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TABLE OF CONTENT

Editorial	5
Liviu Warter	
A Treatise on the Jackass in Academe: How Arrogance and Self-Centeredness Destroy the Credibility of Higher Education	9
Hershey H. Friedman, Linda Weiser Friedman	
Necessary New Competencies for the Future Generations at Work	29
Fons Trompenaars	
Plagiarism in Scientific Articles. A Brief Review	47
Oana Isailă, Hostiuc Sorin	
From Knowledge Enrichment to Career Development: The Case of Higher Education in Israel.....	53
Tamar Almor, Avi Shnider	
Insights Into Plagiarism	65
Bianca Hanganu, Beatrice Gabriela Ioan	
Empowering Changemakers for a Better Society: The Case of Iéseg School of Management, France	73
Grant Douglas	
The Role of Medical Higher Education in Promoting Nondiscrimination - The Sibiu Experience	81
Silviu Morar	
Building a Culture of Integrity.....	95
Thomas D. Zweifel	
A Brief Conversation on Quality and Ethics in Higher Education	105
Ioan Chirila, Iulian Warter	
The Nexus Between Ethics and Quality in Higher Education. Case Study	113
Iulian Warter	
Cold War Ain't Over Yet (Political Correctness and the Academic Caste).....	143
Slawomir Magala	

Authorship Criteria for Scientific Articles	153
Hostiuc Sorin, Oana Isailă, Maria Aluaș	
How Perceive the Students on Political Sciences the Academic Performance and Integrity? Exploratory Case Study	159
Silviu-Petru Grecu	
The Impact of Organizational Culture in Higher Education. Case Study.....	173
Liviu Warter	
Letter to the Editor.....	201
Cristian G. Curcă	
Letter to the Editor.....	205
Hershey H. Friedman, Frimette Kass-Shraibman	
Book Review	209
Aurelian Virgil Băluță	

NECESSARY NEW COMPETENCIES FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS AT WORK

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Abstract

This article looks at the new skills and competencies that are needed to do our future jobs more properly than with the skills we learned yesterday. The world is globalizing, digitalizing and sometimes humanizing. What does this mean for the skills we need to develop? Since the interconnectedness of the world is increasing we see an abundance of competencies that need to be updated or completely renewed. We will discuss this from an individual, team and organizational perspective. One thing is for sure: we need to be able to function in worlds of contradictions. And if we do so we need to become more innovative and agile as a process.

Key words: skills, competencies, creativity, innovation, corporate culture, future generations

The recruitment and selection of professionals and managers is one of the most significant and costly investments an organization can make. Risks can be high, and the cost of a bad hire can have a tremendous impact on time, money and company culture.

A competence and competency-based approach to recruitment and selection of professionals and managers can help your organization make it an effective and successful investment of time, money and expertise. Regardless whether we approach it from the individual, team or organizational perspective, it is very useful to distinguish competencies and competences.

According to Koten (2011) such an approach will help ensure that:

- The organization is clear regarding the competencies and skill sets required by the job
- The selection processes encourage a good fit between individuals and their jobs
- Managers and staff have the required skills and competencies
- Individual competence and competencies are matched to the requirements of the position, the fit of the person with the immediate team, the overall cultural fit, and the particular challenge
- A good process can also support and sell the decision internally if it is determined that an external candidate is the best choice for the position

What is the difference between Competences and Competencies?

A number of confusions within the area of performance assessment with regard to the use of terminology, and differing interpretations, regarding competence assessment are existing. A significant difference between the US and UK approaches to performance assessment is identified. A particular aspect of this is its relevance to assessment based on behaviors and attitudes rather than simply on the results of functional analysis concerning a particular job. This has implications for the future direction of performance assessment, particularly with regard to identifying performance (Moore, Cheng, & Dainty, 2002).

A definition of competence is the capability to carry out a defined function effectively. Whilst a definition of competency is the description of the knowledge, skills, experience and attributes necessary to carry out a defined function effectively.

Competence Competency

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Skill-based | Behaviour-based |
| 2. Standard attained | Manner of behaviour |
| 3. What is measured | How the standard is achieved. |

It becomes clear from above table that competence describes what people can do while competency focuses on how they do it. In other words, the former means a skill and the standard of performance reached, while the latter refers to the behaviour by which it is achieved.

It implies that there is an interface between the two, i.e. the competent application of a skill is likely to make one act in a competent manner and vice versa. The difference between competence and competency can be better understood by knowing and understanding their components.

In short, a competence's focus is on the what and the competency's focus is on the how.

A gradual shift in attention from competence to competency.

Because of the new challenges that digitalization, agile working and globalization have posed to us, we see an obvious shift from attention from the *what* to the *how*. I remember vividly a client that asked us to see whether we could develop an app that measured the values of the participants and the values of the organization and see whether they would match. This value based recruitment approach was inspired by the fact that this organization experienced much more trouble in the how than in the what in making the organization more innovative. And skills are much more easy to assess than the behaviors we need to build a culture we need.

The individual level

First, how does this manifest on the individual level?

Implicit and explicit theories

The creation of a culture of innovation often starts with the individual, the entrepreneur, the whiz kid. There are few innovative organizations that don't have some unusually creative individuals. They are constantly challenging the organization's routines, irritating their more conservative colleagues and making many mistakes on their way, from which they constantly learn.

