

The Belbin Times

Great teams start with **BELBIN®**

Issue 2

Why teams matter

Teams are increasing in importance, but why and when should we deploy teams? What advantages do they have over individuals? And how do we capitalise on the advantages of teamwork, whilst avoiding the pitfalls?

"The ability to quickly build, deploy, disband, and reform teams is a critical skill for today's organizations."

– Deloitte University Press, 2016

1. Teams offer diversity

One person cannot do everything proficiently. In teams, individuals collaborate, sharing their strengths in complementary roles. Your team needs a Team Role make-up that reflects its purpose and goals, otherwise it may be the case that 'you don't know what you don't know'.

2. Teams promote learning opportunities

Working in teams benefits individuals who are exposed to their colleagues' different approaches, experiences, perspectives and skills. Watching others in action playing these roles is a great way to learn.

3. Teams can address more complex problems

As complexity increases, tasks can fall beyond the scope of the individual. According to Ernst & Young in their 2013 study: "Almost 9 out of 10 companies surveyed for this report agree that the problems confronting them are now so complex that teams are essential to provide effective solutions."

4. Teams offer flexibility

Individual members can come and go, offering their skills, expertise and Team Role contributions at the stage when they are most needed, and then moving on as the project progresses. Individual activities can be co-ordinated to help people work more effectively, save time and avoid frustration.

5. Teams deliver faster results

When teams are working optimally and workload is shared to best advantage, progress is faster than individual endeavour.

6. Teams can mirror organisational values

When a team is working in harmony with broader aims, the sense of belonging and commitment to the team can extend to the organisation too, giving employees an increased sense of loyalty to their company.

7. Teams don't just make us better workers, they make us better people

Teams are the human side of working. To be an effective team member, you have to listen to others, and show sensitivity to their feelings and needs. Google's Project Aristotle – their research into effective teams – found that empathy and taking turns in conversation led to psychological safety, the best predictor of success.

So how do we leverage the benefits of teamwork?

1. Make conscious decisions when allocating work

Can the work be accomplished more effectively by an individual or well-matched pairing?

2. Protect the meaning of 'team'

Teams shouldn't be large amalgams of individuals with no common identity or purpose. When a team is needed, their size should be kept small to avoid disengagement, groupthink and lengthy unproductive meetings – we think four is an ideal number.

3. Compose teams 'on purpose'

Teams need to be deliberate in structure, intent and goals in order to be truly effective. The key is to distribute work effectively, identifying what each person has to offer and ensuring they're playing to those strengths. Once that's done, reflect: on what worked well and how behaviours were used to benefit the team.



Next steps...

Belbin can help identify individual strengths and offer advice on how to allocate work most effectively within your team. Are you ready to optimise your team? Start your Belbin journey today. Come to one of our 'How to...' Sessions, become Belbin Accredited or contact us to discover how to get the most from individuals and teams!

01223 264975 | team@belbin.com
www.belbin.com

Why use Belbin?

Belbin Team Roles are used to identify behavioural strengths and weaknesses in the workplace. Whether developing people, resolving conflict or fine-tuning high performance, Belbin provides the language to ensure that individuals and teams communicate and work together with greater understanding. So, how and why should you use Belbin?

In Management Training

Belbin is integral to effective management at all levels, from junior managers looking for insights into their teams, to Executive and Senior Management Teams (SMTs). Understanding and utilising the natural talents and motivations of staff is key to great management, and that's where Belbin can help. Belbin Individual Reports provide managers with rich insights into the key behavioural strengths and preferences of their people, allowing them to get the best from each person in their team. Belbin can:

- Help managers make the transformation from being effective process managers to becoming outstanding people managers.
- Give managers a language to describe how they interact and interrelate with others. With the self-insight and understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, a manager is well-equipped to help others maximise their own potential.
- Enable managers to put together their own great teams!

"I think we've always been striving to find a way of helping people to work together. When people work in effective combinations they achieve so much more than when they're working alone. But to do that, we need a language, and it needs to be a language which is shared and enables people to communicate with one another." – Meredith Belbin

87%

of customers use Belbin to help managers manage successfully

For Conflict Management

Conflict usually arises from misunderstanding or lack of communication, and can manifest itself in a myriad of ways, including lowered morale, reduced productivity and increases in absenteeism. Belbin Team Roles can help to depersonalise problems, focusing on behaviours to avoid personal attacks which can often exacerbate conflict.

Belbin and interpersonal conflict – an individual's Belbin Report (with other team members invited to offer structured feedback by way of Belbin Observer Assessments) offers individuals an opportunity to explore their colleagues' experience of their behavioural contributions. Team and Working Relationship Reports highlight areas of potential conflict and misunderstanding in teams and pairs respectively.

Belbin and cross-team conflict – sometimes, teams become too inwardly-focused and forget their role within the organisation at large. Departmental teams can begin to compete, or dismiss each other's suggestions and outputs, leading to cross-team conflict and reduced productivity. Belbin can offer insights into distinctive team cultures, helping teams use any competitive tendencies to the organisation's advantage!

90%

of customers agree that Belbin helps communication

In Change Management

In reality, rarely can change management programmes commence by wiping the slate clean. Belbin Team Roles helps teams to adapt to changing goals by highlighting collective strengths and minimising weaknesses. This enables the team to be more cohesive (yet adaptable) in a changing environment.

Responses to change can vary with individuals. Whilst some will embrace and promote changes, others may struggle and wish to preserve the status quo. Belbin Team Role preferences can give leads on these behaviours and the underlying concerns, allowing organisations to bring in the right people at the right time when contemplating organisational change.

Sometimes, teams are held in check by misunderstandings or assumptions about their own history. Using Belbin, teams can boost engagement and ownership by claiming their successes and writing their own story, rather than being defined by the past.

"I THINK IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT THE DAY WAS TRANSFORMATIONAL FOR OUR TEAM. WE HAD BEEN THROUGH A LOT OF CHANGE AND TURBULENCE OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, AND IT HELPED US COME BACK TOGETHER, APPRECIATE ONE ANOTHER AND REFOCUS. THE CHANGE IN THE TEAM HAS BEEN REMARKABLE."

Team member – TeachFirst

For Leadership Development

"Leaders who can be trusted are self-aware and know what differentiates them from their colleagues. They are not afraid to reveal their weaknesses and know how to adapt their style to different situations." Rob Goffee, Professor of Organizational Behaviour at London Business School.

Introspection can be difficult, but it's essential for leaders to gauge how effectively they're connecting with staff, and to lead from the front in encouraging behavioural diversity. Belbin is an accessible, rich, people-positive tool which promotes authentic leadership, helping leaders towards an honest assessment of their strengths and shortcomings. Armed with an understanding of their own behaviours, leaders can learn how best to adapt their leadership style to the working environment within their organisation to ensure a positive impact on those they lead.

"THE BELBIN REPORTS HAVE ALLOWED NOVO NORDISK TO USE THE 'HUMAN' ANGLE IN DISCOVERING AND RESOLVING BUSINESS PROBLEMS. ITS PRACTICALITY FOSTERS 'SEAMLESSNESS' BETWEEN THE NOVO NORDISK LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AND THE BUSINESS."

Winnie Li –
Senior Leadership Development Manager,
Novo Nordisk China.

IN A NUTSHELL...

