

THE ROLES PLAYED BY THE TEAM MEMBERS IN THE HUMAN RESOURCES PERFORMING MANAGEMENT

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Abstract:

Teamwork - a feature of modern leadership, lead to performance if the team members are sharing the same vision, understanding the objectives of the organization, communicating, cooperating and helping each other, living and acting after the same principles, norms and values. Team gains more and more a decisive role for the success of the organization and even if the leader is strong and well-intentioned, its results are the effect of all those people that make up the community.

Only by highlighting the skills, talents, inclinations and experience of staff, promoting the principle "all for one and one for all" and some healthy interpersonal relationships we create favorable conditions to obtaining superior results.

The company presented in the case study fits very well in the elements mentioned above, the importance of human resources in general and of the team in particular, represents some of the most important reasons of senior management.

This paper is based on theory of the assumed roles in the team and, as practical application I applied the test for determining the Belbin team roles in the Betty Ice company's financial accounting department. Applying this test was meant as a method for improvement of the effectiveness of teamwork within the organization and tried to see if the team studied is well formed from the perspective of the theory of team roles. Results revealed that a close-knit team has different and complementary roles and its success is based precisely on the existence of as many roles proposed by Meredith Belbin.

Keywords: team roles, the Belbin test, teamwork, individual profile, group

JEL Classification: O15, D23

1. INTRODUCTION

The human resources are the most important asset of an organization. They are very important and have diverse and unpredictable attributes. Man, with all its facets, is more than unique and is transferring to his work transfers this uniqueness. Almost invariably rational individuals will tend to organize themselves in various types of social groups. From the perspective of each individual, the group membership means certain benefits. These benefits bring with them some kind of existential fulfillment of a certain person.

On the other hand, the benefits involve different associated costs: the individual freedom of action is limited, there are some constraints or rules of behavior. However, only individuals together as a group are stronger and can propose important objectives, which reflect the essential advantage of the structure of groups/management teams within organizations.

The transition from group to team is based on steps that may or may not occur. We can still live in the same office colleagues as a normal group or we can create together a team which is able to generate synergy. The synergy is the certification of the team and with it we create "added value", which means that the whole is greater than the sum of its component parts.

It should be noted that teamwork does not mean the annulment of personality of its members, erasing differences, ignoring what they have every single notes. To live among people within a community means, among many others, to respect and comply with the rules of the organization, to remain ourselves, to have and express the own point of view, to think with our heads, to respect the personality, dignity and interests of others.

Teamwork has become increasingly an imperative, an essential requirement for achieving superior results. Training and use of teams in resolving basic tasks proved to be extremely important in promoting a modern leadership.

The leader, no matter how valuable and experienced is, may not include all the activities that currently runs the organization. In fact, as leadership practices shows, the performing leaders have around competent people with strong personality and proven skills with specific work skills and habits in common.

This is one of the reasons to achieve remarkable results by leaders: to build an uniform team, deeply and continuously involved in major problems of organization. This explanation is confirmed in this paper where is presented an example of successful management teams – the Betty Ice Company of Suceava.

This paper presents some concepts considered important to the team management as part of human resource management. The practical part of the work will present the test results from the application of Belbin test - a method of building effective teams developed by the English specialist Meredith Belbin.

2. THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TEAM

If we observe carefully the teams, we find that their members have well-defined roles. This observation is based on the effort of managers to identify and assign each member, the appropriate role. For years, the research management focused almost exclusively on the individual person. Organizations were concerned about the qualifications, experience, individual achievements. In fact, everyone knows that the ideal man for a particular job cannot be found.

Thinking of a good manager we will draw up an endless list of qualities. Can one man to meet all? But there is a solution – the teams. They may meet more often the qualities we need. In addition, it is unlikely that everyone on the team want to leave or get injured at the same time. So, not the individual but team manager is the tool that provides a sustained and lasting success. In most cases, the team performance exceeds the individual performance of team members.

