

ISTJ

Introverted Sensing with Thinking

ISTJs are thorough, exacting, systematic, hardworking, and careful with detail. They enjoy working within organizations to improve procedures and processes, remaining loyal through both good and bad times.

Contributions to the Organization

- Get things done steadily and on schedule
- Concentrate on details and are careful about managing them
- Have things at the right place at the right time
- Can be counted on to honor commitments and follow through
- Work within organizational structure comfortably

Leadership Style

- Use experience and knowledge of the facts to make decisions
- Build on reliable, stable, and consistent performance
- Respect traditional, hierarchical approaches
- Reward those who follow the rules while getting the job done
- Pay attention to immediate and practical organizational needs

Preferred Learning Style

- Presented in a concrete and sequential style
- Practical with applications that are useful now

Potential Pitfalls

- May overlook the long-range implications in favor of day-to-day operations
- May neglect interpersonal niceties
- May become rigid in their ways and perceived as inflexible and less open to innovation
- May expect others to provide the same level of detail and conform to same operating procedures

Order of Preferences*

1. Sensing
2. Thinking
3. Feeling
4. Intuition

* See pages 26–29 for further explanation.

Problem-Solving Approach

- Want to be thoroughly grounded in the facts (S) analyzed in a logical framework (T)
- May need to consider the impact on people (F) and search for more possibilities and other meanings (N) for optimal results

Preferred Work Environments

- Contain realistic, hardworking people focused on facts and results
- Provide long-term security
- Reward a steady pace and those who meet deadlines
- Utilize structure with systematic methods
- Are task-oriented and firm-minded
- Offer quiet and orderly settings
- Allow privacy for uninterrupted work

Suggestions for Development

- May need to pay attention to wider, future ramifications of problems in addition to present realities
- May need to consider the human element and communicate deserved appreciation
- May need to try fresh alternatives to avoid ruts
- May need to develop patience for those who communicate differently or who bypass standard operating procedures

schedules are carried out on time, necessary reports are filed, and established procedures are followed.

Another of Dave's responsibilities involves contracting with vendors, tradespeople, maintenance and security staff. His extraverted Thinking (auxiliary) helps him to be fair and objective when evaluating the performance of the many people he supervises and tough when negotiating the most favorable terms of their contracts.

Evidence of Dave's development of his Feeling (third function) is that he seeks positive reinforcement and feedback and likes to hear that people think he is doing a good job. It is not only important to him that others appreciate his competence; he also wants people to like him. Also, it is only recently that Dave has decided he wants to, and has begun to, make a personal contribution to his community.

Common Threads

Although Glenda and Dave have different backgrounds, experiences, and careers, there are certain common threads woven through their stories. Their specific interests, abilities, and values may differ, but owing to their similar temperament values, the *same hierarchy* of their psychological functions, and the world they use them in (inner or outer), there are certain observations we can make about the needs of many ISTJs.

What follows is a list of the most important elements — the formula, if you will, for ISTJ satisfaction. Given the uniqueness of all individuals — even those who share the same type — this list will not describe each ISTJ equally well. The important thing is that these ten elements, with varying degrees of intensity and in different orders of importance, identify what ISTJs need to be satisfied.

After you have reviewed this list, we rec-

ommend that you go back and prioritize the elements in order of *their importance to you*. When doing this, think of past work experiences as well as your present job, and what you found particularly satisfying or unsatisfying. Try to look for *themes* that run through several experiences, not just the events that might be true for one work situation but not for another.

As an ISTJ, career satisfaction means doing work that:

1. Is technical in nature and lets me depend on my ability to use and remember important facts and details
2. Involves a real product or service done in a thoughtful, logical, and efficient way, preferably using standard operating procedures
3. Lets me be independent, with plenty of time to work alone and use my excellent powers of concentration to complete projects and/or tasks
4. Is done in a stable and traditional environment, where I will not be required to take unnecessary risks or use untested or experimental approaches
5. Has results that are tangible and measurable, where precision and exacting standards are used and respected
6. Has explicit objectives and a clearly defined organizational structure
7. Gives me adequate time to prepare before presenting or turning in my work, preferably in a one-on-one or small group setting
8. Gives me increasing levels of responsibility, with a minimum of social politics, where I am evaluated on how well I have achieved the requirements of the job description and am appreciated for my contributions

