

# The types of people in groups and teams

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By the end of this session participants will have:

- a better appreciation of the need for different types of people in groups and teams
- the beginnings of a familiarity with Belbin's 9 team role types
- an understanding of their own preferred roles in teamwork

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## Handouts

<a href="#">Task and maintenance roles in groups</a> [TWO]	g951128g.wpd
<a href="#">Teams – the essential features</a> (doers, thinkers, carers) [THREE]	g970807a.wpd
<a href="#">Team types – know them by their slogans</a> (Belbin's 9 types) [NINE]	g970620b.wpd
<a href="#">Belbin's team role theory</a> (strengths and weaknesses of the 9 types)	990723.rtf
<a href="#">Common roles in a work group</a> [TWELVE]	g951127d.wpd
<a href="#">Ready for Change</a> [FIVE]	010218b.rtf

## Team leadership and dynamics

A team needs *leadership* but this does not of necessity mean that it needs a single, all purpose, dominant *leader*. Depending on the task in hand, different individuals may serve as leaders. This is obvious when you realise that sometimes there is the need to:

- draw ideas from the team
- orchestrate discussion and agreement
- win consent when the team is faced with a new challenge
- tell the team what to do in an emergency

When people first gather there tends to be much squabbling and not much clarity (all heat and no light). However, as individuals adjust to each other and form into a smoothly performing team, squabbling gets less and clarity increases (all light and no heat eg the four stage model of team dynamics - Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing). But this is not an inevitable process. The chances of it happening can be greatly increased if the individuals concerned have some appreciation of team roles and team dynamics.

## Mix and Match

Different experts have different ideas about how many team roles there are. More often than not the different typologies can be mapped on to each other. The handouts present us with the following lists. Try mapping them.

### Practical tip on how to 'Map' ideas:

Write the names from the lists on separate sheets of paper using different colored ink for the different lists. You can then put the similar items from the different lists beside each other. How easy or difficult is it to map the different lists on to each other?

- Team Roles and Maintenance roles
- Doers, thinkers and carers
- Coordinator, shaper, plant, resource investigator, companyworker/implementer, monitor evaluator, team worker, completer finisher, specialist
- Initiator, clarifier, information giver, questioner, summariser, supporter, joker, experience sharer, process observer
- Task oriented, people oriented, no-sayer, yes-sayer, regulars, deviants, isolates, newcomers, old timers, climbers, cosmopolitans, locals
- apostle, terrorist, mercenary, dead-wood, loose cannon

No particular list will ever be 'correct' but it helps (a) to appreciate that there is a need for 'different strokes for different folks' and (b) to have a commonly accepted vocabulary of team role types that makes it easier for a particular group of people to talk about team dynamics.

Note: We found that although Belbin mapped on to the 'Doers, Thinkers and Carers' quite easily the 'Common roles in work group' did not. These types were thought to be cross cutting and not as useful. Alison Simpson thought that the 'Ready for Change' chart should be added to the handouts as she had found that several community groups had laughed out loud when they realized how appropriate they were.

# Task and Maintenance Roles in Groups

**Task Roles** These roles help to get the job done. They often appear to need tough and single minded people in them. They relate to the *rationale* (life of the group)

**Maintenance Roles** These roles provide the 'oil' for the machinery. They look after the *emotional* life of the group, help make it work, consider the needs of individuals. They open up the channels of communication.

You need both roles present in a group

## Types of people in Task Roles

<b>Initiator</b>	Start things off; or helps change direction. Initially often the leader.
<b>Clarifier</b>	Takes individual contributions and clarifies them - encourages people to be specific "are you saying that ...", "it seems to me what you are saying is ..."
<b>Information giver</b>	Gives or volunteers to find out certain information. It may relate to the exact structure of the task.
<b>The questioner</b>	Asks fundamental questions about the task of the group. Main factor is the ability to step back from what is going on and challenge assumptions.
<b>The summariser</b>	Does not add anything (or much) but provides the facility of checking what has been achieved. Provides breathing space. Can be a formal role in a group.

## Types of people in Maintenance Roles

<b>The supporter</b>	Provides warmth to individuals "yes, I think that's a good point", "that was really helpful" etc. Non-verbal support - a mistake to see these as non-contributors.
<b>The joker</b>	Allows the group to let off steam.
<b>Sharing experience</b>	"That happened to me" - helps breakthrough to the personal level.
<b>Process observer</b>	Often shows himself when the group gets stuck. Helps unblock group dynamics.