Team spirit is the key to great performance. Success is due jointly, mutual aid, recovery potential and actual creative work of individual, trust, respect and honesty in interpersonal relations, ethical conduct dignified and accepting a collective responsibility for the achievements and failures.

The concept of “team” has many definitions in the literature, many of them often by reference to the group and transition-team group.

One example is G.A. Cole (2000) who considers that team is something more than a group of people who have a common goal - is a group where individual contributions are considered complementary. Collaboration, working together is fundamental note of the work team.

George Militaru (2005) defines team as a group whose individual efforts result in a performance that is greater than the sum of individual results. Therefore, a working team generates positive synergy through coordination of effort.

According to George Ar d voaice (2008) a team has a clearly defined objective and by common and collective action generate synergy, people get more than if they work separately. The team is not a collection of individuality. Their quality and performance are determined by the amount of interaction between members as a component. Team creates synergy, which means that the whole is greater than the sum of it up, the relationship between parties is also an intrinsic part of the whole.

Ioan Pastor (2005) defines the team as a group of people who work under a chief. Relationships between group members are dependent; they satisfy predetermined tasks to achieve a common goal. Although the quality of a team is influenced by the quality of each individual, it constitutes a distinct entity.

Constantin Rosca, Mihai Varzaru and Ion G. Rosca (2005) consider the team a group of organized individuals together, led by a leader and acting within a context for the same purpose.

Referring to a real team, Aurel Burciu (2008) presents the following defining features:

- a small number of members;
- some qualifications/complementary skills;
- a full understanding of the purpose;
- a product/service jointly produced;
- a clear conception about work/jobs;
- a sense of mutual responsibility.

3. THE TEAM ROLES BY MEREDITH BELBIN

As we have seen above, one of the reasons to achieve remarkable results by leaders is to build a homogeneous team, deeply and continuously involved in major problems of organization.

But how we can build a successful team?

The answer seems to rely heavily on Meredith Belbin's research from the Centre for Research and Training Industry – Cambridge. For the first time stated that managers who want to build teams only with very intelligent people can fail. Contrary to expectations, the most disastrous team is made up exclusively of very intelligent people. Belbin and his research team identified eight roles (a role later added) that can be played by the team members.

Dr. Raymond Meredith Belbin was born in 1926. He completed graduate and doctoral studies at Cambridge University. The first post-doctoral research position is held at Cranfield College (now Cranfield School of Management at Cranfield University) working as a Research Fellow. His early research focused mainly on older workers in the industry. Next, he returns to Cambridge where he joined the Department of Education Industrial Education. During this period (the last years of the decade in 1960) is invited at the Administrative Staff College in Henley-on-Thames where he made over several years the study for his book (in 1981). But the enshrining and the recognition of his results did not appear immediately. In 1996, Belbin, and his son Nigel, founded Belbin Associates to publish and promote his research findings.

The Belbin Team Roles theory is the result of over nine years of research conducted by Dr. Meredith Belbin and his team in the field of human behavior and contribution at work. The result of this research was first published in 1981, and team roles theory was immediately recognized and accepted by academia and business as an important tool for the human resource management.

Meredith Belbin defines the team role as "a person's specific tendency to behave, contribute and interact with others." Belbin and his team identified nine such roles representing unique combinations of positive and negative aspects of behavior. In practice, a person is able to address two, three or even four favorite roles. The same person may hold several roles, which to address them when the situation requires and a number of roles that is not appropriate which actually she have to avoid. This distribution of roles derives from profile to be achieved by capturing their perception and the perception of observers (colleagues, managers, subordinates, employees, customers, etc.) on that person's behaviour.

