



# TEAMS 2:

## UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES

### *Participant's Manual*

*Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*

*Sponsored by the Louisiana State Civil Service*



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## UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES

*Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*

*Sponsored by the Louisiana State Civil Service*

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# DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEAMS, PART 2

## Course Description

This course is designed to help participants identify their preferences and thus to better understand themselves and others they work with. The concept of personality preference is used in this course to encourage participants to explore how this concept might relate to them as individuals and as members of teams. Participants will analyze the impact of perceptions on team effectiveness, apply strategies to make use of individual differences to improve teamwork, and learn how to use communication strategies in work situations based on individual preferences.

Participants will examine their self-perception and complete a self-assessment to determine their preferences for the ways in which they interact and work with others. They will also compare and contrast the different preferences that people may have. This process will help participants appreciate their own strengths and the strengths of other team members and become more flexible when working with others.

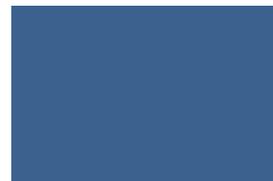
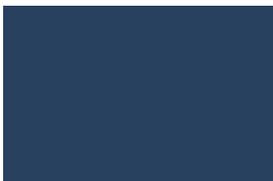
This course is based on Jung's personality preferences that serve as the foundational research for the **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator** (MBTI). The MBTI (in full and abbreviated versions) is a nonjudgmental instrument in which there are no "rights and wrongs."

## Learning Objectives

- Analyze the impact of perceptions (of self and others) on team effectiveness.
- Apply strategies to make use of individual differences to improve teamwork.
- Adapt and demonstrate communication strategies in work situations based on individual preferences.

## Job Outcomes

- Adjusts style, tone, and level of communication to fit the audience and situation.
- Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of all individuals.
- Treats all individuals with sensitivity and respect.
- Create a climate in which everyone is respected and recognized for their contributions.









# INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY



## Sherlock Room Description Sheet

You have just arrived at the ABC Company for a job interview. This job sounds like just what you have been looking for; your title would be executive assistant. You would be working directly for the president of the company, who has requested an interview with you. You arrived on time and were met by the president's personal assistant, who apologized and said that there would be a delay. The president was called unexpectedly into an important conference and will be there for at least 15 minutes more. In the meantime, his assistant has informed you that you are welcome to wait in the president's private office.

You enter the private office. You know that you will be alone here for at least 15 minutes. You look around the room, naturally curious about the person you may be working for. The president's office is carpeted in blending colors of gray, blue, and green. You sit in one of the two blue club chairs to the left of the doorway. Between the chairs is a low wooden table on which there is an empty glass ashtray. Next to the ashtray are two books of matches; one is from a local nightclub and the other is from a local restaurant. On the wall behind you is a picture of an old sailing ship in blues and browns. A rubber plant set in a gray pot sits against the side wall next to the other chair.

Across from where you are sitting is a large wooden desk, with a gray leather desk chair. A framed advertisement for the company hangs on the wall behind the desk, and below that sits a closed briefcase. The gray wastebasket next to the wall by the desk chair is full of papers.