Using Belbin will give you:

- Balanced teams based on behavioural contributions rather than job titles
- Self-aware individuals who can adapt their behaviours according to the situation and business need
- The right people doing the right tasks, leading to better-performing teams
- Depersonalised team conversations, using a common language to discuss team contributions
- Informed, impartial decision-making, based on fact rather than a ‘gut-feel’ which may be subject to unconscious bias
- Confidence when making decisions involving people
- Insight into behavioural strengths and weaknesses which aren’t necessarily revealed by a CV

The Belbin Reports

The first step to uncovering strengths and weaknesses is for individuals to complete the Belbin questionnaire, called the Self-Perception Inventory, and where possible, to obtain feedback from colleagues and managers.

Once the Belbin Individual Reports have been generated, conversations can begin...

For Personal Development and Coaching

Often, professionals are promoted on the basis of performance in their current role, only to suffer from stress once they are in the new job. It’s an adage commonly known as the ‘Peter Principle’. Whilst the new role might come with a desired title and level of responsibility, it often requires particular behaviour that doesn’t fit with the individual’s preferred Belbin Team Roles. As part of the Belbin process:

- The tailored advice and guidance from Belbin Reports can structure discussions as to whether the desired career path is both viable and wise
- Alternatives can be discussed and training gap analysis taken, if required
- Individuals can benefit from increased self-awareness and greater personal effectiveness

99%*

of customers agree that Belbin helps individuals develop a greater level of self-understanding

*That’s almost 100%

In Recruitment and Career Development

The synergy – or lack of synergy – between a person and a job can be mysterious and difficult to explain. Given that two candidates look similar on paper, why is one successful in a role and another, not? The language and understanding of Belbin Team Roles can help when:

- Making decisions about which individuals to recruit or promote
- Providing individuals with the information they need to take the next step on their career path
- Putting together graduate recruitment strategies or assessment centres
- Trying to identify the gaps in teams which need filling!

“THE ONLY TIME IN 7 YEARS THAT WE HAD A **HIRING FAILURE** WAS WHEN ONE OF OUR TEAMS INSISTED ON **IGNORING THE BELBIN REPORT** BECAUSE THE PERSON’S EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE WAS **SO GOOD.**”

Bob Penney –
Managing Director, Ambion (Europe) Ltd

For Employee Engagement

Everyone has strengths: talents, knowledge and skills which can be used to advantage at work. And research shows that those who use their strengths are six times more likely to be engaged on the job. Using Belbin as part of an employee engagement programme can:

- Help individuals discover their strengths
- Ensure that job roles and strengths are aligned
- Recognise and use others’ strengths to best advantage
- Help teams to understand and consider strengths when assigning team projects
- Incorporate strengths into performance reviews and goals
- Foster a culture which promotes strengths

71%

of customers agree that Belbin helps to increase employee engagement

With Teams

Teams offer diversity, promote learning opportunities, address more complex problems, offer flexibility, deliver faster results and can mirror organisational values. Teams don’t just make us better workers, they make us better people. Belbin can help:

- Select people to form high-performing teams
- Develop and coach existing teams
- Maximise the use of virtual teams
- Bring together multi-functional teams
- Optimise project teams

99%*

of customers agree that Belbin helps teams work more effectively

*That’s pretty close to 100% too!

Next steps...

Contact us to see how you can use Belbin Team Roles within your organisation, or, if you are an independent consultant, as part of your toolbox.

Visit: www.belbin.com, phone 01223 264975 or email team@belbin.com

We look forward to hearing from you.

Start the Conversation

Over the past 30 years, we've seen huge changes in how the Belbin Reports are generated and presented. The days of self-scoring questionnaires with a pencil and paper are long gone. Our latest edition of the reports (our 7th version) is available online in 19 languages and we look forward to launching our 8th version in 2019, along with a brand new web application to make it easier than ever to access reports and deliver Belbin within your organisation.

A Belbin Report is the start of every conversation

Self-insight develops individuals and builds strong teams – it's at the heart of business success. Before organisations can push for real business change, each person needs to discover what they have to offer.

But there's a real gap between acknowledging the challenge (improving self-insight) and addressing this challenge in a meaningful way. Talking the talk and sharing theories isn't enough – you need evidence-based methodology that translates into tangible, actionable results.

Ever had a team awayday where everyone had a great time and the team bonded, but then it was back to the status quo on Monday? Or maybe your team has benefitted from in-depth psychometrics which seemed to dig deep into the individual personalities in your team, but there was no practical outcome – no way to aggregate the findings and get people pulling in the same direction?

Belbin combines a sound theoretical framework – and rich history of research and development – with real-world results.

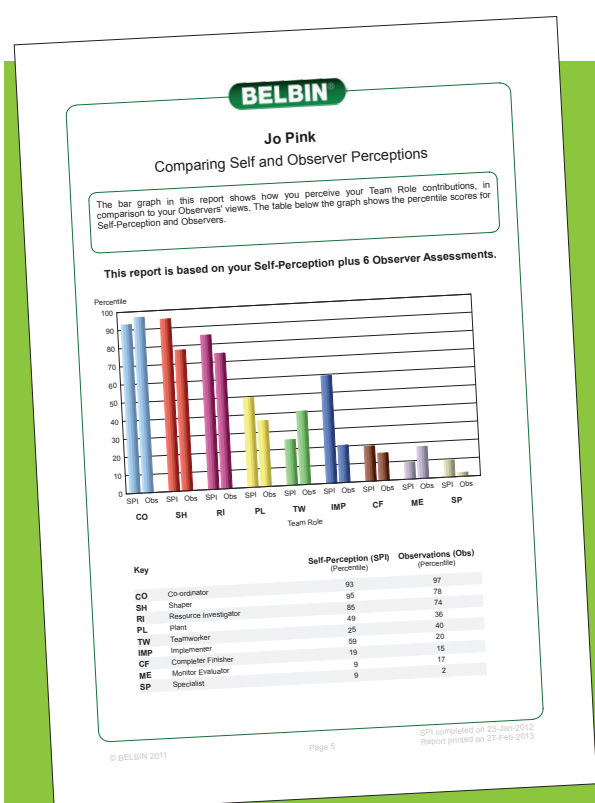
It all starts with the Belbin Individual Report

After completing a short questionnaire – and, where possible, obtaining feedback from colleagues and managers – each person receives a detailed, personalised feedback report which: describes their unique cocktail of contributions to a team; explores their preferred working styles and ways of playing to their strengths, and identifies latent strengths (observed by others) that the individual might cultivate.

