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Issue 02 • Mar-Apr 2011 • R44,95 (INCL. VAT)

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# I'VE GOT YOUR NUMBER.

*Am I speaking your language?*

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How an ancient personality profiling tool provides a thoroughly modern approach to selling to different people

BY DR GRAEME CODRINGTON  
& SAFFRON BAGGALLAY

**T**

HE VERY BEST SALES PEOPLE IN the world do it instinctively. The rest of us need some tools to help us out, but we still need to do it, and do it well. We're talking about adjusting our style to suit the person we're talking to. Most of us tend to communicate in the style we'd prefer to be communicated with – just like we lead the way we'd prefer to be led, or

show affection in the way we'd prefer to be loved. It's only natural, of course. But it's not helpful if we want to be persuasive and influential – and improve our selling skills.

As sales people, we use many different techniques to assist us to do this. Most of our companies have formal profiling and segmentation tools, often taking account of socio-economic factors, gender, culture (especially in South Africa) and age. Personality profiling is often overlooked in sales because people tend to think only of the psychometric-type profiling tools which would require people to fill in complicated assessment tools. Most sales people don't have the luxury of that sort of time investment from potential customers.

But there are some personality tools that don't require a psychometric test. One of the best of these is known as the Enneagram.

Many personality profiling tools focus on our mental apparatus – our cognitive abilities and conscious minds. But the Enneagram focuses on our unconscious and on our desires. It looks at our compulsions – our deep-seated needs and desires that have been with us our whole lives and were shaped and formed by key childhood moments. The attitudes and actions that flow from these compulsions are fairly obvious for everyone to see and can be usefully categorised into nine 'types' ('enneagram' is a Greek construct word meaning 'nine points'). The nine types are normally represented on a circular continuum with a web of internal inter-connecting lines. We'll talk about this shape in a minute.



A brief overview of each type

## THE BODY TYPES

The 8, 9 and 1 form the Body Triad, and tend to react on gut instinct. They are motivated by a need to feel in control, and ask 'how am I impacting or being impacted by the world?' Each of the three types feels and expresses these desires in different ways.

### TYPE 9 THE PEACEMAKER

The 9 fears conflict and will avoid it at all costs, potentially causing huge frustration for those around them. The 9 desires peace and routine.

Type 9s seem very easy-going, accommodating, relaxed, patient, diplomatic, open-minded and empathetic. They make excellent listeners and mediators and are generally known for their ability to keep the peace in times of turbulence. Their ability to avoid conflict and keep peace is a coping mechanism for them, but often results in them feeling unseen or unheard by people around them. They can appear unable to make decisions, and can frustrate colleagues by not taking initiative or bringing energy to engagements. They are happiest when everyone else is happy.

Selling to a 9 can be an aggravating experience because they don't like to be put under pressure when making a decision. It is not a good idea to bully the 9 into anything. They need to see the big picture and how everything fits together. They don't always know what they want, so gentle questioning and patient listening are important. Be prepared for a long process, and be prepared to keep taking the initiative.

### TYPE 1 THE PERFECTIONIST

The 1 hates things being wrong. Ones desire making things right; and they strive for and expect perfection. They want to fix their and other's mistakes, which they usually do by being critical and judgemental of themselves and others.

Ones have an extraordinary ability to look immaculate, even in their tracksuit. They are the most ethical, honest, reliable and productive people in the office, displaying self-discipline and order. They will have hundreds of 'to-do' lists and their desk will be spotless. However, all this is their way of controlling their environments and it can lead to all sorts of unhappiness for them and those around them if left unattended. Unhappy 1s can be extremely inflexible, obsessive-compulsive, overly serious and dogmatic in their desperate attempt to ensure that they never make mistakes.

When selling to 1s, get it right! No spelling, grammatical or factual errors allowed. Be on time and be prepared. Dress appropriately and conduct yourself correctly – 1s are very aware of the 'right way to do things'. Be logical and sell the benefits in terms of making things right or better. Be fair and considerate in your approach to selling to 1s – spinning a story will not wash with them.

### TYPE 8 THE BOSS

The 8 fears weakness, being vulnerable to others and not being in control. They experience life intensely so they come across as strong, forceful and direct. They will figure out who they perceive to be the strongest person in the room and take them down, so that they can replace them. This is often done in

order to establish a better power balance in the room, or protect any underdogs. What 8s desire is strength, power and control.

