

Using the CPI 260® Instrument with the MBTI® Assessment



Regardless of how one defines leadership, and no matter the context, culture, role, or organization, the *what* of leadership—the competencies required—may seem relatively straightforward. All leaders need to be able to communicate clearly, make good decisions, build effective working relationships, and so on. The *how* of leadership, on the other hand, is endlessly varied and generates a fascinating conversation. This is the conversation we will focus on in this guide: getting to what leadership looks like when we take individual style and preferences into account.

The CPI 260® instrument is the newest version of the *California Psychological Inventory*® (CPI™) assessment, which was created in the early 1950s. Taking this assessment gives leaders an opportunity to learn about themselves in terms of their strengths and style, and then to see how they are tracking in comparison to a group of high-potential on-track leaders who were part of the assessment's sample norm group. This rich data pool provides an opportunity to sit beside the best of the best and look at one's strengths, opportunities for development, and areas that are and are not working.

The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) personality instrument has been used for more than 60 years to help individuals better understand themselves and how they interact with others. It offers perspective on many aspects of leadership, including decision making, project management, change management, approach to conflict, and stress management.

When we combine data from these two instruments, the results tell a compelling story about people's leadership style and how, for them, the *what* translates to the *how* of their accomplishments as leaders.

REVIEWING THE BASICS

To begin, let's take a brief look at how the MBTI and CPI 260 assessments operate.

CPI 260® Lifestyles

The CPI 260 instrument was developed to help people gain insight into such areas as their interpersonal style, approach to leadership, values, and motivation. As part of the assessment process, it identifies which of four "lifestyles," or ways of living, best describes the respondent. As illustrated in the figure below, two of these lifestyles (Implementer and Supporter) tend to be rule-favoring and the other two (Innovator and Visualizer) tend to be rule-questioning. On another vector, those who favor each lifestyle tend to move either toward other people (Implementer, Innovator) or away from other people (Supporter, Visualizer). Examining the intersection of these vectors provides insight into the thoughts and potential behaviors of leaders who favor each lifestyle.

CPI 260® Lifestyle	Implications	At Their Best	At Their Worst
Implementer	Take-charge leaders Move toward action Task focused Organized	Make things happen Charismatic Influential Ambitious	Self-promoting Manipulative Aggressive or hostile Rigid
Supporter	Reserved Patient Caring Conscientious	Inspirational Fair Hardworking Supportive	Self-critical Too rigid with rules Don't share their ideas Too accommodating
Innovator	Creative Independent Embrace change Enthusiastic	Risk takers Challenge convention Show initiative Change agents	Lack follow-through Judgmental Rebellious Ignore important details
Visualizer	Autonomous Imaginative Unique Reflective	Creative Perceptive Interesting Autonomous	Impractical Disjointed Alienated from others Conflicted

unconventional worldview that they don't readily share with others. They appreciate beauty in many forms, have an artistic imagination, and tend to keep to themselves. The chart above provides a brief summary of the four lifestyles and their implications.

MBTI® Preferences and Type Dynamics

The MBTI assessment helps people discover their preferences on four dichotomies. The four dichotomies relate to four key questions:

- How do you get your energy and refuel? (Extraversion or Introversion)
- How do you take in information? (Sensing or Intuition)
- How do you make decisions? (Thinking or Feeling)
- How do you orient and organize yourself in the world? (Judging or Perceiving)

Each of these questions is answered toward one pole or the other of its corresponding dichotomy, with varying degrees of clarity. The resulting four preferences combine and interact to form one of sixteen different four-letter types.

The middle two letters of each four-letter MBTI type—referred to as the “function pair”—indicate that type’s dominant and auxiliary preferences. These two preferences operate as the driver and the “wingman” of the type, so to speak. This pairing reveals some of the *how* of leadership. Before we enter into further discussion of the function pair, it is important to understand a little bit about type dynamics.

