

# The Benefits of Becoming Belbin Team Role Accredited

## Situation

A marketing manager asked an internal L&D consultant of a Pharmaceutical Company to run a team session for his eight-person team. Apparently there had been **long-standing 'issues' between two team members**, which had recently flared up again, leading to problems within the wider team.

## Problem

The L&D consultant had encountered Belbin in her previous job and found it useful so she suggested using this model. **The Marketing Manager was sceptical**, since the team had received a Belbin report eighteen months prior as part of a team workshop. The feedback was that nothing much had changed and that the reports (i.e. people's top Team Roles) were wrong.

## Explanation

The consultant contacted Belbin to discuss why this might have been. It transpired **that only Self-Perception had been used**, thus the top Team Roles which emerged were the behaviours individuals believed – or wanted to believe – they exhibited, rather than what others actually observed. It was unsurprising, therefore, that the manager (and other team members) had disagreed with the outcome, even though the individuals had seemed happy with the reports!

## Solution

The L&D consultant decided to become Belbin Team Role Accredited to learn (amongst other things) about: how to position the benefits of using feedback from others (Observer Assessments); where and why conflicts often arise and how to look at the team's behaviours in relation to its business objectives. **She attended a 1:1 course at Belbin HQ in Cambridge** and was able to talk through her particular concerns, whilst learning more about the theory and the reports. She passed the test and proudly used the Belbin Accredited logo.



## Outcome

Armed with her newly-acquired knowledge, she persuaded the Marketing Manager to let her use the Belbin model, but this time with each person in the team providing feedback regarding the behaviour of their colleagues and manager, where applicable.

She based her workshop programme on an outline suggested by Belbin. Prior to the event, she contacted a member of the Belbin team, who talked her through the individual and team reports and discussed some of the exercises she intended to use. She called us after the event to say that the **Marketing Manager had been pleased with the session**. He had told her that the reports incorporating others' feedback had been "far more accurate" and insightful, leading to key learning of how others experienced one's approach.

**Once the focus was on the work and how the team could best achieve its goals, rather than just on how people got on with each other, more positive results were evident.** Team members began genuinely to understand the need for particular Belbin behaviours at different stages of the work and to acknowledge the importance of individuals in the team who exhibited those behaviours. When someone with strong Plant behaviours expressed appreciation for the person who played an Implementer role, and recognised the importance of that role to the team, the others erupted in laughter. These were the two people whose conflict had been creating problems for the whole team!

The L&D consultant recently told us that, eight months after the event, the Marketing Manager considers his team to be working better because of the intervention and has **recommended the approach to other departments**. There are still occasional problems and frustrations, but these are more openly discussed and the **language and understanding of Team Roles has proved vital to avoid things becoming too personal**.

## Feedback

We were delighted when the L&D consultant said that being Belbin Team Role Accredited had given her much more than she had expected. In particular, she appreciated the opportunity to discuss reports, feedback and suggestions with Belbin prior to a team event. As she put it "it was like having a behind the scenes mentor or personal coach" who **"allowed me to shine"** and to "help the team to achieve its potential". What better feedback could we ask for?

To find out how you could become Belbin Team Role Accredited, please contact John O'Boyle at: [info@belbin.ie](mailto:info@belbin.ie) or phone **+353 (0)91 638769**

