

INTP

Introverted Thinking with Intuition

INTPs are rational, curious, theoretical, and abstract, preferring to organize ideas rather than situations or people. They enjoy working alone with ample autonomy for their own ideas and methods.

Contributions to the Organization

- Design logical and complex systems
- Demonstrate expertise in tackling intricate problems
- Add short- and long-range intellectual insight
- Apply logic, analysis, and critical thinking to issues
- Concentrate on core issues

Leadership Style

- Lead through conceptual analysis of problems and goals
- Apply logical systems thinking
- Want to lead other independent types while seeking autonomy for themselves
- Relate to people based on expertise rather than position
- Seek to interact at an intellectual rather than an emotional level

Preferred Learning Style

- Individualized with no set beginning or end, following their own interests in depth
- Broad, conceptual, and challenging to their intellect

Potential Pitfalls

- May be too abstract and therefore unrealistic about necessary follow-through
- May overintellectualize and become too theoretical in their explanations
- May pay too much attention to minor inconsistencies at the expense of teamwork and harmony
- May turn their critical analytical thinking on people and act impersonally

Order of Preferences*

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

* See pages 26–29 for further explanation.

Problem-Solving Approach

- Want to use their internal logic to structure problems and solutions (T) while searching for possible options (N)
- May need to pay attention to present reality and data (S) as well as to the needs and wants of others (F) for optimal results

Preferred Work Environments

- Contain independent thinkers focused on solving complex problems
- Allow privacy with plenty of time and space to think
- Foster independence and originality of thought
- Provide flexible policies and procedures
- Are quiet with as few meetings as possible
- Have unstructured and nonbureaucratic ways
- Reward self-determination

Suggestions for Development

- May need to focus on practical details and develop concrete steps for implementation
- May need to state things more simply
- May need to yield on minor points in order to gain the cooperation of others
- May need to get to know more about others and express appreciation of them

tions between the right people for the right job, and enjoys putting them together. Being innovative and shaking up the establishment are important to Bert. He has a gift for helping people stretch and exceed their own expectations.

Bert uses his Sensing (third function) to keep track of the myriad details involved in his projects and to make sure things are done right. Recreationally, he has plugged into his Sensing by taking up many physical activities, such as bike riding, weight lifting, downhill skiing, and snorkeling. Evidence that he is developing better access to his Feeling side (fourth function) can be seen in the fact that all of his personal relationships have become more important to him. He expresses his feelings more openly and easily and trusts his gut more in evaluating other people.

Common Threads

Although Jaye and Bert 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 naturally use them in (inner or outer), there are certain observations we can make about the needs of many INTPs.

What follows is a list of the most important elements — the formula, if you will, for INTP satisfaction. Given the uniqueness of all individuals — even those who share the same type — this list will not describe each INTP equally well. The important thing is that these ten elements, with varying degrees of intensity and in different orders of importance, identify what INTPs 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 which might be true for one work situation but not for another.

As an INTP, career satisfaction means doing work that:

1. Lets me develop, analyze, and critique new ideas
2. Lets me focus my attention and energy on a creative, theoretical, and logical process, rather than on an end product
3. Is challenging and deals with complex problems, where I am able to try unconventional approaches, and take risks to find the best solution
4. Lets me work independently with plenty of quiet, private time to concentrate and complete my thinking process
5. Lets me set and maintain my own high standards for my work and determine how my performance will be evaluated and compensated
6. Is done in a flexible, nonstructured environment, without useless rules, excessive limitations, or unnecessary meetings
7. Lets me interact with a small group of highly regarded friends and associates, all of whom I respect
8. Gives me opportunities to constantly increase my own personal competence and power and lets me meet and interact with other powerful and successful people
9. Lets me develop ingenious ideas and plans and lets me delegate the imple-

mentation and follow-through to an efficient support staff

10. Does not require me to spend time directly organizing other people or supervising or mediating interpersonal differences

Work-related strengths and weaknesses of INTPs include:

STRENGTHS

Able to analyze problems with great insight

Architects of creative ideas and systems

Enjoy situations where they have opportunity to learn and master new skills and knowledge

Able to work alone, and concentrate well

Good at long-range thinking

WEAKNESSES

May be unrealistic about application of ideas

Ideas may be too complex for others to understand

May lose interest and not apply selves to follow through

Have little tolerance for redundancy or detailed work

May be insensitive to feelings of others, critical, and demanding

Popular Occupations for INTPs

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

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Computer software designer
- Computer programmer

- Research and development specialist
- Systems analyst/data base manager
- Strategic planner
- New market or product conceptualizer

The field of planning and development offers INTPs the opportunity to do what they do best — analyze problems and develop innovative solutions. Most INTPs enjoy working in technical areas, using their ability to understand complex systems and to find ways to eliminate errors or weaknesses.

