

Your ThinkStyle™ Results



Why knowing **your** ThinkStyle is important

At Combustion, we know that becoming a super powered 'creative problem solver' requires a variety of skills. You need to know the process, but you also need to know how to collaborate with others to use it successfully. This is where things often get tricky. If you think back to previous ideation sessions, brainstorming or collaboration efforts, you'll probably recall some frustrations, stops and starts, energy lulls, friction and disagreements. While some of these are inevitable, many are a result of our individual 'ThinkStyle'.

ThinkStyle™ is a proprietary assessment tool that reveals the natural preference for how you go about solving problems. Some people prefer to develop thoughts or ideas very quickly and discover solutions that way, while others might find this overwhelming and would prefer a more structured, methodical and informed approach. When you put these two individuals in a room together and expect them to collaborate effectively, there's bound to be frustration and friction, not to mention little productivity. This is a reality of creative collaboration. So how do you work around these challenges? You don't – instead you work with them and learn to maximize everyone's individual strengths while minimizing and capitalizing on the differences!

Knowledge is power. And self-knowledge is super power. By understanding why and how you are likely to behave in certain situations, you can be empowered to not only prepare, but to adapt your behaviors to make you the best ideator and problem solver that you can be.

This is why knowing your ThinkStyle, as well as other's is so critical. Once you understand why you have a tendency to behave a certain way and what value and challenges this brings, you can learn to capitalize on your super power and evolve and adapt your challenges to work more effectively within a team.

ALL THINKSTYLES ARE CRITICAL TO SUCCESS



There isn't a 'best' or ideal ThinkStyle. They are all equally necessary for success. Knowing your ThinkStyle should empower - not control or limit you. And it also doesn't automatically entitle you to control or leadership in certain parts of the process. Each ThinkStyle is equally capable of performing extremely well in all phases and stages of the creative problem solving process.

No matter what your natural style is, you can also learn to transcend it to become as well rounded an ideator as possible. Mixing ThinkStyles in any collaborative effect will get you far better results, not to mention help to short circuit conflict. So be sure to mix it up, and learn to appreciate and respect the different ThinkStyles. You're all super powered in your own right!

ThinkStyles & Business results

Whether you're a leader, manager, or team member, knowing your own and others' ThinkStyles can be critical to getting the best business results possible. For example, if you discover that your entire team is heavily weighted in only one or two ThinkStyles, it may explain why you or they have experienced struggles working through challenges methodically, thoroughly and effectively.

In order to be the most powerful team possible, it's important to comprise it of a balanced portfolio of ThinkStyles. This way there will be natural champions for each step of the problem solving process and ensure problems are being as equally investigated as solutions. While training can definitely help people become more adept at multiple ThinkStyles, it's a major asset to know what kind of tendencies your teams currently have so you can support, combine, adapt and elevate natural skill sets to maximum effect. This balanced team approach can lead to the 'better, smarter, faster' thinking that all organizations seek.

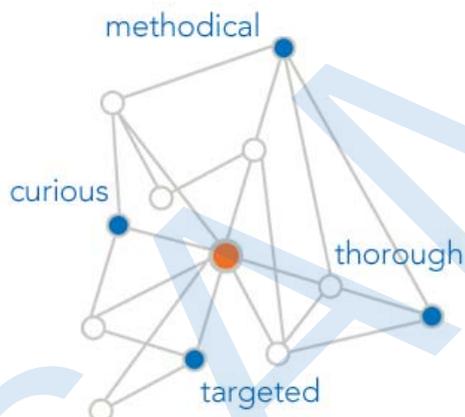
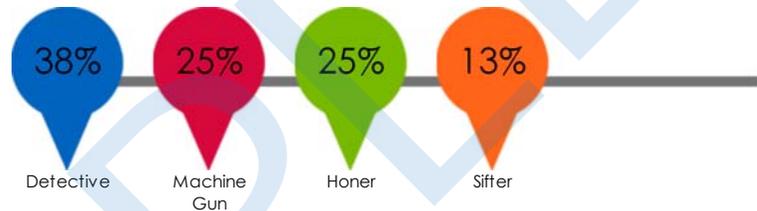


Detective traits:

As a Detective, you're constantly seeking clarity, understanding and focus. You want to ensure that any ideation session has a clear purpose and outcomes. You want to know 'why' more than 'what' and like to ask lots of questions. Only through this process can your brain start to slowly generate ideas. You may be equally capable of introverted and extroverted ideating, but you prefer a more quiet and thoughtful approach.

You recognize the critical need to clearly identify and state the opportunity before ideating and only experience satisfaction when you feel that the real problem is being solved. You prefer to have as much information as possible prior to any creative problem solving session and if given the opportunity, you'd like to have time to study and test that background before starting.

