



Type and work environment

A research study from
The Myers-Briggs Company

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Executive summary

This report describes the results of a survey into the relationships between psychological type and the office environment. With the increasing prevalence of open-plan offices, desk-sharing and hot-desking, concerns are often raised that the modern office may not be a comfortable environment for people of some type preferences. We were interested in finding out more about the links between type and the environment, and to explore type differences in issues such as:

- Preferred or ideal working environment
- Satisfaction and happiness at work and how this is affected by the work environment
- Personalization of the work area
- Likes and dislikes within the work environment.

We created an online survey, where participants were asked to give their MBTI® best-fit type and some demographic information, and to answer questions about their work environment. Three hundred and eleven people took part. The results showed that:

- Though many respondents actually worked in some form of open-plan office environment, most would prefer a small shared office or private office
- Those who worked in a private office were significantly more likely to rate themselves as satisfied or very satisfied with their working environment
- People who were not allowed to personalize their work area were less satisfied with their work environment and had lower job satisfaction
- Some features of the workplace were desired by almost everyone. These included people having their own desk and working area, having well-designed workplaces and having 'quiet areas' available. Others, such as desk-sharing or hot-desking, were disliked by most people.
- A number of differences were found between people of different type preferences. This was most clear between Extraverts and Introverts, and between those with a Judging and a Perceiving preference. However, Thinking–Feeling differences and Sensing–Intuition differences were also shown
- When compared with trends in office design, many of the E–I differences may tend to favor Extraverts in the workplace. This was reflected in the results of the survey, where, on average, Extraverts reported significantly higher levels of job satisfaction and happiness at work than did Introverts. There are however ways in which these effects can be improved.

The results suggest a number of strategies for organizing and designing offices that should help all types work effectively, as well as particular features to avoid or promote for individual types. These are outlined in the report that follows.

Introduction and methodology

Introduction

One of the exercises that's used to help Extraverts and Introverts understand each other better goes like this:

- Separate the group into Extraverts and Introverts
- Ask both groups to draw their ideal office environment on a flipchart
- Compare the results.

Typically, there are quite clear differences between what the Es and the Is draw.

In the past, links have been made between type and the working environment. For example, The Negotiable Environment (Williams, Armstrong, & Malcolm, 1985) discussed office layout and allied factors in MBTI® terms, and the Environmental Personality Type Assessment attempted to 'type' the workplace (Salter, 1995). More recently, concerns have been raised about the impact of the modern office environment on Introverts in particular (Cain, 2012). Open-plan offices have become the norm, and desk-sharing, hot-desking and similar arrangements are becoming commonplace. Such environments may inhibit well-being and productivity for some types.

We were interested in finding out more about the links between type and the environment, and exploring type differences in issues such as:

- Preferred or ideal working environment
- Satisfaction and happiness at work and how this is affected by the work environment
- Personalization of the work area
- Likes and dislikes within the work environment

By investigating these issues, we hoped to identify ways in which we could help organizations adapt the office to individuals, and help individuals adapt to life in the office.

Data collection

To carry out the study, we created an online survey. Participants were asked to give their MBTI best-fit (validated) type and some demographic information. In addition, they completed a number of questions about their office environment, including:

- Actual and ideal work environments
- Degree of satisfaction with their work environment and their work
- Personalization of their work environment
- A short questionnaire covering a range of aspects of their work environment

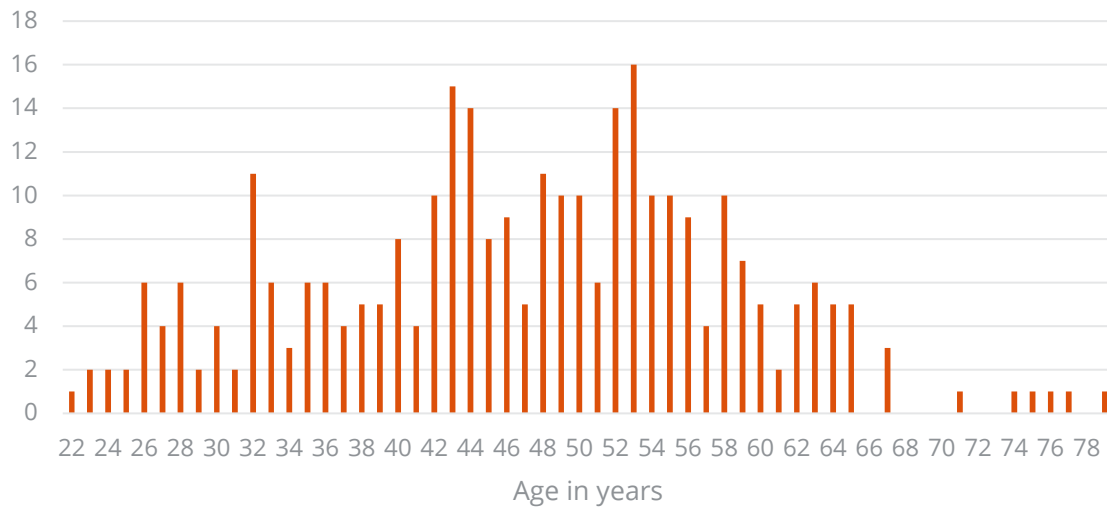
The survey was publicized to type users on LinkedIn, our company website and direct communication to our workshop participants. In total, 311 people completed the survey.

