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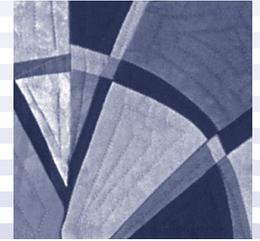
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# Introduction



The concept of innovation is often perceived as *creativity*. We believe, however, that ideas are only innovative when someone somewhere is putting them to use—and that how creative those ideas are perceived to be does not matter. For these reasons, in this booklet we define innovation as the *implementation* of ideas.

Within organizations, managers and workers are exhorted constantly to be more innovative. They are told, “The innovative way is the competitive way.” To be innovative in a competitive way one must innovate continuously. The organization must strive to innovate in all ways and at all times to establish a pattern of consistent delivery of quality innovations. Yet how do we create these innovative organizations? If everyone is trying to be innovative, how can you be more innovative than your competitors?

Organizations that want to establish a culture of innovation put together teams comprising individuals with diverse strengths so that the teams can meet both needs of innovation: idea generation and idea implementation. If the organization can harness creativity and use diverse strengths, it can innovate and gain competitive advantage.

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## Using Type to Improve the Innovation Process

Innovation is a process that requires different strengths during different phases. Thus type theory enables us to identify where an individual’s or a team’s strengths may lie and to make the best use of those strengths. This booklet applies ideas from personality type theory to the innovation process in order to

- Highlight the differences in how people define innovation and show why during the innovation process

some phases feel comfortable, while others feel awkward and tiring

- Develop type-friendly techniques that use type strengths in the innovation process
- Show how type-stretching techniques can enable people to work “out of preference” and bring a fresh view to the process

Organizations that seek continuous innovation are learning what a powerful tool personality type theory is. The aim of this booklet is to provide readers with a clear understanding of how type influences different contributions to the innovation process. With this information, organizations can harness personality type differences to complete the innovation process in a dynamic and effective manner. This booklet is for individuals who want to improve their innovation potential by harnessing the insights that can be gained from personality type. It is also for organizations and teams within organizations that will find the material an asset as they seek to navigate the innovation process.

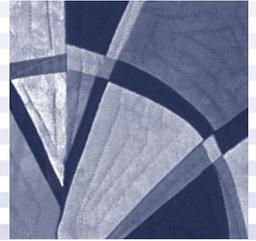
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## Origins and Overview

This booklet originated from our mutual interest in discovering the link between personality type and innovation. We came to the project from different worlds—one (Gareth) from having been involved in innovation and in the teaching of it, and the other (Damian) from his work in the field of type, and, in particular, his experience with the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) instrument. The MBTI instrument identifies sixteen distinct personality types, each type with its own set of strengths. We both knew instinctively there was a link. Our goal was to discover this link and highlight how the different types are critical to the innovation process.

In 2005 we conducted a study of approximately 500 people from around the globe (although primarily in Europe and North America) who completed either an online survey or a paper version of the same. The information

# How Innovation and Type Connect



When asked to define innovation, some people say “building on what’s there to improve the effectiveness of the product or service,” while others describe it as “doing things differently, developing something new or different.” These two definitions epitomize the difference between *adaptive* innovation and *original* innovation. In personality type, that difference is echoed by the difference between Sensing and Intuition (the second dichotomy, yielding the second letter, S or N, of your type code).

Sensing and Intuition appear to be the key drivers when it comes to how you innovate. In essence, these preferences influence how you take in and process information. People with a preference for Sensing are drawn toward details, specifics, and incremental understanding, whereas people with a preference for Intuition are drawn toward the big picture, patterns, and original ideas. The Sensing tendency to build things incrementally based on experience is about seeking to adapt current realities. In contrast, the Intuition tendency to create the big picture from scratch based on hunches and through discerning underlying patterns is about seeking originality.

Your *innovation attitude* is determined by your preference for either Sensing or Intuition in combination with your preference for either Judging or Perceiving (the fourth dichotomy, yielding the fourth letter, J or P, of your type code). Your preference for either Judging or Perceiving helps explain how you approach the external world and how you value time and information.

Our working definition of innovation is the *implementation of ideas*. Sensing–Intuition has to do with the ideas, and

Judging–Perceiving has to do with the implementation. In using personality type theory as part of a plan to spur innovation, a useful starting point is to consider where ideas come from and how they can be grouped. For this purpose, we conceptualized a landscape where ideas exist: the Ideascap<sup>™</sup>.

