




HOW WORK PERSONALITY TYPES CAN INFLUENCE SUCCESSFUL RETURN-TO-OFFICE AND HYBRID STRATEGIES

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**FORCING A RETURN TO THE OFFICE MAY CAUSE
INTUITIVE WORKERS TO SEEK NEW EMPLOYMENT
WITH MORE HYBRID WORK OPPORTUNITIES.**

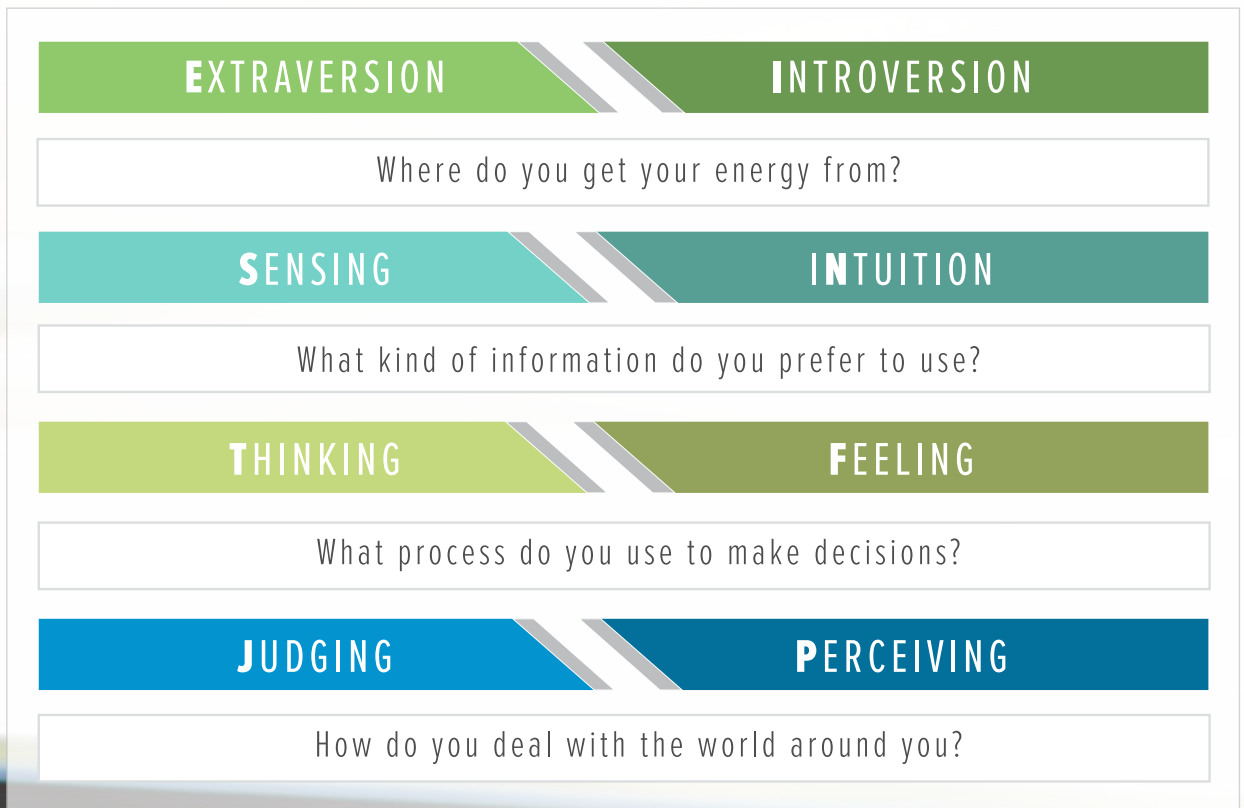
WORKPLACE PERSONALITY TESTS are important tools for understanding work styles. Organizations use the tests in a variety of ways to recruit candidates, ensure culture fit, improve team dynamics, groom leaders, and manage performance.

Considering the post-pandemic challenge of determining where work happens, KI set out to investigate employees' attitudes about remote, hybrid, and in-office work and how those attitudes are influenced by personality types. The goal of this effort was to help organizations navigate today's changed work environment and create effective workplace strategies.

KI partnered with Myers-Briggs Company and commissioned research to explore the possibility that personality may be the key to understanding why individuals do or do not wish to return to the workplace.¹

Since the 1960s, more than 50 million people have taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test,² widely considered the gold-standard in personality tests. In fact, 88 of the Fortune 100 companies use the popular assessment tool in their hiring and training practices.³

Such tests are useful in optimizing a workforce. Personality assessments serve as another tool organizations can use to improve the success of return-to-office guidelines and work-from-home policies. They may also help when designing office spaces and layouts that support better productivity.



THE PERSONALITY TYPES AND DIFFERENCES

At its simplest, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment makes the theory of psychological types understandable and useful in people's lives. It's a way to recognize and appreciate the differences between people and is especially helpful in building better teams.

