

EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE AND MEDIA CHOICE

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Synopsis

The average American household receives over 100 television channels while any combination of the over 8,000 different consumer magazines and almost 1,500 daily newspapers fill their coffee tables.

To further complicate matters, many of these vehicles are aimed at the same, lucrative adult 18-49 demographic. Today's rising media costs and increasingly fragmented and cluttered landscape requires measures beyond age, sex and income to target effectively.

Communigraphics™ is a new survey from OMD which details how personality impacts media behavior and brand selection.

Since 1975 over 30 million people have taken the Myers Briggs Type Indicator MBTI®; more than 10 million have taken the test in the past 5 years. These numbers make it easily the most widely used instrument for assessing personality that we are aware of.

While historically it has been used primarily as a means to predict occupational success and organizational effectiveness, OMD identified it as a possible way of explaining media behavior and brand choice.

The MBTI's focus on identifying and understanding how people are energized by the internal or external world, how they like to take in information and make decisions, and the kinds of lifestyle they try to adopt led us to adapt the instrument for communications targeting.

The full MBTI type indicator was administered in a re-contact of 25,000 MRI Fall 2002 respondents, enabling OMD to examine media and brand usage behavior as measured by MRI.

We will demonstrate that defining communications targets and publication readers in terms of personality gives us a radically different picture of how people consume print and, in our view, a better basis for understanding their brand choice decisions than demographics.

Introduction

"In order to be successful, a communication needs to be listened to without impatience and understood without hostility." (*Myers with Myers*, 1980)

While there has been much talk in the US advertising industry about the need to move beyond demographically-based targeting and considerable interest in attitudinally based targeting, a reliable, independently verified, attitudinal or personality-based segmentation system for magazine planning has yet to emerge.

At the same time, OMD planners have been challenged to move beyond demographics and product usage to understand what motivates consumers. The goal of Communigraphics was to develop a reliable, non-demographically based method of targeting consumers based upon their personalities. Personality-based targeting is both logical and attractive. Personality controls people's responses to the environment around them, has an overt effect on behavior, and once developed, is consistent over time.

While there are many ways of defining and measuring personality, tests that focus on Cognitive Processing - specifically the process of taking in information and making decisions - are most applicable to our objectives as advertisers.

While historically the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI®) has been used primarily to predict occupational success and to facilitate organizational effectiveness it has also received a fair amount of attention from advertising researchers. Previous research suggests that understanding and applying personality type as measured by The MBTI(r) can increase message receptivity (LaBarbera, Yorkston and Weingard, 1998).

However it received little attention from Communications Planners despite being extensively used in education to help develop teaching methods and in communication to increase understanding and to learn approaches most likely to elicit the agreement and cooperation of each personality type.

Previous attempts to use personality types in consumer targeting have been neither nationally projectable nor linked to standard media currency products. As a result, media planners have not been able to reliably integrate personality type into their target audience definitions.

By combining the most widely used personality indicator in the world¹ with the key ‘currency’ print survey in the United States OMD had the opportunity to better understand not only *what* consumers do but *why* they did it. The wealth of empirical academic research on the type classifications² enabled us to access a broad base of knowledge to understand consumer targets much more deeply than any single piece of independently fielded research.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of Jung’s theory of cognitive processing and the 4 dichotomies that make up personality type and to share some of our preliminary findings on how personality type impacts magazine genre preferences within a common target demographic: women 18-49.

Jung’s Type Theory

Carl Jung’s theory of personality is based on the notion that predictable, behavioral differences in people are caused by differences in the way people prefer to use their minds to:

- Take in information (Sensing or Intuition);
- To make decisions (Thinking or Feeling);
- To focus their attention (Extraversion or Introversion) and
- To orient themselves to the outside world (Judging or Perceiving)

Although people are flexible, they prefer to rely on their dominant functions and subsequently develop different strengths (Myers & McCaulley). These differences have an overt effect on behavior and, once developed, tend to be fairly consistent over time.

Overview of the Personality Types

Note: The following descriptions of the personality types were primarily taken from Myers and McCaulley, 1992.

Sensing vs. Intuition

Perception, to Jung, describes all the different ways people can become aware of people, things, ideas or events. It includes not only information gathering but also the seeking of sensation and inspiration and the selection of stimuli to attend to. During this process people rely primarily on one of two mental processes: Sensing or Intuition.

