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# Integrating individuals and organizations: an introduction to team management systems for career professionals

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## Abstract

Describes the importance of team management to career development, as well as the meshing of organizational and individual needs, and views the career as a longitudinal concept. Describes the Team Management Index and the Types of Work Index and their application to career development. Presents the reliability and validity data on the Types of Work Index.

The traditional definitions of career management pay great homage to the merging of individual and organizational needs. The relative emphasis on the organization or individual varies, but the increasing number of training and HR specialists who have become involved in the area in the past ten years means that there is much more material available on the latter rather than the former. Amid the ethical argument of whether career development practitioners are primarily a resource for individual or organizational wellbeing, this article presents an introduction to a methodology which integrates the two. This is, of course, another contribution to the field which is rapidly coming to terms with the fact that valid and integrated methodologies are urgently required to maximize the contribution of career development practitioners. Of course, there are many others, the work of Stamp and Stamp[1], Holland[2] and Super[3], and the always developing contribution of Schein[4] being just some of them.

However, the further contribution of this article is very much on how the increasing complexity and fast rate of growth in organizations makes a team approach to both organizational and individual development essential. Both organizational performance and individual wellbeing, more and more, require skills of working with others in committees, planning groups, task forces and many other teams.

The traditional individual focus of the career-development profession, while still serving us well, needs to be augmented by the reality that managers spend most of their working lives in interdisciplinary and inter-functional teams, interacting with people who may have a totally different working style. Our research has already indicated that managers in different functional areas develop differing managerial preferences[5,6].

The marketing manager in the information technology industry, for instance, often finds himself working closely in teams with software development specialists, hardware specialists, systems analysts and programmers. All have their different style of managing which, to some extent, has been shaped by their professional specialization. It could be argued, for example, that the computer programmer has a more analytical and structured approach to managerial decision making and organization than the marketing manager, whose career socializes him to be more extroverted and

creative in his thinking. The innovative piece of software, and the new advances in information processing both need contributions from a wide variety of professionals and managers to make them work.

The effectiveness of a team depends to a large extent on how well these different managerial preferences are accepted and integrated in the group decision-making process. In a fast-changing world, where organizations are restructuring and having to respond to new environmental challenges every day, no longer can one team member have all the answers. The careers of both professionals and managers are inextricably bound with those of others, and any career development technology which ignores this can be found wanting.

### Describing work activities

Margerison and McCann[5] have found that managerial jobs can be described in terms of the eight work functions of advising, innovating, promoting, developing, organizing, producing, inspecting and maintaining[7].

These terms refer to the “types of work” which are critical to the effective conduct of a particular job, project or task and can be represented by a circular model (Figure 1).

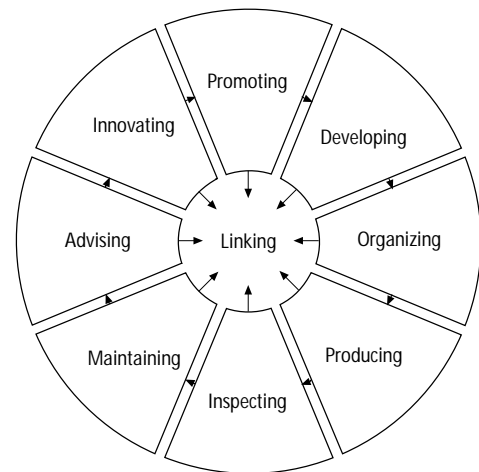
A further “type of work”, which is a skill rather than an affective trait, relates to the ability to link together the work of a team by effective communication and process skills.

Formal jobs, individual work projects and team projects can be described in terms of the importance of each of these types of work. The Types of Work Index (TWI) accomplishes this by providing job holders, their managers, associates and job design specialists with a questionnaire to measure their importance.

Data gathered over the past two years using the Types of Work Index have shown how managerial jobs differ not only in their technical requirements but also in their work style emphasis. See, for example, the emphasis on innovating, promoting and advising for consultants (Figure 2) and the emphasis on maintaining, producing and organizing for administration managers (Figure 3). Figures 4 and 5 provide other examples of “average” profiles of jobs.

