

# Building on a **BELBIN**<sup>®</sup> Base

## Why Teams?

In an increasingly complex and information rich world, the value of collaboration is growing in importance. More and more work is being undertaken by teams rather than by individuals.

Research consistently suggests that an effective team can outperform all reasonable expectations given to its individual members. That is, a team has a synergistic effect—one plus one equals a lot more than two.

This is especially the case when the skills, perspectives and experiences of team members are diverse yet complementary. This diversity enables teams to respond effectively to most challenges thrown their way.

**However, while all teams are groups of individuals, not all groups of individuals are teams.**

Simply putting together a number of people and expecting them to work together as a team is not enough.

**There is technique in teamwork – and it can be done well or done poorly.**

Effective teamwork will increase productivity, encourage engagement, spur innovation and build morale.

However, when done poorly, teams can become catalysts of communication breakdowns, unclear role boundaries, a lack of focus, poor work allocation, people in the wrong roles and process bottlenecks.

If left unchecked, there are obvious implications for productivity, performance, cost, motivation and morale in the workplace. Ultimately this hampers the success of all involved - the individual, the team and the organisation.

**If we're going to build teams, we need to build them well.**

## Effective Teamwork Enables:

- Recognition and use of each person's unique contribution
- Most effective 'data collection' in rapidly changing situations
- Engagement and satisfaction that meets the social needs of individuals and the group
- Improved interpersonal communications allowing more energy to be directed into the task
- Efficient assignment of work drawing on members' strengths and expertise
- Quality decision making through the 'wisdom of teams'



# What Differentiates an Effective Team?

An effective and high performing team is clear on what it is working to achieve – and efficient in how it goes about doing this. To reach this level takes more than high morale and good intent. It is the outcome of a team learning process – building knowledge of each other, the techniques involved and the skills and motivation required to apply these.

## Creating effective teams depends on getting a number of things right:

- Setting the Team Goal
- Team Knowledge (Functional and Behavioural contributions)
- Guiding Principles
- Leadership Focus
- Measurable Performance
- Regular Performance Review
- Effective Assignment of Work
- Positive and Productive Team Culture
- A High Success Rate
- Recognition of Top Individual and Team Performance

## High performance teams know the technique of teamwork.

Effective teamwork results when all its members work as **teamplayers** – where every player understands how important it is for them all to cooperate and work towards a common goal if they want to be successful. When all do their jobs well, this will increase what the team can accomplish.

**Key to this is knowing what each person brings to the team mix –**

### Functional Role

The job we have been hired to do, based upon our ability, experience and skill

*What we do...*

### Team Role

Our tendency to behave, contribute and interrelate in certain ways

*And how we do it...*



It is with the latter that behaviour style identification can help. It is easier to work effectively with people when you are given some expectations of their behaviour preferences and tendencies.



# Why Belbin?

## Behavioural not Psychometric:

Whereas psychometric tests are concerned with measuring psychological variables such as intelligence, aptitude, and personality traits, Belbin takes a different approach. We are not looking at people's personality but the type of work to which people are most suited, based on their actual behaviour: what others in the team see and experience. While personality is unlikely to change, we can adapt our behaviour depending on what is required of us in a given situation or role. So to get individuals and teams working more effectively, we need to focus on the point where changes can be made: our behaviour.

## Common Team Language:

By providing a common, non-threatening and meaningful team language, Belbin enables individuals and teams to communicate and work together with greater understanding. This language can be used to bring a new team together or motivate an existing team and make it more effective. Crucially Team Roles provide **common terms of reference** to all members of the team, allowing them to openly discuss their strengths and weaknesses without conflict.

## Use of Observer Assessments:

Team Roles focus on behaviours. If our interest were confined to personality, it could be argued that no one else could know or understand you better than you know yourself. With behaviour however, it's a different story. Whilst people might think they send out a certain message, other people might read actions and words very differently, and in that case, it's important for the individual to know. For often what matters in the workplace is what managers, colleagues and subordinates think, since tasks are likely to be assigned on that basis.