They easily see how the product, service, or system fits within the context of the whole company, industry, or technology and enjoy creating new, more efficient ways of doing things.

MEDICAL/TECHNICAL

- Neurologist
- Physicist
- Plastic surgeon
- Pharmacist
- Scientist: chemistry/biology

These fields of medicine and other scientific technologies make good use of INTPs' excellent reasoning skills and facility with technical material. The rapidly growing areas of neurology and plastic surgery are often interesting to INTPs because they are able to be on the cutting edge and be involved in innovation, which usually carries some amount of risk. Physics, chemistry, and biology offer opportunities to work with complex concepts, constantly learn new things, and repeatedly ask the question "What if?" These careers, especially when they involve a strong research component, allow the INTP to work independently. Because they are difficult and competitive fields, they tend to attract other intellectual and gifted people, which INTPs find stimulating.

PROFESSIONAL

- Lawyer
- Economist

- Psychologist/psychoanalyst
- Financial analyst
- Architect
- Investigator

These professional careers also offer INTPs plenty of opportunities to analyze and solve complex problems. Often extremely challenging, these careers require clear, logical thinking and innovative approaches to problems and challenges. The creative process is central to the work of both the architect and the psychologist. Seeing how one element or event fits into an overall pattern or system is a particular strength of INTPs and is a frequent aspect of the work of an investigator and financial analyst. From developing flawless legal strategies to forecasting subtle yet powerful economic trends, these professions offer the excitement and personal challenge INTPs thrive on.

ACADEMIC

- Archaeologist
- Mathematician
- Historian
- Philosopher
- College teacher of advanced students
- Researcher
- Logician
- College faculty administrator

The stimulating world of academia is one frequently enjoyed by INTPs. Because there is an emphasis on exploring and considering new and different approaches, INTPs often find career satisfaction in the role of college professor. They usually prefer teaching the more advanced and challenging students and courses. INTPs often enjoy the research element in any of the subject areas above and enjoy the opportunity to work alone and then share their insights and innovations with their intellectual peers. They work best when not restricted by excessive rules and

bureaucracy, which many large universities and colleges are unable to avoid.

CREATIVE

- Photographer
- Creative writer
- Artist
- Entertainer/dancer
- Musician
- Agent
- Inventor

One of the strongest attractions for INTPs to these careers is the chance to create something entirely original. INTPs enjoy the creative process of working with different mediums and the variety of people and experiences they have access to. INTPs usually enjoy working alone or with small numbers of talented people who bring something different to the process. Depending upon their area and their interest in expressing their art, INTPs can enjoy performance. But they don't necessarily need to perform their works to find satisfaction in them. Many INTPs are inspired by the world of creative people and enjoy working as an agent. And their ability to create innovative and clever products or services often gives them success as inventors.

Remember, these are only some of the areas that provide satisfying expression for the unique natural talents of INTPs.

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 strengths and talents for the job search — creative problem solving and critical analysis of potential options — will go a long way toward helping you endure the less interesting or challenging detail-chasing phases. You may also need to make a conscious effort to establish rapport and communicate your vision in simple enough language for others to understand.

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

See possibilities that don't exist at the present time.

- Look past what is known or represented to you as "the way things are." Use your imagination to generate possibilities that may arise within the near future and plan how you can best capitalize on them.
- Consider less obvious means of getting an interviewer's attention or setting yourself apart from other candidates.

Brian realized he needed a creative and attention-getting method of differentiating himself from the other people applying for a highly sought after job as marketing director of new products for a computer software company. So instead of creating a standard resume, Brian designed one that looked like the screen of a super-high-definition color monitor. He sketched a logo of his name, which his girlfriend, a graphic designer, helped him reproduce with an appropriate typeface to match the look of the résumé/screen. He added color and used a plastic binder and patterned contact paper to create a cover that looked like the front of the monitor, with his resume, as the software program, on the inside. He hired a delivery service to hand-deliver the package to the company's vice president with a cover letter that said he had a whole data base of innovative ideas and was eager to meet and present them at the vice president's convenience.

Create your own job opportunities or an adaptation of existing but less attractive opportunities.

- Using your talents at anticipating future needs, develop a job description for a

position that will solve current or future problems.

- Determine ways of altering and improving an existing opportunity into one that will use your strengths and still serve the needs of the employer.