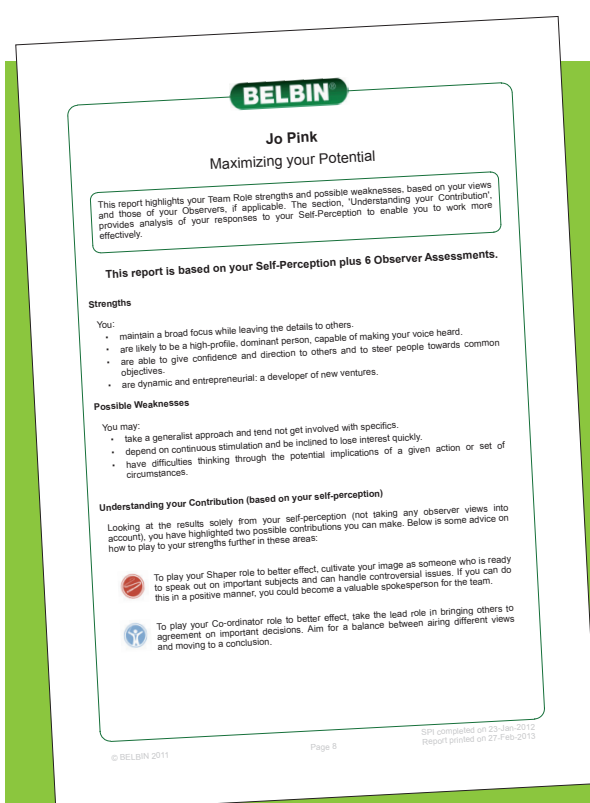
1-49 Reports:
£35 + VAT each

50-99 Reports:
£30 + VAT each

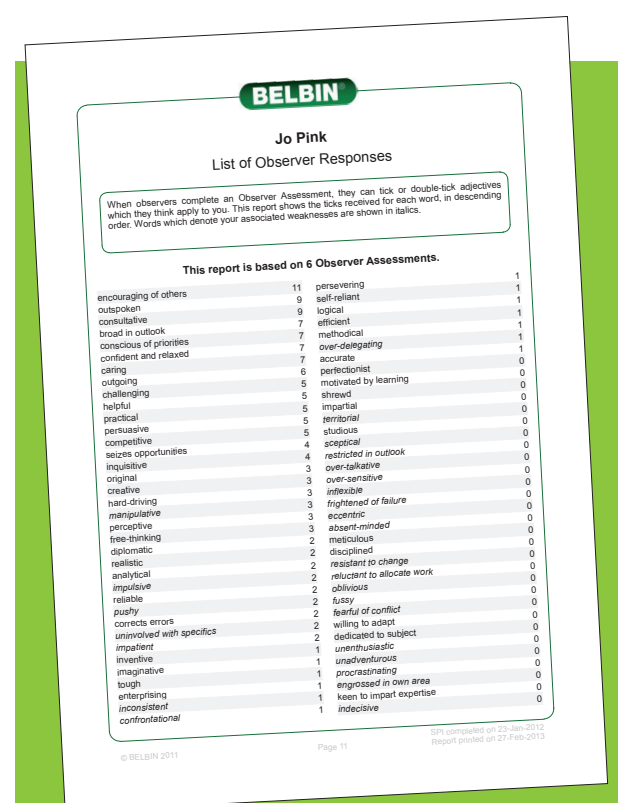
100-199 Reports:
£25 + VAT each



This is where the magic happens. We plot your views of your own behaviour alongside feedback from your managers and colleagues, giving you real insights into the image you project.



You're so much more than just your top Team Roles. Or maybe you don't share your colleagues' view of your strengths? This Report helps you to fine-tune your contribution, with detailed advice on how to articulate and project your unique behavioural 'fingerprint' to best advantage.



You'll never know who ticked what, but all those responses together build up a good idea of the image you project to others and can be a real eye-opener. How do the words and phrases fit for size? Are there any surprises?

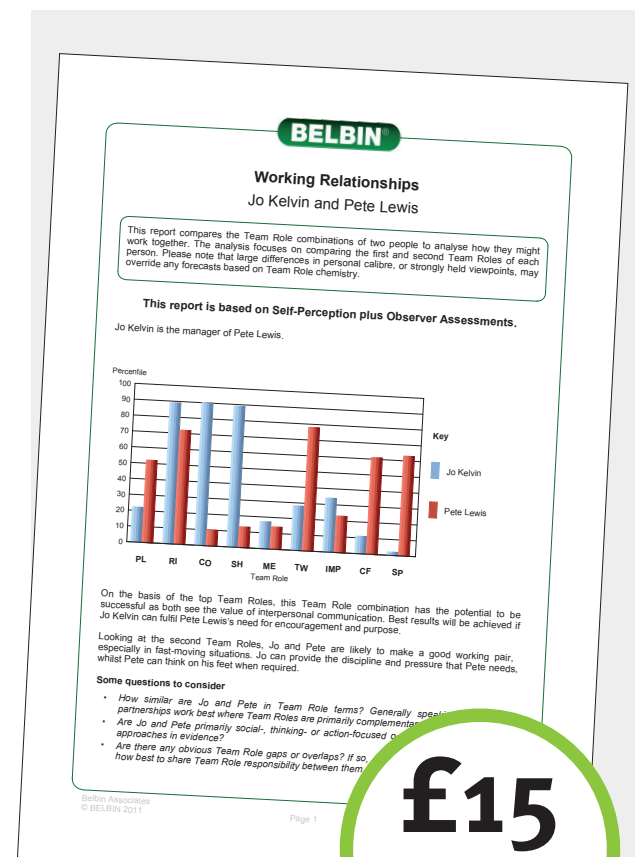
Because Belbin measures behaviour, rather than personality, others in the team can have their say on the strengths they witness every day, by means of Observer feedback. This way, Team Roles can help move your team beyond ideas and aspirations, offering the practical advice and guidance which underpins real change in teams, and providing an avenue to address sensitive issues which might otherwise compromise team success.

Here are just a selection of the Belbin Reports you will receive:

Ready for more?

The learning doesn't end there – our full range of reports help you to run diagnostics on your teams from every angle.

Once each person in the team has an Individual Report, the data can be collated to produce a Team Report, exploring how the team works in combination. This report is designed to provoke conversations in the team. Who is best suited to which kinds of work? Where are the strengths, gaps and overlaps, and are these causing tensions in the team? How might the findings inform succession planning?



£15
+ VAT
per Belbin Working Relationship Report

Looking to compose suitable working pairs or resolve interpersonal conflicts?

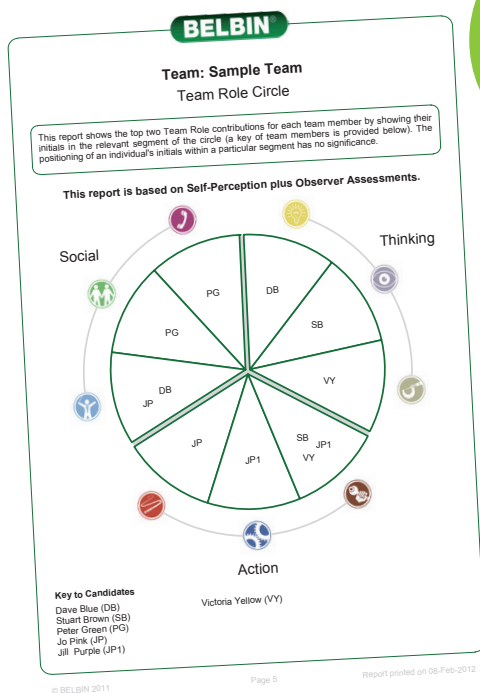
Our Working Relationship Reports explore key pairings of colleagues within teams, or analyse an individual alongside their manager. The key points and questions can help to start potentially difficult conversations and depersonalise hot-button issues.

In teams, individuals with clashing styles might just be able to manage without butting heads, but in a pair, there's nowhere to hide. Whether they're too similar or can't seem to find any common ground, Working Relationship Reports help you put pairs together and diagnose difficult relationships by focusing on complementary strengths and taking the heat out of the conversation.

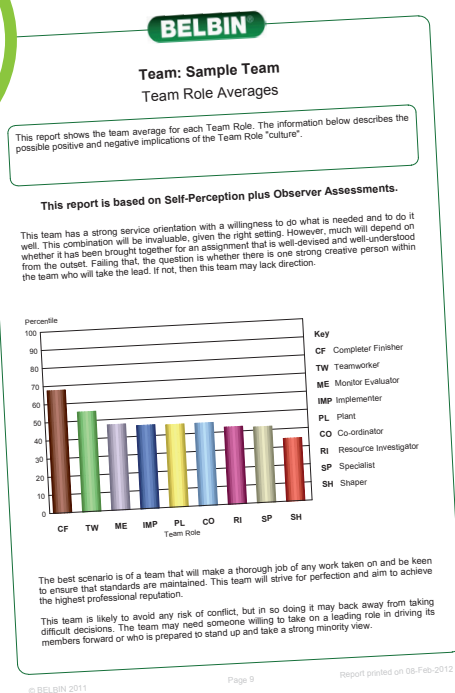
Next steps...

