

# Can Belbin Team Roles change?

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## Can Team Roles change?

Belbin measures behaviour, rather than personality. Whilst the two are interlinked (personality is one of many factors which influences behaviour), personality remains fairly static, whereas behaviour isn't so fixed. Since behaviour changes, we can expect our Team Roles to change as well.

The way you contribute and interact at work can change and develop throughout your career, in response to a number of external stimuli. In fact, it's often beneficial to adjust your behaviour in both the short- and long-term to meet specific needs. Many interview processes and assessment centres include measures of someone's ability to cope with – and adapt to – different circumstances. As someone's job role evolves, certain behaviours may no longer be required, so other Team Roles (so-called “manageable roles”) might be cultivated in their place.

### “A snapshot”

Belbin is a snapshot – a recording of a set of behaviours at a particular time. Using Belbin regularly can: aid personal development; enable teams to work more effectively together; help to resolve conflict within the team, and address difficulties someone might be experiencing at work. Team Roles provide a framework to discuss what's working and what's not, whether for an individual in a particular function, a working environment, or the organisation as a whole.

## Why might Team Roles change?

### 1. Experience and maturity

We've observed that those who are new to the workforce tend to be less definitive about their preferences. As they grow in confidence at work and gain self-knowledge, they are likely to find that their behavioural “identity” becomes more established, with their preferred roles becoming more pronounced.

### 2. A new job

A change in functional role can bring out different behaviours. For example, promotion from a process-oriented role to management might require a shift in focus from organising tasks (Implementer) to organising people (Co-ordinator). An Implementer with Co-ordinator as a manageable role might cultivate their Co-ordinator behaviours in order to fulfil the new role.

### 3. The team has changed

If someone leaves the team, it may create a Team Role “void”, which someone else has to fill. Likewise, if a new person joins the team – perhaps a strong example of a Resource Investigator – others who had been “covering” this Team Role territory might find that their roles shift to accommodate the newcomer.

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## 4. Aspirations and cultural considerations

If someone aspires to play a certain Team Role, they can maximise their Team Role strengths accordingly and “practise” the role until it comes more naturally. If a particular combination of roles is viewed in the organisational culture as advantageous for career progression, for example, individuals will begin to follow the trend and work on building those particular strengths.

## 5. Role learning

Understanding your Belbin Team Roles – and the roles of those around you – can change the way you behave. As you learn how to maximise your strengths and manage your weaknesses, your contributions are likely to become stronger and more defined.

### How much are Team Roles likely to change?

Since personality underpins behaviour, we tend to have a natural affinity for some roles over others. Manageable roles may come to the fore, but it’s unusual to see a complete reversal of Team Roles.

If Team Roles do change considerably from one occasion to the next, it is worth collecting Observer Assessments (Belbin’s 360-degree feedback) to corroborate the individual’s own view with those of colleagues.

### When was the last time you received a Belbin Report?

Have your Team Roles changed?  
Find out [here](#).

**So next time someone asks 'What are your Team Roles?' remember that life/work changes. You might have too.**

### Next Steps

This is a frequently asked question! If you are regularly working with teams, or coaching managers, come along to our Introduction to Belbin Session which will give you all the top tips and practical advice you need!

Call us on 01223 265075 or email [team@Belbin.com](mailto:team@Belbin.com) for more information.