Your contribution to sessions is likely to be a combination of well-formed and provocative questions and thoughtfully considered ideas. In the divergence phase of ideation, you are very capable of generating lots of ideas. But if you don't feel that the session is targeted, you are likely to be reluctant to share them. You are also generally comfortable during the convergence phase if the team appears to be on track.



Detective superpowers:

When it comes to any kind of problem solving session, you are the human equivalent of a site on a rifle. Your primary desire is to ensure that everyone in the room is lined up to be as targeted, informed and prepared as possible. Although all ThinkStyles will benefit greatly from your contribution, Machine Guns in particular need your partnership to be highly successful.

You have a knack for asking the kinds of questions that stop people in their tracks – which can be frustrating for others at first. You're not satisfied by surface answers and are willing and able to dig deeper to uncover the 'ask behind the ask'.

You're willing to spend time researching background to prepare for a session and will want to share it with others. Through your patience and thoroughness, challenges are likely to be better investigated and as a result, better set up for success. Your contribution is invaluable – especially during the initial stages of any ideation session.

Detective challenges:

By nature, Detectives can often be overly cautious during ideation sessions. Your need to 'know' before you 'do' can be counterintuitive at times and you may find yourself stalling out as a result. In the extreme, your caution or need for clarification can end up holding back the entire group from making progress. This can cause frustration for everyone and a 'push pull' dynamic.

Detectives rarely feel completely equipped or prepared to ideate freely. You would rather develop ideas slowly and carefully – testing and measuring at every opportunity. Although this might be your instinct, it is not necessarily one that will best serve you. Once the challenge has been thoroughly investigated, it's important for you to generate ideas along with the group – even though you may be questioning their value. This will help you to strengthen your ability to connect problem and solution in a more free-form way and will ultimately make you a better ideator.

Always remember that ideas will be evolved, developed, tweaked and honed in convergence and your investigative skills will be equally important then. It's important to remember the 10/100 Rule of Ideation: in the 10 minutes you may want to take discussing the merits or validity of an idea, you could easily come up with 100 more ideas.

Your influencing ThinkStyles are:



While everyone will have a dominant ThinkStyle, there will also be other ThinkStyles that influence behavior. For example, some may have a high tendency towards one ThinkStyle and score very low across other (influencing) styles. This is someone who is likely to be extremely comfortable in some aspects of the process and equally uncomfortable in others.

Again, there are no 'good' or 'bad' influencing styles. But there are combinations that are more common or uncommon than others. For example, it is less common for someone to be both an extreme Machine Gun and Honer as these ThinkStyles are at either ends of the spectrum. A Machine Gun and Sifter combo is more common as they are both in the ideation realm. But each person is unique and some people will even discover they have a largely equal set of ThinkStyles. This just means that their skills are evenly balanced. Remember – this is a self-awareness tool, not an indicator of abilities!

MACHINE GUN

Machine Guns are typically very fast ideators, able to produce tons of ideas on the spot and on demand. They thrive in brainstorming environments and as a result, are very popular at ideation or problem solving sessions. Unlike Detectives, they need very few triggers to get their minds firing. Because of their passion for the simple act of generating ideas, they don't mind being stopped and sent off in a new direction at any stage. This makes them open and flexible in the ideation part of the creative problem solving process. Machine Guns gain energy from the act of ideation and are usually the most enthusiastic participants in a brainstorm. Their greatest challenge is staying in the problem long enough to ensure the right opportunities are being identified before the ideas start flowing.

HONER

Honers are happiest in the final development stages of an ideation session. For them, generating ideas can often feel like hard labour – something you have to get through in order to get to the 'good part' – the executional details. In fact, if you simply brought them a fully fleshed out idea, they would be perfectly happy as they're focus is on how to actually make the idea work in the real world. While they tend not to be high-powered 'divergers', they are essential to success during convergence as they will bring a strong reality check to the process. A Honer's greatest challenge is in staying engaged for the end-to-end process, not just waiting for their moment in the sun – and knowing that the quality of their ideas, despite the volume, are equally good.

SIFTER

Sifters possess the uncanny ability to spot a great idea before other ThinkStyles, even in its rawest form. Even in the midst of brainstorming chaos, they are able to laser fix on potential solutions and start to develop them in their minds. They most enjoy the process of organizing and categorizing ideas as this better helps them to clarify their thinking and assessment of ideas – but this does not limit their idea generation abilities. They are essential for keeping the problem solving process moving forward at the convergence stage, which other ThinkStyles may find daunting or frustrating. A Sifter's greatest challenge is not to fixate, obsess or get stuck on one particular idea over others before the entire process has played out.

Detectives & collaboration

Detectives work easily with: **Honers**

Detective and Honers share a passion for understanding, precision and focus. While Detectives are more fixated on the investigation or problem finding part of the process, Honers are most concerned with the details around bringing the idea to life from a practical and executional perspective. This makes you equally cautious and methodical during the process and you will both enjoy the discussion around the 'why' of ideas and solutions.

