Management Teams: Why they succeed or fail
(R. Meredith Belbin)

The Co-ordinator (Chairman)

Provides leadership by co-ordinating the efforts and contributions of the team members. ... This is often a fairly subtle form of leadership which consists of encouraging contributions from others [Belbin81]." In other words this is the type of person who displays good leadership qualities that make them a good chairperson. It is important to note that this is a "personality type" or a role that someone naturally plays; it is best if this person is also the formal leader of a team but they can still play this role if they are not the formal leader.

The Shaper (Driver)

Provides leadership by directing and controlling team members. This type of person exerts a strong influence on how the team operates. This type of person tends to push a team towards its goals. They are good at getting things done, but can overwhelm other team members. Again, this person may not be the actual formal leader of a team but without diplomacy their characteristics can alienate the formal leader.

The Completer (Finisher)

Is the type of person who pays close attention to detail and follows-up on unfinished tasks. They tend to generate a sense of urgency within a team and are good at keeping a team on schedule.

The Implementer (Company Worker)

Is good at accomplishing detailed and practical outcomes. They can be trusted with the responsibility of implementing group decisions. They are good at taking ideas and plans and turning them into practical procedures.

The Monitor-Evaluator

Is good at evaluating ideas and suggestions. They tend to be objective and good at analysing problems and evaluating alternatives. They are commonly referred to as 'devil's advocate.' It is important for this type of person to tactfully point out problems and not to be overly critical of the suggestions of others.

The Plant (Originator)

Is the 'ideas person' of the team. They are good at generating ideas to deal with problems confronting the team. They tend to work best when focusing on major issues, rather than fine details.
The **Resource Investigator**

Acts as a source of information and ideas. They are good at developing contacts with people outside of the team who may be useful to the team. They usually have a set of contacts and are continually expanding that set. They will usually make use of their contacts without prompting from the team.

The **Team Worker (Supporter)**

Helps to maintain group harmony and team spirit. They are good at improving communication within a team and drawing people into discussions. This is an important role within a team but because a lot of their work takes place in the background it is easy to not appreciate the value of these people.

The **Specialist**

Provides knowledge or skills that are in rare supply. In commercial settings they tend not to be full team members; they are more often brought in to deal with specific issues or problems. This is not so much a personality type as it is a role a person can play within a team. The specialist role does not affect the group dynamics of a team directly. Thus a team can work successfully without a specialist. There are personality traits and actions associated with a specialist, which allows Belbin to identify this type of person in his profile test. A specialist tends to be single-minded and independent, qualities that allow them to gain their special skills.

Belbin's research indicates that all roles, except the specialist, are needed in successful teams. Care needs to be taken regarding the co-ordinator and shaper roles. Both of these roles are leadership roles so their formal positions within the team need to be well defined. The people who play these roles need to work closely together to ensure the team does not split into factions. To avoid leadership disputes it is best to have only a single co-ordinator and shaper in a team. In some situations it may be best to have only a co-ordinator or a shaper and not both, if the available people who play these roles are likely to cause conflict if on the same team. It is most advantageous to have multiple implementers and team workers in a team...."

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**Bibliography**