

Appreciating and Leveraging Both Introverts and Extraverts in the Workplace

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Extraversion vs. Introversion (according to Myers and Briggs)

Where do you put your attention and get your energy?

Do you like to spend time in the outer world of people and things (Extraversion), or in your inner world of ideas and images (Introversion)?

Extraversion

The following statements generally apply to me:

- I am seen as "outgoing" or as a "people person."
- I feel comfortable in groups and like working in them.
- I have a wide range of friends and know lots of people.
- I sometimes jump too quickly into an activity and don't allow enough time to think it over.
- Before I start a project, I sometimes forget to stop and get clear on what I want to do and why.

Introversion

The following statements generally apply to me:

- I am seen as "reflective" or "reserved."
- I feel comfortable being alone and like things I can do on my own.
- I prefer to know just a few people well.
- I sometimes spend too much time reflecting and don't move into action quickly enough.
- I sometimes forget to check with the outside world to see if my ideas really fit the experience.

How are you energized?

EXTRAVERSION

- ◆ External/exterior
- ◆ Outside thrust
- ◆ Talk thoughts out
- ◆ Breadth
- ◆ Involved with people, things
- ◆ Interaction
- ◆ Action
- ◆ Do-think-do

INTROVERSION

- ◆ Internal/interior
- ◆ Inside pull
- ◆ Keep thoughts in
- ◆ Depth
- ◆ Work with ideas, thoughts
- ◆ Concentration
- ◆ Reflection
- ◆ Think-do-think

- Introverts vs. Extroverts

Is the brain of an Introvert different than that of an Extravert?



2012 Harvard Study:

Introverts tended to have larger, thicker gray matter in their prefrontal cortex — a region of the brain that is linked to abstract thought and decision-making — while extroverts had less gray matter.

<http://www.medicaldaily.com/>, “The Brain Of An Introvert Compared To That Of An Extrovert: Are They Really Different”, Lecia Bushak, August 21, 2014

Leveraging Differences in Energy

- Workplace layout
- Leadership
- Collaboration and communication
- Decision making

Workplace Layout

- On-demand desks
- Touchdown desks (workstations available for use by anyone)
- Collaborative spaces/hubs
- Meeting rooms of varied sizes and formality
- Telephone booths
- Conference rooms (telephone and video)
- Quiet rooms
- Project rooms
- Social and relaxation spaces
- Resource spaces

“Introverts vs. Extroverts: Do office environments support both?”,
Cushman and Wakefield, 2013, www.cushmanandwakefield.com

Leadership: Bono and Judge, 2004

- Extroversion was the best predictor of **perceived** transformational leadership; extroversion is the **most consistent correlate of perceived leadership** across study settings and leadership criteria.
- Extroverted employees were more likely to emerge as leaders in selection and promotion decisions and be perceived as effective by both supervisors and subordinates.

Bono, Joyce and Timothy Judge, "Personality and Transformational and Transactional Leadership: A Meta-Analysis:", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 89, No. 5, 901–910, 2004

Leadership: Grant, Gino and Hofmann, 2011

- **Introverted** leaders produced greater group performance when leading **proactive** employees.
- **Extroverted** leaders produced greater group performance when leading **passive** employees.
- The researchers attributed these findings to the *introverted leader's willingness to listen and take suggestions from proactive employees and not feel threatened or the need to assert their dominance*

Grant, Adam M., Francesca Gino and David A. Hofmann, "Reversing the Extraverted Leadership Advantage: The role of employee Proactivity", *Academy of Management Journal* Vol. 54, No. 3, 528–550, 2011

Leadership: Harvard Study, 2010

Extraverted leaders can be a liability for a company's performance, especially if the followers are extraverts.

“...new ideas can't blossom into profitable projects if everyone in the room is contributing ideas, and the leader is too busy being outgoing to listen to or act upon them.”

[Http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/6494.html](http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/6494.html), “Introverts: the Best Leaders For Proactive Employees”, Francesca Gino, October 4, 2010

An introverted leader is more likely to listen to and process the ideas of an eager team.

“But if an introverted leader is managing a bunch of passive followers, then a staff meeting may start to resemble a Quaker meeting: lots of contemplation, but hardly any talk. To that end, a team of passive followers benefits from an extraverted leader”

[Http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/6494.html](http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/6494.html), “Introverts: the Best Leaders For Proactive Employees”, Francesca Gino, October 4, 2010

Leadership: Atmanik, 2013

- “Introverted executives reported lower rates of perceived organizational support and work engagement than extroverted executives indicating that introverted executives do not feel as engaged in their work or as supported by their organizations as extroverts.”

Atamanik, Candace, “The Introverted Leader: Examining the Role of Personality and Environment”, FIU Center for Leadership, 2013

Collaboration Techniques

- NOT Brainstorming or “group” discussion
- Brainwriting
- Starbursting – a systematic method of asking questions to clearly define something.
- Crawford’s Slip Writing Method – affinity diagram is an example
- Random input (associated with deBono’s thinking hats)

Brainwriting example

Collaboration Best Practices

- Think about space – balance open spaces with private spaces.
- Allow for unstructured time to collaborate – walks, lunches, etc.
- Encourage “alone” time for idea development (have introverts “train” extroverts in using alone time?)
- Don’t discount those that don’t speak up during meetings.
- Allow collaboration to play out knowing there is no right way.
- Do it in bursts.
- Stretch it out.

Decision Making Best Practices

- Understand your tendencies
- Understand the tendencies of others
- Use collaboration techniques to make the “best” decision, inclusive of appropriate input.
- Slow down the decision making process and expectations
- Identify organization habits (cultural tendencies) that impact good decision making
- Take steps towards more inclusive decision making processes.

Adaptability

“[It is much harder for an extrovert to operate in an introverted world. There are times when you need to work independently, use reflection, get into deep thought. Extroverts find that more difficult because they find creativity comes through discussion, through conversation and talking to people.”

Morrish, John, “The rise of the introvert”, www.managementtoday.co.uk,
March 28, 2012.

10 Ways Managers Can Help Introverts

1. Don't use group-work when recruiting: it favors the extrovert.
2. At big events, schedule in downtime or create an 'introverts' room'.
3. Respect people's need for quiet in the office.
4. Eschew compulsory socializing.
5. Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

10 Ways Managers Can Help Introverts

6. Invite written contributions before and after meetings.
7. Don't interrupt when introverts speak: encourage them.
8. Don't misinterpret silence as disapproval or disagreement.
9. Remember: 'There is zero correlation between being the best talker and having the best ideas.' (Susan Cain)
10. Don't expect to get instant feedback.

Thank you!

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