A sensing person relies upon his or her 5 senses – sight, taste, touch, smell and sound - to gather information about the environment around them. They “live in the moment” and seek to fully experience what is immediate and real. The effect of this is a tendency to be practical, observant and to possess a good memory for detail.

Sensing types understand best when precise descriptions and practical examples are used and typically ask “what” and “how” questions (Brock, 1994). Their reliance on direct perception also creates a situation where information coming from other people *through the spoken or written word* is less trustworthy and therefore carries less conviction than their own past experience.

Intuitive types focus on future possibilities rather than concrete realities. Behavioral characteristics associated with Intuitive types include being imaginative, desiring fresh and unique ways to approach situations and being somewhat theoretical, abstract and future oriented.

Because of their future focus, Intuitive types are often restless and have difficulty enjoying life as it currently is. According to Myers, Intuitive types listen to communications to understand what is being said at a deeper level. They are more concerned with the underlying assumptions and implications and of the message and are seeking to know what the possibilities may be. They focus on the “why” and seek to understand the big picture. They typically dislike repetitive tasks and have poor attention to detail.

Thinking vs. Feeling

Once people become aware of people, things, ideas or events they must then decide what to do with the information. To Jung, judgment encompasses all the methods of coming to a conclusion regarding what has been perceived.

This processing or judging of information is classified by Jung as either Thinking or Feeling. *Thinking* describes a preference for combining information in accordance with the principals of cause and effect. Thinking types are characterized by their preference for objective, logical and often impersonal decision making.

¹ The MBTI® boasts a 1-5 year test/re-test reliability of r.80 with the MRI database

² Over 2,689 journal articles have been written about the instrument since 1985

As a result of this preference Thinking types tend to be analytical, firm-minded and critical, seeking rational order based upon logic. They often appear brisk and frequently hurt people's feelings because they are more focused on the world of things than people.

Another way to come to a decision is by weighing the relative values and merits of the situation at hand. To do this one must rely primarily on personal and/or societal values to make decisions. This personal and subjective approach to decision making requires an individual to be aware of the needs and values of others as well as of themselves. Behaviorally *Feeling* types are subjective, compassionate, and people oriented. Their focus on people makes them friendly and natural people pleasers.

Introvert vs. Extrovert

Where people choose to focus their attention is classified as Introverted or Extroverted. Though the common use of the word Introvert is to describe a shy, quiet person while the term extrovert implies sociability, Jung's definition and the MBTI's descriptions encompasses much more.

Jung described the key differentiation between Extroversion and Introversion in terms of a preferred flow of energy. According to him, someone with an *introverted* attitude prefers to consolidate energy drawn from their environment within their person. As a result, people with an introverted orientation to the world focus their attention on an inner world of ideas, emotions, and impressions rather than the outer world of people and things.

Behaviorally this mental focus manifests itself as a thoughtful, contemplative detachment to the world and a preference for quiet solitary time to reflect. Because their attention is focused within they are also typically less impacted by external events and instead choose to rely more on enduring principals.

Extroverted individuals prefer to draw their energy from the external world of people, activities and things (Hirsh & Kummerow, 1998; Myers & Myers, 1985). They engage the external environment and rely on it for constant stimulation. They tend to think out loud, to need variety and action and are constantly seeking to express themselves to the outside world. Extroverts are typically seen by others as impulsive, action oriented and sociable.

Judging vs. Perceiving

The last dichotomy was touched upon by Jung but made more concrete by Briggs and Myers in their development of the MBTI. It describes the external or extraverted manifestation of a persons judging or perceiving functions. The JP dichotomy seeks to describe the way in which people seek to live their lives or orient themselves to the outside world.

It also describes the ratio of time devoted to taking in information versus making judgments about the information. *Judging* types move quickly through the perception process (either using Sensing or Intuition) to judging (either using Thinking or Feeling). As a result they tend to "tune out" perceptions quickly and make decisions as soon as possible.

As a result of this rapid movement to decision making they are goal oriented and try to be expedient in all matters at all times. They are self disciplined and exacting people who enjoy organizing and completing tasks. As a result they strive to live a planned, organized and purposeful life.

