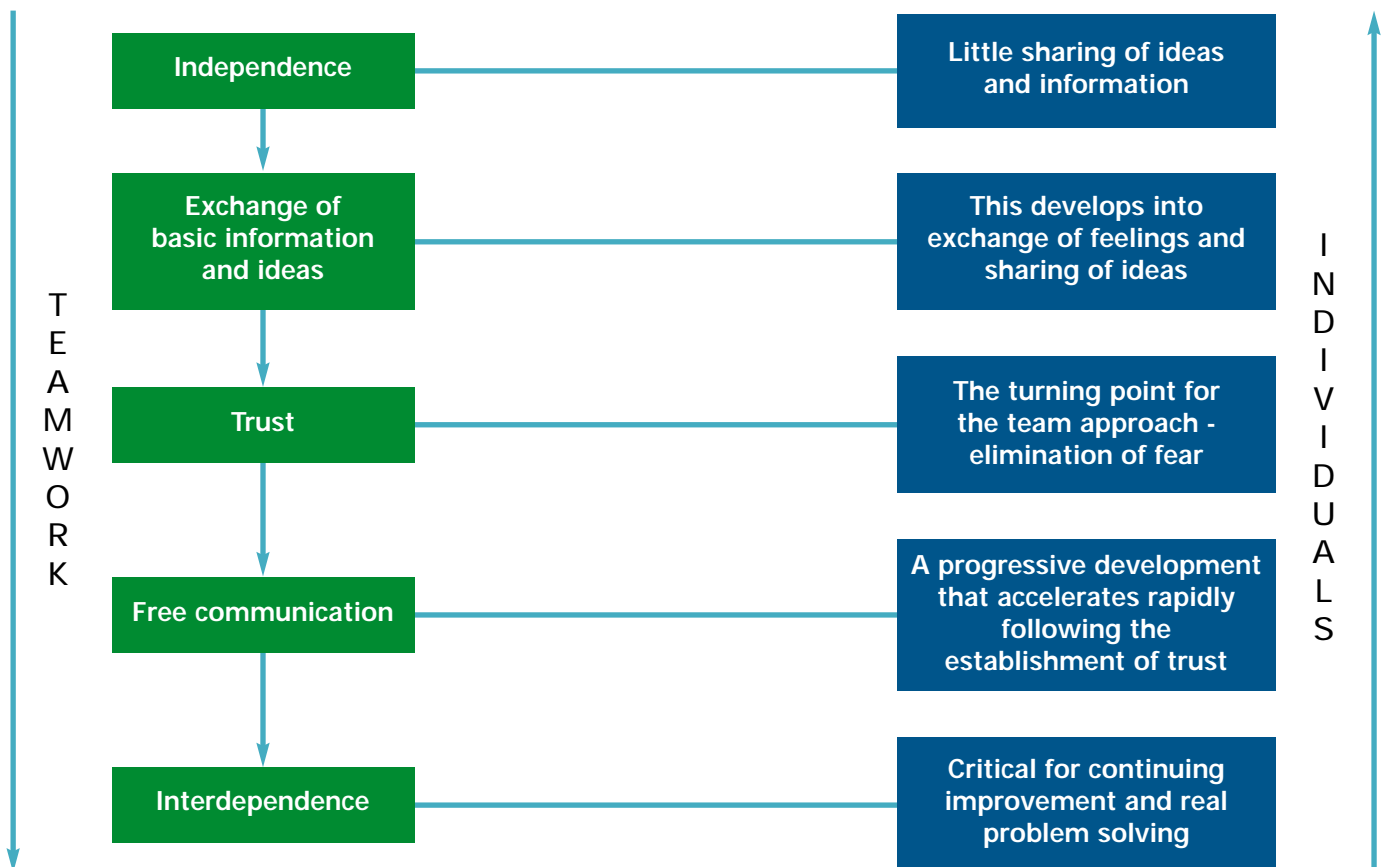# People Development & Teamwork

## Why teams?

People are a fundamental building block of any TQM organisation. The only point at which true responsibility for quality can lie is with the person or group actually doing the job or carrying out the process. The complexity of most of the processes in an organisation places them beyond the control of any one individual, and the only efficient way to tackle process improvement or re-design is through the use of teamwork.

Teamwork has many advantages:

- A greater variety of complex issues can be tackled by pooling expertise and resources
- Problems are exposed to a greater diversity of knowledge, skill and experience
- The approach boosts morale and ownership through participative decision making
- Improvement opportunities that cross departmental or functional boundaries can be more easily addressed
- The recommendations are more likely to be implemented than if they come from an individual

Employees will not engage in continuous improvement activities without commitment from senior managers, a culture for improvement and an effective mechanism for capturing individual contributions. Teamwork must be driven by a strategy, have a structure and be implemented thoughtfully and effectively.

