

Belbin team roles












Belbin team roles

British psychologist **Meredith Belbin** researched the interactions in successful and unsuccessful teams in the 1970s. His conclusion is that the **success of a team** is mainly determined by the alignment of team members' knowledge, skills and attitudes. **This complementarity in a team is much more important** to the effectiveness and efficiency of that team **than the individual abilities** of a team member.

Belbin measures behavior and not personality (as MBTI does, which is a psychometric instrument). While the latter can be very enlightening, it is not necessarily the most valuable feedback in a practical sense, according to Belbin. **Behavior is seen as more adaptable than personality**, since we can adjust our behavior according to what is asked of us in a given situation or role. **Moreover, behavior is observable**. That means it affects those around us and is affected visa versa. Giving constructive feedback on that behavior is less direct than on a person's personality, and this feedback focuses on the element where changes can be made: the behavior.

According to Belbin theory, there are **nine different team roles, each with qualities and weaknesses**. Understanding your preferred roles (and those of your colleagues) improves collaboration and leads to better results. According to Belbin, a team functions optimally **when all roles are represented in a team**. By the way, this does not mean that every team needs nine people. Most people will have two or three Belbin Team Roles they feel most comfortable with, and this may change over time.

Belbin team roles

			Team Role Contribution	Allowable Weakness	
Thinking	Plant	PL		<i>Creative, imaginative, free-thinking. Generates ideas & solves hard problems.</i>	<i>Ignores incidentals. Too pre-occupied to fully communicate.</i>
	Monitor Evaluator	ME		<i>Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options and judges accurately.</i>	<i>Lacks drive and ability to inspire others. Can be overly critical.</i>
	Specialist	SP		<i>Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides rare knowledge and skills.</i>	<i>Contributes only on a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities.</i>
Action	Shaper	SH		<i>Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has drive to overcome obstacles.</i>	<i>Prone to provocation. Offends people's feelings.</i>
	Implementer	IMP		<i>Practical, reliable, efficient. Turns ideas into actions and organizes tasks.</i>	<i>Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.</i>
	Completer Finisher	CF		<i>Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Finds errors. Polishes and perfects.</i>	<i>Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate.</i>
People	Coordinator	CO		<i>Mature, confident, identifies talent. Clarifies goals. Delegates effectively.</i>	<i>Can be seen as manipulative. Offloads own share of the work.</i>
	Team Worker	TW		<i>Co-operative, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens and averts friction.</i>	<i>Indecisive in crunch situations. Avoids confrontation.</i>
	Resource Investigator	RI		<i>Outgoing, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities, develops contacts.</i>	<i>Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm expires.</i>

Source: Belbin, 2022

Belbin: online test

[Free Online Belbin test I](#)



[Free Online Belbin test II
\(excel file with more detail\)](#)

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Belbin and the core quadrants

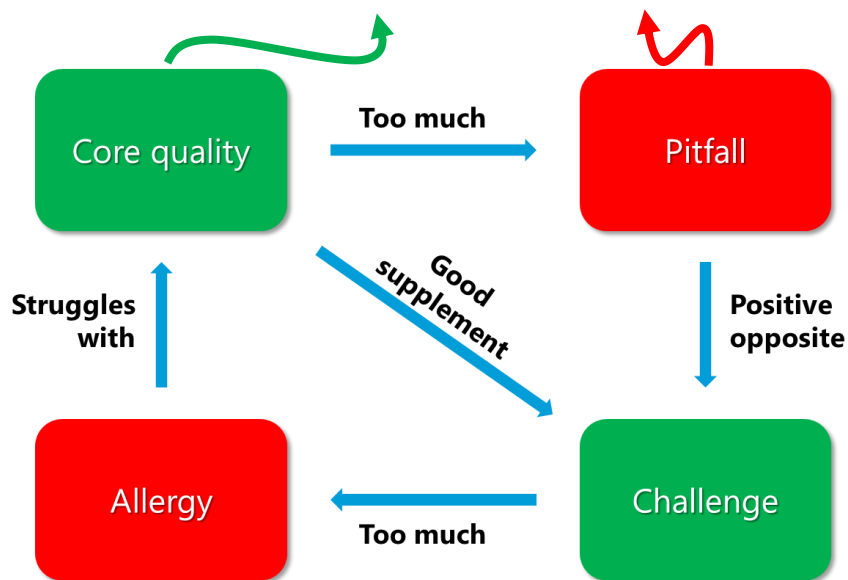
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Belbin demonstrates that **you shouldn't build teams based solely on substantive competencies**, but that **looking at behavioral competencies is just as important**. And you will probably have experienced this personally in practice. If you have two people working together, both of whom are more of a "thinker" than a "doer" or the other way around, you get a completely different team dynamic than if you deliberately put a "thinker" and a "doer" to work together.

