



Belbin Team Roles

Meredith Belbin undertook considerable research into how people work together in teams. The premise which underpins his findings is that effective teams must have certain key roles fulfilled.

As a manager having an understanding of what these roles are, and who in your team is able to fulfil them will enable you to proactively manage your team. You can understand more about this theory and learn about your preferences for team working by completing a psychometric test through www.belbin.com, or speak to the Learning and Development Centre to explore these issues further.

This document provides a brief overview of the theory to start you thinking about how you might manage your team and consider the full talents and energies of everyone in your team, ensuring you are working towards shared goals. It is vital that teams have a clear understanding of their purpose; what it is that they need to do and what their roles are in making this happen.

Belbin Team Roles

Belbin's theory states that there are nine roles which need to be occupied within any team. These are:

Shaper, Coordinator, Plant, Resource Investigator, Monitor Evaluator, Specialist, Teamworker, Implementer, Completer Finisher

Although there are nine team roles, this doesn't mean that a team needs nine people in it to be effective. Individuals will tend to have more than one preferred team role so will often occupy more than one role in the team.

On the next page you can find more detail about each of the roles that people may play in a team. As you read through each role, reflect not only on yourself, but your team.




Which roles do you think you fulfil?

Which roles do you think other members of your team fulfil?




What opportunities does this present?

What potential gaps are there?




Action focussed team roles

Role	Strengths	Allowable weaknesses	Don't be surprised to find out...	Who might play this in my team?
Shaper 	Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	Can be easily provoked and may like provoking others, and may sometimes offend people's feelings.	They could risk becoming aggressive and bad-humoured in their attempts to get things done.	
Completer-Finisher 	Painstaking, conscientious. Searches out errors. Polishes and perfects.	Can be inclined to worry unduly, and reluctant to delegate.	They could be accused of taking their perfectionism to extremes.	
Implementer 	Practical, reliable, efficient. Turns ideas into actions and organises work that needs to be done.	Can be a bit inflexible and slow to respond to new possibilities.	They might be slow to relinquish their plans in favour of positive changes.	

Thought focussed team roles

Role	Strengths	Allowable weaknesses	Don't be surprised to find out...	Who might play this in my team?
Plant 	Creative, imaginative, free-thinking, generates ideas and solves difficult problems.	Might ignore incidentals, and may be too preoccupied to communicate effectively.	They could be absent minded or forgetful.	
Monitor-Evaluator 	Serious, strategic and discerning. Sees all options and judges accurately.	Sometimes lacks the drive and ability to inspire others and can be overly critical.	They could be slow to come to decisions.	
Specialist 	Single-minded, self starting and dedicated. They provide specialist knowledge and skills.	Tends to contribute on a narrow front and can dwell on the technicalities.	They overload you with information.	

People focussed team roles

Role	Strengths	Allowable weaknesses	Don't be surprised to find out...	Who might play this in my team?
 <p>Teamworker</p>	Co-operative, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens and averts friction.	Can be indecisive in crunch situations and tends to avoid confrontation.	They might be hesitant to make unpopular decisions.	
 <p>Coordinator</p>	Mature, confident, identifies talent. Clarifies goals.	Can be seen as manipulative and might offload their own share of the work.	They might over delegate, leaving themselves little work to do.	
 <p>Resource Investigator</p>	Outgoing, enthusiastic, explores opportunities and develops contacts.	Might be over-optimistic, and can lose interest once the initial enthusiasm has passed.	They might forget to follow up on a lead.	