



Leveraging Your Inner Internal Thinker

Once you make the commitment to grow your business, there are essential elements that will affect every decision you make and are largely the place where your fear, hesitation, procrastination, decision making, communication, motivation and even your belief systems are derived from. It's your hardwiring. It operates automatically and it can be your greatest asset or your biggest inhibitor.

Each individual has a specific combination of hardwiring. One of those traits is the internal thinker. While you may or may not have this trait, you will run into someone who does. An internal thinker is introspective and logical. When they meet you for the first time, they will be pleasant but not overly expressive. When they participate in groups, they often will not express themselves unless they have thought about what they are saying, it adds value, or if it is something they consider important.

In *Me, Myself, and Why? The Secrets to Navigating Change*, there is a character called Analytical Ann. Ann is an internal thinker. She is naturally wired to think things through and her main motivation is to get things done. After all, to Ann, social chit chat is inefficient when you have a task at hand. She prefers to communicate through email because it gives her time to think through her answers.

Recently, Ann attended a social event that included individuals she did not know from the company that was merging with her company. She spent small amounts of time in group discussions but removed herself from the group so that she could be alone. This behavior was motivated by her internal hardwiring because she had an internal need to collect her thoughts. This was a critical time for Ann to be an influence during the merger.

Some people perceived her behavior as unsocial and unfriendly, which didn't help position Ann well in the merger. However, Ann needed this time alone because it was draining for her to be with a group of new people.

So how does Ann leverage her strengths and manage her hardwiring during this changing time?

Leveraging Strengths

Make Use of Your Thorough Thinker. Since internal thinkers, like Ann, tend to be introspective, and like to think through things before they talk or act, they will do their homework and come prepared. They will want to plan for a meeting especially when they are asked to present in front of the group. People with this hardwiring contribute work of great quality and make use of their natural tendency to think things through so they spot errors before they occur.

Work with Tangible and Concrete Factual Matters. When you have this internal thinker trait, you focus on work-related activities than social activities. Your best work is in environments where you have opportunities to communicate factually and sincerely.

Use Small Group Interactions. As a business owner, you will network but you'll gravitate toward smaller groups at networking events, which work more in alignment with your natural hard wiring. You generally prefer these smaller social interactions and will hesitate on your decision making when it involves addressing large groups or groups you don't know. You do your best work when you have time to think, which generally means you have



great ideas about an hour after a meeting so structuring follow up feedback is important to leveraging your contributions.

Managing Your Hardwiring

If you're like Ann, your natural hardwiring has its strengths. However, there are parts where, if left unmanaged, could prevent you from getting results and must be taken into consideration when structuring your business and executing your plan.

Acknowledge when others are speaking to you. You have a tendency to go into your head when asked a question or your opinion. When others are talking with you, this may give them the perception that you do not understand what they are saying because you're not acknowledging their question. Behaviorally, when you are thinking, it generally results in a blank stare which can be perceived by others as cold, unfriendly, withdrawn or moody. It is important to verbalize with a simple "yes," "I hear you" or "give me a minute to think about it" so that the other person knows that you understood them, especially external thinkers who *you may* perceive as too verbose or saying what's on their mind before they even think about it.

Make a decision and develop a plan. Internal thinkers, like Ann, can over analyze a plan and never implement. Give yourself a timeline, develop the plan and implement resisting the temptation to over analyze or over think your solutions. You may miss out on an opportunity to grow your business and this over thinking is often the underlying cause of procrastination.

Accept help. You often believe you need to figure things out for yourself. While that may be noble, it may not always be in your best interest especially if you're committed to growing your business. Understand that your natural hardwiring influences you accepting help from others or getting help from others. As a business owner, you can't do everything yourself. It will be necessary to ask for help rather than assuming someone should know you need help.

Record Your Achievements. Since you internalize your thoughts, when someone asks you about the results you achieved, you might have to think about it unless you write them down and celebrate those accomplishments. A hesitation on your part brings about the perception from others that you don't have any achievements. In reality, you just need time to think about them. When you write them down, they remain top of mind helping you to articulate them timely.

Address the social aspects of change. While all people are by nature socially based, internal thinkers have stronger propensity toward the task and this will affect the amount of their socializing. For example, internal thinkers will engage in some very minor verbal courtesies, but then want to get down to business.

When growing your business, you may continue to focus on the tasks and not address the feelings of others. This leaves others with the impression that you are unfriendly or don't care. Keep in mind that others may be external thinkers and may need to articulate their feelings and have a higher propensity for social exchange.



Phone or email are preferred modes of communication. If you want to expand your business and are more of an internal thinker, remember that you naturally gravitate toward communicating through phone or email. This avoids the face-to-face stimulation you don't innately need. Teleseminars are ideal ways for you to express yourself expanding your business in a way that not only leverages your ability to communicate with so many more people but gives you a vehicle that gives you time to prepare and allows you to script it using the best of your think-through wiring.

Interacting

When you're interacting with an internal thinker, remember these tips:

Provide Preparation Time. Internal thinkers do their best when they've had time to prepare what they are going to say. This is why spontaneous brainstorming is difficult for them particularly if it's with people or a subject they are unfamiliar with.

After a meeting, give them time to think about things. Their best ideas come when they've had time to process their thoughts internally. About an hour after a meeting, loop back around with them once they have had a chance to think about it.

Give opportunities to ease into participation. Internal thinkers generally have a hesitation to networking because it requires spontaneous social interaction with people they don't know. Giving them time to get to know the group they are networking with is essential to their excelling in these environments.

Denying this hardwiring actually de-motivates an individual. Getting the hardwiring met and aligning your business growth plans with it, yields increased results more quickly. Understanding your hardwiring is critical to knowing how to stay motivated, what might be holding you back from growing your business, and even what needs to be changed to seal the deal authentically.

Lisa Mininni is the Best Selling Author of *Me, Myself, and Why? The Secrets to Navigating Change* and President of Excellerate Associates, home of The Entrepreneurial Edge System™, the only national developmental and marketing program showing entrepreneurs how to put their personal, client and revenue goals on the fast track.