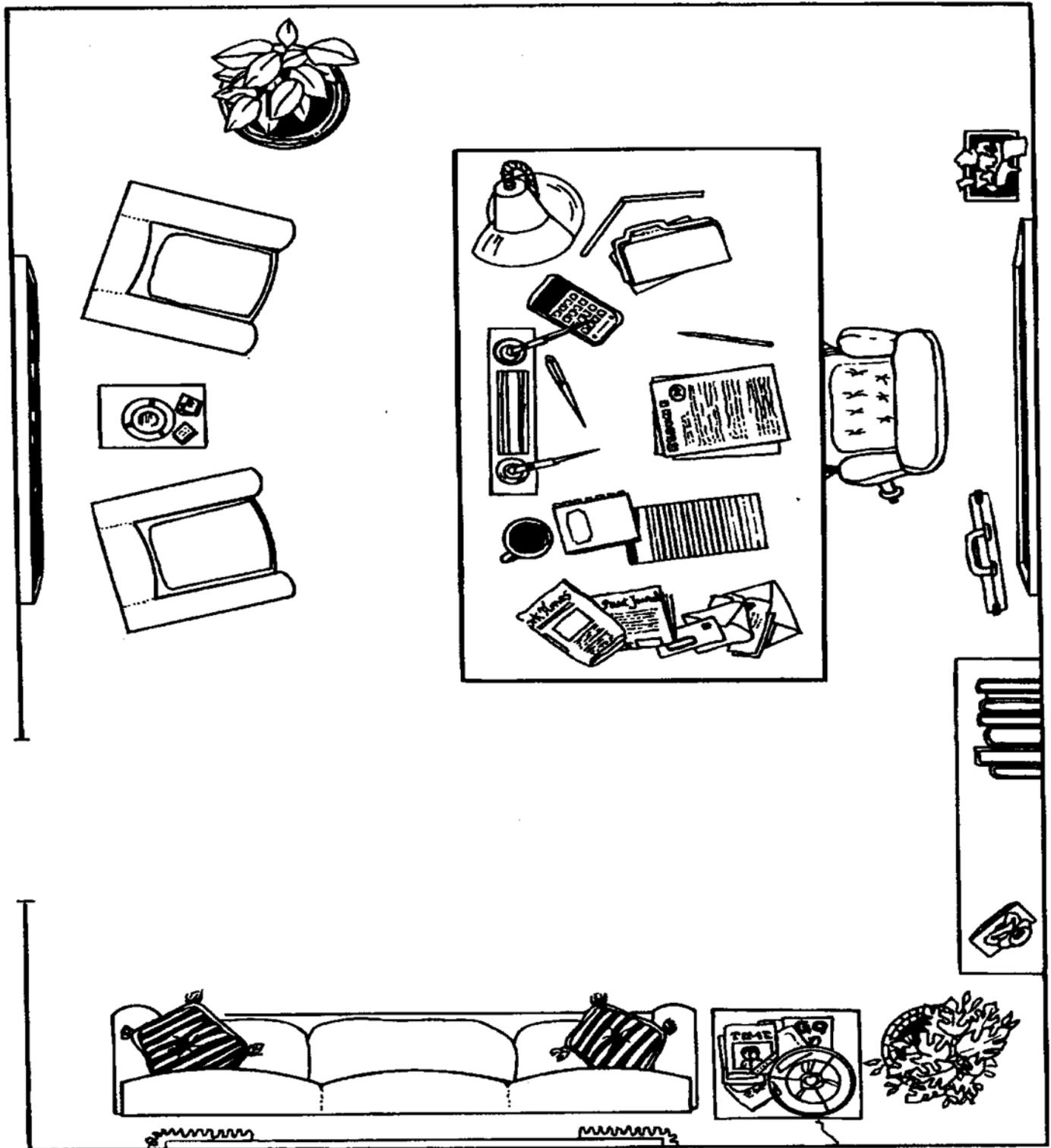
You can see most of the objects on the desk. A matching pen-and-pencil stand and a letter opener sit at the front of the desk. To one side of them is a calculator, and next to that is a brass desk lamp. In front of the lamp is a double metal photograph frame with photographs in it. One is of an attractive woman in her thirties with a young boy about eight years old. The other photograph is of a Dalmatian dog in a grassy field. In front of the frame is a stack of green file folders. On the desk in front of the desk chair are a few sheets of paper and a felt-tipped pen.

On the other side of the desk is a blue coffee mug. In front of it are a leather tabbed book and a legal-sized yellow pad. The book looks as if it is either an address book or an appointment calendar. Beside the yellow pad lies a pile of unopened mail—envelopes of many sizes. And partially on top of the pile and in back of it are half-folded newspapers: the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times.

Behind the desk and to one side is a credenza on which seven books are lined up. They are Roget's Thesaurus, the Random House Webster's Dictionary, Basic Principles of Management, Marketing for Today, Managing Diversity, You are What You Eat, and last year's World Almanac. On the far end of the credenza sits a bronze statue; it appears to be a man sitting with his legs folded in a yoga position, but it is slightly abstract. In the corner next to the credenza is a philodendron sitting in a blue pot.



