

Smart Productivity

Leverage strengths and styles.

 By Carson Tate



In today's global market, knowledge is the primary currency. Knowledge-based organizations depend on the innovation, creativity, and productivity of their knowledge workers. Improving their *productivity* is vital for growth.

To improve *knowledge-worker productivity*, a new approach is needed—a productivity methodology that considers thinking, or *cognitive style*, and each person's preferences in perceiving and processing information to guide behavior. As individuals understand their style, they can make better choices about what tools and techniques can boost their productivity.

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To maximize productivity, help people of all thinking styles embrace their natural preferences to structure workflows that work for them.

What you think is what you act on, which creates the behavior or results. By ignoring what you think, or your cognitive thinking style, you don't address the *why* that directs behavior. *To improve productivity and performance, you must consider cognitive style.*

I identify **four productivity styles**. Let's explore how each style can leverage strengths to harness productive brainpower and get more work done.

1. Prioritizers. Their thinking style is logical, analytical, fact-based critical and realistic thinking. To make decisions, they gather the facts and argue rationally. They can complete much work, effectively prioritize tasks, and are exceptional problem solvers, decision makers and critical analysts. They write short, succinct email mes-

sages and maintain clutter-free inboxes.

2. Planners. Their thinking is organized, sequential, planned, detailed. To make decisions, Planners look at precedence. They're conservative, procedural and practical. They maintain detailed lists and often complete work before the deadline. They find overlooked flaws, approach problems practically and organize and keep track of data.

3. Arrangers. Their thinking is supportive, expressive, and emotional. To make decisions, they involve others, use their intuition, and understand *interpersonal and emotional aspects* of decisions. They maintain detailed visual lists, and intuitively know what tasks to complete. They craft articulate messages and ensure the team has current information. They prefer verbal or face-to-face connections over email.

4. Visualizers. Their thinking is holistic, intuitive, integrating and synthesizing. To make decisions, they play with ideas, explore and embrace risk taking, and look to the future. They manage various tasks and projects well. They excel at communicating the big picture and answering questions.

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