



Flexing MBTI® Step II™ Facets Appropriately to Maximize Effectiveness



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Introduction

This guide looks at particular facet pole combinations for you to consider as you work with clients to increase their self-awareness and understanding. The content is divided into four application areas: **managing personal connections, taking in information to better evaluate options, making solid decisions, and managing projects and meeting deadlines.**

How to Use This Guide

Each combination of two facet poles described below provides a summary of how the two poles can be used together, followed by a tip for enhancing clients' use of that combination. As a practitioner, you can use

this guide to help clients focus more on their connections with others and be more transparent with their team about how they arrive at certain ideas or decisions. Furthermore, discussing the steps individuals use to arrive at a conclusion is a valuable exercise in understanding why some decisions are harder to make than others.

In addition, examining project management style and the process of getting things done can provide an opportunity for them to refine behaviors to create a more streamlined or effective approach. And you can work with your clients to help them be more deliberate in how they use these facet pole combinations effectively to get appropriate reactions and results.

Managing Personal Connections (E–I)

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Initiating and Contained

These two facet poles inform individuals' approach to personal interaction with others. It's possible for people with this combination to train themselves to reach out to others, whether it's to build a more robust professional network or to gain visibility within the organization. Scoring toward the Contained pole of the Expressive–Contained facet might signify that although they also scored toward the Initiating pole of the Initiating–Receiving facet and make an effort to engage with others, that effort might be superficial. Clients with these results may not be comfortable sharing personal information and may tend to keep the conversation light, creating a barrier in forming an in-depth connection.

FACILITATION TIP: Have clients think about how this balance of facet poles might shift if there were more personal engagement or disclosure, or about which facet pole might feel more pertinent. Helping clients manage how they are perceived in terms of how they connect with others can have a positive impact on their overall visibility within the organization.

Expressive and Reflective

Sometimes the way people interact with the world is different from how they learn about the world.

People who score toward the Expressive pole of the Expressive–Contained facet tend to be comfortable sharing personal information and can sometimes be verbose. So it

might seem strange when they
retreat and become less social.

Perhaps they are trying to learn about
something and need a quiet space to do so.

People who score toward the Reflective pole of the
Active–Reflective facet tend to have better recall if
they can read about something rather than have a
conversation about it. So when you want to talk to
them about some topic and they don't seem ready
yet, it may be because they want to spend some
time on their own reading about it before discussing
it.

FACILITATION TIP: For clients who favor both of
these facet poles, encourage them to share
with colleagues that they learn best by
reflecting so that others don't take
it personally when they try to

create some space for themselves.

Helping your clients become aware of the expectations of others will help them feel and appear more tuned in to them.

Enthusiastic and Intimate

When people score toward the Enthusiastic pole of the Enthusiastic–Quiet facet, their energy can be contagious! So it would seem that their attitude would be “the more, the merrier,” right? Not necessarily. Some people who demonstrate enthusiasm may prefer to have deeper relationships with a handful of people rather than a more broad collection of acquaintances with whom they may feel less connected.

Sometimes other people may misinterpret their energy and desire to be in

the middle of the action as a need to be constantly connected with a large number of people. If they also score toward the Intimate pole of the Gregarious–Intimate facet, that may not be the case, and too much social contact may actually be distracting for them. They may prefer to focus their energy on one person at a time to form a more substantial connection.

FACILITATION TIP: For clients with this facet pole combination, you might suggest that they consider lowering their energy level around colleagues with whom they don't have a real connection. Otherwise, those colleagues may misinterpret their enthusiasm as being insincere. Help your clients become aware of the impact their energy can have on others, and how it can sometimes be perceived as interest that is not really there.

Taking In Information to Better Evaluate Options (S–N)

Realistic and Original

People favoring the Realistic pole of the Realistic–Imaginative facet and the Original pole of the Traditional–Original facet tend to enjoy evaluating “what is” as a part of their process of taking in and experiencing information. At the same time, they are interested in putting their own stamp on things and being part of creating the potential reality. Their ideas are grounded in experience and being effective, but they are able to conceptualize doing this in a unique and individual way.

It seems as though people who score toward these poles would be able to invent something very practical and useful, since the initial

research that went into creating the product was likely based on figuring out what was working for them and why the shift or change might be necessary to improve the efficiency of the task or product.