When properly managed and developed, teamwork improves processes and produces results quickly and economically through the free exchange of ideas, information, knowledge and data. It is an essential component of a total quality organisation, building trust, improving communication and developing a culture of interdependence, rather than one of independence.



| TEAMWORK | | INDIVIDUALS |
|---|---|---|
| Independence | | Little sharing of ideas and information |
| Exchange of basic information and ideas | | This develops into exchange of feelings and sharing of ideas |
| Trust | | The turning point for the team approach - elimination of fear |
| Free communication | | A progressive development that accelerates rapidly following the establishment of trust |
| Interdependence | | Critical for continuing improvement and real problem solving |

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# Roles within teams

Following many years' research on teams, Dr Meredith Belbin identified a set of eight roles, which, if all present in a team, give it the best chance of success. These roles are:

- Co-ordinator
- Shaper
- Plant
- Monitor-Evaluator
- Implementer
- Resource Investigator
- Team Worker
- Finisher

The **Co-ordinator** clarifies group objectives, sets the agenda, establishes priorities, selects problems, sums up and is decisive, but does not dominate discussions.

The **Shaper** gives shape to the team effort, looking for pattern in discussions and practical considerations regarding the feasibility of the project. Can steamroller the team, but gets results.

The **Plant** is the source of original ideas, suggestions and proposals that are usually original and radical.

The **Monitor-Evaluator** contributes a measured and dispassionate analysis and, through objectivity, stops the team committing itself to a misguided task.

The **Implementer** turns decisions and strategies into defined and manageable tasks, sorting out objectives and pursuing them logically.

The **Resource Investigator** goes outside the team to bring in ideas, information and developments to it. They are the team's salesperson, diplomat, liaison officer and explorer.

The **Team Worker** operates against division and disruption in the team, like cement, particularly in times of stress and pressure.

The **Finisher** maintains a permanent sense of urgency with relentless follow-through.

All of these roles have value and are missed when not in a team; there are no stars or extras. An individual's team role can be determined by the completion of a Belbin questionnaire.

It is not essential that teams comprise eight people each fulfilling one of the roles above, but that people who are aware and capable of carrying out these roles should be present. In small teams, people can, and do, assume more than one role. In addition, analysing existing teams and their performance or behaviour, using these team role concepts, can lead to improvements, e.g:

- Underachievement demands a good co-ordinator or finisher
- Conflict requires a team worker or strong co-ordinator
- Mediocre performance needs a resource investigator, innovator or shaper
- Error prone teams need an evaluator

Different roles are important in different circumstances, e.g, new teams need a strong shaper to get started, competitive situations demand an innovator with good ideas, and in areas of high risk, a good evaluator may be needed. Teams should, therefore, be analysed both in terms of what team roles members can play, and also in relation to what team skills are most needed.

Despite having well defined roles within a team, the interaction between the different personalities of individuals can be a frequent source of friction. However, this can largely be avoided by understanding and valuing people's differences. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a powerful aid to both team and personal development by providing a well-researched framework for understanding these differences. It is based on identifying an individual's behavioural preferences on four scales:

**Extroversion – Introversion**    **how we prefer to give/receive energy or focus our attention**

**Sensing – INtuition**    **how we prefer to gather information**

**Thinking – Feeling**    **how we prefer to make decisions**

**Judging – Perceiving**    **how we prefer to handle the outer world**

The four MBTI scales represent two opposing preferences – most people are able to use both at different times, but will indicate a preference on each of these scales. In total there are eight possible preferences and an individual's MBTI *type* contains four – E or I, S or N, T or F, and J or P. Preference types should be determined by the completion of a questionnaire, its analysis, and subsequent feedback and discussion with a qualified MBTI administrator.

If each preference is represented by its letter, a person's type may be shown by a four letter code, of which there are sixteen in total; e.g, **ESTJ** represents an extrovert (**E**) who prefers to gather information by sensing (**S**), prefers to make decisions by thinking (**T**) and prefers a judging (**J**) attitude towards the outside world. The person with opposing preferences on all four scales would be an INFP; an introvert (**I**), who prefers to gather information by intuition (**N**), prefers to make decisions by feeling (**F**), and prefers a perceiving (**P**) attitude towards the outer world.

