

# Strategic Planning and Personality Type

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The following is an abstract of my unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, *Strategic Planning and Personality Type: Toward Constructive and Contingent Use of Difference* (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, 1995). Contact me for an 8-page summary of findings and conclusions. A recent article on this topic is also available (note: both it and the summary presume a basic knowledge of type theory).

change, design the planning process, build and operate the planning team, make and implement strategy, and improve interpersonal communication. Generating awareness, acceptance and appreciation of type difference prepares individuals for learning to be more type-flexible – able to access and enact lesser preferences when called for in the situation.

A grounded theory of type flexibility in strategic planning provides a framework for applying an array of "typeflexing" strategies, methods and guidelines. Attention is paid to personal/interpersonal limitations on typeflexing as well as the critical role of the organizational context.

These findings significantly challenge strategic planners and the paradigm underlying their field. At the same time, promising areas are opened up for increasing planners' behavioural repertoires, managing polarities, and making strategic planning more complete.

Qualitative research revealed that information and knowledge of type can be effectively applied to prepare the organization for strategic change, design the planning process, build and operate the planning team, make and implement strategy, and improve interpersonal communication.

**Strategic** planning is undertaken by many organizations seeking to achieve their purposes, respond proactively to a complex and uncertain environment, and initiate strategic change.

Among the contingent factors affecting the creation of situationally appropriate strategies are the habitual preferences individuals on planning teams have for the core planning activities of perception (taking in information) and judgement (evaluating information inputs to reach conclusions). These preferences can be identified using a self-report instrument, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. To create successful strategic change, organizations and their planners require the full range of type preferences along with the ability to make constructive use of type difference. Indications are that this capacity is uncommon but can be developed.

Qualitative research, using depth interviews of practitioners, revealed that information and knowledge of type can be effectively applied to prepare the organization for strategic