**Belbin team roles**

The Belbin Team Role Inventory assesses how an individual behaves in a team environment. It is therefore a behavioural tool, subject to change, and not a psychometric instrument. The assessment includes 360-degree feedback from observers as well as the individual's own evaluation of their behaviour, and contrasts how they see their behaviour versus how their colleagues do.

Unlike the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which is a psychometric instrument used to sort people into one of 16 personality types, the Belbin Inventory scores people on how strongly they express behavioural traits from 9 different Team Roles. An individual may and often does exhibit strong tendencies towards multiple roles. Belbin himself asserts that the Team Roles are not equivalent to [personality types](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personality_type).

Dr. Meredith Belbin first began studying teams at [Henley Management College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henley_Management_College) in the 1970s. Over a period of ten years, Belbin carried out extended observational research to determine which factors influenced team failure or success. A management game was designed to reproduce work life. It contained all the principal variables that typify the problems of decision-making in a business environment. The experiment was designed along scientific lines with careful measurement at each stage.

Those participating were invited to take a battery of psychometric tests and teams were assembled on the basis of test scores. At first, Belbin hypothesised that high-intellect teams would succeed where lower intellect teams would not. However, the outcome of this research was that certain teams, predicted to be excellent based on intellect, failed to fulfil their potential. In fact, it became apparent by looking at the various combinations that it was not intellect, but balance, which enabled a team to succeed. The most successful companies tended to be those with a mix of different people, i.e. those with a range of different behaviours. In fact, eight distinct clusters of behaviour turned out to be distinctive and useful, with the balance required dependent on the purpose and objectives of the team.

The Belbin Team Inventory first appeared in Meredith Belbin's book, "Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail" (1981). The inventory is protected by Belbin's copyright and cannot be reproduced in any form. Additionally, it is not normed, lacks the Specialist role and the benefit of feedback from colleagues and does not offer Team Role feedback. Much early research is based upon this now obsolete version of the inventory.

Belbin now administers the refined Belbin Team Inventory via e-interplace, a computerised system which scores and norms the data to produce feedback reports for individuals, teams, groups and jobs. Meredith Belbin argues that the optimum size for a team is 4 people. Beyond this number, individuals do not work closely enough together to constitute a team and are defined as a group.

Data from the Belbin Team Inventory can also be amalgamated and interpreted to assess how effectively a team is likely to work together, including selecting the best candidate to fulfill each role, and identifying gaps and overlaps in the Team Role distribution which might have an impact on a team's success. The Belbin Team Inventory can also be used in conjunction with the Belbin Job Requirements Inventory to assess a candidate's behavioural performance in a particular job.

**Belbin Team Roles Self Perception Inventory**

To complete each section of this questionnaire, tick in the far left hand column the one, two or three sentences most applicable to yourself. Then in the column on the right, apportion 10 points between those sentences that apply to you: one of which you feel sums you up well while the other only applies some of the time.

In this instance you could give your first choice seven points and the remaining points to your second choice. In some instances you might decide that there are two sentences that apply to you equally - if this is the case, award five points to each.

**You must allocate all 10** **points in each section.**

**A - WHEN INVOLVED IN A PROJECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tick** |  | **Points** |
|  | 1. I can be relied upon to see that work that needs to be done is organised. |  |
|  | 2. I pick up slips and omissions that others fail to notice. |  |
|  | 3. I react strongly when meetings look like losing track of the main objective. |  |
|  | 4. I produce original suggestions. |  |
|  | 5. I analyse other people's ideas objectively, for both merits and failings |  |
|  | 6. I am keen to find out the latest ideas and developments. |  |
|  | 7. I have an aptitude for organising people. |  |
|  | 8. I am always ready to support good suggestions that help to resolve a problem. |  |

**B - IN SEEKING SATISFACTION THROUGH MY WORK:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tick** |  | **Points** |
|  | 1. I like to have a strong influence on decisions. |  |
|  | 2. I feel in my element where work requires a high degree of attention & concentration. |  |
|  | 3. I am concerned to help colleagues with their problems. |  |
|  | 4. I like to make critical discrimination between alternatives. |  |
|  | 5. I tend to have a creative approach to problem solving. |  |
|  | 6. I enjoy reconciling different points of view. |  |
|  | 7. I am more interested in practicalities than new ideas. |  |
|  | 8. I particularly enjoy exploring different views and techniques. |  |

