



HOW TO POSITION YOURSELF AS A PROBLEM SOLVER

Uncover the value you offer and declare what you can do for your current or prospective employer.

#1A: FIND OUT IF YOU SOLVE PROBLEMS THROUGH INNOVATION OR OPERATIONS.

Complete the following questionnaire to find out if you can best address an employer's challenges with your creativity to drive growth or your ability to increase efficiencies or cut costs.

1. I get more joy out of...

- A. Helping my company solve problems in unique ways
- B. Saving my company money

2. If I could do one thing for the rest of my career, I would focus on....

- A. Helping businesses create new and better products and services
- B. Helping business operations run more efficiently

3. Among my greatest strengths are my:

- A. Creativity and passion
- B. Dependability, communication skills, data analysis, and relationship building know-how

4. Any employer that hires me, can count on...

- A. My vision, my perspective, and my ability to see things differently
- B. Me to get the job done faster than anyone else

5. Nobody can quite deliver like I can. I always...

- A. Come up with original ideas
- B. Get things done ahead of time and under budget



6. I _____ what I do.

- A. Love
- B. Am disciplined about

7. I am motivated by...

- A. Uncovering future opportunities
- B. Delivering value today

8. My goal is to...

- A. Do the right things
- B. Do things right

9. My contributions are...

- A. Tough to measure
- B. Easy to measure

10. I generally...

- A. Am comfortable operating without specific guidance, pursue overall goals rather than specific ones, and follow non-linear routes to achieve my objective
- B. Know what my results should be, what steps to take, and who to involve

HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

If you answered mostly As, you best contribute through your creativity as an innovator. If you answered mostly Bs, you problem solve by addressing operational (in)efficiency.



#1B: LEARN TO POSITION YOURSELF AS AN IN-DEMAND "T-SHAPED" PROFESSIONAL.

When exploring which types of consultants the company should hire, McKinsey & Company developed the concept of "T-shaped" and "I-shaped" professionals. While both I-shaped and T-shaped individuals¹ can add value, the consulting firm found that T-shaped professionals are best positioned to help bring new thinking and ideas to light—and that's why today many employers seek these individuals out.

The "T" shape comes from a vertical stroke of a deep skill set from any number of disciplines, while the horizontal line that completes the "T" comes from the ability to collaborate across functions. The "I" shape, on the other hand, indicates a depth of knowledge only in one functional area.

As design firm IDEO CEO Tim Brown has explained,² bringing too many different I-shaped individuals together can lead to problems—as they have difficulty collaborating. Each brings their own perspective, making collaboration a challenge. On the other hand, individuals who are strong team players but lack their own depth of skills and experiences can only contribute through collaboration, not by offering any talent to get things done.

ARE YOU AN "I" OR A "T"? SELF-EVALUATION

I-SHAPED PROFESSIONALS...	T-SHAPED PROFESSIONALS...
<input type="checkbox"/> Can create/contribute but are not known for collaborating	<input type="checkbox"/> Can create/contribute and collaborate
<input type="checkbox"/> Are highly knowledgeable in a given subject matter	<input type="checkbox"/> Possess a range of skills and expertise
<input type="checkbox"/> Advance their knowledge by digging deeper into their field	<input type="checkbox"/> Advance their knowledge by broadening their perspectives and areas of specialty
<input type="checkbox"/> Look for one right answer	<input type="checkbox"/> Use curiosity to ask questions about customer problems
<input type="checkbox"/> Work within their function to solve problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Are collaborative problem-solvers
<input type="checkbox"/> Contribute their individual point of view	<input type="checkbox"/> Can imagine problems from other team members' perspectives
<input type="checkbox"/> Speak about the things they can do personally	<input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm and help build on others' ideas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tackle projects as part of a team

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andyboynton/2011/10/18/are-you-an-i-or-a-t/#3baba4ba6e88>

² https://chiefexecutive.net/ideo-ceo-tim-brown-t-shaped-stars-the-backbone-of-ideoaes-collaborative-culture___trashed/



HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

If your answers indicate that you're a T, this is another way you can position the value you bring. For those that favor the I-shape at the moment, anyone can become a T over time and with effort. Adopting T-shape qualities is something you can work on by talking to people in other functional areas and gaining an understanding of their problems. Becoming a T takes curiosity, bridging silos, asking questions, and broadening your knowledge base.

#1C: DISCOVER YOUR PERSONAL LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND VALUES.

Review Amazon's 14 leadership principles³ for inspiration, and select those that best describe the value you bring.

#2: CREATE YOUR PERSONAL VALUE STATEMENT BASED ON THE THREE SELF-EVALUATIONS ABOVE.

STEP 1: DRAW INSIGHTS FROM THE FIRST SELF-EVALUATION.

Ex: [COMPANY] is looking to [SOLVE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS/MEET SPECIFIC GOALS OF COMPANY]. That's something I can help with... as an innovator OR ...by addressing operational (in)efficiency.

STEP 2: DRAW INSIGHTS FROM THE SECOND SELF-EVALUATION.

Ex: Combining a range of skills and expertise in [AREAS THE COMPANY IS LOOKING FOR SUPPORT], with empathy, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving—seeing problems from other team members' perspectives, I can help address [PROBLEMS COMPANY NEEDS TO SOLVE] within my function and across [OTHER RELATED TEAMS/DISCIPLINES].

³ <https://www.amazon.jobs/en/principles>



STEP 3: DRAW INSIGHTS FROM THE THIRD SELF-EVALUATION.

Ex: The specific leadership values you can count on me to contribute include [Examples from Amazon Leadership Principles: such as thinking big, earning trust, and delivering results].

STEP 4: COMBINE STEPS 1-3 ABOVE.

Ex: [COMPANY] is looking to [SOLVE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS/MEET SPECIFIC GOALS OF COMPANY]. That's something I can help with by addressing operational (in)efficiency.

Combining a range of skills and expertise in [AREAS THE COMPANY IS LOOKING FOR SUPPORT], with empathy, active listening, and collaborative problem-solving—seeing problems from other team members' perspectives, I can help address [PROBLEMS COMPANY NEEDS TO SOLVE] within my function and across [OTHER RELATED TEAMS/DISCIPLINES].

The specific leadership values you can count on me to contribute include thinking big, earning trust, and delivering results.

Congratulations, this is your final Personal Value Statement!