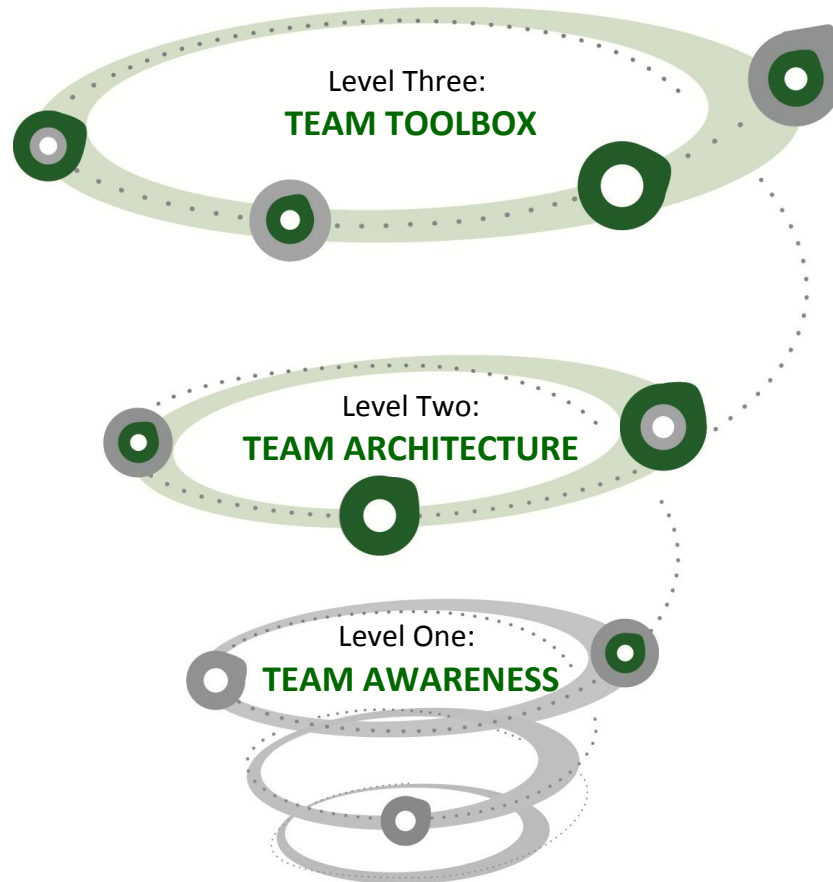
## Who Benefits?

- **Individuals** who want to better understand their contributions to a team and 'strengthen their strengths'.
- **Teams** who wish to identify their strengths and allowable weaknesses to help achieve better results and be more effective:
- **Organisations**, their managers, trainers and consultants who want to encourage and facilitate high performance.



# Bringing Teams and Belbin Team Roles Together

One of the challenges of any ongoing development strategy is to maintain a consistent approach. Leadership Solutions has developed a practical and robust development strategy that builds on the Belbin Team Roles model and provides an ongoing consistent approach. In short, it has a three tier structure:



## Level One – Team Awareness:

Self Awareness, Interpersonal Awareness and Team Awareness - involves assembling individual and team profiles to build awareness of talent contributions and team balance.

## Level Two – Team Architecture:

Addresses the other components required to build the framework that supports team performance: Team Goal, Team Knowledge, Guiding Principles, Leadership Focus, Regular Performance Review, Performance Measures, Work Assignment, Success Rate, Recognition and Reward and Positive and Productive Team Culture.

## Level Three – Team Toolbox:

Addresses the need to both maintain and continue growing the team capability – an operational approach to assist the manager who often comes at performance improvement with a single issue focus. Here the Belbin Toolbox draws on the Team Roles model to provide development actions that are linked and consistent in what they advocate.

Put it all together and you are **‘Building on a Belbin Base’** – an approach underpinned by the expert research that shapes the Team Roles model. And one that has an easy to learn common language - providing the means to talk about behaviour and performance in a non-judgemental way – keys to high performance.