

The Belbin Test

For assessing team roles

The Belbin team Roles

The personal skill inventory identifies eight team roles which are described below. There is also another team role called the **Specialist** which is not identified in the questionnaire.

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.

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.

CO Co-ordinator

Characteristics

Calm, self-confident, controlled.

The distinguishing feature of Co-ordinators 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 Co-ordinators are not necessarily the cleverest members of a team, they have a broad and worldly outlook and generally command respect.

Function

Co-ordinators 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, Co-ordinators 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.

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.

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.

IMP 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, hardworking, 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.

Specialist

Characteristics

Professional, self-starting, dedicated.

Specialists are dedicated individuals who pride themselves on acquiring technical skills and specialist knowledge. Their priorities are to maintain professional standards and advance their own subject. While they show great pride in their own work, they usually lack interest in other people's work, and even in other people themselves. Eventually, the Specialist becomes the expert by sheer commitment along a narrow front. Few possess the single-mindedness, dedication and aptitude to become a first-class Specialist.

Function

Specialists play an indispensable part in some teams, for they provide the rare skill upon which the organisation's service or product is based. As managers, they command support because they know more about their subject than anyone else and can usually be called upon to make decisions based on in-depth experience.

Strengths

Provide knowledge or technical skills in rare supply.

Allowable Weaknesses

Contribute only on a narrow front.

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".