Myers-Briggs Perspectives for Innovators and Change-Makers

Leigh Baker

balance³

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This e-book is a thought provoker designed to kick start your explorations into the regenerative economy. It explores some general principles and strategies. Being general in nature, it cannot replace any specific advice.

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Leigh Baker is a Regenerative Business catalyst, working with individuals and businesses to understand and leverage their opportunities for thriving through the shift to a Regenerative Economy. She is a skilled coach, consultant and trainer who teaches her clients how to change their thinking, build their skills and change their worlds.

Before joining the sustainability game after post graduate studies in 2002, Leigh spent many years working in Australian manufacturing and distribution, developing a deep understanding of the industrial and social systems that deliver our made and built environments.

During her years in supply chain systems innovation, she became increasingly convinced that delivering successful innovation required as much expertise in the 'soft skills' of influencing and the understanding of human systems as it did technical expertise. From this observation, Leigh trained and worked as an executive and business coach.

In 2004 Leigh established **Balance**[3] as a vehicle for exploring and accelerating the spread of the knowledge and skills required to successfully turn regenerative thinking into sustainable business innovation.

Contents

Humans, their systems, and innovation

The real work of innovation is shifting human systems and the behaviours they embed and reinforce. Identifying and influencing the decision makers in those systems takes skill and knowledge, not just luck or "talent..

Amongst the range of tools available to change-makers for understanding and exploring human motivation is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). While it has been misinterpreted and misused in some organisation development programs, we consider it a valuable framework for thinking about quality communication and influencing.

Essentially, Myers-Brigg identifies different preferences that people have for engaging with the world. The 4 patterns of human behavioural preferences or *temperaments* codified builds on observations from as far back as Hippocrates.

People are different

We all know in a general sense that 'people are different'. A better understanding of how those who 'aren't like you' are different can be a valuable tool in influencing for a sustainable future.

The four temperaments described in Myers Briggs are:

- Idealist Temperament
- Rational Temperament
- Guardian Temperament
- Artisan Temperatment

WARNING: the use of these terms varies from normal conversational usage. They are thinking tools to provide YOU with a new map and fresh insight - not labels to box in other people.

Each temperament pattern has its own likely set of Needs, Values, Talents and Behaviour preferences.

 We assess that observing for the behaviours and talents of those we work with and seek to influence can provide insight into the values and core needs that underpin and motivate their actions.

While many people will have one preference dominating, others are more balance. The purpose of this paper is to encourage you to explore dimensions that are outside your own habitual preferences and patterns.

What's YOUR preference?

Knowing your own temperament and preference is important in this work – it will help you identify the gaps between you and the influencers you want to connect with.

Reflecting on the preferences of the key players in your world will enable you to consider how best to connect with and influence them.

Acknowledgment

We have drawn heavily in this paper from the elegant, engaging summary of Myers Briggs Temperaments from *"Understanding Yourself and Others"* by Linda V Berens. There is a huge amount of useful, well written information packed into its slim 36 pages and we warmly recommend it.

1. Exploring for temperament patterns

From most visible to least visible, the characteristics of each temperament are:

1. Behaviours exhibited
2. Talents/Roles employed
3. Values
4. Needs

By observing the behaviours and talents of those we seek to understand and influence, we can postulate the unspoken values and needs that motivate them. Exploring for these underlying needs and values can generate better rapport and connection.
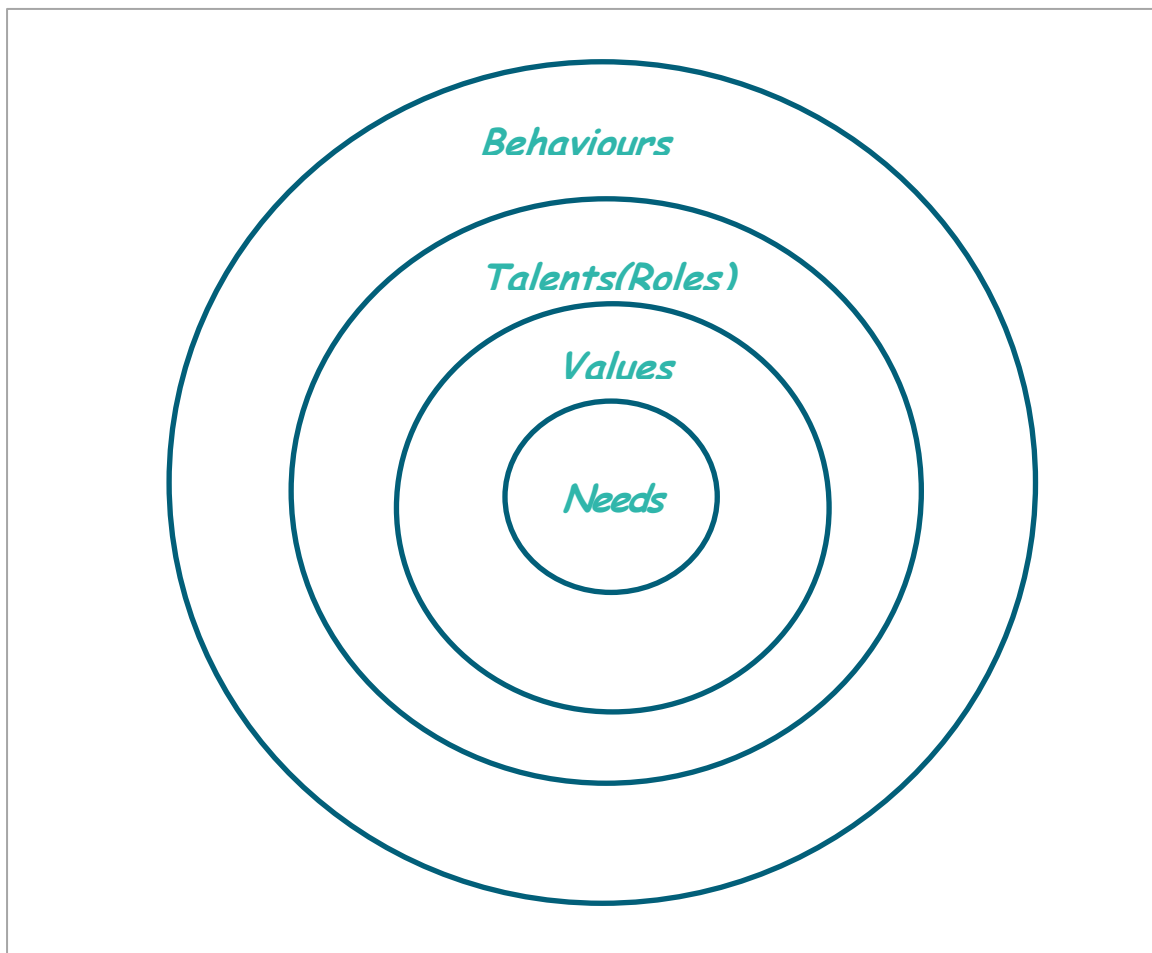

Figure 1 – Myers Briggs insights – from outer behaviour to inner motivators

2. Exploring for insights by behavioural preference

By observing the preferred behaviours of those we seek to connect with, we may develop some insight into their motivations. With a different understanding, we can find different messages and engagement options.

Pick a specific person that you would like to influence more effectively. Think about the behaviours you most commonly observe in them. Do they cluster into one (or two) of those listed here?

BEHAVIOUR PREFERENCES BY TEMPERAMENT			
Creating harmony	Forming hypotheses	Stablising organisations	Seizing opportunities
Relationship-centred	Knowledge-centred	Authority centred	Impact centred
Global language	Precise language	Customary language	Colloquial language
Use metaphors	Conditional	Comparisons	Story telling
Credulous	Sceptical	Fatalistic	Cynical
Imaginative	Inventing	Standardising	Improvising
Empathic	Analytical	Responsible	Risk-taking
Inspiring	Problem solving	Cautious/careful	Fast-reacting
Future oriented	Infinite time orientation	Past orientation	Present orientation
Impressionistic	Perfectionistic	Meticulous	Impulsive
Praising	Critiquing	Appraising	Entertaining
Involved	Oblivious	Dependable	Restless
Warm hearted	Logical	Structured	Spontaneous
Spirtual	Theoretical	Economical	Epicurean
Could you be seeking to connect with the 12% of the population who lean to the IDEALIST???	*Could you be seeking to connect with the 12% of the population who lean to the RATIONAL???*	*Could you be seeking to connect with the 37% of the population who lean to the GUARDIAN???*	*Could you be seeking to connect with the 37% of the population who lean to the ARTISAN???*

3. Exploring for insights by talents and roles

By observing the roles taken on by those we seek to influence, we may gain sight into their underlying motivations.

Equally, understanding our own preferences will enable us to identify potential gaps of understanding between ourselves and those around us.

Again, pick someone you want to engage with more effectively and ask yourself which roles they tend to take on and/or enjoy?

