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VANOC

Vancouver Organizing Committee  
for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic  
Winter Games

# Organizing the 2010 Winter Olympics with the Help of the MBTI® Tool

*From Startup, to Performance, to Dissolution – All in Five Years*

## Customer Spotlight

### Erin Sills, Director

Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games  
(VANOC)

### Q: What are the primary responsibilities of your position?

In my role I have responsibility for leadership and culture development, change management, team effectiveness, and internal communications -- All with the intention of getting us ready to welcome the world to Vancouver and Whistler in 2010.

VANOC currently has more than 1,000 paid employees and we're in the process of recruiting up to 25,000 volunteers for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

### Q: With whom in the organization do you use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) assessment?

I use it at all levels – from senior executives to front line employees. And I use the MBTI assessment in two capacities – team effectiveness and individual leadership coaching.

For team effectiveness I use the MBTI instrument with intact teams and new teams. With intact teams it's a great way to create conversations on how teams are working effectively together and what they need to focus on to become even more effective. When a new team is coming together, I use the MBTI tool to start the conversation about what the team needs to be aware of to operate at its best.

For individual leadership coaching I use the MBTI instrument to provide insight into how the leader's type impacts their leadership style at work – what their strengths and areas for improvement are, and what they need to be aware of when they're operating at an increased stress level.

### Q: How does the MBTI instrument help you fulfill the primary responsibilities of your position?

The MBTI tool is a lens to look at ourselves through. It creates permission for us to look inward. At VANOC, with the pace we're operating at, it's not often that people have time to slow down enough to do that. The MBTI instrument is a quick and effective tool that allows people to really take that inward look to see how they're contributing to our project in ways that are

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effective. It also helps to highlight areas that individuals or teams need to shift or adapt – the different muscles that they need to strengthen to be more efficient in their work. The MBTI instrument gives people permission to have conversations that they wouldn't normally have at work.

**Q: What is the main issue or issues you're trying to resolve by using the MBTI instrument?**

We want to ensure people are working at their best with each other, that they're communicating effectively with each other – understanding that there is a difference in people's preferred ways of sharing information. When we talk about and explore the 4 preferences, people get a lot of "ah-ha's" about where rubs exist in the organization. The MBTI tool helps to develop an increased awareness and the ability to talk about the diversity that exists in the workplace. The MBTI instrument is a framework that allows people to have conversations that they wouldn't normally have.

**Q: What benefits have you and/or the Olympic Organizing Committee received from using the MBTI assessment?**

We've learned how to work better under stress and to realize when people are "in the grip." It has provided staff members an understanding of how stress affects their work and communication style, and it has provided techniques on how to counter the effects of stress. Plus it has taught or reminded members of our organization that people have different preferences and to consider these when working with them.

**Q: What is the biggest challenge for the Workforce Engagement Department?**

We have a limited amount of time to create the conversations necessary for teams to work effectively together, so that's why tools like the MBTI assessment are helpful. We go through all stages of an organization's life cycle – from start-up, to an entrepreneurial phase, to a growth phase, to performance, and then to dissolution. All in five years! There is an enormous amount of change that we go through in getting "games ready," not to mention a time-line that has zero flexibility, and increasing public interest in what we're doing. The need for all of us to be operating at our best is paramount; the MBTI assessment is one framework or tool that helps us get there.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is available from  
Psychometrics Canada at [www.psychometrics.com](http://www.psychometrics.com)