

# Harnessing the power of personality: The MBTI® and its real-world applications

Catherine Ellwood & Lucy Bellec



## Catherine Ellwood

Principal Consultant

- Experienced consultant specializing in team and leadership development and coaching
- Masters-level qualification in Occupational Psychology and an HCPC-registered psychologist
- MBTI type - ESFP



## Lucy Bellec

Trainer

- Experienced trainer specializing in certifying practitioners in MBTI Step I, MBTI Step II and FIRO-B
- Masters-level qualifications in Psychological Sciences and Organizational Psychology
- MBTI type - INTJ

# Session overview

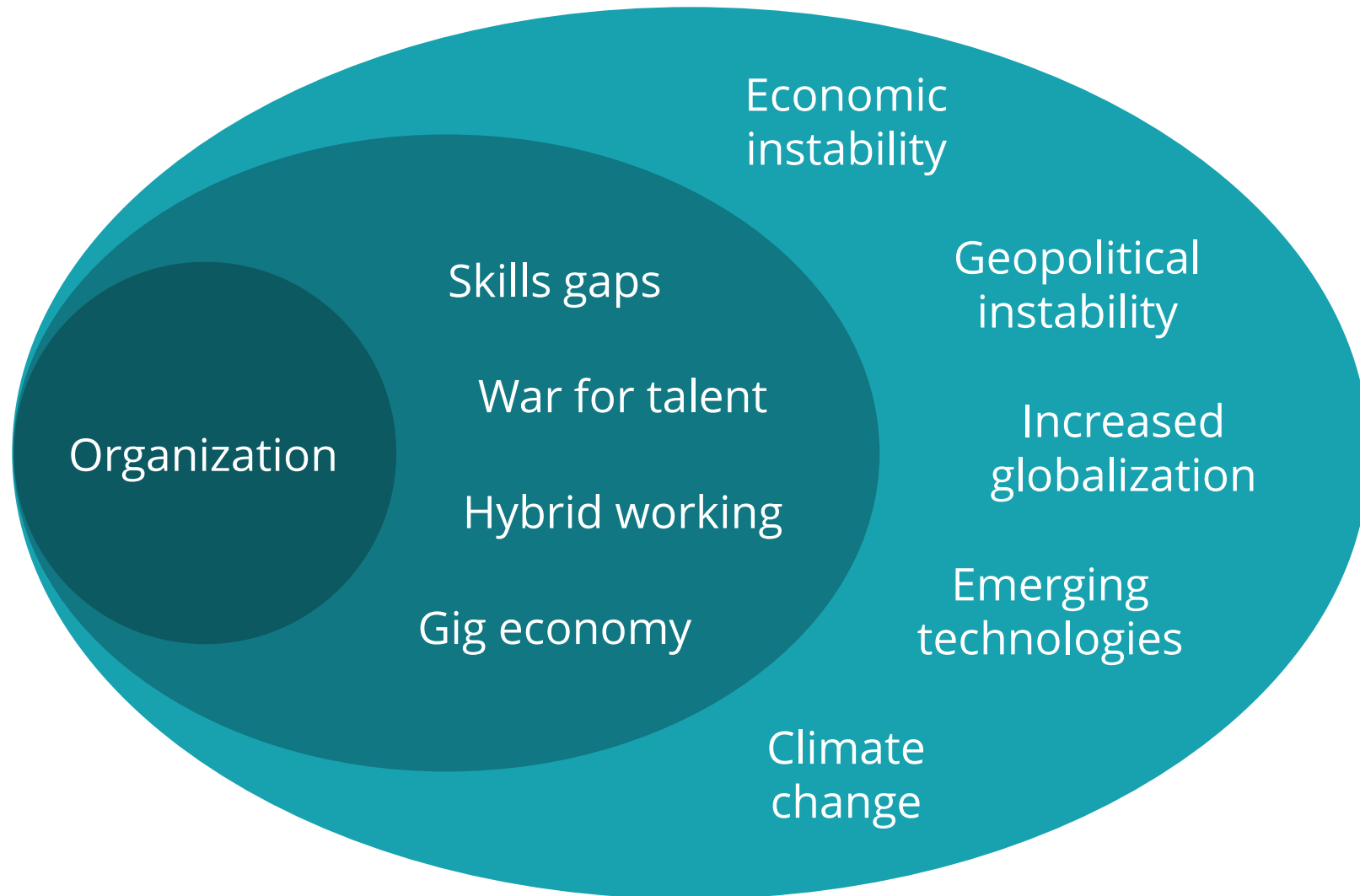
- **Setting the scene**
- **The MBTI framework**
- **Real-world applications**
  - Collaboration & teamworking
  - Problem-solving & decision-making
  - Change agility
  - Conflict management
- **Embedding the MBTI**



