

# Using the Myers-Briggs® Instrument with the Lominger Book *You: Being More Effective in Your MBTI® Type*



One question facilitators often hear during an individual or team-building MBTI® session is “What happens next?” Individuals typically are excited about the prospect of using the MBTI tool in their personal and professional lives but are not sure how to implement the new ideas and potential opportunities. In other words, what is the practical “So what?” of why they learned about the MBTI tool in the first place?

Lominger’s book *You: Being More Effective in Your MBTI® Type* is a useful companion for individuals and teams wishing to learn how to use their MBTI results for development.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, as growing numbers of companies are putting professional development in the hands of their employees, the book offers a cost-effective way to extend the knowledge gained through an individual or team-building session into the workplace in a sustainable way. From an ROI standpoint, this is a win-win situation. The employee feels validated by the employer’s demonstrated interest in his or her learning and development, and the company provides—with minimal financial investment—a wonderful resource to its employees who are motivated to take charge of their own learning.

## TYPE DYNAMICS

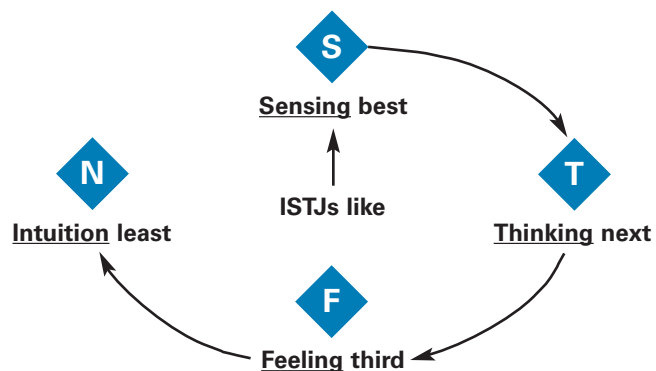
The Lominger book can serve as a valuable resource and guide to help clients who have taken the MBTI assessment and verified their four-letter type increase their understanding of their type and the types of the people with whom they work and interact. The book begins by expanding on the concept of type dynamics, or how the four preferences in each type work together, to bring type to life and to help readers develop a holistic view of type. One way it does this is by describing the eight mental processes—combinations of a function (S, N, T, or F) and an attitude (E or I).

Understanding the *direction* and *experience* of each mental process can help clients picture what related behaviors might look like in an interpersonal or interactive setting. The chart on page 2 provides descriptions of some possible behaviors.

Mental processes play an important part in type dynamics. In the figure on page 2, type dynamics are represented as a cycle that rotates clockwise. An individual’s dominant function is the one that comes to him or her most naturally and that the person turns to first. Next, the auxiliary function acts in concert with the dominant function, much like a “wingman.” The interaction of these two

Mental Process	Possible Behaviors
S <sub>E</sub> (Extraverted Sensing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing awareness of the external environment, including specific details and facts, and attempting to understand or act on this awareness</li> <li>Paying attention to things one can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch</li> </ul>
S <sub>I</sub> (Introverted Sensing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking time to be clear about what specific pieces of information mean and analyzing the source of the information</li> <li>Examining the context of an experience, what one remembers paying attention to, how one felt about it, and what it might mean</li> </ul>
N <sub>E</sub> (Extraverted Intuition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building bridges, tying together themes, and looking for ways to bring all the information together</li> <li>Evaluating “What does all this mean?” and creating ideas and possibilities around the answers</li> </ul>
N <sub>I</sub> (Introverted Intuition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking about what is next and what might happen in the future</li> <li>Putting together ideas with an understanding of how the ideas influence the big picture</li> </ul>
T <sub>E</sub> (Extraverted Thinking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing an objective analysis in an attempt to solve a problem by questioning and challenging others</li> <li>Imposing boundaries on problems to limit the scope of a required solution to a workable dimension</li> </ul>
T <sub>I</sub> (Introverted Thinking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being specific about the way information is understood—expanding and dissecting analysis for new learning</li> <li>Conducting critical analysis to find out what will work and what won't work</li> </ul>
F <sub>E</sub> (Extraverted Feeling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needing to be in relationship with and connect with others involved</li> <li>Showing others, in a warm and compassionate way, how and why one cares about someone or something</li> </ul>
F <sub>I</sub> (Introverted Feeling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking time to reflect on or think about how feelings relate to one's morals and values</li> <li>Looking for what ideas might mean to oneself and the others involved</li> </ul>

functions creates the individual's *function pair*. We can help our clients learn about function pairs and use their knowledge to understand the way they approach change, conflict, communication, decision making, leadership, and many other applications of type.



## TYPE DEVELOPMENT

Type theory contends that individuals spend much time in the first half of life developing their dominant and auxiliary functions. People have the drive to master those functions first because they lean on them much more than they do their last two functions. The third, or tertiary, function is the opposite of the auxiliary and is less developed than the first two functions. The fourth, or inferior, function is the least conscious of all our functions, and thus we don't have the same opportunity to master it that we do with our dominant and auxiliary functions. We don't always recognize when we are using our inferior function, and therefore it can be more challenging to develop.