People like actors and sculptors sometimes think that they all have creativity. But not everybody who has new ideas is creative. In the past it was a luxury; now, in the global economy, it is a necessity for survival. If you are not creative, you are dead. It is nonsense to say that you are either creative or not - anybody can become creative, but this is counter-cultural. Researchers have had to overcome the prevailing wisdom that creativity is possessed by only a gifted few.

What kind of special competenc(i)es does the creative person possess? And is it innate or can you teach it? A great deal of effort has been made to try and define creativity. Early Greek philosophers thought it was a mystical inspiration from the seven muses and later Freud viewed creativity as resulting from the tension between conscious reality and unconscious.

One of the problems is the enormous range of implicit theory, that is, what people think creativity is implicitly, rather what has been explored systematically and rigorously through critical research. Many of us have various ideas about creativity often based on 'great man' theories (such as Leonardo da Vinci or Einstein) but cannot explicitly state what this is. Most of the explicit theories generated in the field of creativity have focused on identifying how much creativity a person possesses rather than what it is. This approach is interested in measuring the capacity or ability to create, evaluating the "correctness" of responses. Ability

or level of creativity might be measured by fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration; it is specific to the situation being examined. This is called the level approach. Thus we might contrive an instrument that ‘measures’ how much creativity a person has based on the following dimensions (CREAX, n.d.):

- Connections: the capacity to make connections between things that don’t initially appear to have connections
- Perspective: the capacity to shift one’s perspective on a situation in terms of space and time and other people
- Curiosity: the desire to change or improve things that everyone else accepts as the norm
Boldness: the confidence to push boundaries beyond accepted conventions and the ability to eliminate fear of what others think of you
- Complexity: the capacity to carry large quantities of data and to be able to manage and manipulate the relationships between information
- Persistence: the capacity to force oneself to keep trying and derive more and stronger solutions even when good ones have already been generated
- Abstraction: the capacity to abstract concepts from ideas

In an increasingly oligopolistic world, in which old ideas can be copied and replicated at ever lower costs, it is the constant renewal of creative solutions that is the ultimate differentiator of survival. Building a culture of innovation is today’s number one management imperative in which HR must play a crucial role.

Much has been written previously about the recruitment, selection and retention of creative talent and separately about product and process innovation. And even more about corporate culture and mechanistic and structural approaches to innovation in organizations. What is severely lacking is an overall framework that integrates these components that informs the HR professional to help the organization create a culture of innovation.

On the one hand we all observe an increasing standardization of the world and on the other, an ever growing diversity. Our core proposition is that when we can connect these extremes, we have the essence of what a culture of innovation is all about. The joining of what we share and where we differ is the new challenge for leadership.

But western education and consumerism hasn’t helped because they have forced us to think in terms of linear models and forced choices. ‘Do you want tea **or** coffee?’ The result is that most thinking emulates profiling instruments used by HR professionals that owe their origin to an American or Anglo-Saxon philosophy that are still dominated by their cultural signature with linear scales. Once the level of creativity could be identified consistently and reliably, the next wave of research examined whether or not those levels of creativity could be enhanced. Torrance and Presbury identified a total of 384 studies that examined the effectiveness of creativity training. The majority of these studies concluded that creativity can be enhanced through formal training. Perhaps one of the most extensive studies on the effects of creativity training was conducted by Parnes and Noller .

However most suffer from the fundamental flaw that they are based only on linear scales, where one orientation excludes the other. Let’s try it:

Creative people are more...

Intuitive
Perceiving
Thinking
Extrovert
Tortoise brain

Creative people are less...

Sensing
Judging
Feeling
Introvert
Hare brain

Lateral	Focused
Risk-taking	Securing
Hunting	Gathering
Individualistic	Consensus seeking
Right brain	Left brain
Etc.	Etc.

There might indeed be relationships between certain dominant orientations and the creative competence of an individual, but an important point has been missed. ‘Stop!’ some would say. Many have done solid research that shows a correlation between certain of the above preferences and creativity. Take the work of Kirton, the renowned British psychologist, who developed the well-regarded instrument, the KAI Inventory (Kirton, 1976). This measures individual styles of problem definition and solving. Kirton conducted a study showing the relationship between the KAI and the MBTI. The primary correlations of the KAI were with the MBTI’s Sensing- Intuiting (S-N) and Judging-Perceiving (J-P) scales (Thinking-Feeling and Introvert-Extrovert were not highly correlated). Other studies went further, and one claimed that all four MBTI preferences correlate with creativity. Creative individuals tend to be more intuitive (N) than sensory (S), more perceiving (P) than judging (J), more extroverted (E) than introverted (I) and more thinking (T) than feeling (F).

We don’t dispute the relationship (statistically reliable) between these characteristics and preferences. (Recall that reliability does not mean validity!) But our new findings reveal that the essence of the creative process is not in one or other position of a continuum, but in how the opposites of the scale interact. How are the faculties of imagination, holism, emotions and connectedness of our right brain interacting through our corpus callosum with the preferences of our left brain to be realistic, analytic and rational? Creative people integrate all those faculties and, in the process discover new ideas and solutions.

Let’s see what this limitation means for some of the commonly cited models of distinctive orientations:

- 1 Hare brain and tortoise mind (Guy Claxton)
- 2 MBTI (originally Carl Jung)
- 3 Adaptors versus Innovators (Michael Kirton)

We’ll examine how powerful these ways of looking at reality are and, in addition, extend them by going beyond their inherently linear scales.