# SHERLOCK ROOM DIAGRAM



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# SHERLOCK INFERENCE SHEET I

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Read the Sherlock Room Description Sheet and study the room diagram carefully. Then complete the Sherlock Inference Sheet I as follows:

1. In the left-hand column (Observation), note data from your reading that you think are important clues about the kind of person who occupies the room.
2. In the middle column (Knowledge), note any experiences that you may have had that influence your observation.
3. In the right-hand column (Inference), note whatever conclusions or you reach and guesses you make as a result of your observations.

<b>OBSERVATION</b>	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>INFERENCE</b>
Raw data	Experiences that influence your observation	Resulting perception

# SHERLOCK INFERENCE SHEET II

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**Based on what you've read, briefly answer the following questions:**

1. Would you accept the job if it were offered to you? Why?
2. How confident are you that you would or would not enjoy working for this person? Why?
3. What do you think would be your degree of satisfaction with this job? Why?
4. How do you think you would be treated by your boss? What type of relationship would you have with the president? (Would it be formal or informal, cold and distant or friendly; would this person be a colleague, a parent figure, or an authority figure?) How would your boss view you? Why?

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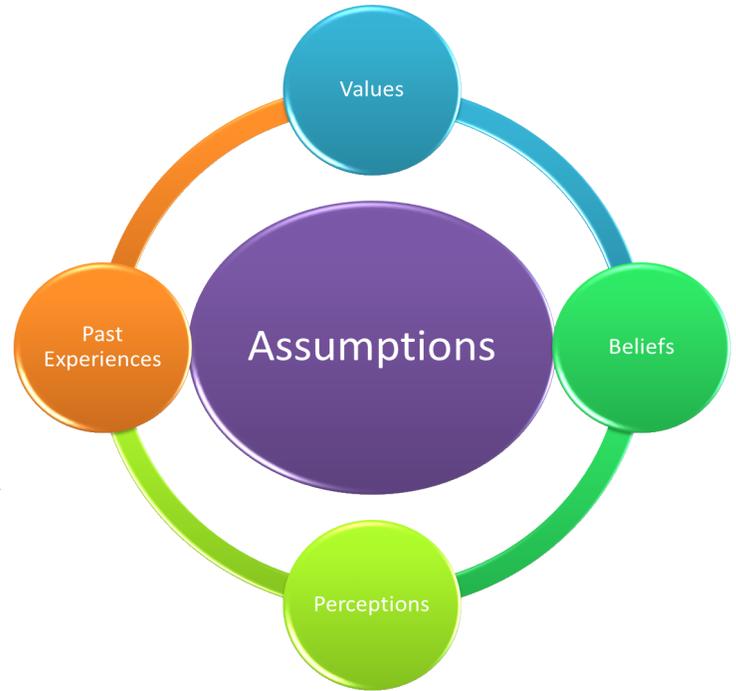
# ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT HUMAN BEHAVIOR

## Assumptions

It is human nature to try to understand human behavior. However, the assumptions that we make about the behavior of others are not necessarily true.

**Instead, our assumptions are reflections of our own values, beliefs, and perceptions.**

When interacting with others, it is important to remember this fact, to clarify assumptions, and be willing to accept at least some responsibility for the quality and effectiveness of the interaction.



One way to do this is to recognize that perceptions are individually held and can differ among individuals. While values and beliefs are also individual in nature, they are more deeply held, more complex, and beyond the scope of this course. Perceptions can differ from fact; and, just as suspicion or speculation is not evidence, perceptions may or may not be an accurate depiction of reality. Therefore, it is necessary for us to check our own perceptions. Doing so will help us to communicate more effectively and to be more productive in teamwork efforts.



## Individual Activity

- Can you think of a time you made a quick assumption about someone that wasn't true?
- What was your assumption based on?
- How did you find out it wasn't true?







