

HOW INNOVATION TRAITS IN MEMBERS
OF ADVERTISING AGENCY TEAMS
PROPEL THE CREATIVE PROCESS:
THE PROFESSIONAL OPINION

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: How Innovation Traits in Members of Advertising Agency Teams Propel the Creative Process: The Professional Opinion

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Advertising agencies trade on their creativity, which is supplied by teams of creative and account workers to create customer-centered advertising that is both novel and interesting. This research explores the magic of the advertising creative team – the team of creative, strategy and management staff that is responsible for creative execution – to find out more about how creative teams function at the goal level (team effectiveness) and at the individual level (individual cognitive styles). To study creativity and decision making, individuals involved in the creation of ads were tested for their innovator traits. Also, connections were explored between an industry effectiveness award and innovator scores. Innovativeness was judged by individual performance on a scale to measure cognitive style. Effie Awards were not associated with

innovation in agency personnel. However, account planners and creatives scored higher on an aggregated innovator scale than did administrative and account executive staff.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to test relationships between innovator traits and their roles in advertising agency teams. To do so, self-reported cognitive styles are assessed for individuals on advertising agency creative teams. Additionally, an association between advertising effectiveness and high innovator scores was tested.

Advertising copy writers and art directors (known as “creatives”) are individuals who possess a unique skill set, giving them the ability to create a message that is both novel and appropriate. Although both innovators and artists can be considered “creative,” advertising creatives who work at the highest level are not simply artists. Rather, they are artists who can understand and solve business communication problems.

This distinction between artists and advertising creatives – how they think and process information – sits at the foundation of effective creative work. Today, the creative process is somewhat of a black box, in that the industry is still struggling with understanding how it works. Some agencies treat creativity as if it were the ability to make a message humorous, while others see it as an art that cannot be explained. Yet, if a common thread that connects advertising creativity with innovation

can be established, as it has been in areas such as engineering, then the box could be unlocked, allowing researchers, teachers and innovators to look inside and find better ways to work, better ways to hire and better ways to teach creatives.

This research is not an attempt to provide authoritative proof that relationships exist. Rather, it represents an idealistic and optimistic exploration of the creative process that is meant to show that this kind of research is possible, and to raise questions for further research in this area.

The results of this research may show that creativity in advertising is a subset of the larger category of innovation (e.g. human factors engineering and product design). By testing advertising agency job types against a popular innovator/adaptor scale, the research may show a connection between innovation traits and particular job roles – roles that are valued for their ability to propel advertising to the next level. If such a connection is found, the advertising community may become more interested in exploring the similarities between the disciplines and garner insights that could help the industry.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

What Is Creativity?

The word creativity seems to be used anywhere someone produces something that is unexpected that seems to have the intended effect, such as expressing an idea or solving a problem. An artist paints a painting, and a thief finds a way to bypass a security system. The artist expresses something she understands, and the thief solves a problem. The artist creates what society decides is “art,” and the thief executes an efficient strategy to steal the jewels without being discovered.

Creativity as Idea Generation

In its broadest sense, creativity can be defined as the ability to generate ideas. Studies in psychology often measure the effectiveness of brainstorming groups simply by the number of non-redundant ideas they are able to produce (DeRosa, Smith, & Hantula, 2007; Diehl & W. Stroebe, 1987; Faure, 2004; Furnham & Ribchester, 1995; Mullen, Johnson, & Salas, 1991; Munkes & Diehl, 2003; B.A. Nijstad & De Dreu, 2002; Bernard A. Nijstad, 2000; Bernard A. Nijstad, Wolfgang Stroebe, & Lodewijkx, 2003; Putman & Paulus, 2009; Rietzschel, Bernard A. Nijstad, & Wolfgang Stroebe, 2006; Torrance, 1957). Because the focus is on the quantity of ideas in these studies, the level of scrutiny placed on the quality of ideas is very low. Even so, this approach to exploring

aspects of creativity – especially the results – are understandable, since defining creativity has continued to be a challenge (Amabile, 1982; Griffin & D. Morrison, 2010; West, Kover, & Caruana, 2008).

Creativity as Problem Solving

Since innovation is a popular word used to describe the solving of technological problems, it may be useful to understand advertising creativity in reference to engineering. The fundamental difference between advertising and engineering creativity is unclear, especially when both are solving a problem. A problem represents a gulf between the existing condition and the desired condition, and both the communicator and the engineer are attempting to bridge that gulf. Both must recognize a goal and find ways to reach it, but the engineer uses technology, and the advertising creative uses some combination of the five human senses. The junction of these two disciplines may take place in the human-factors part of engineering, where the engineer must adapt the innovation to human use, including considerations of human psychology and physiology.

In fact, the engineering literature imposes a higher degree of scrutiny on what can be called “problem solving” than literature in many other fields. This may be because problem solving is such a fundamental part of engineering, possibly its only function. The engineering literature scrutinizes what it calls “problem-mindedness,” where engineers rush too

quickly to solve a problem that they do not sufficiently understand (Bailyn, 1985; Belski, 2009; Buyukdamgaci, 2003; Coskun, Paulus, Brown, & Sherwood, 2000; Getzels, 1975; Raiffa, 1968; Rylander, 2009). In other words, “solution-mindedness” – the propensity to pursue solutions too soon – is regarded as a handicap to problem solving. In psychology (Dietrich & Kanso, 2010; Frederiksen, 1984; Maier & Hoffman, 1960; Pretz, Naples, & Sternberg, 2003) and business management (Checkland & Scholes, 1990; Covey, 1989; Dorst & Cross, 2001; Hsieh, Nickerson, & Zenger, 2007; Hsieh et al., 2007; Mintzberg, 1976; Ohmae, 1983; Rittel & M. M. Webber, 1973; Sommer & Loch, 2004; Yeo, 1995) precisely the same handicaps are acknowledged.

Researchers in the communications field have begun asking questions about how creativity works, and how the best creative minds cultivate creativity. Griffin and Morrison have provided a detailed qualitative analysis of the creative process, where they ask prominent creatives to write, draw or illustrate a representation of their creative process (2010). Griffin provides insight into how creatives interact with creative briefs in a study of college students (2008). Other research has included questions about divergent and convergent thinking among creatives (Kilgour & Scott Koslow, 2009; Sasser & S. Koslow, 2008), an exploration of the differing objectives of members of the agency team (S. Koslow, Sasser, & Riordan, 2003) and the internal effects of client pressures on the creative team (S. Koslow, Sasser, & Riordan, 2006).