Hare brain and tortoise mind

Claxton (2000) makes a fundamental distinction between “hare brain” and “tortoise mind.” Hare brain with its faster thought-processing speed is analytical, calculating, self-conscious, and language-dependent (and given to “monkey chatter” in its worse moments). As Claxton emphasizes, ‘hare brain’ is the right tool for many situations, but not all. When creative solutions are needed, when a problem is fuzzy and imprecise, then the much slower, pondering, and meditative strengths of the “tortoise mind” give answers. Others have named this ‘tortoise mind’ as intuition, or the unconscious, and the id. Claxton goes on to name it the ‘undermind’.

Claxton explores why intelligence increases when you think less. He builds a thesis on the dichotomy between the privileged mode of intelligence-conscious, result-oriented problem solving and the less respectable unconscious intelligence. This unconscious, or ‘undermind’, approaches problems playfully, examines the questions themselves, and keeps us in touch with our poetic nature. His multidisciplinary approach is beautifully executed, with a constant dialogue on the virtues of intuition and a peaceful mind drawing on the works of poets, novelists, and Buddhist teachings. In the West, ‘intelligence’ is measured by how

well we can verbalize what we do, and therefore much of human capability suffers when put under the spotlight of conscious attention. He contrasts this western approach with the actions of the ‘unconscious intelligence’, claiming that much of our best thinking takes place below consciousness.

That is why in management we go from one fad to another, because in the long term none of them seem to work. Management writers often say there are just five points, or seven habits, written in a very concise, rational way. You get excited, but the next day you have forgotten 50 %, and by the next Tuesday 98%. The problem in business is that these commandments leave no room for the tortoise mind – a terribly dangerous development that stifles creativity and innovation and inevitably leads to bad decision making. These commandments are the widely held, but misguided, beliefs that being decisive means making decisions quickly, that fast is always better, and that we should think of our minds as being like computers. Sadly, most of us today believe that a computer is of more use to us than a wise person.

Working together between hare brain and tortoise mind

With your hare brain you might easily conclude that it is in the tortoise mind that creativity is born. Yes, no doubt, using your tortoise mind made the difference. Let’s go back to the question we asked at the beginning. What were the circumstances in which your best creative idea was born? Where did it happen?

Let us take a guess. You weren’t working hard and pushing for the breakthrough. Neither were you just relaxing and meditating waiting for ideas to drop into your mind. You got to some great ideas when you used the tension between hard work and relaxation. It was on vacation, when you suddenly got the new ideas that could make that difficult project so much easier.

In summary, Claxton describes the hare brain as logical, fast, machine-like thinking. The tortoise mind, on the other hand, is slower, less focused, less articulate, much more playful, almost dreamy. Claxton says that the two sides need each other to come up with not just ideas, but good ideas. It is important to note that you need the hare brain. You need to get the information first and work hard on it through the hare brain. Only with that work will you make the tortoise mind effective and creative. You only get the solutions because you work hard. You need to do the hare brain thinking first! Then you must think through the situation and finally, when you have the ideas, you need to evaluate them logically and systematically (hare brain again). It becomes a spiral, reconciling the tension between hare brain and tortoise mind.

You may think that you consciously make moment-to-moment decisions about your life. But Claxton convincingly demonstrates that the mysterious ‘undermind’ has more to do with who we are and what we do than our conscious, logical, linear mind. The ‘d-mode’, our deliberative thinking style – the one we perfect in our years of schooling – is the most commonly accepted model of how our minds work. However, the experimental evidence suggests that d-mode thinking has relatively little to do with how we make most of the decisions in our lives. The d-mode actually comes up with plausible reasons that justify our actions, but it isn’t the source of those actions. The conscious mind’s job is to focus attention on a particular problem and maintain a coherent sense of ourselves; but these processes all come after the fact of our inner decision making. People often seem happier with their decisions in the long run if they think less about them from the outset. It is in this sense that ‘think less’ makes one more intelligent.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The goal of making personality traits measurable is the fundamental quest of professional tools that seek to offer an objective assessment. Of these, the champion is

the MBTI instrument; the most widely used personality inventory in history, which is administered to over three million people a year (Myers, 1995; Myers, & McCaulley, 1992). Human Resources professionals depend on it when their clients need to make important business, career, or personal decisions.

One of Jung's most important discoveries was the realisation that, by understanding the way we typically process information, we can gain insights into why we act and feel the way we do. Jung identified two core psychological processes: perceiving, which involves receiving, or taking in, information; and judging, which involves processing that information (e.g. organising the information and coming to conclusions from it).

Jung identified two further ways of perceiving information, which he termed sensing and intuiting, and two alternative ways of judging information, which he termed thinking and feeling. Moreover, he noted that these four mental processes can be directed either at the external world of people and things, or at the internal world of subjective experience. He termed this attitude towards the outer world extraversion, and this attitude towards the inner world introversion.

Limitations of the (linear) MBTI model

So, can this widely used instrument also give some clues to the creativity of the individual being evaluated?

Creative individuals tend to be more intuitive (N) than sensory (S), more perceiving than judging (J), more extroverted (E) than introverted (I) and more thinking (T) than feeling (F) (Thorne & Gough, 1991). In another study, the MBTI profiles of innovators varied greatly. The great majority had an ENT combination, while the split between judging and perceiving was approximately 50:50. Other studies have shown that up to 95% of senior corporate managers are STJs (Kroeger & Thuessen, 1992), with Americans tending to be an E type and British managers a dominant I type.