To find out more about the Belbin Reports and how they can help your individuals, managers, teams and organisation, contact us on 01223 264975 or team@belbin.com.

£75
+ VAT
per Belbin Team Report



Have you got too many Completer Finishers squabbling over the final draft, but no Plants to come up with new ideas? Do you really need to hire another Shaper? There's no hiding any gaps or overlaps – it's all there in plain sight on the Team Role Circle, and ready for discussion.



With a handle on the team's behavioural 'culture', you know how to read the team, and how new recruits might fare when they're thrown in at the deep end. What are the pros and cons of your team's mix and what does it mean for you and how you work?

Belbin, self-reporting and the dangers of the echo chamber

There's a curious dichotomy when it comes to psychometric and behavioural testing. On the one hand, there's some considerable scepticism in industry regarding the usefulness of such testing; and on the other, a widespread readiness to accept the newest test on the market without due diligence – without asking:

- What does the test claim to measure? (Some widely-used tests conflate behaviour and personality, for example.)
- Where's the research? What kind of theoretical basis is there? Do our organisational values support this kind of theory, and where are the findings to support the hypotheses?
- What's our reason for conducting testing in the first place? What do we hope to achieve, and how well does a given test support our needs in this regard?

And when you don't know the 'why', you don't know what kind of outcome you're seeking.

Self-reporting: not the 'safe option'

Because people can be wary of 'psychometric' tests, lots of companies use self-reporting. People can't disagree if the results come from their own inputs, right? But using self-reporting isn't the 'safe option' – the end result is damaging. The report reflects the individual back at themselves through their own distorted lens. Opportunities for learning and growth are limited by the individual's self-awareness. The test becomes a tick-box exercise and employees don't buy in to the process. Meanwhile, all the issues bubbling away under the surface are never addressed, because each person in the team just carries on in their own echo chamber.



Meredith Belbin said just this, back in 1993:

"These tests and inventories rely on self-reporting. Most participants respond favourably to the outputs they receive, declaring them to be true, a comment that can scarcely be surprising since it is their own inputs that have been processed and fed back to them. Self-awareness and knowledge are at risk, then, of becoming a closed system into which the perceptions of the external world fail to break. Yet the practice of industry means that when decisions have to be reached about people, in terms of promotion or transfer to other work or, indeed, on any matter of importance, it is the perception of others that forms the basis of decision-making."

– Meredith Belbin,
Team Roles at Work, 1993

Interrelate, aggregate, analyse

For real change with real-world outcomes, you need results to interact. Rather than identifying personality traits which categorise individuals, you need feedback within teams and across hierarchical levels in the organisation, to open up the discussions that get people thinking and promote change.

Behaviour is external, observable and grounded in real-world examples. Measuring behaviour is how you add value. It's key to transforming individual development and helping people work more effectively together. Set at a distance from innate personality traits which feel 'too close to home', analysing behaviour as observed by others offers you a practical, democratic, evidence-based

measurement which shows an individual their impact upon a team, without letting things 'get personal'.

Here, you can tell the individual, is the impression they're creating. Here are the strengths others see – did they know? Here is what could be holding them back from promotion or recognition, and here's how to handle it. Here are some reasons why they find it easier to get along with one person, but work more productively with another. Here is where the team's culture is taking it and why.

Can you afford for your people to miss out on that kind of insight?

At Belbin, we believe that measuring behaviour is crucial and that feedback from others is needed to take that behavioural 'pulse'.

That's why we offer Observer Assessments – short surveys for colleagues and managers to complete, based on the behaviours they witness every day. These inform and enrich an individual's own 'view' and that's why we don't charge separately for them – they're an integral part of the Belbin process.

When it comes to personality or behavioural testing, it's crucial to identify needs first: to settle on the 'why' before deciding on the 'what', in order to identify the best kind of test for your needs.

Footnote: If the chap in the image had sought feedback, he might have realised he'd missed an apostrophe.

Next steps...

To find out more about the Belbin Reports and how they can help your individuals, managers, teams and organisation, contact us on 01223 264975 or team@belbin.com.

Belbin on the virtual stage

Virtual teams carry a great deal of potential. From greater diversity to reduced running costs and improved work/life balance, assembling virtual teams allows organisations to gather talent from around the globe. But virtual teams bring their own set of problems too, from cultural divides to missed cues and failing technology.

So, how do you harness the benefits of virtual working without suffering from the drawbacks?

1. Choose your people carefully.

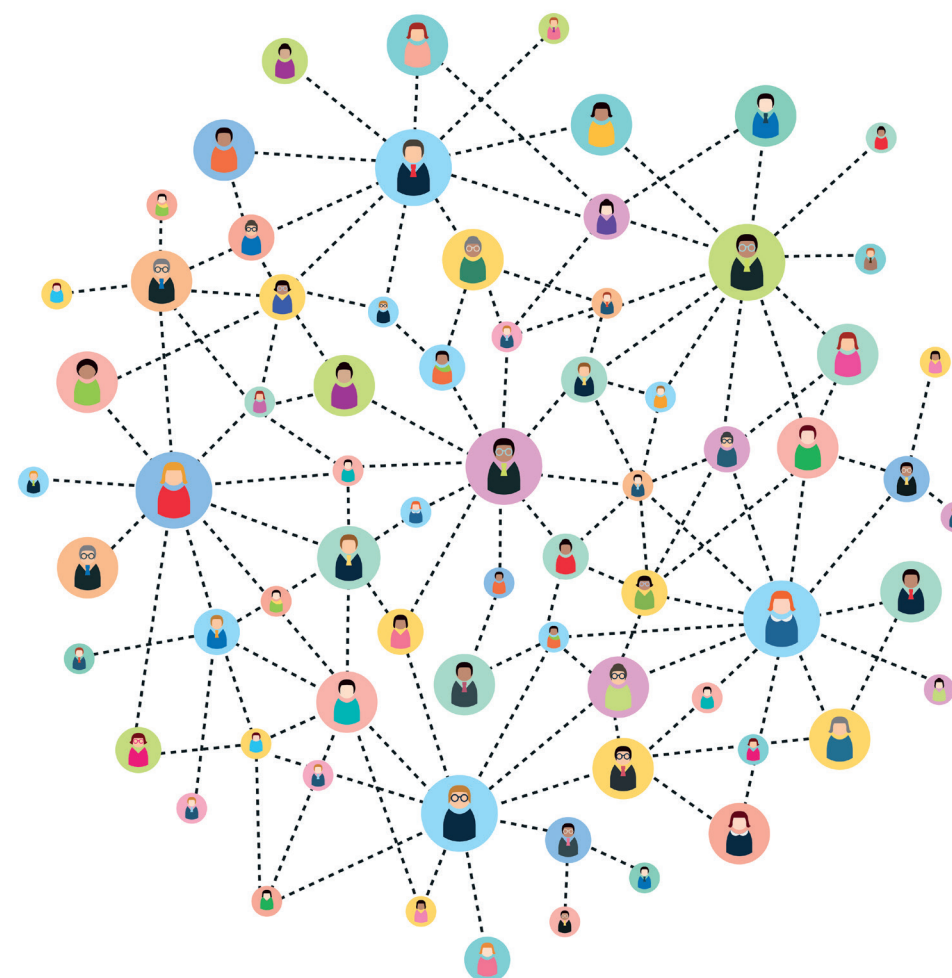
It's crucial to discover the behavioural strengths and weaknesses of each member of the team and to consider the impact of their behaviours in a virtual environment. This can be especially powerful when delivered at the virtual team's first meeting, facilitating discussions as to who will do each kind of work and how individuals might work best together.

