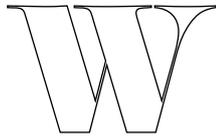


# PSYCHOLOGY AT WORK

UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES US TICK AND HOW WE'RE PERCEIVED BY OTHERS CAN GO A LONG WAY TO CREATING A HARMONIOUS, COLLABORATIVE ATMOSPHERE IN THE WORKPLACE. **NICKY WHYMAN** EXPLAINS THE ART OF SELF-AWARENESS



WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT IF EVERYONE JUST GOT ALONG? IN

the corporate world we are required to work collaboratively, but the reality is that there will always be differences in perspective, varying personal priorities and, on occasion, direct personality clashes that hamper our progress towards a common goal. Too often, those goals are achieved through the imperative of getting the job done while we swallow our frustrations, take deep breaths and count to 10.

At the same time, it's our very differences that make for peak performance in business. A typical group meeting will embrace a mix of personality types, demonstrating greater or lesser strengths in

leadership, co-ordination, moderation, assistance, support and observation. Look a little closer and you will spot undercurrents of bullying, charm, obstinacy, anxiety and tactful diplomacy, which take it in turns to soothe or inflame the collaborative process.

After psychologist Carl Gustav Jung theorised that there were four principal psychological functions by which we experience the world, Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers studied human behaviour and created the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in 1962, which identified 16 possible psychological types. It is still used extensively by HR departments today. Through careful analysis it's possible to

better understand what influences our own reactions and behaviours, as well as those of the people with whom we work. And by developing self-awareness and becoming more intuitive in our responses to our colleagues, we can interact and support one another more effectively.

Let's take boss Alex and his PA Karen, by way of example. Alex is a charismatic

with taking on a new area of responsibility within a tight timeframe.

If these profiles look stereotypical they are actually anything but. Each of us has our own unique mix of attributes and blind spots. There is no right or wrong personality type, but we can all benefit from better understanding ourselves and seeing how we may be perceived

by others.

Alex would benefit from a time management course, for example. A business coach would tell him to guard against being vague and impatient and to slow the pace when interacting with colleagues. That same coach would advise Karen to communicate with Alex in a bright, enthusiastic tone, being very clear on deadlines and priorities. At the same time she'd be advised against boring him with unnecessary detail.



EACH OF US HAS OUR OWN UNIQUE MIX OF ATTRIBUTES

creative, buzzing with ideas. Enthusiastic and impulsive, he loves nothing more than a challenge and works at a fast pace, following so many plans that he has trouble keeping up with them. He doesn't realise that he inadvertently creates last-minute crises that impact on others around him, or that he can be too outspoken and his impatience with process and detail can leave some of his promises unfulfilled.

Karen is conscientious, diplomatic and supportive. She sets herself high standards and believes in following correct procedure, no matter what. She'll do whatever it takes to meet deadlines, but will become stubborn if pressed to cut corners and highly stressed if tasked

It's easy to see how personality profiling can improve working relationships between two colleagues and when applied to a team dynamic the benefits are multiplied many times over. Through training seminars and team days, it's possible to solve internal communication issues, raise levels of motivation and engender a fantastic team spirit. And because such sessions can be tailored to deliver on specific corporate objectives and cater for different-sized groups, real progress can be made in achieving change.

**Nicky Whyman is Commercial Director at teambuilding specialist KDM Events and an ardent practitioner of personality profiling in her own role. Discover more at [kdmevents.co.uk](http://kdmevents.co.uk)**



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