**C -** **WHEN THE TEAM IS TRYING TO SOLVE A PARTICULARLY COMPLEX PROBLEM:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tick** |  | **Points** |
|  | 1. I keep a watching eye on areas where difficulty may arise. |  |
|  | 2. I explore ideas that may have a wider application than in the immediate task |  |
|  | 3. I like to weigh up and evaluate a range of suggestions thoroughly before choosing. |  |
|  | 4. I can co-ordinate and use productively other people's abilities and talents. |  |
|  | 5. I maintain a steady systematic approach, whatever the pressures. |  |
|  | 6. I often produce a new approach to a long continuing problem. |  |
|  | 7. I am ready to make my personal views known in a forceful way if necessary. |  |
|  | 8. I am ready to help whenever I can. |  |

**D - IN CARRYING OUT MY DAY-TO-DAYWORK:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tick** |  | **Points** |
|  | 1. I am keen to see there is nothing vague about my task and objectives. |  |
|  | 2. I am not reluctant to emphasise my own point of view in meetings. |  |
|  | 3. I can work with all sorts of people provided that they have got something  worthwhile to contribute. |  |
|  | 4. I make a point of following up interesting ideas and/or people. |  |
|  | 5. I can usually find the argument to refute unsound propositions. |  |
|  | 6. I tend to see patterns where others would see items as unconnected. |  |
|  | 7. Being busy gives me real satisfaction. |  |
|  | 8. I have a quiet interest in getting to know people better. |  |

**E -** **IF I AM SUDDENLY GIVEN A DIFFICULT TASK WITH LIMITED TIME & UNFAMILIAR PEOPLE:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tick** |  | **Points** |
|  | 1. I often find my imagination frustrated by working in a group. |  |
|  | 2. I find my personal skill particularly appropriate in achieving agreement. |  |
|  | 3. My feelings seldom interfere with my judgment. |  |
|  | 4. I strive to build up an effective structure. |  |
|  | 5. I can work with people who vary widely in their personal qualities and outlook. |  |
|  | 6. I feel it is sometimes worth incurring some temporary unpopularity if one is to succeed in getting one's views across in a group. |  |
|  | 7. I usually know someone whose specialist knowledge is particularly apt. |  |
|  | 8. I seem to develop a natural sense of urgency. |  |

**F -** **WHEN SUDDENLY ASKED TO CONSIDER A NEW PROJECT:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tick** |  | **Points** |
|  | 1. I start to look around for possible ideas and openings. |  |
|  | 2. I am concerned to finish and perfect current work before I start. |  |
|  | 3. I approach the problem in a carefully analytical way. |  |
|  | 4. I am able to assert myself to get other people involved if necessary. |  |
|  | 5. I am able to take an independent and innovative look at most situations. |  |
|  | 6. I am happy to take the lead when action is required. |  |
|  | 7. I can respond positively to my colleagues and their initiatives. |  |
|  | 8. I find it hard to give in a job where the goals are not clearly defined. |  |

**G -** **IN CONTRIBUTING TO GROUP PROJECTS IN GENERAL:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tick** |  | **Points** |
|  | 1. I think I have a talent for sorting out the concrete steps that need to be taken given  a broad brief. |  |
|  | 2. My considered judgement may take time but is usually near the mark. |  |
|  | 3. A broad range of personal contacts is important to my style of working. |  |
|  | 4. I have an eye for getting the details right. |  |
|  | 5. I try to make my mark in group meetings. |  |
|  | 6. I can see how ideas and techniques can be used in new relationships. |  |
|  | 7. I see both sides of a problem and take a decision acceptable to all. |  |
|  | 8. I get on well with others and work hard for the team. |  |

**Scoring Key for Self Perception Inventory**

Transfer your points allocation from the seven sections of the Self Perception Inventory to the appropriate boxes below.

