

# DAVIES Public Affairs



## A brief look at the secret to success

**DAVIES began in 1983 by a man with a vision of the importance of communication and its ability to sustain results. Founded by John Davies, the firm is committed to excellence in issue management, public affairs and crisis communication support for clients around the nation. With less than one hundred employees invested in the firm, DAVIES has been the national public affairs firm of choice for several years. A brief look at the organization culture will attempt to understand why.**

## Overview

- Introduction
- MBTI and DAVIES
- CMM and DAVIES
- How They Work Together
- What Did You Just say?
- My Internship and Permeability
- From Here On Out



## Assessing organizational culture

Organizational culture is different for every organization. Defined as “a system of artifacts, values and assumptions that organizations produce are influenced by in the process” (Miller, 2009), organizational culture is created by the ways of doing things and the ways of talking about what is being done (Miller, 2009). According to Deal and Kennedy (1982), if what is being done and what is being talked about is “enhancing the success of the business,” the organization can be characterized as having “strong” culture.

DAVIES typifies this explanation because it produces high-levels of individual and organizational performance. In addition, DAVIES possesses the four key components of a strong culture (see page 7) and exceeds the expectations of clients and employees.

The strength of the culture of the organization and its subsequent success may be directly related to

members’ personality types. MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Inventory) will outline the personality of three influential members. In addition, Coordinated Management of Meaning (code name: CMM) will also show how members synchronize their interactions to generate the best possible outcomes for the organization and how the process and the theory interrelate.

On a lighter side, we will see an incident of miscommunication between myself and another member (we all know they happen) and reveal how the situation was handled and provided a fruitful learning experience in my life.

I will also interpret my experience in terms of *permeability* to demonstrate the ease of transition into the organizational culture. This first-hand experience will show why a strong organizational culture is paramount in choosing locations.



# Internship at DAVIES: Not just another gopher

Favorite labels like “coffee boy” or “errand girl” or “dog walker” have the potential to make the average individual run for the hills at the thought of an internship in any type of organization, large or small.

However, the organizational culture at DAVIES tolerates none of the above. To DAVIES credit, my tasks are quite involved and fairly integral to the organization. From the lips of a fellow intern, “Essentially, we may have *the* most important job of anyone around.”

Although I know that my work has been a positive contribution, the above statement is not for sure. In any case, my job is important and my duties are as follows:

- **Database creation and updates**
  - This includes compiling databases, confirmation calls, Internet and other research.
- **Excel** (data entry, formulas, de-duping)
- **Mail Merges** (Word and Excel)
- **Letters to the Editor/ Public comments from hearings**
  - (I haven’t done this yet, but I look forward to it).

- **Client phone calls** (GOTs or outreach follow up)
- **Research/Community Audit** (I must say that I am close to being an expert on Florida and Georgia counties).
- **Attending pre-hearing or supporter events** (Not much action in this department).
- **Basic office applications**
  - Scanning docs to PDF, copy/print/fax, functions and shipping procedures
- **Quality Control (QC)**

\* This is the most important part of my job because it usually refers to the final product the client sees. To ensure the highest quality, we are guided by a few principles:

- Confirm. Don’t Assume.
- Ask Questions
- Learn From Mistakes
- Know Your DATA
- Go Slow To Go Fast