Creativity in the advertising context is not only “imagination” (Politz, 1975). Rather, creativity is to build something novel, and do it within the realm of logic (1975). From the creative worker point of view, copywriter Luke Sullivan calls creativity “imagination disciplined by a single-minded business purpose” (2003). But to make any advertising idea ring true, according to Sullivan, the message must be “organically a part of the product” (2003). This may be why he suggests that creatives find the “central truth” of the product in order to create a good ad.

The challenge is that advertising does not present us with neatly packaged problems – or Sullivan’s “central truths.” Instead, advertising introduces special types of problems that are the kind Amabile characterizes as “nonlinear” (1982), that the business world calls “wicked” (Yeo, 1995), and that engineering calls a “type III error” (Buyukdamgaci, 2003; Raiffa, 1968). In other words, the problems do not come with a clear, step-by-step workflow leading to solutions; rather, each problem requires unique insight.

So the goal in solving these complex problems would seem to be insight or the discovery of the central truth. The obstacle to this discovery is the human tendency toward solution-mindedness, which causes individuals to look for solutions before understanding the problem. In other words, for complex problems, problem-mindedness seems to outperform solution-mindedness in yielding effective solutions.

Creativity and “Creatives”

A seemingly popular pattern of successful advertising creatives is the ability to produce ideas that are both novel and appropriate to the problem being solved (Griffin & D. Morrison, 2010; Kilgour & Scott Koslow, 2009).

Kilgour and Koslow relate the appropriateness aspect of creative work to a “convergent” thinking style, characterized by a keen focus on the problem definition, and the originality aspect as “divergent,” a thinking style characterized by the ability to find numerous and novel ideas (2009). In other words, if the creative makes the creative solution converge on the problem and diverge into the realm of the unexpected, the solution can be considered creative. This is also compatible with Sullivan’s assessment of creativity as a “controlled reverie,” wherein the creative stays grounded in the correct solution space (which is the “control”), but allows divergent thinking (the “reverie”) within that solution space.

But which comes first, the control, or the reverie? It may be easy to assume that creatives are primarily divergent in their thinking, and must be brought back down to earth. In fact, some studies have treated creativity as more of a divergent activity with very little relevance to problem solving (Furnham & Ribchester, 1995; Tegano, 1990; Zenazni, Bezancon, & Lubart, 2008). This also creates the perceived need for

techniques to encourage divergent thinking in organizations. But these divergent thinking techniques often come at the expense of convergence (Scott, Lonergan, & Mumford, 2004). In other words, fewer problems are solved, even while the crazy ideas abound. This could be why many experienced creatives see divergent thinking techniques as a crutch for people who are uncreative (S. Koslow et al., 2003).

Before proceeding, a distinction should be made between problems that are worth solving and those that are not. Some agencies serve a small market where the client is not interested in being innovative; they simply want to buy media and get their name out into the market. In these situations, the time and money spent on research, administration, creative and production may not seem worth the cost in the eyes of the advertiser. It is for this reason that a distinction is made between high-value markets – a segment of the advertising market that places a high value on differentiation – and low-value markets, which see little or no value in the added cost or effort. Agencies that serve high-value clients, therefore, are the agencies that should be most interested in identifying and solving the problem.

If experienced creatives in high-value markets – serving high-value clients – view creativity as a process that starts with a problem to solve, what makes them so very different from innovators who solve problems in engineering or in business? The difference seems to be in the kind of

problem that is being tackled. For instance, a design problem needs an engineering solution. A market problem needs a business solution. And a belief problem (deriving from ignorance, misinformation or false assumption) needs a communication solution.

Measuring Creativity and the Effie Awards

If creativity in advertising is considered to consist of novelty and relevance, then winners of an award that rewards advertising creative work that has both of these attributes would provide a good sample. Awards are important in the advertising industry, because of their alleged ability to bring recognition, publicity or visibility, as well as improving morale of staff, motivating employees, inspiring better work, and attracting new talent (Hester, 1988). Firms report to believe that winning awards will result in increased sales, market share and future earnings (Tippins & Kunkel, 2006). Popular awards include the CLIOs, the One Show, the Art Director's Club Awards, but these awards are sometimes referred to as "vanity" awards or "beauty shows" because they appear to show the creative agency's creativity, rather than primarily to sell the client's products (Moriarty, 1996). Awards like the Addys, the One Club Award, the Golden Lions, and the CLIOs usually invite creatives to judge the awards, and do not consider marketing or business objectives (Kover, Goldberg, & James, 1995; Tippins & Kunkel, 2006).

One award, the Effies, attempts to bring effectiveness into the picture as a goal of advertising (Langton, 2007; Moriarty, 1996; Tippins & Kunkel, 2006; Wright-Isak & Faber, 1996). The idea of effectiveness is interesting because of its parallel with technological innovation, where technology must be usable (the human factor in engineering) in addition to being functional (the effective aspect of engineering). In other words, in engineering, failure to make a design functional becomes glaringly obvious with use. Additionally, if a product is not “user-friendly,” it gets fewer users, which usually leads to the ultimate failure of the design.

The analog is worth restating: the art and science of making technology easy to use by considering the needs of humans who need to be able to quickly understand it in order to be able to use it is similar to a communication medium where the public must be able to understand the message quickly. The functionality aspect refers to the useful underlying function of the technology, which in many ways is the same as the core message of an advertising campaign: it must be useful to the user to be meaningful.

The Effie’s were started in 1968 by the New York Chapter of the American Marketing Association. Its purpose was to recognize the most effective ads in the United States. Since then, the Effies have grown to encompass other regions, including an “Effie Worldwide” category. Its tagline is “ideas that work,” and its mission is “To recognize, educate and

encourage effectiveness among the marketing communications industry” (“Effie Awards : About Effie,” n.d.).

The theory behind the Effies is to measure advertising campaigns against their own measurable objectives (Moriarty, 1996). Specifically, the briefs, which contain the business and marketing challenges and objectives, are compared with the results of the campaign. This gives the entire creative process, from the marketing team on the advertiser’s end to the creative who is executing the campaign in Indesign, a kind of integrative wholeness (Moriarty, 1996).