9. Is done in an environment where my practical judgment and experience are valued and rewarded
10. Allows me to set and reach stated goals by providing me with the necessary resources

Work-related strengths and weaknesses of ISTJs include:

STRENGTHS

- Precise and accurate in all work
- Follow established routines and procedures
- Have excellent powers of concentration and are able to work alone without the need for socializing
- Great maintainer of organizations
- Stable, dependable, and can be counted on to follow through

WEAKNESSES

- May have trouble adapting to changing systems
- May need to see practical application to accept new ideas
- Tend not to like change; may be inflexible
- May not understand needs different from their own
- May underestimate themselves and their contribution to the organization

Popular Occupations for ISTJs

In listing occupations that are popular among ISTJs, it is important to note that there are successful people of all types in all fields. However, the following are careers ISTJs may find particularly satisfying, and some of the reasons why. This is by no means a comprehensive listing. It is included to suggest possibilities you may not have previously considered.

BUSINESS

- Office manager
- Accountant

- Auditor
- Manager/supervisor
- Word processing specialist
- Efficiency expert/analyst
- Insurance underwriter

ISTJs often enjoy careers in business and excel in the areas of managing systems and keeping things running smoothly. They usually prefer traditional, established organizations or businesses and by their presence provide a stabilizing effect on an operation. They are efficient and thorough in keeping track of costs and revenues and do not allow errors or omissions to go unchecked or uncorrected. As managers, they provide clear definition of roles and established ways of doing things for their employees. They often prefer businesses that produce tangible products or services.

CIVIL SERVICE

- IRS agent
- Government employee
- Military officer
- Police officer/detective
- Corrections sergeant

Careers in civil service often appeal to ISTJs' desire to serve their community. They enjoy maintaining systems that serve or protect all people. They work well within a structured environment, and can take and give direction and supervision well. ISTJs apply their knowledge and past experience to efficiently and decisively handle current problems. They have good memories for facts and details and use practical judgment in all they do.

FINANCE

- Bank examiner
- Investment securities officer
- Tax examiner
- Stockbroker

- Estate planner
- Credit analyst

ISTJs are often said to have a head for numbers. They use and remember facts and details and can cite evidence to support their views. They are not easily distracted and work painstakingly to complete tasks accurately and meticulously. Careers in finance often require the ability to work well alone, absorb great amounts of data, and follow through on the precise execution of the computation.

EDUCATION

- School principal
- Teacher: technical/industrial/math/physical education
- Librarian
- Administrator

Careers in education are often satisfying for ISTJs, especially those involving administration and/or technical subjects. They do well when overseeing the operation of a school or curriculum. They look for practical possibilities and ways to maintain systems. Administrative and library careers enable the ISTJ to work independently, using objective analysis in keeping order or monitoring data such as test scores and budgets. Teaching can be enjoyable for ISTJs when working with technical and practical subjects, where there are plenty of opportunities for hands-on teaching and learning.

LEGAL/TECHNICAL

- Law researcher
- Legal secretary
- Electrician
- Engineer
- Mechanic
- Computer programmer
- Technical writer

These careers offer ISTJs the chance to use their technical skills and work with

products that demand exacting accuracy. Because they take nothing for granted, they catch slips and oversights, and follow necessary procedures and systems faithfully. Many of these occupations give ISTJs the chance to work alone, employing their tremendous powers of concentration and applying their excellent factual recall and mastery of skills.

MEDICINE

- General surgeon
- Dentist
- Veterinarian
- Nursing administrator
- Health care administrator
- Pharmacist
- Lab technologist

ISTJs are often drawn to medical careers, especially those that are within the traditional structure of a hospital. They pay close attention to the immediate and practical concerns of their patients. They listen carefully and offer thoughtful and conservative advice and treatment plans. ISTJs are also successful administrators within health care settings, working conscientiously and steadily to meet their responsibilities and honor their commitments. They enjoy an orderly environment and one that rewards task-orientation and jobs done on schedule. The more technical nature of dentistry and pharmacology is often enjoyable to ISTJs, who master factual information easily and retain it forever.

