

The use of Belbin Team Types

Within the portfolio of assessment tools offered by Obsidian is the use of the Belbin team types profiling tool. The following case study illustrates one of the uses of the tool.

Introduction

Wipak is a successful packaging company based in North Wales. They have a senior management team of six people who report to the Managing Director.

Obsidian's brief was to run a development centre for the senior team to achieve the following:

- Assess the current level of capability against a given set of competencies. These were
 - Leadership
 - Persuasiveness
 - Negotiation
 - Oral communication (inc presentation skills)
 - Team working
 - Reasoning skills (numerical and verbal)
 - Breadth of vision (business awareness)
- Determine the development needs for the team and the individuals
- Provide input to develop self-awareness and knowledge
- Give opportunities to practice team activities together

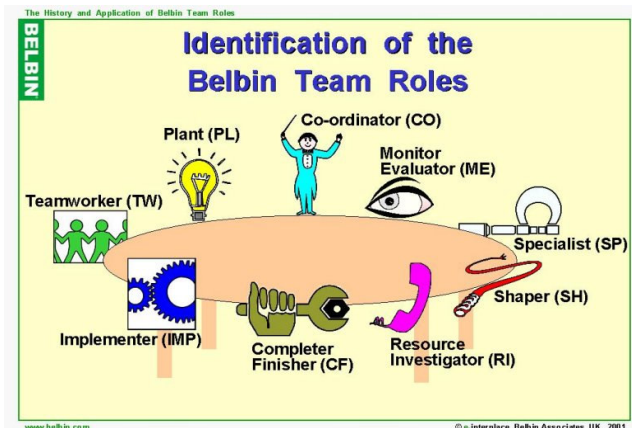
Using Belbin team types

The development centre ran over two days and included a range of activities and personal feedback sessions.

One of these activities used the Belbin team roles and two aspects of the tool were used. The first of these was to ask each person prior to the event to complete a self-assessment questionnaire and then ask at least four observers to complete a questionnaire giving their views of the person.

This produced a report showing the preferred team behaviours which were fed back to the individual concerned.

Secondly, during the development centre, the team were asked to complete the exercise called 'Contribute'. This is an exercise specially developed by Belbin to illustrate the team roles and behaviours in action. It involves the team undertaking several tasks that require the different





attributes of each of the team roles in order to complete them. The team were asked to appoint their coordinator but after that all the decisions on resource allocation, responsibilities and timing were left to them.

During the exercise, which ran for 75 minutes, observers were noting the actions taken and the results achieved. In particular the observations covered:

- How were roles allocated?
- Did individuals understand their brief and what output was required?
- Was sufficient resource allocated to each task?
- How did the coordinator operate to ensure they provided support where required while maintaining an overall view of progress?
- Were people left to struggle?
- Did individuals ask for help or retain responsibility to themselves even when they were not achieving the task?
- Was achievement recognised and celebrated?

Further feedback was given following this exercise both in plenary and individually.

The response from those taking part was highly positive. The awareness of the preferred roles of themselves and each other and how this affects behaviour made the process of working together more effective and the opportunity to actually undertake activity that illustrated this was seen to be most beneficial.

Although this was only one activity in the development centre it was clearly seen by those taking part as an extremely useful activity to promote team awareness, appreciation and team working.

When asked to comment on this activity Managing Director, Phil Wolstenholme said –

“We are a relatively new and young team and it is important that they know themselves and each other. This exercise was searching and proved to be a very accurate reflection of their individual and collective strengths “

