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## EDITORIALS

# Keep your mind open

by William C. Cutlip

Sometimes we're real actuaries. We believe if it can't be proven with a formula, it's not true. And those who don't understand that...well, they just don't understand.

Cindy Forbes wrote an article for the April 1995 issue of *The Actuary* called "Understanding Your Management Style." It described the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a tool in use for many years to help people understand their own style of operation and how they relate to others. It was a good description and explanation of the system.

One person took exception to it (see this month's letters to the editor). He feels people are far too complex to be categorized into 16 "personality types." He has a good point...if we take our MBTI profiles as literal "facts."

Part of our responsibility as actuaries is to communicate our findings and understandings to others. For us to be most effective, we need to do it in

their language, not ours. By understanding how we typically process and communicate information and how others hear it and process it, we can modify our approach so others can hear us better. That's what MBTI and the interaction of people is all about.

Looking at something like an MBTI reminds us of the opportunity we have to grow in our profession. We approach actuarial science as a probabilistic science offering a range of opportunities and solutions. If we take that same probabilistic approach to social sciences such as communications, our possibilities for success increase.

Next time a new idea comes across your desk, stop for a minute and think about how it can help you in your work. Don't limit yourself by looking at whether ideas fit a formula and then discard them if they don't. Rather, see what possibilities your imagination can conjure up. You'll be a better actuary for it.

# The future: Actuaries and the Internet

by Sue Ann Collins

In reviewing this issue of *The Actuary*, I am again struck by how technology influenced my career. During my relatively short time with the life insurance industry, I was among the first at my company exposed to a desktop computer and APL. Later came Lotus and the first portable PC, which by today's standard was hardly portable. Today's

version made the initial prototype awkward by comparison. Our work environment has changed dramatically as traditional actuarial tasks became easier and faster to perform.

If all the references in this issue to electronic bulletin boards such as Actuarial Online and the Internet are any indication, I believe we are on the edge of the next major technological