



# BlueSky

EXPERIENCES

## Belbin Team Roles

### What is it?

Belbin Team Roles is a team role preference profile developed by Dr. Meredith Belbin, a leading figure in the study and analysis of teams and the roles people play in them. It is not a personality profile: 'preference' simply describes a person's natural way of contributing and relating to others while engaged in team activities. Like being right or left-handed or enjoying football more than rugby, there are no right or wrong preferences: it's just the way people are. It is crucial to the usefulness of Belbin Team Roles that we understand and accept this.

### Background

During his time at Henley Management College, Belbin started to see patterns emerge in the Executive Management Exercise (EME) that formed part of the College's executive training programme. These patterns were correlated against psychological data and a battery of tests. It became apparent that key roles were emerging and that they had universal application irrespective of what the team's function was.

This evidence was then further explored and tested by comparing the performance of 'super' teams made up exclusively of high-performing individuals against 'average' teams of standard make-up. Invariably the super teams disappointed and under-performed.

From these observations, two key questions arose: why, and was there a best combination? To answer these questions the key roles were identified and further clarified. These have become the by now famous team roles of Implementer, Coordinator, Shaper, Innovator, Resource Investigator, Monitor Evaluator, Team Worker, Completer/Finisher and Specialist.

### What value does the profile add?

It gives everyone in a team a clear picture of what particular role preference they bring to the team, expressed in terms of most preferred, can be assumed, and least preferred. This tells the individual not only where their strengths lie, but also how they can most effectively contribute to the team. It further shows how the team dynamic reflects the profile of the team as a whole, and provides a simple, straightforward language system that any team can use to discuss its task and behavioural process.

### How does it work?

Team members take about 20 minutes to complete a simple 78-question questionnaire. This can then be either manually or bureau scored. Results are presented in terms of each individual's preference and a team profile of the distribution of roles.

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