Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Are you an introvert or an extrovert? What your personality type says about you



You have probably heard some talk about personality types; you may have even taken an online test and learned a little more about your own personality. One of the big distinctions in these categorizations of personality, are the labels **introvert** and **extrovert**.

People often make the mistake that introverts are shy, while extroverts are outgoing. This is however an oversimplification of both of these terms.

N**o one is a pure introvert or extrovert**; everyone has a mixture of the two tendencies. Also, the terms refer more to what a person needs to recharge their personal batteries, so to speak, than whether they are shy or outgoing. However, if you think of yourself as extremely shy, you might find that you are an introvert, and if you know you are the life of the party, you may find yourself leaning further to the extroverted end of the spectrum.

What defines an introvert and extrovert?

An **introvert** is someone who relies on time alone to recharge, and feels drained after spending too long in the company of other people. They tend to be excellent listeners who prefer to spend time in very small groups or one-on-one. They are reflective and need to be quietly alone with their thoughts, and think things over before making decisions. This can sometimes mean they take more time in planning stages and are slow to move from thinking to action.

Extroverts gain their energy by spending time with other people, and contrarily to introverts, feel depleted after spending too much time alone. They tend to “think out loud”, and like to work in groups. They love surrounding themselves with lots of different people, and feel at ease expressing themselves out loud. They can sometimes be prone to rushing into decisions without thinking them through carefully.

Keeping in mind these differences, it can be helpful to recognize the personality-type tendencies of yourself and your colleagues. Let’s take a look at how each type can uniquely contribute to the workplace, and how to work with them to bring out their best selves.

Introverts

Their best contribution: Introverts are great at problem-solving, and listening to the needs of others. They are great at seeing the small details and really spending time to think through a problem. When they are handed a project, they will spend time with it to come up with a well-thought out solution.

How to communicate with them: Introverts often prefer written communication. They likely will be more comfortable writing a long brief than making a presentation. They probably prefer to work by themselves than spend time in a long meeting. Give them space and time to think and reflect.

Extroverts

©
2020 LinkWorks (UK) Ltd.

Their best contribution: Extroverts have an often infectious enthusiasm and a lot of energy. They can be great at getting big groups of people excited about an idea: these are the people you want making presentations.

How to communicate with them: They like to talk, so encourage them to think aloud and have someone take notes of their ideas. Give them space to speak, and make use of their excellent presentation skills. Allow them to work in teams and brainstorm in group settings.

When it comes to personality styles in the workplace, diversity is your best friend. Introverts and extroverts are both necessary to build a diverse and thriving work environment, as their contrasting styles actually complement each other. Pair an extrovert who is full of ideas they want to express with an introvert who can hear them and spend the time to think them through.

An understanding of your own and your colleagues' personality types is a great way to maximize efficiency in the workplace while keeping some much needed harmony.