Developing Managerial Leaders
Event 1 - Self
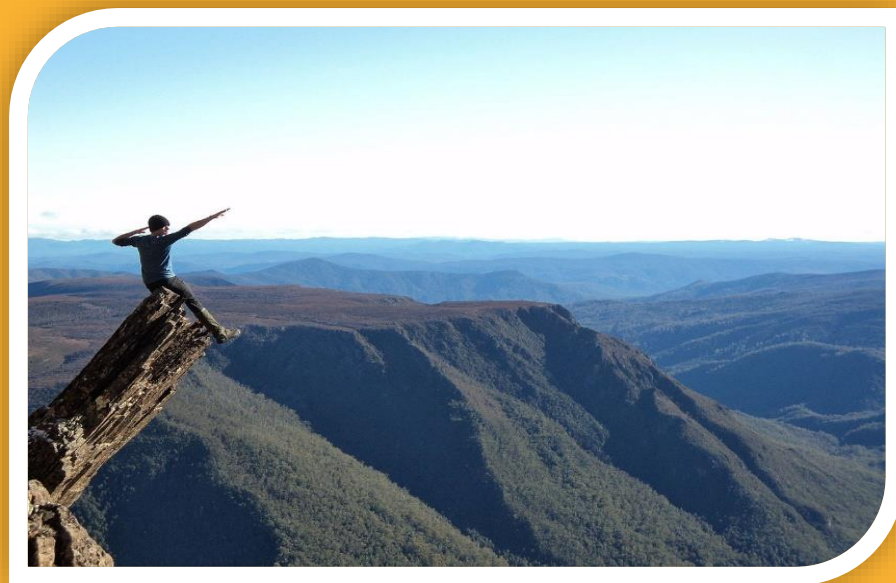
Reference Manual

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Creating desired culture

What is culture

We are all, as people, familiar with culture from our earliest days. We are members of many different cultural groups, some of which, (e.g. a family), we have been a member of for many years. Others (e.g. a social club, sport team) we may have been part of at some stage and subsequently left.

A culture becomes apparent where there is a sense of identity for a particular group, as that group of people starts to share a way of viewing the world. In doing this they share opinions about particular ways of behaving (acting, speaking, dressing, etc.), which they see as acceptable and therefore valuable to the group in terms of its cohesion and achievement.

In many ways, culture is a social mechanism, which human beings use to identify those who are "in" and those who are "out" of a group and how they should behave in the situation. In other words, it is a rapid social filtering process based on understanding what behaviour is seen as okay (e.g. trustworthy, honest, etc.) and what isn't. This allows people to rapidly decide their proposed reaction to people when they meet them in social or other circumstances.

Formally, within the model, we say that a culture is formed when people share mythologies. A mythology is defined as:

Mythology
A **mythology** is;   "the underlying assumption and current belief as to what is positive and valued behaviour and what behaviour is negatively valued."[1]

You can see from the discussion above that this is a shared belief that allows the rating of behaviour, when it is observed. In other words, individually or in a group, people base their ratings (positive or negative value) of the world they are experiencing on their assumptions about what is valuable and what is not.

Where these are shared, the whole group tends to see the world similarly - we rate things the same way.

Being assumptions, these, of course, are unconscious. Therefore, part of the work of understanding culture is to attempt to understand these even though they may not be directly articulated by the people concerned.

The leader's role with respect to culture

So, of what use is it to a leader to understand the mythologies of a particular group?

When individuals or a group view a particular behaviour and rate it through the lens of their mythologies, it influences them to decide on a particular course of action. In other words, they make a prediction about what will happen in their world should they behave in a certain way – in this case, based on their unconscious assumption.

The reaction they get to that behaviour (in other words the feedback from their experience) serves to either reinforce the belief or create some disruption around it for the person involved.

Obviously if the belief is reinforced, then it is cemented even further in place as an effective assumption about the real world (in this person's view). Should the feedback challenge the assumption, this will normally (initially) lead to the person defending their assumption in the face of this contradictory evidence and experiencing some emotional disquiet.

Should this continue – in other words sufficient evidence and disquiet occurs – then the person will be forced eventually to adjust their mythology to reflect a new reality.