Results

The sample

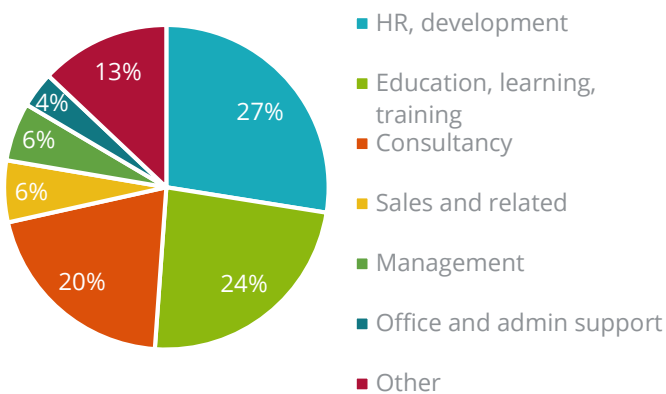
Group demographics

71% of the group were female, with 29% male. Age ranged from 22 to 79 years, with an average (mean) age of 47 years:

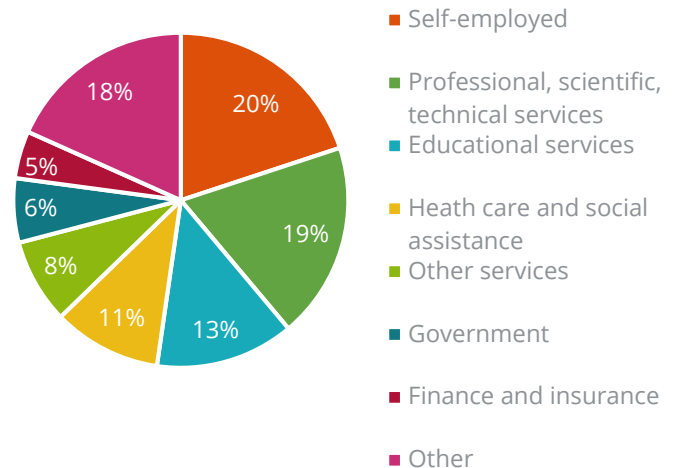


Most of the group had a role in HR/development, education or consultancy. The majority were self-employed or worked for a professional or educational services organization.

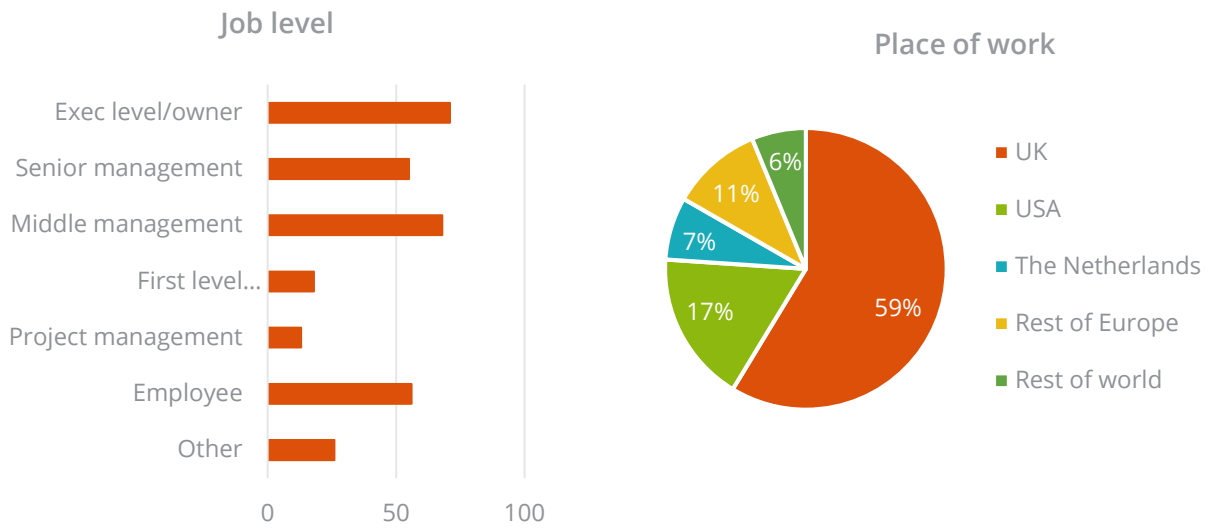
Job type



Industry/organization



Job level varied from employee up to executive/owner. The majority worked principally in the UK.



The makeup of the group reflects the demographics of those likely to be most interested in type and in type research.

Type distribution

A type table for the group is shown below:

Type	N	%
ISTJ N=24 7.7% SSR=0.56		
ISFJ N=14 4.5% SSR=0.35		
INFJ N=18 5.8% SSR=3.41		
INTJ N=24 7.7% SSR=5.50		
ISTP N=18 5.8% SSR=0.91		
ISFP N=9 2.9% SSR=0.64		
INFP N=21 6.7% SSR=2.13		
INTP N=17 5.4% SSR=2.29		
ESTP N=20 6.4% SSR=1.10		
ESFP N=23 7.4% SSR=0.85		
ENFP N=33 10.6% SSR=1.68		
ENTP N=28 9.0% SSR=3.21		
ESTJ N=14 4.5% SSR=0.43		
ESFJ N=13 4.2% SSR=0.33		
ENFJ N=17 5.4% SSR=1.96		
ENTJ N=18 5.8% SSR=2.00		
E	166	53.4
I	145	46.6
S	135	43.4
N	176	56.6
T	163	52.4
F	148	47.6
J	142	45.7
P	169	54.3

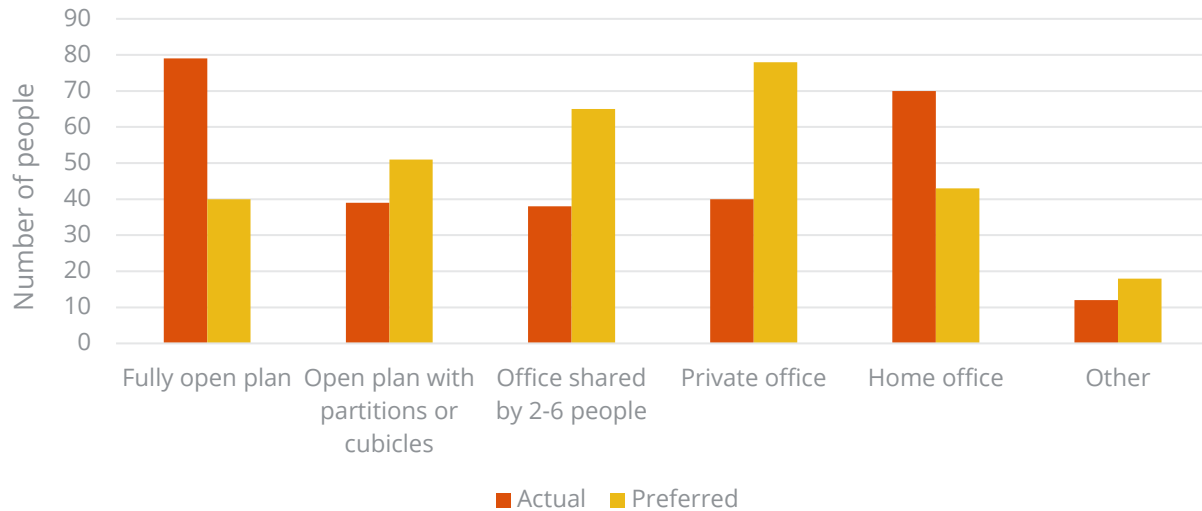
(NOTE: The SSR (self selection ratio) shows how common each type is in the sample, compared to a reference group. We compared the sample to the UK general population. To calculate the SSR, the percentage of each type in the sample is divided by the percentage of that type in the general population. Types with an SSR greater than 1 are over-represented; types with an SSR less than 1 are under-represented.)