The pre-printed numbers in the grid refer to the question numbers of each section. For example if for Section A you scored seven points for question 6 and three points for question 1, you would allocate them in the columns RI and IM respectively.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **SH** |  | **CO** |  | **PL** |  | **RI** |  | **ME** |  | **IM** |  | **TW** |  | **CF** |
| **A** | 3 |  | 7 |  | 4 |  | 6 |  | 5 |  | 1 |  | 8 |  | 2 |  |
| **B** | 1 |  | 6 |  | 5 |  | 8 |  | 4 |  | 7 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  |
| **C** | 7 |  | 4 |  | 6 |  | 2 |  | 3 |  | 5 |  | 8 |  | 1 |  |
| **D** | 2 |  | 3 |  | 6 |  | 4 |  | 5 |  | 1 |  | 8 |  | 7 |  |
| **E** | 6 |  | 5 |  | 1 |  | 7 |  | 3 |  | 4 |  | 2 |  | 8 |  |
| **F** | 6 |  | 4 |  | 5 |  | 1 |  | 3 |  | 8 |  | 7 |  | 2 |  |
| **G** | 5 |  | 7 |  | 6 |  | 3 |  | 2 |  | 1 |  | 8 |  | 4 |  |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**TOTALS**

Once you have allocated all your points, total each column.

The highest two totals represent your primary and secondary preferred team roles.

**THE BELBIN TEAM ROLES**

The personal skill inventory identifies eight team roles, which are described next.

**Understanding your profile**

**SH = 'Shaper'**

**Characteristics**

Highly strung, outgoing, dynamic.

Shapers are highly motivated people with a lot of nervous energy and a great need for achievement. Often they seem to be aggressive extroverts with strong drive. Shapers like to challenge, to lead and to push others into action - and to win. If obstacles arise, they will find a way round - but can be headstrong and emotional in response to any form of disappointment or frustration. Shapers can handle and even thrive on confrontation.

**Function**

Shapers generally make good managers because they generate action and thrive on pressure. They are excellent at sparking life into a team and are very useful in groups where political complications are apt to slow things down. Shapers are inclined to rise above problems of this kind and forge ahead regardless. They like making necessary changes and do not mind taking unpopular decisions. As the name implies, they try to impose some shape and pattern on group discussion or activities. They are probably the most effective members of a team in guaranteeing positive action.

**Strengths**

Drive and a readiness to challenge inertia, ineffectiveness, complacency or self-deception.

**Allowable Weaknesses**

Prone to provocation, irritation and impatience, and a tendency to offend others.

**CO = 'Coordinator'**

**Characteristics**

Calm, self-confident, controlled.

The distinguishing feature of Coordinators is their ability to cause others to work to shared goals. Mature, trusting and confident, they delegate readily. In interpersonal relations they are quick to spot individual talents and to use them to pursue group objectives. While Coordinators are not necessarily the cleverest members of a team, they have a broad and worldly outlook and generally command respect.

**Function**

Coordinators are useful people to have in charge of a team with diverse skills and personal   
characteristics. They perform better in dealing with colleagues of near or equal rank than in directing junior subordinates. Their motto might well be "consultation with control" and they usually believe in tackling problems calmly. In some organisations, Coordinators are inclined to clash with Shapers due to their contrasting management styles.

**Strengths**

Welcome all potential contributors on their merits and without prejudice, but without ever losing sight of the main objective.

**Allowable Weaknesses**

No pretensions as regards intellectual or creative ability.

**PL = 'Plant'**

**Characteristics**

Individualistic, serious-minded, unorthodox.

Plants are innovators and inventors and can be highly creative. They provide the seeds and ideas from which major developments spring. Usually they prefer to operate by themselves at some distance from the other members of the team, using their imagination and often working in an unorthodox way. They tend to be introverted and react strongly to criticism and praise. Their ideas may often be radical and may lack practical constraint. They are independent, clever and original and may be weak in communicating with other people on a different wave-length.

**Function**

The main use of a Plant is to generate new proposals and to solve complex problems. Plants are often needed in the initial stages of a project or when a project is failing to progress. Plants have often made their marks as founders of companies or as originators of new products. Too many Plants in one organisation, however, may be counter-productive as they tend to spend their time reinforcing their own ideas and engaging each other in combat.

**Strengths**

Genius, imagination, intellect, knowledge.

**Allowable Weaknesses**

Up in the clouds, inclined to disregard practical details or protocol.

**RI = 'Resource Investigator'**

**Characteristics**

Extroverted, enthusiastic, curious, communicative.

Resource Investigators are good communicators both inside and outside the organisation. They are natural negotiators, adept at exploring new opportunities and developing contacts. Although not necessarily a great source of original ideas, they are quick to pick up other people's ideas and build on them. They are skilled at finding out what is available and what can be done, and usually get a warm welcome because of their outgoing nature. Resource Investigators have relaxed personalities with a strong inquisitive sense and a readiness to see the possibilities of anything new. However,   
unless they remain stimulated by others, their enthusiasm rapidly fades.