Elaine's upcoming promotion would mean good news and bad news. The good news was an increase in her salary, a support staff she could delegate follow-through details to, and more autonomy. The bad news was the job would require almost daily meetings, and Elaine would be reporting to an individual she had had the displeasure of serving with on a committee, someone she did not respect. After a great deal of reflection, she admitted to herself that all the perks of the promotion would not make up for the negative aspects of the job. So she created a proposal for a special pilot program that would analyze the costs and benefits of several of the company's less profitable products, something her current supervisor had long been interested in. She outlined how the position would require the support services of only one full-time person and would free up an office by requiring the part-time use of one computer terminal. Elaine recommended that she conduct much of her work from her office at home and report, on a weekly basis, to her current supervisor. Because the position would be at a higher ranking, the salary and benefits package would rival those of the other job. Her supervisor was impressed with her initiative and trusted Elaine enough to leave her alone to work on the pilot program for the following twelve months.

Anticipate the logical consequences of actions.

- Demonstrate your clear sense of cause and effect by offering examples of past

experience where you were called upon to contribute the skill, and recount what the positive outcomes were.

- Use your critical thinking skills when considering any job offer to anticipate both the positive and potentially negative outcomes of any decision.

For her second interview for a teaching position in the mathematics department of a small private university, Sandra was glad to hear that she would be asked open-ended questions by the chairman of the department. The chairman presented several difficult challenges the department and university currently faced and asked her how she might handle them if she were a member of the staff. Sandra began by explaining how during her last job she had dealt with equally vexing problems. She spoke about the various possible outcomes of several solutions and what their future ramifications might be. Her interviewer was impressed with her long-range thinking skills and her ability to see many sides of an issue without becoming personally invested in any. It was obvious by the end of the interview that Sandra had considerable skills and could make important contributions to the team.

Create and implement an innovative job search.

- View problems that arise as challenges to be met and use your creativity to come up with ways of overcoming them.
- Set yourself apart from your competition by marketing yourself as a creative, alternative thinker and let all your materials and correspondence reflect that.

Everything was going well for Eric in his job search. He had had several excellent interviews with one of the partners of a presti-

gious architectural firm and was preparing for his final meeting with the firm's senior partner. The morning of the interview, he arrived to discover that the partner who had been interviewing him had left the firm unexpectedly. The senior partner did not have the interview with Eric on his calendar, nor did he know anything about him. Eric had to start from scratch.

Fortunately, he was able to get another appointment and left the firm determined not to let the setback get him down. He spent the next three weeks finding out everything he could about the senior partner's past projects and the history of the firm. He prepared himself for the type of interview he might expect from the person he was learning about. At the interview, he used that experience as an example when he was asked how he dealt with unexpected stumbling blocks. The senior partner was amused and impressed by his creativity, persistence, and candor.

Keep all your career options open to gather all relevant and important information.

- Stay cool and detached; never be pressured into making a decision that you haven't had adequate time to reflect on.
- Ask lots of questions during all interviews to be sure you have an accurate picture of the job, its responsibilities, and limitations before deciding whether to consider it further.

Possible Pitfalls

Although all people are unique, there are certain *potential* blind spots that many INTPs share. We specify "potential" because some of the following *may* be true of you, while others may clearly not apply. While consid-

ering 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 (Sensing and Feeling). 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.

Make sure to eventually move your plans out of the conceptual stage and into practice.

- Once you have developed an innovative job search plan, ask yourself how realistic some of your ideas are. Is there time to get all you've imagined done? Is it possible to create what you have dreamed up? Decide on and hold yourself to a timetable to implement your ideas.
- Develop a step-by-step plan that includes all the facts (timetable, questions to ask, reminder to send follow-up notes, etc.) so you will be more likely to attend to them.

Establish realistic objectives and goals based upon what is practical, not on what your confidence tells you is possible.

- Remember that, depending upon your level of experience and the field you are pursuing, a full career search can take from three to twelve months before you find the right job. Knowing

that from the start and reminding yourself of it throughout the process will help keep you from becoming discouraged and disinterested.

- Ask for the support from a close friend when you find your impatience mounting and/or confidence waning.

Make sure you don't appear condescending or arrogant to potential employers.

- Pay close attention to how others perceive you. Ask someone you trust to role-play with you and give you an honest appraisal of your perceived attitude. In an interview, blunt honesty can be perceived as rudeness.
- Take the time to listen fully to the interviewer's questions or comments before forming an opinion about him or her. Make it a goal to try to establish rapport early in the interview.

Remember to follow through on important details involved in the process.

- Social niceties, such as thank you notes to people who have conducted informational interviews with you, may seem superfluous, but they are an important part of the process.

- Stay on top of follow-up calls and letters so you don't appear disinterested in a position you really do want.

Don't put off making a decision.

- After you have spent the necessary time considering your options and clarifying your needs and skills, take action! Discard less attractive options and decide to actively pursue good ones.
- Don't wait so long to decide that you inadvertently eliminate an opportunity by procrastinating.

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 INTP, 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.