Kirton’s Inventory

Michael Kirton created an inventory to organize personality traits based on two categories: innovation and adaptation (1976), which has become the most popular measuring tool in the creative literature (De Stobbeleir, Ashford, & Buyens, 2008). He uses “innovators” to describe a person who questions assumptions, disrupts and finds unconventional ways to get things done. He uses “adaptors” to describe a person who values stability and doing things in much the same way they were done before. In summary, the adaptors focus on doing things better, while the innovators focused on doing things differently.

If the KAI can suggest which cognitive style is the most creative, it can be used as the underlying theory to help us label our respondents for

how creative they actually are in their jobs, regardless of the job title they hold.

Job Roles in Advertising

Advertising is not done in a vacuum, however, and advertising requires a team of professionals filling different roles, including client communication, research, strategy and creative execution. Consequently, the second logical relationship to find to what extent a person representing a particular job type scores on the innovator scale, which would require clear job definitions in the creative agency. At first, this may seem simple, since agencies employ account people and creatives. But job titles do not tell the whole story.

Copywriters and art directors are generally the creators of the content (Hirschman, 1989; Kover, 1995; Sullivan, 2003; Vanden Bergh & Stuhlfaut, 2006). The copywriter generates a claim statement, and the art director designs the result in visual form. These jobs would seem, then, to fit squarely in the “creative” category.

The account executive is the liaison between the client and the agency, is seen as the voice of the client in the agency (Hirschman, 1989; Quinn, 1999; Wells, Burnett, & Moriarty, 1998), and often fills an administrative project management role (S. S. Webber & Torti, 2004). Creatives and account executives are often seen as antagonistic (Grabher, 2002). In fact, account executives often try to poke holes in

creative ideas, because of their loyalty to the client (Altstiel & Grow, 2006). Although any given account executive role sits on a continuum between sales and project management, it seems to be a clearly managerial job description.

In its most basic description, the planner acts as the voice of the consumer in the agency (Cooper, 1998, p. 30; Staveley, 1999). The planner is a researcher using both qualitative and quantitative methods (Steel, 1998, pp. 203-209) to make sense of the audience. This summary, however, is inadequate, as it fails to define the job function as anything more than a research role. The role gains potency and becomes more complex when other features are added, such as the mandate to inspire the project team (Fortini-Campbell, 1992, p. 77; Hackley, 2003a), and the requirement that they produce strategy (Hackley, 2003a; Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2007; Moriarty, 1996; M. Morrison & Haley, 2003).

Additionally, and by necessity, agency account planners must be able to build their theories of the strategic situation very quickly, since advertising strategy is project-based (usually based on a short-term campaign) rather than a long-term, program approach that companies (internal agencies) are able to take. That strategic assessment must lead to a coherent theory of the customer, the client and the competitive “battlefield” very quickly in order to build an inspirational strategy that can be used as the focus – not unlike a project charter – for everything from discovering tactics, through media planning and all the way to the

execution. The account planner role, then, is less predictable in where it stands on the innovator scale, because of the compound nature of the job role.

Given these distinctions, a priori job roles can be anticipated to fall into these categories. Category 1 refers to account executives and other managerial staff who primarily handle processes, workflows and client relations. Account planners, who are responsible for creating strategies based on consumer insights are referred to in category 2. All creatives, who are responsible for executing the strategy through art and copy (or any communication) fall into category 3. These roles will get further description below.

One difference may confound this proposed straightforward relationship. One problem in advertising is the lack of ability to predict if a creative execution will be effective. But this may lead creatives to be even more discriminating in their acceptance of information they are given. Creatives are highly dependent on information they are given from account executives and account planners. While account planners are asked to distill a company's strategy into a creative brief – a document containing a concise description of the problem the creative person is meant to solve – creatives are asked to interpret that distilled information and solve the problem in a coherent and communicative way to the audience. This is difficult to do when there are contradictions in the brief

and in the brand. Because creatives are judged on their ability to do this, they will be highly sensitive to poorly defined problems and strategies, especially ones containing contradictions.

Account executives are the businesspeople and project managers of the advertising world. They prefer to make things work between the creatives and the advertiser (Altstiel & Grow, 2006). Because they are judged on their ability to make it work, they are the most informed person at the agency for the account they are working on (Ogilvy, 1983). They want the creatives to be novel, but never at the expense of making the client happy. Their job is normally to foster order and discipline. It is for this reason that it is very likely that account executives will score higher on the adaptor scale.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

If the Effies are awarded to campaigns that are most effective in meeting business goals, then the agencies who have won would be expected to have internal processes that specifically support a problem-solving kind of creativity. Companies like this would be very comfortable for creative who enjoy problem solving. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Effie-related personnel (Ef_1) – those who are either in Effie-winning agencies or have won an Effie – will score higher on the innovator scale than will personnel who are not Effie-associated (Ef_0).

If creatives in the advertising industry share the same cognitive style with innovators in business and engineering, then they would be expected to have a high innovator score. Likewise, if managerial staff are less concerned with finding a new point of view on the problem, and more concerned with improving existing processes, then they would be expected to score lower on the innovator scale. Therefore, the following two hypotheses are proposed.

H2.1 Personnel in the creative job category will score higher than both account executives and account planners in the innovator scale.

H2.2 Personnel in the managerial/account executive job category will score lower than both account planners and creatives on the innovator scale.

Account planning requires three primary attributes: research ability (Altstiel & Grow, 2006; Hackley, 2003a, 2003b; M. Morrison & Haley, 2003; Thompson, 2002), the ability to coordinate those research insights into a coherent strategy (Hackley, 2003a, 2003b; M. Morrison & Haley, 2003; Thompson, 2002), and the ability to connect the team around those strategies (Hackley, 2003a, 2003b). The blend between the AP's desire to bring people together in agreement and the ability to ask probing questions that would be necessary to gather information and create strategy present competing cognitive styles, according to Kirton's scale. Because of the strategic role of the account planner, mixed with

the consensus-building mandate of the position, it is difficult to hypothesize where APs will fall in the continuum with any confidence. Instead of hypothesizing, then, the question of where an AP falls on the innovator scale will be treated as a research question.

