

THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD MEANS A WORLD OF TEAMS DO WE WANT EFFICIENT TEAMS? HOW DO WE MAKE THEM?

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Abstract

Meredith Belbin, a British researcher, gained notoriety in the early 1980's through Team Role Theory; his theory gave us a new way to build effective teams. His model is applied by many successful companies worldwide, the model gives us an important lesson on how a team should be formed, what is the best role that a person can fulfil in a team, what are the results of the application of this model and the best way to build a team is to have different categories of personalities to be balanced.

Keywords: team role theory; effective team building; psychological testing in teams

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Introduction. An historical event as an argument

A poorly formed team and an undeserved winner! Napoleon's military campaign in 1815, during the turbulent period of the "100 days war" had begun with a series of military successes. Were the glory days of the French back? After the defeats of that year at Ligny and Quatre Bras (Belgium) administered by Napoleon, the Prussian army retreated. In pursuit of it, Napoleon sent a very strong army led by General Groucy, with over 40,000 men and 104 cannons.

Two days later, the Battle of Waterloo between Napoleon and the British began. Cannons were heard from many miles away, and the Prussians marched to the battlefield against the French and marked Napoleon's great defeat and last battle.

History has it that the officers on Groucy's team were asked to return to the cannons. Instead, the general chose to march in another direction. They kneeled before him and some officers even begged him to choose differently, but the decision within the team had been made. The team was made up of exceptional soldiers, but who did not get along! They were not in harmony with the common goal and made an English general, Wellington, a victorious hero. Unexpected and undeserved. Geniuses can also be wrong. What about today's leaders?

Napoleon gave great importance to the selection of people around him. He is credited with an expression now used in management: "The value of a commander is not in what he does personally, but in the value of the people he knows how to attract as support." He knew how to choose the most extraordinary generals, scholars, the people with the greatest intellectual abilities of the time. He promoted exceptional people. But sometimes that is not enough. Valuable people can give unfavourable results when the team they belong to is unhappy. This was the case with General Groucy, at the time of Waterloo, who made history with a team led by one of the greatest commanders of mankind. One of the great geniuses of mankind was also wrong. Do today's leaders understand the allusion?

1. Working groups can be many, effective teams are harder to build.

It is now said that Maslow's Pyramid has a more didactic value, it has been obsolete for decades. In reality, the individual needs to communicate, to interact, therefore, to assert himself can sometimes matter more than the satisfaction of security or physiological needs.

From Adam and Eve to the present days, the social environment in which man is asserted, emancipated, destroyed, ambitious or unhappy is the team, the group. You could rightly say: anyone can belong to a group, but it is much harder to build a team.

In the cybernetic box of the contemporary reality, the inputs are too numerous, too unpredictable, too overwhelming for us to be able to conceive something significant without a team and especially without well-established teams. One of the fundamental principles of Quality Management refers to

this - Leadership is nothing more than the ability to form and maintain a team that achieves the desired results. The country is not rich or poor, it is well or poorly run – this is a rule that can be extrapolated in all directions.

2. Each with his own role. Team role theory.

Meredith Belbin, a British researcher of the early 1980's, gained notoriety through Team Role Theory. The result of a decade of study and experiences was imposed by the university environment. Currently, more than half of the successful companies in England and many others in the world apply this model in practice.

The role of the team is defined by Belbin as "the specific tendency of a person to behave, contribute and interact with others". Belbin's team has shown that balanced teams, made up of people with different skills, perform better than any other teams.

3. There is no right or wrong role. There are teams.

Belbin also highlighted, through psychological testing, several roles in a team represented by combinations of personalities that act in a certain way in the group. Their number differed slightly depending on the research. Belbin initially identified eight roles, after which he selects another one, the Expert. Other research in the field uses a similar number of roles, to which the declared purpose of the team contributes.

People have qualities and flaws, and in Belbin's model there is no good or bad role, teams must contain different categories to be balanced, avoiding antagonistic, tense situations, focusing on the positive and constructive aspects of activities.

4. Belbin role categories

According to the research, including Belbin's initial ones, some roles have undergone name changes. After a relatively quick test, it is possible to classify the team members into several categories. Not claiming to be a scientific or a detailed approach, but only informative, we present, according to the specific writings, the following roles:

The Coordinator (president). He is mature, preoccupied with the objectives, discovers priorities, does not dominate the discussions.

The Trainer: He is competitive, energetic, aims to win at any cost. The presence of several trainers in a team generates tensions.

The Factory: He is very creative, sometimes solves unorthodox problems. He is the source of ideas. Sometimes he is radical. The presence of several such members in a team generates conflicts.

The Monitor (evaluator): He is cautious, analytical, stops the team from risky acts. But they can be hypercritical and also can put a stop to initiatives and new ideas.

The Implementer (worker): He is loyal, trustworthy, turn strategy into positive actions. But he may also have a narrow vision.

The Resource Investigator: He is the negotiator, open and quick, enthusiastic. But he may have a tendency to lose the momentum and miss / ignore details of the project.

The Teammate: He is adaptable, conciliatory, tending to give unity and continuity to the team. Impartially, he has trouble making important decisions.

The Finisher: he gives attention to details, standards, compliance with schedule and specifications. He is a perfectionist, but he can also be negative in his obsession for arrogating merits and deadlines.

The Expert: He is dedicated to work, empathetic, concerned with professional knowledge and skills that he generously shares in the team.

There is little chance that a person will identify oneself perfectly with a single role, but will certainly be closest to one of them!

Attention! Belbin tests do not hurt! Unfortunately, valuable people can end up in tense teams that often self-consume, but very different people can also be grouped into constructive, productive, exceptional teams. Let's imagine such work teams, classes of students, groups of students or researchers, formed on the advice of a psychologist helped by the results of the BELBIN Tests.

Classifying people into certain categories, not better **than** each other, but who can work better **with** each other!

Would the work of a psychologist matter more than the moods, opinions, "attentions" given to the manager, school principal, chief of staff, or administrator?

The characteristics, the awareness of the team roles that help us understand each other better, explain some behaviors and ways of working and can contribute to the acceptance, the understanding of those around us. With the help of the Belbin Model, experts say, we can better understand and process information about ourselves and other team members.

It seems that there are not many individual professions, but more professions that require a team. There will be more and more team professions in Romania, in the near future, marked by the results of the Belbin research and Team Role. Surely the specialists will have a say and will advise the managers. Good managers will not ignore them. For example, in a City Hall, in a school, a company, the criteria for assigning officials, students to classes can take into account the grades obtained, the geographical origin, the avoidance of relatives, etc. Everyone has positive arguments, but also EVERYONE can come with negative arguments.

Can we imagine what it would be like to start classes right from the beginning based on the model of Team Roles? Should there be no more bullying in Romania starting from the preparatory class?

Not at all academic, we would like to conclude. BELBIN tests do not hurt! But bullying hurts at any age! Incompetence hurts! And so does inefficiency! The future will tell, but specialists provide us with serious explanations for incompetence, frivolity, corruption and inefficiency.

What impact can such scientifically, morally and efficiently built teams have on the Police or Justice? Would the psychologist matter more than the moods, opinions, "attentions" of the chief of staff, the manager, the head of the structure?

Of course, that is if the psychologist is allowed, or wants, or knows how to apply elements of novelty and extremely effective in building teams. Is the role of the psychologist in the Police a kind of a formal act, or should it be the road to normality and efficiency? This is an answer that we must find in a team, and the declared purpose is in the title of our presentation.

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