Of course, as the above data are summated and averaged, the above differences are not as large as would normally be evidenced when comparing specific jobs. Individual jobs demonstrate large differences between the

Figure 1 The Margerison-McCann types of work model



- Advising: Giving and gaining information
- Innovating: Creating and experimenting with new ideas
- Promoting: Searching for and persuading others of new opportunities
- Developing: Assessing and testing the applicability of new approaches
- Organizing: Establishing and implementing ways and means of making things work
- Producing: Operating established systems and practices on a regular basis
- Inspecting: Checking and auditing that systems and contracts are working
- Maintaining: Ensuring that standards and processes are upheld

Figure 2 Critical types of work for consultants (own job ratings, mean percentage scores,  $n = 115$ )

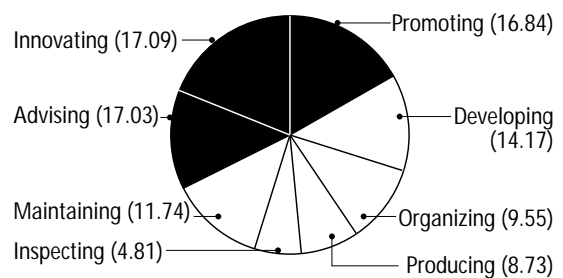


Figure 3 Critical types of work for administration managers (own job ratings, mean percentage scores,  $n = 92$ )

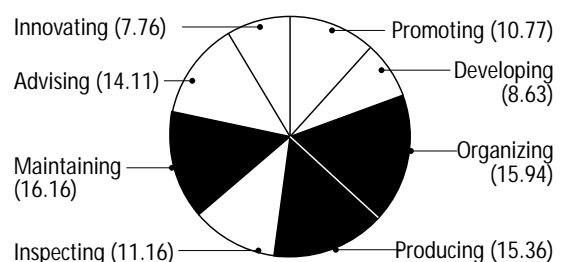


Figure 4 Critical types of work for finance/accounting managers (own job ratings, mean percentage scores,  $n = 11$ )

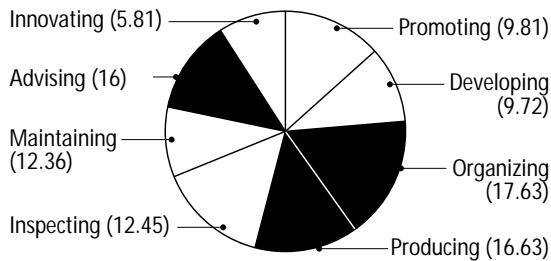
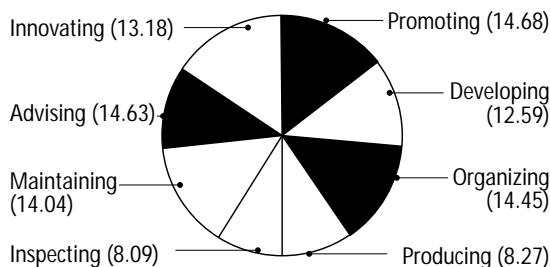


Figure 5 Critical types of work for sales/marketing managers (own job ratings, mean percentage scores,  $n = 22$ )



emphasis which respondents feel should be put on particular work functions.

Providing a profile of a job, along with the more technical job description, can give potential job applicants a good idea of the "way" in which a job should be performed, according to other people who would be affected (e.g. supervisors and associates). An important point here is that these data are deliberately subjective. There are no right or wrong answers, and indeed we find that current job holders and bosses are initially surprised that their perceptions of the job are so different when presented with the results. Subsequent discussion usually reveals that

they did indeed have a different view of *how* the job should be done, even though they might have agreed formally on *what* should be done. In the often subjective world of assessment, the former rather than the latter is often the cause of dissatisfaction on both sides. A discussion, whereby the priorities of the different types of work are agreed, often reaps great benefits for both the boss and the job holder.

Types of work profiles are not constrained by time. Often a job or project may start with emphasis on inspecting and producing while the job is being learned, for example, but changes to developing into some other type of work as time goes on.

Types of work profiles are not constrained by the title of the job. One computer programmer job, for example, may call on creative thought and the communicating of these ideas to others. Another job may need to be focused, for the most part, on detail work and strict scheduling of outputs (inspecting and producing).

### Reliability and test characteristics of the types of work index

The TWI has been developed over five different versions over four years and has been used in the USA, the UK, Europe, Asia and Australasia. An ongoing validation programme is assessing its validity among many different organizations, cultures and languages, and the latest update is available in the *Types of Work Manual*[8]. However, some of the data are presented here.