To return then to the leader's role in this – the role of constructively influencing culture to achieve productive outcomes – it means that the leader is accountable for understanding the mythologies of their people and providing evidence to reinforce the mythologies that add to constructive culture and sufficiently challenge those mythologies that do not, so that they become adjusted over time.

Note that determining what constitutes "constructive" culture is also part of the work of leading and especially forms a vital part of leadership at higher levels in a business. It is a judgment – there is no "correct" culture, although many guidelines exist from the cultures in which the company operates.

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The leader's role with respect to culture[2]

- Understand how team members perceive themselves and each other
- Understand how team members perceive the organisation
- Understand how team members perceive the leader
- Predict how they will interpret change

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[2] Systems Leadership: Creating Positive Organisations (2nd Edition) – I. Macdonald, C. Burke, K. Stewart 2018

Culture Model
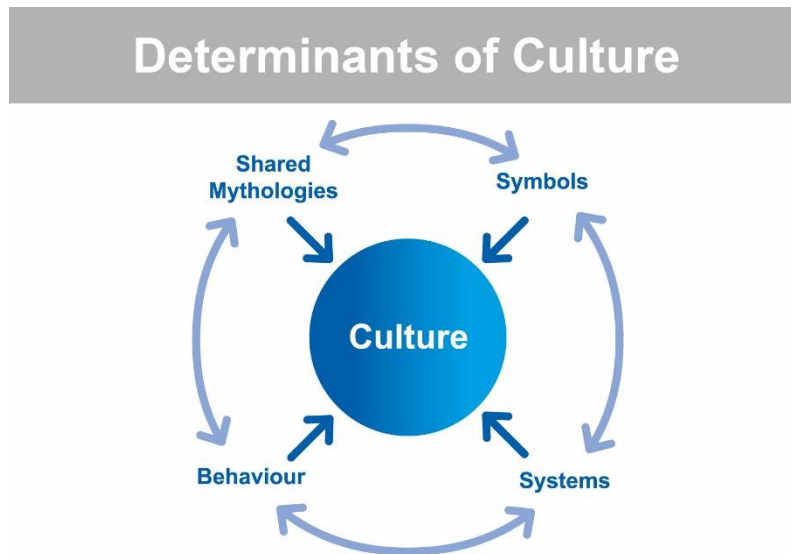
Determinants of culture[3]

We have established so far that people view the world through the lens of their mythologies and, having observed a behaviour, make a prediction about how they should behave and the reaction they are likely to get. The same holds true for Systems and also Symbols. Behaviour, Symbols and Systems are the tools which a leader (and any other person dealing in social process) has at their disposal in order to influence culture.

<u>Behaviour,</u> as we have described, comes in many forms, including physical behaviour, spoken word, dress, particular decisions and actions.

<u>Systems</u> are relevant to culture as they set limits on behaviour. Systems drive particular behaviour by setting these particular limits and are therefore similarly rateable (as with behaviour). In many ways systems are the non-verbal communication of the organisation as they continue to operate, regardless of changes in leadership or behaviour of leaders.

For example, the Payroll or Vehicle Allocation Systems continue to operate and be rated (and therefore reinforce or challenge mythologies) mostly regardless of the leader's behaviour.

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[3] Systems Leadership: Creating Positive Organisations (2nd Edition) – I. Macdonald, C. Burke, K. Stewart 2018

<u>Symbols</u> include anything that becomes symbolic of mythology. These can be specific behaviours or systems (although it is more likely to be a specific event or a ritualised behaviour) but will also be any of a raft of objects that are symbolic in the context of the particular culture.

Symbols[4]
• The outward manifestation of process: for example – flags, gestures, rituals, medals • They are used to reinforce or change mythologies • They are the currency of leadership

It is important to note that, like behaviours and systems, symbols of themselves are neither positive nor negative. The same symbol, such as coloured hard hats, could be positive or negative depending on the mythologies of the group.

Common workplace examples include: uniforms; amenities (e.g. tea, coffee, biscuits); offices; letterheads; badges; and possibly working conditions or facilities. The appreciation and management of Symbols is an important part of effective leadership and one which is easy to forget. It is especially easy to stop seeing symbols in our own "patch" as we become used to them.

As symbols are shorthand for mythologies - that is, they reinforce the unconscious mythology - it is important to be aware of how people perceive those that they see around them and be able to work with them.