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## Historical Overview

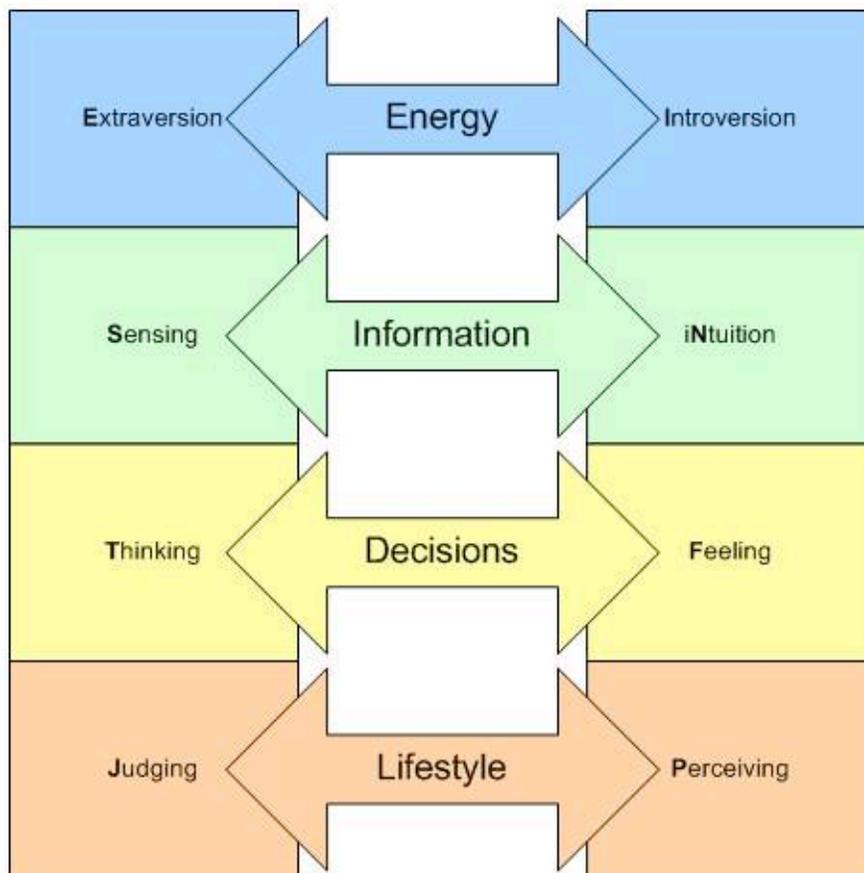
- Based on Carl Jung’s Theory of Psychological Types, which shifted the view that heavenly bodies and deities determined our attitudes to that of human physiology
- Created by Isabel Briggs Myers and her mother, Katherine Briggs
- Designed to measure psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions; intended to match people with specific job types (Kiersey, 1998).

## What is MBTI?

A self-report personality assessment, designed to help people understand their preferences, motivations and potential areas for growth.

# Myers-Briggs and DAVIES

## A Look at Personality Profiling



Talk and listen to others, deal with the world outside of ourselves.

Follow steps in a plan, notice the world around us has changed.

Do the right thing – no matter the consequences, establish guidelines to follow.

Make lists of things to do, form and express opinions.

Think about what we want to say, aware of how we feel.

Perceive underlying meanings for actions, see the big picture.

Will not deliberately try to upset people, like to be near people.

Postpone decision to consider options, do things at the last minute.



# A Portrait of the Culture At DAVIES

According to [personalitypage.com](http://personalitypage.com), ESTP types are “Doers.” They are enthusiastic, straightforward risk takers who like to get their hands dirty and move on to the next thing.

My supervisor, Elizabeth Musson is exactly this type. One of the most approachable, intelligent and flexible people I know, Elizabeth made an impression on me when I interviewed with her telephonically (from Thailand) and in person. She was extremely warm and willing to explain any and all questions regarding my role in the organization. Even now, she checks on me throughout the day because she is highly aware of the complexities of my daily tasks.

To the left is a brief illustration of Elizabeth’s four preferences:

**“Promoter”**

- **Extroversion (E):** Outgoing and always the first to initiate a project, learns and works best through discussion of ideas.
  - From Day 1, Elizabeth was the first person who stuck out in my mind. She asked me a lot of questions and demonstrated excellent people skills.
- **Sensing (S):** Prefers information and tasks that are organized and presented in an orderly, sequential format.
  - She says, “Lets put it into an Excel sheet” and frequently hides unnecessary columns.
- **Thinking (T):** Is most influenced by objective data and cause-and-effect relationships, considers pros and cons of ideas, information and opinions.
  - She will never assign me a project unless she knows there is a clear purpose. I am never to start research databases until we have the go-ahead form the client.
- **Perceiving (P):** Is open, flexible and adaptable.
  - She says, “If you can’t come in on Monday, don’t worry. We’ll work something else out.”



# MBTI:

## A comparison of three types



**Elizabeth Musson,  
Project Coordinator,  
Healthcare Practice**

Elizabeth is an ESTP type or a “Promoter”. She enjoys new experiences and prefers to deal with people face to face instead of intermediately. It is no wonder that she is involved in public affairs and marketing, which are some listed careers that seem best to fit her personality type.

A quick recap of her traits will help illustrate the differences between her and two other members of the organization:

- Can see the needs of the moment
- Very open-minded and aware of reality
- Highly observant
- Quickly improvise an innovative solution to a problem.



**David Given,  
Business Development Assistant**

Compared to Elizabeth, David would rather “just do something” than consider multiple options. According to MBTI, he is considered a “Supervisor.”

David Given is most likely an ESTJ (Extrovert, Sensor, Thinker, Judger) for the following reasons:

- Likes to share with others i.e. spent 20 minutes explaining how he streaked with his buddies in high school.
- Interested only in the big picture i.e. “Why are you are you telling me unnecessary details?”
- Makes decisions based on logic, not the effects it will have on people i.e. “If they don’t answer, then delete them.”