# Setting the scene



# The current climate



# Importance of human skills

- For organizations to be agile, efficient and effective, employees must be too
- In this climate, human skills are paramount

## What are human skills?

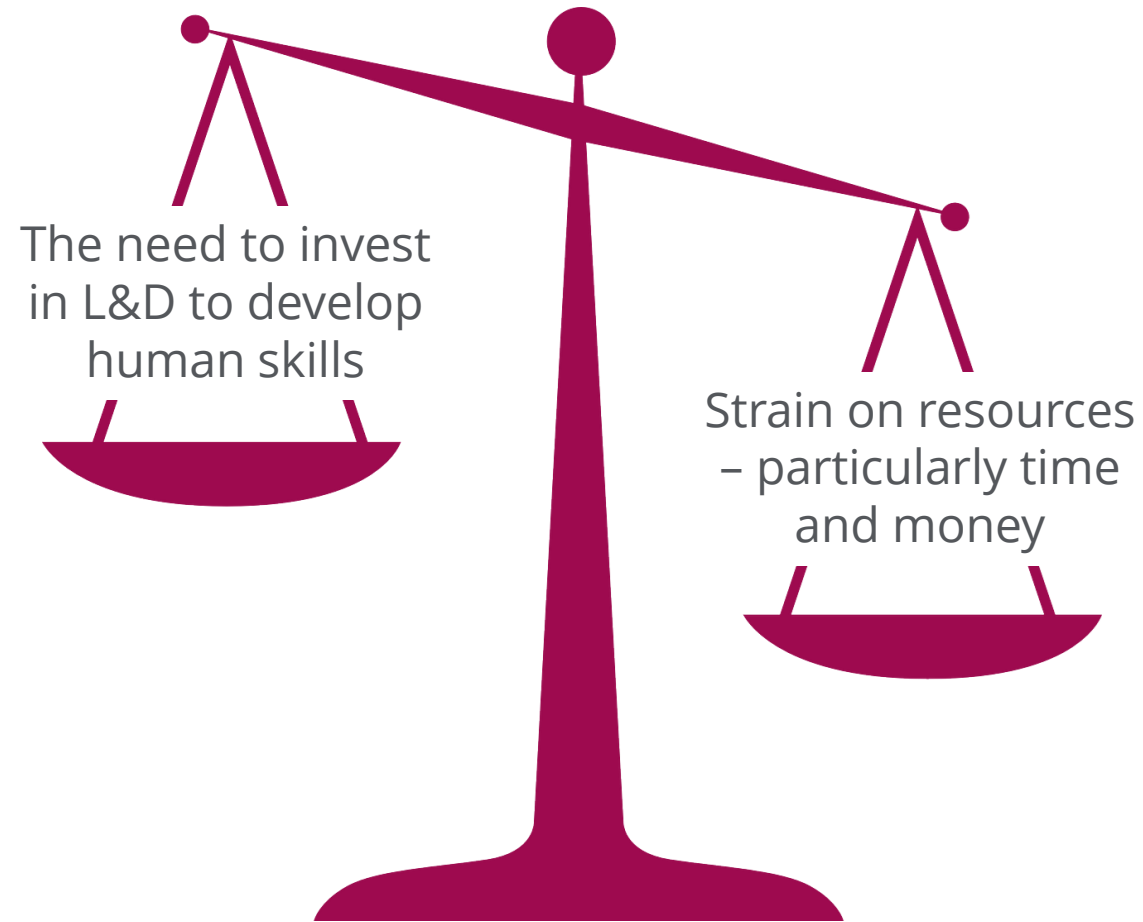
- Skills we use to relate to and interact with others

Collaboration  
Communication  
Change agility

Emotional intelligence  
Conflict management  
Problem-solving



# A dilemma



# A solution

- Harnessing the power of what's already there: personality
- An individual's characteristic pattern of thought, emotion and behavior (Funder, 1997)

## Why personality?

- Fundamental to how we relate to others
- We can develop our behaviors to be more effective
- Leveraging diversity to maximize performance
- One tool with diverse applications to address multiple development needs