And the frequently occurring difference between innovators and managers is a source of potential conflict. Intuitives and sensors view the world very differently. A change will always seem greater to an ST than to an NT, because STs are typically more comfortable with continuous change than with discontinuous change. An NT, however, may actually enjoy discontinuous change.

But what happens when users try to apply methodologies and instruments to measure things that go beyond the environment and delimitations in which they were developed?

Personality and creativity

What we really need to ask is why the underlying models were designed around mutually exclusive values in the first place. It is because our western, hard brain way of thinking is based on Cartesian logic and forces us to say it is either/or, not to say and ... and. This contradicts what Jung had in mind when he originally construed the underlying conceptual framework behind MBTI (Jung, 1971).

We want to consider how we can extend MBTI by slightly adjusting the context and thereby make it a more effective instrument, measuring creativity far beyond any cultural preference. Although there is some evidence that the typologies are statistically related to creativity, we believe that the assumptions on which the instrument is based prohibit its potential to measure creativity. We need a different approach, and a different context.

First of all, it needs to be redesigned into an Integrated Type Indicator that overcomes the limitation of the linear model; and secondly, we need to adjust the process in which it is embedded.

Though the MBTI is a 'ready reckoner' of personality types, there are serious problems of superficiality and of proper application.

The superficiality problem stems from either/or classifications. Is it really the case that we judge or perceive, think or feel, etc.? Jung himself arranged his 'opposite' archetypes in the shape of Tao and wrote of effectance through synthesis. He warned us that ESTJ was the dominant profile of relatively young, brash people in the practical world. He regarded these as the dominant western industrial values. But is this related to the process of creation? Our research suggests not!

What Jung advocated was that we move out of this pattern and mature over time, especially in our later years. He believed that introversion should qualify extraversion, that intuitive faculties should guide sensing, that our feelings could tell us which thoughts were more profound and that good judgment was based on the fullness of perception. In short, Jung sought to reconcile his four functions, not polarize them.

It's also instructive to consider what the MBTI does not measure. It does not measure the capacity to reach out to another person with the opposite profile, and it does not measure how severely the 'shadow sides' are repressed within the candidate. Severe repression would, according to Jung, make it very difficult to communicate with someone with the characteristics you so dislike in yourself.

Our new Integrated Type Indicator

We have seen that the MBTI brilliantly measures four very important decisions but is unable to assess to what extent these contrasting types have been integrated with each other, as opposed to subordinated to each other. Might it be possible to conserve the best aspects of MBTI while inquiring about the extent to which introverted ideas have been extroverted, sense impressions have been intuited, feelings have been thought about and judgments formed on the basis of strong perceptions? And in this process of integration of opposites might we just find the key to creativity?

Given the millions of people who are interested in one way or another in MBTI profiles, it is important not to let all this measurement, coaching, mentoring and insight go to waste. We must, if possible, build on this famous instrument, not try to demolish it or replace it. This is what we have tried to do in our Integrated Type Indicator.

We believe that there is too much one-dimensional thinking when it comes to leadership. Thus our quest is to ask how can we extend one-dimensional models like MBTI by slightly adjusting these instruments and the way of thinking that forms the context of their application, hereby making them jewels that go far beyond any cultural preference?

We can recall that research has sought to correlate these original MBTI scales with different job categories and functions. Thus, there is evidence to suggest which dominant type best fits a marketing role and which type is found most often amongst successful managers.

However, with the internationalization of business we are suddenly confronted with some interesting dilemmas that challenge this principle. Consider for example the situation where the culture in which people are being recruited has a preference for Sensing, what could be done when one is facing an environment where Intuiting is the preference for making a successful career?

Our fundamental concern with the classic MBTI and other such profiling tools is that each dimension is based on the single axis continuum. The MBTI logic asks if you are Sensing or Intuiting? The more you identify yourself as Sensing, the less you must be of the Intuiting type. When seeking to apply the MBTI typology, or indeed any other associative model in an international context, we find that accretion to the extremities of each scale is constraining.

Despite professional psychologists discussing preference with reference to the dominance of our right or left hand when writing, it remains a poor solution. Both could be used, but one is usually dominant. Whilst this model is applicable in explaining individual

writing; it hardly helps one when clapping. During applause it doesn't really matter which hand is dominant, but success will depend on the coordination between both the hands.

Although users of MBTI do talk about combining the variety of preferences in teams and organizations, one cannot derive this approach from the basic MBTI instrument as it is based on forced choice bi-modal questions.

We have to remember that much of this type of research owes its origin to Anglo-Saxon or North American thinking, even though it has been 'exported' across the world. When we begin to incorporate other types of logic, such as Ying-yang or Taoism, we soon realize that we have been restrictive in basing the profiling on bi-modal dimensions. Let's apply this thinking and new logic to the scales of Myers-Briggs.

To test the preference for thinking or feeling, a forced choice question such as the following is usually asked:

- a. I like to subject a problem to rational thought and logical analysis. Wishing something were true, does not make it so. Feelings are not "wrong". They're irrelevant.
- b. I always ask myself what I feel about a problem, because "the heart has its own reasons which Reason knows not of". I seek to develop emotional muscles.