The assessment looks at four areas of personality type:

1. Whether individuals prefer to focus their attention on the outside world of people and things (**Extraversion**) or their inner world of thoughts and feelings (**Introversion**).
2. Whether they trust and prefer to use information that is practical and based on the evidence of their senses (**Sensing**) or they pay more attention to connections and the big picture (**Intuition**).
3. Whether they prefer to make decisions based on objective logic (**Thinking**) or based on their values and on how people will be impacted (**Feeling**).
4. Whether they prefer to live their lives in an ordered, structured, planned way (**Judging**) or in an open, spontaneous, emergent way (**Perceiving**).

Individuals will have preferences for either Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I), Sensing (S) or Intuition (N), Thinking (T) or Feeling (F), and Judging (J) or Perceiving (P).

The four preferences further combine dynamically to give one of 16 different personality types.

For the purposes of this report, we focused on the four defining preferences of MBTI personality types.

To discover the workplace implications of these personality assessments, the research survey questioned participants about their work preferences, collected information about their environments, and obtained their views on job satisfaction.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS: WHAT SPECIFIC PERSONALITIES WANT

Organizations must determine where the traditional workplace fits in our post-pandemic world.

Instead of relying on subjective views and prescriptive mandates, weighing MBTI personality preferences may help. According to the survey results, they can hold the key to understanding what is behind many of today's workplace attitudes.

When it came to **Extraverts** and **Introverts**, some of the findings were as expected. In particular:

- Extraverts were much more likely than Introverts to say they enjoyed working in a place with lots of people. Extraverts added that the best thing about being in the office is talking, socializing, and being with co-workers.

It's no surprise then that Extraverts are more likely to be open to the return-to-office movement than Introverts. However, that is **not their exclusive preference**. It's worth noting that:

- Both Extraverts and Introverts agreed that they enjoyed working from home and appreciated the peace and quiet of doing so, with Introverts agreeing more emphatically.
- Among hybrid workers, both Extraverts and Introverts also agreed they would like to work from home more often, again with Introverts agreeing more emphatically.

ORGANIZATIONS MUST DETERMINE
WHERE THE TRADITIONAL WORKPLACE
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PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS COULD SERVE AS ANOTHER TOOL ORGANIZATIONS CAN USE TO IMPROVE WORKPLACE STRATEGIES.

Key survey highlights regarding **Sensing** and **Intuition** types included:

- Those with a Sensing preference were more positive about their work and their organization.
- Those with an Intuition preference who worked entirely in the office were less positive and were more likely to be looking for a new job.
- Also notable, hybrid workers with a Sensing preference spent, on average, more time working in the office than those with an Intuitive preference. This suggests that Sensing types may be slightly more oriented to office working than Intuitive types and that forcing a return to the office may cause Intuitive workers to seek new employment with more hybrid work opportunities.
- Intuitive respondents were more likely to work for organizations that had no specific rule about how often people should be in the office and less likely to work for an organization that specified working days.

Thinking and **Feeling** preferences provided insight into their workspaces:

- Among hybrid and remote workers, individuals with a Feeling preference were more likely to say they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their home working environment.
- Respondents with a Thinking preference were more likely than those with a Feeling preference to have a dedicated home office or workroom which may account for the dissatisfaction among Feeling preferences.
- In the office, respondents with a Thinking preference were more likely than those with a Feeling preference to prefer neat and organized spaces and found themselves annoyed when people have messy, cluttered desks.

Looking at **Judging** and **Perceiving** preferences, the survey revealed:

- Among hybrid workers, those with a Judging preference were more likely to say they would like to work from home more often.
- Among entirely office-based workers, Perceiving individuals were more likely to say they wished they could work from home more often.

NO MORE OPEN PLANS, PLEASE

Survey respondents were also asked, “What one change would make the biggest improvement to your office or work environment?”

The results were loud and clear: **reduce or eliminate open-plan layouts and add more private spaces.**

In fact, more than half of office-based and hybrid workers’ workplaces were open-plan, and only a quarter of them said that this was their preferred environment.⁴

Those working in fully open-plan offices were the least likely to say they enjoyed their jobs.

In contrast, respondents whose offices included separate individual and group working spaces and/or multipurpose social spaces felt more positive about work, were less likely to be looking for new jobs, and were more satisfied with their working environment.

CONCLUSION: WORKPLACE PERSONALITIES = WORKPLACE OPPORTUNITIES

MBTI provides valuable insights into the needs and preferences of workers in today’s workplace evolution.

The tool can be especially helpful for those organizations that already use personality types in the workplace, readily building on their existing knowledge to achieve smoother transitions, greater success, and better approaches for helping employees thrive.

These insights may allow organizations to better manage workplace strategies and policies and further represents an opportunity to reconfigure office space in more inventive ways.

That includes redesigning spaces to allow for fewer open-plan layouts and more privacy. Additional design insights from the study include:

- Create specified quiet zones by adding private pods, booths, small meeting rooms, and informal gathering spaces.
- Partition larger spaces using storage, resource centers, and third-space solutions to give the feel of smaller environments.

By applying these principles, organizations can realize another meaningful tool for planning the future of workplace design and strategies in order to advance their business well into the future.







SOURCES

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3. "What Personality Are You? How the Myers-Briggs Test Took Over the World." *The Guardian*, August 30, 2021.
4. Hackston, J. (May, 2022). *Remote and hybrid working* [Report]. The Myers-Briggs Company.