# DISCOVERING E & I

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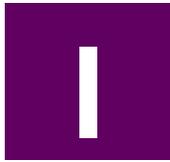


## Individual Activity

Draw a picture representing your ideal holiday. Include details regarding who, what, where, etc.



# SOURCE OF ENERGY



The Extraversion-Introversion dimension refers to **how a person is energized**. Another way to think about this dimension is how a person directs his/her energy. Each person has both orientations, preferring to use one over the other in most cases.

## Extraverts (E)

- Energized by other people and interacting with them.
- Lose energy and focus if they spend too much time alone. Usually finds a way to interact with people after being alone for a long while.
- Like to “think” out loud.
- Usually have good verbal skills and are natural conversationalists.
- Tend to talk a lot during meetings.
- Often seek interaction and they like to meet new people.
- Prefer to have people around; they do well in group interaction.
- Tend to be aware of their surroundings.
- Be impatient with long, slow jobs.
- Usually they are more obvious, more readable.
- Prefer doing something vs. thinking about it.
- Prefer to communicate verbally.
- Prefer to learn a new task by talking it out with others.
- Are easy to get to know; they show the world who they really are ... no surprises.
- Style: thinks out loud; shows the world who they are.

## Introverts (I)

- Energized by reflection about the inside world of ideas and concepts.
- Lose energy if they spend too much time interacting with people. Usually finds a way to rest up or “decompress” alone after interacting with people for a long while.
- Like to reflect on things – think about something before saying it.
- Like to spend time alone.
- Tend to be subtle and hard to read.
- Are naturally careful, quiet, and diligent.
- May think about saying something, and decide not to say it (more often than an Extravert would).
- Seek quiet for concentration and like to figure things out quietly.
- Prefer independent tasks and can work alone contentedly.
- Dislike interruptions and may not be as aware of their surroundings.
- Think before they act, sometimes without acting.
- Prefer to learn by reading rather than talking or experiencing.
- Prefer to communicate in writing
- Are harder to get to know, may keep strengths hidden ... can surprise others.
- Style: thinks before speaking; tends not to show everything about who they are unless they know you.



# INFORMATION GATHERING

S

N

The Sensing– Intuition dimension refers to what a person pays attention to. This dimension deals with how a person prefers to gather information and processes that information.

## Sensors (S)

- Use the five senses to know that a thing “is” or “is not.”
- Prefer relying on verifiable information and concrete experience.
- See reality; prefer facts over hunches.
- Are down-to-earth and realistic.
- Focus on reality and present enjoyment
- Tend to be literal and are naturally good at seeing and grasping details.
- Are quick to see “the trees” (vs. the forest).
- Naturally see the detailed picture.
- Focus on what works now.
- Tend to prefer reality to imagination or fantasy.
- Prefer an established way of doing things (“it’s not broke, don’t fix it”).
- Use a methodical approach and are uncomfortable with hypothetical or abstract problems (or solutions).
- Make decisions step-by-step.
- Usually are good at precise work. Can work steadily, with a realistic idea of how long something will take.
- Like to write out the specifics necessary to complete a task or job.
- Accept current reality as a given to work with, not really interested in “why.”
- Memory: experiential, coming from what they gather through the five senses.

## Intuitors (N)

- Use the five senses to estimate what's coming around the corner.
- Are more interested in “why is it like that?” and seek to understand “what will it be like?”
- See possibilities, have a vivid imagination.
- Prefer hunches to facts, using facts to lead naturally to another hunch.
- Much less literal, and may miss details in the process.
- Are quick to see “the forest” (vs. the trees)
- Naturally see the “big picture.”
- Identify complex patterns. Needs to know why things are as they are.
- May be abstract or visionary, and can imagine a new reality growing out of the facts on the ground.
- Focus on how things could be improved (“got to be a better way”) and their approach is more scattered than methodical.
- May become impatient with practical problems.
- Like to work on complicated problems, one with lots of angles.
- Enjoy learning new skills; can be bored by the specifics of repetitive, routine assignments.
- Follow their inspirations and hunches.
- Memory: symbolic, based on “connecting the dots,” patterns they perceive, relationships among things and/or people.