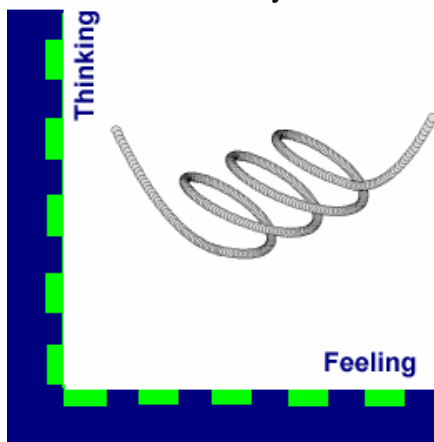
Thus with a series of such questions, we are trying to place the individual along the scale:



How the respondent answers this question gives insight when the dominant culture in which it is applied prefers decisiveness or being consulted (as in the original mode for which MBTI was conceived). But what if in a multi-cultural environment one finds people with different opinions? The decisive leader will agonize over the fact that many want to go for consensus. Conversely, the sensitive leader will not succeed because of an apparent lack of decisiveness. Thus we have a dilemma between the seemingly opposing orientations of Thinking OR Feeling.

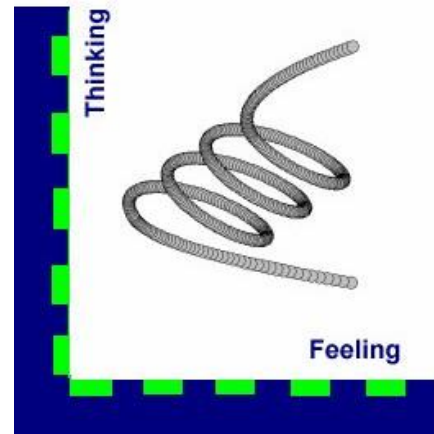
Charles Hampden-Turner et al (2001) shows how we can reconcile seemingly opposing from his meta-level Dilemma Theory. Thus the addition of two alternative options provides a means of evaluating the individual's propensity to reconcile this dilemma:

- c. I like to subject a problem to rational thought and logical analysis. Yet feats of intelligence or folly arouse feelings within me, so these too guide my intelligence.
- d. I always ask myself what I feel about a problem, because my boredom, irritation or excitement is an early clue to whether I can engage intelligently and find a solution.



Those who answer 'c' are starting from a 'Thinking' orientation but accounting for the Feeling of others. They have successfully reconciled the opposites. This process involves starting from one axis and spiraling to the top right (10,10 position) and thus the individual has integrated both components.

Similarly, those who answer 'd' are starting from 'Feeling' but spiraling towards 'Thinking' and again integrating the two seemingly opposite orientations.



A second example focuses on the preference between Judging or Perceiving: Conventionally instruments pose questions such as the following:

While tackling an issue I rather work in a ...

- a. structured and organized way,
- b. flexible way, with the necessary improvisation.

In Germany there is a tendency to one score higher on a. while b. would rather appeal to the French. Thus in a team/group of both Germans and Latinos, wouldn't the following be more effective to diagnose effective orientations?

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While tackling an issue I rather work in a ...

- c. structured way in order to stimulate improvisation in certain boundaries
- d. way with the necessary improvisation trying to develop the best procedures and organization.

In our extended model of MBTI, which we call the ITI (Integrated Type Indicator), we use our own questions that represent the two extreme opposing values for each conjugate pair. However, we also add two additional choices that represent the clockwise and anti-clockwise reconciliation between these extremes.

By combining the answers from a series of questions in this extended format, we can compute a profile that reveals the degree to which an individual seeks to integrate the extreme dimensions.

Adaptors versus Innovators:

Kirton's KAI (Kirton, 1994) measures individual styles of problem definition and solving. Style, in this case, refers to an adaptive, building or analogic problem-solving style versus an innovative or pioneering style.

In the following list, Hipple et al.(2001) summarizes the two groups and how each group is viewed by its opposites.

Table 1: Characteristics of Adaptors and Innovators

Adaptor	Innovator
Efficient, thorough, adaptable, methodical, organized, precise, reliable, dependable	Ingenious, original, independent, unconventional
Accepts problem definition	Challenges problem definition
Does things better	Does things differently
Concerned with resolving problems rather than finding them	Discovers problems and avenues for their solutions
Seeks solutions to problems in tried and understood ways	Manipulates problems by questioning existing assumptions
Reduces problems by improvement and greater efficiency, while aiming at continuity and stability	Is catalyst to unsettled groups, irreverent of their consensual views
Seems impervious to boredom; able to maintain high accuracy in long spells of detailed work	Capable of routine work (system maintenance) for only short bursts; quick to delegate routine tasks

Is an authority within established structures. Kirton noted that some managers were able to initiate change that improved the current system, but were unable to identify opportunities *outside* the framework of the system (Kirton, 1961). Kirton calls this style ‘adaptive’. Other managers were fluent at generating ideas that led to more radical change, but failed in getting their radical ideas accepted. Kirton termed this style ‘innovative’. These observations gave rise to Kirton’s hypothesis that there is a personality continuum called adaptor-innovator, which presumes two very different approaches to change (Kirton, 1976). The main weakness of Kirton’s assumptions perhaps lies in their succinctness and precision. One of the main assumptions is that cognitive style, which underlies the KAI instrument, is conceptually independent of cognitive capacity, success, cognitive techniques and coping behaviour. We agree with this – but this all comes from an assumption that Kirton makes more implicitly: that the adaptor style and the innovator style are *mutually exclusive*. This is shown well by the presentation of the scores of the KAI instrument as the scores on a balance, where a higher score on the adaptor side automatically results in a lower score on the innovator side³³. Much as with the MBTI, the main focus is on the preferences that people have, as people have two hands but prefer to write with one.