Table I presents the intercorrelations of the eight scales. It can be seen that, to a large extent, work functions adjacent to each other on the types of work model returned moderate positive correlations, while work functions opposite to each other tended to return slight,

Table I Intercorrelations of TWI scales (version 4,  $n = 88$ )

Advising	Innovating	Promoting	Developing	Organizing	Producing	Inspecting	Maintaining
Advising	0.60	0.49	0.49	0.28	0.01	0.09	0.27
Innovating		0.77	0.73	0.38	-0.23	-0.21	0.15
Promoting			0.54	0.43	-0.37	-0.34	0.17
Developing				0.45	-0.14	0.04	0.17
Organizing					0.06	0.26	0.35
Producing						0.72	0.44
Inspecting							0.46
Maintaining							

non-significant or negative correlations. The spatial distance of each element from the other (Figure 1) is reflected by their relationship as measured by the Types of Work Index.

Table II provides internal consistency estimates as calculated by Cronbach alpha coefficients. These values either match or are higher than the normally accepted reliability cut-off of 0.75. Most scales return particularly high values.

Research is ongoing to update these statistics as the samples and range of respondents expands. Norms for different occupational groups, sexes and countries will shortly be available and updated for reference and norm groups in the Institute of Team Management research updates.

### Describing the individual

The other side of the coin to job or work activities is assessment of individuals and teams. The Team Management Index (TMI) [5] provides the assessment technology to achieve this. Like managerial work, an individual's work preference can also be described in terms of the eight areas previously described. However, the nomenclature is changed to reflect the personal orientation. For example, a person who prefers inspecting work has personal preferences in the controller/inspector section of the team management wheel, the person who enjoys promoting work has a preference of explorer-promoter (see Figure 6).

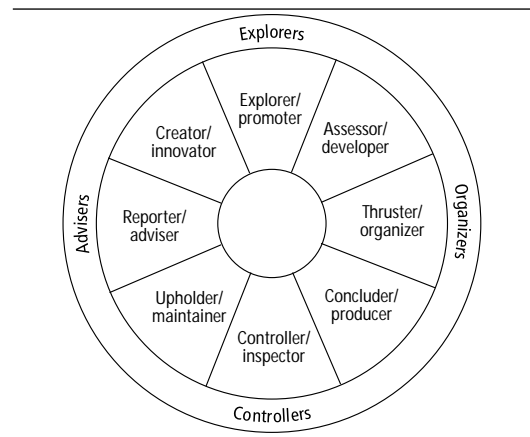
#### Creator/innovators

Creator-innovators are people who have a number of ideas which may well challenge and upset the existing way of doing things. Such people can be very independent and wish to experiment and pursue their ideas regardless of present systems and methods.

Table II Internal consistency of TWI scales (version 4, n = 88)

	Cronbach's alpha
Advising	0.83
Innovating	0.97
Promoting	0.91
Developing	0.90
Organizing	0.87
Producing	0.85
Inspecting	0.87
Maintaining	0.74

Figure 6 The Margerison-McCann team management wheel



They therefore need to be managed in such a way that their ideas have every opportunity to develop unfettered by organizational constraints. Otherwise they are likely to feel inhibited and their creative output may decrease.

#### Explorer/promoters

Explorer/promoters are usually excellent both at generating ideas and getting people enthusiastic about them. They will go out and find what is happening outside the organization and compare new ideas with what is being done by other people. They are also good at bringing back contacts, information and resources which can help innovation in the team. They are very capable of pushing an idea forward even if they are not always the best people to organize and control it.

They are usually influential, talk easily, even on subjects on which they are not experts, and enjoy searching for new opportunities and challenges. They can easily become bored and therefore like the challenge of moving from one project to another. They are particularly good at taking ideas from others (creator/innovators, for example) and promoting them enthusiastically to others.

#### Assessor/developers

Assessor/developers provide a balance between the "exploring" and "organizing" parts of the team management wheel. Often they look for ways and means of making an idea work in practice. Their concern is to see if the market wants the innovation and they will therefore test it against some practical criteria. Very often they will produce a prototype or do a market research study. Their whole interest is in developing an innovation to the point where it can work. In this regard

they are excellent “reality testers” and are unlikely to get carried away with ideas, as sometimes happens with explorer/promoters and creator/innovators.

However, once they have given ideas the “practical twist” to make them work in practice, they may well lose interest in the project and prefer to move off and work on another idea or project. The “producing” function they prefer to leave to others.

### **Thruster/organizers**

Thruster/organizers are the people who will get things done. Once they have been convinced that the “idea” is of interest they will set up procedures and systems and turn the idea into a working reality. They will organize people and systems to ensure that deadlines can be met.

They put emphasis on getting things done even if it does mean that, on the way, certain “feathers are ruffled”. They set objectives, establish plans, work out who should do what and then press hard to get results. They may at times be impatient when people or things get in their way but, being thruster/organizers, they will go through obstacles if they cannot get round them. They are task-oriented, like to work to timed deadlines and seek to control their world rather than let it control them.

