

Quick Guide: Using Team Roles

It's obvious that, for a team to work effectively, it needs to include all the skills required for the job in hand. What may not be so obvious, but also key to excellent performance, is that the team uses a variety of team-focused strengths. Meredith Belbin, amongst others, identified a set of team roles which are important. So here are the **top ten tips** for ensuring that your team functions well:

- 1. Be creative.** The team needs to be innovative in solving problems, identifying improvements, challenging the status quo.
- 2. Find resources.** Rarely, if ever, will the team have everything they need among themselves. They will need to look elsewhere for resources, information, support and guidance.
- 3. Co-ordinate.** Team working requires the integration of a variety of skills, tasks and information, so decide about goals, roles and methods to use.
- 4. Drive for success.** There will be times when the team will need to just get their heads down and push hard towards their goals.
- 5. Evaluate.** Analyse new ideas objectively, ensuring that decisions are appropriate.
- 6. Tend.** Team members should provide a support network for one another, helping each other resolve disputes and promoting harmony.
- 7. Plan.** It's one thing having ideas, quite another turning them into a coherent way forward.
- 8. Check.** The job isn't finished until all the i's are dotted and all the t's crossed. Attention to detail is vital to delivering quality.
- 9. Recognise our strengths.** To some extent, we all bring to the team many of the above eight strengths. It is important to know which team members are the strongest in which, so enabling the team to plug any gaps eg by encouraging somebody to apply a lesser strength to a greater extent, or scheduling use of a missing strength as a regular agenda item for team meetings.
- 10. Ensure the strengths are valued and used.** It's no good having the strengths if, when someone tries to use them, the rest of the team shout them down. The team need to agree how they will ensure that each strength is valued, and commit to listen to one another when they propose applications of those strengths.

Compiled by Bill Carpenter