Research question: given their hybrid role, where will personnel in the account planning job category score in relation to account executives and creatives in the innovator scale?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The initial sample was derived from a list of individuals who were awarded Effies in 2010. Contact with those individuals was requested through direct contact with an agency contact person at these (Ef₁) agencies. After initial data collection, the survey was opened to personnel from all advertising agencies. Social media, telephone and email communication were used to solicit responses. All responses were anonymous.

Instrument

Because the literature provided what was felt to be a strong foundation on which to build specific and measurable questions, a survey was selected as the research instrument. Each question asked the respondent for a subjective self-evaluation.

Kirton's inventory, called the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory (KAI), contains a series of questions. Each question is a bipolar continuum where the subject is asked to choose between two cognitive styles he or she most closely associates with. The cognitive styles chosen reveal whether that person is an innovator or adapter with regard to their cognitive style.

After it was confirmed that the actual KAI would be unobtainable for use in this study, the next logical step seemed to be deriving questions from Kirton's point-by-point description of personality traits for Innovators and Adaptors revealed in his early work (1976). The description of traits provided in that early work were of a scholarly character, and were inappropriate for the audience who would be taking the survey. The necessary rewording, however, presented a tradeoff between adherence to Kirton's specific description of the traits and word-usage relevance to a contemporary audience. Also, some of Kirton's descriptions would be unclear to people not already familiar with his research. For instance, in one case, Kirton describes innovators as someone who is "Liable to make goals of means." This was rephrased to say "I'm likely to treat the accepted approach to problem solving as the best approach." Each questions from the survey can be found in Appendix A.

The survey asked respondents if either they or their agency has ever won an Effie. If the response was in the positive for either one, they were considered Ef₁.

Scale

Each question was scored 1-5 on a 5-point, bipolar scale between the two opposing cognitive styles represented. Questions were then randomized. For each question, the highest point value was given to the

innovator trait. To create the aggregate value, the total scores for each respondent were summed.

Pretesting included input from three faculty members, a PhD student and a non-student. Wording was reported to be clear, but in some cases, it was pointed out that the poles presented as opposing options in the question did not seem to be polar-opposites in meaning. The feedback was fairly consistent among pre-testers and the cases were fixed.

Results

The survey garnered 80 complete responses out of 146 surveys initiated. The survey was sent as a link to all respondents through different channels (e.g. a contact at a company where they work or other network contacts), which kept the respondents anonymous.

Analysis

The survey instrument

The scale used in the survey, an adaptation of Kirton's bipolar scale, was tested for consistency and received a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .77, indicating an acceptable level of consistency.

H1 Innovation and Effies

H1 predicted that personnel in Ef_1 agencies will score higher on the innovator scale than personnel in Ef_0 agencies. The total innovator score

for each participant was summed. Means were then evaluated using a t-test, with Ef_1 as the category variable. The results of the t-test, however, show Ef_1 respondents with a mean score of 41.378 and Ef_0 respondents with a mean score of 43.714. Results show a significance value of .182, as seen in table 1. So although Hypothesis 1 was not supported, it remains unclear whether this value would change given better sampling.

Table 1. T-test showing significance of relationship between having Ef status and innovator score

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		Sig.	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	90% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Aggregate scores for innovator scale	Equal variances assumed	.307	.581	1.349	78	.181	2.31930	1.71974	-.54343	5.18202
	Equal variances not assumed			1.346	75.531	.182	2.31930	1.72348	-.55078	5.18937

To rule out weighted samples – the presence of a larger number of innovative job types within the Ef_0 population – the data set was broken into three parts: creative, account planner and managerial. This allowed the comparison of innovator scores for each job type by Ef status. The T test for managerial staff showed Ef_1 respondents averaging a score of

40.15 and Ef₀ respondents scoring 40.8, shown in table 2. The results were not statistically significant at p < 0.10, shown in table 3.

Table 2. Mean innovator scores for managerial staff.

Ef status	Means	N	Std. Deviation
0	40.8000	15	6.15514
1	40.1500	20	7.63148
Total	40.4286	35	6.94637

Table 3. Significance of managerial staff T test.

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Aggregate scores for innovator scale	Equal variances assumed	.270	33	.789	.65000	2.40566
	Equal variances not assumed	.279	32.783	.782	.65000	2.33189

The comparisons of means for account planners showed Ef₁ respondents averaging a score of 43.25 and Ef₀ respondents scoring 47, as shown in table 4, however, significance of this relationship is .565, as shown in table 5.

Table 4. Mean innovator scores for account planning staff.

Aggregate scores for innovator scale

Ef status	Means	N	Std. Deviation
0	47.0000	5	10.67708
1	43.2500	4	7.93200
Total	45.3333	9	9.19239

Table 5. Significance of account planning staff T test.

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Aggregate scores for innovator scale	Equal variances assumed	.582	7	.579	3.75000	6.43803
	Equal variances not assumed	.604	6.988	.565	3.75000	6.20719

The comparisons of means for creatives showed Ef₁ respondents averaging a score of 42.6923 and Ef₀ respondents scoring 44.9545, as shown in table 6. Table 7 shows a that the results were not statistically significant at p <0.10.

Table 6. Mean innovator scores for creative staff.

Aggregate scores for innovator scale

Ef status	Means	N	Std. Deviation
0	44.9545	22	7.56859
1	42.6923	13	8.27027
Total	44.1143	35	7.79431

Table 7. Significance of creative staff T test.

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Aggregate scores for innovator scale	Equal variances assumed	.826	33	.415	2.26224	2.73949
	Equal variances not assumed	.807	23.524	.428	2.26224	2.80449

Based on the data collected, nothing can be said about the relationship between Effie award winning and personnel score on innovator scale. Results are inconclusive.

H2.1 and H2.2 Innovation and Job Type

H2.1 predicted that personnel in the creative job category will score higher than both account executives and account planners in the innovator scale. H2.2 predicted that personnel in the

managerial/account executive job category will score lower than both account planners and creatives on the innovator scale.

An ANOVA was performed to compare the means of the three job types (the category variable). Creatives scored an aggregated 44.1143, account planners scored 45.3333 and managerial staff scored 40.4286 as shown in table 8 and figure 1.

Creatives outscored people in managerial roles by almost 10% with a significance level of .073, as shown in table 9, supporting H2.2. Account planners scored higher than creatives, however. Therefore H2.1 was not supported.