Type 8s are direct – you will always know where you stand with an 8. They have legendary honesty and an ability to tell it like it is. They are authoritative, loyal and protective of those they care about. When they are being rebellious, insensitive, domineering, self-centred, sceptical, aggressive, obtuse, and belligerent, or just plain rude, they are usually covering up extreme sensitivity, vulnerability and an innate lack of trust in those around them.

Don't even try to take over when selling to an 8. Let them direct the meeting. Allow them to be boss. But don't be pathetic around them, or they will not respect you. Look out for an opportunity to 'push back' at them, and stand your ground – they will respect this if done well. Know what you are talking about, present in a logical and straight-forward manner, and point out the pragmatism of the product or service.

## THE HEART TYPES

Types 2, 3 and 4 form the Heart Triad. They operate primarily out of emotions, and have a desire to be loved, appreciated and supported. Unconsciously they are asking 'how am I being seen?' The 3 is generally least in touch with their feelings, whereas 4s talk constantly about their feelings and 2s talk about everybody else's feelings.

### TYPE 3 THE ACHIEVER

Type 3 fears failure – it's not an option. They desire success at all costs. Even when 3s are not being successful, they will twist reality to make sure that they are seen to be successful.

It's tough for many 3s to admit this, but their coping mechanism is deceit. They tend to work out what other people expect them to be like, and then morph into that. Remember Tom Cruise on Oprah's couch expressing his love for Katie Holmes? That's a 3 performing 'being in love'. Threes are optimistic, confident, industrious, efficient, self-motivated and energetic. You will find lots of 3s in a sales space. They know how to charm and their competitive nature drives them. When 3s are being superficial, vain and pretentious they are usually seeking your attention.

Selling to a 3 involves making them feel special and beautiful. But don't get overly emotional on them, they prefer talking about tasks. They love praise and praise and more praise, but don't expect any back. Sell them the benefits and do it with style. Don't believe anything until it's in writing and signed.

### TYPE 4 THE INDIVIDUALIST

The 4 fears being ordinary and too functional. They live with the feeling that something is missing in their lives; so they're often envious of others. Type 4s are creative and desire to be different. They will often dress alternatively, or have something 'special' about their appearance, like interesting make-up, a signature way of wearing accessories or 'out there' hairstyles.

Type 4s are warm, compassionate, creative, intuitive, supportive

and introspective. They often work in mundane jobs to fund what they really want to do. When 4s appear to be depressed, withdrawn, moody, self-absorbed and guilt-ridden it is often because they are 'playing the victim' to receive love. Abandonment is their biggest fear. Fours are motivated by a need to be understood, to feel that they are special, and that they also belong. It's complicated. On a good day, they can do two days work, but on a bad day they'll get nothing done and disrupt everyone else in the office too.

When selling to a 4, you must be able to customise and show them how you've created something unique for them. They enjoy 'the chase' of a relationship, so 'woo' them and always keep something 'for next time'. Be careful not to over-promise and under-deliver. Delivery and packaging – the aesthetic – make a big difference. If you catch them on a bad day, just walk away and come back some other time.

### TYPE 2 THE GIVER

The 2 fears not being loved, not being needed and being selfish; because in their mind this would mean that they are not lovable, and their main preoccupation is receiving love. The 2 loves being popular, being needed and being selfless. Unconsciously, 2s will remember your birthday so that you remember theirs – and they take pride in being so nice.

Type 2s are loving, caring, adaptable, insightful, generous, enthusiastic and very good at seeing what others need. When they are being martyr-like, indirect, manipulative, possessive, hysterical and overly demonstrative they are desperately covering up their need to be needed in order to seduce you into loving them. They really do need to be included and they will spend a lot of time focusing on what you need. They normally are a hub for gossip and information in the office.

Twos spend so much time focusing on others they are not always sure what they want or need – so selling directly to them may require you to help them figure out what is best for them. Enlisting their help in one of your projects, or getting them to help you promote yourself in their organisation is a good way to motivate them. You'll need to spend time developing a relationship with 2s.

## THE HEAD TYPES

**The 5, 6 and 7 make up the Head Triad, and approach the world by trying to rationalise it. Everything they do is underlined by a need for facts and information. They are motivated by unconscious fear, and are asking 'how am I not safe?' Like all the triads, the three different types within the triad all have their own ways of coping with fear.**

### TYPE 6 THE SCEPTIC

Whilst most of us have a healthy understanding that danger lurks out there somewhere, 6s are acutely aware that danger is a very real part of life and is potentially everywhere. They generally deal with this in one of two ways, either by being cowardly or by being overly brave. Sixes will triple check the front door is locked before they go to bed because what they de-

sire is feeling safe. They are at their best when there is structure, security and consistency.