[4] Systems Leadership: Creating Positive Organisations (2nd Edition) – I. Macdonald, C. Burke, K. Stewart 2018

Values Continuum

+	-
Trustworthy	Untrustworthy
Loving	Unloving
Honest	Dishonest
Fair	Unfair
Courageous	Cowardly
Dignifying	Undignifying
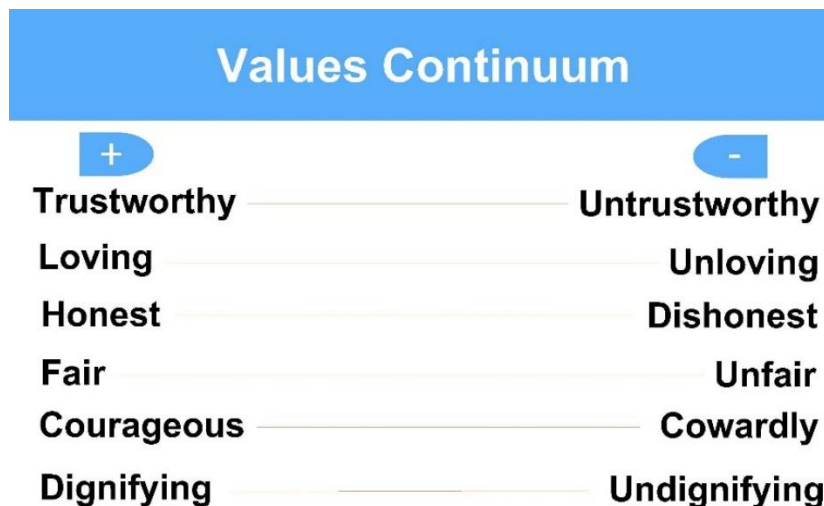
The values continuum

From the core values above, we can establish a continuum on which to rate the views of particular cultural groups on each of the six core values. If a leader understands the mythologies of a particular group they should be able to rate their likely reaction to a particular behaviour, system or symbol and/or changes in those.

It is not always the case that all of the values apply, or that the group's reaction is either strongly positive or negative. However, it does provide a standard platform for performing this analysis.

Further, because it speaks of the core social values, it provides a barometer for leaders, and therefore the organisation, in terms of their own behaviour and decision-making. In other words, how we would expect people in a constructive culture to view a particular decision, action, change, etc.

It also reinforces that part of having effective "cross-functional" relationships is the "cultural" parameters leaders create.

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[5] **Systems Leadership: Creating Positive Organisations (2nd Edition) – I. Macdonald, C. Burke, K. Stewart 2018**

People are much more likely to investigate and resolve issues of accountability and authority if the mythologies modelled and reinforced by their leader encourage that as a "valued" activity. This also comes in part from the leader's behaviour as a team member.

Similarly, each of us, as team members, can influence this through our behaviour both within and across the boundaries of our normal team.

Work – Turning intention into reality

To understand how to work at the right level there are a few concepts we must explore first. The first of these concepts is to understand what '**work**' is.
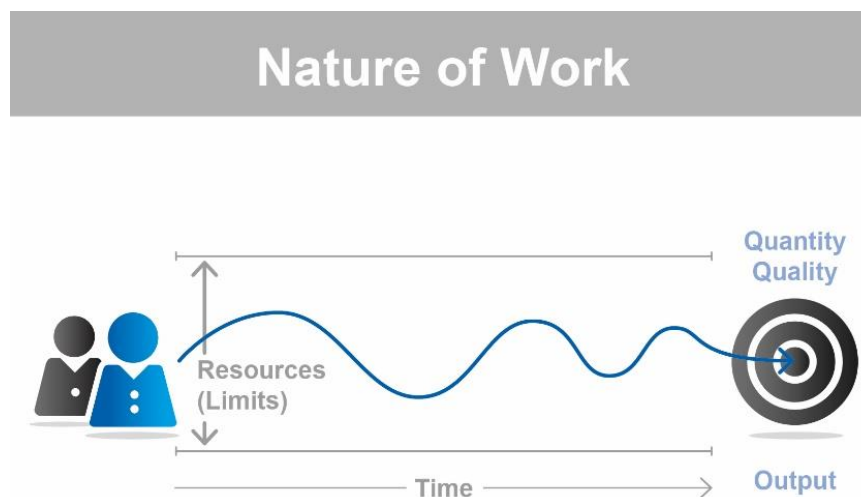
All work in organisations gets done by people. In order to think effectively about how to organise this work, we need to understand the human process of doing work.

