

How to...

Integrate a New Team Member Using Belbin Reports



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How to... Use Belbin Team Role Reports To Integrate a New Team Member

Many companies invest considerable time and effort in the recruitment process, to ensure that the right person is given the job: someone who can work well with the existing team and add value to the organisation.

However, the work doesn't end there – the signed contract is only the beginning. In order for someone to become an engaged and effective member of the new team, effort is needed to welcome and integrate them, to ensure that they understand their new job position and periodically to monitor the success of the integration process.

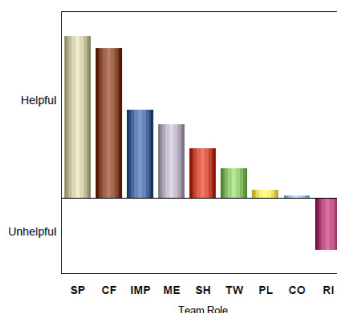
Make your expectations known

You may have a job description which outlines the functional role, but what about the behaviours or Team Role contributions you require? If you have completed a Belbin job report, you can share the "Job Expectations" page with the newcomer and use it as a point of reference and a discussion-starter.

Aeronautical Engineer Job Specification

This report should be given to the person responsible for recruitment or development of the job in question. It highlights the specific requirements of the job in terms of Team Role contributions.

This report is based on Line Manager's Job Requirements Inventory



The job as it is specified requires someone who takes a great pride and interest in a given subject area and has a capacity for professional dedication. The ideal person should show a keen interest in learning more and building up expertise based on experience. The job also demands someone who is intent on producing a high standard of work, keen to ensure that there are no errors and fully aware of the importance of deadlines. A suitable appointee would be one who pays great attention to detail and has good follow-through.

The work entails a fair degree of well-organised planning combined with systematic, efficient practices.

The person appointed should be prepared to work in a restricted environment and to forego spending much time in the world outside.

It has been specified that liaising outside the team could prove detrimental to this job.

The report describes the behaviours required for the job: in this case, Specialist and Completer Finisher roles. It places emphasis on the importance of accurate work and in-depth knowledge. It also comments on the Team Role identified as having characteristics unhelpful to the job – in this case, Resource Investigator. Whilst an outline of the functional aspects of the job may explain **what** has to be done, this Team Role report can help the individual to understand **how** to fulfil the position.

Finding the right fit

It can be daunting for a newcomer to enter an existing team, especially if it is a close-knit unit. Whilst the team may feel more comfortable with those they already know well, cliques and in-jokes can cause a new recruit to feel excluded.

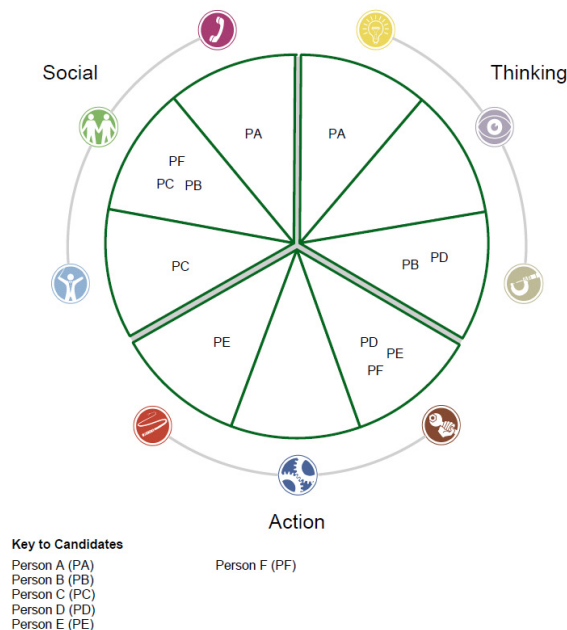
Whilst it may seem obvious to ensure that the newcomer spends time getting to know what work each member of the team does, it is also important for a new colleague to get to know about the Team Roles present in the team and what each person can bring to the party, in order to feel involved in the team's success as soon as possible. The language of Team Roles can come in really useful here.

Team: Exercise CS

Team Role Circle

This report shows the top two Team Role contributions for each team member by showing their initials in the relevant segment of the circle (a key of team members is provided below). The positioning of an individual's initials within a particular segment has no significance.

This report is based on Self-Perception plus Observer Assessments.



This page of the Belbin Team report shows each team member's Team Role contributions, indicated by initials. Imagine that a newcomer (Person A) has been recruited to play Plant and Resource Investigator roles in the team. Let them know this and how they can play the roles to best effect.

