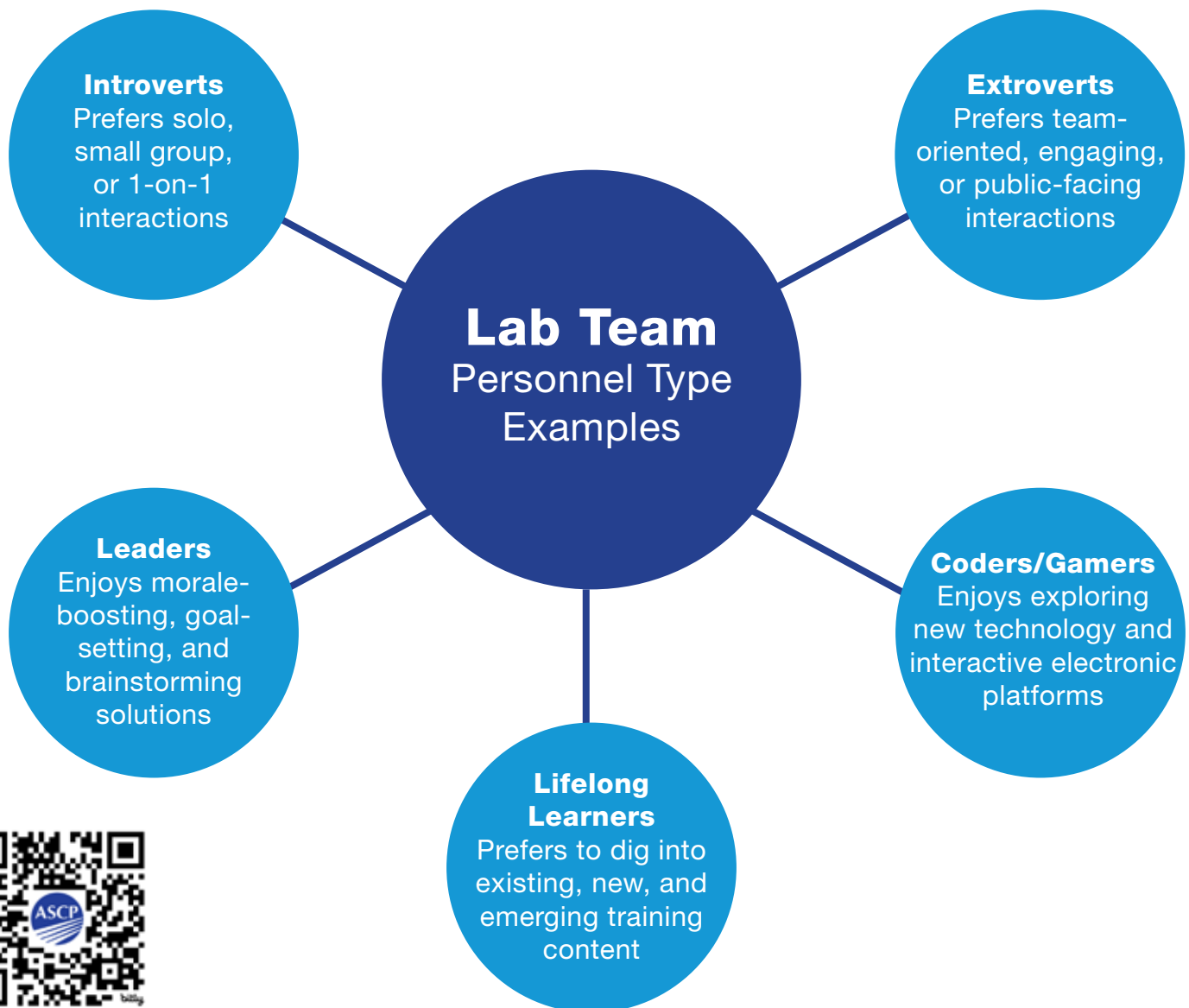


Aligning Your Lab Team: Leveraging Personnel Strengths to Support Your Lab

The clinical laboratory attracts individuals who are organized, detail-oriented, enjoy challenges, and are committed to contributing to patient care through timely and accurate testing. Despite facing staffing shortages, the laboratory workforce seeks to enhance its resilience and diversity.

This job aid is designed to offer clinical laboratory leaders ideas on supporting tasks that may align with their team members' character traits, preferences, or personal interests. While not comprehensive, it aims to provide general guidance to better match the supportive tasks in your laboratory with the personal interests and inclinations of your team.



