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**THINK SMART PROFILE**

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## **The Importance of Thinking**

Thinking about thinking is not new. Trying to understand and differentiate between people and how they think, both similarly and differently, has fascinated scientists and scholars for thousands of years. The current speed of change, particularly in the light of new technology, means that we are expected to do everything more quickly, including thinking. As has always been the case however, we need help in learning 'how' to think effectively. Understanding some of the different thinking styles which are required of us and available to us, is something that is rarely taught effectively, either at school or in the workplace.

Think Smart has been developed to help you to understand some of the different ways in which you think. It identifies your thinking strengths and potential 'weak spots' and explains how you can develop your thinking strategies and flexibility. Think Smart gives you powerful and effective thinking strategies which you can apply in all areas of your work. Spending time developing your thinking skills will make you more successful at work.

### **How to Understand your Profile and Use your Report**

Your Think Smart profile measures your preference levels for 10 different styles of thinking. These are divided into your Sensory Focus, People Focus and Task Focus. Sensory Focused thinking relates to the ways you prefer to receive information via your senses. People Focused thinking relates to the ways you tend to interact with other people. Task Focused thinking relates to the ways you tend to approach tasks and problem solving.

An explanation of how to interpret the significance of your scores is given below. Your personal Think Smart profile and percentage scores for each of the thinking styles are shown on page 4. Detailed descriptions for each style of thinking are shown on pages 5 - 8. The implications of your personal Think Smart profile in terms of strengths and potential weaknesses are shown on page 11. More information about how you can develop your cognitive fitness and thinking skills flexibility is shown on pages 12 - 13.

If you have any questions regarding your Think Smart report, please contact the Think Smart support team, at [thinksmart@cognitivefitness.co.uk](mailto:thinksmart@cognitivefitness.co.uk).

### **Your Think Smart Scores Explained**

Your Profile is likely to consist of a variety of high, moderate and low preference scores for the various types of thinking which Think Smart measures. These are derived from the responses you have given to the statements in the questionnaire. It is important to remember that Think Smart measures preference levels only. It does not measure your actual ability to think in the ways described, even though it is true to say that you are likely to be naturally most effective at thinking in your preferred ways.

The distinction between preferences versus abilities is an important one, particularly where you are matching people to specific jobs. It is a common mistake to think that a higher score is always a 'better' score. It is someone's unique combination of scores viewed in connection with the thinking and behavioural dynamics of the other team members which will make one person more suitable for a specific job role compared to someone else.

- It is quite usual to have a variety of scores across your profile. There will probably be some types of thinking that you really enjoy and have a natural preference for doing, and there will be other types of thinking which you may dislike.

- Each type of thinking is independent of the other types of thinking and any combination of scores is possible. For example, it is possible to have a high preference for all three Sensory styles of thinking. This profile is unusual for most people, however it is quite a common profile for teachers and those people involved in educating and training others.
- Despite what some people may think, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' ways of thinking. For example, it is possible to complete a crossword or a word game by using a number of different strategies, however some strategies will be more successful, more effective and quicker than others.
- Within any job role it is someone's thinking preferences combined with their skills, knowledge and attitudes which makes them unique, and there may be some combinations which will make certain people in that role more successful than others.
- Within any industry or specific job role it is possible, even quite likely, that those people who are very good at their jobs will share some key thinking styles, critical to their success. For example, the most successful lawyers are likely to have a preference for a Trouble Shooting strategy. This explains why they dislike taking unnecessary risks, are motivated by problems and crisis situations and tend to make contingency plans to pre-empt potential problems before they occur.

### **Your Preference Levels Explained:**

#### **High Preference Level 71% - 100%**

- To achieve this score you will have agreed or strongly agreed with the statements in the questionnaire relating to this type of thinking. This means that you are likely to display most of the thinking strategies and behaviours described within the detailed descriptions.
- It is possible that colleagues at work may rely on you to do this type of thinking for them, particularly if they have a lower preference for this thinking style than you do.

#### **Moderate Preference Level 31% - 70%**

- You may have agreed or sometimes agreed with all of the statements relating to a particular type of thinking.
- You are likely to use many, although possibly not all, of the thinking strategies and behaviours described.
- Using certain thinking strategies some of the time indicates your flexibility of thinking at this level.