# DECISION MAKING



The Thinking-Feeling dimension refers to how a person makes decisions with the information he or she has. Both the thinking and feeling approaches are rational. One centers on logic, the other on value/ importance, yet both are rational.

## Thinkers (T)

- Tend to “name things,” sorting them into logical position when making decisions.
- Like to make decisions objectively, impersonally.
- Use an if-then type of logic to analyze information, e.g., if A equals B and B equals C, then A equals C.
- Value abstract principles of Right and Wrong. Value truth and principles and want to apply them impersonally (which is fair to all as they see it).
- Solve problems by seeing how causes are linked with effects; this is “obvious” to them, and they may have difficulty understanding how others cannot see that.
- Prefer drawing his (or her) own conclusions, and will do that using logic and sticking to the principle of the thing.
- May not be aware of emotions affecting a situation; can be unwilling to show emotion and prefer not to deal with the emotions of others.
- Respond more to people's ideas than their feelings.
- Tend to analyze and critique things.
- Naturally see the logical consequences of decisions and actions on the work product, the bottom line, and the system.
- Be able to give negative feedback when necessary.
- Memory: intellectual in nature.
- Style: businesslike and professional.

## Feelers (F)

- Tend to “assign value,” using personal values and beliefs about what is important vs. unimportant about a decision to be made.
- Like to base decisions on human values and needs, on likes and dislikes. That is, on the needs, likes and dislikes of the group.
- Will consider the people involved, what is right/wrong for a person and the group, seeking to maintain/improve harmony with decisions they make that affect the group.
- Solve problems by seeing the people affected by the problem, and how the problem impacts the individual and the group.
- Value people, tact, and harmony – they usually are very supportive of others.
- Can naturally assess the impact of decisions and actions on people.
- Naturally friendly, treat each person uniquely, and act personally rather than businesslike (which seems impersonal to them).
- Have a high need for “do the right thing for this person in this situation.” They are less concerned about impersonally applying a policy towards all and more concerned that the policy is applied so the right thing happens in this situation for this person.
- Respond to people's values as much as to their ideas.
- May be uncomfortable giving negative feedback.
- Memory: affective – remember events and the feelings connected to them.
- Style: warm and friendly.





# LIFE STYLE APPROACH



The Judging—Perceiving dimension refers to the lifestyle approach that people have; how they take these dimension of preference and put it all together. Put it another way, this dimension centers on how a person prefers to organize his/her life.

## Judgers (J)

- Have a high need for a life that is orderly, organized, decided, planned and has deadlines. This brings them the closure that they value.
- Usually prefer predictability vs. being surprised.
- Focus on completing tasks: complete it and move on to the next one. They know this is not always going to happen, yet they would prefer it if it did.
- Want to plan the work, then work the plan and resist deviations from the plan. They will also resist going back to a finished decision or task for another look.
- Make decisions quickly, seeking to finish (closure). May sometimes make decisions too quickly.
- Dislike interrupting the project they are on for a more urgent one. They prefer not to begin a new task/project before current one is complete, yet they understand that life is not always like that.
- Tend not to “beat around the bush.” They are deadline-oriented and time-sensitive.
- Usually get a sense of satisfaction once a decision is made or a task completed.
- Value planning and decisiveness – getting it done by the deadline. They will correct or update the work when necessary, but would rather meet the deadline and do corrections afterwards.
- Approach: time is finite, limited.
- Style: being organized; aim for control, order and predictability.

## Perceivers (P)

- Have a high need to handle life by keeping things open, “rolling with the punches,” and operating as if there is plenty of time. They do not stress about every little deadline, since they will meet the important ones.
- Handle life best when they can be spontaneous and flexible.
- See their environment as a place full of options, and behaving that way is a natural method to adapt to life as it is – too complex to over-plan or tightly control.
- Are comfortable leaving things open for later review or for new information that may change things.
- Tend to be information seekers, and can naturally look at things from several different viewpoints.
- Have trouble making quick decisions, being concerned about missing something. This allows them to leave their options open.
- Start too many projects and have difficulty in finishing them. Also, they may postpone unpleasant tasks.
- Get a lot accomplished at the last minute under the pressure of a deadline.
- Value getting it done right the first time, and are willing to push a deadline to do so. They would rather do it right, do it best, the first time vs. rushing to a deadline and have to re-work something.
- Approach: time is flexible. There are deadlines and there are “deadlines.”
- Style: things are emerging, so let's wait a bit in order to see what happens.