Perceptive types are slow to make decisions, preferring instead to remain in the information gathering mode (either through sensing or intuition). They typically see life as something to be experienced and understood, aiming to miss nothing. Behaviorally they are curious, spontaneous, open-minded, tolerant and adaptable to change. Their avoidance of decision making manifests itself as a desire to keep things open ended and makes it difficult for them to commit to or stick to a plan.

Hypothesis

Based on these marked differences in attitude we hypothesized that irrespective of demographic variables these underlying needs or preferences would impact and predict their magazine usage and preferences. Specifically, we sought to understand the following:

- Does an Intuitive type's dissatisfaction with the present and focus on future possibilities lead them to gravitate towards aspirational media? Conversely, would a Sensing type's practical nature and reliance on quantifiable facts result in a lower propensity to read these same titles and a greater affinity towards news oriented publications or would their distrust of secondhand information cause them to shun print altogether?
- Would a Thinking type's preference for concern towards others result in a greater propensity towards newspapers?
- Would an Extrovert's external focus translate into a greater interest in fashion and pop culture and higher levels of media usage than Introverts in the same demographic group?
- Would the Judging/Perceiving dichotomy impact vehicle selection at all or would it only affect loyalty and the regularity of consumption?

Method

OMD conducted a re-contact of MRI’s Fall 2002 base of respondents (approximately 26,000 people) in January 2003. We administered the entire MBTI battery to the nationally projectable sample. After scanning, completed questionnaires were sent to CPP (the company that licenses Myers-Briggs) for scoring to maximize the accuracy of the test and to minimize the likelihood of false positives or false negatives.

The 10,000 in-tab respondents were then linked back to MRI’s Fall 02 study and made available through IMS for analysis. Prior to conducting any media analysis, OMD staffers under the guidance of CPP conducted validation tests on the data. This included comparing incidence rates and the demographic composition of the types to previously established benchmarks.

Once the data was verified, magazine and newspaper quintiles, magazine genres (as classified by MRI. See appendix 2 for category definitions) and individual titles were compared for women 18-49 within each personality segment.

Results

Magazine and Newspaper Quintile Analysis

As shown in Figure 1, the level of magazine readership varies by personality type. Intuitive types and Extroverts are most likely to be the heavy magazine readers, reading an average of 12 issues per month. Introverts mirror women 18+ in their level of readership and as a result are the group least likely to be heavy magazine readers screening into an average of 10 issues a month. Feeling and Perceiving types mimic their demographic cohort’s average readership while Judging and Thinking types are on par with women 18+ but slightly lower than women 18-49.

Figure 1: Magazine and Newspaper Quintiles by Personality Type for Women 18-49 Index to Women 18+

	W 18-49	Extrovert w18-49	Introvert w 18-49	Sensing W 18-49	Intuition W 18-49	Thinking W 18-49	Feeling W 18 - 49	Judging W 18-49	Perceiving W 18-49
[I (Heavy)]Magazine Quintiles	113	128	96	106	132	102	118	104	123
[II]Magazine Quintiles	111	104	118	114	103	113	110	114	107
[III]Magazine Quintiles	105	107	102	102	113	106	105	109	101
[IV]Magazine Quintiles	93	90	96	93	93	101	89	95	90
[V (Light)]Magazine Quintiles	78	71	87	86	59	78	78	78	79
Magazine upper half (Heavy)	111	117	105	109	118	109	112	110	113
Magazine lower half (Light)	89	83	95	91	82	91	88	90	87
Newspaper upper half (Heavy)	86	90	82	84	94	85	87	88	85
Newspaper lower half (Light)	115	112	120	119	107	117	115	114	117

Source: 2002 MRI Fall - Proprietary Recontact Study
Base: Women 18+

Magazine Genre Analysis

As shown in Figure 2. Intuitive women are significantly more likely than their Sensing counterparts to read Epicurean, Travel, Health, Home Service and Fashion magazines.

Sensing types have a lower propensity to read these types of publications than both Intuitive types and women 18-49. In fact Sensing Types were less likely than women 18-49 to read any of the magazines regardless of genre with the exception of Baby publications.

