Team inventory

5 tips for effective remote working: tip # 2

A team is not a bunch of people with job titles, but a congregation of individuals, each of whom has a role which is understood by other members.

You might choose another instrument to understand your team members better. We work with Belbin, as a simple and profoundly researched tool, focusing on everyone's contribution.

Download a 1-page description of all 9 roles and bring to the light what each of your team members can bring to the table.

What are Belbin Team Roles?

A Team Role as defined by Dr Meredith Belbin as "a tendency to behave, contribute and interrelate with others in a particular way."

The value of Belbin Team Role theory lies in enabling an individual or team to benefit from self-knowledge and adjust according to the demands being made by the external situation.
We talk about nine Team Roles:

Thinking-oriented roles:
- ✓ Plant
- ✓ Monitor Evaluator
- ✓ Specialist

Action-oriented roles:
- ✓ Shaper
- ✓ Implementer
- ✓ Completer Finisher

Social-oriented roles:
- ✓ Co-ordinator
- ✓ Resource Investigator
- ✓ Team-worker

What can be gained by identifying people's Team Roles?

It is difficult to work effectively with people without some reasonable expectations of how they are going to perform. Self and Observer Assessments show how an individual feels and how an individual behaves in a group.

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Observer Assessments provide independent evidence about an individual's Team Roles. A Self-Perception test is only as good as an individual's sense of personal realism. Some people answer in terms of how they would like to contribute rather than how they really behave.

Team Roles develop and mature. These may change with experience and conscious attention. Different Team Roles may come to the fore in response to the needs of particular situations.

A person's overall strongest roles are the ones most appreciated by other people. Develop and play these roles with enthusiasm, because this is where you are likely to make a mark. At the same time take note of your lowest roles and find a strategy to avoid exposure by trying to play them. Try to work with people who are strong in the roles in which you are weak.

What about the reliability and validity of BELBIN®:

Reliability and validity are concepts commonly used in evaluating Psychometric Tests. *Reliability* is a measure of the internal consistency of a test, while *validity* relates to whether a test measures what it purports to measure.

Internal consistency is highest where test items are repeated, but this narrows their focus. Rather than repeating questions, or dealing with items that are virtually identical, BELBIN® seeks to find clusters of useful forms of related behaviour.

For example, the Shaper cluster refers to an individual who is challenging, competitive, hard driving, tough and outspoken. However, that does not mean that everyone who is competitive happens to be outspoken.

Most Psychometric Tests rely on self-reporting. But here the behaviour assumed may not correspond with what others observe. The strength of BELBIN® lies in its emphasis on validity, for its counselling outputs are designed to take account of a consensus on observed behaviour. This can be made evident by looking at how far the Observers agree with each other.

Formal correlations are, however, difficult to calculate as Observers are not required to make any fixed number of responses. Genuine responses are more easily obtained, and are more valuable, when forced choices are avoided. Differences in perception between the self and others provide valuable leads for action.

The demands of jobs also have to be taken into account when assessing validity since the many varied forms of behaviour can be seen as effective or ineffective according to the context. Here the fit between the profile of the individual and the profile of the job plays a key consideration.

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