



# MBTI<sup>®</sup> TEAMBUILDING PROGRAM

**Third Edition**



**Leader's Resource Guide**

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# What's New in This Edition?

The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) tool has been used successfully to improve the performance of teams throughout the world. Because of the well-established efficacy of the *MBTI*® *Teambuilding Program*, we are delighted to offer this revised and expanded edition. This new edition reflects not only the knowledge we have gained through our ongoing professional experience with teambuilding but also the latest developments in

- MBTI forms and administration options
- Research and theory
- Bibliographic material

To address these changes, we have amended and updated the content of this guide. Specifically, we have included

- New charts that detail the Lens concept for six core issues:
  - Communication
  - Team culture
  - Leadership
  - Change
  - Problem solving/conflict resolution
  - Stress
- Eight new icebreaker activities to help team members get acquainted with one another and with the topic(s) to be covered in the teambuilding

- Four new wrap-up activities to help team members reflect on their experiences, reinforce their learning, and get closure on the work they began in the team-building workshop
- Six new activities in part 5 to help team members understand and appreciate their fellow team members' approaches to the six core issues
- The Living Zig-Zag activity in part 5, which enables team members to experience physically the distribution of decision-making styles on a team and to highlight potential concentrations and blind spots in the team's decision-making style
- New and revised slides and handouts (provided on the companion CD as PowerPoint® files for slide presentations and as PDF files to enable you to easily print handouts for distribution at your workshops)
- New templates to help you with pre-workshop needs assessment, workshop contracting, and assessment administration (provided on the companion CD as Microsoft® Word files to enable you to easily customize the templates or include them in your existing materials)

We are confident you will find this edition a useful addition to your teambuilding tool kit. It is designed to help teambuilders, team leaders, and team members enhance their individual and team effectiveness.



# About the Authors



Elizabeth Hirsh, MS, Katherine W. Hirsh, DPhil, and Sandra Krebs Hirsh, MA, MAIR, are internationally recognized authorities on psychological type. All are based in Minnesota. Elizabeth's preferences are for INFP, Katherine's are for INTP, and Sandra's are for ENFP.



# Introduction



In today's changing world of work, teams are becoming increasingly varied and complex. This resource guide presents a framework designed to cut through the complexity and enable teams to function more productively. The MBTI tool, with its Jungian foundation, is a natural for this task because it is based on the premise that we all have unique gifts to offer and challenges to overcome. In teams we work together, attempting to maximize each member's special talents, thereby minimizing gaps in knowledge and skills. Applying the information in this guide to teams and teambuilding provides us with the understanding we need to make those things happen.

In this guide we demonstrate how the MBTI tool can be employed in teambuilding and, indeed, how it can be a powerful tool with teams. We address six core issues affecting teams: communication, team culture, leadership, change, problem solving/conflict resolution, and stress.

## Teambuilding

To put it simply, a team is two or more people working together to accomplish a task. Following are some basic characteristics of today's teams:

- Team members share common goals, tasks, or work.
- Team members have common organizational concerns.
- Actions by one team member affect the work of the other team members.
- Team members may or may not report to the same person(s).
- Team members may or may not work in the same location.

Teambuilding is the process by which the members of a team are encouraged to learn about themselves, one another, and their leader(s), and about how those components fit together to maximize team success. Traditionally, most organizations emphasized the interaction between managers and employees. Today the focus is on facilitating interactions among team members, be they employees or managers. There are a number of ways in which the teambuilding process can unfold:

- It may involve an entire team, subteams (which may be onsite or virtual or both), or dyads.
- It may occur when a team forms or at any point in the team's life.
- It may take place when the team is in conflict or working in harmony.
- It may be a one-time event or part of an ongoing cultural change effort.

## The MBTI® Tool and Team Effectiveness

The MBTI tool provides a framework for understanding differences in what each team member brings to a team. According to Mary McCaulley (1975), it allows us to make predictions about team effectiveness based on psychological type, as follows:

- The more similar the types on a team, the sooner the team members will understand one another.
- The more dissimilar the types on a team, the slower the understanding will be.
- Groups with high type similarity will reach decisions more quickly but are more likely to make errors due to inadequate representation of all viewpoints.
- Groups with members of many different types will reach decisions more slowly (and painfully) but may reach better decisions because more viewpoints are covered.
- Teams with only a single representative of a certain preference (e.g., only one Introvert) may fail to appreciate the gifts/skills associated with that preference and may view that member as different from other team members.
- Teams that come to appreciate and make positive use of type differences may experience less conflict than those that don't.
- Successful teams with members of many different types promote the development of team members by encouraging their learning from the gifts of other types.

