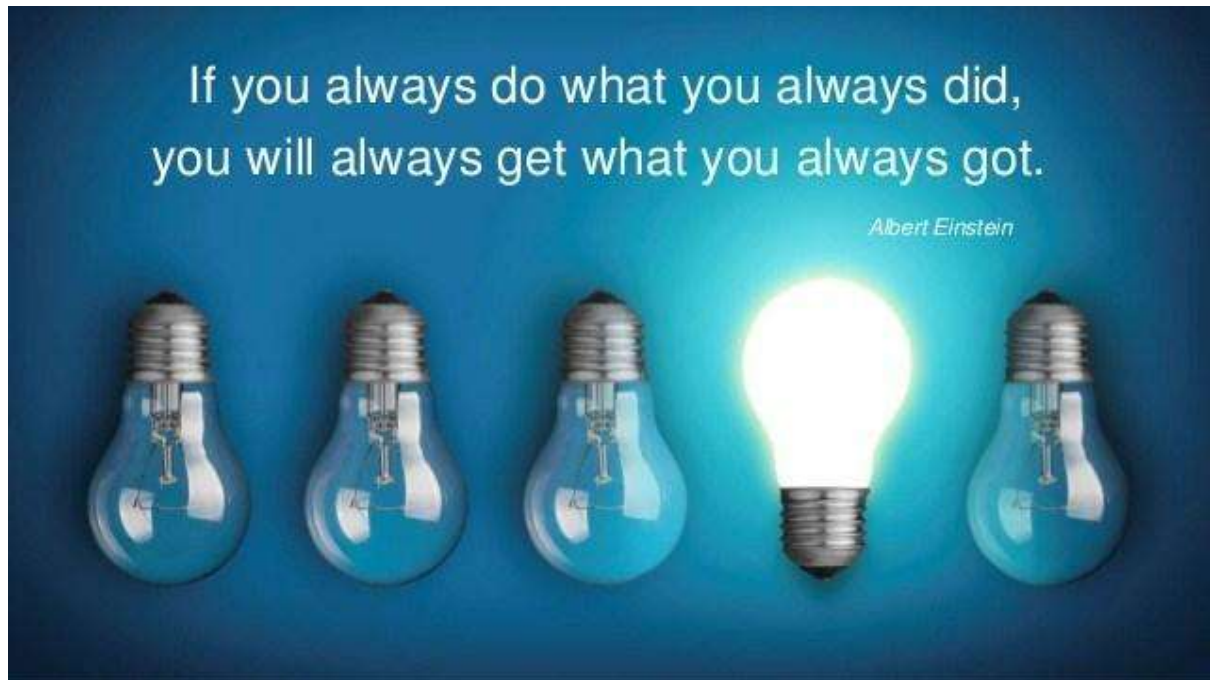


Why you think the way you do?



Different preferences in solving problems

We as individuals or groups are often called upon to solve challenges, make decisions and think creatively. Are you or your group required to do the following?

- Build innovative teams
- Increase collaboration and communication
- Develop leaders
- Train thinking and creativity skills
- Coach executives, entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs

If the answer is Yes in one or more of the above, you need to understand individual thinking preference. It can help you to leverage personal differences and unlock people's ability to generate ideas, collaborate on solutions and achieve breakthrough results.

Once I worked with an institution which values the performance of its people especially their involvement and contribution in making a difference and enhancing the company's long term goals. Many reasons could be put forward for this ongoing success, but high on the list would be the management's firm belief that their greatest asset truly lies in the people's thinking power and their creative potential. Key areas of this change process are (1) A change in the management's approach from bureaucratic management style to participative style and (2) The shift from annual planning to more iterative process approach.

The FourSight Thinking Profile developed by Dr. Gerard Puccio of the International Center for Studies in Creativity, was seen as a key contributor towards the development process of the company's mindset – a tool to measure your preference for each of the four thinking styles and give your insight into how you naturally approach a challenge or problem. This awareness has helped groups deliver innovation.



There are 4 phases for a successful problem-solving process: Clarify the problem, Ideate potential solutions, Develop the chosen idea, and Implement the action — each of us has a preference for one or more of these phases. Hence, by understanding your preferences will help you direct your attention on each phase and avoid the pitfalls of potentially spending too much time on the phases you prefer.

Strategies for company-wide applications were implemented as part of the company's culture. The company called the programme "MINDSET TOOLS". The objectives were to improve

communication between management and operation staff, to increase the level of awareness of individual and group thinking in designing project and to improve teamwork through collaboration and open communication. As groups raise awareness of biases they may have for and against each other, they began to gain more empathy and are willing to collaborate and harness each other's talent.

Subsequently, the HR department has managed to transfer the “MINDSET TOOLS” to workplace by integrating their use in Creative Control Circle activities (e.g. audit exercises, meetings and

improvement projects) and training programmes – part of the on-boarding and leadership development training. The company created a “MINDSET TOOLS” logo to project the company’s steadfast initiative and identity. They shared successful stories through bulletin and internal project meetings and posters are put up in meeting rooms and around the walls in common area.

Now, let’s learn more what are the four unique mental processes for innovative thinking – Clarifier, Ideator, Developer and Implementer.

Clarifier

Likes to spend time getting a clear understanding of a challenge or issues before exploring ideas or solutions. Likes to move cautiously and enjoys looking at the details, data and information that will help them to better understand the issue. At times, Clarifiers may suffer from “analysis paralysis”.

Ideator

Likes to generate broad concepts and ideas. Is more comfortable understanding the big picture and stretching their imagination. They are flexible thinkers, see many possible solutions to the same situation and less concerned with details. Ideators may leapfrog from one idea to the next, not following through on ideas.

Developer

Likes to spend time analysing potential ideas and solutions, breaking them apart and examining their strengths and weaknesses. Enjoys transforming rough ideas and thinking through the steps necessary to implement them. In their eagerness to analyse, compare and weigh competing solutions, Developers may get stuck in developing the “perfect” solution.

Implementer

Strives constantly to take action on ideas. Derives the most energy when bringing ideas to fruition and seeing tangible outcome. They like to get things accomplished and are concerned about getting the next thing to the implementation stage. Implementers may get impatient when things move too slowly and leap to action too quickly.

The overarching goal in understanding your group’s preferred style of thinking is to help them learn to innovate and solve problems more effectively together. Wouldn’t you want to see the team members make the shift from seeing another’s behaviour as “irritating”, to seeing it as “something they can improve upon when working through the challenge?

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