TRACOM® GROUP
THE SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANY®

COMPARING

SOCIAL STYLE® and Myers Briggs

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN **PERSONALITY PROFILES** AND **SOCIAL STYLE®?**

This is a common question. More specifically, people want to know how to compare SOCIAL STYLE to popular personality profiles such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®). What are the similarities and differences?

In this paper we explain how Style and MBTI relate to one another. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) is a registered trademark of CPP. The TRACOM® Group has no affiliation with CPP or MBTI®, and neither CPP nor any of the authors, creators or representatives of MBTI® have reviewed or approved this paper.

Overview of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®

The MBTI is designed to measure psychological preferences in how people perceive the world around them and make decisions. Based on the theoretical work of Carl Jung, the questionnaire and profile were originally developed by Katherine Cook Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers.

The MBTI describes personality using four pairs of opposite preferences, called dichotomies:

- Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I)
- Sensing (S) or Intuition (N)
- Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)
- Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)

Individuals are described by a combination of these four dichotomies. For example, a person can be described as **ESFP**, **INTJ**, and so on.

Extraversion and Introversion are often called attitudes. In general, *extraverts* are action-oriented and get their energy from interacting with people, whereas *introverts* are thought-oriented and get their energy from spending time alone.

Sensing and Intuition are ways people perceive the world. They describe how information is taken in and interpreted by individuals. People who prefer *sensing* rely on information that is tangible and concrete. On the other hand, those who prefer *intuition* rely on information that is more abstract or theoretical.

Thinking and Feeling are decision-making functions. Those who prefer *thinking* make decisions from a more detached standpoint, evaluating the decision with a logical set of rules. Those who prefer *feeling* make decisions by associating or empathizing with the situation, trying to achieve harmony and consensus, and considering the needs of the people involved.

Finally, the MBTI describes people's preference for either *Judging* or *Perceiving* when relating to the outside world. Individuals with a preference for *judgment* display their preferred judging function (Thinking or Feeling). For example, TJ types appear logical, and FJ types as empathetic. Individuals who prefer *perception* show their perceiving function (Sensing or Intuition). For example, SP types appear as concrete and NP types as abstract.

Differences

There are several important differences between the MBTI and SOCIAL STYLE. First, the MBTI and SOCIAL STYLE are based on different theoretical models. The MBTI is based on Carl Jung's personality theory, while SOCIAL STYLE is based on behavioral psychology. The MBTI focuses on personality types and individual preferences, whereas SOCIAL STYLE describes patterns of behavior. Both models have been extensively researched and have been put to practical use for decades.

The two models relate to different aspects of the self: MBTI on intrapersonal functioning and SOCIAL STYLE on interpersonal functioning. The MBTI is focused on internal thoughts and feelings, while SOCIAL STYLE is focused on social relationships. The MBTI provides intrapersonal insight about a person's personality preferences; SOCIAL STYLE gives interpersonal insight into how others view a person's behavior. This distinction is evident in the ways in which the two measurement systems operate. The MBTI is a self-report instrument, whereas SOCIAL STYLE is offered as a multi-rater instrument where others' observations are essential. The focus on intrapersonal understanding of personality (MBTI) versus interpersonal awareness of behavior (Style) is a key difference between the two models.

Another important distinction involves Versatility, a part of the SOCIAL STYLE Profile that measures interpersonal effectiveness. Much of the emphasis on interacting more effectively with others is achieved through the application of Versatility. Versatility consists of four elements: Image, Presentation, Competence, and Feedback. Each of these elements provides information about personal behavior and how to improve interpersonal effectiveness.

Similarities

There are some superficial similarities in how MBTI and SOCIAL STYLE are reported. It is often these similarities that lead people to ask about the connection between Style and the MBTI. The MBTI describes 16 distinct types. Coincidentally, SOCIAL STYLE also describes 16 Style distinctions; however, individuals are categorized into four broad Styles, each with four sub-quadrants. The sub-quadrants describe subtle differences within each of the four Styles. For example, a C3 Amiable person has slightly different behavioral patterns than a D4 Amiable person.

There are also some characteristic similarities among the MBTI types and Styles. For example, the INTJ type is similar in some ways to the Analytical Style. Both are logical, organized, methodical, and critical. The Analytical person keeps thoughts internal, is precise, emotionally controlled, and needs to logically analyze issues before making decisions. These descriptions are similar to the INTJ descriptions. The fundamental distinction between these two descriptions is that SOCIAL STYLE is derived from people's perceptions of another person's outward behavior, while the MBTI types are derived from self-perception of needs and preferences. This is an important distinction since internal preferences and intentions are not always related to behavior as seen and interpreted by others. An INTJ can be seen as Analytical or any other Style.

