



KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

AND **BELBIN**[®] TEAM ROLES

There are nine Belbin Team Roles – nine clusters of behaviour identified in Dr Belbin’s research as being useful to facilitating team progress.










For each Team Role, there are pros and cons to their potential approach to knowledge management. We can use this knowledge to prepare individuals for sharing knowledge, devise appropriate KM strategies and assemble Communities of Practice (COP) that represent diverse cognitive and behavioural approaches.

ON THE PLUS SIDE...

	Resource Investigator	Ideal networker with plenty of useful contacts outside the organisation, so will prevent a KM team from becoming too inward-looking. Sees reconnaissance as fun and is keen to share knowledge and resources with others.
	Teamworker	Keeps the team connected to one another, elicits tacit knowledge naturally and spreads useful information throughout the team. Provides morale and emotional support. Likely to enjoy organising KM social and networking events.
	Co-ordinator	Appreciates the importance of knowledge-sharing for the organisation. Likely to have a good grasp of individuals’ strengths and who knows what. Seeks to foster the right chemistry so that the team can optimise results.
	Plant	Has a natural curiosity. Thrives on asking questions and thinking about how things might be done differently. Will keep KM initiatives on their toes.
	Monitor Evaluator	Respected for objectivity and ability to assess and prioritise options. Likely to be trusted as vital filters, validating promising ideas and information on behalf of the team.
	Specialist	Subject matter expert with encyclopaedic knowledge of a particular area. Willing to learn more and share knowledge about a particular subject and will build relationships with other team members as a result.
	Shaper	Goal-oriented, so will ensure that KM initiative does not degenerate into a talking shop with no tangible business results. Has drive and energy to promote KM and to spur others on when commitment begins to flag.
	Implementer	Knows the organisation best, and understands which existing processes work well and which new ones are feasible. Brings clarity, structure and common sense to KM discussions and possesses the organisational skills to ensure that actions follow those discussions.
	Completer Finisher	Their accuracy, attention to detail and commitment to high standards are invaluable for collating, categorising and retrieving required knowledge. They are also well placed to ensure the ongoing relevance and cogency of knowledge bases.

There is only one sanctioned method to discover your Belbin Team Roles and those of your team or colleagues: purchasing a Belbin Individual Report.

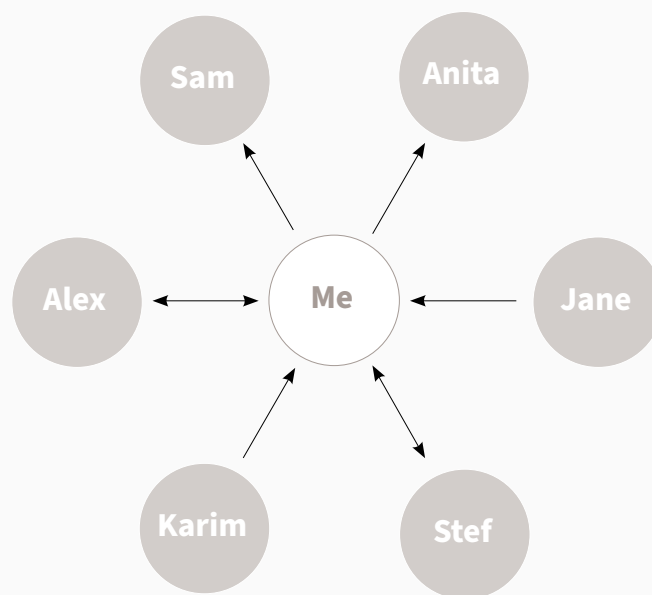
ON THE DOWNSIDE...

<p>Ideas are likely to be fed back to the team indiscriminately, which could result in overload. Best to avoid the process-oriented parts of KM, since they are likely to lose interest.</p>	<p>Resource Investigator</p>	
<p>May struggle to decide which ideas are best to keep, especially if ownership of ideas rests with fellow team members, since they tend to avoid conflict that upsets the team's balance.</p>	<p>Teamworker</p>	
<p>May place more value on tacit (rather than explicit) knowledge, owing to 'hands-off' style. Tends to focus on experience. May over-delegate KM responsibilities.</p>	<p>Co-ordinator</p>	
<p>Likely to have a high personal attachment to the knowledge they have originated or developed. Unlikely to be sufficiently critical of their own ideas.</p>	<p>Plant</p>	
<p>Built-in immunity to enthusiasm might cause friction with others (particularly Plants and Resource Investigators), causing them to regard KM initiatives in a negative light.</p>	<p>Monitor Evaluator</p>	
<p>May provide a greater depth of information than others require, which can result in confusion or alienation. May also be territorial about subject area and therefore reluctant to share knowledge for fear that it compromises their expert status.</p>	<p>Specialist</p>	
<p>Might value explicit, over tacit, knowledge, because it is more tangible. May be inclined to rush parts of the process in order to meet deadlines.</p>	<p>Shaper</p>	
<p>Likely to become dissatisfied in a KM environment where processes are perceived as inefficient or not relevant to the organisation in question. Likely to be resistant to change.</p>	<p>Implementer</p>	
<p>Reluctance to delegate can cause difficulties, since knowledge sharing requires a high degree of delegation to ensure everyone's contribution is maximised.</p>	<p>Completer Finisher</p>	

Practical Exercise: Tapping into the team's informal/ tacit knowledge network

Each of us has a tacit knowledge network – a network of colleagues and other individuals with whom we share knowledge. A useful exercise is for each individual in a team to identify those in their knowledge network and indicate whether information is 'pushed' (i.e. the individual actively shares knowledge with the other without prompting) or 'pulled' (the individual is called upon by others to share information). In many cases, relationships will contain both 'push' and 'pull'.

Example:



Once the individuals and the types of sharing have been identified, Belbin Working Relationship Reports can be used to help people understand how to make the most of each relationship, to share and elicit knowledge most effectively. This moves beyond the 'know what' to the 'know how', and sets up knowledge sharing as a flow, and part of a working relationship, rather than a sterile process or proscribed event.

- When used in the context of knowledge management, this report can give rise to fruitful discussions:
- How and why others do others in the team communicate information? How does their Team Role make-up influence what they say and how they say it?
- What do an individual's Team Role preferences indicate about the way they obtain explicit and tacit information, and how they might record or share what they know?
- Where might clashes might arise between individuals sharing knowledge?
- What are the opportunities and potential problems? How might they be overcome?

Building Communities of Practice (COP)

Communities of Practice (COPs) are informal, cross-sectional groups with a passion for a particular subject or practice, and are essential to sustainable knowledge management. This diagram shows how individuals might contribute to, and derive benefits from, COPs according to their Team Role styles.





The only sanctioned way of finding out your Belbin® Team Role strengths and weaknesses is by completing the official Belbin® Self-Perception Inventory online, and receiving a Belbin® Individual Report.

Over 3 million Belbin® Reports have been generated worldwide for individuals, managers, teams and organisations.



We can help you every step of the way.

Contact us at [belbin.com](https://www.belbin.com) to start your Belbin® journey.