

# 5 Teamwork

## Learning objectives in this unit

- Exploring team relationships
- Dealing with conflict
- Adding emphasis
- Responding to feedback

## Case study

- Developing a teamwork ethos

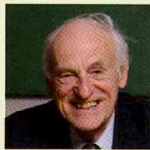
## Starting point

- 1 What problems can occur when working with other people?
- 2 What different types of personality are needed for a successful team?

## Working with words | Exploring team relationships

- 1 Dr Meredith Belbin of the Henley Management College developed nine team roles to show how different individuals behave in teams. Read the text and compare these team roles with your ideas in *Starting point*.

## What kind of team player are you?



Meredith Belbin

### 1 Plant

Valued in a team for their ability to come up with strange and innovative solutions. Like the absent-minded professor-inventor, they often spend time quietly working alone, which results in solutions to problems, but they may have trouble communicating their ideas effectively.

### 2 Resource investigator

This person contributes to the team with boundless enthusiasm at the start of the project. They are excellent networkers who express themselves clearly and they vigorously pursue opportunities outside the team. They tend to lose momentum towards the end of a project.

### 3 Coordinator

The natural chairperson, able to detach themselves from the detail, to see the bigger picture. They are mature, good at delegating and at helping the rest of the team to reach decisions. Their management and delegating powers may mean they don't pay enough attention to their own duties at work.

### 4 Shaper

They spur their team into action. You have to tread carefully with this person; they thrive on pressure and challenge, and often get results by pushing others hard to do the same. In their drive to get things done, they may upset other team members by seeming to treat them unfairly.

### 5 Team worker

Working closely with everyone, they like to steer clear of confrontation. They are good listeners and can help to calm situations by talking through problems with colleagues. However, as they don't like taking sides, they may find it difficult to make decisions.

### 6 Completer – Finisher

The team's perfectionist. They take themselves very seriously – keeping to schedules and maintaining quality are equally important to them, and they pay painstaking attention to detail. Colleagues may have trouble relating to them as they are poor delegators and they tend to worry excessively about minor details.

### 7 Monitor – Evaluator

They are good at judging the situation due to a great ability to analyse logically. They assess periodically and look at all the available options objectively. However, their work can fall short of expectations as they can lack drive and find it difficult to relate passionately to their work.

### 8 Implementer

This person is disciplined and can be relied on to perform to a high level and to cope with things practically. They tend not to deviate from a set path and can find it difficult to take new ideas on board.

### 9 Specialist

They are highly skilled and are usually viewed positively for providing specialized knowledge. They tend not to see the bigger picture, focusing on technicalities.





- 2** Read the text again and discuss questions 1–2 with a partner.
- 1 What is the main positive and negative characteristic of each role?
  - 2 Which team role best describes you?
- 3** Underline the adverb in *italics* which collocates with each verb in 1–8. Then check your answers in the text in **1**.
- 1 communicate their ideas *thoroughly* / *effectively*
  - 2 express themselves *understandably* / *clearly*
  - 3 tread *carefully* / *well* with this person
  - 4 push others *hard* / *roughly*
  - 5 treat employees *unfairly* / *carelessly*
  - 6 work *tightly* / *closely* with a colleague
  - 7 look at (available options) *objectively* / *deliberately*
  - 8 be viewed *satisfactorily* / *positively*
- 4** Work with a partner. Use as many of the verb + adverb combinations in **3** as you can and give each other advice for successful working relationships at your work / in your job.
- 5** 26▷ Three people are talking about the roles they play in their teams at work. Listen to the extracts and identify the strengths and weaknesses of each person.
- 6** Which of the two Belbin roles best fits each of the people you listened to in **5**?
- 1 Shaper / Team worker
  - 2 Coordinator / Completer – Finisher
  - 3 Resource investigator / Implementer
- 7** Work with a partner. Discuss which of the three people you would choose to work with you / in your team, and why.
- 8** Work with a partner. Replace the underlined words in sentences 1–6 with multi-word verbs in **bold** in the text in **1** with a similar meaning. Change the form of the verb where necessary.
- 1 I didn't spend enough time on the sales figures – I think they're actually incorrect.
  - 2 I'm capable of handling most complications by myself. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3 There are some particularly tight deadlines to meet. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4 I prefer to avoid any last-minute changes. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5 Otherwise we would not achieve our sales targets, would we? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6 I think we should concentrate on solving the problem, rather than discussing who was to blame. \_\_\_\_\_
- »» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 5** on page 110.
- 9** Work with a partner. Take turns to describe a colleague / team leader you work with, using vocabulary from **3** and **8**. How similar / different are their working styles?
- 10** Work with a partner. Ask and answer questions about recent projects you have worked on to find out which Belbin role you think you each play in a team. Consider the following aspects.
- 1 task / project
  - 2 colleagues / fellow team members
  - 3 schedules / pressure
  - 4 issues / problems
  - 5 confrontation / fairness
- Alternatively, turn to File 15 on page 139, for some project outlines. Discuss the projects, and work together to establish the best mix of Belbin roles for each.