In addition to the personal profile can be achieved a profile of the post held by that person. Multitude of information obtained at the individual level, at the posts and at the whole team makes the team roles theory an excellent tool for individual assessment, management of personal development, building and team development, team management, selection of candidates for a particular job and management education. The evaluation of behavioral characteristics is done in terms of two types of perceptions: the own perception and the perception of its observers. One of

the advantages of applying this theory is precisely this possibility to capture the perception of observers: the people who interact and come into contact with the person observed.

The aggregation of subjective information obtained from each observer allows identifying the dominant behavioral characteristics of the person observed. These dominant features are providing credibility from the feedback provided by many people. And finally, what really counts is how a person is perceived by those who come into contact, rather than what that person thinks about his behavior.

The comparison between their own perception and the perception of observers is a key issue in management teams. In this case it is important to relate the perception of observers and to understand why there are differences between the two perceptions, when they exist. This can be achieved by further investigation, assessments, discussions with all types of observers (managers, colleagues, subordinates), by encouraging them to provide feedback and by an increased attention for understanding the feedback.

The individual profile of team roles helps us a better understanding of ourselves; explain to us some approaches and preferences in terms of a concept, of the nine types of behavior and contribution at work place. If we can to find ourselves in the light of these roles, we can certainly understand those around us by using the same process. Through team roles we can better understand and interpret the information we hold about ourselves and people we work with.

Table 1 summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the profiles suggested by the Belbin Team:

Table 1: Summary of roles within a team, by Meredith Belbin

ROLE NAME	FUNDAMENTAL CONTRIBUTION	PERMITTED WEAKNESS
PLANT	Creativity, imagination, able to solve difficult problems	Ignore details, often too preoccupied to communicate effectively
RESOURCE INVESTIGATOR	Enthusiasm, communication, search-friendly occasions, he makes useful links	Overly optimistic, quickly loses interest
COORDINATOR	Coordinate chair, clarifies goals, decision capabilities and empowerment	May prove propensity to manipulation, sometimes delegate their tasks to others
SHAPER	Dynamism, oriented perseverance, courage in overcoming obstacles, faces pressures	Challenging attitude, hurts the feelings of others
MONITOR EVALUATOR	Discernment, critically constructive, strategic thinking	The inability to make followers, being overly critical
TEAM WORKER	Cooperation, diplomacy, perceptive attitude, avoiding friction	Undecided in some cases, easily influenced
IMPLEMENTER	Discipline, seriousness, efficiency, initiate practical measures	Inflexibility, slowness in detecting unusual opportunities
COMPLETER FINISHER	Methodical and conscientious attitude, detect errors and omissions, meet deadlines	They make too many worries, refractory to delegation of responsibility, formalist
SPECIALIST	Decided prosecution intended, is capable of self-initiation, providing knowledge and skills that few people possess	A limited contribution to a narrow field, delaying the technical details, fails to perceive the big picture

(Processed from Gerald A. Cole, *Staff management*, Ed Codecs, 2000, p. 97 and <http://www.belbin.com/rte.asp?id=8>)

4. THE TEAM ROLES AND THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Individual profile roles in the team can decide which areas we should develop so as to improve our individual performance.

The first starting point is given for comparison between the nature of the tasks we currently perform, that these types of contributions required on one hand and our team profile on the other

hand. Might be where we need to develop some secondary roles because in this way we have to naturally address those aspects of our work which require those roles. Understanding the nature of skills required by the tasks they fulfill and specific behaviors of team roles we need to decide in which direction we need to develop and which are the best ways to achieve this. This decision is especially important if we discussed future career steps and future requirements that we will face.

The second starting point for personal development is the comparison between its perception, the perception of observers and a decision on which action must take to "equalize" the two perceptions. A successful person is characterized by a good correlation between own perception (what he thinks about himself) and the perception of observers (what colleagues think about it). To achieve this correlation, if it does not occur, there are two options. The first would be that person to adjust their own perceptions based on the perception of observers; the second would be the person to better promote their sites for some asset that they are perceived as such by observers.

