



SHIFT IT:

From Mirrors to Passports

Think Better. Work Smarter.

The 20th Century: Mirrors - Personality Types and Traits

It is very hard to change your personality. It's a lot easier to change your thinking. Eben Harrell's article in Harvard Business Review's April 2017 issue, The New Science of Teamwork highlights a brief history of two of the personality tests that have dominated the learning and development landscape in the 20th century.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) launched in the 1940's. It describes 16 different personality types and traits. Your results profile you as a type. MBTI, or one of its many derivatives, is still the tool of choice for many learning and development professionals.

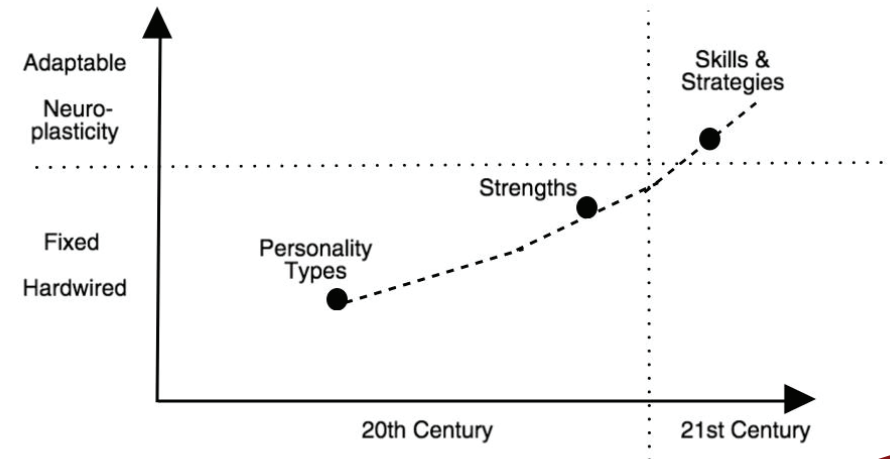
Gallup's StrengthsFinder originally launched in 1998. It focuses on 34 signature strengths. Your results profile your top 5. People identify their own uniqueness in having a particular mix of strengths. Like MBTI this information can be helpful to know. A new personality test highlighted also in the Harvard Business Review, categorizes people into one of 4 types, enhanced with cool brain pattern research.

Personality tests are like mirrors. They reflect back who you are. They label types. Know your type. Know other types. It is who you are. Play to your type. Leverage your strengths.

I have three problems with these types of personality tests and their current relevance for the needs of today's workplace. First, they label people's styles as primarily fixed and hardwired. They don't show you how to develop additional skills to improve your performance. The second problem is they aren't particularly useful in helping leaders assemble the right mix of talents to build high

performing, problem solving teams. Third, no personality tool has the other half of the solution that leaders and teams need - actual collaborative problem solving processes and practical tools that accelerate the complex work teams have to do - using the same language and concepts learned in the assessment.

In the late 1990's neuroplasticity came along. We aren't hardwired. We can grow, adapt and change our minds, if we want to. Strengths get you in the door. It's helpful to know about your personality. Deliberate skill development helps you win. One of my sons is a certified golf pro. His biggest strength is that he can drive a golf ball 300 yards. If he relied only on his strengths, he'd go to the driving range everyday to work on hitting the ball further. The truth is, the best way he can improve his golf score, is to practice not on his strengths in driving, but by working hard on his short game and putting.



The 21st Century: Portals - Thinking Skills & Adaptability

Knowing personality styles is interesting and helpful. Developing higher order thinking skills is essential now. The growth in the 21st century economy will come from people who are effective creative and critical thinkers, who can solve unique, non-routine problems as they arise.

The Forum Report on the Fourth Industrial Revolution highlighted the three most important workforce skills by 2020:

- Complex problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Skills trump personality.