The significance of the ANOVA was 0.073, creating the expectation of high level of reliability. After performing a post-hoc analysis using a Tukey test to discover the significance of relationship between pairs of means, it was discovered that there was not a statistically significant result between any pair of means ($p < 0.10$), as shown in table 10.

Taking into consideration means and ANOVA significance only, it would appear that H2.2 is supported and that H2.1 was not supported. It is difficult, however, to make this claim based on statistically insignificant differences in pairs.

Table 8. Means and descriptives by job type

Aggregate scores for innovator scale

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Manager	35	40.4286	6.94637	1.17415	38.0424	42.8147	27.00	56.00
Account planner	9	45.3333	9.19239	3.06413	38.2674	52.3992	32.00	61.00
Creative	35	44.1143	7.79431	1.31748	41.4368	46.7917	29.00	62.00
Total	79	42.6203	7.75805	.87285	40.8825	44.3580	27.00	62.00

Table 9. ANOVA showing significance of difference in innovator scores by job type

ANOVA
Aggregate scores for innovator scale

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	312.493	2	156.247	2.710	.073
Within Groups	4382.114	76	57.659		
Total	4694.608	78			

Table 10. Tukey post hoc pairs of means analysis

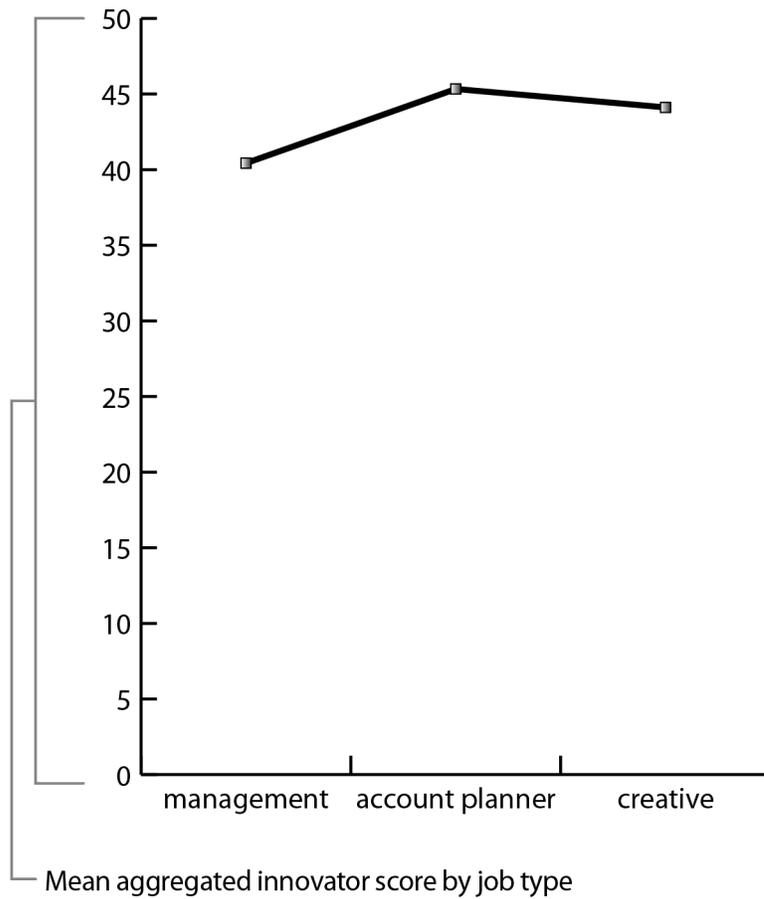
Dependent Variable: Aggregate scores for innovator scale

	Job category	Job category	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	Manager	Account planner	-4.90476	2.83796	.201
		Creative	-3.68571	1.81516	.112
	Account planner	Manager	4.90476	2.83796	.201
		Creative	1.21905	2.83796	.903
	Creative	Manager	3.68571	1.81516	.112
		Account planner	-1.21905	2.83796	.903

Research Question: Insights into Account Planners

The research question asked for analysis of account planners as compared with other agency workers, given their hybrid role. This broad question was already partially answered in the analysis of the hypotheses. To drill deeper, results of question-specific ANOVAs were reviewed to find areas of significant difference between planners and other agency roles. Salient areas of difference were found in three areas, discussed below.

Figure 1. Innovator score by job type.



With an innovator scale mean of 3.67, account planners were found to consider themselves more tolerant of chaos than creatives (3.09 mean) or managerial (2.68 mean), as shown in figure 2. This result carries a significance level of .054, as shown in table 11.

Table 11. Chaos tolerance ANOVA comparison between jobs

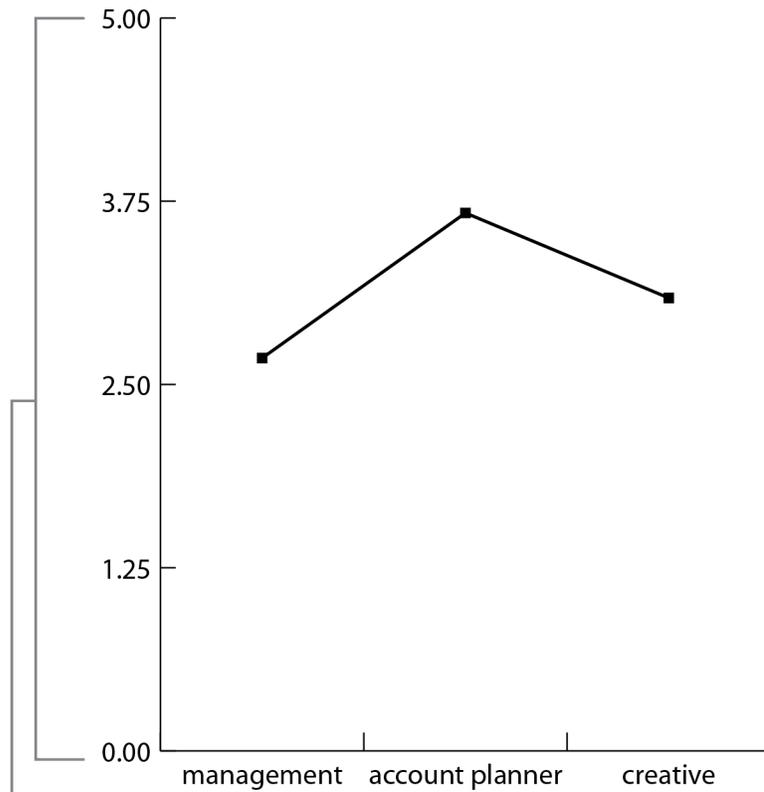
ANOVA
Aggregate scores for innovator scale

