

ESFJs are helpful, tactful, compassionate, and orderly. They place a high value on getting along with others and enjoy organizing people and projects to help complete the tasks at hand.

Contributions to the Organization

- Bring a service orientation and attitude
- Pay close attention to each person's needs, desiring to please
- Complete tasks in a timely and accurate way
- Respect rules and authority
- Handle day-to-day operations efficiently

Leadership Style

- Lead through personal attention to others
- Gain cooperation through good relationships
- Keep people well informed
- Set an example of hard work and follow-through
- Uphold organizational traditions

Preferred Learning Style

- Structured, participative, and personable with ample time to talk through new information
- Practical material with known applications

Order of Preferences*

1. Feeling
2. Sensing
3. Intuition
4. Thinking

* See pages 26–29 for further explanation.

Problem-Solving Approach

- Want to consider values and the impact on people (F) as well as pertinent facts and useful details (S)
- May need to identify other interpretations and meanings (N) and to logically and dispassionately analyze them (T) for optimal results

Preferred Work Environments

- Contain conscientious, cooperative people oriented toward helping others
- Are goal-oriented with helpful procedures in place
- Reward organization and efficiency
- Encourage friendships
- Are appreciative and outgoing
- Foster interpersonal sensitivity and caring
- Include both facts and values

Potential Pitfalls

- May avoid conflict and sweep problems under the rug
- May ignore their own priorities because of a desire to please others
- May prescribe what they assume is best for others or the organization
- May not always take the time to step back, be objective, and see the bigger picture

Suggestions for Development

- May need to learn how to pay attention to differences and manage conflict
- May need to factor in their personal needs and wants
- May need to listen more objectively to what is really needed
- May need to consider the logical, global implications of their decisions

theories. He also enjoys conducting research, gathering facts about new weapons and other equipment, testing them out to be sure they will work in the field or within the department.

Evidence that Dennis is developing greater access to his Intuition (third function) can be seen in his interest in helping the department to make changes, including philosophical changes. He likes looking for new approaches, learning and teaching new techniques and changes in the law. He has also begun to experience a pull in the direction of his Thinking (fourth function) as well, by deciding to prepare for the sergeant's exam — a promotion that would increase his stature and power. Additionally, he is more analytical, considering cause and effect in his thinking. Consequently, Dennis believes he makes better and more logical decisions.

Common Threads

Although Caryl, Robin, and Dennis have different backgrounds, experiences, and careers, there are certain common threads woven through their stories. Their specific interests, abilities, and values may differ, but owing to their similar temperament values, the *same hierarchy* of their psychological functions, and the "world" they use them in (inner or outer), there are certain observations we can make about the needs of many ESFJs.

What follows is a list of the most important elements — the formula, if you will, for ESFJ satisfaction. Given the uniqueness of all individuals — even those who share the same type — this list will not describe each ESFJ equally well. The important thing is that these ten elements, with varying degrees of intensity and in different orders of importance, identify what ESFJs need to be satisfied.

After you have reviewed this list, we recommend that you go back and prioritize the elements in order of *their importance to you*. When doing this, think of past work experiences as well as your present job, and what you found particularly satisfying or unsatisfying. Try to look for *themes* that run through several experiences, not just the events that might be true for one work situation but not for another.

As an ESFJ, career satisfaction means doing work that:

1. Lets me establish and maintain warm and genuine interpersonal relationships with other people working in real and tangible ways to improve their quality of life
2. Has practical benefits for people and gives me time to learn and master necessary skills before using them
3. Lets me exercise control, working with many people, and helping them work harmoniously toward a common goal
4. Has clear expectations, and where the evaluation of my performance is judged upon established and explicitly stated criteria
5. Is done in a cooperative environment, free from conflicts and tension between co-workers, supervisors, clients, patients, and others
6. Lets me make decisions and use efficient procedures to see that all the details of my projects are carried out to my specifications
7. Gives me plenty of opportunities to interact with other people throughout the day and to be an integral part of the decision-making process
8. Lets me organize my own work and that of those around me to ensure

that things are run as smoothly and efficiently as possible

9. Is done within a friendly environment where people express their appreciation for my accomplishments, where I feel approval and support, and where I consider my co-workers to be my friends
10. Is done in a setting with existing structure, where the chain of command is known and understood, and where authority is respected

Work-related strengths and weaknesses of ESFJs include:

STRENGTHS

Good cooperators; create friendly and harmonious relationships with others
Take personal approach regardless of occupation

Hardworking, productive, conscientious, and loyal

Adapt well to routine; obey rules and regulations

Well organized and able to remember and use facts

WEAKNESSES

Sensitive to criticism, stressed by tension-filled work situations

Can become discouraged without praise and expression of appreciation

Can make decisions too quickly and without considering other options

May not look for new ways of doing things; can be opinionated and rigid

May become restless if working alone for extended periods of time; need to socialize.

