

Using Belbin for Career Planning

When making career decisions it is imperative that one takes into consideration natural talents and behavioural tendencies. Very often, when deciding on a career, people focus on what is fashionable, in demand or most remunerative only to discover when they take up the position that they don't like the job, or worse still find it stressful.

Frequently the cause of this is due to people pursuing a career that does not align with their natural strengths and tendencies and after striving to re-engineer themselves they eventually seek a new job. Sadly, often to make the same mistake again.

Let me try and explain this mis-matching in a simple way. Suppose a person is naturally extrovert and communicative and finds interaction with others the very essence of life and this person believes the real money is in IT, say writing software. The person then lands a job in this field and undergoes extensive training and education only to find that there is virtually no scope for doing what comes naturally - interacting with others.

What happens is, at best, the person underperforms, gets frequently chastised by the boss and self esteem goes down and down. This is also exacerbated by the person looking at others who excel in this type of work and saying to themselves "I wish I could be like....".

This is clearly no recipe for a successful career. One's career should be built on what comes naturally, is motivating and enjoyable, as far as possible, rather than what is inherently unnatural and de-motivating.

What are my natural talents and behavioural tendencies?

This question is a good starting point for any of us, so how do we elicit this vital information? The good news is that there is a way that is used by leading organisations around the world - Belbin Team Role profiling a process can be easily adopted by anyone as a key element of career planning.

How can you go about this? The process starts by you completing the Belbin Self Perception Inventory,¹ which will provide you with a clear view of how you see yourself. The perceptions of others should be added to this by getting four people who know you well to complete the Belbin Observer Assessment. Combining the data from all of these sources and reflecting on the information elicited should lead to a realistic understanding of one's natural behavioural tendencies. (The illustration on the right shows the process in detail.)



Using Belbin Team Roles for Career Planning

Armed with this information and it should be possible to avoid the pitfalls of pursuing jobs for which one is totally unsuitable and, thus, avoid wasting lots of time and energy in the process.

Remember, whilst it is quite feasible to acquire new skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience it is not so easy to re-engineer something that owes part of its origin to genetics, your natural behavioural tendencies. Don't choose to play all your matches away from home.

¹You can obtain a free set of the latest Belbin assessments and example reports by contacting barrie.watson@belbin.info

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