# What type of business leader are you?

In this article, behavioural preferences expert, Dr Clare Howard, helps business owners and leaders to understand their own behavioural patterns and the implications these have on their approaches to business leadership and success.

## Do you know your strengths and blind-spots?

At whatever stage you are in the lifecycle of your business, knowing your strengths and blind spots, and those of your team/employees are as essential as having a business plan. Whereas figures and spreadsheets are the language of business planning, an understanding of your own personal preferences and of those who you employ shape the language of strategy implementation.

What do we mean by personal preferences? Often known as Type Preferences, these key personal behavioural preferences were first identified by Carl Jung over a 100 years ago, and have been researched, written about and used extensively throughout the world ever since. Put simply, there are four dimensions to our personalities:

- **Energy**: Taking Action or Thinking Things Through? Some people like to talk things out, and take action. Others need space and time to think things through.
- **Structure**: Organised or Going With the Flow? Some people like to be very organised: they need plans, and stick to them. Others prefer to go with the flow.
- **Content**: Facts or Ideas? Some people prefer to focus on the facts of a situation: on what is immediate and real. Others think in terms of ideas, wanting to explore possibilities.
- **Conclusions**: Solution-Focused or People-Focused? We all make decisions. Some people base these on logical thinking, while others make people-focused decisions.

These combine to give 16 type personalities. No one type is the best at setting up and running a business. All have their strengths, and their blind spots. What are yours?

## Energy

Let's first take the impact of our preferences for ENERGY and STRUCTURE on running a new business.

If your ENERGY is about taking ACTION and talking things out, you will tend to communicate enthusiastically with anyone around you: one-to-one with a friend, with your colleagues, or in groups. You like to have your say, and you like the stimulus of working with people.

You're probably comfortable getting out and about, being busy and active. You'll see networking as a good way of making contact and keeping in touch. However, without thinking time, you might find yourself jumping into action, over committing yourself and your resources, and not thinking through what's actually the best action to take.

If the focus of your ENERGY is more about REFLECTION, and thinking things through before acting you probably spend a lot of time thinking deeply about your business to understand what's needed. You might well enjoy constructing the business plans, as it gives you the chance to reflect on what your business is.

However, your business lives or dies on its activity in the outer world. And your interpersonal relationships – with clients and staff – depend on strong and active communication. Do your staff know what you're thinking? Do you sometimes think about something for so long that the opportunity has come and gone before you know it?

## Structure and organisation

If you have a STRUCTURED and organised approach to your life, you like to have a clear view of what lies ahead so that you can plan for the week, or the month, or the year ahead, the likelihood is that you like things to be organised.

You'll have lists, and plans, and you'll use them. You are probably happy at setting yourself – and your staff – goals.But what happens when you don't achieve them? What happens when something gets in the way of you achieving what you've planned to do? And what if people don't

follow through, or aren't as focused as you? It's a great strength to have a plan and work the plan – especially if you've learnt that flexibility and adaptability to make the most of the unexpected are also useful traits to cultivate.

If you're more of a GO WITH THE FLOW sort of person, you enjoy remaining open to change, and are always willing to adapt to new information. You like to go your own way, exploring new trains of thought and activities, rather than conforming to others' schedules and systems.

You often leave things till the last minute (or even later!), needing the pressure of a real deadline to get things finished. As an implementation strategy – this approach can be stressful, for yourself as well as others around you. And when running a business, organisation is essential. You can't ignore the VAT man, the TAX man, and cash flow. If you haven't managed to train yourself to knuckle down and meet the deadlines – hire someone who can!

## Head in the clouds, or feet on the ground?

A successful business leader sometimes feels that they need to split themselves in two. This is definitely true when it comes to what you concentrate on. You've got to look to the future – ideas and possibilities – while at the same time being practical and realistic, and attending to the day to day detail of the business.

Your preference might be for the FACTS, the detail, based on your own experience, and looking for relevance in the here and now. However, leading a business also involved looking ahead, and seeing what might be coming up around the future. Be careful that you're not so busy concentrating on the tasks that you don't look for new ideas to take your business into the future.

Alternatively, if you prefer the theoretical, the conceptual, and IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE – make sure you're also in driving seat for today's tasks. Ideas for the future are no good if the cashflow has dried up in the meantime.

## Truth or tact?

And so to how we make decisions. You might be a people-person, getting on well with clients and staff. You'll enjoy buiding relationships and the customer service side of your business. But when you run a business, you'll have tough decisions to make. Make sure you apply logic and analysis when you have to.

Or perhaps yours is the logical approach. These are skills that underpin your business approach. For you, being tough is part of being in business. Remember, though, that successful leaders practise and apply their people skills. It might not come naturally but factoring in interpersonal warmth, and appreciating other people's contributions, will pay dividends.

## Action points

Being realistic about what makes you tick – and how to work with your strengths without overworking them and creating blind spots - is the key to improving personal effectiveness. Understanding what makes other people tick, helping them work to their strengths – and creating a balance of strengths within your team – is the key to improving business effectiveness and success.

Want to know more? Go to www.yourpreferences.net for a simple online graphical assessment of your type preferences. Use our unique Type Team resources to help you identify the type preferences of your team and understand your team strengths, blind spots, and development needs.

And see how our coaching resource pack will help you develop your coaching skills to develop your people as you develop your business.