Popular Occupations for ESFJs

In listing occupations that are popular among ESFJs, it is important to note that there are successful people of all types in all fields. However, the following are careers

ESFJs may find particularly satisfying and some of the reasons why. This is by no means a comprehensive listing. It is included to suggest possibilities you may not have previously considered.

HEALTH CARE

- Family physician
- Nurse
- Dentist
- Medical/dental assistant
- Medical secretary
- Speech pathologist
- Exercise physiologist
- Optometrist

The attraction of the health care field to ESFJs is the ability to work directly with other people in a helping capacity. Whether as a physician, nurse, or other practitioner, ESFJs enjoy using acquired skills to help make the lives of their patients easier, less painful, or less traumatic. They excel in careers that require hands-on application of practical skills and adherence to standard operating procedures. These careers in health care also enable ESFJs to establish and maintain strong personal relationships with their patients and co-workers.

EDUCATION

- Elementary school teacher
- Special education teacher
- Home economics teacher
- Child care provider
- Athletic coach

ESFJs teach by personal involvement and example. The younger student and those with special needs are especially appealing to ESFJs who find rewards in helping others by teaching them basic skills. Working directly with young children appeals to the ESFJ's natural energy and enthusiasm.

There is often a great deal of structure and order within a school setting, an environment which many ESFJs find comfortable.

Many ESFJs also enjoy being physically active and teaching others physical skills and the importance of working on a team.

SOCIAL SERVICE

- Social worker
- Community welfare worker
- Professional volunteer
- Religious educator
- Counselor
- Minister/priest/rabbi

ESFJs are strong supporters of their community and often volunteer their time to establish and maintain civic organizations. Therefore, they often experience career satisfaction in careers where they do the same type of work. The personal connection of social work — helping individuals and families overcome problems and become productive members of society — is rewarding for many ESFJs. Their ease and facility meeting people and speaking to groups makes community action jobs satisfying for some ESFJs. Counseling, religious education, and the ministry attract ESFJs who enjoy the commitment of helping others in very specific and profound ways. ESFJs tend to be conservative and traditional by nature, and enjoy working within the context of existing and valuable organizations to make their contribution.

BUSINESS

- Real estate agent/broker
- Personal banker
- Sales representative (tangibles)
- Telemarketer
- Office manager
- Public relations account executive
- Retail owner/operator
- Receptionist

The world of business provides ESFJs the opportunity to meet a lot of people and to work hard to achieve their goals. They enjoy the active and busy pace of many

businesses and enjoy the customer or client contact. When the business is of a personal nature, such as real estate or personal banking, many ESFJs find success because they are motivated to establish positive relationships with others and then work vigorously to maintain those relationships.

Public relations and marketing require the excellent interpersonal and communication skills most ESFJs possess. Both careers require careful attention to details and follow-through on all project coordination. The organizational skills of the ESFJ are used extensively in these careers.

Finally, sales is an area where ESFJs often experience a great deal of success using their interpersonal skills, their resourcefulness, and their sensitivity to the needs of others. ESFJs usually prefer the sales of tangible goods, rather than intangibles such as concepts, ideas, or complex systems. Retail is an area of interest because it involves public contact and the ability to become well versed in the features and benefits of special products.

SERVICE

- Customer service representative
- Funeral home director
- Hairdresser/cosmetologist
- Flight attendant
- Host/hostess
- Caterer
- Fund-raiser

ESFJs often gravitate to the service industries primarily because of the ability to work directly with other people and provide services that help make an experience more enjoyable or less stressful. The job of customer service representative provides them an opportunity to do this. ESFJs are steadfast and dependable during difficult times, and often rise to the occasion to help take care of all details during a crisis. Funeral home

directors must show an inordinate amount of sensitivity and concern for others in their work.

On the lighter side of life, ESFJs often enjoy the variety, travel, and interpersonal contact of being a flight attendant. Most ESFJs are warm and gracious and make excellent hosts/hostesses in the restaurant or catering business.