# Business communication skills

## Context

Duverger is a well-established European kitchenware company and it is about to launch an exciting new range of branded kitchenware. The company intends to create a 'big splash' with an extensive promotional campaign across Europe, starting with a product launch at a convention in Vienna next week. The Sales, Marketing, and Production departments in Duverger are working together on the promotional campaign. The first box of brochures for the company's stand in Vienna has just been delivered, but they don't look quite right.

## Negotiating | Dealing with conflict



- 1 What can go wrong when brochures are printed? Why do these things happen?
- 2 27▷ A meeting takes place between three managers – Jenny, Riccardo, and Paul – to discuss the situation. Listen to Extract 1 from the meeting. Compare your answers to 1 with what actually went wrong.
- 3 27▷ The three managers handle the discussion and deal with conflict in different ways. Listen again and decide who – Jenny (*J*), Riccardo (*R*), or Paul (*P*) –
  - 1 attempts to clarify the situation \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2 encourages the others to keep to the facts \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3 expresses their concerns diplomatically \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4 expresses their concerns more directly. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Match phrases a–i from Extract 1 to these categories. Can you add any more phrases?
  - 1 Keeping to the facts / being objective: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2 Talking about concerns directly: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3 Talking about concerns more diplomatically: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4 Clarifying / checking understanding: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a Do you understand what I'm trying to say?
  - b Would I be right in thinking ...?
  - c I don't know if you are aware, but ...?
  - d Let's try not to get personal here.
  - e Can we try and stay focused on the facts?
  - f I'm really not happy with ...
  - g Can I just make sure I've understood this correctly?
  - h I'm a bit worried about ...
  - i The real issue here is ...

- 5 Work with a partner. Discuss what you would say in these 'conflict' situations. Then have the conversations.

### Situation 1

- **Student A** Tell B about your boss's plans to get rid of the coffee area.
- **Student B** You are surprised. Try to clarify what A has said.
- **Student A** Confirm.
- **Student B** You are very concerned and want to know what staff can do about this decision. Express your concerns directly.
- **Student A** Tell B to focus on the facts – there has been no final decision yet. You are concerned that staff don't have enough informal meeting space. Be diplomatic.

### Situation 2

- **Student A** Tell B (the senior manager) you are not happy that a colleague who has been at the company for less time than you has been promoted above you and is now your line manager. Express your concerns directly.
- **Student B** Tell A to focus on the facts – the new line manager is very capable and is qualified for the job. Be diplomatic.



**6 28▶** Listen to Extract 2. What are the options for Duverger? What course of action do they successfully negotiate?

**7** During the negotiation in Extract 2, who

- a plays the role of chairperson?      c offers a compromise?  
b expresses points of disagreement?