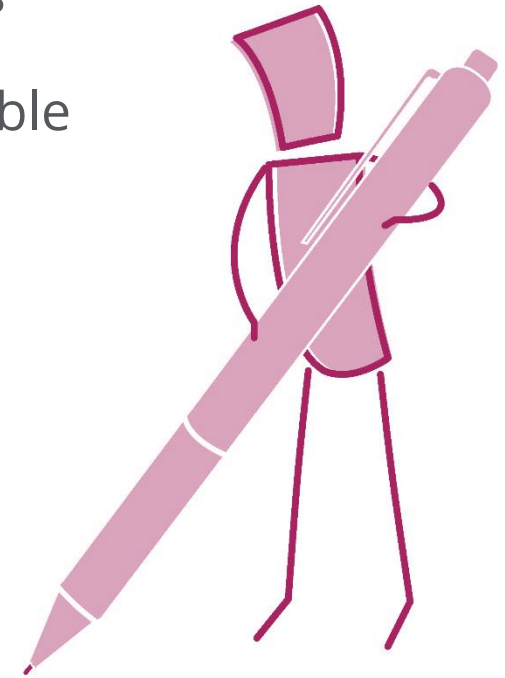


# The MBTI® framework



# Key principles

- The MBTI is not a test, but an indicator of personality preferences
- “Preference” tells us what you find most energizing and comfortable – rather than what you are good at
- Everyone can (and should) use all eight of the preferences
- There are no better or worse types: all types have potential strengths and stretches
- Each individual is best placed to decide their own type
- MBTI results are not meant to limit or stereotype



# The four preference pairs

**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?**

# The 16 types

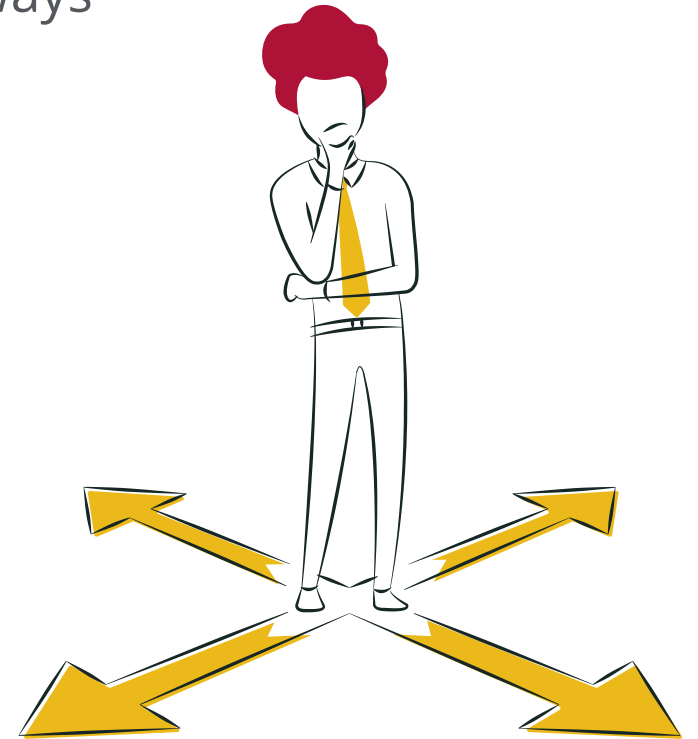


# Why the MBTI?

- Describes personality differences in positive, constructive ways
- Our preferences don't change, but our behaviors can
- Greater ability to flex makes us more agile and effective

## The MBTI can help us by...

- Raising awareness of what our preferences are, so that we have greater choice over how we use them
- Appreciating important differences between people to leverage that diversity and maximize performance





# Collaboration & teamworking





# What does good collaboration look like to you?

# Collaboration in the current climate

- Individuals working to achieve a common goal
- More challenging in a hybrid, dispersed environment...



if some workers are in the office, while others are remote

if workers are sometimes in the office, but sometimes remote

if workers are in different offices and even different countries

- Can lead to feelings of disconnection and compromised trust
- But, also a risk of over-connecting online to compensate
- Different people have different preferences for *how* to collaborate



# The MBTI & collaboration

## EXTRAVERSION

- Tend to be expressive in meetings, talk things through
- Prefer a lively, stimulating environment
- Like to get into action quickly, solve problems through interaction

## INTROVERSION

- Tend to be contained in meetings, think things through
- Prefer a calm, quiet environment
- Like to spend time in reflection, solve problems through concentration

## JUDGING

- Tend to plan step-by-step, implement a structure or method
- Prefer to start early, work in a steady manner to avoid last-minute pressures
- Like to make decisions quickly