CLERICAL

- Secretary
- Receptionist
- Office machine operator
- Bookkeeper
- Typist

Most ESFJs, in addition to having interpersonal skills required in many clerical positions, have good manual dexterity. Once a skill is learned by an ESFJ, it is never forgotten. ESFJs are able to perform routine tasks with unerring accuracy and usually have the facility with numbers required of bookkeeping. The critical elements in clerical careers for ESFJs are feeling appreciated as part of a team and the ability to socialize with co-workers on the job. Isolation is very draining to an ESFJ.

Implications for the Job Search

Knowing the particular strengths and blind spots of your type can afford you a tremendous advantage in your job search campaign. In all aspects of the process, from conducting research into available positions, identifying and contacting prospective employers, developing personal marketing tools such as résumés, arranging and conducting job interviews, negotiating salaries, to finally accepting a position, people will act true to their type. Being able to capitalize on your assets and compensate for your liabilities can make the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful job search.

The differences between types are sometimes subtle and other times dramatic. It is the subtle variations in advice we offer that make the real difference between success or failure in a job search. The concept of "networking," or meeting with and talking to people to gather information about potential jobs, serves as a good example. Extraverts will naturally enjoy networking and are advised to do so on a large scale, while Introverts find more limited and targeted networking, especially with people they already know, easier. Sensors tend to network with people in a defined scope, while Intuitives will go far and wide to find people often seemingly unrelated to their field of interest. Further, Feelers take networking, like everything else, very personally and enjoy establishing warm rapport, while Thinkers will be more objective and detached in their style. Finally, Judges tend to ask fewer and more structured questions during their networking, while Perceivers could ask questions of all sorts all day long! One valuable search technique, many ways to implement it.

Pathways to Success

As we will detail in the following pages, your many interpersonal strengths and talents, as well as your great organizational skills, will enable you to implement an efficient job search. Beware of your tendency to be overwhelmed by the uncertainty of the process and become discouraged by rejection, even when it is not personal.

As an ESFJ, your most effective strategies will build on your abilities to:

Establish rapport with interviewers.

- Demonstrate to interviewers your ease at meeting new people and your abil-

ity to make others feel comfortable with you.

- Find a common interest, using your keen powers of observation and your ability to create a friendly atmosphere with others.

Neil was interviewing for a sales position at a health food distributor whose client base was small independently owned and operated health food stores. Neil was primarily interested in the job because, being a vegetarian himself, he wanted to use his sales experience selling something he believed in. While driving into the parking lot, Neil saw a woman get out of her car and enter the building. He noticed her car because of its "I Love Labrador Retrievers" bumper sticker. When he was escorted into the interviewer's office, he recognized her as the woman who owned the car with the bumper sticker. He immediately asked if she owned a dog. She seemed surprised that he knew until he mentioned the bumper sticker and offered the information that he and his wife also owned a Lab. They talked for several minutes about the joys and chaos of owning that breed of dog. The interview went exceptionally well because Neil had made the effort to let his interviewer get to know him as a person.

Conduct informational interviews.

- Interview people in the careers that interest you to get a better understanding of what the job entails.
- Expand your existing network of friends and associates by asking people you meet to refer you to others who might know of positions you are qualified for.

During Abby's search for a career in social work, she called on everyone she knew. She started with her friends and family and

expanded her list to include old college professors and even her childhood piano teacher. She rekindled relationships and obtained references from past employers and her minister to detail her involvement with community projects and to testify to her interpersonal skills. In all, she met, spoke on the telephone with, or wrote letters to nearly fifty people. All were eager to help her. When she was hired as a case manager for a health and nutrition program for pregnant inner-city teens, she traced her path to that specific job through eight people and over sixteen years of contacts.

Conduct an organized, well-planned job search.

- Develop a timetable and budget for your job search, including the cost of résumés, postage, and telephone calls, and how long you anticipate it will take. Set aside letter writing and follow-up telephone time each day, and keep a record of whom you have called and the status of each possibility.
- Demonstrate what type of employee you will be, using your job search as an example. Use your excellent organizational skills by creating an easy-to-read, well-designed résumé and cover letter. Be on time for interviews and follow up with thank you notes.

Jessica took on her job search the same way she took on every job she had ever had. She was enthusiastic, thorough, and precise in preparing her marketing materials and stayed on top of every detail. She impressed interviewers with her organization and communication skills and always followed up informational interviews with thank you notes. The only problem she faced was the fact that she was offered two equally good opportunities on two successive days. She

ultimately made her decision based upon which job would let her utilize the same skills she used in her job search, this time on a daily basis.

