

Belbin for Breakfast



What do the Belbin Team Roles have to do with a fried egg?

Looking at our personalities at work is interesting and useful - but personality tends to be very stable over time. So, while personality testing can still be a revealing exercise, when it comes to *developing yourself*, we need to look further: Not just at personality, but the *ways we use* our personality in the workplace.



This is one of the goals of the Belbin Team Profiles. At first glance it might look like yet-another personality tool, but the Belbin instead measures **behaviour**: or rather, your preferred ways of behaving at work.

These are influenced by your personality, of course, but vary depending on lots of other things, like your work culture, your status, and how you feel that day. So, whilst it's usually a negative for a personality test to vary on the situational context, instead the Belbin *embraces* it: In one sense the situational context is just as important as personality, when your goal is to look at how we actually go about working with each other to get results.

This is where the egg comes in.

Think of the yolk of the egg as your personality. It is relatively fixed in its shape and tends to sit at the centre. Around this, though, the egg whites tend to run and flow and fit whatever shape they are required to – but of course some shapes are more natural for them to fit than others.

Also, unlike the MBTI, the Belbin tests **traits rather than types** – which is usually regarded as the preferred way of doing things nowadays. For instance, rather than being either a ‘Coordinator’ or ‘not a Coordinator’, you receive a score from 0 up to 100 on how natural that behaviour is for you. For example, if you score only a 10, it doesn’t mean that you’re bad at Coordinating – but rather that it’s not a natural behaviour for you and might require more effort from you if you have to work in that style.

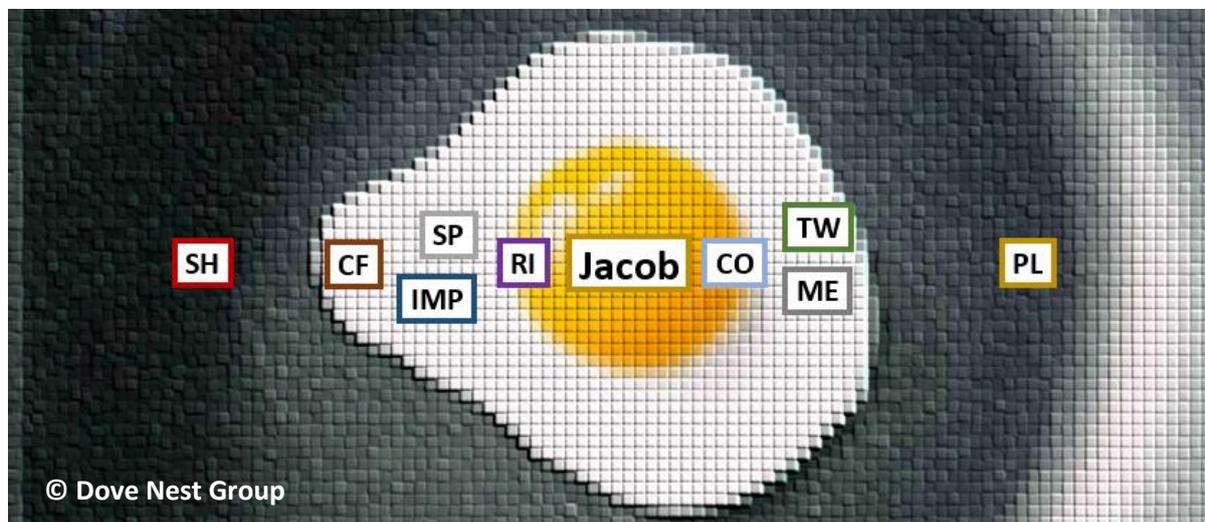
So, what are the nine Belbin Team Roles?

Rather than repeat what’s already written, I’d like to show you this nice summary page from the Belbin website which introduces you to each of the nine team roles. While reading these you may want to have a think about which roles you tend to gravitate to the most in your work, and which ones you prefer avoiding.

<http://www.belbin.com/about/belbin-team-roles/>

To give you an example using the ‘egg’ metaphor again, I’ve taken my own Belbin profile and plotted it below.

The styles very close to the yolk - my personality - like Resource Investigator and Coordinator are the ones I score highly on and working in these ways are natural and easy for me.



The styles further away, like Completer-Finisher and Monitor Evaluator are those that I’m probably still able to do, but which would require substantially more effort from me and might cause me more stress if I had to carry on working in these ways long-term. Roles like Plant and Shaper are not particularly suitable for me (hence not part of my egg at all) – and are working styles I should avoid if possible!

What happens next?

As with any psychometric, looking at the results in an individual consultation can be useful and interesting, but where they really come to life is in a team session where you can learn and make changes on how everyone works together.

When running Belbin across a team, you can learn a lot about your shared work dynamic. Maybe no one in your team is a natural coordinator, so somebody has to pick up that role (and might feel some discomfort doing so, or need extra support). Maybe you are all Resource Investigators and at risk of always gravitating to that style even when it might not be effective. Maybe you are looking at hiring someone new, and you notice that your team doesn't have a strong Implementer – so you might want to consider looking for a candidate with that sort of strength!

As I've mentioned before though, don't ever put your entire recruitment or development drive behind the psychometric – but when you use it as part of a balanced assessment or a development workshop, it can be invaluable.

Wrapping Up

I hope that overview of the Belbin was useful and interesting.

If you or your team are interested in taking the Belbin Team Roles, give us a call on 015395 67878, e-mail us at enquiries@dovenes.co.uk

If you have any questions or comments about this week's article, please do get in touch on LinkedIn or e-mail me at jacob.minihan@dovenest.co.uk.

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