Implications for the Job Search

Knowing the particular strengths and blind spots of your type can afford you a tremendous advantage in your job search campaign. In all aspects of the process, from conducting research into available positions, identifying and contacting prospective employers, developing personal marketing tools such as résumés, arranging and conducting job interviews, negotiating salaries, to finally

accepting a position, people will act true to their type. Being able to capitalize on your assets and compensate for your liabilities can make the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful job search.

The differences between types are sometimes subtle and other times dramatic. It is the subtle variations in advice we offer that make the real difference between success or failure in a job search. The concept of "networking," or meeting with and talking to people to gather information about potential jobs, serves as a good example. Extraverts will naturally enjoy networking and are advised to do so on a large scale, while Introverts find more limited and targeted networking, especially with people they already know, easier. Sensors tend to network with people in a defined scope, while Intuitives will go far and wide to find people often seemingly unrelated to their field of interest. Further, Feelers take networking, like everything else, very personally and enjoy establishing warm rapport, while Thinkers will be more objective and detached in their style. Finally, Judgers tend to ask fewer and more structured questions during their networking, while Perceivers could ask questions of all sorts all day long! One valuable search technique, many ways to implement it.

Pathways to Success

As we will detail in the following pages, your strengths and talents for the job search include your conscientiousness, desire to work hard, and ability to keep careful track of details and commitments. Beware of your tendency to stick only to the tried-and-true traditional methods of job hunting and miss less-obvious or clever approaches.

As an ISTJ, your most effective strategies will build on your abilities to:

Research career options completely and conduct thorough data collection.

- Be patient in collecting information during the gathering stage of your job search. Remember that it often takes several months to find the right job.
- Network on a limited basis with people who know you well, especially those you have worked with in the past who are in different jobs, or people they recommend.

When Frank was looking for a position in the tax department of his state government, he asked a friend from the Rotary club to refer him to someone he knew in the tax commissioner's office. Frank talked at length with the person, who was able to show him the offices, give him a real sample of a typical week's work load, and even share some of the complaints people had about the job. As a result, Frank had a more realistic view of the job's advantages and disadvantages before actually applying for the position.

Carefully prepare your marketing materials.

- Look at your résumé and cover letters with an objective eye. Ask yourself what kind of message they send about you. Are they an accurate reflection of you?
- Be sure to include work accomplishments from your recent and more distant past and have letters of recommendation ready if needed.

Judy started work on her résumé by patterning it after a friend's in the same business. But she decided that what she needed was a finished product that would better sell her skills and experience. We helped her focus her résumé on accomplishments and

the skills that each one utilized. In the work history section of the résumé, Judy showed how each position had given her increased levels of responsibility. When she mailed the résumé with personalized cover letters, she was confident that the person reviewing it would have a good picture of her experience and all she had to offer.

Patiently follow companies' recruitment and personnel procedures.

- Ask or read about company hiring procedures as part of your overall information gathering. Tailor your approach for the way the system works.
- Demonstrate the kind of employee you will be by going through appropriate channels, using the system, and respecting the chain of command.

When recruiters from a major manufacturing company came to Martha's university to interview graduate computer programming students, Martha decided to get some advance information before interviewing. She spoke to her career adviser and got the name of an alumnus who was currently employed by the company. She put what she learned into practice and was really prepared for the interview. Besides being ready for the standard questions, she was also ready to ask a few of her own to let the interviewer know that she had done her homework and knew something about the company. The interviewer was impressed with her initiative. More subtle, however, was a fact that Martha had learned from her contact — the company encouraged a conservative dress code. Martha even bought a traditional blue suit for the interview. It turned out the company representative conducting the interview was wearing an almost identical suit.

Follow through on all details.

- Focus your energy on completing large and small tasks relating to your job search. Include mapping out a general plan, keeping track of your progress, writing thank you letters, and making follow-up calls.
- Stay organized. Demonstrate your skills and don't be afraid to be persistent, showing your interest in a particular job.

