

allow him to detach occasionally from the demands of the office and his patients. He has moved into a new and larger office so his practice can continue to grow, and he has become interested in computer technology. George has also begun to engage his Intuition (fourth function) by considering new areas of business. For example, not long ago he helped develop the area's first free-standing mammography clinic – and innovative, entrepreneurial, and highly successful project.

Common Threads

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

What follows is a list of the most important elements – the formula, if you will, for ISFJ satisfaction. Given the uniqueness of all individuals – even those who share the same type – this list will not describe each ISFJ equally well. The important thing is that these ten elements, with varying degrees of intensity and in different orders of importance, identify what ISFJs 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 ISFJ, career satisfaction means doing work that:

1. Requires careful observation and meticulous accuracy, where I can use my ability to remember facts and details
2. Lets me work on tangible projects that help other people, often requiring great accuracy and attention to detail
3. Lets me express my compassion and devotion by working hard behind the scenes, but where my contributions are recognized and appreciated
4. Is done in a traditional, stable, orderly, and structured environment, where the results are practical service-oriented
5. Requires that I adhere to standard procedures, use practical judgment, and follow through in a careful, organized way
6. Lets me focus all my energy on one project or one person at a time, working on products or services that have observable and results
7. Gives me a private work space so I can concentrate fully for extended periods of time and with a minimum of interruptions
8. Lets me work primarily one-one helping others, or with other people who share my personal values and beliefs
9. Requires me to be organized and efficient in completing my assignments
10. Does not require too frequently that I present my work in front of groups of people without having adequate time to prepare well in advance

Work-related strengths and weakness of ISFJs include:

STRENGTHS

Strong work ethic: responsible and hard-working

Excellent with routines requiring sequential, repeated procedures or tasks
Accurate, thorough, and careful with details
Enjoy being in service to others: supportive with co-workers or subordinates
Enjoy using established ways of doing things: respect status given by titles

WEAKNESSES

May underestimate own values: may not be assertive about their own needs
Frequently overworked because they take on too much
May not see implications of future consequences
May not adjust well to constant change
May become discouraged if they no longer feel needed or appreciated

Popular Occupations for ISFJs

In listing occupations that are popular among ISFJs, it is important to note that there are successful people of all types in fields. However, the following are careers ISFJs may find particularly satisfying and some of the reasons why. This is by no means comprehensive listing. It is included to suggest possibilities you may not have considered.

MEDICINE

- Family physician
- Nurse
- Medical technologist
- Dental hygienist
- Physical therapist
- Medical equipment salesperson
- Health care administrator
- Dietician

These occupations allow ISFJs to work in a field where their contributions have a personal and direct impact on others. Many of these occupations require hands-on and one-on-one interaction with clients and patients. ISFJs like to be able to help others in real and practical ways. Many of these positions allow the ISFJ to work relatively independently with a traditional

and organized culture. The field of medicine makes good use of ISFJs' ability to learn and practice technical skills and gives them the chance to establish personal connections with other people.

SOCIAL SERVICE/RESEARCH

- Preschool/elementary teacher
- Librarian/archivist
- Curator
- Educational administrator
- Social worker
- Guidance counselor
- Personal counselor
- Religious educator
- Speech pathologist
- Probation officer

Education is a field frequently of interest to ISFJs because it allows them to help other people and make a contribution to society. ISFJs often enjoy teaching elementary school because of the personal interaction with students and the ability to teach basic skills. Many ISFJs enjoy careers in educational administration, especially when they are responsible for a specific area of specialty (for example, special education) or a relatively small service area (one town rather than a large city school system). ISFJs enjoy working independently but within an organization where they are appreciated for their contribution and know what is expected of them.

The field of research offers satisfaction for ISFJs because it allows them to work independently and follow through on specific tasks of investigation. Curators are required to create and maintain complete and

accurate records, which lets them use their organizational and factual recall skills.