FACILITATION TIP: Remind clients that the common sense that people favoring the Realistic pole tend to employ is quite helpful in informing the utility of creating something that others would actually find effective. You can help your clients leverage this combination to blend aspects of the facet poles in a practical and productive way.

Traditional and Theoretical

People who favor the Traditional pole of the Traditional–Original facet feel more comfortable

when they know what they can expect from situations and experiences. They can be change-averse at times, or at least somewhat resistant to change. However, diving into understanding what contributes to a sound theory can hold their interest. In one sense, people who prefer the Theoretical pole of the Experiential–Theoretical facet see theories as being grounded in reality and therefore appreciate the context from which they came.

Similarly, people who are heavily steeped in tradition tend to want to uphold those practices that honor where they have come from but also where they are going. Those who favor the Theoretical pole tend to focus on the future, but as a precursor try to understand how it is shaped

by the past. People who favor these two facets focus on trends and patterns in order to understand what has worked in the past and what could work in the future.

FACILITATION TIP: Talk to your clients about how they naturally examine and analyze patterns, and how that helps substantiate theories in reality. Therefore, the potential for change can be more easily integrated by themselves and maybe even by their colleagues. Work with your clients to assess when it is better to hold on to what is working and when they might experiment with trying something new.

Experiential and Conceptual

Often for people who favor both of these facet poles there is a conflict between learning for the sake of knowledge—more than for what the knowledge can accomplish—and drawing on specific experience of what has worked in the past. The tension exists in terms of thinking more about the idea of something than about how realistic the application of that idea could be. People who prefer the Experiential pole of the Experiential–Theoretical facet like to focus on events, while people who prefer the Conceptual pole of the Practical–Conceptual facet like to focus on ideas.

It is possible that a need for more specific information could

prevent a person from exploring new ideas without knowing exactly how that information would be applied to future work. For example, in a strategy session a person with this facet combination might first look at a successful event to assess the plausibility of repeating the event's success (such as a good sales month). If the person spends too much time analyzing which customers purchased specific products, it might keep him or her from focusing on a potential future need or emerging industry trend that is likely to affect future purchases of the same product.

FACILITATION TIP: Clients can benefit from gaining hands-on experience and then using that experience to develop further understanding of a concept. That is, experience

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can create opportunities for new
and maybe even better ideas that
may prove to be more practical. Help
your clients see that this process can be very
productive if they can work through and manage
the conflict.

Making Solid Decisions (T–F)

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Questioning and Accepting

People who favor both of these facet poles tend to first use the Questioning pole of the Questioning–Accommodating facet to try to understand aspects of a decision by clarifying facts. Their tenacious questioning can facilitate their trust in the final decision. Once their questions have been answered, they can express their Accepting pole of the Critical–Accepting facet. They are ready to move on and implement the decision because they have performed their due diligence and assessed any discrepancies.

However, going from asking myriad questions to coming to consensus may sometimes happen too quickly because the questioning

process is now going on internally.

When these individuals stop asking questions, it may seem to indicate a lack of interest or “giving up,” when actually they are paying more attention to what is good about the decision and have made a shift toward accepting the implications, whatever they may be.

FACILITATION TIP: For clients with this facet pole combination, talk to them about the need to clarify their decision-making process, so that other people don’t mistake their quick agreement for a lack of engagement. Help them assess their style of establishing trust in their process and the impact it has on others.

Tough and Empathetic

These two facet poles speak to people's internal thoughts as they move through the decision-making process. Empathy and trying to understand another person's experience can be a powerful element of the decision-making process. Decision makers who favor the Empathetic pole of the Logical–Empathetic facet are often able to gain a clear perspective on how other people may ultimately be affected by a decision. If they also favor the Tough pole of the Tough–Tender facet, they may not seem to be consistent in their approach in trying to understand others.

In fact, empathy and toughness can exist at the same time. People can understand the feelings

of others while also prioritizing the bottom line and basing their decision on the facts that support it. Many leaders use empathy to gain insight into team members' experiences, but they ultimately have to make decisions based on what is good for the business. Sometimes this results in team members and colleagues feeling that their concerns have not been taken into account when that's not necessarily the case.