Sixes are also known as loyalists. They are always there for you, especially in times of need. They are likeable, caring, warm, compassionate, witty, practical and responsible. However, they often don't show what they feel inside – which is suspicious and doubtful. They always look for hidden agendas and ulterior motives. So when they become hyper-vigilant, judgemental, unpredictable, defensive, rigid, testy, and paranoid, and begin to ask lots and lots of investigative questions, you know they are spiraling into feeling unsafe and they need direct information to restore their faith in you.

Selling to 6s can be a tricky business because they are naturally sceptical of your motives and are unlikely to trust a sales person. Ensure that you are consistent and direct in your approach, making sure there are no surprises along the way. Do not, under any circumstances, spin the 6 a story or make them promises you cannot keep.

### TYPE 5 THE OBSERVER

The 5 fears being coerced into a situation. Type 5s feel invaded very easily. If they could just be left alone they would be able to figure it all out. Every 5 we know has a 'special place' where they go to 'retreat'. So 5s deal with their unconscious fear by gathering information through reading, researching, observing and listening. However, they get so stuck in the business of gathering that they can forget to live – and are often not very good at giving back information or feedback.

Fives are deep thinkers. They need to know everything, which is why they are analytical, wise, objective, perceptive and self-contained. These are very admirable qualities, but 5s also need to be aware that the depths to which they go are unnecessary and can be cumbersome for others. In their quest for knowledge, 5s can appear distant, emotionally unavailable, unassertive and intellectually arrogant.

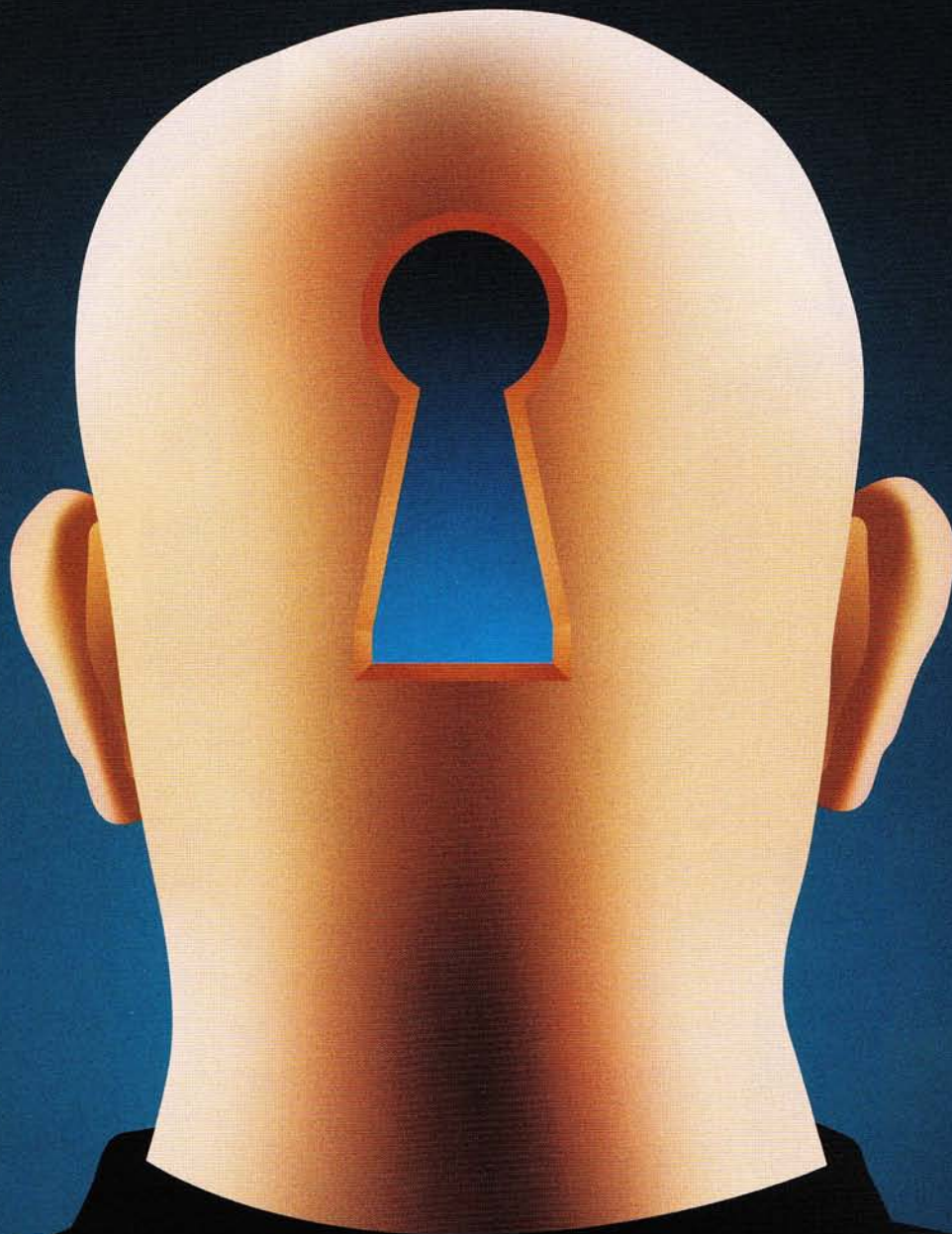
Selling to 5s would involve huge amounts of research. The 5 probably knows more than you do about what you're selling and the process will be long, drawn-out and involved. Make sure your website is available and detailed, so the 5 can do research in their own time. Make sure you know what a Google search about you and your product will bring up. If you are not a 5 (and we cannot see many 5s going into sales) this will require patience and detail at every juncture.

