

Using mind control tactics to manipulate employees[©]

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INTRODUCTION

Honestly, this paper will not teach you “mind control”, but it will give you a slightly better understanding of working with people. The thing about people is that we are all the same, yet we are all so very different. But as you begin to understand how this uniqueness manifests in others and what drives certain behaviors, we can learn to alter our behavior and communication. This will help in better anticipating and strategizing in working with different personalities to accomplish goals and tasks.

What makes a business successful? Maybe it's the right idea at the right time, maybe a high quality product? But what I and many others would argue is that one of the most important factors is having a good team. What good is a great, new idea without the people to back it up and see it to fruition? How do you continue to produce a quality product without a team to create, manage, and distribute it?

Think of it from a financial standpoint. I have heard countless conversations in the industry about labor being one of the biggest expenditures in the business. If you have a job to do, you want someone who is well suited for that job that will do it well. You would not buy a screwdriver to use it as a hammer. Obviously it is capable of doing the job of a hammer, but without using its full ability. Utilizing the skill and talents of employees should not be any different.

We all have a different set of mental tools that we are comfortable using. We all may have access to the same basic tools—but prefer a particular tool or set of tools for a particular project. These unique sets of preferences give us our distinct personalities and make us appear similar or dissimilar to others.

This is the concept of personality or trait psychology. The purpose of which is to make sense of these different preferences and how they drive our behavior. It about perceptions—how you perceive yourself, how you perceive others—and how other people perceive us.

If I was 2.4 m (8 ft) tall, I would perceive everyone around me as short. I would wake-up and wonder why I am surrounded by so many short people. It is not that everyone around me is short, just that I am really tall. That is an obvious physical difference, which you cannot ignore. However, personality differences are not as obvious.

These perceptions drive the way you communicate with others. If you are not aware of these different views, your brain runs on autopilot and assumes that each interaction you have goes a certain way, and that you have no control. But you can have control! Our brains are made up of systems of patterns that process communication and drive our behavior. So, if we recognize those patterns in our brains and notice them in others, we have more control over how our interactions pan out.

The idea of personality assessment and “typing” can be used to create a framework based on preferences for you to understand yourself better and more effectively and relate to others. There are many models that you can use in the business world to facilitate a more cognizant self-awareness.

MYERS BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR

The purpose of this paper is to focus on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, <http://www.myersbriggs.org/>. It is one of the more popular assessments, and has been used by businesses since it began in 1944. It starts with four overall temperament groups (Table 1).

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Table 1. The four overall temperament groups of Myers Briggs.

Guardians: Organized Honest Dependable Responsible Humble Hard-working	Rationalists: Pragmatic Strategic Independent Objective Efficient Ingenious
Artisans: Adaptable Loyal Laid-back Fun-loving Artistic Curious	Idealists: Inspiring Unique Flexible Passionate Altruistic Creative

Temperament groups

1. Guardians.

First are the Guardians; dependable, hardworking, and honest. This group makes up the biggest percentage of the world's population, and a good thing too, because they are the backbones of society. These are your worker bees, they are here complete the task at hand. These people value tradition above all else, like military and police, but also thrive as determined business men and women. Think of that person in the office who you know you can always count on to get a task completed. You know you can give them a list and they will see it to completion exactly as you wanted. This type respects authority and has a strong sense of right and wrong. They make good supervisors and managers. They want everyone to follow the rules and are here to enforce them.

2. Artisans.

Secondly are the Artisans; fun-loving, adaptable and living in the moment. They are connected with the world around them in a mentality of spontaneity and are adventurers. They see the world for what it is: in the current moment and want to embrace it all. They are creative in solving the problems you are facing, excel in crisis situations, and do not hold on to things too long. You'll often find these types of people in sales, in entertainment, or as self-employed business owners. They want to do things their way and need the freedom to do so! They are here to have fun and many want to share that with those around them. These types are not afraid of risks which can lead them to great success or failures.

3. Rationalists.

We also have Rationalists; the analytical, pragmatic problem solver, strong, independent, self-contained, determined, and logical. These are the people that always have an ingenious new way of getting systems in place and coming up with strategic plans. They value intellect and competence. You have a brain in your head—and the rationalists think you ought to use it. They are very forward thinking, always 4 or 5 steps ahead of the game. They tend to be lawyers, scientists, and engineers. Incredibly goal driven individuals that are insatiable until their achievement is met. To rationalists, work is work and play is work. They are constantly searching for new knowledge and a new way to challenge themselves. This group makes up a small percentage of the overall population but these are the people that change the world.