Sell yourself as a team player who will work hard to reach the goals of the organization.

- Emphasize your experience working with a diverse group of individuals in one organization or during your career, providing examples of situations that challenged and utilized those skills and abilities.
- Learn as much as you can about the organization or company's "personality" by reading about principals and recent events within the company. Use newspapers, trade publications, and talk to people who know firsthand about the company before going into the interview.

Through Jim's career counseling, he had set his sights on working in property management. But he also learned from his research and informational interviews that some developers used approaches and tactics in business that went against his personal code of ethics. He was still sure that property management was what he wanted to do, so he set out to find a company he would feel comfortable being a part of. His search ultimately led him to a family-owned developer. He talked at length with the firm's president about the company's goals and philosophy until he felt sure that he would feel proud representing the firm. Interestingly, he was later told that it was his concern and refusal to sell out his principles that landed him the job because he was seen as someone the president could easily trust and depend upon.

Make decisions.

- Once you decide that you are interested in a position, act on it to minimize the risk of the opportunity slipping away.
- Eliminate unfeasible or less attractive options along the way so you can keep your focus on your goals. Remain realistic about your skills, interests, and needs so you aren't easily swayed by jobs that may tempt you with their excitement and glamour but won't provide the security or stability you seek.

Remember Dennis's love of car racing? While he always enjoyed the excitement of racing competitively, he ruled it out as a realistic career because it would not provide the long-term job security or consistent income he needed once he married and had a family. He still keeps his interest in cars by working on them in his spare time and occasionally races on the weekends. Even though the opportunity to race professionally presented itself, his decision to become a police officer has proved to be in his long-term best interest.

Possible Pitfalls

Although all people are unique, there are certain *potential* blind spots that many ESFJs share. We underscore "potential" because some of the following *may* be true of you, while others may clearly not apply. While considering them, you may notice that these tendencies do not relate just to the job search but rather describe pitfalls that you may have experienced in other aspects of your life as well. It is therefore helpful to consider each one in terms of your past experiences by asking yourself, "Is this true for me?" And if so, "How did this tendency prevent me from getting something that I wanted?" You will probably notice that the

key to overcoming your blind spots is the conscious and thoughtful development of your third and fourth functions (Intuition and Thinking). We recognize that many of the suggestions will be difficult to implement, but the more you use these functions, the fewer problems they will cause you in the future.

Avoid the tendency to burn your bridges once you think you've crossed them.

- Try not to view situations or job options as either all good or all bad. Look for the gray area that exists in most things. Sometimes trade-offs must be made.
- Take time to reflect on your options. Don't run the risk of making decisions too hastily before you have had a chance to gather all the information you can.

Try not to become easily discouraged.

- Accept constructive criticism in the spirit in which it is intended and try not to take it personally.
- Seek out support and encouragement from friends during the sometimes trying job search process. Look for assistance from other people who are also going through or have recently gone through their own job search.

Gather more objective criteria for decisions rather than relying exclusively on your personal feelings.

- Take a step back from the situation to enable you to look at it more objectively. Resist the urge to base your opinions of a job on your like or dislike for the person conducting the interview.
- Ask yourself what are the possible and logical consequences of taking a job or embarking on a course of action.

Adjust your focus to more long-range career planning.

- Create a set of goals for one, five, and ten years from now. When considering potential careers or jobs, check them against this list to see if they will help move you forward toward your goals.
- Resist the tendency to take stop-gap jobs because you are beginning to feel overwhelmed or uncertain about your security. Try not to compromise by taking jobs that will not provide satisfaction in the long run.

Look for career opportunities beyond what is already known.

- Ask yourself "what else?" when generating a list of possible jobs or careers. Consider less traditional approaches or settings if other important criteria exist. If needed, get help in brainstorming positions from friends (especially Intuitives) who know you well.
- Look for ways to demonstrate or explain how your skills are transferable from one work situation to another.

The Final Piece

Now that you have a solid understanding of your type under your belt, you can see how your strengths and preferences suit you better for some kinds of jobs and for some approaches to a job search. But as an ESFJ, you've already noticed that you are not equally drawn to *every* career or field listed in the Popular Occupations section. The next and final step in the process is to look at how your type meshes with your personal interests. So now turn to Chapter 24 to put your new knowledge to work by finding out how your interests, skills, and values can combine with your type to let you find the work you were meant to do.