In order to provide empirical evidence for these bold conclusions, we asked some 250 managers from a variety of cultural backgrounds to complete our ITI and an adapted version of the KAI.

We found that creative people move more effectively between intuition and thinking, that innovators extrovertly publish their introverted calculation and constantly learn by oscillating between judging and perceiving, and finally check their feelings through thinking. An additional finding is that culture often determines the side that respondents start from. So we are not saying that one culture is more creative than another; only that their starting point for looking at a problem is different.

Not combining opposite logics shows an absence of creativity. Clapping with one hand makes little noise. So, instead of questions from Kirton’s original KAI that are based on linear (Likert) scales, our ‘integrated innovation indicator’ asks questions in the following format:

Q1 Which of the following four options best describes how you most frequently behave?

- a) I am efficient, thorough, adaptable, methodical, organized, precise, reliable and dependable. (5 score in invention, 0 score in adaptation, 0 score in innovation)
- b) I am ingenious, original, independent, unconventional and unpredictable. (0 score in invention, 5 score in adaptation, 0 score in innovation)
- c) I am continuously checking in an organized and methodical manner whether my original ideas do work in practice. (5 score in invention, 0 score in Adaptation, 8 score in innovation)
- d) I am methodical and organized first, to set the basis to launch my unconventional ideas. (0 score in invention, 5 score in adaptation, 8 score in innovation)

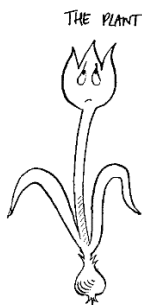
Measurement of creativity is usually about the linear level (i.e. how much) rather than the nature and form of creativity and how it can be harnessed and linked to adaptation. Similarly, received wisdom prescribes that all team roles must be present in a group to make an effective team. But there is less guidance about how these contrasting roles can be combined to work together. How do we connect the contributions of innovative idea generating Plants by combining them with the adaptive Implementer(s) who wants to halt yet more innovations, freeze design and deliver the current idea? And managing a multi-cultural innovative team adds even more tensions from contrasting orientations to resolve.

The evidence from our research and consulting shows that innovation requires the *competency* to combine differences, while Kirton is rather focusing on the *competence*. In turn, this requires the identification of the dilemmas that derive from the tensions caused by personality differences, team role preferences and value (i.e. cultural) differences ~ whether from national, ethnic or corporate cultures. In our findings, all people from all cultures and corporations share similar dilemmas but it is their initial approach to them is culturally determined. For example, on the one hand should we be directing and ‘hands-on’ in our management of staff or on the other hand empowering staff to be self-controlling and innovative? Realizing innovative potential will depend on both the autonomy of its people and on how well the ideas arising from this autonomy can be connected, centralized and co-ordinated.

So what does this mean for creating innovative teams?

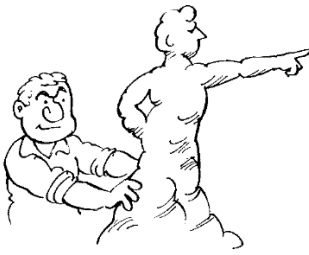
Getting everyone to think the same way is a tempting strategy, but it is when opposites are integrated to work with each other that we realize the potential of an innovative team. Meredith Belbin has identified the necessity of eight roles to be fulfilled to get a high performing and innovative team.

These are self-identified by team members completing a simple questionnaire on their favourite roles, and include the following.



This is the ideas-generator and originator of the team’s creative potential. S/he “thinks out of the box”.

THE SHAPER



The Shaper gets people to shape up around the new idea and drives the idea through. S/he is sometimes called the Product Champion and puts momentum behind the idea.

RESOURCE INVESTIGATOR



This is a person whose role is to spot opportunities, as well as mobilise the resources necessary to carrying through the project. Windows of Opportunity may open very briefly and must be darted through.

CO-ORDINATOR



The responsibility of this role is to “open the gate” allowing the ideas into the team, co-ordinating and repairing the team as it digests the new ideas. New ideas are potentially disintegrative so restoring team cohesion can be vital.

THE SPECIALIST

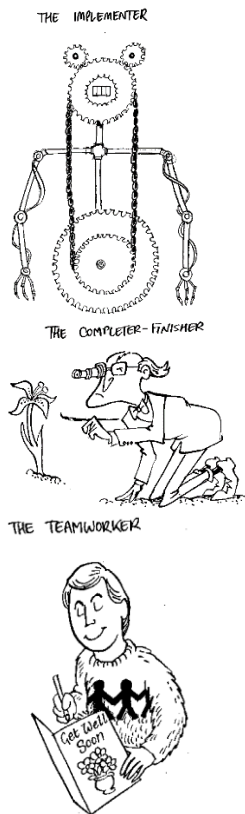


This is the expert in some key discipline essential to the project/product e.g. the electronics engineer or tool-maker. Without technical brilliance the entire project may fail to match standards or specifications.

MONITOR-EVALUATOR



This is the role of critic, who kills ideas that are wasting the team’s time, but constructively improves ideas and implementations which require further work and elaboration. The M/E is often very intelligent and sceptical.