FACILITATION TIP: Reinforce for your clients that taking time to explain both their perspective and why their focus is so narrow may help others understand the seeming contradiction in their presentation of both understanding and yet not agreeing. At the same time, it might be a benefit to leverage more empathy



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and show more flexibility in
exploring alternatives.

Logical and Compassionate

The blending of different aspects of these facet poles allows for a more holistic vision during the decision-making process. While the Logical pole of the core facet, Logical–Empathetic, is focused on data and cause and effect, it includes the additional nuance of paying attention to other people’s values and feelings before arriving at a final decision. For clients who express both of these facet poles, the benefit is the opportunity to flex to either side of the T–F preference pair in terms of facts and values, even though other people may think they are being wishy-washy or inconsistent in their focus. You can increase these clients’

understanding by reinforcing that they prefer facts but also want to pay attention to how those facts interact with their feelings about the decision.

FACILITATION TIP: Encourage your clients to remind other people that for them logic comes first, before their values enter into the analysis and before a final decision is made, so they will not question their process. They will get better buy-in from teammates if they inform them of the process through which they reached the decision.

Managing Projects and Meeting Deadlines (J–P)

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Methodical and Pressure- Prompted

These facet poles speak to how people approach their work in terms of focus and time management. People who favor the Pressure-Prompted pole of the Early Starting–Pressure-Prompted facet need the pressure of a looming deadline to activate their sense of urgency to complete things, and they seem to have their own sense of timing. Their ability to dive deep into the flow of the process and create their best work right up against the deadline appears to be counter to Methodical people’s tendency to prepare in advance to complete a task. But in fact these two facet poles work very well together.

For people who favor the Methodical pole, much of the preparation happens internally as they think about how best to complete the task. By the time they begin the actual task creation, the plan has already been put into place and each step and aspect of the plan has been well thought through. For them the challenge is that they are the only ones who see their internal process, so to the external world they may seem unprepared for the challenge. With this combination of facet poles, an important component of the process is keeping others informed. In addition, people who favor these poles must give themselves enough time on the front end to play with the method so they can attend to important and necessary details.

FACILITATION TIP: When you are working with clients who favor these facet poles, remind them to inform others of their internal process for creating the method, so that it does not appear erratic or ill-informed and others will not jump to conclusions about their style or process of accomplishing tasks.

Scheduled and Emergent

These facet poles indicate the process by which people reach their goals. People who favor the Scheduled pole of the Scheduled–Spontaneous facet tend to prefer routine and like to plan things out ahead of time so they know what they can expect in the future. They are different from those who favor the Emergent pole of the Methodical–Emergent facet, who tend

to dive into a process without a plan and let things evolve organically. It is possible that having some semblance of what the schedule requires allows for some flexibility once they begin the work. Then they rely on their belief that they will find a way to accomplish their goal based on both their preparation and their ability to wait a little longer to learn more about what may be required.

A blend of predictability of procedures (Scheduled) and a little less formality and some improvising (Emergent) can allow for more flexibility to stay open to changes in the plan so that the work will not need to be redone if the situation changes. Externally these people may seem to go with the flow, when in fact they have spent time

thinking about the best way to
accomplish their goal.

FACILITATION TIP: Help your clients recognize that timing could be an important component in the shift from planning to doing to make sure they are being efficient and effective. Work with them to find a balance so they do not spend too much time in either phase of the process.

Early Starting and Casual

This facet pole combination has to do with people's approach to deadlines and completing projects.

Part of the benefit of diving in to finish tasks early is potentially having more control over timing and the work pace.

This is how the Casual pole of the Systematic–Casual

facet and the Early Starting pole of the Early Starting–Pressure–Prompted facet work together. Early Starting people want to give themselves plenty of time to finish their work without the stress of coming too close to the deadline. The extra effort of early planning is mitigated by a sense of control over the process and when the project will be completed. Alternatively, Casual people like to finish work, as they feel motivated in their own time and are open to letting things just happen without as much desire to control the process.

FACILITATION TIP: People with this facet pole combination often appear more relaxed despite the due diligence involved in beginning work well before it is expected to be finished. What they are trying to avoid is the panic of potentially

missing a deadline, so they give themselves some wiggle room to maneuver when new information is needed or presented. Then they can maintain their casual pace and complete the work to their own satisfaction. Help your clients make sure their process is transparent so that others do not make assumptions about their level of engagement.