

From Co-ordinator to Completer Finisher – nine personalities in teams

As in every social group, in hospital teams, we find not only disciplines and hierarchies, but also different characters coming together. The British psychosociologist Raymond M. Belbin defined nine personality types that encounter each other in teams: Plant, Resource Investigator, Co-ordinator, Shaper, Monitor Evaluator, Team-worker, Implementer, Completer Finisher and Specialist.¹ Often, team members slip into learned roles without noticing and take on tasks they are already familiar with in the group. It is the responsibility of the manager to put the team together in such a way that characters as well as skills complement each other and free roles can be filled:²

Knowledge-oriented roles:

The Monitor Evaluator has a concentrated, analytical character, which they can use for strategic decisions and critical evaluation. Their scepticism can discourage the team.

The Plant introduces ideas to the team and has an innovative nature. They can be very solution-focused and work creatively, but tend to neglect details.

The Specialist has expert knowledge, which they willingly share with their colleagues. They tend to engage at the information level and can sometimes get lost in technical details.

Action-oriented roles:

The Implementer is concerned with getting things started and finished. They are disciplined, reliable and effective in their work, but they can be inflexible.

The Completer Finisher ensures optimal results. They are conscientious about their tasks, reliable and good at details. However, they can be controlling and unwilling to delegate.

The Shaper is interested in improvements and challenges the other team members. They take responsibility and bring the team with them. Their weakness is impatience.

Communication-oriented roles:

The Co-ordinator distributes tasks and encourages decision-making. They are confident and effective – which can seem manipulative to other team members.

The Teamworker is a diplomatic, motivating colleague who puts themselves entirely at the service of the team. They ensure a good team atmosphere, but in critical situations do not enjoy making decisions.

The Resource Investigator is the communicative centre of the team and makes connections between members. Their optimism can be inspiring, but can also get out of hand.

An interdisciplinary round to draw up a treatment plan: while the Specialist threatens to get lost in technical details, the Shaper can impatiently insist on decisions. In serious cases, the co-operative and diplomatic Teamworker may need to mediate or the strategic Monitor Evaluator might have to assess the feasibility of proposals. It is worth reflecting on the presence or absence of the nine personality types in your own team and taking on the task of team composition and development in the highly complex working environment of surgery with responsibility.

Sources

¹ Raymond Meredith Belbin published his book *Management Teams. Why they succeed or fail* in 1981. In it, he describes the team role method, which is also known as the 'Belbin Team Inventory'. Analyses of teams made up of course participants at Henley Management College in the 1970s informed the creation of the team roles. Belbin describes how the composition of the teams in terms of various personality types influences the effectiveness of the teamwork.

² Teamrollen nach Belbin. So stellen Sie ein perfektes Team zusammen. [Team roles according to Belbin. How to put together the perfect team.] Available at https://www.impulse.de/management/personalfuehrung/teamrollen-nach-belbin/7305936.html#Welche_Teamrollen_sollten_im_idealen_Team_besetzt_sein [20.02.2021]