## The Ideascap<sup>™</sup>: Categorizing Innovative Ideas

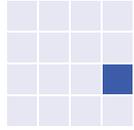
The Ideascap (see Figure 1) is divided into four realms, each of which is populated with a distinct category of innovative ideas: Efficiency ideas, Refining ideas, Adopting ideas, and Different ideas. Depending on your personality type, some realms of the Ideascap are likely more attractive to you than others. Some are likely more difficult to explore, less appealing, or perhaps less interesting for you.

At the center of the Ideascap is the organization. All categories of ideas are accessible to the organization. The organization sends its people into each realm to explore, find, capture, and bring back alive innovative ideas found there.

Categorizing ideas is useful because it enables you to see which categories of ideas are being generated and which categories of ideas are missing. Certain categories of ideas tend to be easier or more challenging to implement; when you are picking an option, it’s useful to have a sense of how easy or difficult that option will be to implement.

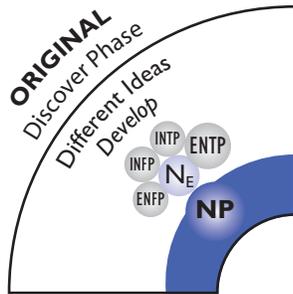
In the Ideascap model, the spiraling band surrounding the organization signifies that it is inherently more difficult to bring captured ideas back from some realms than it is from others. For example, Different ideas are usually more difficult to implement than Efficiency ideas, though Different ideas, in general, are more valuable. Various techniques can be used to take an idea from one realm to another to make it more valuable by moving it around the Ideascap clockwise or easier to implement by moving it counter-clockwise.

## ENTP



## Breaking the mold to innovate in new and exciting ways

ENTPs, unconstrained by boundaries or rules and regulations, constantly seek out opportunities to be creative and think differently about existing problems or processes. At times their insatiable appetite for change and innovation may cause them to spend too much time in the idea generation phase. However, their entrepreneurial disposition and desire to find competitive advantage help ensure that they complete the innovation process.



### Innovation attitude:

NP

### Category of ideas:

Different

### Hierarchy of functions:

**Dominant** N<sub>E</sub>  
Auxiliary T<sub>I</sub>  
Tertiary F  
Inferior S<sub>I</sub>

### In the innovation process, ENTPs:

- **Value** ambiguity (EN)
- **Communicate** visions, strategies, and future possibilities (NT)
- **Focus** mainly on generating ideas (NP)

### Contributions to innovation

- Restless dissatisfaction with the status quo
- Generating many ideas, often
- Mental agility
- Being prepared to look in obscure places for ideas
- Tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty
- Love of brainstorming and working with others to find a new way forward
- Willingness to challenge themselves and others to find a better alternative
- Flexibility, enabling them to respond effectively and swiftly

### Innovation priorities

- Maintaining a future orientation
- Seeking out what is new and different
- Entrepreneurialism
- Enthusiasm
- Pioneering ideas and creative possibilities
- Appropriately disregarding proposed limitations

### Blocking innovation potential

- Others' being anchored to the past or persisting in the belief that an idea or process cannot be improved upon
- Blunt criticism of others
- Minimizing the value of experience
- Focusing solely on conceptual models
- Failing to see evolutionary change as being innovative
- Lack of consistency in the Deliver phase

### Challenging situations

- When the organization dictates that innovation must be done in a particular way
- When they ignore realities that are at odds with their goals
- When they become overly critical of others and ultimately themselves, thus reducing their chances of reaching the implementation stage
- When they are forced to work alone

### What they need from others

- Different perspectives on current realities
- Engagement in the idea generation phase and help in taking ideas in unexpected directions
- Willingness to follow their lead and appreciation for their ability to spot trends
- Freedom to explore and invent
- Tolerance of their language (both positive and negative) when they get excited
- Competent contributions

### Coaching tips for ENTPs

- Your need for the limelight may discourage others from fully contributing to the process.
- Remember that your penchant for debating may be perceived by others (notably FJs) as promoting conflict.
- Recognize that you may need to work within the system at times to realize your innovation potential.
- Thank others for contributing to your innovative ideas to ensure ongoing buy-in to the process.
- Find an SJ colleague who can help ground your ideas, leading to greater success in the implementation phase.