#### **Low Preference Level 0% - 30%**

- This means that you are unlikely to display many of the thinking strategies and behaviours described although some of them may be true of you.
- Because of your low preference, potentially, these areas of thinking could be 'weak spots' for you at work. If you think that this may be the case, it is possible for you to develop your thinking skills by the focused application of specific thinking exercises and strategies. Refer to your Personal Development Plan and Review Strategy at the end of this report to find out what you can do next.

## Your Think Smart Scores

**SENSORY FOCUS:** measures how you tend to prefer to receive information via your senses.



### Visual Thinking

relates to visual information and clarity.



### Auditory Thinking

focuses on words and listening.



### Intuitive Thinking

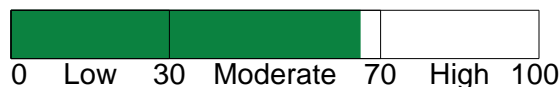
relies on feelings and emotions.

**PEOPLE FOCUS:** measures how you tend to prefer to inter-react with other people.



### Conformist Thinking

is associated with fitting in and avoiding conflict.



### Challenging Thinking

takes a confrontational approach.

**TASK FOCUS:** measures how you tend to prefer to approach tasks and problem solving at work.



### Creative Thinking

makes connections and multi-tasks.



### Logical Thinking

thinks sequentially and prefers facts.



### Simplicity Thinking

simplifies issues if possible.



### Complexity Thinking

enjoys difficult and complex issues.



### Trouble Shooter Thinking

identifies problems to be avoided.

## SENSORY FOCUS



### Visual Thinking

Someone with a preference for Visual Thinking will:

- Present information in a clear visual format and may dislike too much information being presented at once as this reduces the clarity of the message.
- Learn by looking and watching and will interpret information more quickly if diagrams or sketches are used.
- Think very quickly and they may speed read or skim documents.
- Dislike 'being kept in the dark' by colleagues.
- Have an internal visual representation inside their head regarding the way something looks or should look although they may lack the words to clearly articulate their vision and what they 'see'.
- Sometimes process information too quickly for their colleagues, leaving all parties feeling frustrated.

Your score suggests that you have a **High Preference** for Visual Thinking.

You are likely to be regarded as a "quick thinker" by some of your colleagues but you may become frustrated with their slower pace. You will prefer information to be clear, ideally presented using a visually interesting format. You will probably be motivated by being shown what to look for and by being involved in issues that move forward quickly.



### Auditory Thinking

Someone with a preference for Auditory Thinking will:

- Like to talk things through with colleagues, sometimes at length.
- Become frustrated without the opportunity to discuss and debate issues.
- Tend to be good listeners and can often 'overhear' parallel conversations.
- Become overwhelmed if colleagues talk over one another.
- Pay particular attention to the words and language used by other people and dislike the use of 'sloppy' or inappropriate language.
- Sometimes be so busy listening to their own internal dialogue, that they don't hear what is said to them by colleagues.

Your score suggests that you have a **High Preference** for Auditory Thinking.

You are likely to be a good listener and you will want to talk things through with your colleagues, becoming frustrated if you do not have the opportunity to debate issues with them. You will probably enjoy words and their usage and may enjoy reading or writing reports. However, you may find that sometimes your communications with colleagues are 'too wordy' for them and that you use ten words where two carefully selected words would be equally as effective.



### Intuitive Thinking

Someone with a preference for Intuitive Thinking will:

- Focus on how they feel about a task, project, person or issue.
- Rely on intuition and emotion to make decisions.
- Have an emotional commitment to their colleagues and their work.
- Bring passion and energy to the team.
- Often have a high degree of physical energy.
- Sometimes rely on instincts or emotions without the supporting evidence to balance their thinking and decision making.

Your score suggests that you have a **High Preference** for Intuitive Thinking.

You are likely to feel comfortable involving your feelings and emotions when you are making decisions at work and you will be a passionate and energetic member of any team. However, you may find that sometimes colleagues do not give you the time you need to consider issues, as they may push you to make decisions too quickly. They may also fail to understand your need to walk around or take short breaks in long meetings.

