

Kilmanns Personality Style Instrument



*Sample Results and
Interpretive Materials*

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AND ASSOCIATES**

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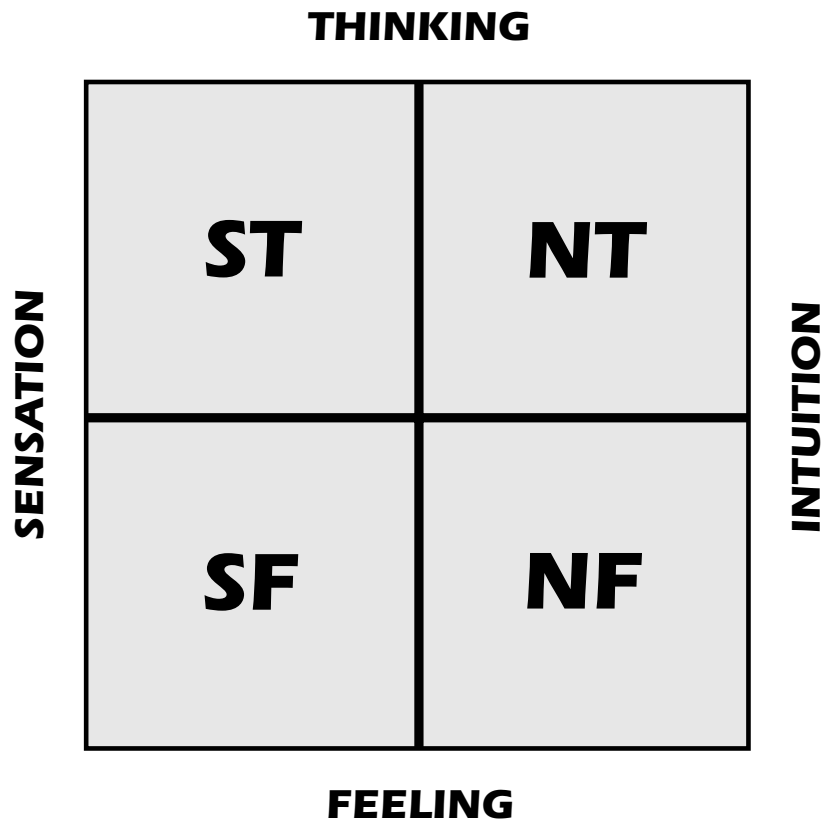
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PERSONALITY STYLE INSTRUMENT

Defining Four Personality Styles

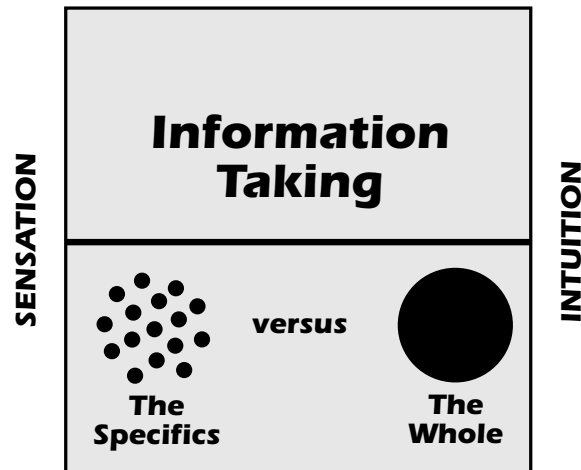
As shown below, the four personality styles are a composite of two key distinctions: Sensation (S) vs. Intuition (N) and Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F). The first distinction (S vs. N) consists of two different ways of taking in information. The second distinction (T vs. F) consists of two different ways of making decisions. Thus, each of the four personality styles is a unique approach to information taking and decision making, which was originally presented in C. G. Jung's famous book: *Psychological Types*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1923.



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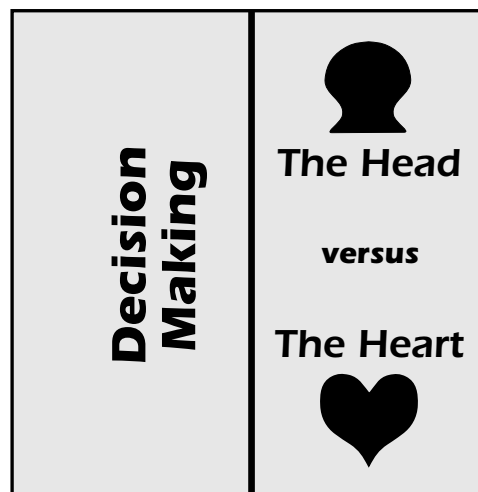
There are two ways in which people take in information: sensation and intuition. Sensation refers to the preference for taking in information by the five senses. It focuses on the details, facts, and **specifics** of a situation: what can be seen, touched, smelled, and so forth. In contrast, intuition is a preference for the **whole** rather than the parts, for the new possibilities, hunches, and future implications of any subject—what cannot be seen or touched directly. People develop a preference for one or the other mode of taking in information. Even though they can use either sensation or intuition when required, they may be unable to apply each equally well. The information-taking mode that is not preferred, in fact, is regarded as a person's weaker function or "blind side."



