

ESTJ

(About 8.7% of the U.S. population)

ESTJs are life's *administrators*. As Extraverted-Judgers (EJs), they have a driving need to impose their judgments on the world around them with structure, schedule, and order. This combination of preferences gives ESTJs the ability to see a situation as it is and work with others to develop procedures, rituals, or regulations that will take care of it, while providing a framework for similar situations. They are often highly organized and enjoy bringing order out of chaos.

ESTJ Personality Highlights

- Their **Extraversion** makes for lively interaction with the outside world and a zest for life.
- Their **Sensing** allows them to see the world around them as tactile and immediate.
- Their **Thinking** translates their perceptions into objective, impersonal, analytical decisions.
- Their **Judging** provides closure and accountability by producing finished products in a timely and orderly fashion.

This special combination of hands-on perception and analytical judgment, focused outward, set in a lifestyle of structure, schedule, and order, makes ESTJs the administrators of the world. If you want a job done, a regulation established, a system implemented, or an ongoing program evaluated, call on an ESTJ to manage it.

Here are some other characteristics. ESTJs...

- Freely express their opinions.
- Can be surprised when others see things differently than they do.
- View their side of the argument as an open-and-shut case, dismissing the views of others as irrelevant.
- Are partygoers who are always ready with a quick joke, a ready exchange, or an unsolicited opinion about almost anything.

ESTJs in Personal Life

In relating to others, as with everything else, ESTJs are comfortable taking charge. Decisive and opinionated, they are easy to get along with as long as they are listened to and allowed to control things. Generally, ESTJs and ISTJs would prefer to surround themselves, both at home and at work, with "yes people," although they would deny it.

Each of the ESTJs four preferences – Extraversion, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging – fall on the tougher, more objective side of the line between alternatives. Their outgoing assertiveness, practicality, firm-mindedness, and decisiveness tend to make them good protectors and providers.

ESTJs at Home

The ESTJ's lifestyle, like most other things, is controlled and organized. Family is one more thing to manage. Hard work, tight schedules, and solid merit-based rewards are hallmarks of their lives. Fun, relaxation, and free time are scheduled and doled out (to themselves and others) according to how well standard operating procedures and other regulations have been followed. Good work brings good rewards; hard work is its own relaxation. Certain activities typically associated with males – such as golf, beer-drinking, and poker – are scheduled for relaxation. So are certain more typically female activities, such as gardening, tennis, or shopping.

Family events and rituals are the symbols of an ESTJ's cultural heritage and must be honored with the strictest adherence and most loyal obedience. ESTJ children and adults alike look forward to birthdays, religious celebrations, and annual family reunions. Although ESTJs may protest, sometimes vehemently, about going to such events, it would never occur to them not to be there. They might even be surprised to hear that another type was "hurt" by their protesting.

Hard work carries ESTJs to the end of their lives. Rewards, degrees, gold watches, and certificates are given in due season. Retirement is one more thing to be scheduled and planned. Their later years are still scheduled and regimented, though perhaps somewhat less than before.

ESTJs as Children

As children, ESTJs are usually socially active, take-charge types. In general, they play hard, give orders to everyone (parents included), and want two main things: that their parents act like parents and that structure, schedule, and definition be imposed upon them by someone. They may protest this discipline, but in the long run they appreciate and rely on the security that such authority brings. ESTJ children are responsible while also testing the limits. They are responsible to parents and friends who take command, but keep testing that authority to reassure themselves that it can be relied upon. For example, at bedtime, ESTJ children may resist and protest going to bed. But they appreciate immensely a parent who enforces bedtime rituals.

Things are no different in the classroom. A teacher's job is to teach, be organized, be a good role model, dress appropriately, be decisive, and follow a lesson plan. When that happens ESTJ students will respond and prove to be rather good scholars, although they may be somewhat mouthy and argumentative. Courses that are structured, with practical, tangible results, will appeal most to ESTJ students. Their academic prowess will continue as they climb the academic ladder, although they tend to have less patience with the more abstract world of college. They are frustrated by iNtuitive-Perceiving (NP) professors – who are the dominant faculty type at the college level – when their lectures don't follow stated outlines and their material isn't limited to the factual and concrete. ESTJ course evaluations may focus on pointing out small detailed "errors" in the course materials.

ESTJs as Parents

Home, family, parenting, and children are among the central and motivating commitments of the ESTJ's life. When all else fails, appealing to their parental duties and responsibilities will bring a

parent around to whatever program is being offered. It's possible that more encyclopedias, home-learning kits, how-to-raise-better-children books, and other family programs have been sold to ESTJs by appealing to their parental responsibilities than to any other type.