In our respondents, the most common type is ENFP, with 10.6% of the total. Compared with the general population, there is an over-representation of people with an Intuition preference, and to a lesser extent of those with a Perceiving preference. These differences reflect how type practitioners as a whole tend to differ from the general population (The Myers-Briggs Company, formerly OPP Ltd, 2011).

Actual and ideal office environment

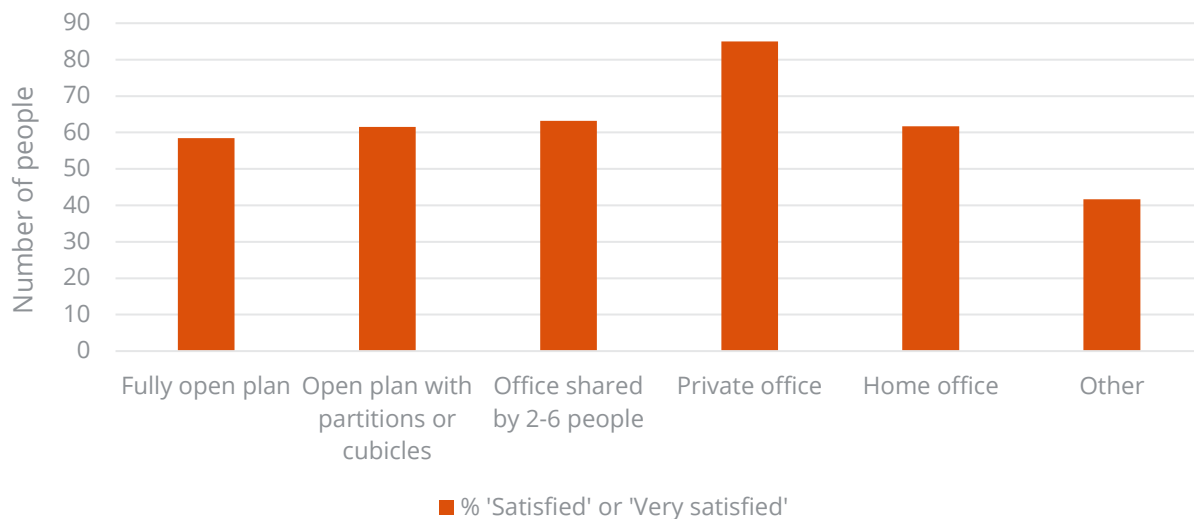
Overall findings

Many respondents worked in some form of open-plan office environment. However, most would prefer a small shared office or a private office:



Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents both to have and to prefer a private office or a home office. There were no significant gender differences.

Comparing office environment with satisfaction, those who worked in a private office were significantly more likely to rate themselves as satisfied or very satisfied with their working environment than any other group.



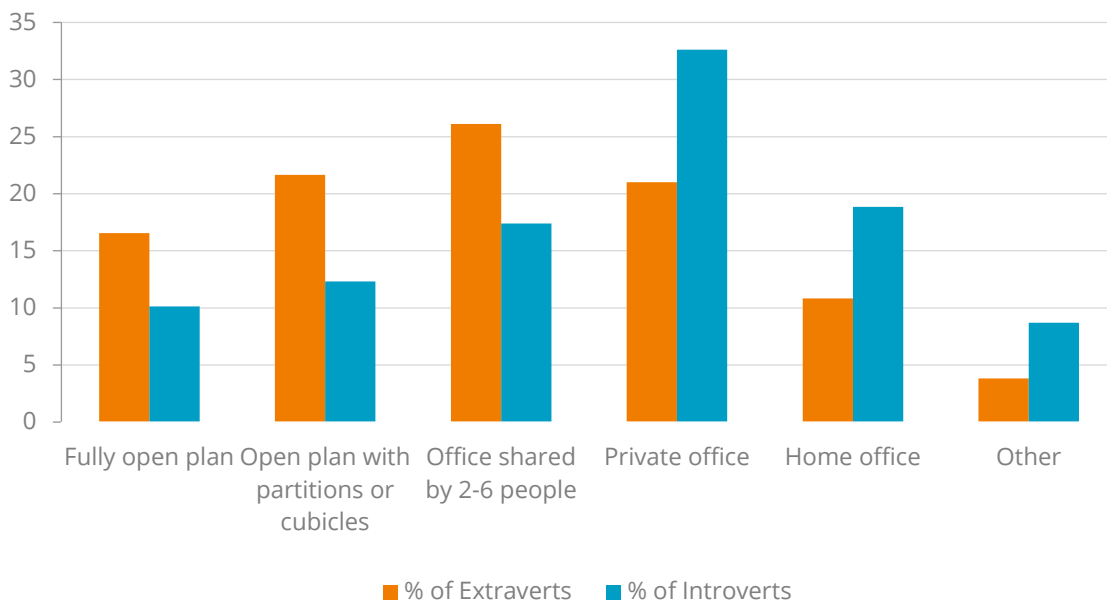
Those working in open-plan offices have relatively low levels of satisfaction. There is also a large discrepancy between the number of people actually working in an open-plan office, and the number who would prefer to work in this way. This is not surprising given the results of previous research. This has shown, for example, that open-plan offices are rated lower in terms of environmental quality (Kim & de Dear, 2013), and are particularly disliked by people with more demanding jobs (Hedge, 1982).

