



Teaching teamwork

Part 1: preparation

Belbin's Team Roles

- **Shaper** – drives work forward and gets things done, has a clear idea of the desired direction of travel
- **Implementer** – also gets things done, looking for ways to turn talk into action and generate practical activity
- **Completer-Finisher** – focuses on completing tasks, and tidying up all the loose ends
- **Coordinator** – manage the group dynamics, often in a leadership role

Belbin's Team Roles/2

- **Team Worker** – helps the team to work effectively by supporting personal relationships
- **Resource Investigator** – gathers external resources and information to help the team
- **Plant** – generates ideas and creative solutions, not all of them practical
- **Monitor-Evaluator** – good at critically assessing ideas and proposals, and at making decisions
- **Specialist** – brings expert knowledge to the group, not always necessary to effective functioning

Task vs. Process Team Roles

- **Task roles** focus on '**what**': the job in hand, and getting it done. The key 'task-focused' team roles are *Shaper, Implementer, Completer-Finisher, Monitor-Evaluator, Plant and Specialist*.
- **Process roles** focus on '**how**', and particularly on the people involved. They include *Coordinator, Resource Investigator, and Team Worker*.
- The most effective team-workers are those who can see what skills are available within the group and **use their own skills to fill any gaps**. *People tend to be either task- or process-focused, rather than a mixture.*

Key Task-Focused Team Skills

Organising and Planning Skills

- Being organised is essential to getting tasks done. *Shapers, Implementers and Completer-Finishers* are all characterised by good organising skills and can usually be relied upon to put in place strong systems for managing projects well.

Decision-Making

- Being able to make decisions is also crucial to moving things forward.
- *Shapers and Monitor-Evaluators* are both good decision-makers.

Key Task-Focused Team Skills/2

Problem-Solving

- Task-focused people are often adept at problem-solving, especially if the problem relates to the task.
- *Plants* look for innovative ideas to solve the problem, and *Implementers* will turn ideas into practical action.
- *Shapers* will see the 'big picture' and the overall plan, making sure that the solution to the problem does not result in a change of direction.

Key Process-Focused Team Skills

Communication Skills

- Good *Coordinators, Team-Workers and Resource Investigators* are good at Verbal Communication, Listening, and Questioning.

Ability to Build Rapport

- These people are also good at developing a sense of harmony within the group. They help to build rapport with others, creating a coherent team.

Persuasion and Influencing Skills

- One of the key areas of process skills is in persuading and influencing. If the group is to come to a shared decision, for example, several members may need to be persuaded of the merits of a particular course of action.

Key Process-Focused Team Skills/2

Facilitation Skills

- Managing a process is basically about facilitating it, or making it easier. Good facilitation skills are therefore vital in team-working, although they are often wrongly seen as crucial only for managing workshops.

Feedback Skills

- Giving and receiving feedback well is essential in any team-working situation. Being able to give clear and effective feedback to others is vital to keep the group process running effectively, and to plan. It also helps to ensure that you do not get irritated and angry with the way that others are behaving. It follows that you also need to be able to receive feedback gracefully, and then act on it calmly.

Key Process-Focused Team Skills/3

Skills in Chairing Meetings

- Group work often involves meetings, whether those are committee meetings or much bigger and more formal meetings. *Skilled Coordinators* often have highly developed skills in chairing meetings and use them in small and large groups alike.

Conflict resolution

- Finally, you have to recognise that there may be situations when you need to deal with difficult people or situations, or even resolve a conflict.

Sources

- <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/team-working.html>
- Belbin, R. M. (1994). *Management Teams. Why They Succeed or Fail*. Butterworth-Heinemann. London