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
How do you place yourself on the following scale?-I thrive on order; when things are stable, I'm most effective: I thrive on chaos; when everyone else is confused, I'm more likely to have focus and vision	Between Groups	7.765	2	3.882	3.027	.054
	Within Groups	96.184	75	1.282		
	Total	103.949	77			

Planners (mean 3.0) score about the same as the creatives (mean 2.97) in the area of being seen as impractical and shocking to others, as shown in figure 3, with an associated significance level of 0.05, as shown in table 12. Managers scored a mean of 2.31.

Figure 4 plots the position of planners (mean score of 2.89) also scored almost as high as creatives (mean score of 2.94) who were the group who saw themselves as most likely to rock the boat. Managerial staff scored 2.34. Significance was high at .053, as indicated in table 13.

Figure 2. Chaos tolerance plot



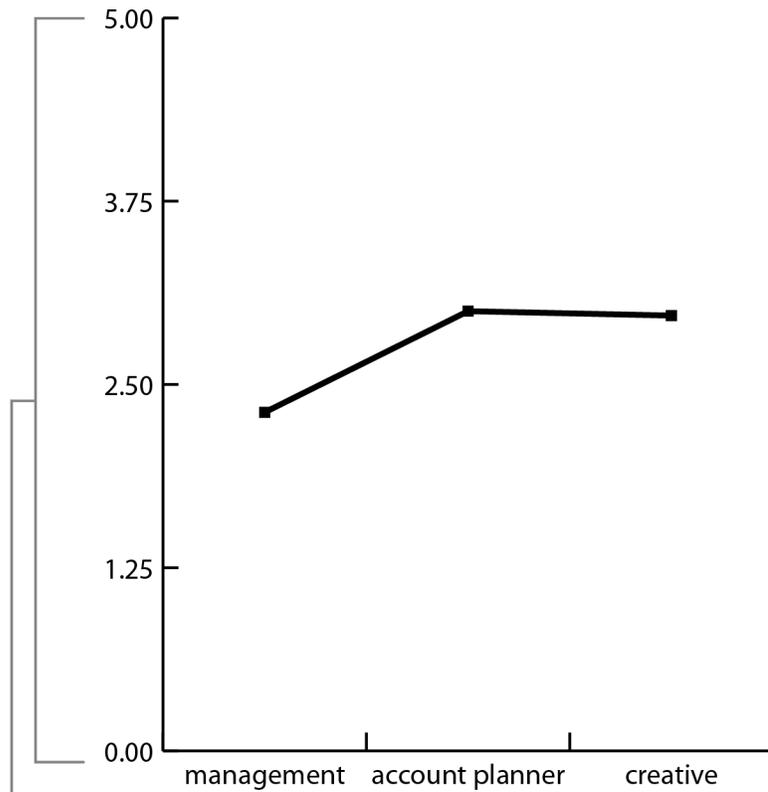
Mean score for the following survey question:
 I thrive on order, when things are stable, I'm most effective (0 score):
 I thrive on chaos; when everyone else is confused, I'm more likely to have focus and vision (5 score)

Table 12. Seen as impractical or shocking to others. Higher score indicates higher level of reported impracticality and shockingness to others.

ANOVA
 Aggregate scores for innovator scale

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
How do you place yourself on the following scale?-'I'm sometimes seen as impractical, even shocking, to people who don't understand me: I'm seen as pretty safe and dependable	Between Groups	8.574	2	4.287	3.118	.050
	Within Groups	104.514	76	1.375		
	Total	113.089	78			

Figure 3. Impracticality/shocking means plot



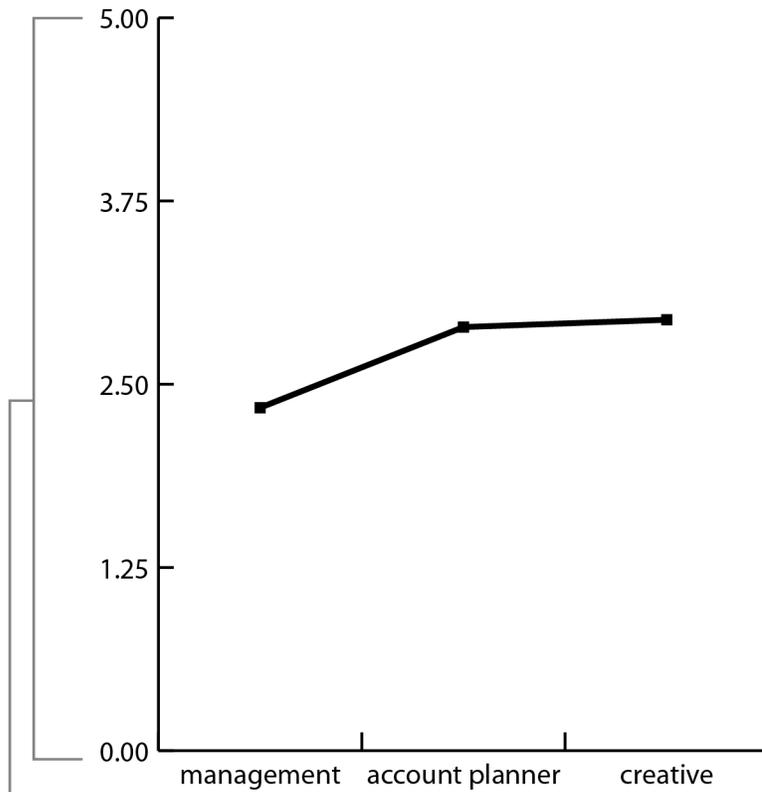
Mean score for the following survey question:
 I'm sometimes seen as impractical, even shocking,
 to people who don't understand me (5 score):
 I'm seen as pretty safe and dependable (0 score)

Table 13. Willingness to rock the boat ANOVA.