**Function**

Resource Investigators are quick to open up and exploit opportunities. They have an ability to think on their feet and to probe others for information. They are the best people to set up external contacts, to search for resources outside the group, and to carry out any negotiations that may be involved.

**Strengths**

A capacity for finding useful people and promising ideas or opportunities, and a general source of vitality.

**Allowable Weaknesses**

Liable to lose interest once the initial fascination has passed.

**ME = 'Monitor Evaluator'**

**Characteristics**

Sober, unemotional, prudent.

Monitor Evaluators are serious-minded, prudent individuals with a built-in immunity from being over- enthusiastic. They are slow deciders who prefer to think things over - usually with a high critical thinking ability. Good Monitor Evaluators have a capacity for shrewd judgements that take all factors into account and seldom give bad advice.

**Function**

Monitor Evaluators are at home when analysing problems and evaluating ideas and suggestions. They are very good at weighing up the pro's and con's of options and to outsiders seem dry, boring or even over-critical. Some people are surprised that they become managers. Nevertheless, many Monitor Evaluators occupy key planning and strategic posts and thrive in high-level appointments where a relatively small number of decisions carry major consequences.

**Strengths**

Judgement, discretion, hard-headedness.

**Allowable Weaknesses**

Lack of inspiration or the ability to motivate others.

**IM = 'Implementer'**

**Characteristics**

Implementers are well organised, enjoy routine, and have a practical common-sense and self- discipline.

They favour hard work and tackle problems in a systematic fashion. On a wider front they hold unswerving loyalty to the organisation and are less concerned with the pursuit of self-interest. However, Implementers may find difficulty in coping with new situations.

**Function**

Implementers are useful because of their reliability and capacity for application. They succeed because they have a sense of what is feasible and relevant. It is said that many executives only do the jobs they wish to do and neglect those tasks which they find distasteful. By contrast, Implementers will do what needs to be done. Good Implementers often progress to high management positions by virtue of good organisational skills and efficiency in dealing with all necessary work.

**Strengths**

Organising ability, practical common sense, hard working, self-discipline.

**Allowable Weaknesses**

Lack of flexibility, resistance to unproven ideas.

**TW = 'Team Worker'**

**Characteristics**

Socially oriented, rather mild and sensitive.

Team Workers are the most supportive members of a team. They are mild, sociable and concerned about others with a great capacity for flexibility and adapting to different situations and people. Team Workers are perceptive and diplomatic. They are good listeners and are generally popular members of a group. They cope less well with pressure or situations involving the need for confrontation.

**Function**

The role of the Team Worker is to prevent interpersonal problems within a team and allow everyone to contribute effectively. Since they don't like friction, they will go to great lengths to avoid it. The diplomatic and perceptive skills of a Team Worker become real assets, especially under a managerial regime where conflicts are liable to arise or to be artificially suppressed. Team Worker managers are seen as a threat to no one and therefore can be elected as the most accepted and favoured people to serve under. Team Workers have a lubricating effect on teams. Morale is better and people seem to co-operate better when they are around.

**Strengths**

Ability to respond to people and situations and to promote team spirit.

**Allowable Weaknesses**

Indecision at moments of crisis and some failure to provide a clear lead to others.

**CF = 'Completer-Finisher'**

**Characteristics**

Painstaking, orderly, conscientious, anxious.

Completers, or Completer-Finishers, have a great capacity for follow-through and attention to detail, and seldom start what they cannot finish. They are motivated by internal anxiety, although outwardly they may appear unruffled. Typically, they are introverts who don't need much external stimulus or incentive. Completer-Finishers dislike carelessness and are intolerant of those with a casual disposition. Reluctant to delegate, they prefer to tackle all tasks themselves.

**Function**

Completer-Finishers are invaluable where tasks demand close concentration and a high degree of accuracy. They foster a sense of urgency within a team and are good at meeting schedules. In management, they excel by the high standards to which they aspire, and by their concern for precision, attention to detail and follow-through.

**Strengths**

A capacity for fulfilling their promises and working to the highest standards.

**Allowable Weaknesses**

A tendency to worry about small things and a reluctance to "let go".