## PEOPLE FOCUS



### Conformist Thinking

Someone with a preference for Conformist Thinking will:

- Take a non-confrontational approach wherever possible.
- Try to avoid what they perceive to be an argument or disagreement.
- Like to fit in and prefers not to 'stand out in a crowd'.
- Be flexible and adaptable, matching the culture of an organisation or team.
- Avoid challenging others, and if they do, will tend to challenge in a gentle, conciliatory way rather than a direct confrontation.
- Find being challenged by colleagues uncomfortable and may agree just to keep the peace, with no intention of implementing or supporting whatever they have agreed to.

Your score suggests that you have a **Moderate Preference** for Conformist Thinking.

This indicates that you will prefer to take a non-confrontational approach at work, but that you also have the flexibility to challenge when necessary. You will be able to apply Conformist Thinking strategies when you think it is appropriate to the circumstances and you will be able to adapt to a team where your colleagues have a variety of Conformist Thinking preferences.



### Challenging Thinking

Someone with a preference for Challenging Thinking will:

- Challenge frequently others about what is being done, the reasons for it and how it is being implemented.
- Challenge the status quo and the boundaries at work.
- Think an issue through by initially disagreeing with others about it.
- Dislike being told what to do or that something cannot be done.
- Frequently employ a high risk strategy to achieve their objectives.
- Be difficult to manage at times.
- Be quite likely to upset other team members who dislike conflict.

Your score suggests that you have a **Moderate Preference** for Challenging Thinking.

You are likely to dislike being told what to do and you will often challenge issues at work, although you may not always feel able to challenge things directly. You are likely to have the flexibility to apply Challenging Thinking strategies when you think it is appropriate to the circumstances and you will be able to adapt to a team where your colleagues have a variety of Challenging Thinking preferences.



## TASK FOCUS



### Creative Thinking

Someone with a preference for Creative Thinking will:

- Make connections and see patterns and often be imaginative in all areas of their work.
- Multi-task and juggle a number of pieces of work concurrently.
- Often go off at a tangent and not finish a task or activity, (or even a sentence when they are speaking!).
- Become bored by routine and mundane tasks.
- Think quickly and have high energy levels, being energised by the creative thinking process.
- Often think backwards from the answer, outcome or ultimate goal.
- Sometimes contribute ideas that, although innovative, are impractical to implement.

Your score suggests that you have a **High Preference** for Creative Thinking.

You are considered by your colleagues to be a highly innovative member of the team and they may rely on you to come up with creative solutions to problems and to make connections that they are not able to generate. You may find that you tend to work things out backwards, starting with your ultimate goal and then going back to the beginning to work towards it. You are likely to be motivated by the possibility of being creative in your work and you will probably be easily distracted, finding that you 'go off at a tangent' at times, something which your more Logical Thinking colleagues may find frustrating.



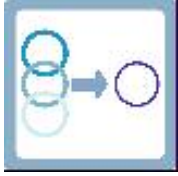
### Logical Thinking

Someone with a preference for Logical Thinking will:

- Think sequentially and will focus on the facts and the evidence.
- Prefer to finish one job before moving on to the next activity.
- Be ordered and disciplined, conscientious and tenacious, and dislike cutting corners.
- Prefer structure and order within their working day.
- Need a 'tidy' environment; clutter and mess distract them to the extent that they find it impossible to function effectively.
- Not perform well if expected to multi-task and may even slow their team down by insisting that everything is done in a logical and sequential order.

Your score suggests that you have a **Moderate Preference** for Logical Thinking.

Being able to think and work sequentially with a degree of structure and order are important to you at work, however you may also have the flexibility to work effectively in more creative environments. You are likely to have the flexibility to apply Logical Thinking strategies when you think it is appropriate to the circumstances and you will be able to adapt to a team where your colleagues have a variety of Logical Thinking preferences.



### Simplicity Thinking

Someone with a preference for Simplicity Thinking will:

- Simplify an issue if they can.
- Probably not include all of the relevant information or go into very much detail.
- Prefer the 'easy' way of doing things.- Keep things easy to manage if they possibly can.
- Perceive things as being 'easy' rather than 'difficult'.
- Under-estimate the complexity of a task or an issue.
- 'Over-simplify' issues at work thereby sometimes missing important information and frustrating colleagues.

Your score suggests that you have a **Moderate Preference** for Simplicity Thinking.

This means that you are likely to think of things as being "easy" and you will prefer to simplify information if at all possible. However, it also means that you are likely to be able to deal with complex tasks if required. You will have the flexibility to apply Simplicity Thinking strategies when you think it is appropriate to the circumstances and you will be able to adapt to working within a team where your colleagues have a variety of Simplicity Thinking preferences.