**Caitlin Steele,  
Human Resources Assistant**

Remarkably different from the other two members, Caitlin is more quiet and reserved in the presence of others, but very task-oriented. She was very flexible and accommodating while I was in Thailand to help me secure my internship at DAVIES.

Caitlin Steele is most likely an INFJ based on the following characteristics:

- Service-oriented, putting the needs of others first i.e. the reason she works in HR
- Always like to bring closure to an issue before she can move on
- Prefers to work alone i.e. she sits in a quad by herself
- Considers future implications for current actions



# A One-of-a-Kind Culture

Although there are too many organizational members to assess here using MBTI, it is clear that DAVIES possess a strong organizational culture because members share similar ideas about organizational values, heroes, rites and rituals and cultural networks.

## Values

“*Values* are the beliefs and visions that members hold for an organization” (Miller, 2009).

At DAVIES, producing meaningful work is everything. Striving for excellence “makes everyone around us better in the process.” Here is a list of a few things of value:

- Care for others, exceptional quality, integrity, flawless execution, attitude of team abundance, redefining controversy, and having fun.

## Heroes

“*Heroes* are the individuals who come to exemplify an organization’s values” (Miller, 2009).

- John Davies, Chairman and CEO: Invests his experience daily through hands-on analysis, strategy and messaging.
- Brandon Edwards, President and COO: Since joining the firm, DAVIES has been awarded Agency of the Year and Best Agency to Work For.

## Rites and Rituals

“*Rites and Rituals* are the ceremonies through which an organization celebrates its values” (Miller, 2009).

Here are a few unique rites and rituals that DAVIES observes:

- Bagel and Fruit Mondays, Casual Jean Fridays, innocent hazing and joke-making, (especially by the organizational heroes), internal and external recognition awards.

## Cultural Network

“*Cultural networks* are the communication systems through which cultural values are instituted and reinforced. They consist of both formal organizational channels, and the informal interactions of employees” (Miller, 2009). A few examples characterize the strength of DAVIES cultural network:

- Monday morning meetings with the LA office re: entire client list, daily media clips reviewed by all members, informal emails



## An Applied Theory:

### CMM and DAVIES

Recently, I witnessed a unique interaction between two co-workers, Colleen and David. He told her about the time he streaked naked with some friends. To some, this may seem inappropriate. For them, it is normal interaction. CMM will show you why:

**Cultural Patterns:** At DAVIES, members are like family. They share similar interests and ideas about life.

**Self-Concept:** Both are strong, sociable people with high self-esteem.

**Episode:** The computers were down and they were passing time.

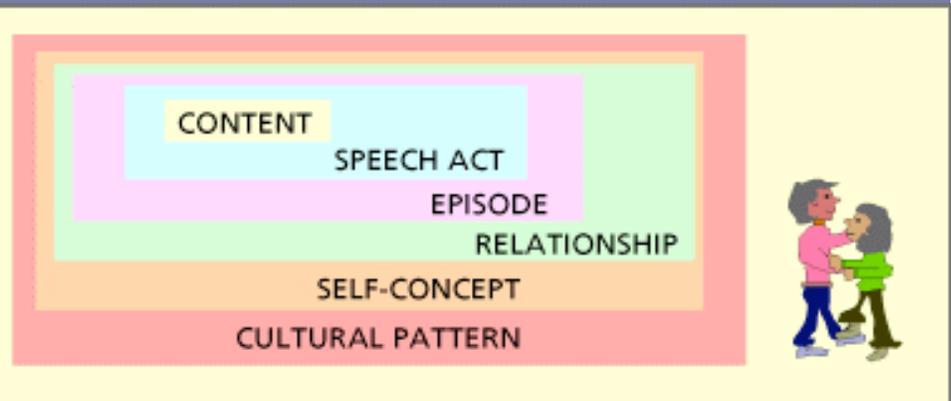
**Speech Act:** Colleen had a smile on her face and David was animated with laughter.

**Content:** He said he streaked with his friends.

**Constitutive Rules:** This type of story means David and Colleen are friends.

**Regulative Rules:** Thus, they are allowed to share personal stories.

## Shared Organizational Culture through Coordinated Management of Meaning



### The Facts

- Explains how humans construct meaning for communication patterns.
- Shared meanings mean greater understanding in the workplace.

