

WHAT KIND OF TEAM ROLES ARE THERE?

Situational leadership in team situations is based on distributed leadership. Distributed leadership works when the team is welded together and performs well. The roles of the power holder and task leader are missing from the team roles. In top teams, the team is led by the person who has the best skills for the specific situation.

Team roles are based on the idea of a person's adaption to the team and his conscious or unconscious behaviour patterns in that particular team. Additionally, each team member has his own work role, which is related to his professional competencies or job description. Team roles and work roles are not related. According to Belbin, most people have two or three team roles that they are most comfortable with and prefer. Every person also has a few other team roles that they can cover if they need to (for example, if the team roles would otherwise be missing from the team and the assigned tasks call for these roles). The remaining team roles are roles that they choose not to adopt at all.

Team role assessment helps the team members to acknowledge and visualise which team roles have a strong position in the team and which team roles may even be missing. Each team role is needed in the team. Some of the team roles are strengthened in certain situations by giving the power to the team members most suited to the situation. Some team roles may need to be muted to ensure work efficiency in the team. For example, in a situation where the team is brainstorming ideas, it is essential to avoid judging the ideas. Qualifying the ideas is a separate team situation.

Doer – practical and sensible

The doer is a practical organiser. He turns the decisions and strategies into defined and controllable work tasks, which can be implemented by the team members. The doer is very disciplined and he works efficiently and in an organised way. The doer does not give up easily. His honesty and trust in the team members is acknowledged.

The doer may not be interested in topics that are not directly related to the work task at hand. He may find it difficult to adjust to changes, and sudden changes in schedule may upset him and he may seem inflexible. However, the doer is willing to modify his schedules and proposals for them to match the team's plans.

The doer asks:

- Can I organise this for you?
- What does this mean in practice?
- When does everything need to be ready?

Micromanager – thorough and persistent

The micromanager is a strong and self-disciplined person. He has an almost compulsive need to finish his tasks by the set deadline. The micromanager worries that everything that could go wrong will. He cannot relax unless he has personally checked all the details.

The micromanager becomes impatient and irritated if the other team members appear to be lazy. He may lower the team morale with his worried behaviour. The micromanager may not necessarily see the big picture and the ultimate goal due to worrying about all the little details.

The micromanager asks:

- Can I specify the details more?
- Can we make it even better?
- Has everyone completed their tasks?

Analyser – objective and analytical

A strong evaluator may seem like a serious and uninteresting person. The analyser is the most objective member in a team and he can prevent the team from committing to projects which are based on faulty assumptions. His ability to absorb, analyse and evaluate complex and vast topics, and to analyse problems and evaluate decisions and team members' contributions, are essential for the team. The analyser does not usually criticise just for the sake of being critical – he just sees faults in a plan or an argument.

The analyser wants to mull over things and he needs time for decision-making. Other team members may think that he is tactless and unenterprising. During times of change, the analyser may have a negative effect on the team atmosphere.

The analyser asks:

- May I tell you what I'd like to do and explain why?
- Are we taking all the necessary aspects into consideration?
- May I think about this for a moment?

Innovator – original and creative

The innovator is an energetic and uninhibited person. He has unique ideas and proposals. The innovator is interested in the overall picture and consistency. He is most likely to approach problems from totally different angles than the other team members.

The innovator may immerse himself too much in ideas that are not beneficial for the team. He may skip some details and other team members may regard him as sloppy. The

innovator sets up his own ideas by judging those of others. This may cause some disapproval in the team. He finds it very hard to accept it when his own ideas are criticised. He may get so upset that he refuses to work with the team.

The innovator asks:

- Can I suggest a certain solution to a problem?
- Should we look at this from another viewpoint?

Explorer – curious and outgoing

The explorer is a relaxed and social team member who gets easily excited about new topics and tasks. His answers are positive and enthusiastic. The explorer can stimulate ideas and encourage innovation by identifying the most useful ideas for the team. Within the team he can remain active even when under pressure.

The explorer is mostly focused on topics that are external to the team. He makes friends quickly and his network outside the team is extensive. Thanks to this network, he can bring new information, ideas and development ideas to the team.

When the explorer is alone, he gets bored easily and then becomes inefficient. He may spend too much time on topics that he personally finds interesting but which are not beneficial for the team. Additionally, he may quickly lose interest in topics. As an innovator, the explorer is not very productive.

The explorer asks:

- Are the team members interested in hearing more about a certain topic?
- Does the team need outside help?

Teambuilder – emotional and social

The teambuilder is the most sensitive of the team members. He communicates and listens actively and encourages the other team members to do the same. The teambuilder knows about each team members' needs and worries, and even about what happens in their personal lives.

The team is very fond of the teambuilder. He is loyal and supports all the team members. If one of the team members has an idea, the team builder develops it further and does not try to pan the idea or come up with a competing idea himself. The teambuilder's role in the team is particularly emphasised in stressful and oppressive situations.

The team builder does not want to compete and he avoids all conflicts. As a result, other team members may think that he is incapable of making decisions and sticking to them.

The teambuilder wonders:

Is everyone in the team happy?

Can I help or support the others in some way?

Can I help to reconcile the differences between the team members?

Enforcer – target-oriented and dynamic

The enforcer is very target-oriented. He wants to make decisions and create action. He combines ideas, objectives and practical viewpoints into reasonable entities. The enforcer also coordinates team activities to ensure that all targets are met. He decides which problems should be resolved by the team and defines priorities for the tasks. Additionally, he can influence the team members.

The enforcer may seem impatient. Other team members may feel that the enforcer rules over the weaker team members. He questions things, which may make the other team members feel uncomfortable.

Typically, the enforcer asks:

Are we ready to start?

May I suggest a certain way to proceed?

Facilitator – stable and confident

The facilitator is a mature and confident team member. He coordinates team efforts to meet the objectives and targets. He clarifies goals and promotes decision-making. The facilitator is a good communicator, both as a talker and a listener, and he makes sure that all team members have an opportunity to voice their opinions.

The facilitator is quite a dominant person, but in a relaxed way. Still, other team members may see him as manipulative. He delegates well but sometimes too much, and offloads his personal work tasks to other team members. Usually, facilitators are not very innovative.

The facilitator wants to know:

Has everyone said what they want to say?

Are we ready to make the decision now?