As a review, type dynamics looks at four functions:

1. **Dominant function**—the function people feel most natural using and thus rely on most of the time
2. **Auxiliary function**—supports the dominant function, like a wingman who sweeps in to make sure that what needs to happen will happen
3. **Tertiary function**—balances the auxiliary function
4. **Inferior function**—largely unconscious; tends to surface when people are experiencing stress or when things in their life are not balanced

Type dynamics dictates that the functions operate in the order listed above (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4) when life is going as expected and people are doing well. However, stress may put people “in the grip” of their inferior function. At that point they begin to rely on their inferior (largely unconscious) function rather than their dominant function. In addition, a person who typically prefers Extraversion now becomes temporarily Introverted, and vice versa. It is important that individuals keep this in mind and remind themselves that when people are under stress, they may not be operating from their dominant function and therefore may not be using the best parts of themselves or their best judgment.

The chart below lists the function pairs and the hierarchy of the preferences for the sixteen MBTI types.

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

USING THE ASSESSMENTS TOGETHER

So what can we learn from using the CPI 260 and MBTI assessments in tandem? We know the function pairs give us insight into many aspects of the *how* of leadership for individuals. If we look at the CPI 260 style and add the function pairs, it adds depth to our understanding of the individual’s leadership approach. As illustrated in the chart below, the leadership styles of those who favor the CPI 260 Implementer, Supporter, Innovator, and Visualizer lifestyles look different through the use of each function pair involved in driving forward a person’s MBTI type.

CPI 260® Lifestyle	MBTI® Function Pair			
	ST	SF	NF	NT
Implementer	Meticulous Intense Fast paced Task focused Precise	Loyal Dedicated Determined Service oriented Personable	Charismatic Charming Welcoming Passionate Inspirational	Driven Competent Resourceful Connected Original
Supporter	Conscientious Moral Organized Humble Stable	Compassionate Patient Responsible Practical Thoughtful	Caring Patient Harmonious Warm Committed	Analytical Theoretical Clever Objective Informed
Innovator	Impulsive Complicated Resolute Reasonable Tough	Spontaneous Personal Amicable Kind Thorough	Witty Insightful Enthusiastic Flexible Sincere	Direct Creative Determined Unique Insightful
Visualizer	Diligent Meticulous Reflective Perceptive Modest	Unassuming Quiet Intentional Productive Pensive	Inventive Imaginative Eccentric Wistful Encouraging	Autonomous Ingenuous Sharp Speculative Curious

Often leaders are fluent in what they do well and have learned how to elevate these competencies to the highest possible levels. Where they tend to stumble is in their areas for development. The CPI 260® Coaching Report for Leaders details a person’s development opportunities and points to areas in which improvement may be needed. If leaders can develop awareness of their more vulnerable areas, they can learn to manage them in the best and the worst of times. Enter the “grip” experience described above, whereby type dynamics enacts the use of the inferior function during stress. When we become aware of how we tend to behave when we are stressed or operating without the “safety net” of our more comfortable functions, we have the opportunity to address the needs of the “grip”

(inferior) function and move on. Let’s take a look at what development opportunities might be presented for each type, and what individuals may need to help them return to their usual way of functioning and lead with their dominant function. Part of being an emotionally intelligent leader means knowing when we are not at our best and what we need to do to get back to using the best parts of ourselves.