While the four functions normally operate in a 1, 2, 3, 4 order (#1 dominant, #2 auxiliary, #3 tertiary, #4 inferior), as shown in the chart below, when people are significantly stressed the order of operation reverses. Put simply, when individuals are under great stress or fatigued they have less access to their most preferred, most natural functions and are forced to operate by using their less preferred, less accessible functions. Naomi Quenk calls this being "in the grip" of our inferior function.<sup>2</sup> It is a little bit like writing with our nondominant hand: It feels awkward, uncomfortable, and strange at times. We behave in uncharacteristic, unpredictable ways. Typically, response time

**Order of Functions for Each Type**

Type	#1 Dominant	#2 Auxiliary	#3 Tertiary	#4 Inferior
ESTJ	Thinking	Sensing	Intuition	Feeling
ISTJ	Sensing	Thinking	Feeling	Intuition
ESFJ	Feeling	Sensing	Intuition	Thinking
ISFJ	Sensing	Feeling	Thinking	Intuition
ESTP	Sensing	Thinking	Feeling	Intuition
ISTP	Thinking	Sensing	Intuition	Feeling
ESFP	Sensing	Feeling	Thinking	Intuition
ISFP	Feeling	Sensing	Intuition	Thinking
ENFJ	Feeling	Intuition	Sensing	Thinking
INFJ	Intuition	Feeling	Thinking	Sensing
ENFP	Intuition	Feeling	Thinking	Sensing
INFP	Feeling	Intuition	Sensing	Thinking
ENTJ	Thinking	Intuition	Sensing	Feeling
INTJ	Intuition	Thinking	Feeling	Sensing
ENTP	Intuition	Thinking	Feeling	Sensing
INTP	Thinking	Intuition	Sensing	Feeling

lengthens and individuals become less efficient. This is why when people are working a stress-filled fifteen-hour day, they are really getting only six hours of work done and spinning their wheels for the other nine hours. They are “in the grip” and not at the top of their game!

So what is required to return to an optimal cycle of functions and one’s preferred method of functioning? For individuals in stressful situations, allowing themselves to choose behaviors associated with their inferior function gives them an opportunity to refuel and return to their pre-stress level of functioning. The problem for many people is that they don’t make an effort to do this. They don’t take time off from work when they are sick and don’t get enough sleep when they are too busy. They run on fumes and assume that eventually they will catch up. Although they may know logically that if they take the day off it will help them heal and return to work refreshed, often people feel they don’t have the option to do this. The result is a longer-than-necessary period of ineffectiveness and stress.

If we help our clients understand type dynamics and the order of their functions, they can use that understanding to their advantage. By pairing their knowledge of type dynamics with the recommendations offered in the Lominger book, they can leverage the power of type and develop themselves under the best and the worst circumstances. For example, the Lominger book looks at ways people may overuse or underuse their preferences and offers insights that may help people learn to flex their type style to improve the outcome of a situation. Let’s say you are a project manager driving an initiative with a team of people who have various MBTI® types. As an ESTJ, you prefer to have an exact, detailed plan that specifies each step and substep for participants. This style, however, may be so foreign to some participants—INFPs, for example—that even being a member of the team creates tension for them. When you overuse your type in this way, you may neglect to appreciate type diversity and the many different ways people arrive at conclusions. A project manager who lacks this kind of vision or flexibility may find himself or herself leading a team with some motivation and morale issues, which undeniably will affect the quality and delivery of services.

In another example, the Lominger book offers some management suggestions to an ENFP. The ENFP’s style is driven by a need to connect with and please people with whom he or she is working. Sometimes what gets lost in the execution has to do with the preferences opposite those of a person’s function pair (for an ENFP, those opposite preferences are S and T). In one section the book recommends ways to organize, manage time, forecast tasks and work, set goals, and create a process. Of course, these things are within the capabilities of an ENFP, but they may not come naturally. Therefore, the Lominger book recommends some specific strategies the ENFP can try in attempting to accommodate the needs of his or her opposite preferences.

## **ADDITIONAL BENEFITS**

Following the section on mental processes, the Lominger book presents chapters on the sixteen MBTI types, which discuss strengths, basic communication, barriers to effectiveness, and stress reactions for each type. Each of these chapters also contains sections called “Being a More

Effective [ISTJ], “Overusing [ISTJ] Tendencies,” “Applications,” and “Suggested Readings.” The “Suggested Readings” sections are particularly helpful for clients who like to give themselves homework assignments and self-development challenges to meet specific goals.

Next the book looks at the MBTI® Form Q (Step II™) assessment, helping readers understand the facets and use the information garnered from them to increase their awareness of type in others and themselves. The authors look at either developing a facet or determining whether a facet is being overused. The book concludes with a brief section about general effectiveness and development planning for all types.

Ultimately, the Lominger book is an informative and easy-to-use resource our clients can employ in conjunction with their MBTI results. Its straightforward presentation enables readers to focus on those areas in which they are looking to develop more insight around their type or the types of people with whom they interact. Each section specifically and practically outlines strategies and applications that relate to on-the-job and realistic ways to flex type and develop preferences in an *appropriate* way, which is the key to using type most effectively.

Whether our clients have undergone a team or individual interpretation, using the book as a guide and resource in concert with their MBTI report will enable them to drive their own development and create a specific, step-by-step plan to elevate themselves to the next level in their career or organization. The Lominger book can be used in any department and at any level in an organization, and it is a small investment with a potentially huge ROI.

## NOTES

1. Pearman, R. R., Lombardo, M. M., and Eichinger, R. W. (2005). *You: Being more effective in your MBTI® type*. Minneapolis, MN: Lominger International.
2. See Quenk, N. L. (2000). *In the grip: Understanding type, stress, and the inferior function*, 2nd ed. Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc.

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