

How to optimize “working in groups” based on MBPT

(MBPT = Myers-Briggs Personality Type)

Individual differences affect interpersonal communications. How people “hear” things depends on their preferences (E/I, S/N, T/F, J/P). Useful communication must be listened to, understood and both considered & responded to without hostility. To reduce irrelevant friction, try to match presentation to the MBPT components of the individual you are addressing.

When E’s work with I’s

- Write out ideas, plan & present them ahead of time to allow time for reflection.
- Don’t expect an immediate reaction. Give time to reflect & consider.
- Take time to talk one-on-one - or in a very small group
- Develop a trusting relationship with the I’s

When I’s work with E’s

- Project energy & enthusiasm
- Speak up; project your voice
- Use non-verbal behavior: gestures, facial expressions, body language, eye contact.
- Be action oriented; come across as a doer!

When S’s work with N’s

- State the “big idea” first. Know what your **main point** is.
- Give prospect of an interesting possibility before getting down to facts.
- If you need help with an **idea**, ask an N for help
- Avoid automatic negative reaction to N’s sketchy plans (“It might work if...”)
- Whatever you are dealing with, focus on **what's possible**.

When N’s work with S’s

- Work out the **details** of your idea before presenting it.
- Give **explicit statement** of the problem to be solved.
- Be factual, specific & pragmatic.
- Have a **definite** plan of action. If possible, have a goal with specific steps for achieving the goal within a time frame.
- Listen for data you might have forgotten to consider. Revise your idea or plan to take that information into account.

When T's work with F's

- Mention points of agreement before bringing up points of difference.
- Start presentation with a concern for the people involved.
- Ask for people-oriented data:
 - "How do you feel about it?" Why?
 - "How would others feel?" Why
- Count people's feelings among the causes/facts to be reckoned with, and act accordingly.

When F's work with T's

- Address the task "up front", i.e. directly; don't beat around the bush.
- Arrange comments in a logical way:
 - Beginning
 - Sequence of points
 - End
- Use pros & cons and in the process, be rational & analytical.
- Don't go overboard about asking the group members how they are feeling about the decision-making process.

When J's work with P's

- Be flexible. Listen for new information & if needed, readjust thinking.
- Be patient. Don't demand immediate answers. Leave matter open-ended as long as you can.

When P's work with J's

- Plan ahead. Use timelines. Set deadlines. Live by them.
- Be ready to make decisions when necessary.
- Avoid inappropriate diversions, jokes.

Conclusion

Establish quickly that effective communication among the group members is valuable. (Note that the definition of "valuable" varies from type to type.) Stress the unsolved part of the problem, rather than condemning the whole idea, plan or recommendation. If differences of opinion occur, be quick to say, "You may be right. Let's explore that."

Recognize that compromise between different types is often necessary. Addressing group members according to differences in MBPT will yield better solutions & more harmonious working relationship.