### Hierarchy of Meaning:

- How we interpret our experiences with others is based on meaning we assign. In the workplace, meanings are created through:
  - **Content:** what is said.
  - **Speech Act:** behaviors that define the content.
  - **Episode:** particular instances of interaction.
  - **Relationships:** the types we have with others.
  - **Self-Concept:** how we view ourselves shapes communication with others.
  - **Cultural Patterns:** a mutual understanding shared by particular social groups or societies.

**Rules:** No such person made “rules.” They come from early childhood socialization and are displayed through personal interpretation and overt behaviors.

- **Constitutive:** decides what certain actions mean i.e. hugging is showing affection.
- **Regulative:** guides interaction i.e. is it appropriate to talk about personal topics?



# CMM and MBTI: How They Work As One

Myers-Briggs personality profiling can be very functional in determining a person's preference in workplace communication. MBTI is also useful for matching people with the right jobs that will enable them to produce maximum outputs for the organization. It measures levels of energy, ways of information processing and decision-making, and preferred method of lifestyle.

In addition, CMM is a communication theory based on self-generated rules that guides our interaction and determines how we behave around members in the workplace.

Although one is a self-assessment tool and the other is a theory, they are closely interrelated and used together can promote successful workplace interaction. How? We'll use Elizabeth and Caitlin as an example:

Since Elizabeth is an ESTP personality type and Caitlin is an INFJ personality type, it is safe to assume that there are some differences in the way they prefer to work.

- Elizabeth likes to make quick decisions and move onto the next task, leaving little room for lengthy contemplation
- Caitlin is sensitive and complex and thrives on introspection before making any long-term decisions.

However, if they realize each other's personality types, Elizabeth could appreciate that Caitlin likes to take things slow and provide maximum support in her decision-making.

On the other hand, Caitlin would realize that Elizabeth has a hundred things to do each day and quick decisions are the best way for effective results.

Even if they don't necessarily agree with each other's preferred method of task completion, they could apply CMM and adapt their communication to one another to experience coordination (agreement). They may never experience complete coordination, but partial coordination is better than no coordination at all.

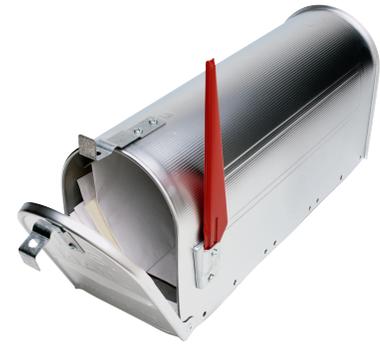
Below is a diagram that illustrates the relationship and how coordination is possible:





# What Did You Just Say?

## Workplace communication gone wrong



The following story illustrates:

A month ago, my Mac crashed and I lost over 2,000 pictures from Thailand and unfortunately, had not backed up. It was a very emotional time for me and discussing it is very hard. SO...

One day at work, Caitlin extended her apologies regarding the computer. She said, "That must suck." I said (*in a low voice*), "It's not so bad, except for the !\*#@# pictures." I actually said an obscenity to her because we were the only ones in the room.

I didn't think it was a big deal until I saw the look on her face: horror. I knew I had to fix this fast and explain myself for my explicit comment:

"I'm sorry I said that. It was just the heat of the moment. Did anyone hear me?"

"Just me," she said, "but you probably shouldn't say that."

"I know," I said. "I wasn't thinking clearly. Please forgive me."

Caitlin accepted my apology and workplace interaction has been normal ever since. Thankfully, she is an understanding person.

Here is a look at our interaction using principles from MBTI and CMM and how the incident could have been avoided. This level of understanding can help prevent such miscommunications in the future:

I am an extrovert and a feeling person by nature. Being an ENFJ, I like to express exactly how I am feeling (hence, using an obscenity).

Caitlin on the other hand, is an INFP, and more reserved and thoughtful by nature. Most likely, she would have contemplated how that word would make me feel before it came out of her mouth.

Because our personality types differ, we did not reach shared meaning for what that word meant. To me, it was a colorful way of expressing my emotions and for her, it was clearly a cross to our communication boundaries. Here are a few tips for workplace interactions:

- Assess personality types: Would an introvert use that type of language at work?
- Respect and appreciate each other's differences.
- Think before you speak and choose your words wisely.
- Address any issues and correct any deviations you have made.



## Internship at DAVIES: The Ease of Permeability

Often times, it can be challenging for anyone to begin a new job. The people are fresh, the tasks can be foreign and the overall job expectations can be like nothing ever experienced before.

As a student, the only job I've known is restaurant serving because it has provided the fastest, easy money. An extemporaneous reward I received from the job was a knack for multitasking and refined ability to speak with the public and work on a team.