ESTJs in Professional Life

Two slogans that describe the ESTJ's philosophy in the workplace are, "Don't fix what isn't broken" and "Anything worth doing is worth doing well." Both statements drive ESTJs. Fiercely loyal and extremely compulsive, they race up the administrative ladder in any organization. They spend money well and are naturals at marketing and at "selling" their effectiveness. They are superb at developing sound management policies and committed to their own model as the best way to do something. They are quick to venture into many areas, take charge (usually successfully), and develop a following of subordinates who come to trust their authoritative nature.

ESTJs as Leaders

The ESTJ's leadership style is all about being a decisively organized, methodical, implementer of plans who is focused on targeted outcomes. Known for their ability to communicate well-defined tasks and realistic expectations for almost all activity, they are often masterful at creating structures and acting pragmatically to get things done. As group leaders, they prepare step-by-step analyses that provide a clear, efficient plan of action to achieve stated goals. ESTJs are more concerned with stability and logical exactness than in developing relationships through building rapport or developing strategic initiatives. When overplayed, these strengths can derail their leadership efforts, producing compliance rather than commitment from employees and colleagues.

More than most other types, ESTJs are the proverbial jack-of-all-trades. Preferring accountability, responsibility, productivity, and results, this type is remarkable at just about anything they do. You can find them in leadership positions in a cross-section of professions, from law and medicine to education and engineering.

It is as natural and inborn for ESTJs to manage (although not necessarily lead) as it is for fish to swim. Grounded, organized, exacting, socially deft, gregarious, academically capable, and always appropriate, ESTJs are seen by others as dependable, practical, and able to get the job done. They will naturally talk to others and gather just enough factual information to make a decision. These inherent social and administrative skills make the family, the workforce, the neighborhood, the church, or any other group appropriate arenas for them to administer and manage. The ESTJ's need for control prompts them to always say "yes" when asked to assume positions of responsibility.

As a general rule, ESTJs will rise to the top of almost any organization. When this doesn't occur, it's usually because their Extraverted-Judging (EJ) orientation has alienated others or their argumentative nature has made enemies higher up. If they manage to keep this behavior in check and can show their expertise without being impatient, then they are a natural to achieve leadership roles. They often do well academically, which allows them to carry the proper credentials; they will use those credentials in a very authoritative way, demanding respect. For example, if Jane Smith has earned a Ph.D. and you

were to address her as Ms. Smith, you would be instantly corrected: “That’s *Doctor* Smith.” (It’s the ESTJ who will identify himself as “Capt. Joseph E. Smith, III, USN, Ret.”) ESTJs command and demand respect from others, and they give it to others when appropriate.

ESTJs as Employees

ESTJs are very conscious of the chain of command. For them, work is a series of goals to be reached by following rules and regulations issued by the upper ranks of an organization’s hierarchy. The system and its regulations are good, self-protecting, and self-perpetuating. By following them and working hard, ESTJs believe the system will, in turn, serve them. They are loyal to their office and to the organization as a whole, though not necessarily to specific individuals. As a result, they are viewed as good followers and team or role players by their superiors. They then may be rewarded with promotions – in essence, being allowed to join the “inner circle” of like-minded leaders.

ESTJs’ Workplace Stressors

Because ESTJs are a take-charge type with very high control needs, and because of their extreme sense of accountability, they do not cope well when things don’t go as planned. They have no tolerance for disorganization, tardiness, sloppiness, or inappropriate behavior (as they define it, of course). All of these are invitations for a barrage of criticism. ESTJs have a short fuse when anything suggests they are losing control. They can become loud, rigid, and domineering, creating a great deal of stress within anyone nearby. (As a rule, ESTJs give ulcers rather than getting them.) None of this is malicious. Instead, it’s meant to keep the world running “correctly” and to keep people doing what they “should” be doing.

Organizationally, ESTJs can find it most unsettling when there aren’t enough measurable markers indicating progress and current status. This lack of markers can bring on a sense of losing control and that nothing is really being accomplished. Since they abhor inefficiency, they find waste and misuse of any resources completely unacceptable and even dangerous to the system.