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There are two basic ways in which people arrive at decisions: thinking and feeling. Thinking is an impersonal, logical, analytical preference for making a decision: using the **head**. If such and such is true, then this and that follow, as based on a logical analysis. Feeling, in contrast, refers to a personal, subjective, or unique way of making a decision: using the **heart**. Does the person like the alternative? Does it fit with his (or her) values and self-image? While arriving at such a conclusion is not logical per se, it is not illogical either. Feeling is *a*logical—simply based on a different style of reaching decisions. Just as they do with sensation and intuition, people develop a preference for either thinking or feeling. Even though they can use either when required, people may be unsure of themselves when they rely on their blind side.

THINKING



FEELING

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Combining the two different ways of taking in information with the two different ways of making decisions defines the four personality styles:

STs enjoy the well-structured aspects of problem solving. Such people choose a certain alternative on the basis of a logical, impersonal analysis. ST people seek single answers to most questions and prefer the answers to be clearly right or wrong according to some quantitative assessment. It's not surprising, then, that ST persons are most confident dealing with details, facts, and well-established rules.

NTs enjoy looking at a complex situation from many different—global—perspectives. Such people are attracted to abstract discussions; they get bored with well-structured and routine problems, and they abhor details. NTs are especially good at creating theories, diagrams, and classification schemes to intellectually structure their world—which largely consists of ideas, possibilities, and conceptual frameworks.

SFs enjoy socializing. This activity satisfies their focus on the immediate experience as well as their need for being with friends. SF people are primarily concerned with the special needs of their fellow associates in the organization—rather than the technical or analytical aspects of the work. Their personal style and sensitivity enable them to feel how any decision might affect the quality of life for the organization's members.

NFs enjoy uncertainty and ambiguity. Such people prefer looking into the future and use their personal criteria for deciding what is important to consider. Such people thrive on dynamic complexity; they function best when there is a minimum of structure and when problems have not been defined yet. They are especially concerned about meaning, impact, and the future welfare of their organization and society.

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Interpreting Your Scores

ST, NT, SF, and NF scores can vary between 0 and 40 (since there are ten items for each style with a scale from 0 to 4). Typically several (and in some cases all) of a person's scores fall between 15 and 25—the middle 50% of the distribution for each personality style (as represented by the **moderate shading** on the diagram). But it is not unusual for a person to have a score that falls between 0 and 14—the low 25% of the distribution for each style (as represented by the **mild shading** on the graph). Nor is it unusual for a person to have a score that falls between 26 and 40—the high 25% of the distribution for each style (as shown by the **dark shading** on the graph). For some people, in fact, two of their scores are moderate, one of their scores is high, while their remaining score is low—revealing a clear stylistic preference with an equally evident blind side.

The same explanation holds true for the average scores of work groups (or departments or the whole organization). The shape of the quadrangle conveys whether the work group (or organization) tends to approach all situations in the same manner (a specialist) or if a variety of styles are appreciated and utilized in the work environment (a generalist).