2. Consider size.

When numbers climb beyond four or five people, a team becomes a group and people take less individual responsibility. Dr Meredith Belbin's ideal team size is four, so that each team member is accountable. No one has the casting vote, so decisions must be reached by consensus.

3. Clarify goals and guidelines.

In their study of high-performing teams, Ernst & Young found that building and sustaining a desire to achieve a collective goal was more important to virtual, than to co-located, teams, removing the focus from local concerns. As an international language with no particular bias or affinity, Belbin Team Roles can break down cultural barriers which might otherwise hinder effective teamwork.



4. Build trust.

In virtual teams, it can take longer for individuals to understand team culture. It's crucial that people feel able to speak up if they disagree, without fear of reprisals. Google calls it 'psychological safety' and it's key to overcoming the isolation and misunderstandings that can result from remote working.

5. Focus on interaction.

Ernst & Young's study discovered that those in virtual teams could be more sensitive to how colleagues are thinking and feeling, simply because they're aware of the increased potential for miscommunications. By identifying Belbin Team Role contributions within the team, differences can be celebrated and encouraged, rather than becoming a negative to be managed.

6. Encourage honesty.

Team members need to be honest with one another – and actively so. Harvard Business Review introduces the concept of 'observable candour', suggesting that a nominated individual is responsible for vocalising objections to non-constructive criticism or picking up when something is being left unsaid.

7. Use Belbin to help your people adapt to virtual working.

Download our report on virtual teams to discover the sensitivities each Team Role faces when encountering virtual working, plus advice on using Observer Assessments (360-degree feedback) to identify strengths, encourage candour and depersonalise conflict within the team.

Next steps...

To request your copy of the Belbin Report: Leverage the potential of virtual teams with Belbin, please email team@belbin.com.

The good

A 2009 survey by WHU-Otto Beisheim School of Management showed that well-managed virtual teams could outperform 'co-located' teams and improve employee productivity by up to 43%.

The bad

A 2005 study by Deloitte found that IT projects outsourced to virtual work groups found that 66% didn't deliver on the clients' requirements.

Behavioural vs. Psychometric Tests

Many companies use tests to help them make decisions, develop employees and build high-performing teams. There is a wealth of tests to choose from, so how do you decide? Discover how to choose the test that best suits your needs.

From SMEs to multinationals

Many organisations use testing of some sort (whether aptitude, suitability, psychometric or behavioural) to help manage, develop, engage, and make decisions about, individuals within their organisation.

The benefits of introducing testing into the workplace (whether for recruitment, or for ongoing personal and team development) include:

- Providing an external, objective view of an individual, which is not biased by the perspective of an individual (such as a line manager) or by the organisational culture.
- Helping individuals to learn about themselves by presenting them in a new light. The provision of tailored information allows individuals to manage their career progress and set targets based on their performance.
- Analysing fit between individuals and jobs, so that appropriate skills and training needs can be identified.
- Building teams of individuals who work harmoniously and productively together.

70%*

of UK companies with over 50 employees use tests measuring personality, behavioural style, motivators, interests and values.

*Source: Personnel Today

First, you need to decide exactly what you, or your organisation, hope to gain from testing.

What sort of information or advice do you wish to obtain that will help you with the organisation's recruitment or personal development project? How will line managers, HR, trainers or consultants be using the information provided, and to what end?

At Belbin, we distinguish between behaviour and personality.

Many tests claim to cover both behaviour and personality, but actually, these are distinct, so it's important to find out exactly what your chosen test will be measuring. Belbin measures behaviour and does not have psychometric properties. There are a number of different factors which influence our behaviour – and personality is one of them. Others include: skills and abilities; values and motivations; experiences and external influences. Whilst personality may not be immediately apparent to others, behaviour is – it's the outward manifestation of all those factors, working together and acting on other people.

Many psychometric or personality tests provide results which focus on an individual's personality traits. Bear in mind that whilst this information may be edifying for the individual concerned, it is not necessarily the most useful form of feedback for the organisation. Instead, it may be more advantageous to retrieve practical advice which is grounded in 360-degree peer reviews and which is specifically focused on the work setting.



What is a psychometric test?

There are many tests that focus on an individual's personality. Aspects such as extroversion/introversion, thinking/feeling are measured and are considered relatively fixed. They are based on an individual's answers to a range of questions. There is no 360-degree view, so one could say that the outcome is only as good as an individual's self-knowledge.

The question to ask is whether the outcome of a psychometric test has a great deal of bearing on the individual's performance in the workplace? Does it matter than a member of staff can be labelled an extrovert, or is it more useful to see how that staff member contributes in a particular work situation?

At Belbin, we feel that the latter is more useful and thousands of organisations worldwide agree. Of course, personality is a factor, but it is only one of many that influence an individual's behaviour.

**“YOUR BELIEFS
DON'T MAKE
YOU A BETTER
PERSON, YOUR
BEHAVIOUR
DOES.”**

Sukhraj S. Dhillon

What's a behavioural test?

A behavioural test investigates propensities towards certain kinds of behaviour and styles of interaction with others, rather than measuring personality traits. Behaviour is regarded as more changeable than personality, since we can adapt our behaviour depending on what is required of us in a given situation or role.

Behaviour is also observable. This means that it affects, and is affected by, those around us. This makes the process of understanding and adapting our actions a democratic one: whilst we wouldn't ask others to tell us about our personalities, we often remark on one another's behaviour.

Finally, behavioural tests can provide constructive feedback which directly informs the way an individual behaves in the workplace. Personality is unlikely to change, so to dust off the cobwebs and get individuals and teams working more effectively, we need to focus on the point where changes can be made: our behaviour.

**“WORKING WITH BELBIN
FOR THIRTY YEARS NOW
AND IT'S STILL THE MOST
VALID AND INSIGHTFUL
MODEL TO UNDERSTAND
AND IMPROVE TEAM
PERFORMANCE.
IT'S AN EVERGREEN.”**

Volta Executive Consultants

Belbin Team Roles – behaviour or personality testing?

Belbin is concerned with behaviour: what others in your team see and experience. Whilst this may be influenced by your personality, this is not the only factor.

In a nutshell, during the 1970s, Dr Meredith Belbin and his research team at Henley Management College set about observing teams. As the study progressed, the research revealed that the difference between success and failure for a team was not dependent on factors such as intellect, but more on behaviour.

The research team began to identify separate clusters of behaviour, each of which formed distinct team contributions or “Team Roles”. A Team Role came to be defined as:

“A tendency to behave, contribute and interrelate with others in a particular way.”

It was found that different individuals displayed different Team Roles to varying degrees. Moreover, the behaviour assumed might not correspond with what others observe. Whereas many psychometric tests rely on self-reporting, the Belbin assessment uses 360° feedback to give you an accurate idea of how you fit in your team.