In physics, *mechanical work* is the amount of energy transferred by a force acting through a distance. The term *work* was first coined in 1826 by the French mathematician Gaspard-Gustave Coriolis.
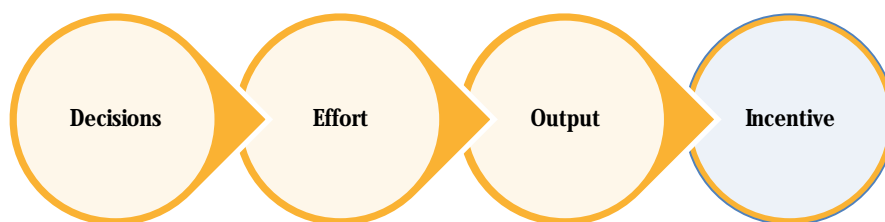
So, in human terms we could say that *work* has four components

1. making a **decision** (using our discretion about the work to be performed)

2. to exerting **effort** (using physical, mental and emotional effort to perform a task)

3. creating an **output** (able to be described in terms of quantity and quality)

4. driven by an **incentive** (reward or elimination/minimisation of a negative effect).

Three questions about work

In performing work there are three questions to which we all seek answers. They are:

1. what am I supposed to be doing?

2. how well am I going at that?

3. what future is there in how I do this?

If the person doing the work can reasonably answer these then they will have greater clarity about their work, its importance and impact for them. If this is the case it makes sense (is rational) for the person to feel more confident in contributing more of themselves to the doing of the work (assuming the consequences are positive of course). They are also more likely to be able to predict these consequences – i.e. their future is more predictable – which is an important part of their psychological security.

When we work we all have the three questions, but we have also seen that we all think, and therefore behave, differently – each approach is linked to our type and temperament.

Three Question About Work

1. What am I supposed to do?

2. How am I going?

3. What's in my future?

Work and well being

Emotional Intelligence: A Primer

Emotional intelligence – the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively – consists of four fundamental capabilities: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skill. Each capability, in turn, is composed of specific sets of competencies. Below is a list of the capabilities and their corresponding traits.

Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness	Social Skill
• *Emotional self-awareness:* The ability to read and understand your emotions as well as recognise their impact on work performance, relationships and the like. • *Accurate self-assessment:* A realistic evaluation of your strengths and limitations. • *Self-confidence:*	• *Self control:* the ability to keep disruptive emotions and impulses under control. • *Trustworthiness:* A consistent display of honesty and integrity. • *Conscientiousness:* The ability to manage yourself and your responsibilities. • *Adaptability:* Skill at adjusting to changing	• *Empathy:* Skill at sensing other people's emotions, understanding their perspective and taking an active interest in their concerns. • *Organisational awareness:* The ability to read the currents of organisational life, build decision networks and navigate politics. • *Service orientation:*	• *Visionary leadership:* The ability to take charge and inspire with a compelling vision. • *Influence:* The ability to wield a range of persuasive tactics. • *Developing others:* The propensity to bolster the abilities of others through feedback and guidance. • *Communication:* Skill at listening and at sending clear, convincing and well-tuned messages. • *Change catalyst:*

A strong and positive sense of self-worth.	situations and overcoming obstacles.	The ability to recognise and meet customers' needs.	Proficiency in initiating new ideas and leading people in a new direction.
	• *Achievement orientation:* The drive to meet an internal standard of excellence. • *Initiative:* A readiness to seize opportunities.		• *Conflict management:* The ability to de-escalate disagreements and orchestrate resolutions. • *Building bonds:* Proficiency at cultivating and maintaining a web of relationships. • *Teamwork and collaboration:* Competence at promoting cooperation and building teams.

Growing Your Emotional Intelligence

Unlike IQ, which is largely genetic – it changes little from childhood – the skills of emotional intelligence can be learned at any age. It's not easy however. Growing your emotional intelligence takes practice and commitment. But the payoffs are well worth the investment.