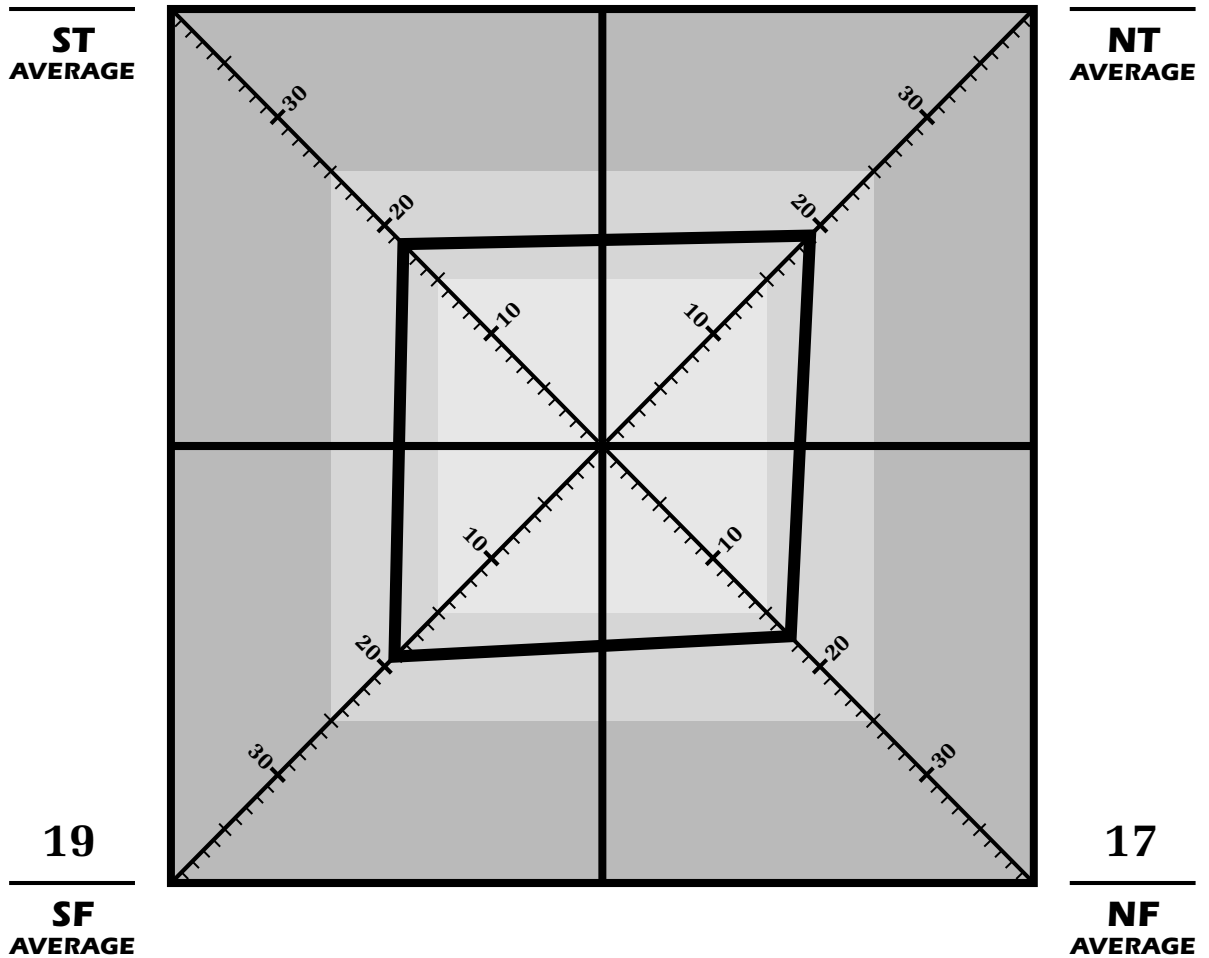
On the graph on the opposite page, a sample quadrangle is shown to illustrate a generalist profile for an organization. For this situation, all four average scores fall in the moderate range (between 15 and 25) and the quadrangle closely approaches the shape of a square—symbolizing the potential for fully appreciating and using all personality differences.

PERSONALITY STYLE INSTRUMENT

A Generalist Profile

18
ST
AVERAGE

19
NT
AVERAGE



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A quadrangle illustrating a specialist profile is shown on the opposite page. Note that only two averages (ST and NF) fall in the moderate range (15 to 25). The NT average is in the high range (26 to 40) while the SF average is in the low range (0 to 14). This particular distribution of styles results in a quadrangle whose shape varies significantly from a square—symbolizing the difficulty this organization will have in fully utilizing all personality differences.

The advantage of specialization is the ability to do one thing extremely well. In the case of an NT specialization, the organization would be able to concentrate on such matters as technological innovation and personal creativity. Such a focus might be especially useful in a high-technology organization—especially during periods of rapid growth. However, by not devoting the necessary attention to the day-to-day efficiency of the operations and the peculiar needs of the employees, this dominant NT style might very well result in numerous dysfunctional consequences in time—when, for example, the industry matures and the marketplace is more competitive.

