

How to rebuild your team...

When you lose someone from the team you work in, whether they have resigned or been made redundant – the team has to re-invent itself if it's going to be effective. Michelle Lucas our resident Executive Coach shares her experience of how best to do this.

To be an effective team you need to have the right skills for the job and you need to have the right team dynamics – most organisations think about the first more technical perspective and the best ones also think about the second. There's a great piece of theory which really helps teams consider how well they work together and it's called Belbin's team roles. The principle is that we will all naturally adopt different roles in a team and the best teams have a good mix of them - here's a snapshot of them all:

The Shaper – as the label suggests this is the person that will whip people into shape! Not always the most popular member on the team, but their energy and drive will help move the team forward.

The Plant – this is your ideas person, they tend to be creative and can think up novel solutions, which is really helpful when the team gets “stuck”.

The Monitor-Evaluator – this is the considered person who will review suggestions for flaws. Whilst often seen as a bit of a doubting Thomas they are really valuable in tempering some of the ‘off the wall’ ideas of the Plant and the forcefulness of the Shaper.

The Resource-Investigator – this person is fantastic at sourcing information and they probably come to the team with loads of contacts. Often a “self-starter” you can give this person a task and they will run with it.

The Implementer – this person needs a little more direction but is hugely reliable and they will be steadfast in turning ideas into practical action.

The Completer-Finisher – if you need to ensure the detail is attended to, this is your person. They are really motivated by ensuring things are done properly and have an enviable eye for dotting the i's and crossing the t's!

The Team Worker – this person will be looking out for how people are feeling about the job in hand rather than looking at how the task itself is being achieved. They will draw the team members together, help avoid conflict and generally ensure the well-being of the team – they will also remember everyone's birthday!

The Co-ordinator – often this person acts as the Chairman (whether this is their formal role or not) and their maturity acts as a great enabler to bring the different viewpoints together. They are driven by a sense of reason in order to get the right outcome rather than the desire for team harmony that the Team Worker has.

Most people have more than one preference and the styles of the other team members will influence which role(s) an individual will personally adopt. When someone leaves the team the balance is upset and you cannot assume that the team will carry on in the same way. So make sure you audit what is now missing from the team dynamics and see who else might be able to offer this quality. If no-one else fits the bill, there will be “blind spots” in how your team works and you will need to acknowledge and work on these to ensure they don't catch you out!

For more information on Belbin – see the “resources” section of Michelle’s website
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