## PERCEIVING

- Tend to plunge in first, work out what's needed along the way
- May feel limited by a fixed plan and energized by last-minute pressures
- Like to keep options open, respond flexibly to what emerges

# The MBTI & collaboration

"Decisive introverts"	IJ	Autonomous and resolute
"Adaptable introverts"	IP	Autonomous and flexible
"Adaptable extraverts"	EP	Connected and flexible
"Decisive extraverts"	EJ	Connected and resolute

# Real-world example: Veolia Group

## Context

- Water, waste and energy management for sustainable development
- Operates in five continents, more than 170,000 employees

## Challenges

- Developing collaboration across multicultural, transnational teams
- Improving communication and strengthening team cohesion
- Finding a common 'language' for team development

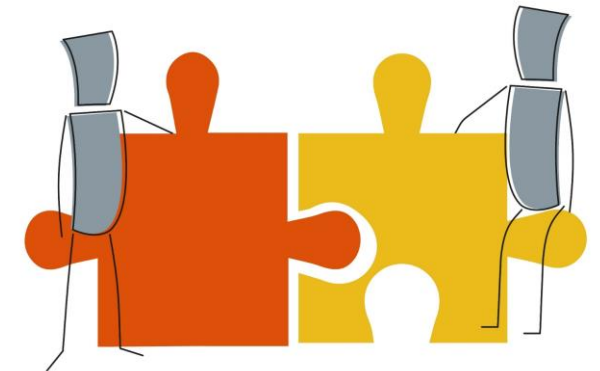
# Real-world example: Veolia Group

## Solution

- Program of MBTI seminars focused on self-discovery and collaboration
- Co-created and co-hosted with our consultants, to complement existing initiatives

## Results

- “I understand better why my colleagues react this way”
- Team negotiations to approach meetings differently, solicit managers sooner, and ask questions at a different time
- Continuation of the program across Central Europe and the US delivered by internal MBTI practitioners





# Decision-making & problem-solving





What is most important to you when making a difficult decision?

# Decision-making & problem-solving in the current climate

- Finding a solution to a difficult or complex issue, by gathering information and assessing alternative courses of action
- More challenging in a climate of instability and innovation...
  - when resources are limited or uncertain
  - when landscapes evolve quickly and without warning
- Pressure on organizations to ‘future-proof’ key decisions
- Individual biases in how we gather, process and evaluate information



# The MBTI & decision-making

## SENSING

- Tend to focus on concrete facts and specifics, what is known
- Prefer to rely on what has been tried and tested in the past
- Value practical solutions that meet present needs

## INTUITION

- Tend to focus on abstract ideas and the 'big picture', what could be
- Prefer to explore alternatives as an opportunity to try new things
- Value innovative solutions that open up future possibilities

