

# What's Your Marketing Personality?

Learn more about your marketing and management strengths and weaknesses by evaluating key personality traits.

by Kindra Gordon

Why are some people relatively calm, cool and collected when it comes to marketing cattle while others find it a nerve-racking, emotional roller coaster?

Part of the answer may lie in your personality style — such as how you make decisions, how you deal with emotional situations and how you handle change.

For instance, are you a people person, or would you rather be horseback by yourself all day? Your answer to that question reflects some of your personality — such as whether you are an extrovert, who draws energy from being around others, or an introvert, who works best alone.

Beth Eberspacher and Al Prosch, both with the ag economics department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, advocate that understanding your personality type and the personality traits of others who you work with can help make things go more smoothly in the workplace — be it an office or a farm.

“Understanding personalities helps you understand how you make decisions and where others

might be coming from. That can lower anxiety in the workplace,” explains Eberspacher.

As an example, she says some people have a personality that requires time and information to make a decision; other personalities might like to make choices on the spur of the moment. Recognizing and respecting those differences can help facilitate better communication, as well as help you understand your marketing style, she says.

## Different decision processes

Prosch explains that there are two main personality types — extroverts and introverts. Extroverts tend to like talking to everyone; they seek action; and they often act before they have a full understanding of all the details.

Introverts like to think things through; they want in-depth facts and knowledge; and they may think and think and never act.

Each personality has its own strengths and weaknesses, says Prosch. “We just need to learn to manage them,” he says.

Within these two categories, people tend to have one of

four distinct styles. Prosch and Eberspacher explain them as:

1) **Duty**, which is people who are organized, accurate and efficient. Prosch says, “These people like to follow the rules.”

2) **People**, which is individuals who are social, flexible and personable. Prosch says this tends to be the personality that volunteers and serves on boards.

3) **Competence**, which is people who are the analytical and scientific types.

4) **Now**, which is individuals who are the thrill seekers and creative types. But they are also the quick thinkers in a crisis.

Prosch says everyone has a little bit of each of these personality styles but most people have one or two styles that dominate their personalities.

## Marketing influence

Because these personality styles influence how you process information and make decisions, Prosch says they can also influence how you market.

For instance, Prosch says,

- The organized “duty” style will want to understand marketing strategies and is quite risk-averse.
- Whereas a “people” personality will act more on hunches instead of facts. This individual has a “go for it attitude.”

## Reading about personality types

Roy Smith recommends these books for more information about personality types:

“**Type Talk: The 16 Personality Types That Determine How We Live, Love, and Work**” by Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen

“**Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types**” by David Keirse and Marilyn Bates

“**Please Understand Me II: Temperament, Character, Intelligence**” by David Keirse

“**Nurture by Nature: How to Raise Happy, Healthy, Responsible Children Through the Insights of Personality Type**” by Paul D. Tieger, Barbara Barron-Tieger and E. Michael Ellovich

“**What Will I Do With My Money?**” by Ray Linder (offers insight on how your temperament affects your financial decisions) **HW**

## More marketing tips

Roy Smith, a Plattsmouth, Neb., farmer and marketing strategist, has studied the connection between personality types and farm marketing for years. He advocates that understanding your personality style will be beneficial to your marketing decisions.

From his own experience of farming for nearly 40 years, he offers these marketing insights:

- Don't be paralyzed by the fear of failure. Smith suggests taking small steps with

any marketing choices you make. He says, "Don't commit 100% of your crop to something the first time you sell it that way. Do 10-20% to try it, and if it works, do more. The only way to learn is to get educated and then try it."

- Join marketing clubs or have a support group of two to three people whom you can share ideas with. Smith says this is especially important if you have a strong thinking or judging

personality type. He adds that it also helps to have complementary personality types working together in an operation. "It often helps to have another opinion from a personality type that is different from your own," he says.

- Lastly, have a marketing plan based on historical data that includes a goal price and timeline, and use it as a guide. **HW**

- The "now" style will be very flexible with his marketing plan and actually enjoys the excitement of the risk. He sees marketing more as a game.
- The "competence" style will need to learn from a broker or consultant that he feels is very competent. Once he feels educated, he will be very independent in making his own decisions.

### Have a plan

Eberspacher emphasizes that the beneficial part of understanding personalities is that it gives insight to communication and decision-making. "It helps us understand why we and others do the things we do," she concludes.

The pair suggest knowing and focusing on your strengths. Then, team up with others who have strengths you don't have. They also suggest a written plan — be it for marketing, farm transfer or simply

farm business goals — can help take the emotions out of things and helps facilitate communication among all different personality styles. **HW**

**Editor's Note:** *If you'd like to learn more about your personality type, the following two Web sites offer the Myers-Briggs personality test online: [www.humanmetrics.com](http://www.humanmetrics.com) offers a free test and results; [www.keirsey.com](http://www.keirsey.com) charges \$14.95 for test results and detailed information about your personality type.*