**THE MAIN BENEFIT OF USING BELBIN?
“ACCESSIBLE, EASY LANGUAGE TO
GRASP. NOT ABOUT PERSONALITY,
BUT INSTEAD BEHAVIOUR, SO LESS
RESISTANCE FROM PEOPLE WHO DON'T
LIKE BEING 'TESTED'. IT'S CLEAR THAT
BELBIN TEAM ROLES RESONATE WITH
PEOPLE WHEN I DISCUSS IT. THEY CAN
SEE APPLICATIONS THAT WILL IMPROVE
EFFICIENCY AND TEAM CULTURE.”**

Caroline Broad – Broad Associates Ltd.

We believe in change. So, we think behaviour holds the key.

‘Personalities’ don't always reveal themselves wholly and uniformly at work – it can vary enormously, depending on who we are and what we do. Preconceived ideas and aspirations can stand between the person we want to be and the one who really shows up at the office.

By focusing on our behavioural styles, and allowing others to evidence how they interpret our behaviour at work, we have real opportunities to work to our strengths and contain the weaknesses which may stand in the way of success.

Using the language of Belbin Team Roles, organisations can use real team data to take practical steps that introduce and instil lasting change.

93%

of our customers continue to use the practical language of Team Roles to enable them to work more effectively after initial contact.

Next steps...

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Five things Contribute can tell you about your team

Contribute is a team exercise from Belbin, and it's all about helping your team to understand – and value – the nine Belbin Team Roles. From devising comic captions to sourcing a cauliflower and a purple shoe, Contribute demonstrates what contribution each Team Role makes and encourages the team to consider others' strengths – and what might be missing from the team as a whole.

Contribute will...

1. Help your team distinguish their butterfly expert from their social butterfly

The overarching message of Belbin Team Roles is the celebration of individual difference, but to celebrate it, first you've got to recognise what each person has to offer. Rather than receiving instructions from on high, it's up to the team's nominated Co-ordinator to establish where talents lie and to decide who should do what. This might lead to the discovery of some latent strengths in the team and will certainly help your resident Co-ordinator to hone their skills in identifying and promoting others' abilities.

2. Put people under pressure, so you can see the cracks

In the workplace, tensions can bubble along under the surface without ever coming to the fore to be resolved. Or things go wrong, but no one knows why. With Contribute, everything moves

at speed. Under pressure, people tend to resort to their natural or preferred behaviours, so strengths and weaknesses are more apparent, and it's difficult to hide. This provides the perfect opportunity to study success and failure, both at an individual and team level.

As one player commented: "If you don't know your strengths, you won't know why you fail."

3. Give you one exercise for each role, so you can mind the gaps

Teams don't often balance just like that, and sometimes it's difficult to see where Team Role contributions might be missing, because we don't know what we don't know. If the logic puzzle doesn't look appealing to anyone, it might suggest that the team is missing a Monitor Evaluator. In real terms, this might mean that ideas are put forward and pursued without due consideration of their merit. Of course, the roles needed are likely to vary from one

team to the next, depending on what the team is set up to do, but it's important to make Team Role composition work by design, rather than by accident.

4. Showcase the tension between different styles

Some Team Roles need to work alone and others need to bring people together. You might find that the thinking roles (Plants, Monitor Evaluators and Specialists) take themselves off elsewhere to find some quiet thinking space. But not for long. The Shaper needs willing team members to herd into a sheep pen. Blindfolded. And is going to blow a shrill whistle until everyone else comes to take part. Contribute illustrates the complementarity of different roles, but also the tensions that can affect individual performance in the workplace. When it comes to the analysis and feedback afterwards, these points can be useful discussion-starters for exploring how to accommodate different contributions at work.

5. Show you what your colleagues look like stumbling around wearing blindfolds

Because, when all's said and done, that's always good for a laugh.

We've seen Contribute bring people together and transform mediocre teams into high-performing teams. It offers practical learning points that translate readily back to the workplace and make a lasting impact.

To help individuals understand what they have to offer, Contribute comes with nine Belbin Individual Reports (worth £315) free of charge.

Next steps...

Belbin Contribute costs just £495 + VAT + delivery and comes with nine free Belbin Individual Reports worth £315 + VAT. To order a copy, visit www.belbin.com, phone 01223 264975 or email team@belbin.com

A Case Study

We love hearing how the Contribute game can help to bring the Belbin message home through experiential learning. DeeDee Smartt Lynch, based in the USA, writes:

We wanted to let you know how extraordinary it was to use the Contribute game during our workshop.

After a couple of days, Contribute was the capstone of our session, where we pulled everything together. We learned so much from running the exercise, for example:

How on earth – on this remote part of the Naval base – the Resource Investigators managed to find a purple shoe, cauliflower and boiled egg is beyond me, and I consider myself an effective Resource Investigator!

We had identified that there was only one Specialist in the session, but when we tackled the Contribute game, she knocked the butterfly exercise out in minutes on her first try (after an excellent Teamworker gave her the courage in her abilities). It took other groups multiple tries.

We watched the quirky Plant fly through the captions in under five minutes – he made me laugh so hard, I was embarrassed! It was fascinating!

The strongest Shaper insisted that his team complete the sheep-pen exercise (only two teams had time to do it). He said he learned so much from that experiment, it blew him away.

Of course there's more, but I just wanted to highlight what a positive, powerful and valuable decision it has been to invest in and include Contribute in our workshop. These games will be well-used going forward!



Co-operate

Three exercises to help teams communicate and recognise their different contributions.

Perfect for:

- Assessment centres, away days or team building sessions;
- Ice-breakers;
- Identifying how a team copes and communicates;
- New team development;
- Management development.

Co-operate uses three action-oriented exercises which actively illustrate the most important elements of good teamwork. Successful completion of the tasks depends on effective communication, co-operation and decision-making.

Exercise 1: Team Build

The team is asked to complete a series of shapes on different boards, exchanging pieces as they go, without being able to see each other's boards. Ultimately, the exercise can only be completed if they sacrifice short-term individual goals for the sake of the team's achievements.

Exercise 2: Team Rescue

The team is required to form a strategy to rescue a "rocket" within a short timeframe. They must listen for the input of other team members and decide who will be actively involved in the operation.

Exercise 3: Team Write

This exercise is only possible if the team pulls together to work as one. The team must control the writing apparatus supplied to manoeuvre a pen and draw different shapes.

Giving Feedback

Each of the activities draws attention to a different aspect of team dynamics, providing plenty of opportunities for observation and feedback.

Co-operate comes with a facilitator's guide which includes observation and feedback forms so that observed behaviours can be noted for discussion, whether on a one-to-one basis, or as part of a team building day.

Logistics

Each exercise requires a team of between four and eight people. Depending on your requirements, the three exercises can be run simultaneously with three different teams, allowing up to 24 people to take part. Each exercise takes around 20 minutes to complete and can be followed up with feedback and debrief time as required.

Next steps...

Belbin Co-operate costs £595 + VAT + delivery. Add Co-operate to your toolbox today and get your team working. To order a copy, visit www.belbin.com, phone 01223 264975 or email team@belbin.com



Training to help your teams

At Belbin, we understand the importance of delivering practical outcomes, based on rigorous, scientific processes. We also believe that when you choose to expand your knowledge of Belbin, you want something you can take forward and use for real with your colleagues or clients, rather than a certificate growing dusty in a drawer, relating to “something you knew about once”. Perhaps one of our clients put it best when they described Belbin as an ‘evergreen’ – and we want our training to be evergreen too.

Whatever your Belbin training needs, we’ve got them covered.