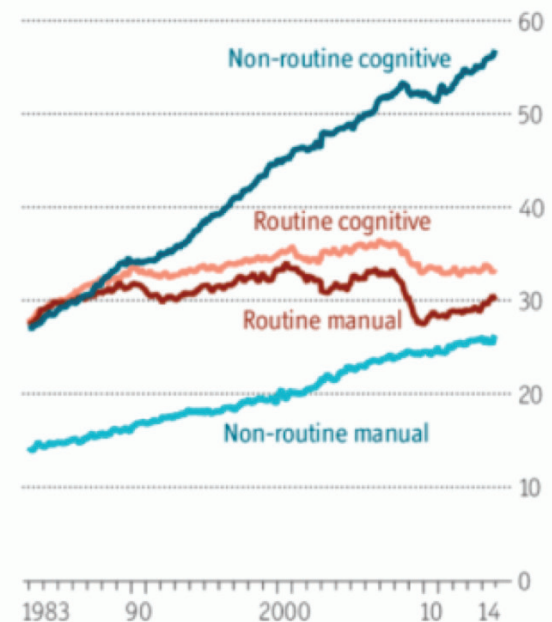
The real challenge for leaders is how to find better ways to enable a broad diversity of people of different ages, backgrounds, cultures and experiences, to get onto the same page more quickly, to do great work together. The new science of teamwork must also be based on building these new higher order skills. Leaders need better methods for team selection to ensure the right mix of cognitive style diversity to do the work.

In 2000, I decided to build a next generation solution to the conventional personality assessments and provide more innovative tools to accelerate how leaders and their teams make the leap from forming to performing. This was to be a new portal for thinking skills development, one that could help leaders and their teams learn how to work smarter together. I put together an expert team of behavioural scientists to research and develop a new thinking skills system. I called the system 4D-i Total Intelligence.

We developed the 4D-i or 4Dimensions Inventory as an assessment for learning and a developmental tool to master specific thinking strategies. We normed it first on 1,000 people, then 8,000 and then 25,000 people. It was a portal to expand the development of higher order thinking skills, problem solving abilities and collaborative teamwork.

Think

United States employment, by type of work, m



Sources: US Population Survey; Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

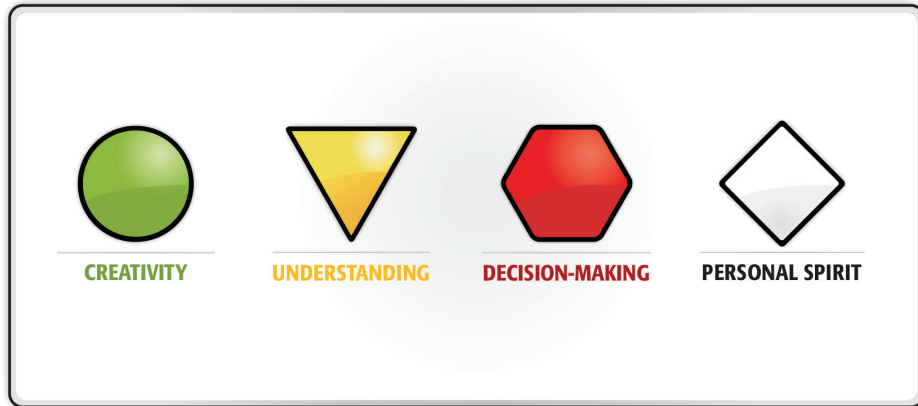
Economist.com



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We produced the 4D-i as an integrated system to first, deliver a 'know self' with a 'grow self' approach and second, deliver a practical toolkit to help teams do better collaborative work.

We researched and mapped out 4 dimensions of total intelligence.

We identified 21 specific strategies to help people develop four core skill sets- increase creativity, deepen understanding, improve decision-making and strengthen personal spirit.

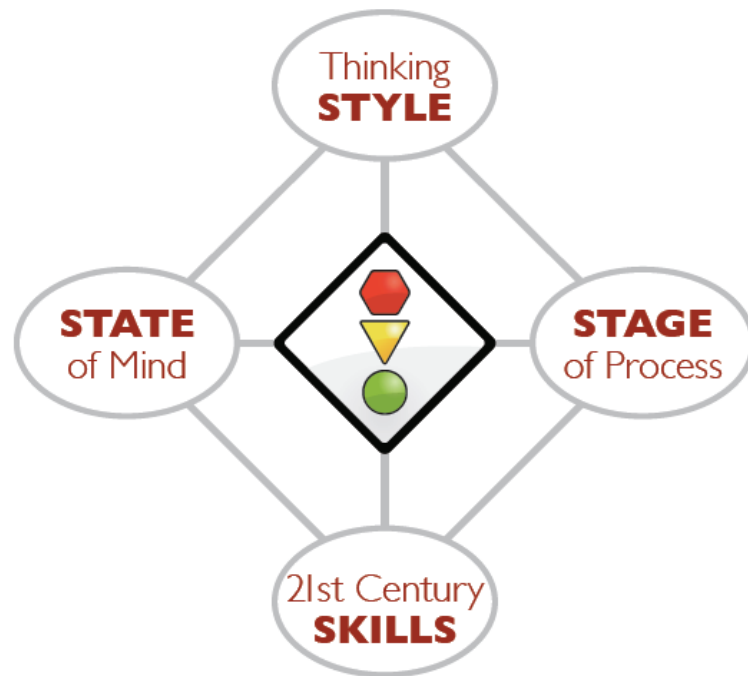
The 4D-i maps preferences like the personality instruments do. The difference - it maps preferences for using specific thinking strategies, not personality types. Each of the strategies is a learnable skill, not a fixed trait. The more strategies you can learn and master, beyond the ones you prefer, the more adaptable and effective you and your team will be.