# ACHIEVING FLEXIBILITY

In order to build stronger and more productive teams, team members must learn how to work better with others with the opposite or different preferences than their own. Learning how to adapt your preferences when working with others will ultimately reduce stress and conflict in the workplace.



Keep in mind that everybody is capable of adapting to his/her situation and surroundings regardless of preferences. The more you learn and practice, the more comfortable and confident you will become.

Extraverts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefer communicating by talking rather than writing.</li></ul>
Introverts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefer one-to-one communication. Prefer communicating in writing rather than talking.</li></ul>
Sensing Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefer to receive information in detail, rather than the big picture perspective.</li><li>• When communicating with sensors, be concrete and use factual data.</li></ul>
Intuitive Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefer to receive the big picture and any implications for the future, rather than detailed information.</li><li>• When communicating with intuitors, present only your interpretation of the facts.</li></ul>
Thinking Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefer logical order and has a tendency to analyze information; tough-minded and may unintentionally offend others.</li><li>• When communicating with thinking types, present the pros and cons of any possible actions.</li></ul>
Feeling Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take an interest in people rather than things; sensitive and sympathetic when receiving or delivering bad news.</li><li>• When communicating with feeling types, disclose your values and feelings. Explain the possible impact of the situation on you and others.</li></ul>
Judging Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefer deadlines and seek closure on projects.</li><li>• Communicate in terms of plans, decisions, and schedules.</li></ul>
Perceptive Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefer to be spontaneous and keep their options open.</li><li>• Communicate in terms of adaptability or flexibility. Allow for input about how to get things done.</li></ul>

# APPLICATION ACTIVITY

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Read the case study below and make recommendations about how the supervisor should tailor orientation for his employees based on their preferences. Write a script of what the supervisor should say to each employee. You may refer to the table on the previous page for ideas.

## **BILL**

Bill's IT department has just been reorganized and consolidated with another IT department to improve his agency's efficiency and effectiveness. As a result he will be working with three new employees: John, Alice, and Fred. Although he prefers to communicate and organize his thoughts in writing (Introvert), he will, when necessary, communicate with others in a meeting. When gathering information in order to make a decision he tends to rely on past experience and factual data (Sensing), but will, if necessary, explore possibilities. He likes to logically analyze the facts and make fair decisions (Thinking). Once he makes a plan he prefers to follow the plan and likes the structure of schedules (Judging), but will, if necessary, adapt his plans if there is new data to suggest the change.

## **JOHN**

John seems to enjoy working long hours. He has a keen sense of reality and likes details and factual information (Sensing). He wants to get the job done even though it may not follow established procedures (Perceiving). He tends to take risks and the freedom to do so when solving an IT problem and will willingly work long hours to complete a new assignment. He also often procrastinates with routine assignments, not meeting deadlines. He has little regard for the past or future.

# APPLICATION ACTIVITY

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## **ALICE**

Alice seems to like the challenge of solving complex systems problems that require innovation and creativity (Intuiting). She tends to ignore or challenge the relevance of routine daily assignments, preferring to deal with future planning. Additionally, she seems to embrace change and continues working on a project until it is just right (Thinking). She values competence and loses patience with other coworkers who do not match her standards.

## **FRED**

Fred seems to really champion and support people, loving harmony in the workplace. He is never too busy to stop and help a coworker (Feeling). Fred has not been able to complete his work assignments due to interruptions from coworkers sharing concerns about how the IT Department's consolidation will affect the work group and productivity (Intuiting). He is feeling disillusioned and very concerned about how the people issues can be resolved to create a team spirit and maximize productivity.



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