# Teams - the essential features

Source: Honey P (1994) *Teams and Leaders* - video notes. Melrose Film Productions

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## A Team needs to have

- clear, challenging objectives which everyone understands and wants to achieve
- members who are committed by being involved and by talking differences through to a consensus
- members with a variety of different styles that complement one another

## There are three key types of Team members:

<b>DOERS</b>	who are intent on the job that's to be done and give the team its drive and momentum
<b>THINKERS</b>	who have good ideas and reject bad ones
<b>CARERS</b>	who keep the team together, ease tensions, promote harmony and are sensitive about relationships within the team.

A Team needs leadership. This involves someone who wins consent when the Team is faced with a new challenge. Sometimes this might mean telling the Team what to do and sometimes it will involve getting ideas from Team members and orchestrating discussion and agreement. Different people may exercise the leadership role at different times.

# Team Types

## know them by their slogans

**Belbin M (1993) *Team Roles at Work*; Butterworth/Heinemann 0 7506 0925 7**

Belbin is famous for his categorization of types of people in teams. His 9 types are listed below and described in terms of the phrases and slogans which they might use.

<a href="#">Plant</a>	<a href="#">Shaper</a>	<a href="#">Implementer</a>
<a href="#">Resource Investigator</a>	<a href="#">Monitor Evaluator</a>	<a href="#">Completer finisher</a>
<a href="#">Co-ordinator</a>	<a href="#">Teamworker</a>	<a href="#">Specialist</a>

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### Plant

- When a problem is baffling, think laterally
- Where there's a problem, there's a solution
- The greater the problem, the greater the challenge
- Do not disturb, genius at work
- Good ideas always seem strange at first
- Ideas start with dreaming
- Without continuous innovation, there is no survival

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### Resource Investigator

- We could make a fortune out of that
- Ideas should be stolen with pride
- Never reinvent the wheel
- Opportunities arise from other people's mistakes
- Surely we can exploit that?
- You can always telephone to find out
- Time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted

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### Co-ordinator

- Let's keep the main objective in sight
- Has anyone else got anything to add to this?
- We like to reach a consensus before we move forward
- Never assume that silence means approval
- I think that we should give someone else a chance
- Good delegation is an art
- Management is the art of getting other people to do all the work

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## Shaper

- Just do it!
- Say 'no', then negotiate.
- If you say 'yes I will do it', I expect it to be done
- I'm not satisfied we are achieving all we can
- I may be blunt, but at least I am to the point
- I'll get things moving
- When the going gets tough, the tough get going

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## Monitor evaluator

- I'll think it over and give you a firm decision tomorrow
- Have we exhausted all the options?
- If it does not stand up to logic, it's not worth doing!
- Better to make the right decision slowly than the wrong one quickly
- This looks like the best option on balance
- Let's weigh up the alternatives
- Decisions should not be based purely on enthusiasm

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## Teamworker

- Courtesy costs nothing
- I was very interested in your point of view
- If it's all right with you, it's all right with me
- Everybody has a good side worth appealing to
- If people listened to themselves more, they would talk less
- You can always sense a good atmosphere at work
- I try to be versatile

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## Implementer

- If it can be done, we will do it
- An ounce of action is worth a pound of theory
- Hard work never killed anybody
- If it's difficult, we do it immediately. If it's impossible it takes a little longer
- To err is human, to forgive is not company policy
- Let's get down to the task in hand
- The company has my full support

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## Completer finisher

- This is something that demands our undivided attention
  - The small print is always worth reading
  - ‘If anything can go wrong it will’, and as O’Toole said on Murphy’s Law, ‘Murphy was an optimist’.
  - There is no excuse for not being perfect
  - Perfection is only just good enough
  - A stitch in time saves nine
  - Has it been checked?
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## Specialist

- In this job you never stop learning
- Choose a job you love, and you’ll never have to work a day of your life
- True professionalism is its own reward
- My subject is fascinating to me
- The more you know, the more you find to discover
- It is better to know a lot about something, than a little about everything
- A committee is 12 people doing the work on one

**For Fellowship to be right, there must be organisation within diversity:  
clarity in purpose within the strength of diversity. Then does fellowship  
lead to order. (I Ching)**



# Belbin's Team Role Theory

**Source: West M (1994) *Effective Teamwork*; The British Psychology Society**

Based on research with over 200 teams conducting management business games at the Administrative Staff College, Henley, in the UK, Belbin identified nine team types. Almost always people have a mix of roles and will have dominant and sub-dominant roles.