The sixteen MBTI types are therefore:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ISTJ | ISFJ | INFJ | INTJ |
| ISTP | ISFP | INFP | INTP |
| ESTP | ESFP | ENFP | ENTP |
| ESTJ | ESFJ | ENFJ | ENTJ |

- The **Extrovert** prefers action and the outer world
- The **Introvert** prefers ideas and the inner world
- **Sensing-Thinking** types are interested in facts, analysing them impersonally and using a step-by-step process to reach a conclusion
- The **Sensing-Feeling** types are also interested in facts, but analyse them personally and are concerned about how things matter to themselves and others
- **Intuition-Thinking** types are interested in patterns and possibilities, making decisions based on impersonal, logical analysis
- **Intuition-Feeling** types are also interested in patterns and possibilities, but make decisions based upon personal values, and their effect on individuals
- **Judging** types are seen by others as preferring to live in an orderly, planned fashion and liking to regulate and control
- **Perceiving types** are seen by others as being flexible, spontaneous, and showing a willingness to understand and adapt readily

Clearly, there are more than sixteen personality types in the world, and it is important to stress that we can and do adopt all sixteen types in our day-to-day life. However, everyone has a preferred type, where they feel at their most comfortable.

For teamwork, the preference types and their interpretation are very powerful, and can be used by an individual, or a team addressing a process improvement problem.

It is imperative that the team does not skip those steps that require them to use their non-preferences, *e.g*, information tends to be gathered by the preferred function (S or N) and decisions also made by the preferred function (T or F). So a strong ST type will prefer to gather facts (S) and think logically through the decision process (T), with insufficient time and attention being paid to emerging patterns and other possibilities (N) and the impact on people (F).

Problems, solutions and decisions are likely to be improved if all the preferences are used; if team members are not experienced in spending time in their non-preferred function, they should consult others of opposing preferences. If a team does not have a member with an (F) preference, for example, team members should pay particular attention to the impact of their decisions on people, as there will be a natural preference to ignore or avoid this issue.

Personality differences frequently result from a conflict between two opposing types. For example, an ST might think that an NF colleague lacks attention to detail and is not logical, therefore their judgement must be unsound. The NF might feel that the ST is "picky" and cannot see the whole picture, and may be offended by their apparent insensitivity to others.

Use of the MBTI leads to an understanding that neither is "right", or "wrong". Their differences are their strength, and allow both to operate more effectively. This has great implications for teamwork, and real advantages can be gained if all team members know their MBTI preference and share them within the team.

# Team development

It is possible to identify four stages that all teams will go through, given time:

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing

In the **Forming (awareness)** stage, feelings, weaknesses and mistakes are covered up and there is no shared understanding of what needs to be done. People show little care for others' values and views.

The **Storming (conflict)** stage is more risky as personal issues are opened up and the team becomes more inward looking. There is more concern for the values, views and problems of others in the team.

In the **Norming (co-operation)** stage, confidence and trust begin to emerge, together with a more systematic and open approach, leading to a clearer and more methodical way of working. There is greater valuing of people, clarification of purpose, establishing of objectives, systematic collection of information, considering of all options, preparation of detailed plans and progress reviews to make improvements.

Evidence of the **Performing (productivity)** stage includes flexibility, leadership decided by situations, not protocol, everyone's energy is utilised and basic principles and social aspects of the organisation's decisions are considered.

Teams that go through these stages successfully should become effective process improvement teams and display:

- Clear objectives and agreed performance goals
- Openness and confrontation
- Support and trust
- Co-operation and conflict
- Good decision making
- Appropriate leadership
- Review of the team process
- Sound inter-group relationships
- Individual development opportunities

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## A model for teamwork

In developing his model for teamwork, John Adair understood that for any team to respond to leadership, it needed a clearly defined *task*, and the achievement of that task is related to the needs of the *team* and the *individuals* within that team.

The team leader or facilitator must concentrate on the small central area in the model where the three circles overlap – the "action to change" area, and there are three inter-related, but distinctive, requirements of a team leader:
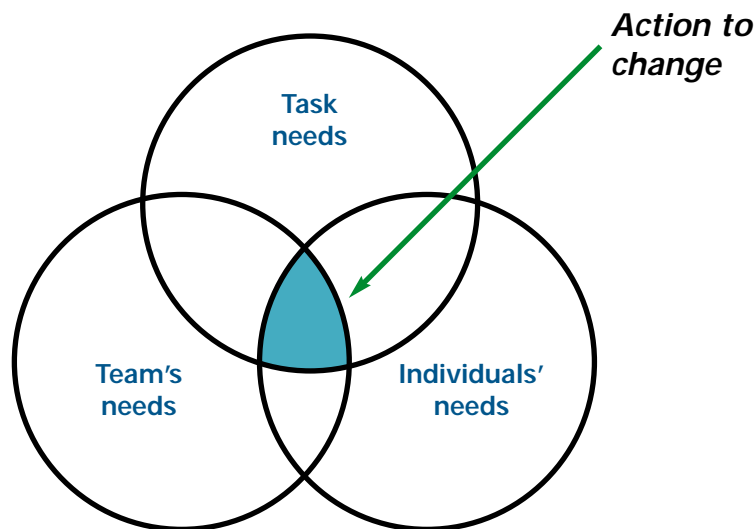