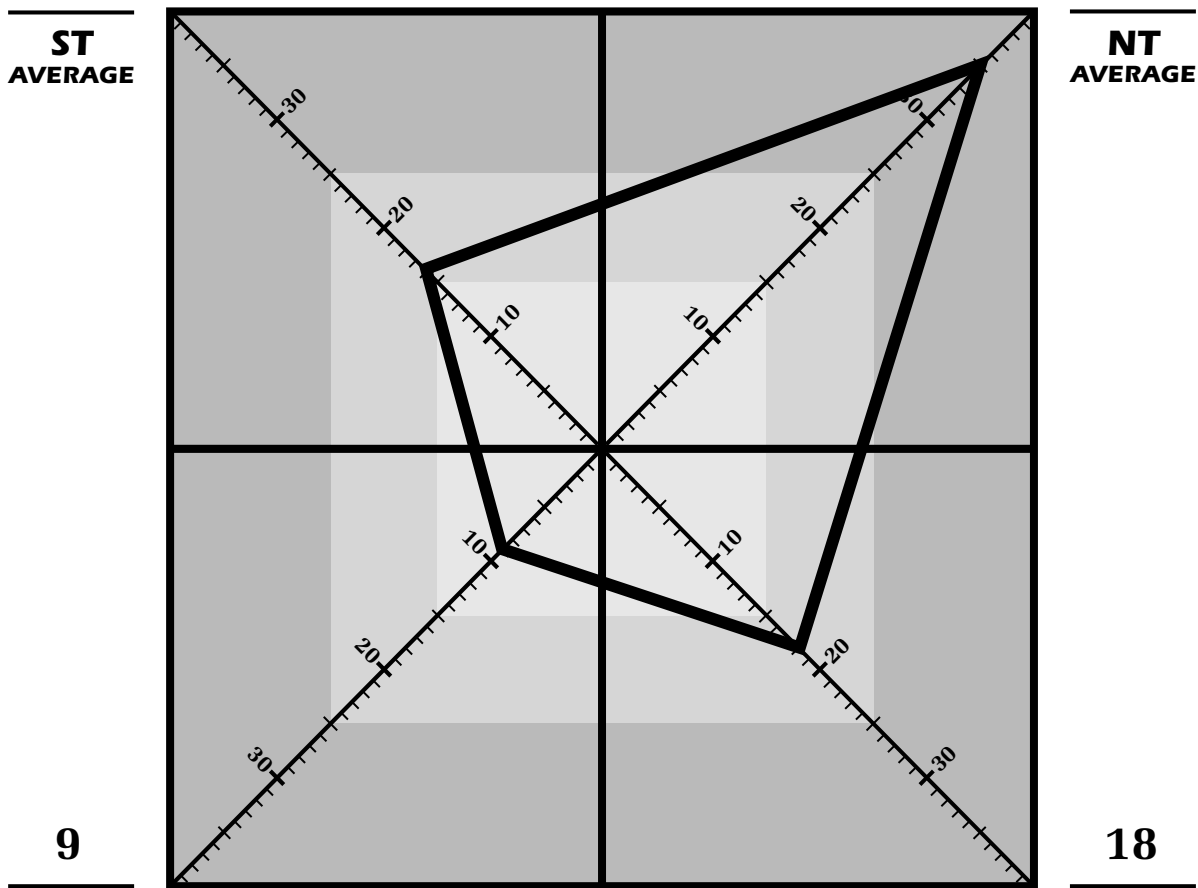
This same sort of stylistic analysis can be done for any other specialist profile by amplifying the essential qualities of the dominant style while minimizing the potential contribution from the blind side. Thus, a high score in any quadrant represents a well-focused style best suited for its own unique piece of the organizational puzzle. The blind side, however, represents the one style most likely to be unappreciated, devalued, and, therefore, not fully utilized when its own special portion of a problem requires special attention.

PERSONALITY STYLE INSTRUMENT

A Specialist Profile

16
ST
AVERAGE

35
NT
AVERAGE



9
SF
AVERAGE

18
NF
AVERAGE

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Managing Diversity

The ultimate challenge for individuals and organizations is to recognize all differences in style and use them explicitly for addressing complex problems. If any organization were to see its problems and opportunities from only a single vantage point (applying just one or two personality styles), most efforts at solving key organizational problems would likely fail. If the ST style were not appreciated and utilized, some important technical details would probably be neglected. If the NT style were not available for the analysis of a crucial problem, alternative possibilities and novel approaches might be excluded from consideration. If the SF style were ignored, the very people affected by some proposed solution might not contribute the necessary commitment and support to make it work. And if the NF style were put aside (or, worse yet, put down), the future success of the organization might inadvertently be exchanged for an ill-fated—quick fix—solution today. For a thorough discussion of how personality styles affect organizational behavior, see Ralph H. Kilmann's book, *Managing Beyond the Quick Fix*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989.