Ready for a novel challenge, I was ecstatic when I was accepted for the internship position at DAVIES. Not only did I welcome it with open arms, but I also rearranged my schedule to make sure that nothing would interfere with my new and exciting venture.

The first concept that comes to mind when I think of DAVIES is permeability.

*Permeability* is a character component of a system that allows information and materials to flow in and out (systems is a type of theory that focuses on interlocking processes and strategies of organizations). The degree of permeability varies from system to system – some are relatively closed, whereas others are extremely open (Miller, p. 60).

DAVIES is one that is highly open. As a result, it was incredibly easy for me to adapt to my new environment.

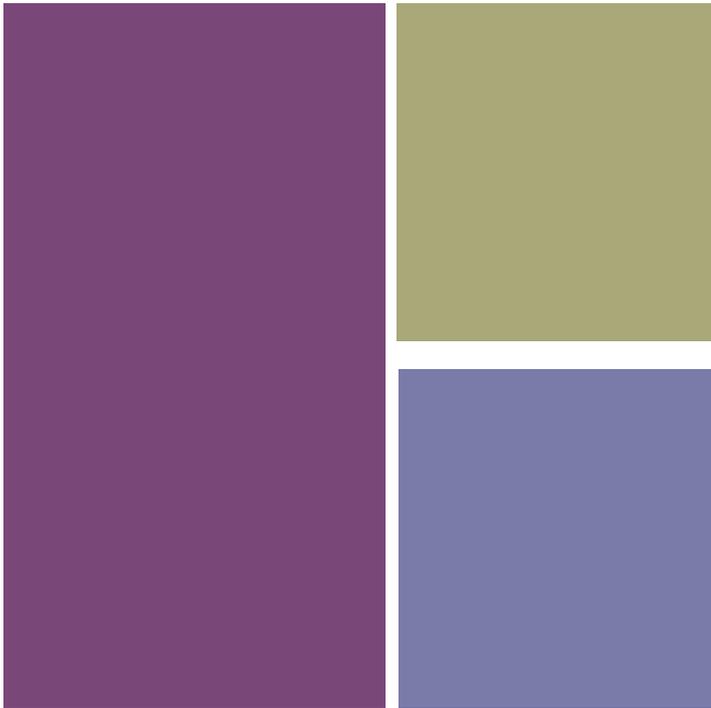
On my first day, I was given a black binder packed full of information related to DAVIES. It was

clearly organized by tabs, situated behind a very warm welcome letter from Caitlin.

As I toured the office, everyone greeted me with friendly smiles and some even remembered that I was “the girl who interviewed from Thailand.” I thought it was remarkable and it impressed me tremendously. I also noticed that people worked cross-sectionally by cubicles and only a few held corner offices. This aids functional communication between members and the ability for multiple teams to permeate administrative boundaries to work together.

Above all, my relationship with Elizabeth is the true definition of permeability in the workplace. Since I am an intern and I will be gone in a few weeks (☹), Elizabeth doesn't have to take the time and energy to explain details about why I do things in addition to how to do it, but she does. She talks to me about the clients and takes extra steps to show me tools that will positively benefit me in my future career.

Another example of permeability is my miscommunication with Caitlin. Easily, she could have been surprised by my comment, not said a word and left with an opinion of me that may was negative. However, she chose to address it when I inquired and allowed information to flow freely between us. This gave me insight into where she was coming from and enabled me to correct the error of my way.



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## From Here On: What the future holds beyond DAVIES

First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone at DAVIES for making my internship experience possible and more than I could have ever imagined. Everyone was so kind and welcoming and made the transition easy for me. Special thanks to Elizabeth for providing guidance and always finding tasks for me to do, even if it took time out of her work schedule.

I would also like to say that I have been fortunate to gain an experience at an organization with such a strong culture where everyone is recognized for their hard work and the value they bring to the firm. Even as an intern, I have felt valuable because I am assigned legitimate tasks that are relevant and beneficial to the future of the organization. When I begin my career, I aspire to always produce meaningful work and become a valuable asset to my company.

Interning at DAVIES has also given me insight into the dynamics of different personality types and how

they affect people's interactions and communication. I have seen that if you do not pay attention to this and the different levels of meaning that people hold for types of communications, there is potential for serious repercussions in the workplace. Fortunately, mine was only minor, but it taught me a lifelong lesson of value.

When my internship at DAVIES is finished, it will be bittersweet because I will be at such a pivotal time in my life. I will be on my way to graduation, and shortly after, New York City to begin my career. Where I will land, it is too early to tell, but one thing is for sure: I will never forget my time spent at DAVIES and my memories of this great opportunity and experience will never be far behind.

- Melissa Patti



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