Nancy had narrowed down her first choice in her career switch. She had decided she wanted to be the director of nursing at a nearby hospital. The position was still being posted internally, so, for the short term, Nancy would have to wait to find out if it would be opened to the public. She stayed in touch with each of her contacts at the facility and made regular calls to the vice president for personnel at the hospital to remind him of her interest. A couple of times during the wait, she had doubts about calling or sending a note. But she decided that she should continue to show that as hard as she would work to get the job, she would work just as hard, once she got the job. Her persistence paid off. When the position was open for outside application, she was the first, and last, applicant.

Make thoughtful, practical decisions.

- Ask for the time you need to carefully consider a job offer. Let your prospective employer know that you take your commitments seriously and want to give the offer the same attention you give to all of your responsibilities.
- Take a realistic look at the current job market and your skills. Employ your logical reasoning to help you make logical decisions.

After Gordon retired from the Navy, he began the process of making a career change by seeking career counseling. One of the ways he developed a list of realistic options was to review his skills and also research the job market in his home state. He considered using his training in physical education to work with a professional or collegiate sports team but determined that there were too few opportunities. So he pursued a career in high school physical education at a school with a need for a new varsity football and baseball coach. He was able to structure a job where he would be able to do both.

Possible Pitfalls

Although all people are unique, there are certain *potential* blind spots that many ISTJs share. We specify "potential" because some of the following *may* be true of you, while others may clearly not apply. While considering them, you may notice that these tendencies do not relate just to the job search but rather describe pitfalls that you may have experienced in other aspects of your life as well. It is therefore helpful to consider each one in terms of your past experiences by asking yourself, "Is this true for me?" And if so, "How did this tendency prevent me from getting something that I wanted?" You will probably notice that the key to overcoming your blind spots is the conscious and thoughtful development of your third and fourth functions (Feeling and Intuition). We recognize that many of the suggestions will be difficult to implement, but the more you use these functions, the fewer problems they will cause you in the future.

Consider career possibilities that are less obvious.

- Look for career possibilities that don't currently exist. Get help generating a

long list of potential careers in which you are interested. Also look for careers that require the same skills you have, even if your skills are in a different field.

- Resist the urge to rule options out as unrealistic simply because you lack direct experience in the field.

Don't overlook the implications of your decisions.

- Try imagining yourself in any job you are considering. Imagine yourself five, ten, or twenty years from now. Is there growth potential? Opportunities to change areas or add responsibility?
- Develop a set of long-term and short-range goals to use as a measuring stick during your search. Compare potential jobs against both sets of goals to discover if you might be selling out a future goal for a short-range objective.

Avoid the tendency to be overcautious and rigid in your thinking.

- Try to keep yourself open to the possibility of doing something very different than you have in the past. Consider taking some reasonable and necessary risks to find career satisfaction.
- Continue to get help or counsel from friends or professionals if you think you might be slipping back into a routine in your thinking.

Remember to consider the human element in your search.

- Take the time to think about your true feelings and motivation as well as what makes logical sense, and what you are technically qualified for. Ask yourself what's really important to you in your life, as well as your work, and make

sure you aren't compromising the former.

- Pay attention to the interpersonal subtleties during the interview process. Engage in what you may consider frivolous niceties simply because you now know that other people consider them important.

Express enthusiasm for the job and aggressively market yourself.

- Let people know if you really are interested in a particular job. Generate energy and enthusiasm for yourself and the position.
- Try not to underestimate your abilities and what you have to contribute to an organization. Demonstrate your confidence in yourself by talking about your

accomplishments in the past and what you could offer the company.

The Final Piece

Now that you have a solid understanding of your type under your belt, you can see how your strengths and preferences suit you better for some kinds of jobs and for some approaches to a job search. But as an ISTJ, you've already noticed that you are not equally drawn to *every* career or field listed in the Popular Occupations section. The next and final step in the process is to look at how your type meshes with your personal interests. So now turn to Chapter 24 to put your new knowledge to work by finding out how your interests, skills, and values can combine with your type to let you find the work you were meant to do.