The results also suggest that the link between work environment and satisfaction and happiness at work operates differently for Extraverts and Introverts. Introverts who work in fully or partially open plan offices reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction, and happiness at work, than did Extraverts working in the same environment.

Type differences

There were no significant differences in type in terms of people's actual working environment (presumably because an office layout is imposed rather than chosen).

However, there was a clear and statistically significant E-I difference when it came to their ideal working environment. Introverts were more likely than Extraverts to prefer a private office or home office. Extraverts were particularly likely to prefer a small shared office. Though open-plan offices were not preferred by a majority of either Extraverts or Introverts, Extraverts were significantly more likely to put this as a preference than Introverts.



No other preference pair showed a significant difference.

Satisfaction and happiness at work

Overall levels of satisfaction and happiness

Respondents were asked three questions relating to satisfaction and happiness at work. Most of the group responded positively:

- 'How satisfied are you with your work or office environment' – two thirds of the group said they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'
- 'I have a great deal of job satisfaction' – 79% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'
- 'I'm very happy at work' – 72% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'.

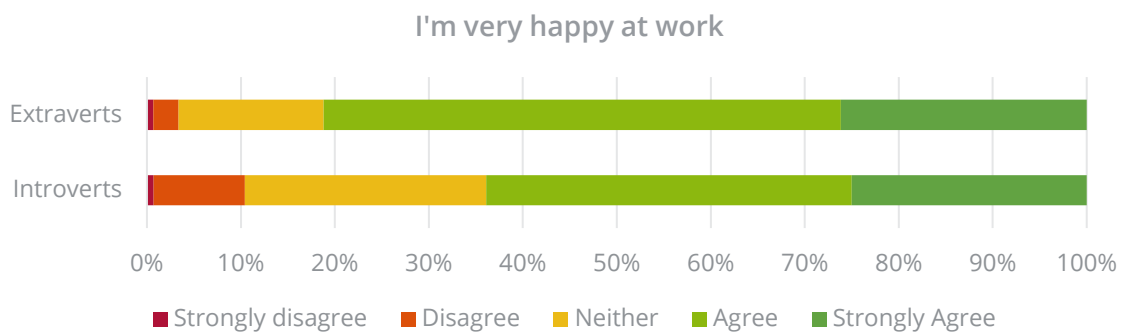
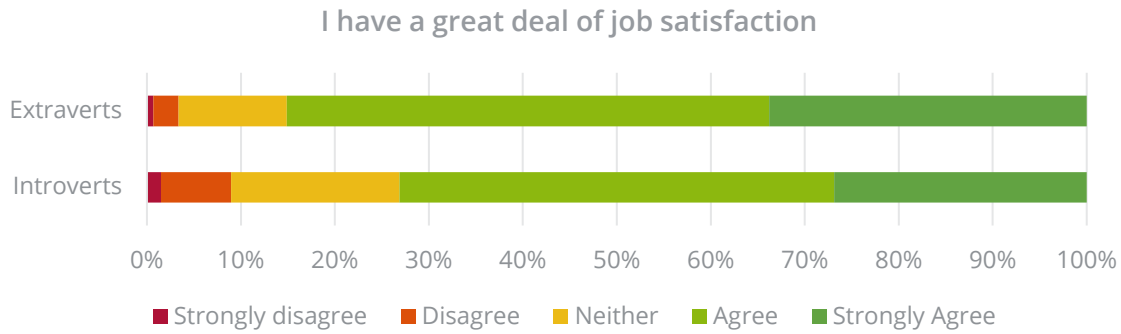
Group differences

There were, however, some individual differences in job satisfaction and happiness at work. A number of factors appeared to contribute here:

Factor	Satisfaction with work environment	Job satisfaction	Happiness at work
Age	No relationship	Older people are more positive	No relationship
Organization type	No relationship	Self-employed are more positive	
Job level	No relationship	Those in higher level are jobs more positive	
Actual office environment	Private or home office = more satisfied	No relationship	
No. of people at work	Those at workplaces with fewer people are more positive		
No. of personal items	More items = greater satisfaction for T	No relationship	No relationship
Has personal items because "someone cared enough to give you the item(s)"	More likely to be chosen by those more satisfied with the work environment	No relationship	No relationship
Not allowed to personalize work area	Less satisfied with the work environment	Lower job satisfaction	No relationship

There were no significant type differences in terms of overall satisfaction with the work environment. However, on average, Extraverts reported significantly higher levels of job satisfaction and happiness at work than Introverts. 85% of Extraverts, but only 73% of Introverts, agree or strongly agree with the statement "I have a great deal of job satisfaction". 81% of Extraverts, but only 61% of Introverts, agree or strongly agree with the statement "I'm very happy at work".

Introverts were more likely than Extraverts to disagree with both statements.



Looking in more detail at the factors that might affect job satisfaction, Introverts (but not Extraverts) were more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction if they were in a workplace with smaller numbers of people. In general, the happier and more satisfied Introverts were more likely to agree with the following statements:

- I'm happy where I am in my workplace. I wouldn't want to move to another part of the office
- I find that I need lots of storage space

And less likely to agree with the following statements:

- When I'm working at my computer, I'll often wear headphones
- It bothers me when someone has a bigger desk, a better location or a newer computer than I do

These statements were neutral for Extraverts. It may be that less happy and less satisfied Introverts become more distracted by their work environment.

