

AURORA
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

**USING
BELBIN'S TEAM ROLES**



Aurora TDS is licensed by Belbin® Associates to work
with the Team Roles methodology



TEAM ROLES EXPLAINED

Introduction

Belbin's Team Roles can be used for a number of purposes including understanding our own behavioural preferences and those of other people too.

This can assist greatly with getting the best out of people, avoiding so called 'personality conflicts' and developing strong interpersonal relationships. This helps, internally, to put together or develop strong teams and, externally, to understand clients.

What are Belbin's Team Roles?

Whilst conducting research at Henley Management College Dr Meredith Belbin discovered that there were a number of behavioural attributes that were crucial to high performance teams. These he named:

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

Belbin's nine Team Roles have been enduring and now thousands of people in organisations around the world use them to assist with recruitment, build high performance teams, resolve conflict and generally understand colleagues and clients with whom they work.

Meredith Belbin has written a number of books about how the Team Roles thinking can be used and his methodology is studied in universities and centres of excellence around the world.

Some people think that the Team Roles assessment is a psychometric test: it isn't. Psychometrics are about *personality traits*, whereas Belbin's Team Roles are about *behavioural preferences* or preferred ways of working. The advantage is that behavioural preferences can be 'observed' by what people do and what they say.

Some people also think that completing an assessment to find out their Team Roles profile must be time consuming. Well, the first part, completing the 'self-assessment inventory' takes up to 20 minutes and is straightforward. The second part involves asking 4 people who know the person well to choose adjectives from a list provided to describe their view of that person. This takes about 10 minutes and, again, is straightforward. The five sets of results (one self-perception inventory form and 4 observer assessments) are

sent for analysis and individuals receive their profile, in the form of a 6 page report, within about 3 days.

The report is non-judgemental; a person's team roles profile cannot be good or bad. In the self-perception and observer assessments there are no right or wrong responses. A person's team role profile simply describes their behavioural preferences when working in a team.

Armed with this information a group (perhaps a team¹) will be able to analyse itself and discover its strengths and weaknesses. For example, a team with a large number of 'Plants' and no 'Completer Finishers' will be very creative, but prone to never getting anything done; or a team with several 'Shapers' is likely to experience internal conflict as they compete to have things done their way!

When selecting team members (or recruiting into jobs) knowledge of Team Roles can be useful for the purpose of filling gaps (Team Role gaps) or strengthening certain coverage of roles depending on the purpose of the team.

More information about Team Roles and how they can be used can be obtained from Aurora TDS, but for now, here is a general description of each one:

Plant (PL) - *generates the light of new ideas*

Plants tend to be imaginative, innovative and creative people. They provide the ideas, sometimes appearing a bit zany, that may lead to the solution of a problem or achievement of a task. They usually prefer to work alone, some distance from the team, where they can let their mind wander. They are often introverted and react strongly to both praise and criticism. Their ideas may be radical and they will not be concerned by practical constraints.



Completer Finisher (CF) - *gets things done*

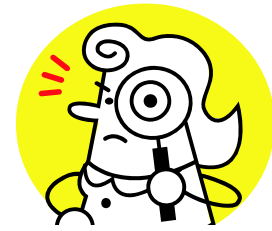
Completer Finishers throw themselves into whatever needs to be done by the team. These people are motivated by intense internal drive to complete a task, even though they may look calm to other team members. Typically, they are introverted and do not need externally generated motivation or stimulation. Completer Finishers are not keen to delegate tasks to other people because they fear relinquishing control over the quality of output required. They have a sense of urgency to complete a task, apply high standards and they will be seen by others as precise, task focused and dedicated.



¹ A group is a collection of people. A team is a collection of people who have a common goal (a task or problem to solve) and will all contribute to the achievement of that goal.

Monitor Evaluator (ME) - *the critical eye*

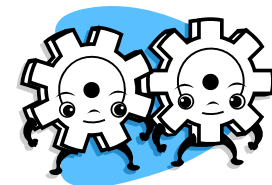
Monitor Evaluators are serious-minded people who tend to take decisions cautiously, preferring accuracy over speed. They are unlikely to be overly enthusiastic about anything, preferring instead to take all factors into account and make careful judgements about whether a proposed course of action will be successful. Monitor Evaluators are well suited to leadership roles, even though they appear to be dry humoured and critical, because they are seen as 'thinkers' and, by their very, nature they are rarely wrong.