### TYPE 7 THE ENTHUSIAST

The 7 is terrified of rejection, entrapment, boredom and being too dependent. They are the world's monkey minds: ideas people with little or no follow through. What they want is to be popular (with everybody), to be free to have fun their way, and to experience as much as they can quickly with as much variation as possible. This can be exhausting for everybody else.

Sevens are fun-loving, spontaneous, confident, curious and imaginative, which is actually all just a distraction for their refusal to experience their fear and pain. Sevens can get so wrapped up in planning fun, over-committing, over-promising and under-delivering that they can spiral into impulsive, narcissistic, manic, undisciplined, self-destructive mode very quickly.

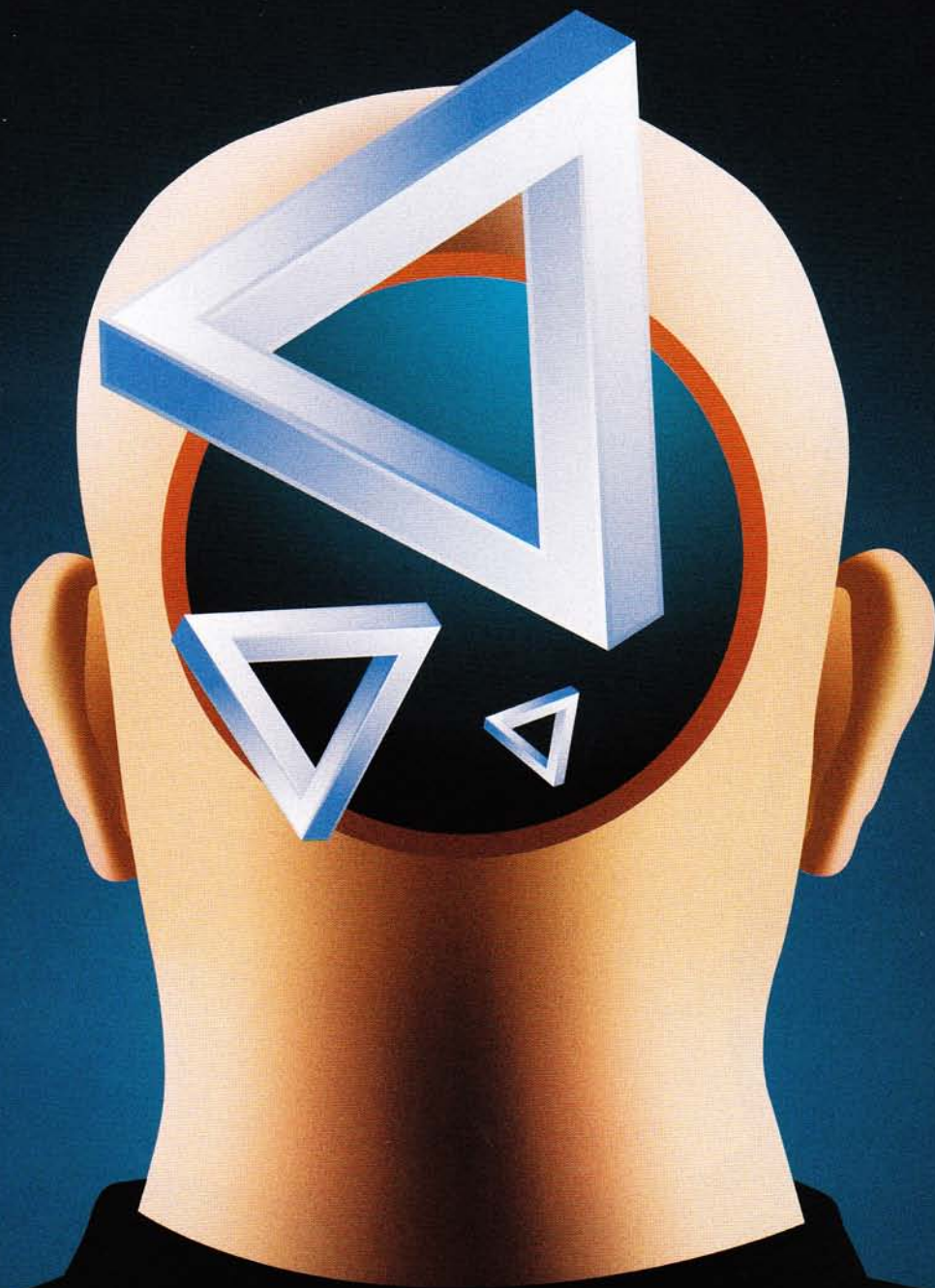
When selling to a 7, make it fun. The 7 will be massively enthused and see all the reasons for why they should buy. Your challenge will be to get them to actually commit. Keep the momentum for the sale going or the 7 will swim away. Selling is an attractive environment for 7s who come with natural wit and charm.