<a href="#">Co-ordinator</a>	<a href="#">Resource Investigator</a>	<a href="#">Team Worker</a>
<a href="#">Shaper</a>	<a href="#">Company Worker/ Implementer</a>	<a href="#">Completer finisher</a>
<a href="#">Plant</a>	<a href="#">Monitor/Evaluator</a>	<a href="#">Specialist</a>

## Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator is a person-oriented leader. This person is trusting, accepting, dominant and is committed to team goals and objectives. The co-ordinator is a positive thinker who approves of goal attainment, struggle and effort in others. The co-ordinator is someone tolerant enough always to listen to others, but strong enough to reject their advice.

The co-ordinator may not stand out in a team and usually does not have a sharp intellect.

## Shaper

The shaper is a task-focused leader who abounds in nervous energy, who has a high motivation to achieve and for whom winning is the name of the game. The shaper is committed to achieving ends and will 'shape' others into achieving the aims of the team.

He or she will challenge, argue or disagree and will display aggression in the pursuit of goal achievement. Two or three shapers in a group, according to Belbin, can lead to conflict, aggravation and in-fighting.

## Plant

The plant is a specialist idea maker characterised by high IQ and introversion while also being dominant and original. The plant tends to take radical approaches to team functioning and problems. Plants are more concerned with major issues than with details.

Weaknesses are a tendency to disregard practical details and argumentativeness.

## Resource Investigator

The resource investigator is the executive who is never in his room, and if he is, he is on the telephone. The resource investigator is someone who explores opportunities and develops contacts. Resource investigators are good negotiators who probe others for information and support and pick up other's ideas and develop them. They are characterised by sociability and enthusiasm and are good at liaison work and exploring resources outside the group.

Weaknesses are a tendency to lose interest after initial fascination with an idea, and they are not usually the source of original ideas.

## Company worker/ implementer

Implementers are aware of external obligations and are disciplined, conscientious and have a good self-image. They tend to be tough-minded and practical, trusting and tolerant, respecting established traditions. They are characterised by low anxiety and tend to work for the team in a practical, realistic way. Implementers figure prominently in positions of responsibility in larger organisations. They tend to do the jobs that others do not want to do and do them well: for example, disciplining employees.

Implementers are conservative, inflexible and slow to respond to new possibilities.

## Monitor evaluator

According to the model, this is a judicious, prudent, intelligent person with a low need to achieve. Monitor evaluators contribute particularly at times of crucial decision making because they are capable of evaluating competing proposals. The monitor

Weaknesses are that they may appear dry and boring or even over-critical. They are not good at inspiring others.

evaluator is not deflected by emotional arguments, is serious minded, tends to be slow in coming to a decision because of a need to think things over and takes pride in never being wrong.

Those in high level appointments are often monitor evaluators.

## Team worker

Team workers make helpful interventions to avert potential friction and enable difficult characters within the team to use their skills to positive ends. They tend to keep team spirit up and allow other members to contribute effectively. Their diplomatic skills together with their sense of humour are assets to a team. They tend to have skills in listening, coping with awkward people and to be sociable, sensitive and people oriented.

They tend to be indecisive in moments of crisis and reluctant to do things that might hurt others.

## Completer finishers

The completer finisher dots the i's and crosses the t's. He or she gives attention to detail, aims to complete and to do so thoroughly. They make steady effort and are consistent in their work. They are not so interested in the glamour of spectacular success.

Weaknesses, according to Belbin, are that they tend to be over anxious and have difficulty letting go and delegating work.

## Specialist

The specialist provides knowledge and technical skills which are in rare supply within the team. They are often highly introverted and anxious and tend to be self-starting, dedicated and committed.

Their weaknesses are single-mindedness and a lack of interest in other peoples' subjects

# Common Roles in a Work Group

Source: Gross B M (1968) *Organisations and their Managing*: Free Press, New York

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The following list of roles which people tend to act out in groups is based on that of Gross (1968) . It is interesting to compare it with such lists stemming from other observers/theorists.