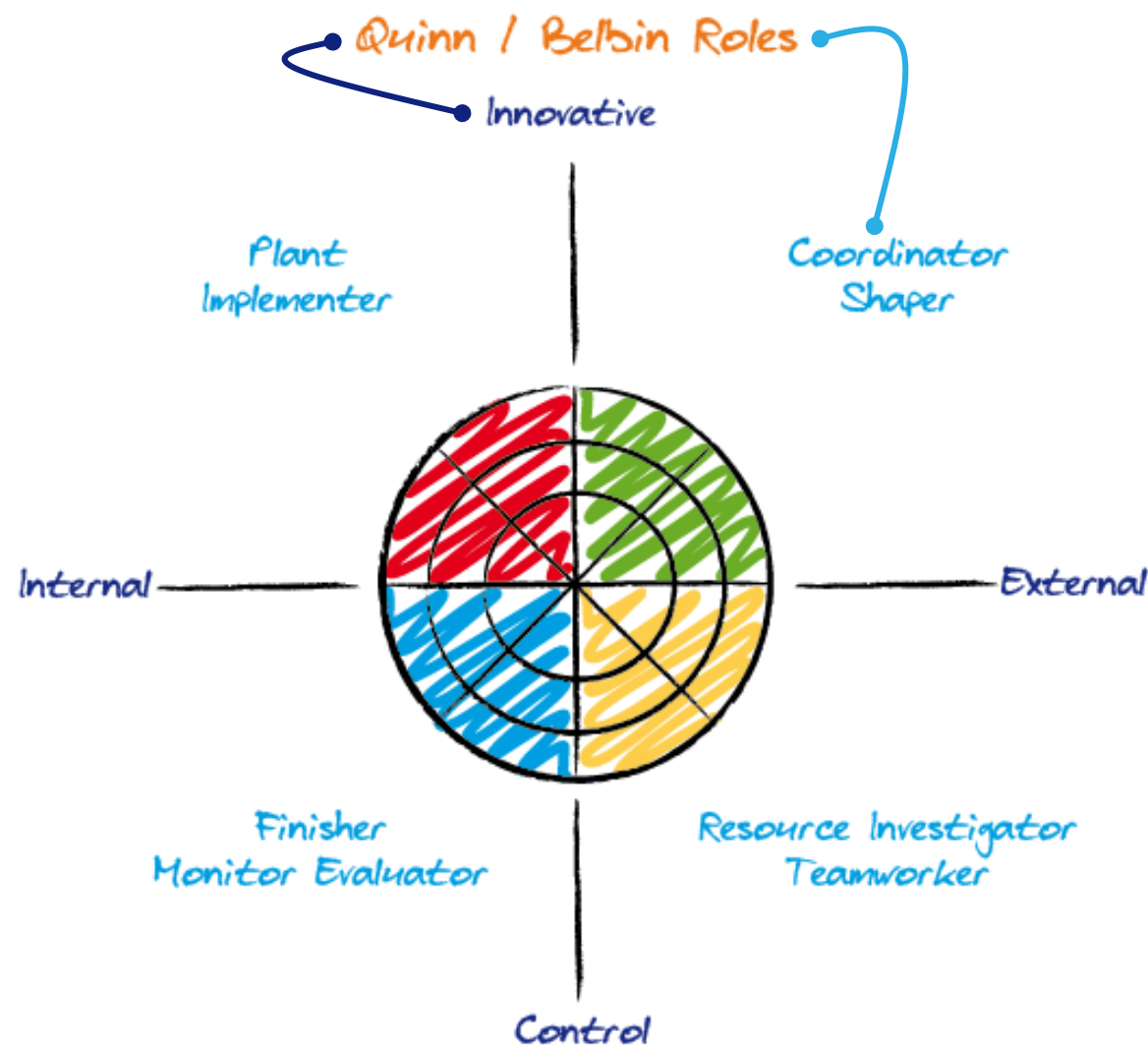
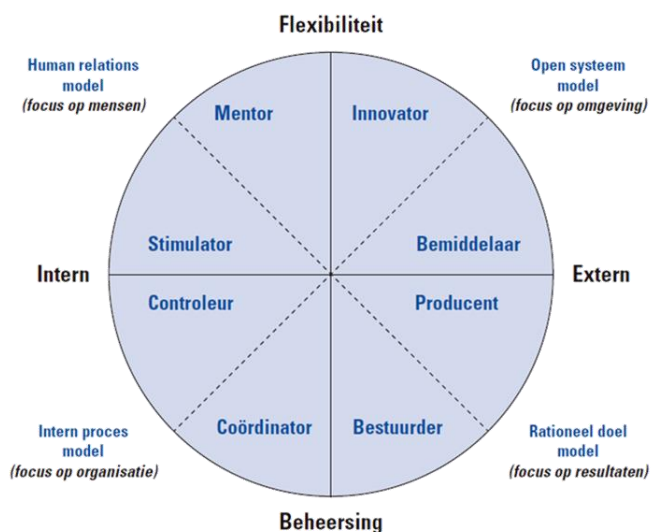
Furthermore, look at the Belbin roles for the columns 'contribution' and 'weakness'. Daniel Ofman's **core quadrants** are nicely reflected here (core quality and pitfall). Also Allergy, for example, to discover which characters attract and reject each other when working together. Ofman's core quadrants are of course a tool for the individual, but thinking 'and what does that mean if you work together with someone with this core quality' produces **beautiful logical connections with Belbin**.

Fortunately. 😊



Belbin and Quinn's Competing values framework

In the Master Class we had already established a connection between Quinn's Competing values framework and Ofman's Core Quadrants. Then there is of course also a link between Belbin's and Quinn's theory.



Source: www.quinnassociation.com, 2023



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