- Define and achieve the job or **task**, *e.g*, process improvement
- Build up and co-ordinate a **team** to do this
- Develop and satisfy the **individuals** within the team

To do this, the team leader or facilitator must perform the following functions:

- **Planning**
  Define the team task or purpose
  Make a workable plan
- **Initiating**
  Explain why the plan is necessary
  Allocate tasks to team members
  Set team standards
- **Controlling**
  Influence the tempo
  Ensure all actions move towards the objective
  Keep discussions relevant
  Guide the team to action and decision
- **Supporting**
  Encourage and discipline the team and individuals
  Create team spirit
  Relieve tension
  Reconcile disagreements

- **Informing**
  - Give new information to the team
  - Receive information from the team
  - Summarise suggestions and ideas
- **Evaluating**
  - Test the consequences of a proposed solution
  - Evaluate team performance
  - Help the team evaluate its own performance against standards

A team process is like any other process – it has inputs and outputs. High performing teams have three main attributes – high task fulfillment, high team maintenance and low self-orientation.

Improvement team members must be given the responsibility and authority to represent their part of the organisation in the process. This allows the team to gain respect and knowledge and be seen to have the authority to act in the best interests of the organisation, with respect to the process they are aiming to improve.

The actual running of improvement teams involves several factors:

- Team selection and leadership
- Team objectives
- Team meetings
- Team assignments
- Team dynamics
- Team results and reviews

The most important element of a team is its members; people with knowledge and experience relevant to the process are required, with a limit of 5-10 members, to keep the team small enough to be manageable, whilst allowing a good exchange of ideas. **Team Membership and Selection** should include people from groups outside the process if their involvement is essential, and sometimes starting a team with one or two people and building it up as the process becomes understood is an option.

The **Team Objectives** should be agreed at the beginning of the project and stated at the start of every team meeting. This enables the team members to focus thought and efforts on the aims, and minimises distractions from other issues.

Before every **Team Meeting** an agenda should be prepared and circulated to each team member. It should include the venue, time and duration of the meeting, a list of expected attendees, a list of topics to be covered at the meeting, any preparatory assignments for individual members or groups, supporting material to be discussed at the meeting.

It is never possible to solve problems by meetings alone. They should result in action plans with specific tasks assigned to team members – the **Team Assignments**. These should be decided when the team is together and agreement reached regarding individual responsibilities and timescales, all of which must be clearly stated in the minutes of the meeting.

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The interaction between team members is vital for its success. The team leader must address **Team Dynamics** and create a culture of creativity, remove barriers to idea generation, encourage all members to contribute and support all team members.

Teams function most effectively when the Team Results are communicated and acted upon. Team Reviews will assist team members to focus on their objectives and review progress as well as to deal with problems that may arise in teamwork.

## Training

The unique feature about quality improvement teams is that people are asked to join, and not told to do so. The training of team members and leaders is the foundation of all successful improvement programmes to ensure people understand the concepts of teamwork, plus the tools and techniques that are to be employed during the improvement programme, such as those covered in the Process section.

Quality training must be continuous to meet not only changes in technology but also changes in the environment in which the organisation operates, its structure and most importantly, its people. Quality training can be considered in the form of a cycle of improvement, the elements of which are:

- Ensure training is part of the quality policy
- Allocate responsibilities for training
- Define training objectives
- Establish a training organisation
- Specify quality training needs
- Prepare training programmes and materials
- Implement and monitor training
- Assess the results
- Review the effectiveness of the training

Even if the quality policy remains constant, there is a continuing need to ensure that new quality training objectives are set, either to promote improvements or to raise the standards already achieved.

## Investors in People

This is the national Standard that sets a level of good practice for training and development of people to achieve business goals. The Standard was developed during 1990 by the National Training Task Force in partnership with leading organisations, personnel, professional and employee organisations. It provides a framework for improving an organisation's performance and competitiveness, through a planned approach to setting and communicating objectives and developing people to meet these objectives. The result is that what people can do and are motivated to do, matches what the organisation needs them to do. The process is cyclical and should engender the culture of continuous improvement.