Consider the case of a marketing director for a division of a global food company. Jack, as I'll call him, was a classic pacesetter: high energy, always striving to find better ways to get things done and too eager to step in and take over when, say, someone seemed about to miss a deadline. Worse, Jack was prone to pounce on anyone who didn't seem to meet his standards, flying off the handle if a person merely deviated from completing a job in the order Jack thought best.

Jack's leadership style had a predictably disastrous impact on climate and business results. After two years of stagnant performance, Jack's boss suggested he seek out a coach. Jack wasn't pleased but realising his own job was on the line, he complied.

The coach, an expert in teaching people how to increase their emotional intelligence began with a 360 degree evaluation of Jack. A diagnosis from multiple viewpoints is essential in improving emotional intelligence because those who need the most help usually have blind spots. In fact, our research found that top performing leaders overestimate their strengths on, at most, one emotional intelligence ability, whereas poor performers overrate themselves on four or more. Jack was not that far off, but he did rate himself more glowingly than his direct reports, who gave him especially low grades on emotional self-control and empathy.

Initially Jack had some trouble accepting the feedback data. But when his coach showed him how those weaknesses were tied to his inability to display leadership styles dependent on those competencies – especially the authoritative, affiliative and coaching styles – Jack realised he had to improve if he wanted to advance in the company. Making such a connection is essential. The reason: improving emotional intelligence isn't done in a weekend or during a seminar – it takes diligent practice on the job, over several months. If people do not see the value of the change they will not make that effort.

Once Jack zeroed in on areas for improvement and committed himself to making the effort he and his coach worked up a plan to turn his day-to-day job into a learning laboratory. For instance, Jack discovered he was empathetic when things were calm, but in a crisis, he tuned out others. This tendency hampered his ability to listen to what people were telling him in the very moments he most needed to do so. Jack's plan required him to focus on his behaviour during tough situations. As soon as he felt himself tensing up, his job was to immediately step back, let the other person speak and then ask clarifying questions. The point was to not act judgmental or hostile under pressure.

The change didn't come easily, but with practice Jack learned to defuse his flare-ups by entering into a dialogue instead of launching a harangue. Although he didn't always agree with them, at least he gave people a chance to make their case. At the same time, Jack also practiced giving his direct reports more positive feedback and reminding them of how their work contributed to the group's mission. And he restrained himself from micromanaging them.

Jack met with his coach every week or two to review his progress and get advice on specific problems. For instance, occasionally Jack would find himself falling back on his old, pacesetting tactics – cutting people off, jumping in to take over, and blowing up in a rage. Almost immediately he would regret it. So he and his coach dissected those relapses to figure out what triggered the old ways and what to do the next time a similar moment arose. Such "relapse prevention" measures inoculate people against future lapses or just giving up. Over a six month period Jack made real improvement. His own records showed he had reduced the number of flare-ups from one or more a day at the beginning to just one or two a month. The climate had improved sharply and the division's numbers were starting to creep upward.

Why does improving an emotional intelligence competence take months rather than days? Because the emotional centres of the brain, not just the neocortex, are involved. The neocortex, the thinking brain that learns technical skills and purely cognitive abilities, gains knowledge very quickly, but the emotional brain does not. To master a new behaviour, the emotional centres need repetition and practice.

Improving your emotional intelligence, then, is akin to changing your habits. Brain circuits that carry leadership habits have to unlearn the old ones and replace them with the new. The more often a behavioural sequence is repeated the stronger the underlying brain circuits become. At some point, the new neural pathways become the brain's default option. When that happened, Jack was able to go through the paces of leadership effortlessly, using styles that worked for him and the whole company.

Managing Self

To manage others' performance effectively it has been established that a key skill for leaders at all levels is managing their own performance effectively. *Self-management* starts with understanding your own motivations and drivers, accepting them as part of your reality and then deciding what action to take (and of course taking the action) for an improvement in performance. This is what is known as the '**Triple A' method**.

Awareness

Acceptance

Action

Firstly, we will explore self-awareness with the *Insight Game* and the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)* and think about taking action to take in the context of Steven Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (1989).

Right from the start it is important to think about self-improvement in a positive light. We *all* have strengths and weaknesses (that means everyone) that we demonstrate in our behaviour daily – minute by minute. It makes sense to place the greatest emphasis on what works well for us (our strengths) rather than what does not work well (our weaknesses) because whatever is foremost in our mind will expand and materialise in our lives.