Personalizing the work area

Personalization and well-being

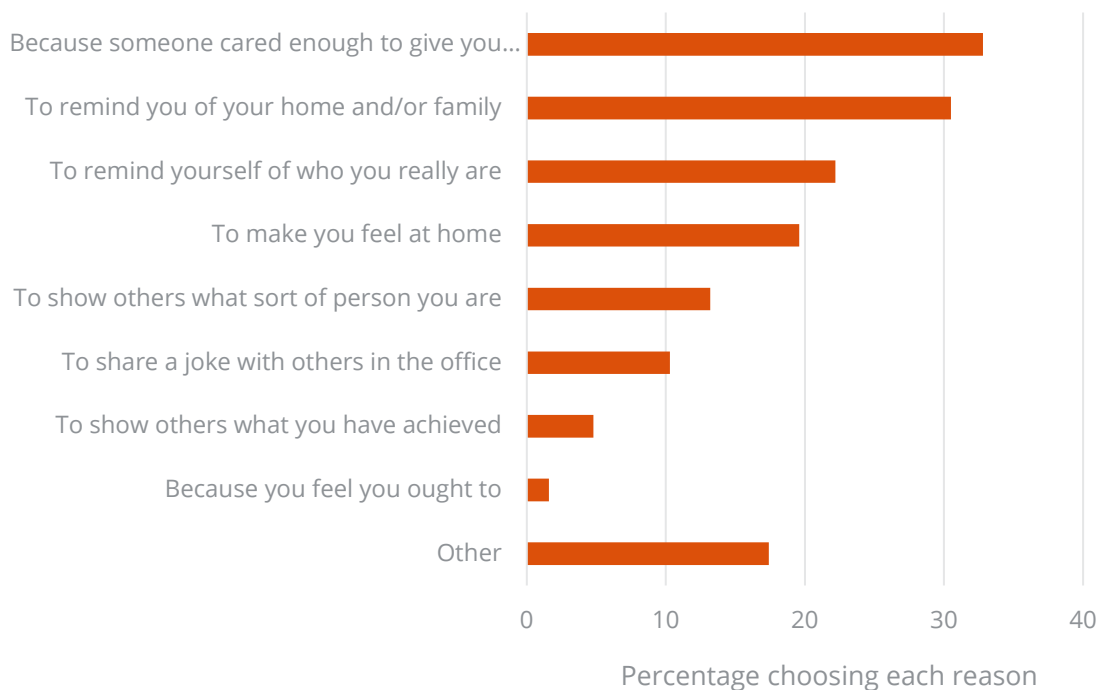
Previous research (Wells, 2000) has suggested that there is a link between personalization and well-being. This was borne out by our research, which found that those who were not allowed to personalize their work area were less satisfied with their work environment, and reported lower levels of job satisfaction than those who were. For those a Thinking preference, those with more personal items in their work area were more satisfied with their work environment.

Reasons for personalizing the work area

18 people (6% of the group) were not allowed to personalize their work area. For the remainder, there was a wide range in the number of personal items kept to hand, from 0 to 41, with an average (median) of 3 items.

Recent research has suggested that individuals have a wide range of reasons for personalizing their workplace (Byron & Laurence, 2015). In our group, the most common reasons for personalization – each chosen by over 30% of respondents – were “Because someone cared enough to give you the item(s)” and “To remind you of your home and/or family”.

Reason for personalizing the work area



Type differences

There were no type differences in the total number of personal items, although those with a Thinking preference were more likely to have no personal items at all. Interestingly, there is a significant correlation ($r=0.23$, significant at the 1% level) between the number of personal items and satisfaction with the working environment for those with a Thinking preference.

This correlation does not exist for those with a Feeling preference. It may be that those with a Thinking preference do not always see the need to personalize their work area – but that when they do, and do so comprehensively, they become more satisfied with their work environment.

There were some type differences in the reasons chosen for personalization:

- Feeling types were more likely than Thinking types to choose “Because someone else cared enough to give you the item(s)” and “To remind yourself of who you really are”
- SF individuals were more likely than others to choose “Because someone else cared enough to give you the item(s)”, “To show others what sort of person you are” and “To show others what you have achieved”
- Those with dominant extraverted Feeling were the most likely to choose “To make you feel at home”. Extraverted Thinking types were particularly unlikely to pick this reason.

Aspects of the work environment

Overview

Respondents completed 24 questions relating to various aspects of the work environment. They rated each statement on a scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The chart shows the average score on each question.



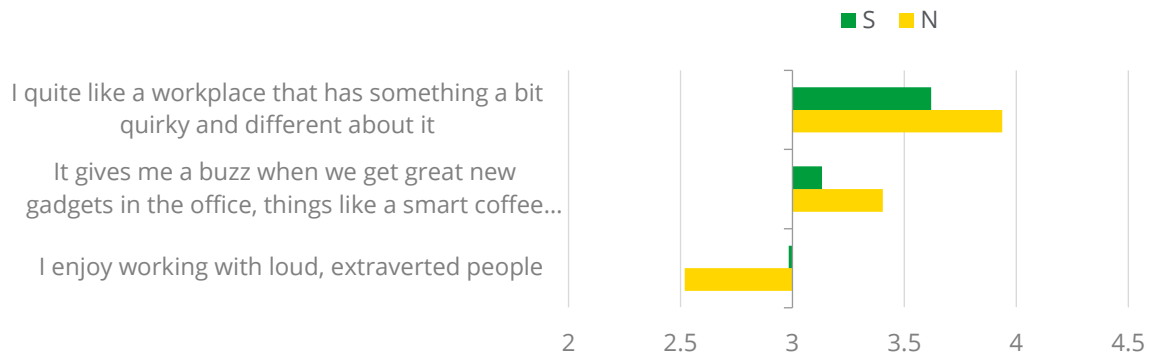
Type differences

The overall results show that there are some aspects of the workplace that are agreed on by almost everyone. For example, whatever their type, most people think that it is important to have their own desk and working area, and few people are particularly bothered when someone has a bigger desk, a better location or a newer computer than they do. Of course, there are type differences in people’s views. For example, Introverts are on average even keener on having their own desk and working area than are Extraverts. The chart below shows the questions that demonstrate a statistically significant difference between E and I.

