

SELF- AWARENESS AND REMOTE WORKING



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We've been reading a lot about what remote working means for teams and leaders, but what does it mean for you, sitting at your desk (or on your sofa!) wondering what happens now?

Even for organisations who have already embraced remote working in some capacity, having most – or all – of the workforce working from home for the entire working week, without the option of face-to-face interaction, is uncharted territory.

Many employees will be wondering what is expected of them, how best to communicate with their manager and others in the team, and how to spend their day.

What kind of routine is appropriate? Are you expected to be at your desk all the time, or is it flexible, so long as you are handling your workload? What are the new rules for keeping in touch with others? And how do you juggle work alongside the other demands made upon your time, when the boundary between work and home becomes blurred?

At Belbin, we believe that knowing yourself is the starting point

Belbin behaviours aren't just about teamwork. They're a guide to your strengths, your preferred styles of working, your motivations and aspirations, and the areas where you tend to seek help from others.

Understanding these key features of the way you work gives you insights into why you prefer some kinds of work to others, and enables you to manage expectations (your own and others'). A virtual world can present additional challenges to collaboration and communication, so this self-insight is more important than ever.



Create your working environment

Whilst we may not have control over our location, we can still shape our working environment by creating routines and strategies that fit our working styles.

For example, if you struggle when out of a routine, can you create a timetable that will help you to organise your day? Are you someone who seeks out interaction and would struggle with isolated working? If so, can you arrange regular times to meet online with colleagues to discuss your projects or relevant issues? Do you enjoy thinking time but tend to procrastinate? If so, what strategies can you deploy to ensure that ideas turn into actions?

You and your team

Some people find it easier to prioritise than others, just as some find it easier to keep to deadlines or keep things organised. As we adjust to new ways of working, it's more important than ever to understand the strengths of others in the team, so that we know the resources around us and how we can best help others. In turn, knowing and articulating our Team Roles to others within the team helps us to understand the impact our behaviours have on others.

Once you have received your Belbin Individual Report based on your own perception, the next step is to ask for input from those you work with (called Observer Assessments) so that you can get a rounded view of how others understand your contributions. Without Observer Assessments, you are working in another kind of isolation when it comes to your behaviours, because you may be aspiring to one role while others see talents of which you may be unaware.

Unleash your potential

A change of environment might lead us to work in different ways. We might be required to think of innovative solutions to problems, cover for colleagues who are unavailable or take on different kinds of work. Fortunately, although we all have our strengths or preferred ways of working, we also have a set of behaviours called 'manageable roles'. These are latent strengths which can be called upon when needed and cultivated. The current upheaval to our working lives is a great opportunity to take a leap outside our comfort zone and discover and develop talents we didn't know we had.

When things go wrong

Alongside the opportunities, virtual working presents new challenges. Virtual communication can be more difficult without the nuances of tone or cues from body language. In addition, so-called 'attribution error' is more common with remote working. If someone is out of the office, we might assume that they are busy in a meeting or with a client. However, if a remote worker is unavailable, we are likely to be less charitable in attributing a reason, and deduce that they aren't 'putting in the time'.

Some may struggle to find their motivation when working alone. Others may find themselves working at different times or may feel unable to 'switch off' with phones and laptops pinging away nearby. All of this can lead to burnout, so it's crucial to set your individual boundaries in light of the way you work and the most common difficulties you encounter in your working life. If you can predict how you're likely to respond to different situations, you'll be one step ahead in forestalling problems.

Set yourself up for success

It's crucial for you and your manager to communicate expectations clearly. If you're fortunate enough to have a strong working relationship with your manager already, it's likely to be easier to change tracks over to virtual working. If not, using a common language to explore strengths and potential weaknesses is a great first step.

The language of Belbin Team Roles helps us to identify and articulate our contributions more clearly, and also to discuss the difficulties we encounter, in dispassionate terms. What's more, your Belbin Individual Report is

a practical tool, offering advice and guidance to help develop strategies for more effective working. And once your manager has completed their own Belbin, you can take the opportunity to analyse the relationship with our Working Relationship Report, which compares the two sets of data and points up some areas for discussion. This can be a great way to address new challenges (or even problems that preceded remote working) through a new lens.

ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN YOUR BELBIN JOURNEY?
THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME.
CONTACT US. TEAM@BELBIN.COM