Thinking types have a higher propensity towards Business/Finance, Science and Technology, Sports and Computer magazines than their cohort and Feeling types. They are less likely than Women 18-49 and Feeling Types to indulge in entertainment oriented titles such as Bridal, Fashion, Music, Women’s and Travel publications.

Overall, Introverts have a lower interest in magazine than Extroverts. Their readership preferences mirror those of women 18-49 on half of the genres and with the exception of Computer and Science/Technology publications they are less likely than Extroverts to gravitate toward any of the magazine genres. On the other hand, Extroverts have a much stronger affinity for Fashion, Bridal and Travel magazines than women 18-49.

The Judging/Perceiving Dichotomy does not appear to significantly impact genre affinity with the exception of a somewhat stronger affinity towards Women’s fashion, Music and Sports by the Perceiving types.

Figure 2: Magazine Types by Personality Type for Women 18-49 Index to Women 18+

	W 18-49	Extrovert w18-49	Introvert w 18-49	Sensing W 18-49	Intuition W 18-49	Thinking W 18-49	Feeling W 18 - 49	Judging W 18-49	Perceiving W 18-49
Airline	102	103	101	94	125	78	112	107	97
Babies	147	146	148	158	118	128	154	144	150
Bridal	139	164	108	139	136	112	149	146	130
Business/Finance	101	112	89	94	119	125	92	101	102
Computers	128	97	165	116	160	167	112	133	122
Epicurean	92	91	93	71	145	83	96	96	87
Gardening	89	91	87	87	94	81	92	80	100
General Editorial	94	94	95	93	97	90	96	96	92
Health	93	102	82	83	117	97	91	93	93
Home Service	100	102	98	93	118	91	104	98	102
Music	129	130	128	131	124	105	139	109	154
News - Weekly	111	115	107	110	114	116	109	111	111
Distributed	95	98	93	93	103	91	97	98	93
Parenthood	134	138	130	140	118	122	139	142	125
Science/Technology	106	91	122	84	162	145	89	104	108
Sports	123	130	114	114	145	153	110	109	139
Travel	91	110	70	78	124	94	90	84	99
Women	106	110	101	103	114	98	109	106	106
Women Fashion	124	149	94	102	178	102	133	104	146

Source: 2002 MRI Fall - Proprietary Recontact Study

Base: Women 18+

Note: Automotive, Boating, Fishing/Hunting, Fraternal, Men, Motorcycle, Outdoor Recreation and Photography were removed due to low sample sizes

Summary and Implications

We have only dipped a toe in the water with the findings reported here. Digging deeper into the data has shown personality to be a robust way of segmenting magazine readers and product users in ways that lead planners to different conclusions than they might have arrived at using demographics alone. Demographic targeting assumes the people within a group will exhibit similar media habits and will be receptive to the same messaging. However preliminary evidence suggests that personality differences impact magazine selection and usage levels in a predictable way regardless of one's demographic cohort.

While women 18-49 are likely to be heavy magazine readers, we have seen that Introverts in that group are not. Looking at demographic variables it would seem at first glance that Epicurean, Travel, and Health magazines are not good vehicles for women 18-49 though we've seen that these are among the best publications to reach Intuitive types in that cohort.

While these initial steps towards personality based targeting are encouraging more work is needed fully understand how best to use personality type in communications planning.

Appendix I

MRI Fall 02 Magazine Genre Definitions

Airline

American Way
 Attaché
 Continental
 Hemispheres (United)
 Northwest World Traveler
 Sky (Delta Airlines)
 Southwest Spirit

Automotive

Automobile
 Autoweek
 Car and Driver
 Car Craft
 Circle Track
 4 Wheel & Off Road
 Four Wheeler
 Hot Rod
 Motor Trend
 Popular Hot Rodding
 Road & Track
 Sport Truck
 Stock Car Racing
 Street Rodder
 Super Chevy
 Truckin'

Babies

American Baby
 Baby Talk
 Fit Pregnancy

Boating

Boating
 Motor Boating
 Salt Water Sportsman
 Yachting

Bridal

Bridal Guide
 Bride's
 Modern Bride

Business/Finance

Barron's
 Black Enterprise
 Business Week
 Consumer Reports
 Entrepreneur
 Fast Company
 Forbes
 Fortune
 Inc.
 Kiplinger's Personal Finance
 Money
 Mutual Funds
 Smart Money
 Wall Street Journal
 Worth

