



Leveraging Your External Thinker

Isn't it interesting that we know each individual has a different style of communicating and doing things, but many people never really realize why that is? Yet, when we realize how individuals behave, we can be more effective in providing information the way the other person wants to receive it, often helping in communication, sales, and providing solutions.

All people exhibit varying degrees of behavioral factors. Your behavioral factors (or hardwiring) operate(s) automatically and it can be your greatest asset or your biggest inhibitor. This hardwiring creates patterns and is often the underlying reason for habits and belief systems.

Each individual has a specific combination of hardwiring. One of those traits is the external thinker. While you may or may not have this trait, you will undoubtedly run into someone who does. You'll recognize an external thinker when you meet them. They are outgoing and communicative as well as socially oriented and poised. When they meet you for the first time, they will be cheerful and optimistic. When they participate in groups, they often will be one of the first to speak up and are capable of stimulating and often persuasive conversations.

In *Me, Myself, and Why? The Secrets to Navigating Change*, there is a character named Spirited Sandy. Sandy is an external thinker. She is naturally wired to express her thoughts aloud and her main motivation is to get things done by working with (and through) other people. Sandy is motivated by meeting new people and is energized by lively company.

As a Sales Representative, Sandy was generally energized by her work. One day, Sandy joined a networking group - gravitating toward her natural ability to connect with people. A natural extrovert, Sandy did most of the talking rather than managing her innate need of fluent conversation.

Some people perceive her behavior as "all about Sandy" and didn't feel that they had an opportunity to contribute. However, Sandy perceived that she was being helpful by providing solutions.

So how does Sandy leverage her strengths and manage her hardwiring?

Leveraging Strengths

Create opportunities for interaction with people. Since external thinkers, like Sandy, tend to be energized by face-to-face contact with others, they will need to get this underlying motivation met each day. For solopreneurs, this can be accomplished through active participation in networking groups. Be aware, however, of your natural need to communicate your thoughts. Networking is about what you can learn about the other person so manage your natural urge to chat about you.

Work involving service to others. When you have this external thinker trait, you're a natural delegator of authority, and interested in developing people and the organization (or the team.) Your best work is in environments where you have opportunities to stimulate and motivate people. As an empathetic individual, you are able to recognize another person's point of view and like to be of service to others helping fix any problems especially if there is dissatisfaction.



Participation in Groups. As a business owner, you prefer working in groups and enjoy the interaction groups provide. You generally prefer being in the company of others as opposed to working alone. You do your best work when you have time to bounce it off of others, which is important to know in order to leverage your hardwiring.

Managing Your Hardwiring

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

Silence Is Golden. You have a tendency to talk through what's in your head (as opposed to internal thinkers who keep it in their head until they have processed it.) This live streaming gives people the perception that you are only concerned about your thoughts and contributions. Behaviorally, it causes people to tune out and people may think you are disingenuous because you say the first thing that comes to mind.

While you may be the most trustworthy person, being verbal about your thoughts has its disadvantages especially when it comes to building trust. While you may think you're generating ideas aloud, others who may be opposite of you, take everything you say into consideration. While in your mind you were just generating ideas, they started implementing those ideas. When you clarify that you were just brainstorming, they perceive you as changing your mind because, after all, you said (fill in the blank.) This perception often erodes trust with others you work with because of what they see as inconsistencies in what you say aloud.

It is important to manage your natural impulse to share what's on your mind and carefully articulate to others when you are just brainstorming or thinking aloud. In addition, allow silence especially if you have individuals who are internal thinkers on your team. Resist the urge to fill the silence with words. Silence gives the *internal* thinkers, who are opposite of you, time to process particularly if it is a new subject. Internal thinkers and external thinkers are not so far apart. Internal thinkers just process their information on the inside and external thinkers process their information on the outside.

Be Present. External Thinkers, like Sandy are able to empathize and understand another person's point of view and want to be of help often giving their advice or suggestions without being asked. The other person doesn't always want advice or suggestions and is looking for someone to just listen. Before giving your advice, ask the individual, "what do you need from me?" or "how can I help?" They will often tell you what they need and may even say, just listening was helpful.

An extroverted client of mine often had difficulty staying present with his clients. To stay in the moment, he repeats (in his head) what the other individual is saying. This internal scripting allows him to stay in the moment with the individual and avoid going into problem-solving mode. This simple trick has helped hundreds of my extroverted clients stay in the moment especially when they naturally wanted to "fix" an issue or take over the conversation.

Build in Face Time. If you want to expand your business and are more of an external thinker, remember that you naturally gravitate toward communicating with others face to face. If this is absent in your Marketing Mix, you will



become de-energized unless you get this natural motivator met. Live speaking engagements are one of the ways for you to express yourself expanding your business in a way that leverages your social and communication skills.

Interacting

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

Establish An Agenda with Timelines. External thinkers by their nature need to verbalize their thoughts. They do their best when they have an opportunity to express themselves. They are stimulated by spontaneous brainstorming but you have to identify and stick to timelines; otherwise, you'll find your meeting going on longer than anticipated.

Acknowledge Them. External Thinkers are motivated to do even more when they have been personally acknowledged. Whether it is their work or a contribution they made in a meeting, a verbal response or simple thank you goes a long way with an external thinker.

Control Business Costs. External thinkers by their very nature often will use more words to communicate their thoughts and this can increase your phone bills. One company's Sales Representatives were consistently exceeding their cell phone minute limits. Instead of trying to get the External Thinkers to have shorter conversations, they realized they needed a different cell phone plan. They adopted a flat rate plan ultimately saving the company thousands of dollars a month in overage charges while allowing the sales representatives to continue to be in their natural mode.

Denying this hardwiring for long periods of time 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.

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