4. Idealists.

Lastly are the Idealists; warm, inspiring, trying to make the world a better place. This

group values harmony above all else. Often times you will find them in service professions where they can thrive helping others; kind-hearted, loving, and romantic in their view of the world. They excel at reading people, and you will find that you can count on them. This type is constantly thinking about the future, always coming up with ideas on how to make things better for everyone involved. The creator of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was an idealist. She developed MBTI during WWII as a way for women to understand their strengths and find new careers they would excel at. This was during the period when men were off fighting in the war—and it was critical to find new talent to fill the needs of industry and business. She wanted to create a better working community with the circumstances they had been given. Idealists are passionate about their interests and care deeply for the world around them.

DIFFERENTIATING FACTORS WITHIN EACH CATEGORY

As mentioned before, the four groups only start to categorize the various Myers Briggs Types. There are also differentiating factors within each category that break them up farther and give each individual one of 16 types: introversion vs extroversion, intuition vs sensing, feeling vs thinking, and judging vs. perceiving. Each one of the 16 types is much more specific and describes each individual’s perception of the world in much more detail. The following is a list of the overall 16 personality types and which temperament group each falls into (Table 2).

Table 2. The 16 personality types¹ within each temperament group of Myers Briggs.

Guardians: ISTJ – Introversion, sensing, thinking, judging ISFJ ESTJ – Extroversion, sensing, thinking, judging ESFJ	Rationalists: INTJ – Introversion, intuition, thinking, judging INTP ENTJ – Extroversion, intuition, thinking, judging ENTP
Artisans: ISFP – Introversion, sensing, feeling, perceiving ISTP ESFP – Extroversion, sensing, feeling, perceiving ESTP	Idealists: INFJ – Introversion, intuition, feeling, judging INFP ENFJ – Extroversion, intuition, feeling, judging ENFP

¹Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I); the way you take in information: Sensing (S) or Intuition (N); how you make decisions: Thinking (T) or Feeling (F); how you deal with the world: Judging (J) or Perceiving (P).

Understanding which group you fall into is key because even though you may perceive yourself in a positive light, those that are different or opposite of you may read your behavior in a negative way (Table 3).

Table 3. Perception of the four temperament groups of Myers Briggs.

Guardians: Stubborn Overly cautious Inflexible Judgmental Intolerant	Rationalists: Cold Insensitive Arrogant Overly analytical Condescending
Artisans: Overly dramatic Flaky Unreliable Easily Bored Impatient	Idealists: Sensitive Perfectionistic Burn out easily Impractical Easily stressed

The reality is that if one is unaware of the differences in perception—you will only view yourself as the positive side—and be oblivious how others may perceive the negative side. Unfortunately, if you are interacting with someone whose preferences are opposite of yours—you also tend to see them with a negative perception. The inflexible Guardians stomp out the impractical passion of the Idealists. The Artisans become too unreliable for the overly analytical Rationalist to take seriously. These misunderstandings cause struggles in communication and turbulence in relationships—leaving people of diverse types feeling misunderstood—and especially leaving the Idealists unhappy about the lack of harmony.

Carl Jung, considered the father of personality psychology has a quote that states, “Everything that irritates us about others can lead to an understanding of ourselves.” Begin to think about those you regularly interact with. Realize that when you are struggling with someone there are ways to facilitate better interactions.

We all have the same tools, we just use them differently, and you are likely going to work with a mix of all the different types. Start by trying to meet those other types on common ground (Figure 1).