Mapping SOCIAL STYLE to MBTI

The MBTI types have been mapped to interaction styles, which is a concept similar to SOCIAL STYLE. Graph 1 on page 7 displays the MBTI types in relation to the 16 SOCIAL STYLE sub-quadrants. The most obvious similarity exists along the Extraversion/Introversion dimension. The Tell Assertive styles, Driving and Expressive, are *extraverted* and the Ask Assertive styles, Amiable and Analytical, are *introverted*.

A similar pattern exists on the Responsiveness dimension in relation to the MBTI Thinking/Feeling dimension. With only some exceptions, the Controlled Responsive styles, Analytical and Driving, are *Thinking* and the Emote Responsive styles, Amiable and Expressive, are *Feeling*.

We want to point out that this map is not empirical; there is no scientific research behind this. It was based on the judgment and experiences of personality researchers. The mappings are reasonable; however it is impossible to determine whether the two profiles would correspond with one another to such a degree if this were tested on real people. On the contrary, our experiences would indicate otherwise. For example, though an INTJ is predicted to profile as a D1 Analytical, if such a person is in a role that requires a great deal of activity and interaction with others, then other people's observations may cause his or her profile to correspond more closely to a C1 or B1 (Analytical/Driving). As we noted previously, people's behavior does not always correspond with their self-perceptions.

A person's MBTI and SOCIAL STYLE results are most likely to correspond with the map when their self-perception is clearly aligned with their outward behavior. In other words, when the MBTI profile, which is a measure of internal preferences, clearly relates to how that person behaves towards others, then there is a higher probability that the map will be accurate. TRACOM's research on SOCIAL STYLE has shown that self-perception of behavior is only the same as others' perception approximately 50% of the time. Likewise, how people feel about themselves is often not the same as how they behave towards others.

GRAPH 1: LIKELY MAPPING OF MBTI TYPES TO SOCIAL STYLE

Driving: ENTJ, ESTJ, ESTP, ENFJ
Expressive: ENTP, ENFP, ESFJ, ESFP
Amiable: ISFJ, ISFP, INFP, INTP
Analytical: INFJ, INTJ, ISTJ, ISTP

ANALYTICAL   **DRIVING**

	D	C	CONTROLS	B	A	
1	INTJ	ISTP		ENTJ	ESTP	1
2	ISTJ	INFJ		ESTJ	ENFJ	2

ASKS   **TELLS**

	D	C	EMOTES	B	A	
3	INTP	ISFP		ENTP	ESFP	3
4	ISFJ	INFP		ESFJ	ENFP	4
	C	C		B	A	

AMIABLE   **EXPRESSIVE**

Summary

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and SOCIAL STYLE describe two distinct aspects of a person. Together, these two pictures provide a more detailed view of the person than either could alone. The MBTI can be useful for understanding personal preferences and motivations. It is particularly enlightening for helping people understand their preferences. For example, it can be useful for career and occupation planning, helping to insure a good fit between a person and a profession.

A critical difference between SOCIAL STYLE and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is the ability of participants to understand and apply the concepts of each model. Research from Colorado State University and Regis Learning Solutions found that the TRACOM Social Style training model is easier to understand and use than either DiSC or Myers-Briggs. The study evaluated more than 200 people participating in training programs featuring the DiSC model from Inscape Publishing, the MBTI model from CPP, Inc., and the SOCIAL STYLE model from the TRACOM Group. It found that while participants in all three programs held very positive reactions to the training programs, participants in Style training scored significantly higher in terms of understanding and retaining course concepts and in using those skills to understand and relate effectively with others. Read more about this study **HERE**.

SOCIAL STYLE is most effective for understanding how others see us, and also for understanding how to interact most effectively with others based on their Styles. Versatility adds to this understanding by providing pragmatic techniques for increasing interpersonal effectiveness.

About the Author

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Casey Mulqueen oversees the research and development of TRACOM's various assessment instruments and products. He has experience developing a wide variety of assessments such as personality inventories, 360-degree feedback programs, performance appraisal systems, and employee engagement programs. His expertise in cross-cultural assessment and norming has helped ensure that TRACOM's global surveys are valid and reliable throughout the world. He is a writer who has authored a variety of materials including books, book chapters, and peer-reviewed journal articles. Casey has an M.S. in clinical psychology and a Ph.D. in industrial/organizational psychology.

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