**8 28▶** Listen to Extract 2 again. Replace the words in *italics* with phrases from the audio with a similar meaning.

- 1 Well, Riccardo, *what do you think we should do about this?*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 To be frank, *don't expect me to* sit around and wait for you to sort this out.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 And *how can you possibly* be contemplating a reprint?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 OK, Paul, *that's fair enough, but* surely we need to get this right now?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Oh, come on, that's just not practical. *I'm cancelling* the launch in Vienna if ...  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Look, Paul, Riccardo, *I don't want* any serious setbacks ...  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Thinking about this sensibly, the problems with the artwork *I can live with*, if ...  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8 I mean, *why don't I* give the printer another call?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Paul, *do we have* your approval on this?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 10 In which case, Riccardo, *would you be happy to* liaise with the printer ...?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**9** Match the phrases you noted in 8 to a–c in 7.

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 5 on page 110.

**10** Work in groups of three. Student A, turn to File 17 on page 140, Student B, turn to File 36 on page 144, and Student C, turn to File 49 on page 147. Negotiate the situations, following the steps below.

- 1 Establish the point of conflict.
- 2 Discuss any disagreements.
- 3 Try to reach a solution / compromise.

» Interactive Workbook » Email



## Key expressions

### Clarifying the situation

Can I just make sure I've understood this correctly?  
Would I be right in thinking ...?  
Do you understand what I'm trying to say?

### Staying focused on the facts

Let's try not to get personal here.  
Can we try and stay focused on the facts?

### Expressing concerns diplomatically

I'm a bit worried about ...  
I don't know if you are aware, but ...?

### Expressing concerns directly

I'm really not happy with ...  
The real issue here is ...

### Chairing the negotiation

How do you propose we deal with this issue?  
Look, can we try and avoid any ...?  
I need to know ...  
Can I leave you to ...?

### Expressing points of disagreement

I can't just ...  
I just don't understand how ...  
I see what you mean, but ...  
I just won't be able to ..., if ...

### Offering a compromise

I'm prepared to ... if ...  
Look, would it help if ...?  
I'd be more than happy to ...

» Interactive Workbook  
» Phrasebank

## Culture question

- How do you deal with conflict in your culture?
- Do you know how it is dealt with in other cultures?
- How can differences in the approach to conflict affect working relationships?

## Language at work | Adding emphasis

### 1 29► Listen to extracts 1–9. How do the speakers add emphasis to each sentence (e.g. word order, intonation, adding words or phrases)?

- 1 The reason why I say this is because if we get it right this time, any future campaigns should run more smoothly.
- 2 Which is why this whole thing is just so frustrating.
- 3 How we resolve this is the issue now.
- 4 It's the Vienna convention which really worries me.
- 5 In which case, Riccardo, can I leave you to liaise with the printer ...?
- 6 What really concerns me is the way this has been handled so badly by the printers.
- 7 The problems with the artwork I'm prepared to overlook.
- 8 The thing that bothers me is that we just don't have time.
- 9 Not only do we have a major error on our hands, but we're also not sure how this happened.

### 2 Which techniques for adding emphasis from a–d are used in the sentences in 1? More than one technique may be used in each sentence.

- a cleft sentences: *it's ... which / that; what ... is ...* \_\_\_\_\_
- b fixed phrases used to add emphasis \_\_\_\_\_
- c fronting (putting a topic at the start of a sentence for emphasis) \_\_\_\_\_
- d adverbs of degree \_\_\_\_\_

►► For more information, go to **Language reference Unit 5** on page 128.

### 3 Look at conversations 1–6 below. In each case, add emphasis to B's reply using one of the phrases from the list.

*What we must be clear about is ...*

*What I'd really like to know is ...*

*It's ... which ...*

*Not only ... but also ...*

*Which is why ...*

*In which case ...*

- 1 A I really don't know how to fill in this document.  
B Wouldn't it be a good idea to sit down and sort this out properly?
- 2 A Apparently there are hardly any tickets left for the conference.  
B I told you to book early.
- 3 A How should I reply to their email?  
B It's absolutely essential that the contract is signed by the 5th.
- 4 A I can't believe there's no budget left to complete the project!  
B What'll happen to the team if the project is abandoned?
- 5 A So they didn't attend?  
B They didn't attend the meeting. They forgot to let us know.
- 6 A The job is challenging enough, without all these extra changes they're asking for.  
B The changes make the job interesting.