## THINKING

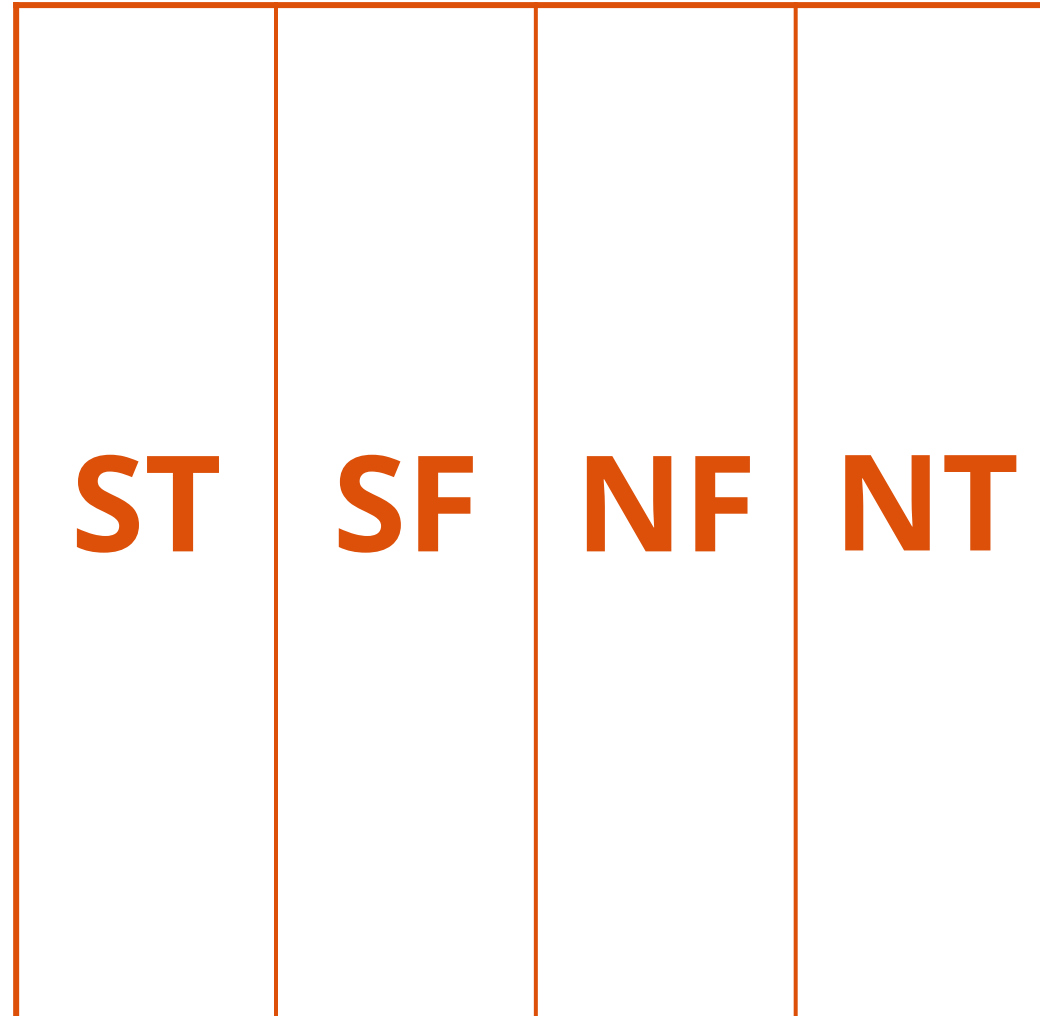
- Tend to step out of the situation to decide objectively
- Prefer to use logic, analysis and impersonal criteria
- Prioritize completion and performance of the task

## FEELING

- Tend to step into the situation to weigh things subjectively
- Prefer to use personal values and empathy
- Prioritize relationships and impact on individuals



# The MBTI & decision-making

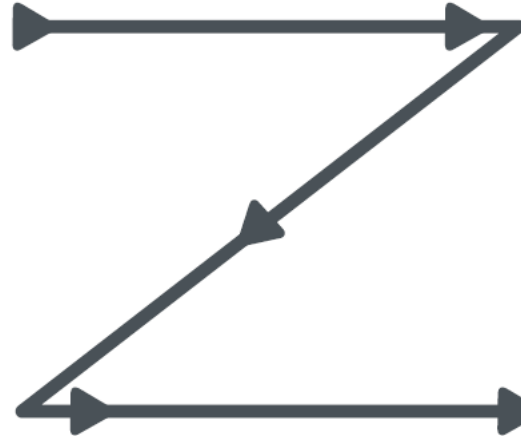


# A decision-making model

Focus on the here and now and concrete, realistic data



Logically weighing up the pros and cons



Focus on connections, themes, and the future



Considering values and the impact on people

# Real-world example: Pharmaceutical logistics company

## Context

- Leading distributor of pharmaceutical and healthcare products serving pharmacies, hospitals and doctors
- Delivering over 10 million items per week to more than 14,000 pharmacies and other organizations

## Challenges

- Improving management capability across the organization
- Dealing with an increasingly complex working environment
- Needing to make well-rounded decisions at pace

# Real-world example: Pharmaceutical logistics company

## Solution

- A modular development program focusing on people leadership, navigating change and effective decision-making
- Decision-making module focused on real scenarios to ensure face validity and transfer of learning

## Results

- Sessions were delivered to the Board and 36 senior managers providing a common language across the business
- “It has really made me thinking about what I am prioritizing when I’m making decisions. Consciously considering a range of options will enable me to be more effective.”
- Internal MBTI practitioners were trained to deliver the program providing a more cost-effective and sustainable long-term solution



# Change agility





What is most important to you when going through a time of change?