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We chose a traffic light to be our simple color-coded metaphor for thinking, to make the system easy to remember and use. Our colors have meaning - if you know what to do when a traffic light changes from one color to another, then you can learn to shift your thinking to match the situation you are in.

Do red, stop and decide - is the signal for shifting to decision-making or red light thinking. It has 6 strategies, 4 in critical thinking and 2 in emotion based decision-making.

Be yellow and slow down - is the signal for shifting to understanding or yellow light thinking. It has 6 strategies, 3 in analytical thinking and 3 for compassion.

Go green and go create - is the signal to shift to creativity or green light thinking. It has 6 strategies, 4 in creative thinking and 2 in creative intuition,

Ignite white is the signal to strengthen personal spirit. Strengthen your personal spirit with 3 strategies.

We then developed 4 key applications of the total intelligence system. The first two applications focus on personal awareness and skills development.

Style - this is your preferred thinking style, as shown by the 4D-i assessment. It highlights your preferences for using some of the 21 strategies and produces a personal profile

Skills - regardless of your preferences, the more skills in total intelligence you can develop, the more effective you will be. The 4D-i offers a portfolio of 21 key higher order thinking and behavioural skills for complex problem solving, critical thinking, compassion and creative thinking for the 21st century.

The other two applications focus on specific group mindsets and stages of problem solving to get work done in teams.

States of mind- each colour also represents a distinct and different state of mind. The goal is to be able to switch from one state of mind to another, to match the needs of the other person or the specific demands of a task. For example, to do in depth analytical research, it's best to switch into the yellow light state or analytical thinking state of mind. To generate ideas in a group, ask all members to shift into the green light or creative thinking state of mind. When it's time to get closure, the team needs to shift into the red light thinking mindset to make decisions.

Stage of a process – each colour also represents a specific stage of a disciplined problem solving process. Using this approach, you can design or select clear color-coded strategy-based, problem-solving processes for project teams and meeting management.



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THE POWER OF ONE:

COMBINE PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT WITH PROCESS ACCELERATION INTO ONE INTEGRATED SOLUTION

More than ever, the new data suggests people need to acquire the adaptability plus higher order thinking and behavioural skills to succeed in the workplace.

The next challenge we had - could we use the same language and strategies to build meeting and team process solutions to accelerate problem solving, collaboration and decision-making? We developed a set of colour coded 'design for thinking' smart tracks. These process tracks enable teams to get onto the same page to work through complex problem solving together. In a 3 year government study, one client achieved a 558% ROI, using our meeting process system to save time and get more done. This was the highest return on investment ever measured in an assessment of corporate training programs. We then developed a rapid innovation program to bring a broad diversity of people together to accelerate complex problem solving and produce innovative solutions within hours.

One of our clients described the 4D-i like 'intelligent all wheel drive for your mind'. Clients use the 4D-i and the thinking processes to develop leaders, coach, build teams, plan and run outcome based meetings, onboard and to accelerate collaborative problem solving and innovation initiatives. Education and workforce development clients use the 4D-i and the total intelligence system as the platform to teach 21st century skills.

In the next blog, I will explore more on how we can expand the new science of teamwork beyond 20th century personality assessments. I will explore ways that leaders can map the total intelligence of their human resources with some of the same precision they know their financial resources. I will explore how leaders can harness the power of cognitive style diversity - the diversity of their people's thinking skills -with greater precision to get great results in assembling teams and running meetings. Thanks for your interest, I look forward to hearing your comments.



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