### 4 Add emphasis to the following sentences, using the fronting technique.

- 1 We need to think about how we go about this.
- 2 It's absolutely crucial that we get this right.

►► For more exercises, go to **Practice file 5** on page 111.

### 5 Work in groups of three. You are members of a team set up to produce the company news section on the intranet. The deadline for a first draft is the end of next week. However, poor communication in the team has slowed the project down. You decide to hold a meeting to discuss the problems. Student A, turn to File 20 on page 140, Student B, turn to File 40 on page 145, and Student C turn to File 27 on page 142.

- 1 Discuss each problem on the agenda. Use techniques for emphasizing the points you make to each other.
- 2 End the meeting by deciding how you are going to resolve these issues.

#### Agenda

Communication problems in the intranet team

- 1 Unfocused meetings
- 2 Team members with different working styles
- 3 Lack of communication outside team meetings



## Practically speaking | Responding to feedback

### 1 Work with a partner. Discuss the following questions.

- 1 Is feedback necessarily the same as criticism?
- 2 How can negative feedback be made constructive?
- 3 How do you normally react to negative / positive feedback?



## Key word | *only*

Match phrases 1–5 with *only* in *italics* to synonyms a–e.

- 1 I'm sorry, *only* I didn't realize.
- 2 I'm *only* too happy to have some honest feedback.
- 3 I'm *only* trying to help.
- 4 I think my *only* real doubt is the line you've taken on absenteeism.
- 5 Apparently the same issue came up *only* last week.

- a very
- b as recently as
- c single
- d just
- e but

### 2 30▶ Listen to three conversations. In which conversation does somebody

- 1 respond to positive feedback?
- 2 accept negative feedback?
- 3 challenge negative feedback?

### 3 30▶ Match phrases a–k to 1–3 in 2. Then listen again to check your answers.

- a I see what you're saying ..., but ... \_\_\_\_
- b Thanks for your support – it's good to know I'm on the right track. \_\_\_\_
- c I'm sorry, I didn't realize – thanks for pointing that out. \_\_\_\_
- d Oh, I see, well it seems a pity to ..., but maybe you're right. \_\_\_\_
- e Oh, really? Why do you think that? \_\_\_\_
- f ... to be honest, I just don't have time to ... \_\_\_\_
- g No, I'm sorry, I don't see what you're getting at. \_\_\_\_
- h Thanks. Though I have to admit, I got the idea from ... \_\_\_\_
- i Actually, I'm very happy to have some honest feedback. I'll just keep working on it. \_\_\_\_
- j So how do you think I could improve it? \_\_\_\_
- k Look, you're entitled to your opinion, but ... \_\_\_\_

» For extension and revision go to **Useful phrases** on page 134.

### 4 Work with a partner. Discuss how you would respond to the feedback in 1–6 below. Use phrases in 3 to help you.

- 1 'I basically liked the way you presented your arguments, but I did feel you need to sound more sure of yourself.'
- 2 'Some of the ideas you came up with in that meeting were really creative. I'm sure Gian Luca is going to want to explore some of those further.'
- 3 'Did you read the report through before submitting it? It's just that there were several inconsistencies. It just doesn't seem like your normal standard, that's all.'
- 4 'We've just had some feedback from the client – I know it's a bit late, but basically they're not very happy with the colours we've selected.'
- 5 'I know the team's been under a lot of pressure recently, but I can't help feeling it's compromising the quality of the work.'
- 6 'We've got deadlines to meet, and we all have to do our bit. The delay from your group has meant that the production team are sitting around waiting for us to deliver.'

### 5 Work with a partner. Student A, turn to File 22 on page 141, Student B, turn to File 39 on page 145. Take turns to respond to each other's feedback.