ANOVA
 Aggregate scores for innovator scale

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
How do you place yourself on the following scale?-I steady the boat, because we need team cohesion:I rock the boat, because it needs to be rocked	Between Groups	6.783	2	3.391	3.044	.053
	Within Groups	84.660	76	1.114		
	Total	91.443	78			

Figure 4. Willingness to rock the boat. Higher number indicates increased willingness to rock the boat.



Mean score for the following survey question:
I steady the boat, because we need team cohesion (0 score):
I rock the boat, because it needs to be rocked (5 score)

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Job Roles and Innovation

Innovation and Advertising Creativity

This study extends the field's understanding of creativity by connecting two job roles – roles which are commonly connected to creativity in advertising – to particular, self-reported personality traits in the respondents. This study – particularly in hypothesis 2.1 and 2.2 – highlights the link between cognitive styles present in fields known for innovation (such as engineering) and cognitive styles present in advertising agency creative groups.

The Innovative Advertising Roles

Further, the particular advertising agency creative group roles (account planner and creative) associated with innovation are considered the most creative roles in advertising teams. This connection indicates that this innovator scale may be valid in helping the field of communication understand how creatives think by giving a more specific definition to creativity, and linking it to “innovation” in other fields.

This kind of understanding could improve the function of educators, researchers and practitioners in the communication field. Educators may be able to identify cognitive style earlier in the education

process, allowing them to steer innovators to more creative job roles. Researchers in creativity and communication may be able to use the Kirton-inspired innovation inventory as a measurement instrument, and the truths it contains as a definition for creativity and innovation. Finally, by understanding the underlying thinking modalities, practitioners – particularly managers – can deliver information in ways that leverage the innovator cognitive style, resulting in ideas that are both more original and more relevant to the communication problem being solved.

The Adaptive Advertising Roles

The study also provides insight into the cognitive style of account executives (managers), who scored lower than average on the innovator scale. This, however, is not the whole story. The focus of this study was innovation, so little attention was paid to the opposite end of Kirton's continuum: adaptation. In fact, adaptation may be a necessary foil for innovation. Future research could test to what extent the presence of an adapter improves the performance (meeting deadlines, meeting budget and even creativity) of a creative team. Also, future research could test whether managers are forced to assume a more adaptive role in response to a creative environment, in order to help the team maintain function.

A concern in this study was the statistical insignificance in the pairs-of-means relationships, illuminated by the Tukey test. Despite

these statistically insignificant findings, probably due to sample size, the results, nonetheless, establish the directionality of these relationships.

Effies and Innovator Traits

Hypothesis 1 represented an attempt to understand how clear advertising goals affect creative work by testing personnel in a group of agencies who received a popular effectiveness award and comparing them with personnel from agencies that had not. Although the findings were not statistically significant, the failure of Effie-related agencies to outscore Non-Effie-related agencies raises some questions about the assumptions going into this study. In fact, at least three possibilities exist to explain why this is the case.

The first, and most obvious, is that the sample was not generalizable. It was either too small, or there was another explanation for why a particular kind of Effie-related agency was responsive and available for the survey. Also, it is possible that only particular kinds of agency workers made themselves available to take the survey (e.g. the agency personnel who do bad work have more time on their hands and were able to participate in the survey). No clear evidence exists to substantiate this as a likely reason for the difference in scores, especially because the Non-Effie-related agencies would be expected to yield a similar kind of sample.

Related to this is the possibility that Effie-related agencies are not necessarily always able to create a systemic creative culture within their agencies. It is also possible that agency size, the age of the creative and industry work experience are all factors that confound this study, but that could be explored in future studies.

The second possibility is that innovation, by Kirton's definition, is not what makes advertising effective. Further work comparing the creative process of individuals in notoriously innovative technology companies and notoriously creative advertising agencies might provide insights into the creative processes, including how processes vary between disciplines and their common denominators.

Finally, it is possible that the Effies do not actually recognize effectiveness to the extent claimed. Establishing this may build off of Moriarty's existing research, which studied how the Effies were judged, including the extent of measurability possible for each campaign (1996).

Future Research

To this point, little research has been done to help the industry understand what kind of information – and in what form – will help creative teams produce the best creative work. Trade literature and advertising textbooks, on the other hand, are replete with the admonition to readers to understanding the problem that is being solved before moving to solutions. Many writings treat the importance of research as if

it were established (Altstiel & Grow, 2006; Felton, 2006; Fortini-Campbell, 1992; Steel, 1998, 2006; Sullivan, 2003). But more recent research is looking at how creativity leverages – possibly depends on – research and understanding (Griffin, 2008; Griffin & D. Morrison, 2010).

The trade literature – containing much anecdotal evidence – would seem to justify further inquiry to find out if creatives are content with the information they receive from their support staff. If the results show room for improvement, it could have a profound effect on the way the creative industry shares knowledge. Possible benefits could include less disagreement between account executives and creatives (because goals are made explicit at the project outset) and more focused creative work.

Psychology: the Nature of Creativity

Edward Necka writes that creativity is a long-term memory function aided by what he calls “metacognitive strategies.” In this theory, creativity actually happens when the creative person is learning about an object or idea and “filing” it away for later use. A non-creative person may identify an object or idea based on the present use for that object, where a creative person is actually curious about the object for the object’s sake. Because of this, the creative person understands the fundamentals of the object, rather than simply one of its functions. The key strength to this is that, when the creative person files the object or idea away, he or she creates neural pathways based on basic attributes

of the object of his/her attention rather than only the present uses for that object. This manifests itself as resourcefulness and creativity during a later time when the creative team is exploring problems and solutions. It helps them look at problems in non-standard ways by allowing them a kind of clarity that is both fundamental and complete. They can extrapolate from there.

This helps the creative build a cognitive model of the problem, based on his/her worldview, that is accurate and complete. It removes confusion and spawns good questions. In advertising, this is often referred to as “point of view,” and it seems to be growing in importance in the industry.

This may be one reason that innovators ask questions that may seem irrelevant to others: their differing point of view requires them to approach a problem in a different way, thereby asking questions that don't seem relevant to others who don't think that way. Research in this area could explore interactions between creative, managerial and strategic positions around the topic of point of view and learning style.