Computers

Computer Shopper
 Macworld
 PC Magazine
 PC World
 Smart Business
 Yahoo! Internet Life

Epicurean

Bon Appetit
 Food & Wine

Fishing/Hunting

American Hunter
 American Rifleman
 Bassmaster
 Ducks Unlimited
 Field & Stream
 Game & Fish
 Guns & Ammo
 Handguns
 Hunting
 North American Fisherman
 North American Hunter
 Outdoor Life
 Sports Afield

Fraternal

American Legion
 VFW

Gardening

Country Living Gardener
 Flower & Gardener
 Gardening How-To-OG

General Editorial

American Heritage
 Atlantic Monthly
 Audubon
 Biography
 Cable Guide
 Catholic Digest
 Ebony
 Guideposts
 Los Angeles Times (Daily)
 My Generation
 National Enquirer
 National Geographic
 National Wildlife
 Natural History
 New York Times (Daily)
 Premiere
 Reader's Digest
 Saturday Evening Post
 Smithsonian

General Editorial (continued)

Star
Talk
The New Yorker
Town & Country
USA Today
Vanity Fair
Yankee

Health

Arthritis Today
Health
Muscle & Fitness
Prevention
Psychology Today

Home Service

Architectural Digest
Better Homes & Gardens
Coastal Living
Country Home
Country Living
Country Sampler
Elle Décor
Family Handyman
Handy
Home
House & Garden
House Beautiful
Martha Stewart Living
Mary Engelbreit's Home Companion
Metropolitan Home
Midwest Living
Mother Earth News
Southern Accents
Southern Living
Sunset
This Old House
Traditional Home
Wood
Workbench

Men

Details
Esquire
FHM
Gear
GQ (Gentlemen's Quarterly)
Maxim
Men's Fitness
Men's Health
Men's Journal
Penthouse
Playboy
Popular Mechanics
Stuff

Motorcycle

Cycle World
Dirt Rider
Easyriders
Motorcyclist

Music

Country Music
Country Weekly
Rolling Stone
Spin
The Source
Vibe

News – Weekly

Entertainment Weekly
Jet
New York Magazine
Newsweek
People
Sports Illustrated
Time
TV Guide
U.S. News & World Report
Us Weekly

Newspaper Distributed

Chicago Tribune (Sunday)
Los Angeles Times (Sunday)
Metro-Puck Carrier Newspapers
New York Times (Sunday)
Parade Carrier Newspapers
Sunday Mag/Net Carrier Newspapers
TMS TV Week Network (1)
TMS TV Week Network (2)
Tribune (3) Daily/Sunday
Tribune (11) Daily/Sunday
USA Weekend Carrier Newspapers
Washington Post (Sunday)

Outdoor Recreation

Back packer
Sierra

Parenthood

Child
Disney Channel Magazine
Family Fun
Nick Jr. Magazine
Parenting
Parents
Scholastic Parent & Child

Photography

American Photo
Petersen's Photographic
Popular Photography

Science/Technology

Discover
Popular Science
Scientific American

Sports

Bicycling
 ESPN the Magazine
 Golf Digest
 Golf for Women
 Golf Magazine
 Golf World
 Outside
 PGA Tour Partners
 Runner's World
 Scuba Diving
 Ski
 Skiing
 Skin Diver
 Tennis
 The Sporting News
 USA Today Baseball Weekly
 WWE Magazine

Women's Fashion

Elle
 Harper's Bazaar
 Vogue

Travel

Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel
 Conde Nast Traveler
 Endless Vacation
 Gourmet
 National Geographic Traveler
 Travel & Leisure
 Travel Holiday

Women

Allure
 Cooking Light
 Cosmopolitan
 Essence
 Family Circle
 First For Women
 Fitness
 Glamour
 Good Housekeeping
 In Style
 Jane
 Ladies' Home Journal
 Marie Claire
 Q. The Oprah Magazine
 Real Simple
 Redbook
 Rosie
 Self
 Seventeen
 Shape
 Soap Opera Digest
 Soap Opera Weekly
 Teen
 Teen People
 True Story
 Victoria
 W
 Weight Watchers
 Woman's Day
 Woman's World
 Working Mother
 YM

Appendix II – Bibliography

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