

I became certified in the TTI's type instrument, DISC, a year prior to becoming qualified in the Myers Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®). Shortly after completing my MBTI® training a colleague who was not familiar with DISC asked me to explain the differences between the two instruments.

And so I began the process of comparing and contrasting these two tools used to assess personality type. Interestingly enough, when I asked professionals familiar with both instruments what they thought about them, I got mixed reactions – reactions that formed an interesting pattern. Professionals in academic settings preferred the MBTI®, citing it was more applicable to student life than DISC. Most professionals I spoke to in consulting positions favored DISC saying that it was easier for people to relate to and understand. Ultimately, the end user factored heaviest in people's opinions of which instrument better served its audience.

Although my “study” would never be considered scientific, my informal inquiries did reveal a range of thoughts and opinions practitioners held related to type assessment. In my own experience, the first time I took DISC and had it interpreted for me, I wasn't very impressed. The information didn't resonate for me and I didn't know how to work with the data I had received. My first exposure to the MBTI® was very in-depth and if given the choice between the two, I would have definitely identified MBTI® as the stronger instrument. However, the second time I took DISC and had the results interpreted for me, it was a completely different experience. I saw firsthand the power of this instrument. Thanks to the skill and expertise of the interpreters, I could immediately apply what I had learned. I was quickly able to distinguish between the four personality types and saw instant applications for interactions with others.

DISC's reliability is slightly lower than MBTI® in part because it examines situational responses. DISC can be particularly helpful in assessing fit/alignment with job expectations (e.g., front office vs. back office roles, selling vs. service roles). The simplicity of TTI's DISC's types (i.e., 4 types in DISC versus 16 types in MBTI®) makes it a relatively easy instrument for interpreters to explain and for users to digest. The vocabulary is clear and requires less clarification than MBTI® language (e.g., “judging” vs. “perceiving” or explaining the difference between “introverted thinking” and “extraverted feeling”). DISC is also less well known than MBTI®, which has been used extensively all over the world, so it's often an attractive alternative for organizations and teams who have completed the MBTI® numerous times and are looking for new way to examine their dynamics.

Given its focus on “how” people do things, DISC's information has significant implications in sales – both how people sell and how people buy (e.g., products, services, or concepts). A sales person aware of DISC's four types, for example, could readily predict a sale prospect's type with reasonable accuracy, and adjust his or her style/approach accordingly. MBTI® offers the same insights into personality type; however, sorting out which of the 16 types someone might be isn't necessarily as easy a process as it would be for someone sorting through four.

MBTI® provides a wealth of information to end users, and when offered in a group setting, it can broaden team members' perspectives about each other and likely improve relations. An awareness of DISC's four types can offer team members a way to recognize relatively quickly which of the four types another individual might be, and mutual knowledge of the instrument is not necessary for interactions to benefit.

The DISC types can be easily observed, perhaps more so than the MBTI® types. MBTI® requires considerable time for an end user to become familiar with all facets of the instrument. Practitioners have told me it took them years to fully understand the tool. It is a fascinating instrument that does simplify a significant amount of information. DISC, on the other hand, could be considered too simplistic because it breaks a lot of information down into four simple categories which are reported at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. These four categories, however, speak to the root of most work situations (problems, people, pace, procedures), therefore providing an immediate, useable foundation for users to relate to and apply in interactions with others.