

# Exploring team members' roles



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Exploring Team Member's Roles (Student Name) University of Phoenix " All for one, and one for all! " These four different words, written by Alexander Dumas, pere, author of The Three Musketeers, have been made popular throughout history, and symbolize the very important concept of teamwork (The Three Musketeers. (Work overview), 2002).

Ideally, all individuals on a team work together and strive to achieve some common goal. Whether it be a personal, academic, or business goal, that goal will benefit each member of the team, thus leading back to the " all for one, and one for all," motto. In order for a team to be successful, all members must assume different roles that are suitable for both teamwork and goal succession. According to Belbin's team roles, Meredith Belbin, a management consultant, " developed the idea that for a team to function effectively it needs key roles to be performed by team members—each role contributing a specific skill or behavioural dimension to the team dynamics. " (Heery, Edmund. , & Noon, Mike, 2001).

" Over a period of years, Belbin and his trained observers identified eight team roles, and developed an instrument for quantifying individuals' team role preferences. The instrument [is] known as the Belbin Team Role Self-Perception Inventory (SPI), and these eight team roles are as follows: implementer, co-ordinator, shaper, plant, resource investigator, monitor evaluator, team worker, and complete/finisher (Partington & Harris, 1999). Belbin (1993) lists the labels and the principal concerns and characteristics of the eight roles as follows: (1) Implementer (IM) - concerned with the practical translation and application of concepts and plans developed by the team. This entails a down-to-earth outlook, coupled with perseverance in the

face of difficulties. (2) Co-ordinator (CO) - organises, co-ordinates and controls the activities of the team. This involves the clarification of team objectives and problems, assigning tasks and responsibilities, and encouraging team members to get involved in achieving objectives and goals.

(3) Shaper (SH) - challenges, argues and disagrees. Is achievement-motivated, extrovert, impatient, and has a low frustration threshold. Keen on winning the game. Has good insight, especially if loses. A non-chair leader.

4) Plant (PL) - concerned with putting forward ideas and strategies for achieving the objectives adopted by the team.

Performance of this role requires creativity, imagination and innovation. (5) Resource Investigator (RI) - explores the environment outside the team, by identifying ideas, information and resources. Performance of this role involves developing contacts, co-ordination and negotiation with other teams and individuals. (6) Monitor Evaluator (ME) - analyses ideas and proposals being considered by the team, to evaluate their feasibility and value for achieving the team's objectives.

Points out in a constructive manner the weaknesses of proposals being considered. (7) Team Worker (TW) - creates and maintains a team spirit. This involves improving communication by providing personal support and warmth to team members and by overcoming tension and conflict. (8) Completer/Finisher (CF) - ensures that the team's efforts achieve appropriate standards, and that mistakes of both commissions and omissions are

avoided. It also involves searching for detailed mistakes and maintaining a sense of urgency within the team.

Partington & Harris, 1999) In addition to defining team roles, it is important to know how a team develops into a successful high-performance team. Team member's roles become evident during the five stages of team development points, forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning, which were identified by psychologists Tuckman and Jensen (Straub, 1996). During the first stage, forming, " team tries to define its collective goals and figure out how to reach them with the skills and abilities each member brings to the table" (Straub, 1996). At the University of Phoenix this stage is quickly executed by using Learning Team Charters, a process that quickly unites team members and leads directly into the second stage, storming, in which " Chaos reigns as opinions and conflicts begin to surface.

members may argue about priorities and responsibilities. Some may back away from the tension and disagreements that develop, which may create major problems because the team needs everyone's participation to succeed" (Straub, 1996). This stage is critical as other team members' expectations of one another may diminish, and groupthink may occur. If a team is successfully able to overcome the first two stages, success will begin to ensue, and the third stage of team development will begin.

Straub describes norming when " Members begin to bond with each other and the team acquires an identity" (Straub, 1996). During the norming stage, the team develops an attitude that helps drive the will to succeed.

The fourth stage, performing, is when the team performs at its utmost best. The team is already thriving, and all the members are contributing. Once the team's goals have been completed, a team will usually disband. This is the fifth and final stage and is referred to as the adjourning stage.

These stages progress as the team members assimilate the responsibilities of their roles, and begin making stronger contributions to the team effort. All individuals on a team must work together to achieve their goals. By identifying team members' roles and understanding how teams develop, team members are able to contribute to their team effort more efficiently and effectively. References Heery, Edmund.

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