Knowing yourself - MBTI Insight

When we go about our normal lives at work and away from work, we think and behave in ways that feel comfortable to us. These ways of thinking and behaving are called preferences. Over many years psychologists and others have been expanding their understanding of the differences in the way people think and behave.

The Insight Game is based on the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)* that has taken many of these theories and developed a very practical way of identifying what makes people different.

The *Insight Game* is primarily concerned with the valuable differences in people that result from preference, where they like to focus their attention, the way they like to take in information, the way they like to decide, and the kind of lifestyle they adopt. People with preferences opposite to yours tend to be opposite to you in many ways. They are likely to be weak where you are strong, and strong where you are weak. Each type has its own set of inherent strengths.

The *Insight Game* is a fast but accurate method of achieving a similar result to the full *Myers Briggs Instrument* in understanding *Type Preference*. It is a 'solitaire' board game which helps each participant understand how they live in the world, how they make their decisions, take in information, and get their energy. It also helps the participant to appreciate the preferences of others, and build more meaningful relationships.

Preferences

Within the MBTI model there are two opposite preferences for each of the four scales. It is important to note that all of us use both of the opposite preferences. We normally prefer to use one – it feels more comfortable.

My Insight game score

E	N	F	P
I	S	T	J

My preferred style is

Extraversion and introversion

Extraversion

Extraverts tend to focus upon the outer world of people and things. They are energised by what is happening in the outer world and where they tend to direct their energy. They prefer to communicate more by talking than writing and tend to think out loud. They need to experience the world to understand it and thus tend to like variety and action.

Introversion

Introverts focus more upon the inner world. When they are introverting they are energized by what goes on in their inner world and this is where they direct their energy. Introverts are usually more comfortable when they can work quietly and without interruption, and tend to think before they talk. They like to understand the world before experiencing it and so need time to reflect before taking action.

Sensing and intuiting

Sensing

Sensing focuses upon the realities of a situation. They tend to work what is 'given' in the here and now and thus become realistic and practical.

They are usually good at remembering and working with a great number of facts. They like proven procedures and are careful with detail.

Intuition

Intuition shows you the meanings, relationships and possibilities that go beyond the information from your senses. When we are intuiting we look at the big picture and try to grasp overall patterns. Intuitive types can become expert at seeing new possibilities and value imagination and inspiration.

Thinking and feeling

Thinking

Thinking types make decisions objectively on the basis of cause and effect by analysing and weighing the evidence. Thinking focuses on the logical consequences of any choice or action. Thinking types seek an objective standard of truth and are good at analysing what is wrong with something.

Feeling

Feeling types make decisions based on person-centred values. When making decisions they consider how important the choices are to themselves and others.

They like dealing with people and tend to become sympathetic, appreciative and tactful. They value harmony and work to make it happen.

Judging and perceiving

### Judging

Judging types prefer to live in a planned, orderly way, wanting to regulate life and control it. They want to make decisions, come to closure, and then carry on. They like to be structured, organised and they want things settled.

