

What is Procurement's Personality? A Test for Practitioners

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Leonard Nimoy, the actor who played the character Mr. Spock on the old hit TV series Star Trek, sadly passed away last week. Although Spock was half human, his other half was Vulcan, and that gave him his extremely analytical viewpoint that helped him advise his boss Captain Kirk. His personality was oriented toward logic, science and analysis, but also to order, honesty, loyalty, dependability and getting the job done. In short, Spock seems like the perfect problem solving machine for a large bureaucratic company.

In the parlance of the [Myers Briggs](#) archetypes, he was an [ISTJ](#) (*Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging*) as compared to an [ENFP](#) (*Extrovert, INtuition, Feeling, Perceiving*) like Captain Kirk. These 2 personality archetypes are part of the 16 possible combinations of “personalities” that prefer to interpret the world in very different ways. ISTJ’s like Spock are introverts who use their senses to interpret hard data and think logically about how to solve a problem and settle the issue through a structured solution (for more on these four core preferences, see [here](#)). The bizarre thing about [ISTJ](#)’s, though, in the business world is that a [recent study](#) found that the majority of chief information officers fell into this single category when statistically there should be less than 10% in any one category! CIO’s are very much like Mr. Spock. And since IT shares more in common with procurement than perhaps any other function...

What the Procurement Personality Type?

What’s the dominant personality archetype for a chief procurement officer – or a procurement professional more generally?

It’s a simple question, but one that has surprisingly never been researched before in the procurement profession. It’s also an important topic given the weight placed on talent management in modern enterprises. It’s also a question that I’ve been meaning to answer with some hard data for a long time – and that time has come.

So, in response, I’m collaborating with the Institute for Supply Management to perform a snap poll that simply asks **procurement practitioners** (no providers please - for now at least) about their personality profile. The survey link is [here](#). The 3-4 minute poll is simply the 4 personality traits and some demographic questions. But, rather than just use or recreate an existing diagnostic, we’re taking a slightly different take on it. We’ve tailored the general Jungian principles toward a business context and to talent management – namely with regards to *applied learning and problem solving*. In other words, “who you are,” and how you approach problems can be just as important as what specific domain skills and knowledge that you’re applying.

I’ll dive into the details of this topic over the next few days, but for now, I would encourage

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<https://spendmatters.com/cpo/what-is-the-procurement-personality-type/>

everyone (providers too) to take one of the many personality type diagnostics that are out there. (Some examples: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), **or** [here](#).) I like the [first one](#) because it gives you a percentage strength ranking on the 4 dimensions rather than just putting you in a certain box. This weighted output will also help inform practitioners how to fill our [snap poll](#) that is currently scheduled to close this Friday.

If you have any colleague practitioners, please let them know, because if they participate, they'll get a more in depth benchmark analysis (e.g., where we'll correlate learning/solving approaches to job role and other demographics). We look forward to your participation and to the results!