## Who is using the Enneagram

The Enneagram has ancient roots but it has come into mainstream practice relatively recently. It is distinctive among ancient systems, as it did not arise out of a religion or particular philosophy, and was known widely in the ancient world from China to Western Europe. The Enneagram is taught at a number of universities, mainly in the psychology department, and has been included in the Stanford University School of Business course, 'Personality, Self-Awareness and Leadership' since 1997. Many different organisations make extensive use of the Enneagram, including many top businesses, the CIA (which uses the Enneagram to help agents understand the behaviour of world leaders), teachers and life coaches, and Roman Catholic priests (especially the missionary Jesuits). The merits of the Enneagram have been discussed in esteemed publications such as *The Enquirer*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week* and *Newsweek*.

The most comprehensive research done regarding the accuracy of the Enneagram was completed in 2005. Independent researchers at SHL Group plc, the world's largest occupational psychometric test provider conducted a year-long project, and their conclusions are that "the nine Enneagram types do have validity as real and objective indicators of personality. Therefore, businesses and other kinds of users of the Enneagram typology can be reassured about its objective value... and that they stand on a par psychometrically with the Myers-Briggs system, the Big Five, and other well known, accepted psychological systems."



## You, Your Type and I

One of the most powerful uses of the Enneagram is to understand the dynamics of relationships between two or more types. Many couples who have discovered the Enneagram swear by it in managing their relationship. What one person does naturally without even thinking might be a real pressure point for someone else – and the Enneagram can spot this potential flash point. For example, 1s love structure, order and discipline and are meticulously punctual. Sevens on the other hand love spontaneity, will sacrifice being on time for being in the moment, and appear to be disorganised most of the time. If a 1 and a 7 want to have a good relationship, they will not be able to find a compromise solution – there is no ‘half way’ point between their two extremes that either would be happy with. Instead they will have to partition their lives so that some parts are structured and some are spontaneous. On holiday, for example, they might have one day of structured and pre-planned activities, and one day of adventure and exploring with no agenda. The goal is not compromise. The goal is to help each type achieve and fulfil their driving needs and unconscious desires at least some of the time, and to be conscious about helping others to do the same.

## Using the Enneagram to understand customers & enhance your sales

Learning the Enneagram will help you have a better understanding of yourself and others in terms of motivation, the interpretation of information, decision-making, providing and receiving feedback, effective team-work, team management, and very importantly, how to sell to different 'types' of people in different environments.

Knowing the Enneagram allows you to provide customers and clients with products and services that meet their needs in the way they wish their needs to be met. It really allows you to build relationships because you truly understand that different people have different points of view. Integrating the Enneagram with a substantive sales model allows you to exploit the sales person's strengths.