While often personally challenging, the field of social work often provides great satisfaction for ISFJs find the contribution they make rewarding because they are able, through their involvement with their clients, to help them make practical and tangible improvements in their lives. These occupations offer the same opportunities for one-on-one interaction and independent working environments, all of interest to an ISFJ.

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

- Secretary
- Clerical supervisor
- Customer service representative
- Personnel administrator
- Computer operator
- Bookkeeper

These careers require a great deal of interaction with the people on one-on-one basis and are often enjoyed by ISFJs. Many are support positions, which enable ISFJs to use skills in organization and follow-through of important details, especially when working in support of someone they respect and admire. These positions also require knowledge and use of both technical and communication skills to help others get the information or assistance they need.

OTHER

- Interior decorator
- Electrician
- Retail salesperson
- Fashion merchandiser
- Innkeeper
- Guard/watchkeeper

These careers are not necessarily related to one another but have some common characteristics and requirements. Each requires the person to work with real things that have to do with daily living. As an interior decorator, the ISFJ uses his or her aesthetic sense to find the

right décor for the client. The job requires attention to detail and a strong ability to work with another toward satisfying that client's needs and wishes in his or her home. ISFJs usually place great importance on the way their own home is decorated and can easily understand and relate to the desires of their clients to create homes that are comfortable for them.

An electrician is responsible for technical accuracy and adherence to standard procedures and codes. ISFJs enjoy focusing their attention on tasks that require hands-on-work and enjoy using skills they have mastered. If the ISFJ feels his or her contributions are valued and appreciated and if he or she receives quality interaction with either the customer, partner, or co-workers, the job of an electrician can be satisfying.

Retail sales and merchandising are careers often enjoyed by ISFJs, especially when they are able to work in either a small specialty shop or one department of a larger store. Their attention to the details of how their shop looks and "feels" to customers often wins them long standing repeat business. They enjoy spending time with one customer at a time, finding just the right item or accessory to work with what the customer already has. They enjoy following through and maintaining relationships with customers and treat staff with kindness and loyalty.

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 resumes, 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 “net-working,” 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 Intuitive 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, Judgers 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 lie in your ability to demonstrate your efficiency, sincerity, and desire to work hard. However, your job search might become stalled if you fail to see workable alternatives or derailed when you take rejection too personally.

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

Research opportunities thoroughly, collecting all relevant facts.

- Use all resources available to you, including the local library and trade publications, to find out as much as you can about the company, industry, or position you are considering.
- Spend the amount of time necessary until you are comfortable with your knowledge base before proceeding to the interview stage.

When Connie was beginning to consider a career change, she was counseled by several colleagues in other school districts to look at a smaller school system to get the added responsibility she was looking for. She fully researched the town she works in now to find out about the level of parental and town support for the special education program before even applying for the position. Because she knew those elements were critical to her satisfaction in the job well, she talked with parents, teachers, and other administrators to get a feeling for the emotional climate of the town.

Make thoughtful decisions based upon practical considerations.

- Establish a list of criteria and refer to it frequently during the job search process, comparing potential job opportunities against it.
- Try to be objective during the decision making process so as to remain pragmatic and realistic about what a possible job will really be like, not just how you wish it might be.

Morty made a major career change to working with not-for-profits after determining that his personal and professional life were equally important to him. He wanted more time to spend with his family and on his religious studies. He weighed the pros and cons of the change and decided, after careful consideration, that the change would afford him the more relaxed and peaceful lifestyle he wanted, while still using his skills and experience in accounting.

Conduct an organized, well-planned job search.

- Prepare resumes with individualized cover letter to address your specific interests and qualifications for the job in question. Follow up with a telephone call to secure an appointment, rather than waiting for a potential employer to call you.
- Stay in contact with people who have given you time or an interview, write them thank you notes and send them notification when you find the right job.