MBTI Type	Development Opportunity/“Grip”	Remedy	Core Performance Area
ISTJ	Checking out and becoming unproductive	Attain success with small projects first	Problem solving
ISTP	Being hypersensitive to others	Reinvigorate your empathy	Self-management
ESTP	Catastrophizing about a problem	Seek help brainstorming options for resolution	Problem solving
ESTJ	Taking an impersonal or tactical approach	Express emotions/feelings to others	Team building
ISFJ	Feeling out of control and pessimistic	Remind self of successful accomplishments	Self-management
ISFP	Being hypercritical of others	Reframe negative thoughts into tolerance	Team building
ESFP	Being overly analytical and even a little paranoid	Create a back-up plan when things change	Self-management
ESFJ	Feeling incompetent	Start something new that is enjoyable	Self-management
INFJ	Feeling rageful and worn out	Spend time enjoying a hobby	Self-management
INFP	Behaving passive-aggressively	Focus on what is right instead of what is wrong	Self-management
ENFP	Feeling overly anxious and withdrawing	Delegate to others and assign priorities	Team building
ENFJ	Being rigid and insensitive	Speak to someone who is objective	Self-management
INTJ	Obsessing and feeling distracted	Allow some unscheduled time to refocus	Self-management
INTP	Worrying about outbursts of emotion	Take some time alone to process feelings	Self-management
ENTP	Losing productivity	Make a list of to-dos and start small	Problem solving
ENTJ	Becoming impatient with and easily angered by others	Spend time talking with a trusted friend	Team building

INTERPRETATION TIPS

There are some things to watch out for when providing an interpretation of the CPI 260 instrument and blending it with information from the MBTI assessment. Here are some tips to keep in mind during an interpretation.

Leveraging Self-Awareness and the Grip Experience

As mentioned above, the key to managing the grip experience (i.e., being in the grip of our inferior function) is self-awareness. In the “Self-Management” section of the CPI 260® Coaching Report for Leaders, higher scale scores (60 and above) indicate increased likelihood of successfully managing the inferior function. When these scores are lower (below 50), the individual has to work harder to navigate stressful situations, and may find himself or herself in the grip more often.

Dominance and Empathy

The CPI 260 Dominance and Empathy scales tell us about the balance between influence and the ability to empathize. If a person scores either too low (below 50) or too high (above 70) on either scale, relating to others may be a problem. On the MBTI instrument, STs with a Dominance score above 70 can be overly domineering and task focused if their Empathy score is not at least in the 50s. Similarly, NTs can be perceived as bossy and arrogant when their Dominance score is above 70 and Empathy is below 50. If an SF or an NF has an Empathy score above 70, it may not be an asset if his or her Dominance score is below 50. High- and low-scoring SFs and NFs, with their generous and collaborative nature, may be taken advantage of by others who can sense the opportunity to push them around. NFs tend to influence others by obtaining buy-in with their charm and enthusiasm. SFs show their leadership through service to others as team players who are invaluable to the organization.

Sensitivity

The CPI 260 Sensitivity scale score plays a role in the delivery of messages, approach, and communication. When the Sensitivity score is high (above 55), the person is likely to take things personally and to want to be connected to and well liked by others. If the Sensitivity score is low (below 45), the person is likely a straight shooter who may be gruff, to the point, and at times unaware of the impact he or she has on others. Paying attention to the delivery of a message becomes as important as the message itself at times. Regardless of the function pair on the MBTI instrument, the Sensitivity score speaks to people's interpersonal approach and their level of awareness of their impact on others.

Energy and the CPI 260® Assessment

On some scales on the CPI 260 assessment, we can expect scores to look different for people who prefer Extraversion and those who prefer Introversion. For example, Sociability and Social Presence scores are often lower for Introverts and higher for Extraverts. However, this does not mean that people with a preference for Introversion have a harder time making an impact. Usually, Introverts' challenge in the organization becomes increasing their visibility with upper management and with people who will play a role in the upward trajectory of their career. For people who tend to move away from people instead of toward them, development in these two areas can be seen as an opportunity to grow and flex. In a similar vein, if the Social Presence and Self-Acceptance scores are too high (above 70), it can imply a kind of grandiosity in social situations that is difficult for others to be around. The person may display arrogance or need to take attention from others, and may project an unrealistic self-adoration and appreciation that is not echoed by others.

CONCLUSION

In this guide we have explored the influence of individual style and preferences, as indicated by the CPI 260 and MBTI instruments, on the *how* of leadership. The more open an individual is to engaging in and learning from a dialogue about the data from the combined use of the MBTI and CPI 260 assessments, the more opportunities he or she will have for insight and professional development.

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