<b>Task-oriented individuals</b>	Those who predominantly try to get the job done and get some output from the group.
<b>People-oriented individuals</b>	Those who are concerned with interpersonal relationships in the group and who work hard to maintain a good social climate.
<b>No-sayers</b>	Those who consistently oppose most proposals; have thick skins; find fault with virtually everything.
<b>Yes-sayers</b>	Those who try to get round opposition, are enthusiastic and counter the no-sayers.
<b>Regulars</b>	Those who are obviously accepted by the group. These are the 'in people' who accept and project the group's norms & values.
<b>Deviants</b>	Individuals who depart from group values.
<b>Isolates</b>	'Lone Wolves' who often depart even further from expected values and behaviours than the deviants.
<b>Newcomers</b>	New entrants to the group who need to be guided by others; are expected to be seen but not heard.
<b>Old Timers</b>	Those who have been in the group for a long time and know the ropes.
<b>Climbers</b>	Individuals who are commonly expected to get ahead often on the basis of assumed potential rather than any concrete demonstration of ability.

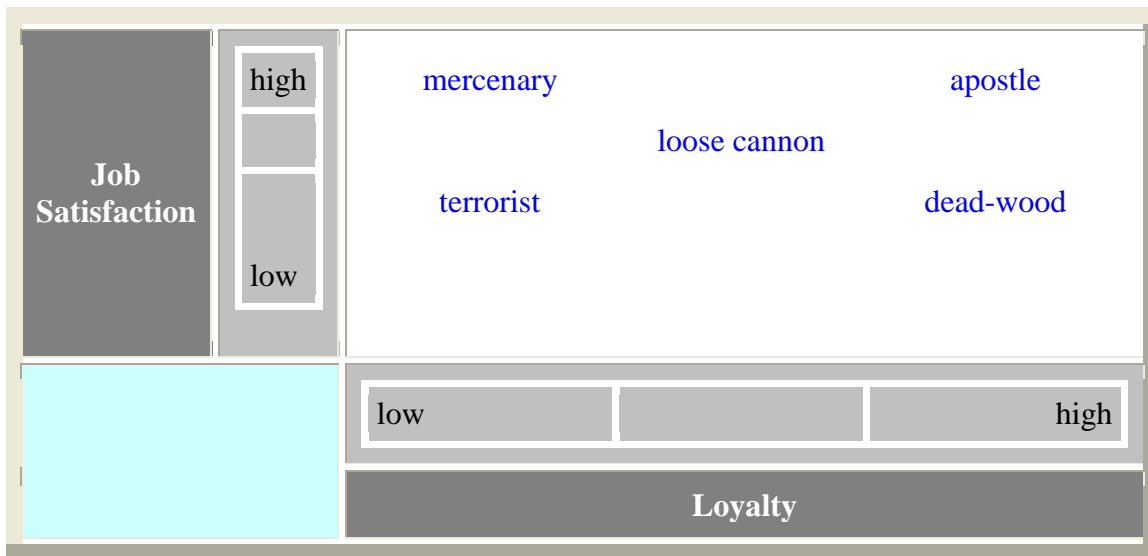
<b>Cosmopolitans</b>	Group members who view themselves as part of a wider professional or cultural community and who often consider the group and its members inferior to this wider community.
<b>Locals</b>	Those who are firmly rooted in the group and in the organizational community.

# Ready for change

*Based on Phil Hawthorn & Robert Joyce (2001) 2 new 2x 2 matrices*

*in Open Business Issue 14; Open University Business School [www.open.ac.uk/oubs-alumni](http://www.open.ac.uk/oubs-alumni)*

The only constant thing is change. Different people respond to change in different ways. The following table suggest five types of response depending on a person's level of job satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation.



<b>Apostle</b>	These people love their work and sing from the organisation's hymn sheet – not very original but very dependable.
<b>Terrorist</b>	These people undermine the organisation by saying bad things behind people's backs – spoilers.
<b>Mercenary</b>	These love the work but are not too worried about the organisation. They will jump ship if pressured.
<b>Dead-wood</b>	These are the moaners and grumblers who have been around too long, don't contribute and refuse to leave.
<b>Loose cannon</b>	Unpredictable people with energy and ideas – entrepreneurs. You need them to make change but you then have to tie them down.

When change is inevitable the organisation should follow the path created by the loose cannon. An apostle can be assigned to each terrorist to cancel his negative impact. The mercenaries will probably leave and the dead wood will moan a lot but follow.

If there are too many terrorists it may be time to wrap up the organisation!

*The model was designed with the private sector in mind.*

*How might it be different in the public sector?*

*How is it different in the community sector?*