

THE DiSC PERSONAL PROFILE SYSTEM™ AND THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR

by Miriam (Mimi) B. Hull, Ph.D.

Sir Isaac Newton observed that if we achieve something of value, it is because we stand on the shoulders of giants who came before us. Among the many giants who have gone before us are Carl G. Jung, the noted author of *Psychological Types*,¹ and William Moulton Marston, author of *Emotions of Normal People*.²

John G. Geier, Ph.D. developed the DiSC™ dimensions of behavior model and the Personal Profile System™ (PPS) instrument.³ According to Geier, the Personal Profile System is based on the findings of his research studies, much of which he said William Marston had laid the groundwork for when he described the primary emotions and drew up terms which might be used to measure those factors.

Geier frequently acknowledged Marston's contributions to his work in applying behavioral science concepts to work and personal situations.⁴ It was Dr. Geier who was instrumental in reprinting Marston's work.

Carl G. Jung, the prominent Swiss born psychiatrist, brought significant attention to human behavior and behavior that was not random but classifiable. While this kind of general classification goes back to the ancient Greeks, Jung's work was based on differences in behavior resulting from preferences.

These preferences, Jung taught, emerge early in life and form the foundation for our *personalities*. Many instruments trace their foundation to Jung's work. One of them, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was developed by Katharine C. Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers.

In this article, I would like to address some of the similarities and differences of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Carlson Learning Company instrument, the Personal Profile System. Basically, I want to confirm the fact that these two instruments are not in competition with each other because they produce two different kinds of results.

Personality and Behavior

To begin with, I would like to define *personality* and *behavior*. It is the consideration of what makes up *personality* and

what makes up *behavior* that distinguishes the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator from the Personal Profile System. The MBTI profiles *personality*. The PPS profiles *behavior*. These are two very distinct concepts.

Personality is defined by Webster's New Riverside University Dictionary as "the pattern of collective character, behavioral, temperamental, emotional, and mental traits of an individual." *Behavior* is defined as "one's actions or reactions under specified circumstances."

The distinction, then, we could make is that *personality* is our overall way of looking at a person — the totality of qualities, cultural values, beliefs, emotional make-up, skills, abilities, and traits peculiar to an individual. *Behavior*, on the other hand, is the way we respond to a specific situation. It is the *outward expression* of who we are.

With the PPS instrument the individual is asked to focus on a particular environment. This includes such focuses as work, different relationships, or home life. If you focus on the relationship with your clients, you may come up with one profile. If you focus on your relationship with your boss, you may come up with another. If you focus on your relationship with your friends, you may come up with a third. If you focus on your relationship with your husband or wife, you may come up with a fourth.

Our profile may change because we frequently behave differently in different situations, even though our personality remains constant. In fact, our behavior in a given focus may or may not be consistent with our basic personality — it depends on how genuine we are. Sometimes our behavior may mask how we really are.

The MBTI looks at behavior, too, but as it relates to long-term personality. Your personality does not change except by significant emotional experiences. Personality is everything a person is: inborn traits, as well as mental capabilities; your emotional makeup, as well as your skills and abilities. The MBTI looks at more and different information than the PPS. That is why there is no true, direct comparison between the

two. The MBTI and the PPS are two different instruments measuring different things.

Basics of the PPS

The Personal Profile System™ identifies four distinct, behavioral styles that can easily be observed in daily behavior. Some general characteristics of these styles include:

Dominant (D) Style: This style is assertive, determined, independent, and motivated by competitive opportunities. This style actively and positively tries to overcome unfavorable obstacles that block their way.

Influencing (i) Style: This style is optimistic, talkative, eager to please, and tends to be emotional. This style actively focuses their energies on influencing and persuading others in favorable situations.

Steadiness (S) Style: This style is a good listener, easy-going, low-keyed, and maintains a calm and peaceful relationship with others. This style is more comfortable in a favorable environment.

Cautious (C) Style: This style likes things done the "right" or "correct" way as they see it. This style tends to focus on their own high standards of appropriate behavior and on reducing antagonistic factors in an unfavorable environment.

People exhibit a mix of the four dimensions of behavioral responses (D-i-S-C), with fifteen identified Classical Patterns, and many more potential combinations. There is no best or ideal pattern, nor is the purpose of the profile to ask people to change their style; rather, the information is useful to measure and understand one's response to a specifically defined environment.

The PPS focuses on identifying and building awareness of the strengths and possible limitations of the person's style. It is a self-report instrument that provides instant feedback the individual can use to develop new skills and adapt better to the differences in others and the needs of a specific situation.

Basics of MBTI

The Myers Briggs Type Indicator identifies four pairs of "preference alternatives" individuals are predisposed to. These are:

Extraverted ⁵	(E)	or	Introverted	(I)
Sensing	(S)	or	iNtuitive ⁶	(N)
Thinking	(T)	or	Feeling	(F)
Judging	(J)	or	Perceiving	(P)

These four pairs — Extraverted or Introverted, Sensing or

iNtuitive, Thinking or Feeling, Judging or Perceiving — combine into sixteen personality types:

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ

Your "type" then indicates your personal preference in where you get your energy (E or I), how you gather information (S or N), how you prefer to make your decisions (T or F), and how you prefer to be on a day-to-day basis (J or P). Like the PPS, the MBTI considers no pattern better than another pattern.