The take-home message is that the MBTI tool improves team effectiveness by

- Fostering openness and trust
- Providing a neutral and affirmative language with which to discuss differences
- Supplying a framework through which team members can better understand and manage conflict

- Teaching team members to value and work with the strengths of others
- Increasing productivity by aligning an individual's type preferences with particular team tasks

## Forms of the MBTI® Tool

This guide is intended for people already familiar with the MBTI tool. Readers should have considerable experience using it (including administration, scoring, and interpretation) and some experience working with teams.

You will need to choose which form of the MBTI tool to use with a particular team:

- MBTI Form M (Step I™) assessment
- MBTI Form Q (Step II™) assessment
- MBTI®Complete

The MBTI Form M (Step I instrument), in either the standard or self-scorable format, is the most commonly used version of the assessment. Both formats contain 93 items and can be administered in 15 to 25 minutes. The MBTI Form Q (Step II assessment) consists of 144 items and provides a more detailed analysis of each of the MBTI preference dichotomies. It indicates the participants' types and preference clarity indexes on twenty empirically derived components of the preference pairs. Form Q is particularly useful in teambuilding when you want to delve deeper into the nuances of type and/or elucidate the differences between people who have the same preferences. MBTI®Complete is an online edition of the MBTI tool that brings together assessment and interpretation.

Several different narrative reports are available and can be helpful. For example, you may find the MBTI® Interpretive Report for Organizations, the MBTI® Work Styles Report, and the MBTI® Team Report useful in the teambuilding context. For more information about any of the versions of the MBTI tool, call CPP Customer Relations at 800-624-1765 or visit [www.mbti.com](http://www.mbti.com) or [www.cpp.com](http://www.cpp.com).

*Note:* In Europe the Step I assessment is used. The MBTI assessments and reports, as well as some of the booklets in the *Introduction to Type®* series, are available in a variety of languages. For more information visit [www.opp.eu.com](http://www.opp.eu.com).

## Ethical Guidelines for Use of the MBTI® Tool

Bear in mind that participants can choose not to take the MBTI assessment. It is important that team leaders and/or your client understand this. The assessment is based on the premise of honoring preferences—making it mandatory would be unethical. You may find that team members who are initially reluctant feel more at ease with the idea of taking the assessment after they have seen it in action during

the teambuilding workshop. Given this, it may be wise to bring along some extra Form M (Step 1) Self-Scorable assessments or be prepared to offer an online administration for wary individuals.

Remember, many things can affect the way an individual responds to the items on the assessment. In our experience it is useful to advise participants to take the assessment at home, away from work and as far removed from their organizational self as possible. In this way their results should more accurately render their true type preferences. Participants who complete the assessment while in their work setting or in their workaday mind-set may respond in a manner that reflects what is esteemed in the workplace rather than their personal preferences, attitudes, and values. Research suggests that a workplace frame of mind can lead individuals to skew their results toward preferences for Thinking (T) and Judging (J). Furthermore, it is our experience that when trust is low and power is unevenly distributed on a team, team members may slant their type toward the perceived team norm. This protects them from the risk of seeming different. Results also can be influenced by more immediate factors, such as health, mood, time constraints, and so on. Armed with this knowledge, you may be better able to help team members verify their true psychological type.

Using the MBTI tool responsibly requires that you take a number of factors into account. You should

- Allow participants to select and clarify their preferences and type before receiving their MBTI results
- Emphasize that the MBTI tool sorts preferences; it does not measure abilities
- Underscore that type is more than who you are at work; it is a reflection of who you are independent of setting
- Impress upon participants that the MBTI tool is not a test and that there are no right or wrong answers (or preferences)
- Discourage using the MBTI tool as the sole basis for a teambuilding intervention
- Be aware of your own type preferences and biases and how they affect your training style
- Highlight the fact that type should not be used as an excuse for doing or not doing something
- Avoid stereotyping based on type—just because a person has a preference for Sensing does not mean that he or she should be asked to attend to all the details
- Remind participants that everyone uses every preference; however, we favor certain preferences over others
- Ensure that MBTI data are used to open up opportunities rather than limit them
- Stress that a person's psychological type should be regarded as a working hypothesis until it is confirmed by the individual

Another ethical consideration worth highlighting is confidentiality. Participants may be hesitant to reveal their type publicly. Honor these concerns by reminding them that results are confidential; individuals are encouraged to share their results but they are not required to do so. Where there are trust issues, we explain to team members that when activities are planned for type-alike groups, they may choose to participate by sitting with others who represent their preference or type, or by sitting with those whose preferences are interesting to them. It is even possible to run a session in which individuals are arbitrarily assigned to a type or a preference group; one potential benefit of this is that it forces participants to take another's point of view and look at things in new ways. Both techniques reserve for participants the option of divulging or concealing their type. Partner with the organization to ensure confidentiality by

- Controlling access to MBTI data—beyond aggregate data, results should not be given to other team members, team leaders, or other organizational units without prior permission
- Involving team leaders and other organizational figures in the process by asking them to open the teambuilding, to reassure participants that the confidentiality of their results will be protected, and to share their type and positive personal experiences with the MBTI tool

Note that extreme concern by participants about confidentiality may indicate deeper issues than can be addressed in the teambuilding workshop. It may be helpful to have resource or contact information ready so you can refer participants to additional assistance.

