

In a rapidly transforming world, organizations need to capture and harness all the talent available to them. The way we interact with one another is key to all relationships, personal as well as professional.

[The Myers-Briggs Company](#) empowers people to be the best they can be by providing them with two indispensable tools—self-awareness and a deeper understanding of others. We help organizations around the world enhance teamwork and collaboration, develop leaders who inspire, foster diversity, and help them solve their most complex people challenges.

With over 60 years of experience in assessment development and publishing and over 30 years in consultancy and training, a global network of offices, partners and certified independent consultants in 115 countries, products in 29 languages, and experience working with 88 of the Fortune 100 companies, we're ready, willing, and able to help you succeed.

[eu.themyersbriggs.com](http://eu.themyersbriggs.com)