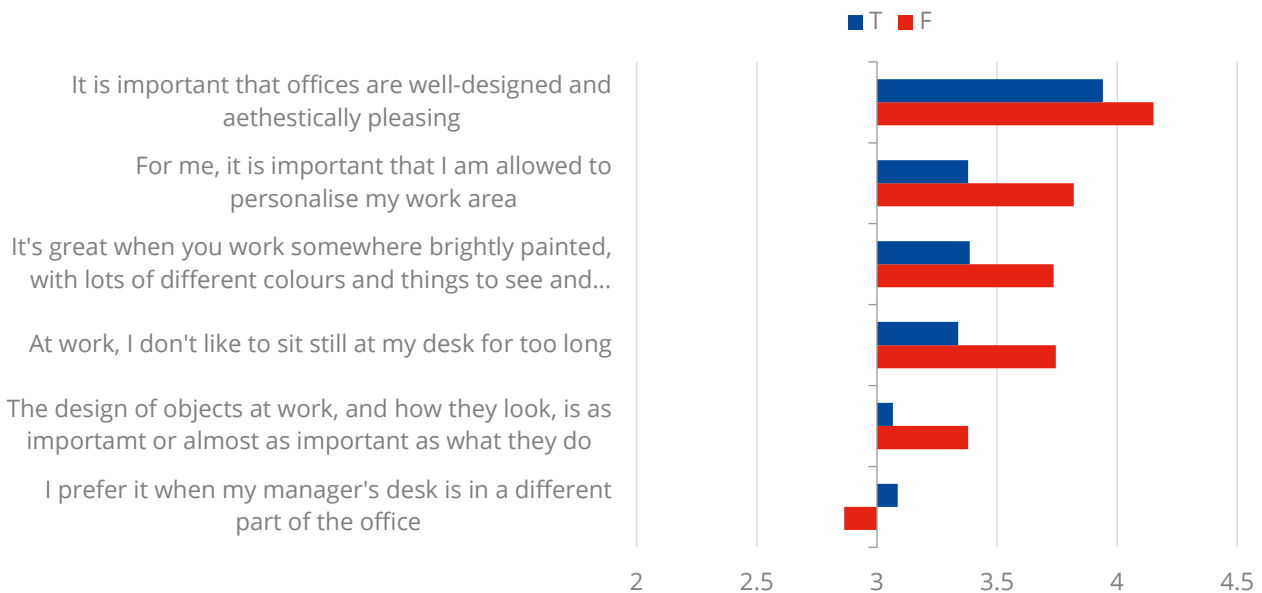


Although there are differences in degree, both Extraverts and Introverts want their own desk and working area, which they can personalize. Both like the idea of having a 'quiet area' in the office, and neither are particularly keen on hot-desking (although Introverts have a greater dislike of this). However, Extraverts are much less keen on sitting still at their desk and Introverts much more likely to be distracted by having lots of people around. Indeed, Extraverts enjoy working somewhere where there are lots of people around and don't mind working with loud, Extraverted people. Introverts don't really enjoy the former and positively dislike the latter.

There are fewer S–N differences. Those that do exist largely reflect the Intuition preference for the new and different.

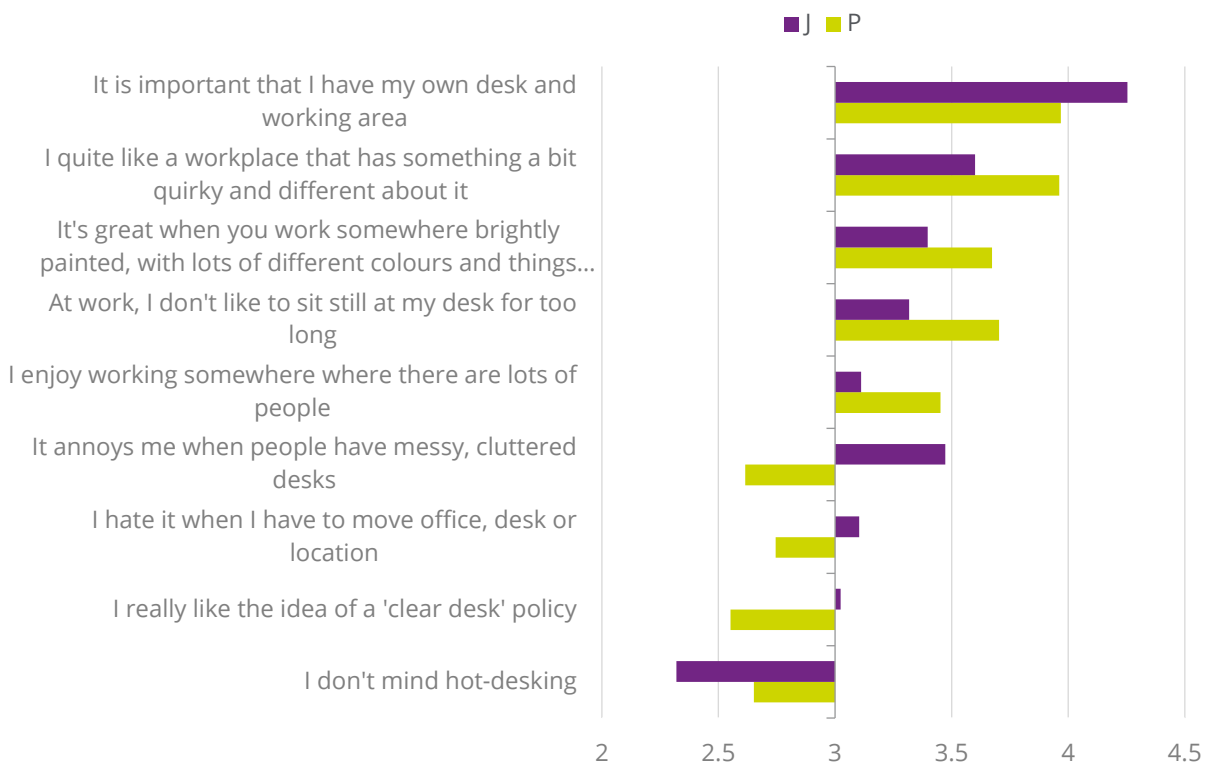


For T–F, many of the results seem to reflect a greater appreciation of the aesthetics of the workplace on behalf of those with a Feeling preference.



The Judging–Perceiving dichotomy also shows a number of statistically significant differences. As with Extraversion and Introversion, some of these are differences of degree. For example, both types think it is important to have their own desk or working area, and neither like hot-desking, though those with a Judging preference are particularly keen on the former and particularly not keen on the latter.