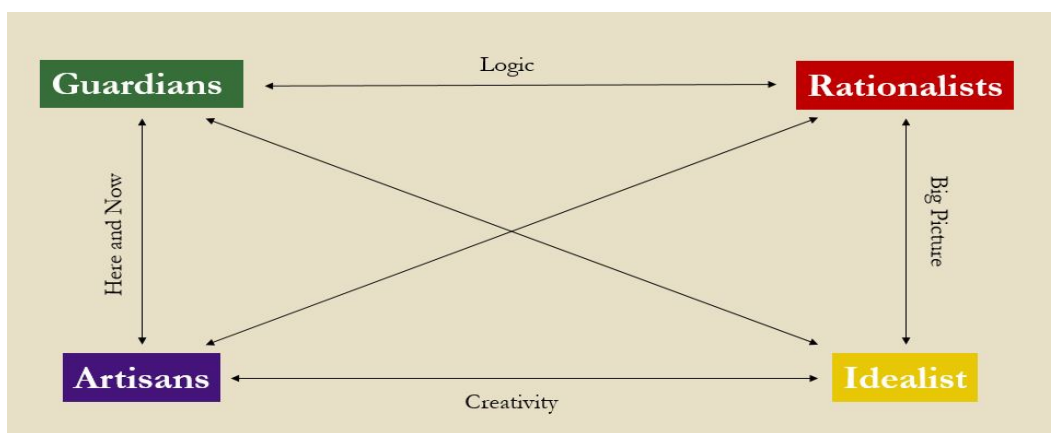


Figure 1. Finding common ground among the four temperament groups to positively interact.

Guardians and Rationalist both value logic. So if you are a Rationalist working with a Guardian—talk logistics. Artisans and Idealists relate to one another’s creativity. Guardians and Artisans both share a value for things that are tangible in the here and now—the things one can see, taste and touch. Whereas, the Idealist and Rationalists see the big picture, and share a vision of what could be instead of what is.

As you start to work with your opposites be aware that you have got a little more adjusting to do to build the communication bridge there. But it is not impossible. Here are some examples of effective ways opposites can communicate and work together.

Example 1

An Idealist manager wants to come up with a better, more efficient way to cover cold frame houses. He or she has noticed the old way causes too many tears and takes too much time. The Guardian subordinate that has been with the business for a couple years, receives an email from the idealist saying, “Hey, come up with a new way of doing this.” That Guardian will feel paralyzed. They are being asked to change something they are comfortable with for some period and have not been given a whole lot of direction. In a better way to approach this project, the Idealist should explain what was not working before—and that they need to fix the problem. Give the Guardian some options. Use their input and ideas to help sort through the details, what can and cannot be done, and together find a solution that benefits everyone. And once there is a plan, he or she will see it to completion exactly as described. Hence, both parties (personality types) feel fulfilled. The Guardian gets to fix a problem with a practical solution and the Idealist gets to see a new

concept to fruition, creating a sense of harmony by having all parties on the same page.

Example 2

An Artisan and Rationalist are working on what plants to order for the following spring. The Artisan wants to hit the ground running: what is new, exciting, and shiny. They want to try it All—and do it right now. The Rationalists are pragmatic. They want to think about it and grasp the logic. What did we grow last year? What is a new worthwhile plant? How many *Hydrangea paniculata* cultivars do we actually need to grow? They want to make a plan, a budget, and focus on the big picture. But before the Artisan feels trapped and the Rationalist is overwhelmed—they can meet in the middle. Allow the Artisan to focus on what is new and better. Let the Rationalist explain what is possible and what the purpose is.

The more aware you become of these personality differences, the better you will be at altering your behavior to facilitate better communication. This enables one to become a better manager and become more adept at placing people in tasks that are better suited for their strengths. Many of us have heard the Einstein quote, “Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.”

Go back to the analogy of the screwdriver. Each of these different personality types are capable of doing jobs that are outside their preferences, but it will stress them and they will not feel fulfilled. Think of the different jobs in the nursery industry and what kind of people might be best for those jobs—or what different types can bring to those jobs. IPM and quality control (QC) management are constantly changing. You have to constantly put out fires, work with multiple moving parts and can develop creative solutions. This is where an Artisan can thrive—able to focus in the moment and conquer the issue. But they might need the help of a Guardian to see that they check every box and do not miss the details.

A nursery grower needs to have a plan and understand the big picture. This is where a Rationalist’s natural skills can be utilized. Managing people can be difficult. Trying to find ways to make everyone happy can be challenging for many types, but that harmony seeking Idealist can really use their strengths to help. This does not mean that a Guardian will not make a great grower or manager—but they may need support from other types, too.

All of these things come back to creating an environment where your employees can thrive. Creating better communication and giving them tasks that make them feel they are contributing. These are the important things that keep employees around for years. The take home messages is to make yourself AWARE. Be aware of this new way of thinking and use it to recognize similarities and differences in people. Be self-aware; understand how you communicate, what you bring to the table, and what your strengths and weaknesses are. Finally, be aware of others. Understand that there is no ideal “normal person.” Each of us is born with different gifts, unique ways in which we use our minds, values, and feelings to live every day.