Belbin Accreditation

Our in-depth Accreditation course combines theory and practice, giving you the theoretical knowledge needed to become a Belbin expert, and working through practical examples so that you have the confidence to feed back Reports once you’re back at your desk. Once Accredited, our regular meet-ups give you the opportunity to build your Belbin network, keep up-to-date with the latest developments in our research and discover how others are using Team Roles to advantage in their businesses.

We run regular open Accreditation Courses, which means that you learn not just from us, but from like-minded HR and L&D professionals. Take a look at www.belbin.com to see our latest dates.

And once you are Accredited we don’t just leave you to it. You get access to your own exclusive resources, a Belbin Accredited Logo, discounts to use when purchasing Belbin Reports, and access to the Belbin Team whenever you want to run through any Reports, sessions or anything Belbin!

“I’m usually quite critical as I have high standards around training, but this was a fantastic experience.”

“Not only did I understand and absorb Belbin theory and applications, I also gained understanding of myself.”

“Thought-provoking and practical.”





Workshops

Of course, you may prefer to invite us to run a Belbin Team Workshop for you – be it as a one-off session, or a series of sessions combined with 1:1 feedback and coaching. We have experience working with SMEs, multinationals, charities and not-for-profits across the world. We also run workshops especially for Sales Teams, Managers and for those responsible for Recruitment. Whether you would like to focus on conflict resolution, change management, project planning, business development, or helping the team shift from good to great, just contact us to see what we can do!

“It was awesome.”

“I can now take it to a whole new level with the teams I work with.”

“I was pleasantly surprised at how effective and important it will be in our business.”

“Your session hit the mark well yesterday and I thoroughly enjoyed it, thank you.”

‘How to...’ Sessions

Alternatively, why not come along to one of our Belbin ‘How to...’ sessions and discover how versatile the Belbin Team Role model really is. From Reports to games, these sessions are chock-full of ideas for introducing Belbin into your organisation.

“Brilliant session – I feel equipped and motivated! You provided lots of practical tips which were very welcome.”

“Brilliant facilitation – passionate and motivated. Brilliant venue!”

“Excellent! Great Pace and good mix of theory and practical.”

Next steps...

If you are interested in any of our training courses, please get in touch! 01223 264975 or team@belbin.com

Real business improvement with Belbin

From 2015 to 2016, Belbin China collaborated with Sanofi to analyse the Team Role behaviours of Regional Sales Managers (RSMs) and their teams, using



performance criteria to define success. The initial findings from the study were that RSMs with at least one strong Team Role (one Team Role for which they scored in the 80th percentile or above) were likely to be more successful than those with no strong Team Roles.

This was just the start. They went on to analyse their RSMs in more detail and were soon able to identify key behaviours that the most successful RSMs had in common.

Overall, Sanofi was able to identify patterns and discover the behavioural dynamics that make their teams tick – a function of their organisational culture and their company’s unique needs. By integrating Belbin into their working practices, Sanofi were able to harness the power of Team Roles to drive real business results.

Working closely with Sanofi, Belbin China were able to provide the ‘Big Data’ which has helped Sanofi China make a real difference with their Sales Teams. This was so successful, this case study helped them to be included in Training Magazines Top 125 Companies:

“The Breakthrough BELBIN Team Leadership program at Sanofi (China) Investment Co., LTD., applies BELBIN Team Roles to enable managers to enhance self-awareness, better understand others, and improve team construction and composition. Participants start with BELBIN Team Roles assessment, followed by a two-day BELBIN workshop, with a Team Development Plan designed and implemented and supported by data analysis on program effectiveness.

The Breakthrough BELBIN Team program facilitates leaders to assess a current team’s strengths and weaknesses against its business goal, develop members and the team as a whole, and enhance the overall team’s performance. Participants demonstrated a 2.3% higher sales growth rate in 2016 versus non-participants.”

Contact us to find out how you can replicate this success!



Don't fear your weaknesses – embrace them!

From the desk of our Head of Belbin GetSet (Schools and Colleges) – Lisa Ward



Over the past year, I have been visiting several schools on behalf of Belbin GetSet, to assist on enterprise days and run soft-skills workshops. Often, the students I see are classed as under-achieving. As a tool for identifying and projecting strengths, Belbin GetSet is ideally suited for these groups. Many of them suffer with low self-esteem and will readily tell you they are not very good at anything! So, in terms of raising aspirations and confidence, Belbin GetSet really does help, and it is a wonderful thing to see.

Recently, I was asked to present on Belbin GetSet with the theme of 'Leadership' at Wells Cathedral School in Somerset, at a Head of Schools Conference for independent schools in the South West.

Entering their final year of further education and, having just been nominated as head boys and girls, this group of 41 students were already assertive, confident and academically on-track. Expectations were high for them all to go on to achieve great things. So, a totally different audience.

We started by addressing how being a great team player can make you an even better leader. We discussed and ran exercises on how self-awareness can be key in being a successful and respected leader. We looked at their Belbin GetSet profiles, discussing the nine Belbin Team Roles, highlighting how important it is not to box ourselves into one or two roles (we are way too interesting and too unique for that!) but to learn from our preferred behaviours and especially our 360-degree feedback from others – do our

peers see the same behaviours we feel we project? We spoke about recognising these behaviours in others and using that information in their leadership roles as head boys and girls, to help understand and empathise with people.

So far, so good. Everyone was engaged and interested. Then I brought up weaknesses... "Because we all have them," I cheerily said. "They are the flipside to our strengths."

Blank faces. Oh.

“Who thinks they have weaknesses?” I asked. A few hands tentatively went up.

Hmmm...

“Who’s afraid to talk about their weaknesses?” I continued.

Every hand in the room shot up.

And that got me thinking. This is perhaps where we can help these bright young people the most. The pressure on any student these days is immense: hitting targets; ticking all the right boxes; performing well in exams. But when the expectations rise ever higher, failure is not an option in their eyes, and weakness is not part of their language. But of course, making mistakes and messing up at various points of our lives is the only way we learn, improve and grow as human beings.

“Everyone has weaknesses,” I said. “Don’t fear them – embrace them!” Because identifying them and managing them positively can be very powerful and effective in the workplace. We can’t be good at everything and we can’t do everything on our own. That would make the world a very dull place, wouldn’t it?

“I can do things you cannot; you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things.”

– **Mother Teresa**

Belbin GetSet is a 15-minute questionnaire culminating in a workbook full of personalised advice and guidance for young people aged between 14 and 19. It helps them identify their strengths, project them in a positive way and manage their weaknesses effectively.

The Belbin GetSet programme also offers a variety of free resources such as lesson plans and 45-minute soft-skills modules.

Next steps...

If you would like further information about Belbin GetSet, please call one of the team on 01223 264975 for an informal chat, or visit www.belbingetset.com.

Belbin and Internships

Internships provide the ideal opportunity to enable people entering the workforce to discover and develop their strengths in their chosen career. Belbin GetSet is a perfect fit, since it analyses preferred behavioural styles and offers personalised guidance and advice for those with little or no previous experience of work.

Interns at a Fortune 500 company – one of the largest utility companies in the US – underwent the Belbin GetSet process as part of a three-month internship.

The interns were introduced to Belbin Team Roles via the Belbin DVD, ‘Fire Toast and Teamwork’. They received their Belbin Reports, took part in a practical teambuilding activity, and then completed a mapping exercise to better understand how individual Team Roles (and any voids or surpluses) played out during the activity.

The organisers commented that using Belbin was beneficial to the interns and that the students seemed to find value in it.