For example, you might explain that Plants and Resource Investigators are original, imaginative and keen to explore and develop new ideas. As such, their Team Role behaviours are especially useful at the beginning stages of a project to generate ideas and start creative juices flowing. This identifies something that the newcomer can do to add value to the team and gives them a distinctive part to play in team or project meetings and when interacting with others.










Who do I ask about...?

Whilst the line manager might be the first port of call to resolve practical issues surrounding the job, what happens if the individual needs to know who is best suited to which kind of work? The Team Contributions page gives a little more detail:

BELBIN®**Team: Exercise CS**
Team Contributions

Particular individuals will need to be brought in at the right time if the team is to be fully effective. This report offers suggestions as to who should take on the work of each Team Role within the team. Some roles are shared; some individuals are suggested to play more than one role.

This report is based on Self-Perception plus Observer Assessments.

-  When some new line of thought is desired, ask Person A.
-  When the team needs to exploit new opportunities, turn to Person A.
-  When someone is needed to orchestrate team effort, call on Person C.
-  When there is a need to increase the pace and arrive at decisions, you can count on Person E. Also involve Person D.
-  When the team needs someone to choose between competing options, seek advice from Person C.
-  When arguments break out and team atmosphere needs to be improved, try to involve Person C. Also involve Person B, and Person F.
-  When decisions need to be turned into workable procedures, turn to Person C.
-  When it is imperative that plans are completed to the highest standards, a key part can be played by Person D, and Person E. Also involve Person F.
-  When the team needs someone to research a subject in depth and gain the expertise the team requires, ask Person D.

In this example, the newcomer has been added so that they can see their own contribution and how it fits within the team. For example, if our new recruit (Person A) has a least preferred role of Monitor Evaluator, she should run new ideas past Person C, who can help to analyse dispassionately whether the ideas are workable and identify any potential pitfalls.

It is also useful to identify where any conflicts might arise. If you are adding a new Specialist to the team, is Person D likely to feel protective of his or her subject area and resist intrusion? How will the cluster of Completer Finishers cope with a new Resource Investigator whose approach may be seen as expedient? If adding another Shaper to the team, would they be best working separately from Person D and Person E, so that arguments do not arise?

By recognising your new recruit's strongest suits, identifying any potential Team Role clashes and reassuring them to seek assistance where they feel less confident, you will communicate the message that you perceive that he or she will add value and will help to ensure that the newcomer is engaged with both work and team from the outset.

Foster the right working environment

The individual's Team Role report (specifically, the *Feedback and Development Suggestions* page) can also provide advice as to the working environment which will be most conducive to the newcomer's success.

For example, Person A's report indicates that, since she is "of a creative disposition", she will work best given a "loose framework", but not in an atmosphere where "there is a need for quiet, concentrated work". To help a talkative, enthusiastic, creative individual like Person A to achieve her potential, it would not be appropriate to place her in a quiet, industrious office full of Implementer-Specialists, since this could cause frustration for all concerned!

Individual A
Feedback and Development Suggestions

This report is ideal for handing to and discussing with your line manager. It will provide an insight into your preferred way of working and the environment in which you thrive. Alternatively, this report is also a useful aid for any manager or recruitment specialist who wants to find out more about the individual in terms of their preferred working style and environment.

This report is based on your Self-Perception plus 4 Observer Assessments.

Key points

Individual A is likely to be a driven individual. Ask about any situations in which his desire to meet deadlines has come into conflict with the need to make last-minute checks. Can Individual appreciate the importance of getting things right or is he inclined to be hasty?

Work Environment

Individual should be placed in a fluid and unstructured job where events move swiftly. He would be best suited to a role at the cutting edge of change, which offers a great deal of scope and means working under pressure. Specify work in terms of goals and objectives and then give Individual a free rein. Be generous in offering resources but demand regular reports on progress.

Others have observed that Individual might be best suited to:

- rising to a challenge
- coming up with new business initiatives
- maintaining his independence of thought

On the other hand, Observers have indicated that he might be less suited to work where:


- tolerance of slow progress is important
- responsibilities and work need to be shared with others

Keep an eye on the integration process

It is important to ensure that good intentions don't fall foul of heavy workloads and other distractions. Once an individual has got to know colleagues and worked with them for a longer period of time (we usually recommend at least six months), ask the team to complete Observer Assessments so that you can get a rounded picture of the role the new recruit is playing within the team and how their contributions sit with other team members.

Perhaps two of the most useful pages of the Belbin Self-Perception report in this situation are the *Analysis of your Team Role Composition* and the *List of Observer Responses*.

The *Analysis of your Team Role Composition* page gives an idea of the Team Role behaviours others see. It could be that this varies from the individual's Self-Perception, if he or she is adapting behaviours to meet the needs of the team.