The Implementer is the person who gives the idea its embodiment as a product or services, who makes an ideal real and gives to some vision a practical utility.

This role “edits” the finished project/product and refines it for customer use. The C/F is a “detail person” and takes infinite pains to get the whole system user friendly.

This role is for the socio-emotional specialist who maintains the morale and the cohesion of the team by healing any hurts. S/he encourages participation, facilitates team processes and may even do running repairs on gaps or splits in the team. The best team workers sense any incompleteness and supply the needed roles.

If members of a team play different roles and have different cultural orientations, then the team is full of potential conflict and misunderstanding. With Pepsico, Stream and other organizations we asked members of their senior team what tensions they face with working with other members of their team that had ‘opposite’ team roles to themselves. Note that the focus was on the dilemmas they faced when working with other team members by virtue of the team roles, and not aspects of personality or inter-personal relationships. Simply posing these questions instantly generated new insights to how they were working with others and they were all well able to be creative about how they could reconcile their own team role with opposite team roles. Consider a team member who was a Shaper. What dilemma did she identify in working with the Finisher role in a team ~ and how could she work better in the future by reconciling this dilemma?

Respondent		Other team member
Shaper <i>Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. The drive and courage to overcome obstacles. But prone to provocation. Offends people's feelings.</i>	Working with a contrasting team role	Finisher <i>Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors and omissions. Delivers on time. but Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate.</i>
This is what he said about herself: <i>“difficult for me to take on and develop ideas I have not had an original input to”</i>		And about her colleague: <i>“May not appear interested in alternative viewpoints as focus is on detail and delivery”</i>
This is what she proposed as a Reconciliation		

Request the finisher to structure meeting time to evaluate my new ideas and then to identify and discuss his/her concerns and how they could be overcome if my idea might be implemented

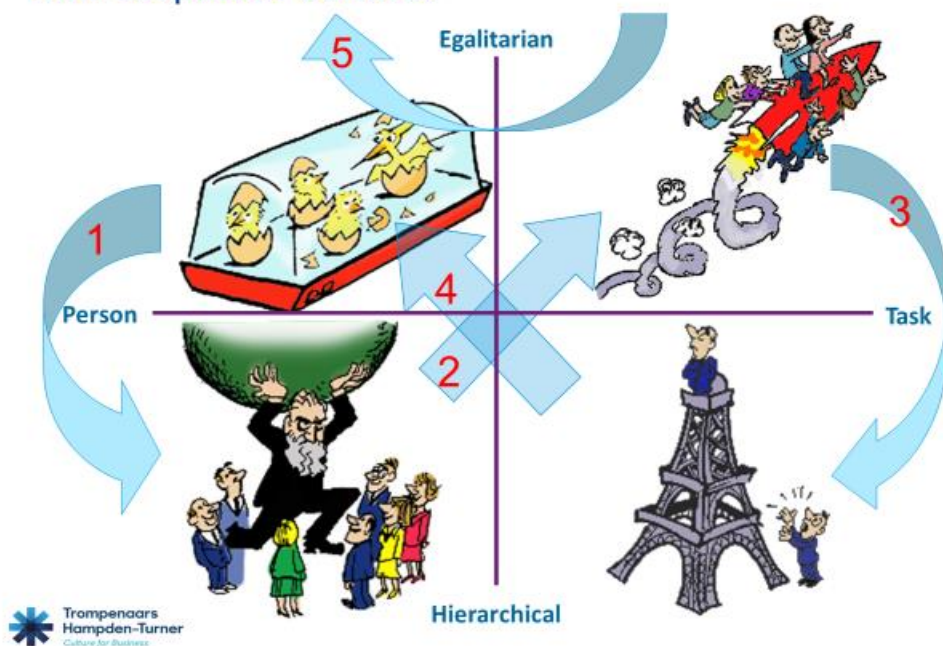
Creative individuals and inventive teams are necessary, so do their competences but they are not sufficient to generate conditions for the organization to be innovative. It needs competencies of reconciling the tensions between the roles.

So how can HR Directors help guide their organization?

Well it is too simplistic to expect a straight journey down a single path. It is becoming clear that any single corporate culture has its strengths and weaknesses. At any given time, most organizations have a single dominant corporate culture that struggles with less dominant orientations. The organization life-cycle follows a series of transitions from one corporate culture to the next where each transition is prompted by a crisis. Each crisis arises when growth outgrows the current culture. Here we find frequently occurring dilemmas that must be reconciled in order to progress from one culture to the next. Each dilemma requires an innovative solution and a truly innovative organization copes successfully with each. And again the *how* is more important than the *what*.

So the prerequisite for an innovative organization is the reconciliation of a variety of organization cultures in order to face the changing dynamic world in which it operates. Cultures can learn to reconcile differences from values at ever higher levels ~ for example, so that better rules are created from a variety of exceptions that come with growth. But let's follow the typical life-cycle of cultures.

Four Corporate Cultures



Creative entrepreneurship

Typically organizations begin by the founders creating both a product (or service) and a market. As the organization grows, it exceeds the capacity of the founder to know everyone personally resulting in a crisis of leadership because management problems cannot be handled through informal processes.

1. *From Invention to Intention: growth through direction*

The solution is to appoint a strong paternalistic manager who can pull the organization together in a kind of family. Often a trusted relative of the founder is chosen who has to reconcile the original incubator culture with the developing family culture. Dilemmas manifest as team spirit versus individual creativity, and leading participative employees versus respect for authority. But later, people find themselves restricted by the cumbersome and restricted centralized authority. Their dilemma is now between following orders and taking initiative so creating a crisis of autonomy.