ROLE PREFERENCES BY TEMPERAMENT			
Mentor or forseer	Organiser or director	Monitor/ oversee	Operator/ maneuverer
Advocate or proponent	Engineer/ inventor	Conserve/ provide	Player/ performer
Romatic idealist	Perpetual learner	Rule maker/ enforcer	Crisis manager
Facilitator	Categorise	Provider	Permorm
Reveal	Design	Protector	Adapt
Counsel	Marshal	Supervisor	Promote
Integrative thinking	Differential thinking	Sequential thinking	Contextual thinking
Interpretation	Analysis	Measurement	Variation
Diplomacy	Strategy	Logistics	Tactics
Catalyst	Visionary	Stabiliser/ trationalist	Troubleshooter/ negotiator
Could you be seeking to connect with the 12% of the population who lean to the IDEALIST???	*Could you be seeking to connect with the 12% of the population who lean to the RATIONAL???*	*Could you be seeking to connect with the 37% of the population who lean to the GUARDIAN???*	*Could you be seeking to connect with the 37% of the population who lean to the ARTISAN???*

4. Underlying typical temperament influences

To us, understanding temperaments is a useful model for thinking creatively about influencing and communication – it's not a labelling methodology for playing the blame game.

Idealists

If you assess that you're seeking to connect with an **idealist** preference set, consider:

Values

This temperament is characteristically motivated by values around:

- Empathetic relationships
- Ethics and morality
- Authenticity
- Idealistic and meaning-driven world views
- Cooperative interaction and unity

Core needs

This temperament can be characterised by core needs for:

- Meaning and significance
- Unique identity

If you assess your target audience may have idealist preferences, have you framed your message to their potential motivators? Have you made sure you're not using your defaults?

It may not be a useful strategy to engage someone with idealist patters in hierarchical procedures that ensure conformity and consistency.

Rationals

If you're seeking to connect with a **rational** preference set, consider:

Values

This temperament is characteristically motivated by values around:

- Expert relationships
- Concepts and ideas
- Progress
- Ultimate truths or theories
- Intelligence
- Scientific inquiry

- Logical consistency

Core needs

This temperament can be characterised by core needs for:

- Mastery and self control
- Knowledge and competence

If you assess your target audience may have rational preferences, have you framed your message to their potential motivators? Have you made sure you're not using your defaults?

It may be useful to engage them in new concepts and scientific principles rather than appealing to ethics and group wellbeing.

Guardians

If you're seeking to connect with a **guardian** preference set, consider:

Values

This temperament is characteristically motivated by values around:

- Group relationships
- Rules and regulations
- Conformity
- Preservation of social groups
- Security
- Hierarchical procedures
- Stability

Core needs

This temperament can be characterised by core needs for:

- Membership and belonging
- Responsibility/duty

If you assess your target audience may have guardian preferences, have you framed your message to their potential motivators? Have you made sure you're not using your defaults?

For example, someone with guardian tendencies may not be interested in 'exciting new technologies' – unless they ensure stability and preserve a sense of belonging,

Artisans

If you're seeking to connect with an **artisan** preference set, consider:

Values

This temperament is characteristically motivated by values around:

- Fraternal relationships
- Excitement and stimulation
- Aesthetics
- Immediate adventure
- Action
- Performance with skill
- Variety

Core needs

This temperament can be characterised by core needs for:

- Freedom to act on impulse
- Ability to make an impact

If you assess your target audience may have idealist preferences, have you framed your message to their potential motivators? Have you made sure you're not using your defaults?

It could be more useful to appeal to the variety of innovation applications possible and the impact they can make rather than responsibility to a greater good and compliance with regulation.

5. How can you craft your message to meet your audience's preferences?

So how will you use this new level of insight? Who can you engage with differently now you know there are some preference patterns to give you a stable framework for influencing?

As you've explored the different lists, what have you observed about your own preferences? Who is the most challenging person for you to communicate with? What is your first estimation of where you could march to the beat of a different set of preference patterns?

Influencing for a regenerative future

At Balance[3], a key area of interest is in environmental sustainability and the implementation of regenerative business models.

It's our assessment that many sustainability practitioners and advocates have preferences in the idealist and rational temperament sets. It's worth understanding that these two temperament groups together **make up just one quarter** of the population.

Their default messaging misses the mark for **three quarters** of the population. Yet technology innovations of the past four decades and the proven implementation successes of at least two decades mean that we have other stories to tell – stories that can connect more fully with the majority.

There's a library of well-developed regenerative business strategy and practice. Explore it to find the messages and motivators that can help you succeed in connecting with your audience and drawing them into exploring your desired innovation.

Innovation delivery is a learnable craft

Change your thinking, build your innovation delivery skills, then get out there and have some fun. *Be excited, be very excited...*

If you're not sure where to get started, explore our FREE RESOURCES

or get in touch at:

www.balance3.com.au

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