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Introverted team members may prefer to engage in solo, small group, or 1-on-1 interactions in the laboratory. Some supporting lab tasks that introverted team members might enjoy and find fulfilling are:

- Assigning, ordering, and organizing **proficiency testing (PT)** specimens and test results to ensure that PTs are efficiently conducted, reviewed, and stored
- Conducting **reagent and supply inventory** to support analysis of laboratory supply consumption rates and ordering processes
- Organizing paper logs and binders to guarantee that paper-based laboratory documentation is up-to-date and has appropriate **version control**
- Conducting **assay and/or instrument validations** necessary to trust that laboratory testing performance is operating as expected
- Highlighting the laboratory and its impact on patient care as a “**Laboratory Champion**” by creating a laboratory newsletter ([references](#), [example](#)), **Lunch & Learn series**, **social media account**, or **website for the laboratory** (for HIPAA-compliant content only)

Extroverted team members may prefer to engage in team-oriented, engaging, or public-facing interactions within and outside of the laboratory. Some supporting lab tasks that extroverted lab team members might enjoy and find fulfilling are:

- Performing **correlation studies** every six months (or as indicated), which could involve engagement with other laboratory departments
- Serving as the **Laboratory Safety Officer** which may require engagement within the laboratory team and with others outside of the laboratory (e.g. other departments, vendors, etc.)
- **Liaising with other laboratory departments** as the lab’s go-to “**Laboratory Educator**” to help spread awareness of and answer questions about the laboratory’s processes
- **Training and onboarding** new staff hires or students to maintain high-quality and structured laboratory training, appropriate for the context
- Serving as a **Laboratory Tour Guide** to orient non-laboratory staff through a brief tour of the lab as a part of their orientation and for stronger inter-departmental collaborations
- Championing the laboratory as a career path as the lab’s go-to “**Lab Visibility Champion**” to help raise awareness about the laboratory as a career path to K-12 and college students (reference: [ASCP What’s My Next](#))
- Highlighting the laboratory and its impact on patient care as a “**Laboratory Champion**” by creating a **Lunch & Learn series**, or **social media account** (for HIPAA-compliant content only)

Leaders within the laboratory team can be [identified](#) and nurtured to grow through professional development [strategies](#); these laboratory leaders can both become advocates for the laboratory as well as mentors within the laboratory. Team members exhibiting leadership qualities may enjoy team-based activities involving morale-boosting, goal-setting, and understanding laboratory pain points and brainstorming solutions. Some supporting lab tasks that lab team leaders might enjoy and find fulfilling are:

- **Interviewing peers or [conducting employee rounding activities](#)** to make sure that laboratory successes, problems, and challenges are voiced, heard, and relayed to necessary parties in a diplomatic and effective way
- Serving as the lab’s go-to “**Wellbeing Champion**” to pull together wellbeing initiatives at your institution (or outside of it) and engage team members in these events and activities
- **Scheduling bench assignments or the full department schedule** to hone in on scheduling skills and the ins and outs of managing teams
- Highlighting the laboratory and its impact on patient care as a “**Laboratory Champion**” by creating a **laboratory newsletter** ([references](#), [example](#)), **Lunch & Learn series**, **social media account**, or **website for the laboratory** (for HIPAA-compliant content only)

Team members who are **lifelong learners** may prefer to dig into existing, new, and emerging training content for the laboratory. Some supporting lab tasks that lifelong learner lab team members might enjoy and find fulfilling are:

- Serving as the “**Continuing Education (CE) Champion**,” by researching laboratory CE opportunities and sharing the information with lab team members
- Championing the laboratory as a career path as the lab’s go-to “**Lab Visibility Champion**” to help raise awareness about the laboratory as a career path to K-12 and college students (reference: [ASCP What’s My Next](#))
- Exploring **new educational modalities** of laboratory training (e.g. [CDC’s OneLab Virtual Reality \(VR\)](#) trainings, microlearning, etc.)
- **Liaising with other laboratory departments** as the lab’s go-to “**Laboratory Educator**” to help spread awareness of and answer questions about the laboratory’s processes. As a part of this process, the lifelong learner can also help soak in knowledge about operations in other departments and how new **best practices** could be applied to improve their own lab operations.

Laboratory team members who are also **Coders/Gamers** in their personal life might also be able to apply those skills to areas of the laboratory. Some supporting lab tasks that coder/gamer lab team members might enjoy and find fulfilling are:

- Working with the laboratory, IT, or other departments to **support LIS integration or data dashboards** to be set up and monitored for the laboratory. Review of laboratory [quality](#) metrics across the entire testing spectrum can not only be informative, but it can be impactful for [advocating on behalf of the laboratory](#) and to [justify staffing needs](#).
- Engaging in **national benchmarking programs** like ASCP’s [National Pathology Quality Registry \(NPQR\)](#). NPQR is a national quality and benchmarking program for pathology laboratories that lab team coders/gamers might find both useful for quality improvement and fun to see how their laboratory compares to others.
- Exploring **new educational modalities** of laboratory training (e.g. [CDC’s OneLab Virtual Reality \(VR\)](#) trainings, microlearning, etc.)