Divergent Thinking Techniques

How do divergent thinking techniques affect creativity? Existing research seems to say that divergent thinking techniques come at the expense of focus (S. Koslow et al., 2003; Scott et al., 2004). In other words, the problem is not getting solved, but novel ideas are being

created. But the potential exists for more research in this area to test, on a larger scale, the effect of divergent thinking techniques on the quality and focus of ideas.

Does Job Type Contribute to Cognitive Style?

Although account executives and other managerial staff scored lower in innovation in this study, it is unclear whether the personality of the account executive causes this cognitive style or the job, itself, causes the practice of this type of thinking. In addition, there are still other possibilities that could account for cognitive style. To help uncover the etiology of cognitive styles, research could measure changes in cognitive style in different working environments. For example, practicing innovators often suggest having uninterrupted time to think and plan (with cell phone turned off, no computer or email), and that this helps strategic and creative thinking (Steel, 2006, p. 101). If an experiment were set up, subjects could be asked to follow this advice and tested on the effect.

Are Agency Account Executives More Creative than their Non-Agency Counterparts?

How do agency account executives compare with their non-agency counterparts? Are they largely the same personality type, with similar innovator thinking styles, but with the agency executives more tolerant of the creative process? Finding this out could be as simple as identifying a

sample based on job description and comparing KAI scores. The next step would be finding out why. This would be interesting, because it could give us clues as to how to balance creativity and efficiency (with regard to linear, non-creative tasks) in all kinds of industries.

Limitations of the Research

Moriarty's 1996 study of the Effies found that the judging and measuring of outcomes did not meet the ideals:

The study found that most of the objectives were not measurable as stated. Of the cases used in this analysis, only 17 percent stated measurable objectives. Most of the cases (50 percent) were focused on communication objectives, although some were centered primarily on marketing effects (25 percent) with little attempt to assess communication effects; the remaining 25 percent were split between communication and marketing effects. The marketing effects were dominated by sales and share objectives; the communication effects were dominated by persuasive effects that focused on behavior and attitude. In terms of support, the study found that 91 percent of the evidence statements were clearly linked to objectives; however, it also found that few of the cases (10 percent) made a clear causal argument linking the effect to the advertising message.

The size of the sample made it difficult to get significant findings in two notable areas. One of those areas was whether winning an Effie is related to agency or individual innovation level. Another area sample size imposed a limitation was the understanding of how the three groups – creative, management and account planning – performed on individual questions.

This population is notoriously difficult to survey. Other researchers have experienced similar difficulty in getting responses from advertising agency personnel (Sasser & S. Koslow, 2008). Because of this, our N=82, with only 79 completing the section explaining their job type (an important independent variable). The sample was contacted via the company they worked for and social networks, rather than random sampling, which would have been desirable. Even with these limitations, the research raises some interesting questions.

Finding the best creatives requires an acceptable definition for what it means to be the best. There are various ways of looking at creativity in the research. It would seem necessary, then, to take an inventory of those measures and definitions to make a case for our use of the word and concept. In other words, there must be a clear path from our definition of creativity to the concept of innovation, or “effective creativity.” To put it still another way, the best creatives are effective with their art, because their work starts with an interesting problem to solve.

It must be established that there is such a scale that is based on research and insights that can shed light on what it means to be an innovator or creative problem solver. This will show us the way forward, and give us insight into how to lay a firm foundation for creative work.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Although it seems intuitive that innovation would exist on advertising teams, a definition of innovation, via a point-by-point analysis of cognitive styles, sheds much more light on the subject. This study not only tested a particular definition of “innovation” on advertising roles, but found specific cognitive styles that associated with specific advertising team roles, effectively identifying the loci of innovation on a creative team.

The results recorded in this study are compelling, but not conclusive, as the reliability of some relationships was outside of the range normally accepted in peer-reviewed journals in the social sciences. However, the results were significant enough to raise questions and possibly justify future research.

More research is needed to determine whether creativity in advertising should be cultivated and managed in the same way as innovation in other industries. It seems a worthwhile question to answer, however, given the widespread call for more creativity and its ability to help us to improve efficiencies.

Future studies should find and test people in job types that require innovative problem solving. As the research community begins to

understand creativity, it may be able to uncover highly useful insights and turn those insights into teaching techniques.

APPENDIX
SCALE ITEMS

Below are listed the bipolar scale items and their corresponding scores. Respondents were asked at what level they score themselves on a 5-point Likert scale, with the following statements at each end of the scale.

Q4.1

1	5
I'm precise, reliable, efficient, methodical, prudent and disciplined:	I have my own style, I think on tangents and approach tasks from an unsuspected angle

Q4.2

1	5
I tend to move quickly to the solution phase of problem solving. sometimes too quickly	I tend to dwell longer on making sense of the problem, and I sometimes get bogged down there

Q4.3

5	1
I question assumptions of the problem and play around with it before I move to a solution	I look for solutions to problems in tried and understood ways

Q4.4

1	5
I solve problems by improvement and greater efficiency, with maximum continuity and stability	I get settled groups out of their comfort zones. I'm irreverent of consensus

Q4.5

5	1
I'm sometimes seen as impractical, even shocking, to people who don't understand me	I'm seen as pretty safe and dependable

Q4.6

1	5
I'm likely to treat the accepted approach to problem solving as the best approach	When trying to reach a goal, I have little respect for accepted approaches

Q4.7

5	1
Don't ask me to do routine work for very long	I can maintain high levels of accuracy in long periods of detailed work

Q4.8

1	5
I thrive on order; when things are stable, I'm most effective	I thrive on chaos; when everyone else is confused, I'm more likely to have focus and vision

Q4.9

1	5
It's rarely worth it to change the way things are done; and when I do, I make sure to have support behind me	I challenge the system a lot, because there's a lot that could be better

Q4.10

5	1
I love my coworkers (or not), but I don't mind disagreeing with them	I respect my coworkers, and I use what they think as a barometer of how well I'm doing

Q4.11

1	5
I'm much better at routine stuff than emergency situations	I'm much better dealing with emergencies than dealing with routine stuff

Q4.12

5	1
I bring a fresh perspective to the team	I bring stability to the team

Q4.13

1	5
I steady the boat, because we need team cohesion	I rock the boat, because it needs to be rocked

Q4.14

1	5
I make sure everything gets done reliably	I make sure we're exploring everything and not getting stuck in the mud

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