More stark differences are, however, seen in views around tidiness in the office. People with a Perceiving preference are not keen on the idea of a ‘clear desk policy’. Those with a Judging preference are ambivalent. Perceiving types are not annoyed when people have messy, cluttered desks, where Judging types typically are.



Applying the results of the research

Environmental factors leading to happier people

General tips for a better workplace

Different types have different likes and dislikes. However, this research suggests that there are several factors that generally may lead to greater satisfaction with the working environment, and often greater satisfaction with the job and greater happiness at work. These factors will either act in a positive way for everyone, or be positive for some types and neutral for others.

Some factors are outside an organization's control. For example, in our study, older respondents tended to be more satisfied with their job; older respondents with a Feeling or a Perceiving preference were also more satisfied with their work environment and happier at work. However, it is possible to compile a checklist of environmental improvements:

- Where possible, move away from large open-plan offices. Many organizations have open-plan offices. This may be because of a belief that open-plan offices encourage greater communication, or because open-plan offices are seen as a more efficient or less expensive use of resources. However, in our study, those working in open-plan offices were among the least satisfied with their work environment. Introverts in particular did not like the idea of an open-plan office. The data suggest that where possible, small shared offices may be the best solution. In some open-plan environments, it may be possible to give the 'feel' of a small shared office.
- Allow people to have their own desk or workspace in the office. Although particularly important for those with an Introverted or Judging preference, this is high on most people's list of desirable workplace features. Similarly, avoid hot-desking, if at all possible.
- Where possible, move away from workplaces with very large numbers of people. Those in workplaces with fewer people are on average more satisfied with their work environment, more satisfied with their job, and happier at work. This relationship exists across the whole group, but is particularly important for Introverts. Remember that Introverts make up about half of the general population.
- Let people personalize their work area. Those who are not allowed to do this are less satisfied with their work environment and report less job satisfaction.
- Pay attention to the appearance and aesthetics of the workplace. Although this is more important to some types than others, for many it does relate to satisfaction with the work environment and the job.
- Have a 'quiet area' somewhere in the workplace. Even Extraverts think that this is a useful feature.

Type-specific likes and dislikes

Individual types have their particular likes and dislikes when it comes to the work environment. Listed below are the factors that differentiate between each favorite process.

Introverted Sensing types (ISTJ, ISFJ):

- Particularly dislike having to move office, desk or location
- Are not particularly impressed by having new gadgets in the office
- Don't mind having to sit still at their desk
- Particularly dislike the idea of hot-desking
- Are more likely than most to need lots of storage space
- Are particularly unlikely to want to move to another part of the office.

Extraverted Sensing types (ESTP, ESFP):

- Are the least likely to be distracted by having lots of people around. They really enjoy working somewhere where there are lots of people
- Enjoy working with loud, Extraverted people
- Are not overly concerned with having to move office, desk or location
- Dislike having to sit still at their desk for too long
- Are more likely than most to report that they're always 'on the go'.

Introverted Intuition types (INFJ, INTJ):

- Are (along with introverted Feeling types) the most likely to be distracted by having lots of people around. They also don't enjoy working where there are lots of people.
- Particularly dislike working with loud, extraverted people
- Enjoy having new gadgets in the office
- Are especially keen that there is a 'quiet area' somewhere in the office
- Are particularly unlikely to want to move to another part of the office.

Extraverted Intuition types (ENTP, ENFP):

- Are more likely than most to need lots of storage space
- Are particularly keen on a workplace that has something a bit quirky and different about it.

Introverted Thinking types (ISTP, INTP):

- Are the least likely to be annoyed when people have messy, cluttered desks. If their own desk can be described in this way, they may struggle to see what others are concerned with. They particularly dislike the idea of a 'clear desk' policy.
- Think it as particularly important that they have their own desk and working area
- Don't mind having to sit still at their desk
- Are especially keen that there is a 'quiet area' somewhere in the office
- Are less likely than most to need lots of storage space.

Extraverted Thinking types (ESTJ, ENTJ):

- Are less concerned than most with having their own desk and working area
- Are more likely than most to report always being 'on the go'
- Enjoy working with loud, extraverted people.

Introverted Feeling types (ISFP, INFP):

- Are especially likely to think it is important that they are allowed to personalize their work area – and are likely to become demotivated if this is not the case. On average, they have eight personal items in their workspace. Extraverted Thinking or introverted Sensing colleagues or managers may not appreciate how important this is to these individuals.
- Are (along with introverted Intuition types) the most likely to be distracted by having lots of people around. They also don't enjoy working somewhere where there are lots of people.
- Dislike working with loud, extraverted people
- Are not particularly impressed by having new gadgets in the office
- Are especially keen that there is a 'quiet area' somewhere in the office.

Extraverted Feeling types (ESFJ, ENFJ):

- Feel that it is particularly important for them to have their own desk and working area
- Enjoy having new gadgets in the office
- Particularly dislike the idea of hot-desking.

Introverts, job satisfaction and open-plan offices

Open-plan offices and hot-desking

In the 21st century, open-plan office working has become the norm. It was the most common form of office environment for the participants in our survey.

The adoption of open-plan working may have been driven in part by a perception that open-plan offices can facilitate communication and diminish the negative effects of rigid hierarchies in organizations. However, research suggests that any such benefits are outweighed by the negative effects of the open-plan environment (Kim & de Dear, 2013), such as noise levels, distraction, and lack of privacy. Indeed, in our survey, those working in an open-plan office were among the least satisfied with their work environment. Nevertheless, open-plan offices continue to increase in popularity in organizations, primarily for financial reasons (Leach & Clegg, 2011).

Cost is also a driver of the move to hot-desking. This is where a worker no longer has their own dedicated desk, but instead can use one of a number of desks, workstations or areas that they share in common with other workers. Hot-desking and similar shared workspace arrangements are becoming especially prevalent in places where space is expensive and at a premium. However, they can reduce job satisfaction and worker productivity. This may be because they have a negative effect on an employee's sense of security and their 'territory', both as an individual and as a member of a group, and of ownership of that part of the workplace that is 'theirs' (Vischer, 2008).

