



Disaster-Workshop

How did we end up here? A dysfunctional team, tension, and an MBTI workshop.

By Christian Rook

It's Saturday morning.

The entire leadership team has been invited to a weekend workshop at a nearby castle. Why? Because communication in the management meetings isn't working. There's tension between individual team members—and not the productive kind.

They've tried everything: one-on-ones, feedback sessions—none of it really worked. On the contrary: things got personal. One example:

"She's never going to make it. She caused problems at her last company too. A friend of mine told me," M. sneers.

"I have no problem with M. I'm not even going to comment. He's just a very difficult program manager. Everyone knows that. Honestly, I think he has a problem with women," the HR director counters—pretending to sound neutral.

Well... that's not what neutrality sounds like. And they're not the only ones. Something's clearly off in this team.

So: weekend workshop.

And because things tend to get personal fast in this group, this time the focus is on personality and behavior.

When the CEO presents the plan at the weekly meeting, half the team rolls their eyes.

"Oh great, now we're doing that psychology crap too? What's the point?" the head of sales says—loudly, as always.

Disaster-Workshop!

How Did We End Up Here?



Program manager M. takes a subtler approach: *"I won't participate unless I get a written guarantee that my data will be deleted immediately. According to my research, the servers are located in the US. I don't want Elon Musk knowing about me."*

The CEO—aware of the tensions but more comfortable smiling problems away—backs off. He postpones the decision to the next meeting. A familiar strategy when he feels cornered.

When leadership itself isn't convinced, it tends to undermine initiatives—or hides behind excuses, hoping the issue will just go away.

What I hadn't mentioned yet: the idea for the workshop didn't come from the CEO.

It was HR's Head of Europe who brought it up—and "strongly recommended" the initiative.

The CEO knew: this was not something he could just sit out.

A model that shifts perspectives

Personally, I believe in what some dismiss as "psychobabble"—especially when it comes to behavior and leadership. That's why I was open to the MBTI workshop, which was to be facilitated by a certified coach.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is no magic bullet. But it *is* an excellent tool for self-reflection—and for explaining misunderstandings that aren't rooted in bad intent but in different thinking and perception patterns.

MBTI is based on four dimensions, each with two expressions. That results in 16 personality types. The more diverse the types on a team, the broader the perspectives—if you know how to harness them.

Dimension 1: Extraversion (E) vs. Introversion (I)

How we recharge energy

- E's recharge by interacting with others. I's recharge by retreating.
- E's speak to think. I's think before speaking.

On a Saturday night, an E wants to go out and socialize. An I prefers a quiet movie at home with one person.

Dimension 2: Sensing (S) vs. Intuition (N)

How we take in information

- S's focus on facts, details, and the present moment.
- N's look for patterns, possibilities, and abstract theories.

In a job interview, an S will walk through their résumé chronologically. An N will say something like, "*In my last role, I had the opportunity to...*"

Dimension 3: Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F)

How we make decisions

- T's are logical, objective, and principle-driven.
- F's are empathetic, values-based, and sensitive to context.

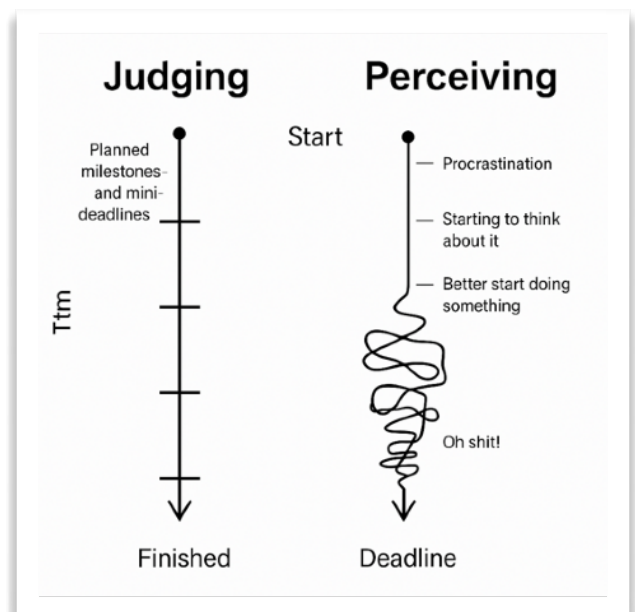
In a layoff situation, a T says: "*He knew the rules. He broke them. That's on him.*"

An F says: "*Yes, but we shouldn't forget what he's going through in his personal life.*"

Dimension 4: Judging (J) vs. Perceiving (P)

How we work

- J's thrive on structure, planning, and decisions.
- P's prefer flexibility, spontaneity, and options.



The J–P difference becomes especially obvious in project work (see diagram). A project has a fixed deadline. J and P are assigned to work together.

The J immediately outlines the tasks and divides the time into intervals. Then they approach the P to coordinate.

The P responds: "*Relax, we've got so much time.*"

The J walks away annoyed, thinking: *Total chaos.*

The P is confused, thinking: *What a control freak.*

As the project progresses, the J sticks to the plan.

The P procrastinates—and finishes in a high-energy "all-nighter" just before the deadline.

Surprisingly, the results can be equally good—regardless of the path taken.

Back to the workshop—or: How it all went wrong

The trainer—a business consultant with a

background in psychology—starts out smooth, charming, and confident. Within 30 minutes, even the skeptics are paying attention.

Then the self-assessment begins—and all hell breaks loose.

“This is fortune-telling! These questions are so vague, they fit anyone,” the head of sales (ENTJ) shouts.

M. (ISTJ) demonstratively opens his laptop and live-googles studies that debunk MBTI as unscientific.

The trainer stays calm: *“The MBTI is not a diagnostic tool—it’s a reflection tool.”*

But as the group work begins, things spiral.

“I can’t work constructively with her,” the head of sales says about the HR director (INFJ)—in front of everyone.

The CEO—an INTP and conflict-averse—remains silent. Eyes locked on his phone. The trainer suggests regrouping. M. gets up and leaves.

The CFO (also ENTJ) declares loudly: *“This was a waste of time from the start.”*

The CEO proposes an extended lunch break, *“so we can decide whether we want to continue afterward.”*

Reality check: The workshop has failed. The trainer quietly packs up, smiles politely, and leaves.

The chance for a real conversation? Gone.

And then something unexpected happens

Three days later, the head of marketing (ENFP) walks into my office.

“You know... I’ve been thinking more about the MBTI. And I think I now understand why the CFO and I always clash. I think in pictures. He thinks in Excel.”

A week later, I observe the head of sales in a calm, rational conversation with the head of production (ISTP).

“Okay, you need more data. As long as we agree on a deadline, I’m fine with that,” I hear him say.

At the next management meeting, the HR director—unusually—speaks up:

“Before we decide on this restructuring, we should also consider its impact on team morale.”

And the CFO? Nods.

“That’s a relevant point. We should take both perspectives into account.”

On paper, the workshop was a disaster. But it stirred something.

Not through pressure—but through ideas.

Not instantly—but with lasting impact.

MBTI wasn’t treated as truth—but as a lens. And that was enough.

And the CEO? Never brought it up again. A missed opportunity, no doubt.

But maybe the quiet ripple effect in the team was more powerful than any forced harmony.

Coincidence? Maybe.

Or the beginning of a team learning to see difference as strength.



Christian Rook

info@christianrook.com

www.christianrook.com