Finally, it is important to remind individuals taking the MBTI assessment that they are the best experts on themselves. No assessment can fully describe anyone. Reassure participants that their actual or true preferences may be different from the results provided by the assessment. Let them know that this is okay; as mentioned above, there are a number of factors unrelated to type that may affect a particular person's scores. Taking the MBTI assessment is only the first step in the discovery process. Indeed, it is crucial that all participants, with preferences clear or unclear, seek confirmation of their preferences throughout the teambuilding process.

## When Teambuilding Is Not Appropriate

While this is a resource about teambuilding and the MBTI tool, there are instances in which neither may be appropriate. Therefore, before going any farther we feel it is important to indicate several situations in which teambuilding with the MBTI tool may not be the best approach. These include situations in which

- The client or team leader is not committed to the MBTI tool and/or the process of teambuilding
- Teambuilding and/or the MBTI tool does not have the support of senior leadership

- The organization or team is undergoing extreme change or crisis
- The difficulties affecting the team are outside the team's control

## Objectives of the *Leader's Resource Guide*

The objectives of this guide are to

- Provide a foundation for effective teambuilding
- Give a detailed overview of the process of initiating, designing, and presenting a teambuilding intervention
- Present four Lenses that illustrate the richness of MBTI theory for understanding the behavior of individuals and teams
- Apply these Lenses to six core issues:
  - Communication
  - Team culture
  - Leadership
  - Change
  - Problem solving/conflict resolution
  - Stress
- Supply easy-to-use and comprehensive activities complete with slides and handouts
- Furnish materials to reinforce and deepen understanding of psychological type, teams, and teambuilding

## Organization of the *Leader's Resource Guide*

This guide is organized to aid you, the teambuilder, as you prepare for and conduct teambuilding workshops. Select those parts of the guide and those slides and handouts that complement your facilitation style or work most effectively with the team issues you will be addressing. An additional resource for teambuilding participants that serves as a companion to this guide is the booklet *Introduction to Type® and Teams* (Hirsh, Hirsh, & Hirsh, 2003). We suggest you read both this guide and the booklet before choosing your exact approach.

**The *Leader's Resource Guide* is divided into five parts:**

**Part 1, "Beginning the Teambuilding Process,"** details the beginning stages of the process (prior to the teambuilding workshop). We discuss the initial client contact and the steps in the contracting process, as well as those in the interviewing process.

We also cover the administration of the MBTI tool, the formation of a partnership team, and the presentation of critical feedback to individual team members, the team leadership, and the partnership team.

**Part 2, “The Teambuilding Workshop,”** describes workshop components. We begin with two important issues a teambuilder should think about before the workshop takes place: ethics and teambuilder traps. The bulk of part 2 consists of a sample teambuilding agenda with step-by-step commentary. We also cover post-workshop considerations such as how to conduct a follow-up session and information on how and why teambuilding interventions may go awry. Finally, we discuss how to tailor an agenda to include more activities when more than one day is available.

**Part 3, “Team Analysis Using the Type Table and the Lenses,”** presents the tools for conducting a team analysis. We elucidate the structure of the type table and delineate four orderly subdivisions referred to here as Lenses. Each Lens highlights similarities, differences, and relationships among all sixteen types. Finally, we provide an example of a team analysis to demonstrate the usefulness of the Lens approach.

**Part 4, “Applying Type Lenses to Core Issues of Teambuilding,”** reviews each Lens in depth as it relates to the six core issues. Provided for each Lens is a chart with a general overview, an example of its application to a sample team, and six activities and six charts (one for each core issue) for use in teambuilding.

**Part 5, “Additional Resources,”** provides an alternative workshop format using Participative Data Gathering, six additional teambuilding activities to help team members understand and appreciate their fellow team members’ approaches to the six core issues, an activity (the Living Zig-Zag) for reactivating knowledge in teams already familiar with psychological type, two activities for team action planning, and a list of additional resources and type organizations that can help you expand and strengthen your understanding of the MBTI tool, teams, and teambuilding.