

Weaving a Successful Team

Meridith Belbin's explanation of how teams work has stood the test of time and spread across the Globe. While now in his eighties he is still active as a consultant and as a visiting professor at [Henley Management College](#).

It was he who first expounded the 1970's the idea that teams with a balance of different types of people were the most effective. This discovery followed detailed observation over many years of different groups taking part in management exercises. In 1981 he published *Management Teams: Why they succeed or Fail*.

It was first thought, he said, "that high intellect teams would succeed where lower intellect teams would not". However the outcome of his research was that teams predicted to be excellent based on intellect failed to fulfil their potential. It was team balance that enabled a team to succeed.

Belbin identified nine distinct clusters of behaviour and called them "team roles". Each role defines a tendency to behave, contribute and interrelate with others in a particular way and can be used "as a common meaningful language to bridge the gap between ourselves and our colleagues"



Belbins Team Roles

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Q: We are a small business but since the recession commenced we have found that our cash flow is being squeezed. Now more and more customers are not paying their bills and I am beginning to think the business will go under. Is there any way I can turn it around?

Firstly let's deal with the customers payments. Most businesses will simply continue to just send out copy invoices/ statements and hope that payment will eventually be made. However you need to adapt to the changed circumstances.

- Try calling or emailing the clients, it's important that contact is made and payment demanded. Offering scheduled payment plans may be an option.
- Always be polite and nice, but remember you are only there to do business. Often emotions get in the way and we deal with this situation badly. So if need to get someone to do this work for you, who is a little more detached, do so. Also be persistent but maintain your professionalism.
- Maintain your own cash flow projections and be aware to ensure that you have sufficient cash in the pipeline to meet your own business needs.

SMALL BUSINESS CAN DO STRATEGY

Small business owners are known to wear many hats, the operational hat, sales hat, marketing hat and so on. This has lead to people believing that small business are not capable of wearing hats such as the strategy hat. The problem is aggravated by lack of knowledge on strategy and the fact that it is placed on a pedestal. So many believe small business can't strategise.

THIS IS A MYTH, all small business can strategise. All they need is to understand what strategy is using the KISS principle.

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TIP

When hiring for growth, look for motivated people. They can be trained and will grow into new positions.

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