### Complexity Thinking

Someone with a preference for Complexity Thinking will:

- Perceive issues as being 'difficult' rather than 'easy'.
- Be motivated by a degree of challenge and complexity.
- Become frustrated if they are given projects or tasks which they perceive as being 'too easy' and not challenging enough for them.
- Be attracted to work that is considered difficult or complicated by others.
- Link issues together and consider the implications of issues.
- Possibly 'over-complicate' issues and make them difficult unnecessarily, although they are unlikely to do this deliberately.

Your score suggests that you have a **High Preference** for Complexity Thinking.

This means that you will be motivated by complexity and you are likely to enjoy working on "difficult" and challenging tasks that other people find too challenging to work on. However, it also means that you may have a tendency to become bored quite quickly if you think that your work is too "easy" for you. Potentially you may be inclined to 'over-complicate' issues, thereby making things appear more complicated than they really need to be which can sometimes lead to confusion with your colleagues.



### Trouble Shooter Thinking

Someone with a preference for Trouble Shooter Thinking will:

- Dislike taking unnecessary risks.
- Tend to think in terms of risk management.
- Focus on what could go wrong, identifying which problems and potential problems need to be avoided in order to ensure success.
- Make appropriate contingency plans and pre-empt problems.
- Focus on preventing past problems from happening again.
- Be motivated by crisis situations and problems.
- Sometimes create problems to solve and fires to fight unnecessarily.

Your score suggests that you have a **Moderate Preference** for Trouble Shooter Thinking.

The implications of your score are that you will sometimes focus on what could go wrong in situations, but you do not have a strong preference for all the thinking strategies described above. In fact, you may even dislike some of them. You are likely to have the flexibility to apply Trouble Shooter Thinking strategies when you think it is appropriate to the circumstances and you will be able to adapt to a team where your colleagues have a variety of Trouble Shooter Thinking preferences.

## Your Thinking Strategy Strengths

These are the types of thinking that you have scored most highly in. They will be the thinking strategies which you access and use most often across the broadest variety of circumstances.

For example:

Sean Connery, the actor who played James Bond in many of the 007 films, says, "*I always attempt to make everything as simple as possible - whatever it is*". This suggests that he may have a preference for Simplicity Thinking which he applies across most situations.

Your thinking strategy strengths are likely to be:

- Creative Thinking
- Auditory Thinking
- Visual Thinking

## Your Potential Thinking Strategy Development Areas

Please be aware that:

- Any thinking strategy is only a weakness if it is inappropriate in the circumstances or if it causes you or other people problems of some kind.
- Your thinking style development areas are likely to be those types of thinking that you have a low preference or tolerance for. You may actively dislike thinking in these ways and avoid them if possible.
- It is probable that you will not actively choose to use the thinking strategies you have a low score for, particularly if you can rely on someone else to do those types of thinking for you.

Your potential thinking strategy development areas are likely to be:

- Logical Thinking
- Trouble Shooter Thinking
- Conformist Thinking

If you decide that you want to develop these thinking strategies refer to your Personal Development Plan and Review Strategy at the end of this report for details of what you can do next.

## Your Potential Conflicts With Others

Conflict can occur between colleagues at times. This could be due to a difference in your thinking preferences, which can lead to misunderstandings and frustration, or it may be due to specific circumstances, high levels of stress or pressure. Some people feel more comfortable dealing with conflict than others. Your Moderate preference for Challenging Thinking suggests that there may be occasions when you find it necessary to challenge others although this does not necessarily mean that you will be in conflict with them.

This, combined with your Moderate preference for Conformist Thinking suggests that there will be times when you will find it appropriate to conform at work.

## Your Personal Development Plan and Review Strategy

Although the brain learns very quickly, the development of any new skill requires the repeated conscious application of the appropriate techniques. Developing your existing thinking skills or even developing new thinking strategies is no different; you need to practice more than once to be successful! Over time, and as you review your progress, you will find that what used to require conscious thought and effort will become much easier, perhaps even 'second nature'.

Following the steps outlined below is a useful development and review strategy.

### Step 1

Review your Think Smart profile and decide which thinking styles you want to develop and why. Make a mental note or jot down how developing these thinking skills will benefit you. e.g.