Person X

Analysis of your Team Role Composition

This report provides an overview of Team Roles as seen by yourself and others, in order from most prominent (column 1) to least (column 9). Your overall Team Role composition is not simply an average of each individual line, but a weighted integration of your perceptions and your Observers' views, which takes many factors into account.

This report is based on your Self-Perception plus 6 Observer Assessments.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Person X's Self-Perception	CO	SP	IMP	SH	TW	CF	PL	RI	ME
Observers:									
Observer 1	RI	PL	CO	SP	TW	SH	IMP	ME	CF
Observer 2	RI	SP	PL	CO	TW	ME	CF	SH	IMP
Observer 3	PL	RI	TW	SH	SP	CO	CF	ME	IMP
Observer 4	PL	RI	SH	SP	CO	CF	ME	IMP	TW
Observer 5	RI	SP	ME	PL	IMP	TW	SH	CO	CF
Observer 6	RI	PL	SP	TW	SH	ME	CO	CF	IMP
Observers' Overall Views	RI	PL	SP	SH	TW	CO	ME	IMP	CF
Your Overall Team Role Composition	PL	SP	RI	SH	CO	TW	IMP	ME	CF
									

Your observers reached quite different conclusions to your own in terms of Team Role preferences. There will inevitably be some compromise, but if you feel strongly that you have strengths which have not yet been uncovered, it is up to you to declare your preferences in these areas. Alternatively, you may want to focus on cultivating those Team Role strengths which others see in you.

This comment looks at the consistency between the Observers' Overall Views and your Self-Perception. It does not take into account the level of agreement between the Observers themselves.

When exploring the report with the newcomer, look at:

The level of agreement between Observers – do they see different behaviours? Are there any obvious reasons for this? For example, does the newcomer adopt different behaviours with managers and colleagues? Does he or she play different roles when they would otherwise be lacking?

The level of agreement between the individual's Self-Perception and the Observers – does the individual seem to be making a Team Role sacrifice or is there a Team Role strength which is not being played or recognised? Would the individual like the chance to try playing different Team Roles within the team and is this a possibility?

Whilst this analysis can give an indication of perceived Team Role contributions, it doesn't necessarily tell you whether the individual is playing the role to best effect or which behaviours are useful to the team. The *List of Observer Responses* can help to provide a fuller picture.

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Person X

List of Observer Responses

When observers complete an Observer Assessment, they can tick or double-tick adjectives which they think apply to you. This report shows the ticks received for each word, in descending order. Words which denote your associated weaknesses are shown in *italics*.

This report is based on 6 Observer Assessments.

creative	8	reliable	1
outgoing	8	<i>procrastinating</i>	1
helpful	7	<i>engrossed in own area</i>	1
confident and relaxed	6	<i>uninvolved with specifics</i>	1
imaginative	5	<i>impatient</i>	1
seizes opportunities	5	tough	0
motivated by learning	5	perfectionist	0
inquisitive	5	hard-driving	0
<i>impulsive</i>	5	territorial	0
willing to adapt	5	sceptical	0
free-thinking	4	over-talkative	0
keen to impart expertise	4	over-sensitive	0
outspoken	3	manipulative	0
<i>inconsistent</i>	3	<i>inflexible</i>	0
eccentric	3	<i>frightened of failure</i>	0
self-reliant	3	<i>confrontational</i>	0
competitive	3	persevering	0
inventive	2	meticulous	0
enterprising	2	diplomatic	0
encouraging of others	2	realistic	0
analytical	2	disciplined	0
efficient	2	perceptive	0
caring	2	conscious of priorities	0
dedicated to subject	2	methodical	0
original	1	<i>resistant to change</i>	0
shrewd	1	<i>reluctant to allocate work</i>	0
impartial	1	<i>over-delegating</i>	0
challenging	1	<i>oblivious</i>	0
studious	1	<i>fussy</i>	0
<i>restricted in outlook</i>	1	<i>fearful of conflict</i>	0
<i>absent-minded</i>	1	accurate	0
broad in outlook	1	<i>unenthusiastic</i>	0
consultative	1	<i>unadventurous</i>	0
practical	1	<i>pushy</i>	0
logical	1	corrects errors	0
persuasive	1	<i>indecisive</i>	0

With this report, it is useful to look at:

The top five words – do these build up an accurate picture of the individual in question? Are there any surprises?

The distribution of words denoting strengths and associated weaknesses (the latter are shown in *italics*) – are there any prominent weaknesses which the individual could be helped to manage?

It is important to repeat Team Role analysis with any team, as things can change over time. Individuals can adapt their behaviours to meet the changing dynamics of working relationships and developing needs of the team, and the team's own purpose could change significantly. Whatever challenges a team may face, Belbin Team Roles can provide insights to help people work more effectively together.