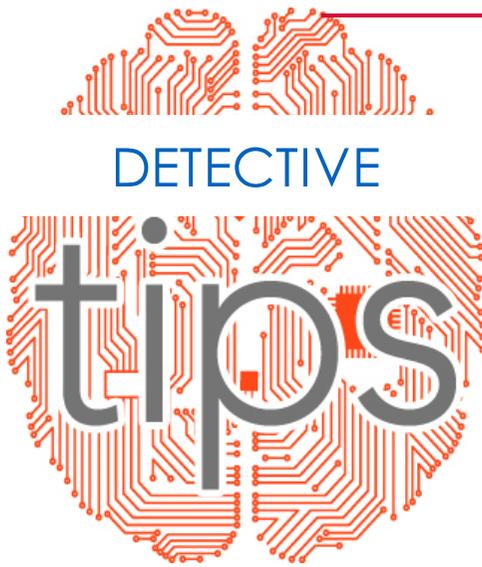
The trick to effective collaboration is to not let you drag each other down the proverbial rabbit hole. With your shared passion for the details, Detectives and Honers can so get so fixated on minutiae that they lose sight of the bigger picture; usually the one filled with "what if" and possibility. So while you might agree on the need for clarity, you also have to learn to be free thinkers when the time comes. Because of your shared challenges in this, your best collaboration can often be simply in encouraging each other to worry less when it comes to generating ideas without judgement.

Detectives may experience frustration with: **Machine Guns**

"Whoa, whoa – hang on a second. I don't think we have enough information to start brainstorming yet." This observation and comment is very common for Detectives when problem solving. So while Machine Guns are eager to get down to generating solutions, Detectives are equally eager to delve more deeply into the problem. This situation can prove extremely frustrating for both parties. But if you can establish some agreed upon guidelines or timelines on how to work together without friction, you'll collaborate your way to collective genius! For example, Detectives can prepare some background for the team and share it in advance and then once in the session, the team can agree on how long they'll allow for questioning and investigation before moving to idea generation. This way the structure won't be dependent on personal preferences, rather on productivity.

Despite initial frustrations, you can also really help Machine Guns develop their skills. If you can effectively communicate the value of some upfront consideration, you can gradually teach Machine Guns how to slow down and become more informed. This can really up the quality of output all around. Likewise, learning to be more playful once solid background has been established can actively free your mind and make you less precious during ideation. When this partnership works, it can be the most powerful of all ThinkStyle collaborations!





Detective Performance Tips:

- Spend time preparing for a brainstorm in advance. Ask for information. If the 'client' doesn't have any, offer to help them prepare. Your skills will be invaluable in this area and will allow you to feel more comfortable when you get into the room.
- Set yourself targets for how many ideas you want to contribute at a minimum. This will force you to go beyond your comfort zone to achieve your 'number'. And take note of how quickly you get there. Then up that number every time you go into the room until contributing hundreds of ideas no longer feels so daunting.
- Don't volunteer to be the facilitator during the problem finding stage. You want to stay focused on being a major contributor during this critical time.
- Make sure to ask for introverted idea generation techniques to be included in the process. Machine Guns may naturally push the room to mainly extroverted techniques so make sure your preference is considered too.
- Try to look at the convergence phase as just another problem solving exercise. The question now becomes "In what ways can we turn all of these seemingly disjointed ideas into coherent ones?" This can challenge your Detective brain if you let it!

Detective Collaboration Tips:

- Find a Machine Gun in your organization that you easily connect with. Work together to become a 'super' ideation team by sharing insights and approaches in advance. They need your skills as much as you need theirs and the better you can understand and communicate with each other, the more powerful you'll both be.
- Learn when to hold on and when to let go. If you had your way, the process would be weighted 80% problem finding and 20% solution finding – as you believe a problem well defined is easily solved. While this argument may have merit, it won't be the natural view of others in the room. Aim for 50 / 50 and try to become aware of when you're acting like a dog with a bone. Give in every once in a while and trust the process. And then on the occasions you're absolutely sure the team isn't solving the right problem, you can dig your heels in to great effect.
- Try learning some facilitation techniques. Your probing and deductive skills can really help move an entire team towards well informed solutions. Being the designer and facilitator of sessions that require real investigation can help teach you to appreciate the entire process and be more comfortable in the environment as a result.
- Learn to ask 'killer questions' instead of being an 'idea killer'. Prepare a list of really smart and provocative questions that you can bring into any ideation session. For example, when trying to identify the real challenge, be the first person to ask "If we solved this problem, would our problem really be solved?" or "how would our business be different in 6 months if we solved this problem?"
- If you find yourself becoming disconnected from the process halfway through, instead of torturing yourself, simply take a break. Let the rest of the team work through categorizing and then come back for some team clustering and use your provocateur skills. It may help you stay focused, refreshed and objective.