While researching the personnel department of a large department store, Lisa decided she would apply for a customer service representative position. She called ahead to learn the manager's name and title and sent a personalized letter highlighting her experience and her interest in the company. After several phone calls, she secured an appointment and interviewed with the manager. There was no position available at the time Lisa continued to search while staying in contact with the manager. One day in the library, Lisa read an article about a new computerized preferred-customer tracking system being developed for use in retail. She sent the article with a brief note to the manager. A few days later, she was called for a second interview and later offered a job.

The manager told her that her perseverance had won the job for her over candidates with more experience.

Capitalize on your solid, stable, dependable work experience.

- Provide prospective employers with several examples of past successes, including any citations, awards, or letters of recommendation.
- Demonstrate your consistency in meeting job requirements and reaching organizational goals.

Jeremy was a biology teacher at a college and an article faculty adviser to students. He had always been particularly interested in the problem of student attrition (students leaving the college before graduation). Over the many years of his tenure, he kept his own careful records of student attrition, which he collected from interviews with his own students, the college counseling center, and other faculty advisers.

When the associate dean of students position became available, Jeremy was interested. He might not ordinarily have been considered a likely candidate, but he took all the information he had collected over the years, and compiled it into a report. He met with the dean of students and shared his observations. His self-acquired but acknowledged expertise in the area of student trends, combined with his reputation as a caring and popular student adviser, helped move him into the front-runner's position for the job.

Possible Pitfalls

Although all people are unique, there are certain *potential* blind spots that many ISFJs 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 (Thinking and Intuition). 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.

Look for and stay open to considering possibilities that do not currently exist.

- Engage in the sometimes difficult exercise of brainstorming: generating lists of possibilities while resisting the urge to eliminate the seemingly impossible ones. Keep all ideas until you have generated a lengthy list. Consider each and ask yourself "Why not?" several times before discarding it as a viable option. You may want to call on the help of friends for whom brainstorming comes more naturally.
- Ask other people currently enjoying jobs you may wish to consider how they went about getting trained for the job or obtaining an interview. Consider less traditional or unconventional approaches.

Be aggressive, or at least assertive, when planning and implementing your job search.

- Realize that the adage "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" is often true,

especially in the competitive world of employment.

- Use all your excellent organizational and follow-through skills to stay on top of all opportunities. Follow up appointments with notes to remind the prospective employer of your continued interest in the position. Contact old friends and business associates and ask them to help you develop a list of potential people to add to your network. And most important, ask for interviews and tell interviewers of positions that you want!

Don't underrepresent your enthusiasm and interpersonal skills

- Save the humility for another time and place. Speak up and tell prospective employers about your past accomplishments. Demonstrate your abilities by offering past reviews and letters of recommendation from supervisors.
- Work from the assumption that you are exactly what the prospective employer is looking for and that you have a lot to offer. You will project the confidence and energy most employers want in employees.

Try to be objective and do not allow your personal feelings to be the sole criterion of important decisions.

- Suspend making any decisions about a person or a position until you have left the interview and had some time to think back on it. Try to stay clear on the fact that it is easy to confuse rapport with friendship.
- Consider the cause and effect of your decisions. Make a list of possible outcomes and results of your choices, using your original list of criteria as a benchmark against which to measure

potential jobs, rather than your personal feelings about the interviewer or the worksite.

Avoid being rigid and inflexible, seeing options as either all good or all bad.

- Again, refer to your list of criteria. Adhere to those elements that you simply can't live without, and be willing to be flexible about those are less important.
- Try to imagine yourself in each job opportunity you consider. Ask a friend to help you generate a list of the pros and cons of each opportunity and look at both sides fairly before making any decisions.

Try not to take rejection personally and get discouraged.

- Remember that just because you look at the world from a personal perspective, that is not true for everyone else. Most rejections are not directed at you personally but at your qualifications for a

job. It sometimes takes several weeks or months to find the right job. Patience will pay off if you keep going.

- Get support from friends or family members when you are starting to lose your energy and confidence. Ask for the encouragement you need. Let friends help you for a change.

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 ISFJ, you've already noticed that you are not equally drawn to *every* career or field listed in 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.