Why Use a Type Table?

One of the many reasons that the MBTI® assessment has become such a popular and widely used tool in team and organization development efforts is its ability to capture a group's preference data in the aggregate, which is achieved with a type table. Type tables allow us to see a whole group all at once—a small team, a large group, an entire company, even a nation. We can study and consider the distribution of one type or a single type preference in relation to any other and upon these facts hypothesize group tendencies, learning needs, member expectations, and a host of other insights on which to base development and leadership decisions.

Whether trainers use it as a diagnostic tool kept "behind the curtain" or whether teams construct, dissect and embrace their own as an artifact of their Myers-Briggs® training, the type table is a tool every trainer should understand and be able to use.

Type Table Construction

- The core of Jung's theory are the functions--S/N and T/F; therefore, these core elements are put into the columns of the type table, providing the structural support of the type table.
- S and N are put into the table in the same order they appear on their dichotomy— S's in the left two columns and N's in the right two columns.
- F's go in the two middle columns—imagine them touching and relating--and T's go in the two outside columns, suggesting an objective, outward-facing border.
- The attitudes—E/I and J/P—go in the horizontal rows of the type table.
- E's go in the bottom two rows and I's go in the top two rows. To remember this, imagine the stereotype of the introverted northerner and the extraverted southerner to remember this placement.

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

- P's go in the middle two rows—imagine a Perceiver "on the fence," able to go in either direction. J's go in the top and bottom rows—imagine the Judgers creating a boundary and keeping the P's from running off.

Type Table Analysis

The following ideas are offered to assist you in reading and using any given type table.

Group/Team Type
This is a composite type derived by considering the group's distribution on each of the four dichotomies?

- Are there more Extraverts or Introverts?
- Are there more Sensors or iNtuitives?
- Are there more Thinking Deciders or Feeling Deciders?
- Are there more Judgers or Perceivers?

Behavior associated with the group type will emerge from the group as a whole from very early on in that group's experience with each other. Norms—both official and covert—will tend to support the typological needs and tendencies of this group type.

One of the most common mistakes for inexperienced and/or ineffective leaders is the false belief that their (the leader's) type preferences override the group type. They do not. The goal of any successful leader should be—not to change or neutralize a group's type—but rather to work within the structure of this type to maximize its effectiveness.

Tie Scores in Groups
If a group is tied on any given dichotomy, reflect that tie by capturing both preferences. For instance, a team with 5 Introverts and 5 Extraverts would be captured as a team type of E/I for that dichotomy. But here is an important thing to keep in mind with groups/teams with tied preferences. Like people, groups are believed to have a type. Even tied groups (a group that come out E/I) will have an overall preference for Extraversion or Introversion, but the simple act of counting will not indicate which this preference is. Therefore, a tie score on the group level does NOT mean that the team prefers both (or neither). Rather, a tie should raise the trainer and team's sensitivity and curiosity regarding the overall preference, behavior and dominant tendencies of the group.

Type Table Analysis Questions

Once the group's type is derived, reflect upon and/or have the group discuss these questions:

Individual Dichotomy Questions
- What does the E/I distribution suggest about the group's needs for air time, external or internal processing, interruptions, engagement and reflection?
- What does the S/N distribution suggest about the group's needs for data--details versus big picture, vision supported by facts, or facts leading to vision, literal versus figurative language in team discussion?
- What does the T/F distribution suggest about the group's probable judging process-- objective versus subjective? Will the group push more often for clarity even at the expense of harmony, or will the collective need/desire for team cohesion and harmony come at the expense of clarity and pointed debate?
- How structured or open-ended will this group likely be? Will it be easier to access its curiosity or its time sensitivity? Will it maneuver more to adapt to or control events and the world around it?

Summary Team Questions
- What does this team likely do often or readily?
- What does this team likely overlook or lose sight of?

Mission Fit Questions
- What is the good news—how does this team's type nicely fit the task at hand?
- What is the bad new—how might this team struggle with the task at hand?

Leadership Fit Questions
- What is the good news—how will the leader and the group likely work well together typologically?
- What is the bad news—how will the leader and the group likely struggle with each other typologically?

Trainer Fit Questions
- How would training this group be easy for you?
- How would training the group be challenging for you?

2 Advanced Type Table Insights

Modal Type
The modal type is the single 4-letter type most represented in any given type table. The modal type manifests itself as a subgroup that operates within the large group.
- Where modal preferences differ from the group type, look for tensions (positive and negative, creative and destructive).
- Where there is agreement between the modal and group types, look for the modal to reinforce the group's cognitive and behavioral tendencies—again positively and negatively.

Temperament
The behavioral model of temperament (NF, NT, SJ and SP) is outstanding to explain, and even predict, the patterns of behavior you are likely to see in the group. These behaviors, because of repetition, when engaged in by critical mass of the group, become the basis of the cultural norms and expectations of the group.

For instance, if a group has a high percentage of NTs, which leads them to be highly critical, authority independent and competency-driven, these behaviors become the norm of the group—even being over time demanded of/expected from members of the group who are not NT.

What is the temperament distribution of the group whose type table you are analyzing?
- How many NFs are there?
- How many NTs are there?
- How many SJs are there?
- How many SPs are there?

Temperament, being a great predictor of cultural and behavioral expectations, could certainly be a powerful tool in your type table analysis. Among the temperament-based questions a type table could help you answer are:
- How will this group most like to learn?
- What learning styles are not addressed by an approach aimed at the majority temperaments?
- How will this group most likely respond to and interact with your authority and leadership?
- How will this group best respond to praise and encouragement—and offer it?
- How will this group most likely respond to conflict?
- If pushed to an extreme, will this group err more on the side of structure, order and routine—squelching innovation, or are they likely to err on the side of being too open, curious and adaptive—overcommitting and under-delivering?

Learn more about Temperament with OKA's 4 Temperaments Skillshop

Sample type table below. Save time and construct a group type table in real time during Type workshops! Purchase Flip Chart Type Tables here.

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