**Shaper (SH) - *the whip cracker***

Shapers are people who usually display high energy and are desperate for achievement. They tend to display extrovert qualities, considerable drive and they like to win. In some ways Shapers are obvious leaders, particularly at the start of a task, but their assertiveness and abrasiveness can make them unpopular. They thrive under pressure and like to get things done their way, hence the name 'Shaper'. They don't mind antagonising people, as long as the task gets done and they can be determined, argumentative and combative. A team containing two or more strong Shapers can expect conflict as the individuals battle to have things their way.

**Implementer (IMP) - *the cogs of a team***

Implementers are practical people with common sense, self-control and discipline. They are not afraid of hard work and prefer to tackle tasks in a systematic way. They are well organised and will be seen as having loyalty to the team above loyalty to themselves or other groups outside their team. Implementers, however, may be perceived as dull, hardworking and inflexible. They frequently rise towards the top of organisations because they are seen as efficient and well organised, even though they have a tendency to lack charisma.

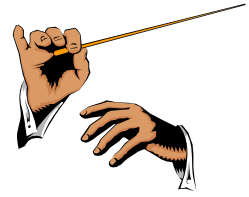
**Team Worker (TW) - *helps the team pull together***

Team Workers are the most supportive members of a team. These people tend to be mild-mannered, sociable and concerned about the wellbeing of other team members. They demonstrate flexibility and adapt to suit different situations taking into account the wishes of other people. They have high levels of emotional intelligence and are diplomatic, but they can be indecisive in dynamic situations. People with strong Team Worker tendencies are an ideal counter to Shapers because they work hard to ensure that conflict in the team is minimised. They are not seen as a threat to anyone and, therefore, they are often chosen for the position of team leader. In short, Team Workers can be thought of as the oil that ensures the smooth running of a team and morale is usually higher when they are around.



Coordinator (CO) - *ensures that the team works together*

Coordinators have the ability to cause other people to work towards shared goals. These people are naturally inclined to be leaders of teams or chairs of meetings. They are usually happy to delegate tasks and will be effective at doing so. They tend to have a broad outlook and, as a result, command respect from people around them. Coordinators are consultative and this sometimes brings them into conflict with Shapers because of the wide difference in management styles.



Resource Investigator (RI) - *knows how and where to find resources*

Resource Investigators are usually enthusiastic and outgoing people. They are effective communicators inside and outside the team and they are natural negotiators. Not particularly innovative themselves, Resource Investigators tend to be good at taking other people's ideas and developing them. As the name suggests, Resource Investigators are skilful at finding out what is available and how it can be accessed; they are good at exploring possibilities and reporting back to the team, but they easily get bored.



Specialist (SP) - *the expert*

Specialists can be hard to find but they can be invaluable members of team. These are people who are naturally keen to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a particular task. Whilst they will take great pride in their own area of expertise they are unlikely to be interested in other people's expertise. When they find themselves appointed as team leaders they usually command considerable respect from other team members because they seem to know so much about the technical aspects of the task to be achieved. Furthermore, they can be called upon to take decisions based on deep knowledge and sometimes experience too, but as team leaders their single-mindedness tends to limit their effectiveness.



TEAM ROLES: DO SAY – DON'T SAY

Team Role	Do Say	Don't Say
Plant 	That's clever That's perceptive You seem to come up with ideas for even the most challenging issues	I doubt if that would work Your ideas are so outrageous they can't possibly work
Co-ordinator 	You are a calm and confident person You seem like someone who should chair that meeting We need someone decisive to move this forward	You seem to be empire building You seem a bit laid back about this
Monitor Evaluator 	You are being very analytical about this We need to choose someone who considers the options before judging the best course of action	You don't seem very enthusiastic about this You don't seem to inspire the people around you
Implementer 	You seem to be efficient That seems like a useful, practical suggestion You are a pragmatic person, aren't you!	You seem to be a little resistant to these new ideas (proposals) Aren't you interested in exploring new possibilities?
Completer-Finisher 	You are the sort of person to get this done Your attention to detail is second to none You seem particularly interested in the quality of our service	Why don't you delegate? Don't worry, it will get done!
Resource Investigator 	So you are the person who gets resources organised around here I'll bet you know where xxx can be found I'm sure you know someone who can help	You are too optimistic You don't seem interested any more
Shaper 	You seem to thrive under pressure Wow, nothing gets in your way! Let's put some pace into this	You don't seem to care about offending people You seem to ride rough-shod over people Slow down!
Teamworker 	That's very perceptive You are being very diplomatic! You listen well to what people say	Why don't you confront them? For goodness sake, be decisive!
Specialist 	Wow, you seem to know a lot about this! You are very focussed on this	Never mind about the technicalities We don't need this level of detail