# Change agility in the current climate

- Ability to adapt to change, as an opportunity rather than a threat
- Even more important in a climate of instability and innovation...
  - when resources are limited or uncertain
  - when landscapes evolve quickly and without warning
- Ability to respond to change can be 'make or break' for organizations
- Change can be source of great stress for leaders, teams and individuals
- A need to approach change proactively, rather than simply playing 'catch-up'



# The MBTI & change

## EXTRAVERSION

- Prefer face-to-face communication to talk the change through
- Want to get into action quickly, to keep up the pace
- Might become frustrated if the change moves too slowly

## INTROVERSION

- Prefer written communication to think the change through
- Want time to assimilate the change before taking action
- Might become frustrated if the change is not thought through

## SENSING

- Value change that will improve practical processes and results
- Want to know facts and specifics of how the change will work
- Use past experiences to evaluate how realistic the change is

## INTUITION

- Value change that will broaden future possibilities
- Want to know how the change fits with the bigger picture
- Use imagination to explore how the future will be



# The MBTI & change

<b>IS</b> "Thoughtful realists"	<b>IN</b> "Thoughtful innovators"
<b>ES</b> "Action-oriented realists"	<b>EN</b> "Action-oriented innovators"

# Real-world example: Macmillan Cancer Support

## Context

- Healthcare, information and financial support to people affected by cancer
- One of UK's largest charities, supporting over 2.3 million people affected by cancer

## Challenges

- Regional service development team to be impacted by significant organizational change
- Changes would require new team structures, new systems and new ways of working
- Team leader recognized the need to prepare in advance of the changes

# Real-world example: Macmillan Cancer Support

## Solution

- A four-session program delivered over a 12-month period
- Sessions focused on reactions to changes, supporting one another and resilience
- Well-being and mindfulness exercises to provide time for reflection and connection


## Results

- “I have noticed a very positive, mature attitude to the change process across the team”
- The team leader received feedback from senior management that changes had been implemented and embedded more smoothly in her region than anywhere else



# Conflict management





How do you feel when you see  
conflict on the horizon?

# Conflict in the current climate

- Difference of opinions, values or interests between two or more individuals
- Might relate to a task, process or relationship
- A little can be good, but too much conflict...

wastes valuable time and therefore money

reduces engagement and retention due to stress

- May be exacerbated by cultural differences
- Harder to manage conflict in a hybrid environment



# The MBTI & conflict

## THINKING

- Tend to seek objective truth, want to fix what is wrong
- Ask questions to clarify the content of the conflict
- Prefer to put feelings to one side, may seem detached or critical

## FEELING

- Tend to seek harmony, want to support what is right
- Look for common ground, ensure different views are respected
- Prefer to connect with feelings, may appear to avoid conflict

## JUDGING

- Prefer to resolve conflict quickly and move on
- Tend to focus on the output of the conflict moving forwards
- May feel uncomfortable while conflict is ongoing

## PERCEIVING

- Prefer to create space to explore and clarify all the options
- Tend to focus on the input of the people involved in the conflict
- May feel constrained if decisions are made too quickly

# The MBTI & conflict

**TJ**

“The fixers”

**FJ**

“The bridge-builders”

**FP**

“The mediators”

**TP**

“The debaters”



# Real-world example: global distillery company

## Context

- Family-owned distillery company in operation for over 130 years
- Employs over 2,800 people in over 50 global locations

## Challenges

- Managing conflict by improving understanding and communication
- Dealing with differences in a constructive, non-judgemental way
- Providing a cost-effective efficient solution, tailored to fit individual needs

# Real-world example: global distillery company

## Solution

- Paired coaching process available for any individual experiencing conflict – peer to peer, manager to direct report, project team workers
- Began with individual MBTI feedback sessions, followed by time for reflection before paired coaching
- Used the MBTI comparison report to discuss differences in a constructive way

## Results

- “It has hugely helped in terms of understanding the reasons for our behavior and why we were struggling to work together.”
- “Our working relationship is so much more productive now – I feel like we can be more honest with each other.”



# Embedding the MBTI®



# The MBTI in practice

- Initial feedback sessions – individually or in groups – to establish best-fit type
- Further sessions, depending on the objectives:

Skills development

Team development

Coaching and leadership

- Two options for delivery:

Internal practitioners

Partnership support



# Certification training & ongoing support

## MBTI Step I certification

- Three-day workshop available in-person (Oxford), virtually (Zoom) or in-house
- Also available in a self-guided format with three virtual instructor-led sessions

## MBTI Step II certification

- Two-day workshop available virtually (Zoom) or in-house
- Also available as part of the self-guided Step I certification
- Ongoing support for practitioners through customer support, account management, and our practitioner helpdesk

# Certification training & ongoing support

## MBTI certification

- Includes Step I and Step II
- Instructor led options in person or virtually
- Also available in a self-guided format with three virtual instructor-led sessions
- Ongoing support for practitioners through customer support, account management, regular resources and free webinars



Thank you for listening