When asked about their experience of Belbin as part of their internship:

“ I felt that the report generated by my friends who took the survey was very useful as it provided insight about how I functioned in a team without my own biases. ”

100% agreed or strongly agreed that an understanding of Belbin enabled them to use their strengths more often during their internship.

100% said that understanding their Belbin strengths enabled them to work more effectively in a team.

100% said that they would recommend Belbin to others embarking on an internship.

85% agreed that use of the Belbin Observer Assessments improved their self-awareness and understanding of how others see their strengths.

77% said that understanding Belbin strengths improved their individual performance.

62% said that discovering Belbin had increased their engagement at work.

Half of respondents mentioned the inclusion of Observer Assessments as the most useful aspect of the Belbin Reports. One person stated:

“I felt that the report generated by my friends who took the survey was very useful as it provided insight about how I functioned in a team without my own biases.”

Others mentioned: the accuracy of the report; the usefulness of the tips for interview, and the opportunity to understand the Team Role tendencies of others in the team, since it enabled them to learn how to develop and lead diverse team members.

Belbin GetSet is designed especially for students, interns and others who might be new to the workplace, since it draws on experiences of teamworking outside the world of work and focuses on exploring Team Role behaviours as the individual’s career progresses.

Belbin GetSet helps people entering the world of work by:

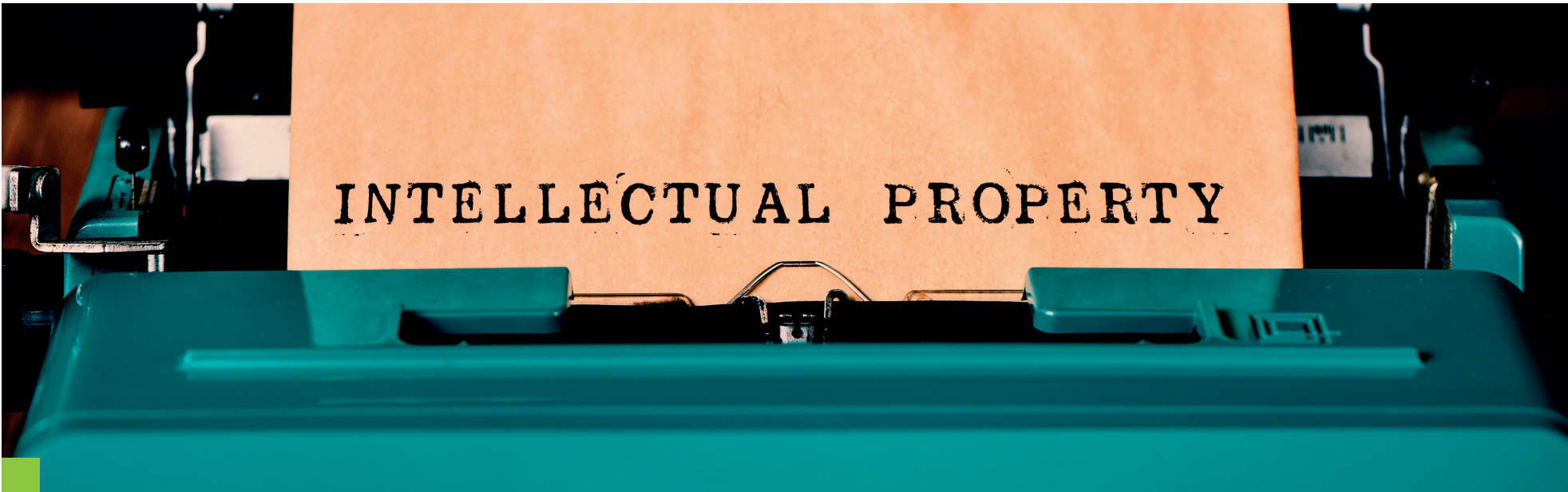
- Enabling them to discover and cultivate strengths
- Building self-confidence
- Promoting positive self-presentation
- Increasing self-knowledge and understanding of individual differences
- Enhancing personal development
- Helping to articulate preferred working and learning styles

Belbin GetSet also...

- Uses professional language and concepts in preparation for the workplace
- Assist individuals in creating a personal statement which can form a valuable resource for placement, performance reviews and ongoing personal development
- Prompts individual to identify supporting examples of key workplace behaviours
- Introduces the concept of peer review and encourages individuals to act on feedback
- Identifies the benefits and potential pitfalls of teamworking
- Offers advice on where they might fit within a team and how to work effectively with others

Belbin GetSet gives employers the tools to place newcomers effectively within a team or organisation, uncover their strengths and manage their ongoing learning and development.

For more information on using Belbin with students and interns, please contact us today.



Getting copyright... right

Have you ever completed a Belbin questionnaire and added up the scores to find out your top Team Roles, or encountered a spreadsheet matrix? The old self-scored, eight-role questionnaire originates from Meredith Belbin’s book – *Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail (1981)*. It was intended for the purchaser of the book to gain an idea of the Team Roles. Any reproduction, amendment or distribution of the questionnaire is a breach of Belbin’s copyright, but there are many other reasons why using a self-score Belbin questionnaire is not a good idea. Here are a few:

- No Team Role advice is offered. By contrast, official Belbin Reports provide personalised advice and guidance on how to play to your strengths, manage your weaknesses and announce your preferred working styles.
- There is no Specialist Team Role. Meredith Belbin’s original research investigated team behaviours using a business simulation. Once Dr Belbin began using the Belbin questionnaire in industry, he discovered a ninth cluster of behaviours (focused on specialised skills and knowledge) which was not apparent from his original research.
- The self-scoring version is not properly normed. It uses the original data sample of 100 managers who completed the test in the 1970s. Today, we norm results for Belbin Reports using an international norm-base of more than 9000 individuals.

- There is no Observer input, or feedback from colleagues. Since Belbin measures behaviour rather than personality, obtaining peer feedback is crucial to understanding how our behaviour at work impacts others, and presents numerous learning opportunities.

There is only one sanctioned method to find out your Team Role preferences, and that’s to complete a questionnaire online (via the Belbin Online Account) and receive a Report directly from our system. Anything else just isn’t the real Belbin.

We want you to have the best experience when using Belbin. We don’t want you to form a team or recruit an individual based on an incomplete picture of their Team Roles. We hope that your organisation wouldn’t want that either. If you think you’ve been using something that isn’t a sanctioned Belbin questionnaire, then please do get in touch with us and we’ll be happy to advise and set you off on the right path.

Unfortunately, if we discover cases of infringement which haven’t otherwise been brought to our attention, we have to take legal action, with over 400 successful cases to date.

Belbin is an immensely powerful tool when used correctly – please help us to help you and your teams.

If you would like to experience THE REAL BELBIN, just fill in your details below and send this coupon to:
Belbin, 3-4 Bennell Court, West Street, Comberton, Cambridge, CB23 7EN.

Name:.....
Organisation:
Email address:.....

- ☐ Yes, please – I would like to try the REAL Belbin.
- ☐ Yes, please keep me up-to-date with all things Belbin.



We will send you a link to the most up-to-date Belbin Self-Perception Inventory and Observer Assessments. Once your questionnaires have been completed, you will be sent your Belbin Individual Report (worth £35 + VAT) via email free of charge. If you can’t find a post box or haven’t got a stamp to hand, please email team@belbin.com with the code: BeLRealRep.

Only one FREE Belbin Report per organisation. Limited stock, first 100 returned coupons/emails ONLY.