A few years ago, we worked with a company that was selling top end pet products to vets. We helped their sales team understand the Enneagram, and then worked with them to categorise every vet that they sold to. We discovered that all nine Enneagram types were represented (although there seemed to be quite a lot of 3s and 2s). We then developed a sales approach for each Enneagram type. We also helped each of the sales team to know their own Enneagram profile, and to appreciate the particular bias their type would bring to their sales approach. Within a few months, the sales team reported a significant increase in the connection and engagement they had with the vets, and the company saw a double digit increase in sales.

## More information & online profiling tools

You will find these links helpful if you want to learn more about the Enneagram, or use one of the many online profiling tools to assist in identifying your Enneagram type.

- TomorrowToday's 'Roots and Routes' courses: [www.tomorrowtoday.co.za](http://www.tomorrowtoday.co.za)  
Contact Saffron Baggallay: [saffron@tomorrowtoday.co.za](mailto:saffron@tomorrowtoday.co.za)
- The International Enneagram Association: [www.internationalenneagram.org](http://www.internationalenneagram.org)
- Enneagram Worldwide: [www.enneagramworldwide.com](http://www.enneagramworldwide.com)
- 9 Types: [www.9types.com](http://www.9types.com)
- The Enneagram Institute: [www.enneagraminstitute.com](http://www.enneagraminstitute.com)
- Personality Online: [www.personalityonline.com](http://www.personalityonline.com)
- Similar minds: [www.similarminds.com](http://www.similarminds.com)
- Do a YouTube search for Enneagram and find many amazing (and some horrific) videos to help you understand the different types better

## Finding your type

So there we have the nine types – albeit in briefest possible overview. Were you able to spot your basic type? Some types will find this easy: 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 are fairly easy to self-identify (although the 5 will then reject the whole thing as 'too simplistic'). The 9 probably saw themselves in every type, and the 4 is wondering if there is a 10th type that hasn't been identified yet. The 8 has also probably rejected this out of hand (as a matter of course). The 6 is likely to see themselves as a 1 or a 2. So, yes, it's not easy just on the basis of this brief summary. In fact, many Enneagram experts believe that it can take a few years to finally find, accept and embrace your full Enneagram profile, with a proper understanding of all its complexity. Remember that your 'type' consists of your basic type, varying amounts of the wings on either side of that, the types to which you would move when under conditions of extreme calm and stress, and multiple levels of maturity. So, for example, a type 9 person would see something of the 8, 1, 3 and 6 in themselves.

If you're battling to know which type you are, there are three things you can do. The easiest is to ask close friends and colleagues. Other people can probably see more clearly than you can how your compulsions direct your actions and – since all they see is the results of your internal dialogue, and don't hear all the voices you hear in your head.

Secondly, you can take one of the many online Enneagram tests available on the Internet. We'd caution you, though, to remember that these are not psychometric tests – so they are not able to reliably pinpoint your exact type. What they do, though, is the third thing, and that is to help you eliminate some of the types that you are definitely not. After that, it's all about gaining more insights, reading up on the profile, attending training courses and workshops, and using your knowledge and experience to do a better job of understanding yourself, understanding and appreciating others, and managing your relationships and interactions with other people more effectively and consciously.

## Using the Enneagram

Writing about the Enneagram in fewer than 4 000 words is like summarising what you need to know to qualify as a medical doctor in one afternoon. To really be able to use the Enneagram on a practical level, everyday, you have to explore it. The more you explore and the more comfortable and familiar you become, the easier it is to use. And when you use it, you'll discover the power of the insights to improve your self-knowledge and help you relate to – and sell to – other people more effectively. □



DR. GRAEME CODRINGTON is founder and international director of TomorrowToday, a strategy consultancy focused on the future world of work. He is a speaker, author, futurist and facilitator. Graeme is a guest lecturer at four top business schools, including the London Business School. He has a Doctorate in Business Administration and three best-selling books published by Penguin. He can be contacted at [graeme@tomorrowtoday.co.uk](mailto:graeme@tomorrowtoday.co.uk)



SAFFRON BAGGALLAY is a trainer and human communications expert at TomorrowToday Training. She has used and applied the Enneagram in her work for many years, and has a passion for helping others use it to connect and communicate more effectively. She can be contacted at [saffron@tomorrowtoday.co.za](mailto:saffron@tomorrowtoday.co.za)