The Investors in People Standard is based on four key principles, as summarised in the following table:

| Principles | Indicators | Evidence* |
|---|---|---|
| **Commitment** An Investor in People is fully committed to developing its people in order to achieve its aims and objectives | **1 The organisation is committed to supporting the development of its people** | Top management can describe strategies that they have put in place to support the development of people in order to improve the organisation's performance<br><br>Managers can describe specific actions that they have taken and are currently taking to support the development of people |
| | **2 People are encouraged to improve their own and other people's performance** | People can give examples of how they have been encouraged to improve their own performance<br><br>People can give examples of how they have been encouraged to improve other people's performance |
| | **3 People believe their contribution to the organisation is recognised** | People can describe how their contribution to the organisation is recognised<br><br>People believe that their contribution to the organisation is recognised |
| | **4 The organisation is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in the development of its people** | Top management can describe strategies that they have put in place to ensure equality of opportunity in the development of people<br><br>Managers can describe specific actions that they have taken and are currently taking to ensure equality of opportunity in the development of people |
| **Planning** An Investor in People is clear about its aims and its objectives and what its people need to do to achieve them | **5 The organisation has a plan with clear aims and objectives which are understood by everyone** | The organisation has a plan with clear aims and objectives<br><br>People can consistently explain the aims and objectives of the organisation at a level appropriate to their role<br><br>Representative groups are consulted about the organisation's aims and objectives |
| | **6 The development of people is in line with the organisation's aims and objectives** | The organisation has clear priorities which link the development of people to its aims and objectives at organisation, team and individual level<br><br>People clearly understand what their development activities should achieve, both for them and the organisation |
| | **7 People understand how they contribute to achieving the organisation's aims and objectives** | People can explain how they contribute to achieving the organisation's aims and objectives |

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| Action<br>An Investor in People develops its people effectively in order to improve its performance | 8 Managers are effective in supporting the development of people | The organisation makes sure that managers have the knowledge and skills they need to develop their people<br><br>Managers at all levels understand what they need to do to support the development of people |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | 9 People learn and develop effectively | People who are new to the organisation, and those new to a job, can confirm that they have received an effective induction<br><br>The organisation can show that people learn and develop effectively |
| Evaluation<br>An Investor in People understands the impact of its investment in people on its performance | 10 The development of people improves the performance of the organisation, teams and individuals | The organisation can show that the development of people has improved the performance of the organisation, teams and individuals |
| | 11 People understand the impact of the development of people on the performance of the organisation, teams and individuals | Top management understands the overall costs and benefits of the development of people and its impact on performance<br><br>People can explain the impact of their development on their performance, and the performance of their team and the organisation as a whole |
| | 12 The organisation gets better at developing its people | People can give examples of relevant and timely improvements that have been made to development activities |

*These are not exhaustive, and more can be found on the Investors in People website, @ www.iipuk.co.uk*

The 4 principles are a cyclical process and are broken down into 12 indicators, against which organisations wishing to be recognised as an 'Investor in People' will be assessed.

Being recognised as an 'Investor in People' involves a number of steps:

- Understanding the Standard and its strategic implications for the organisation
- Undertaking a review against the Standard to identify any gaps in current practice
- Making the commitment to meet the Standard and communicating that commitment to all members of staff
- Planning and taking action, to bring about change
- Bringing together the evidence for assessment against the Standard
- Achievement or recognition as an Investor in People
- Working to keep the culture of continuous improvement alive.

Significant commercial benefits may be gained by organisations that achieve the Standard, and they begin to appear while working towards becoming an Investor in People.

The practical benefits of working towards and achieving the Standard include:

- Improved earnings, productivity and profitability. Skilled and motivated people work harder and better. Productivity will improve. Extra effort will be made to close sales and a positive impact will be seen on the bottom line.
- Reduced costs and wastage. Skilled and motivated people constantly examine their work to contribute to reducing costs and wastage.
- Enhanced quality investing in people significantly improves the results of quality programmes. Investors in People adds considerable value to BS 5750, ISO 9000 and other total quality initiatives.
- Improved motivation through greater involvement, personal development and recognition of achievement, motivation is improved. This leads to higher morale, improved retention rates, reduced absenteeism, readier acceptance of change and identification with the organisation beyond the confines of the job.
- Customer satisfaction. Investing in People is central to helping employees become customer focused. Thus enabling the organisation to effectively meet customer needs at a profit.
- Public recognition. Investor in People status brings public recognition for real achievements measured against a rigorous National Standard. Being an Investor in People helps to attract the best quality job applicants. It may also provide a reason for customers to choose specific goods and services.
- Competitive advantage through improved performance, Investor in People organisations develop a competitive edge.