*"I want to develop my Auditory Thinking skills so I can become a better listener and I don't miss what's being said at meetings".*

### Step 2

Start keeping a diary. Make a note of times when you catch yourself using the thinking skills you want to develop. It's also useful to notice other peoples' successful strategies. e.g.

*"I caught myself day dreaming in a meeting today and I missed what was being said. When I looked over the table at John I noticed that he was watching the person who was speaking and making short notes about what they said, whereas I was trying to remember everything! He then quoted back to people the exact words they had used later in the meeting - so it really seemed as if he had been listening and paying attention. Everyone was very impressed, - including me! It's a strategy I'm going to use in the future".*

### Step 3

Visit the Cognitive Fitness web site at [www.cognitivefitness.co.uk](http://www.cognitivefitness.co.uk) for free Thinking Skills exercises and practical work-based examples to help you develop those thinking skills you have decided to work on.

### Step 4

Take the time to reflect and review your personal progress every few months. A more focused review where you discuss your progress and successes with a friend, colleague or your line manager once a year will remind you to continue to practice the development of your Thinking Skills.

Unless you experience a significant change in your life (such as starting a new job), your Think Smart profile is likely to remain stable for about a year, possibly even longer. After this time you may find that your profile has changed slightly, particularly if you have consciously made the effort to use a wider variety of thinking strategies and develop your thinking skills.

If you change your job, move job role or join a new organisation you will find it useful to re-map your Think Smart profile after a settling in period in order to double check that your thinking strategies match the demands of your job. If you find that they do not, you will be able to review your development plan accordingly and develop more appropriate and effective strategies to make you more successful at work.

### Team Development using Think Smart:

Although Think Smart has been designed primarily for individuals, you can use it with your team to develop a shared understanding of individual thinking preferences and the thinking strategies of the team as a whole. This greater understanding will allow you to work to individual and combined strengths. You can develop any potential 'weak spots' within the team's thinking, and reduce some of the problems and frustrations involved in working with a diverse group of people.

## What You Can Do Next

### **For Yourself:**

If you are interested in learning more about your thinking styles and how they affect your behaviour, communication and influencing skills your next step would be to complete your Thinking Styles profile. Thinking Styles measures a further 16 different types of thinking which are critical for individual success. Thinking Styles can map two-way partnerships, highlighting areas of synergy and potential areas of conflict within your relationships at work. People in small companies, where working successfully in partnership is vital, find this particularly useful.

If you would like to know more, visit our web site: [www.thinkingstyles.co.uk](http://www.thinkingstyles.co.uk) where you can download the questionnaire. Thinking Styles is a psychometric instrument and we offer facilitated and confidential feedback.

### **For Your Team:**

Do you want your team to be more than the sum of its parts? Cognitive Team Roles has been designed to help you create exceptional, talented teams that exceed expectations. Your team profile is mapped against the 10 types of thinking which are critical to successful team performance. With Cognitive Team Roles you can:

- Develop greater awareness and understanding of your team's individual thinking preferences
- Balance the team's focus of attention on using the most appropriate thinking strategies for each task
- Identify any critical area of weakness within the team before it adversely effects team performance

The Cognitive Team Roles process is facilitated by a Cognitive Fitness consultant who will guide and support you and your team throughout your development. If you would like to know more about Cognitive Team Roles visit our web site at [www.cognitivefitness.co.uk](http://www.cognitivefitness.co.uk).

### **For Your Organisation:**

We strongly believe that within any organisation the difference between average performance and excellence critically lies in the quality of the thinking that occurs within individuals and teams. Poor quality thinking and inflexible thinking strategies lead to inappropriate and ineffective actions which ultimately adversely effect the success of the organisation and the people within it.

If you believe that the quality of thinking within your organisation is going to be critical for your success in the future, the Cognitive Fitness Consultancy can help you and the people who critically matter to develop business and mental agility, becoming more flexible and able thinkers.

To learn more about how to develop Cognitive Fitness visit the web site at [www.cognitivefitness.co.uk](http://www.cognitivefitness.co.uk)

### **ConsultingTools:**

ConsultingTools provides additional solutions to enable learning and development of individuals, teams and organisations through a wide variety of customised and off-the-shelf products.

For more information visit [www.consultingtools.com](http://www.consultingtools.com).