Team Role Types and VoicePrint

Research Insight

British psychologist Meredith Belbin studied the relationship between personality and team roles. Although his questionnaire has been criticised by type theorists as lacking sufficient test-retest reliability, his model of different team-roles, distinctive contributions that can be made to effective team functioning, remains useful. He identified eight team roles plus a particular type of outlier.

The **Plant** is a new-ides generator, intuitive and spontaneously creative, but generally less interested in details or practicalities, and often finding it difficult to communicate their concepts.
The **Shaper** is achievement-oriented, directing and driving other members of the team towards goals, but often inattentive to people's feelings, and therefore prone to disregard and damage relationships.
The **Monitor-Evaluator** is critical minded, quick to notice and call out what is wrong with an idea, but with a personal detachment that can make it difficult to engage others or bring them along.
The **Resource-Investigator** is an explorer, curious and outgoing, interested in what is new and different, and keen to bring these possibilities to the attention of the team, but easily bored and often losing interest in follow-through.
The **Team Worker** is sensitive to others' feelings, focusing on providing help and putting themselves out for the team, but tending to appease rather than confront uncomfortable issues.
The **Implementer** concentrates on getting things done, being diligent and productive, but tends to over-rely on past practice and be reluctant to embrace novelty and change.
The **Completer-Finisher** is also highly task-focused, painstaking and attentive to detail, but often anxious, reluctant to delegate and prone to lose sight of the bigger picture.
The **Co-Ordinator** focuses on purpose and process, chairing the proceedings to get the best out of the different members of the team, but can be perceived as manipulative or as providing insufficiently explicit direction.
The **Specialist** is typically a subject matter expert with deep expertise, but little interest in, patience with or sensitivity to teamwork, often making them disruptive to group process.

The Findings

Our Belbin/VoicePrint cross-correlational study revealed some clear and significant 'talk tendencies' for each of the 8 Belbin team-role types. The study was conducted prior to the identification of the Specialist role. (*indicates statistical significance at $p<0.05$ or higher)

The **Plant**, as expected, exhibited low use of the ***Articulate*** voice.
The **Shaper**, as expected, showed high use of both the ***Advocate and Challenge*** voices.
The **Monitor-Evaluator** showed high use of the ***Evaluate*** and low use of the *Advise* voice, suggesting that they perhaps tacitly regard their evaluation as removing the need for further recommendations.
The **Resource-Investigator**, like the Plant, makes relatively little use of the *Articulate* voice, perhaps reflecting both their tendency to use enthusiasm rather than precise explanation and their impatience/low threshold of boredom.
The **Team Worker**, perhaps reflecting their role of all-round helper, exhibits no particular tendency other than an unusual willingness to use the ***Direct*** voice under pressure, perhaps a last resort to pull the team together.
The **Implementer** exhibits high use of **Challenge** and low use of *Articulate*, perhaps a reflection of their 'action-not words' inclination.

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The **Completer-Finisher** shows a high use of the ***Articulate and Diagnose*** voices (where high scores have been observed to be common indicators of anxiety) and low use of *Advocate and Challenge*. The highs probably reflect their concern to 'join the dots' and to be precise, while the lows reflect their reluctance to assert themselves or push others.

The **Co-Ordinator** is a high user of the ***Challenge voice***, probably reflecting their attention to group process, and for its interruptive value in keeping proceedings on track and re-focusing energies promptly.

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