2. *From intention to invasion: growth through delegation*

It is difficult for leaders who had been successful at being directive, to relinquish control and delegate and the lower level managers are not used to making decisions. The need to develop a Task oriented culture (that we caricature as a Guided Missile) becomes evident. But this gives rise to dilemmas of lord, servant or servant leader and tensions from asking how we centralize lessons from decentralized locations and finally social learning versus technological learning. Innovative approaches are again required in which Leaders need to lead by giving service to others. And concerns for people have to be connected with concerns for productivity resulting in a reconciling socio-technical philosophy. In this way, the reconciliation of the family with guided missile cultures means the inventions have gained intention through the directive infusion of long term commitment with the support of loyal people. Furthermore, the intended inventions have obtained focus to the outside world and are ready for invasion.

3. *From invasion to implementation: growth through co-ordination*

Just when we thought all was well, top management senses that it is losing control over a highly diversified operation. So the crisis of control arises. Now we need more formal reporting systems and committees which results in a return to centralization. We caricature this as the rise of the role oriented Eiffel Tower culture. Dilemmas now appear between meeting financial criteria versus developing people, focusing on customers versus internal processes and whether we should meet benchmarks or transcend them. Standards and benchmarks become obsolete when we realize they are linear one-dimensional measures. So it is not simply if people have lived up to the standards, but have the standards lived up to the people! Reconciling internal orientations with customer focus can be achieved by involving customers in improving internal processes!

4. *From implementation to inquiring: growth through collaboration*

Most co-ordinating systems eventually gain a momentum of their own resulting in a crisis of 'red-tape'. Now the organization has become too large and complex to be managed through rigid well prescribed systems. Procedures take preference over problem solving.

So how do we sustain the innovation spirit of the organization now? We've given 'intention to invention', invaded the market, and implemented the right processes whilst fighting the crises of leadership, autonomy, control and red tape. New dilemmas involve striving to be right first time or correcting errors quickly, learning explicitly or tacitly, and connecting the authority of sponsors with empowered teams.

5. *From inquiring to innovation: growth through external connections*

By reconciling the dilemmas characteristic of this phase, the infinity loop is finally closed and at the same time to go outside the organization.

The organization may now have exhausted what it can achieve from itself so growth now may depend on the design of extra-organizational solutions ~ such as buying a new small pioneering incubator that brings a fresh input of innovative ideas! This networking and alliance phase has more emphasis on the market than internal hierarchical concerns. The locus of innovation now shifts to networks and away from the individual firm.

In perspective

In our consulting, we have captured, encoded and trawled through some 45,000 dilemmas with which organizations wrestle. Linguistic analysis and data mining shows this raw database can be reduced and clustered to a manageable series of frequently recurring dilemmas that embrace the life-cycle stages we have described.

It is those organizations that successfully reconcile the dilemmas by developing the competency in making connections between different orientations that survive in the ever changing world. HR has a key role to facilitate this mindset change.

Ultimately, people are still the unique and scarce entity. But the challenge for 'HR' is not to think itself as human resource management but the management of resourceful humans. We need to reconcile competences with competencies, because we both need the what and the how.

And that really would be innovation!

The concepts described here are explored in detail in the recently published 'Riding the Whirlwind ~ Connecting People and Organizations in a Culture of Innovation' by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (2007)

CHALLENGES FOR HR

HR should be prepared to help the crisis of leadership with leadership development programmes focusing on the reconciliation of the following crucial dilemmas:

- 1. Leading participating employees versus respect for authority*
- 2. Team spirit versus individual creativity*
- 3. Effectiveness of teams versus creation of cultural knowledge about these teams.*

In the crisis of autonomy, the HR professional is responsible for facilitating the reconciliations between:

- 1. Lord, servant, or servant leader?*
- 2. How do we centralize lessons reaching us from decentralized locations?*
- 3. Social learning versus technological learning*

Effective levers to pull at this stage are processes in corporate learning and knowledge management.

And the crisis of control can best be overcome if HR helps to resolve:

- 1. The role of standards and benchmarks: should we meet or transcend them?*
- 2. Meeting financial criteria versus developing our people*
- 3. Focus on external customers versus focus on internal.*

Traditional job evaluation systems, freezing the reality of ever evolving creative jobs, jeopardize innovative cultures. Programmes related with appraisal systems and customer orientation programmes can be the focal point for exposing these issues.

For the crisis of 'red tape' the HR role needs to be broadened so that the following dilemmas can be resolved:

- 1. Authority of sponsor versus empowered teams*
- 2. Lean processes versus client is king*
- 3. Should we strive to be right first time, or make errors and correct them quickly?*
- 4. Do we learn explicitly or tacitly?*

The HR role supports the chief inquirer by becoming a consultant to make learning systems possible, job evaluation systems transparent and integrated (not 'balanced' scorecard to support this.)

Finally, HR roles become crucial in helping the organization going external and assist with the following dilemmas:

- 1. Internal versus external innovations*

2. *Investing in research and development efforts versus cooperating with rival companies*
3. *Hi-tech versus 'hi-touch' in virtual teams*
4. *Systemic versus modular innovation.*

Here the HR professional needs to connect to systems and partners outside the company and learn by connecting to alternative systems.

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