ESTJs also experience stress when they see others within the system being irresponsible. They have a strong positive regard for the organization’s hierarchy and clearly established lines of authority. When others disrespect, cross over, or attempt to break established chains of command, they tend to respond with anger and criticism. They can also have trouble listening to subordinates or anyone else they define as unqualified to render an opinion. This includes children and others outside the chain of command. ESTJs understand how the conventional bureaucracy functions and work it to the maximum.

The ESTJ’s chain-of-command mentality may produce behavior that, on the surface, seems inconsistent with their everyday style. Hard-charging, high-ranking ESTJs can appear almost meek at home or in social gatherings – that is, once they have decreed that the home or party is their partner’s turf. According to the chain of command, the partner should give orders and the ESTJ will follow quite obediently. Hours later, back at work, it is once again time to take over. It is important to realize that neither of these seemingly contradictory behaviors is inconsistent with being an ESTJ.

Their innate compulsiveness makes it difficult for ESTJs to relax. It's been said that they are capable of turning reading into a competitive sport. In later life this can manifest itself in a variety of stress-related health problems and make retirement difficult and intimidating.

ESTJs' Careers

When making career choices, ESTJs should resist the tendency to rely too much on previous job definitions as they consider what future positions would be a good fit. They will logically weigh the pros and cons of career/job options, but may forget to consider the impact of their decisions on their personal life, significant others, and what is ultimately important to them. They are good at setting goals and following through, but they need to remember that many good opportunities come through events and interactions that aren't planned.

As they progress through life and up the organizational ladder, ESTJs would do well to explore areas outside their everyday experience. For example, they might find enjoyment and balance in the soft sciences, such as psychology and sociology, as well as literature, art, and music. All of these provide insights and inspiration that can help ESTJs respect others' points of view and appreciate that there is more to life than compulsive deadlines.

That being said, STJs in general (and ESTJs in particular) are heavily represented in the ranks of supervisors, managers, and executives. By one measure about 60% of corporate vice presidents and CEOs are STJs, with a majority of those being ESTJs. Other occupations that attract ESTJs include industrial arts teacher, food service manager, banker, sales representative, insurance agent, and judge.

Summary

ESTJs maintain the traditions, norms, and rules of a group. They are efficient, responsible, and hardworking. They bring order, structure, and a drive for completion in everything they do. They thrive on organizing projects, tasks, or events and following through with their commitments – and they expect others to do the same.

Adapted from the writing and teaching of Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen.

ESTJs On a Team

Naturally Bring to a Team

- Responsible and helpful; their relationships are about showing caring and concern by providing structure
- Quickly see the right way to do tasks; focus on planning and timely completion
- Will establish procedures and activities that provide team members with a sense of belonging
- Committed to and responsible for the task – steady, dependable, and predictable workers
- Cooperative team players

Teamwork Style

- Make sure things run smoothly by defining purposes and issues, planning, and attending to logistics
- Lead in areas that require a responsible, results-oriented approach
- Expect others to follow rules and procedures
- Relate to others in a direct manner, encouraging cooperative teamwork and motivating others for quality performance

Potential Blind Spots

- May be quick to tell others what they should or should not do
- May get bogged down by ambiguous situations
- May make others feel put down by their detailed instructions and strong need for control
- Often expect others to be more like them

To Help Them Succeed

- Provide stability and time-tested practices and procedures
- Give specific examples and comparisons to make theories and abstractions work better for them
- Be prepared; have a time-and-task focus, have agendas and clearly defined outcomes, and follow the agreed-upon plan

Adapted from Quick Guide to the 16 Personality Types in Organizations by Sue A. Cooper, Roger R. Pearman, et al.

Managing the ESTJ

WORK LABEL – SUPERVISOR

- Practical and realistic
- A natural in business and applied mechanics
- Likes to run things, to be in charge
- Gets things done
- Focused, with no time to waste

STRENGTHS

- Responsible
- Matter-of-fact
- Industrious
- Organized
- Decisive

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

- Slow down and be patient
- Recognize other workable solutions
- Be open to the big picture
- Be sensitive to others' needs
- Listen more

TO FUNCTION BEST ESTJs NEED: Predictability and order. Standards and measurements for success. Tell them what needs to be done; they'll make it happen.

ESTJs ARE FRUSTRATED BY: A lack of realism. Missed deadlines and lack of organization. Broken rules and wasted time. Emotional responses.

ESTJs IRRITATE OTHERS BY: Appearing impatient. Making decisions too fast with too little information. Not taking the time to listen. Insensitivity to the needs of others.

ESTJs VALUE: The system, authority, and control.

ON A TEAM: They take responsibility and get things done.