The PPS and Learning Styles

The way we take in information influences how we process that information, and, ultimately, how we use that information. If you are a high "D," you will take in bottom line information and think in outline form. If you are a high "C," you will take in lots and lots of information — paragraphs and volumes — then choose what information you will give out. The "C" carefully analyzes information. Usually, though, they will use only a very small percentage of what was taken.

If you are an "i" or "S," your information will be colored by your emotions and experiences. The high "i" also takes in lots of information — because they don't want to miss any part of it — but the information is taken in differently than the "C's" information. How they feel about the information will determine what they do with it.

The high "S" will take in information that fits with information they already have. If it doesn't fit, the "S" will often, unconsciously, reject the information. They do not do this intentionally — because they do not want any conflict. The "S" will reject conflict, not only interpersonally, but internally. The way they may do this is by just not accepting it.

The MBTI and Learning Types

With the MBTI, your first scale is Extravert/Introvert. About 75% of the population are Extraverts (E) and 25% of the population are Introverts (I). The Extravert prefers to learn by doing and likes to talk in order to think things out. They like stimulation and like many different things coming at them.

The Introvert likes to learn about things by reading and thinking. They will talk about it, but need time to process it internally first. They like depth and concentration and are more comfortable in the world of ideas than in the world of people and things.

The S (Sensing) person makes up 75% of the population

and likes facts. They want to learn something they can continue to use. Sensing individuals are very real and learn through their senses. They do a tremendous amount of observation and want first hand experience. They are anchored in reality and practicality.

An N (iNtuitive) person makes up 25% of the population and is an abstract thinker. They like to look at theories and ideas and like to be very innovative. The iNtuitive has a strong drive for projects, initiatives, ingenuity, versatility, and abstract kind of information and things.

The Thinking (T) person is very logical. They are also very critical, demand efficiency, and will do what they need to do to get the job done. They will analyze things but they do so mentally. Like the Feeling (F) person they make up 50% of the population.

The Feeling (F) person is very sympathetic and will rule with their heart. Their learning is based on how it affects everyone around them. They are very people-oriented, empathetic, and are very devoted and emotional.

The Judging (J) person makes up 55% of the population. They like to make lists of things to do, be orderly, and make plans. They like quick decisions — like to get things wrapped up — and want to organize and control. When they complete a project, though, they like to celebrate.

On the other hand, the Perceptive (P) person wants to consider all the possibilities. They want a lot of emphasis on adaptability, understanding, and want to put off making a decision as long as they possibly can. They make up 45% of the population.

Similarities and Differences

As you can tell by the learning styles and types, there are similarities between the MBTI and the PPS; however, the MBTI looks at more and different information than the PPS. There are parts of the MBTI that seem to relate to aspects of the PPS but there is never a direct line-by-line correlation. They are two instruments measuring different things in different ways.

An example I like to use to differentiate between the MBTI and the PPS is the structure of condominiums. Let's say you have a number of condominiums side by side. They are structurally the same (MBTI) but the way they are decorated (PPS) can be very, very different. So, too, people who have the same MBTI type may have very different PPS profiles and vice versa.

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One of the advantages I see with the use of the PPS is the mirror we have of ourselves in many different situations. When we know this of ourselves, we will also understand why people respond to us differently in different situations. Take, for example, a woman executive. Typically, at the office she will be called upon to use "D" behavior, knows that, and will behave accordingly and appropriately. However, at home she may be called upon to use more supportive behavior so when she focuses on her profile at home she may be a high "S." Her "core" in both situations may be an "i," and it may be the secondary style in both considerations.

Conclusion

There is not enough room to go into the many and various aspects of both instruments. The Personal Profile System is, without doubt, easier to administer, implement, easier to use, and is more practical. The MBTI comes from a psychological background and has been applied to business. The MBTI requires a more intensive approach and gives an indepth basis of where people are coming

from. The Personal Profile System was originally created as a business instrument, using business people in the process of developing teams.

Learning is complex. If resources permit, both instruments together can make learning about self and others more meaningful and significant. ■

References

- ¹ Jung, C. M., *Psychological Types* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971). A revision by R. F. C. Hull of the translation by H. G. Baynes.
- ² Marston, William M., *Emotions of Normal People* (New York: Harcourt, Brace Co., 1928).
- ³ The Personal Profile System was begun in the 1950s by John G. Geier. "By 1977, the instrument was a complete educational system — self-administered, self-developed, and completely self-interpreted." Marston, William Moulton, *Emotions of Normal People*. Interpretive introduction by John G. Geier, Ph.D. (Minneapolis, MN: Persona Press, Inc., 1979), page 7.
- ⁴ Ibid, page 6.
- ⁵ The dictionary spells this word extroverted. However, Carl Jung preferred extraverted, which is the spelling used here.
- ⁶ The letter N is used to designate iNtuition because the letter I is used in Introverted.

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