Perceiving

Perceiving types like to live in flexible, spontaneous ways, gathering information and keeping options open. They seek to understand life rather than control it. They prefer to stay open to experience, enjoying and trusting their ability to adapt to the moment.
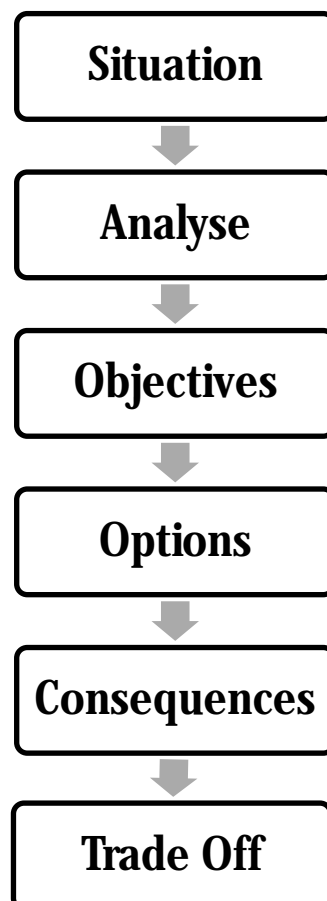
Preference Scales
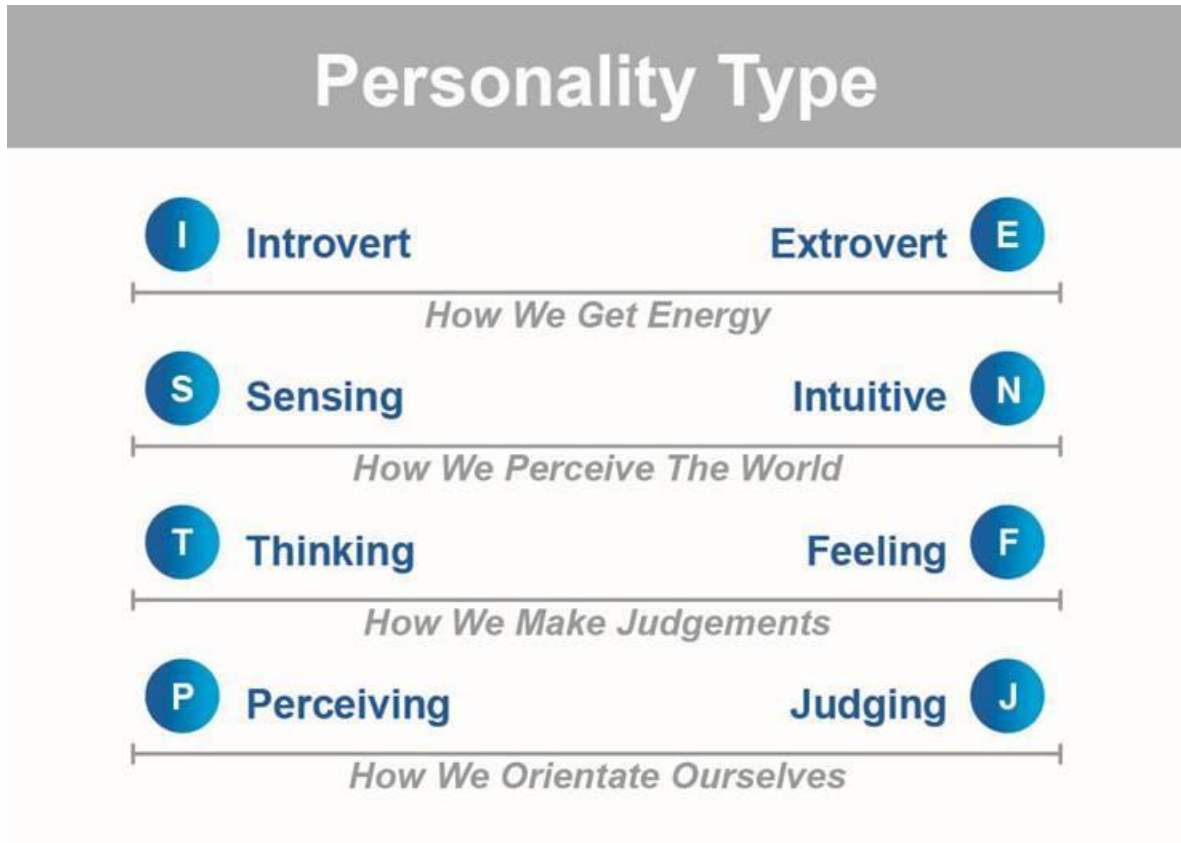
Temperament

	Temperament Type
SJ	Duty seekers, work ethic, rule followers
SP	Activity seekers, variety, challengers
NF	Idea seekers, connection, values
NT	Knowledge seekers, competence, concepts

Decision Making

```
┌──────────────┐
│  Situation   │
└──────────────┘
       ↓
┌──────────────┐
│   Analyse    │
└──────────────┘
       ↓
┌──────────────┐
│  Objectives  │
└──────────────┘
       ↓
┌──────────────┐
│   Options    │
└──────────────┘
       ↓
┌──────────────┐
│ Consequences │
└──────────────┘
       ↓
┌──────────────┐
│  Trade Off   │
└──────────────┘
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End of Sample

Please click here: contact us to discuss this program and how we can work with your team.