### **Concluder/producers**

Concluder/producers take a great pride in producing a product or service to a standard. They will do this on a regular basis and feel fulfilled if they can deliver “what is expected, when it is expected”. Indeed, they like working to set procedures and doing things in a regular way. The fact that they produced something yesterday does not mean that they will be bored with producing it tomorrow. High standards of effectiveness and efficiency are important to them and their motto may well be “if a job is worth doing it is worth doing well”.

### **Controller/inspectors**

Controller/inspectors are people who enjoy doing detailed work and making sure that the facts and figures are correct. They will be careful and meticulous and often critical of errors or unsystematic work. Indeed, one of their great strengths is that they can concentrate for long periods of time on a particular task, often working alone in their quiet, individualistic way.

### **Upholder/maintainers**

Upholder/maintainers are usually people of strong conviction about the way in which things should be done. They are often the people who are most supportive of others in the team and can provide a lot of stability.

Their work preference is to consolidate – to make sure that everything is in order and working well before pressing on. They can therefore be reluctant to make changes unless it is absolutely necessary. They prefer to work in a control-oriented, supportive way, making sure that things are done in accordance with their standards.

Upholder/maintainers are loyal to organizations whose values match their own deep-seated beliefs. Usually they have a strong sense of what is “right” or “wrong” and are often driven by their own code of ethics.

### **Reporter/advisers**

Reporter/advisers are good at generating information and gathering it together in such a way that it can be understood. Such people are usually patient and prepared to hold off making a decision until they know as much as they can about the work to be done.

Reporter/advisers make excellent facilitators and are among the most liked people in an organization because of their interest in people and their willingness to listen with a “sympathetic ear”.

## **The Team Management Index**

A 60-item questionnaire measures an individual’s work preferences. The output is a 3-4,000-word profile which describes the characteristics of the highest scoring role preference, along with those of the next two sectors.

When both a TMI and a TWI is completed, a match score is also calculated which indicates the match between a person’s preferences and the types of work in which they are or will be involved.

Like the TWI, the TMI has also been fully validated, but with a worldwide sample of over 15,000 managers[6].

## **Implementation**

The richness of data available from these assessments provides a sound foundation on which to initiate career discussions either in organizations or individually, but a key benefit is the equal emphasis which this system gives

to both personal characteristics and the environment.

Current dissatisfaction with a job may, for example, be due to a mismatch of job requirements and individual work preferences. Discussions on how this imbalance can be redressed can focus on changing the work environment, or developing a liking for other types of work.

Questions which arise include: Can the job be redesigned? Is the project or job totally unsuitable for an individual's work preferences or does it provide a challenge to explore new ways of working? Is there a value in working in an area which calls on different work preferences or in learning to work with others who are different in their approach?

As an adjunct to career planning, the applications are obvious. Several clients have rated their ideal job using the TWI together with their present job and used this as a starting point for charting their career plan. A retrospective analysis of career change in the past can help to explain what used to be seen as random changes as a connected set of steps towards achieving a career goal.

A combination of TWI analyses can describe the "culture" of certain departments, units or whole organizations. A predominantly "promoting" culture, for example, may inhabit one unit, while another has an "advising" culture. Such analyses can help to explain why certain work behaviours are rewarded in some sections of the organization and punished in others. Our cross-cultural comparisons, for example, seem to suggest that managers in different countries have differing styles – expatriates working in other cultures need to be aware of these differences and how they can affect their work behaviour. It is also more than likely that certain jobs with the same name differ in the "how" rather than the "what" of performing specific activities.

Use of the above technologies can help career professionals to make very effective contributions to the organizations and people with whom they work. Finally, it is important to see a career as:

(1) *A longitudinal concept.* People can (and do) change their work preferences as they progress through different formal jobs

and work projects. This is nowhere more evident than in the transition from technical specialist to manager, where managers are called on to work with teams comprising a wider selection of colleagues who may indeed have different work preferences and expectations.

- (2) *A social as well as an individual concept.* Careers are influenced by others' careers. By viewing one's own career as part of a network of career paths within the organization, an extra dimension can be added to the process. More and more, a skill which is required is to be able to work effectively with others who have different styles and needs. The TMI helps to focus on the team factors at work in organizations.
- (3) *A meshing of individual and environment.* Focusing on one or the other of these can leave one blinded to the process of meshing, which is integral to successful career building. An assessment technology which uses the same model to describe both the individual and the environment provides opportunities to see inconsistencies, map career paths and underline them to become more aware of the dynamic and integrative process which is effective career management.

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