In our survey, neither open-plan working nor hot-desking were popular. Those working in an open-plan office were among the least satisfied with their working environment. 79% of the group agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "It is important that I have my own desk and working area" and 53% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I don't mind hot-desking". Where possible, then, companies should step back from these forms of office organization. Realistically, this will often not be possible, and here it will be important to allow workers to control their environment – for example, by allowing them to temporarily personalize their workspace. This specific accommodation is likely to be particularly appreciated by those with an introverted Feeling preference.

Are offices a toxic environment for Introverts?

One of the findings of our survey was that, in general, Extraverts reported significantly higher levels of job satisfaction and happiness at work than did Introverts. One practical question, therefore, is this: is there anything about the design of the workplace that disadvantages Introverts? If so, how can this be improved?

Previous research (Allread & Marras, 2006) has shown that when an employee's personality is matched with the nature of their work environment, they are likely to report less anxiety and physical discomfort, and more job satisfaction and social support, than those employees where there is a mismatch. This may be a particularly important issue for Introverts, as it has been suggested that the modern office is 'designed for Extraverts' (Cain, 2012). Many of the trends in the modern office, while not always moving towards the preferences of Extraverts, certainly seem to be moving away from the preferences of Introverts:

Trend	Extraversion–Introversion
More open-plan offices	Not popular with either Extraverts or Introverts, but <i>especially</i> unpopular with Introverts
Lots of people around (in open-plan offices)	More distracting for Introverts, especially if those people can act in a loud, extraverted way.
More hot-desking, desk-sharing etc.	Not popular with either Extraverts or Introverts, but much less popular with Introverts. Those with an Introverted Sensing preference particularly dislike this approach.
Not having one's own desk or area; having to move location in the office	Introverts dislike this; Extraverts are more ambivalent

By creating a workplace that is arguably less conducive to job satisfaction and happiness at work amongst Introverts, organizations risk demotivating a significant part of the workforce. There are, however, a number of things that organizations can do to counteract the negative effects of the modern workplace on Introverts, including:

- Create 'quiet areas'. Extraverts are likely to appreciate these as well. Ensure that these can legitimately be used as individual quiet spaces and not just as 'meeting rooms'.
- Create the illusion of smallness and intimacy by careful attention to design and layout.
- Create spaces where Extraverts can behave in a loud, Extraverted way without distracting Introverts. Look at the way that 'traffic' moves around the office and place spaces in these areas where people will gravitate to.
- Don't move people's location without good, and clearly stated, reasons.
- Allow people to personalize their work area. In a hot-desking arrangement, ensure that there is the facility to do this.
- In general, create a 'blended office'. It may not be possible, for cost and other reasons, to move away from an open-plan office, but it should be possible, with careful attention to office layout and furniture design, to create offices with a mix of spaces that will allow both Extraverts and Introverts to flourish.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Respondent comments

Everyone who responded to the survey was invited (but not obliged) to leave comments. Many comments were about the format of the survey, asking when the results would be available etc. However, several related to type and the environment. They are reprinted here.

ESFP:

- I really like my manager... if I didn't, I suspect I'd answer differently. I minimize personal items because I desk share, but also because I don't want to be defined in the workplace by my family situation.
- 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!

INTJ:

- I'm an INTJ, but I can 'push' ENTJ at work so long as I can go hide in my office periodically.

INFP:

- I used to work in an office that had more than 10 people in it and was very unhappy. I asked to move to somewhere quieter and would have considered leaving if this could not have been found. I now share an office with 1 other person and she is part-time – perfect!

ENFP:

- Having lots of light and plants in the office is important to me. I already keep the door open to the open space, to stay connected.
- 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.
- Replying to the statements I realized that working just two days has an effect on what I need from my work environment. I need more focus to get the job done. Before, I worked four days and I felt I had more time to 'play' in between tasks.
- I prefer a mixture – when reading / planning / focusing, I need to work alone in a quiet space. When exploring / developing ideas / designing I need to be around people and bounce ideas off them. Other people's noise and enthusiasm distracts me when I need to be quiet, but I probably distract others when I'm in 'loud' mode. The social aspects of the team are important to me – I wouldn't want to be alone all the time.

INTP:

- Open-plan offices and hot-desking are not for PEOPLE. Extraverts find it too easy to be distracted, and introverts find it torture. The only reason open-plan offices and hot-desking are popular is because it is CHEAPER, leaving more profit for other things (usually shareholders). All the rationale around these practices encouraging communication is utter rubbish, thought up to justify an essentially financial decision. Employee satisfaction increases with the ability to concentrate, and get things done, regardless of type. Private offices say 'Employees are important', 'Trust is vital', 'We employ individual people, not interchangeable parts'.
- Bit difficult to answer as a) I am an interim b) I work at home 2 days per week, and work at different sites so the environment is less important c) I don't mind hot-desking but I do want somewhere permanent to store my things – near to the hot-desks.

ENTJ:

- I loathe open-plan offices. It means you can never have a private conversation, or when you are having a delicate conversation, the office can just erupt into noise which diminishes the attention you appear to be giving to a client or customer. A good hot-desking system where you can log into a phone and desk top is essential as are private offices where you can go if you need to. Secluded break out areas are also a good idea. It is not essential to be 'on show' the whole time and in my opinion it diminishes productivity.

ISFP:

- Was not certain what hot-desking is?? As an extreme I, it seems easy to block out any noise when I need to but I think the SP in me loves the activity of the enthusiastic E. They make it fun to work. When I get home I do need quiet and am extremely grateful that my E husband naps after work and does not really want chat until we have dinner. I also stay up very late and my quiet time comes then also when I can concentrate on work.

ESFJ:

- To me, the people in the office and their commitment to each other and the quality of the work product make so much more difference to me than the layout, latest technology, or the work space. However, as an 'S' I do like and appreciate a work space that is aesthetically pleasing, comfortable, and allows me to personalize my work area.
- In general 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. However, when I have to be fully concentrated on a specific task I prefer to be in a quiet space to better focus on the task I have to deal with.