The third point of departure is the team's requirements for specific roles. It could happen that the team members may not address naturally a role asked by the specific objectives and the context of the team. In this case a person may decide to develop a secondary role to "fill the gap" in the team. In this case we could talk about a natural decision for personal development or about a sacrifice that makes a person in the interest of the team. In the latter case it is preferable that this sacrifice will not last long enough to generate a less motivation for that person.

The development objectives of team roles may be included in the overall personal development plan and can be combined with the performance evaluation system. The evaluation of the team roles can be repeated at regular intervals of time to determine how the profile evolves over time, to what extent personal development objectives have been achieved and what still to be done.

5. CASE STUDY: ANALYSIS OF TEAM ROLES AT SC BETTY ICE SA

Company Presentation

Information about company for 2009:

Turnover: 20 million

Profit: 890.000 Euros

Total investment: about 32 million

Production capacity: 120 tones (60-65% use)

The top five ice cream producers in Romania: Nestlé, Betty Ice, Top Gel, Kubo IceCream and Alpin '57 Lux, all of them are holding over 60% of total market

The Romanian ice cream market it's estimated at 120 million Euros. The Betty Ice Company was founded in 1994, and after months and years of searching, testing, Betty Ice succeeded to become what it is today - a company that has a strong influence on the Romanian ice cream market, the second largest ice producer. The factory was operational in 2007 but the last buildings, including reception and the offices were completed in 2008. In only two years the company succeeded to reach the second place in the country, selling ice for 17.5 millions euros and struggling with the well-known multinational company Nestle.

The company's development is based on the acquisition of the last-generation machines, Betty Ice is now one of the most modern ice cream plant in Europe with a capacity of about 100 tons of ice per day. Main target of the company is focusing on distribution, thus aiming to go as close as it possible to the final consumer. Other departments which the businessman wants to develop are the production and logistics; the marketing part it's important, too. If, at beginning, the product was promoted by itself, now the marketing plays an important role in promoting business

strategy. The interest of Betty Ice's board is to increase market share, to produce new sorts of ice cream to satisfy consumer's refined requests.

Although is a production company, in which the technical level of the machineries is very important for the quantity and quality of the final good, the human resources are a permanent preoccupation for the businessman, Vasile Armenean. There are aprox. 380 permanent and seasonal employees, involved in the production, the distribution sectors, and at the offices. On this last group we focused our research.

THE RESEARCH DEPLOYMENT

This research tried to identify the team roles within one of the department from Betty Ice Company. After the consultation with the manager, I decided to apply the Belbin questionnaire at the Financial and accounting department, which includes a number of five employees, but the test has been filled also by the inspector of human resources, who works in the same office with the finance department employees.

The team roles can be determined through a questionnaire that has a series of statements grouped into several categories. These statements describe various behaviors and attitudes manifested in the team and they have to be ranked in ascending order. A full assessment involves both the own perception and the perception of others. The teammates must complete the same test for their colleague. Differences between results are not very high, maintaining the main profile, but can occur different side profiles. The www.belbin.com website provides detailed reports determined by testing Belbin profiles and in addition, there is a computer program that can automatically calculate employee profile.

There are two versions of the Belbin test, the first with nine profiles and the second with eight profiles. Since the test version with nine profiles requires additional resources from both sides, I decided to apply the test with eight Belbin profiles. In addition, this version is much easier to fill by the employee and the results of previous tests have shown that the hierarchy in terms of the dominant role is preserved, no matter how is done the research.

Tested employees had enough time, as long as they need; besides the test itself, employees were asked to write the department where are working, full name, current position, previous position (to see if the profile matches) and e-mail address (for sending the results interpretation).

The questionnaires were evaluated using a special scale for determining the scores related to each profile. Which profile obtains the highest scores that's the dominant role and the following scores in descending order are showing secondary roles. As it can be seen bellow, there are few people who have a very limited number of profiles; the majority of them are "interpreting" a different role if different situations. The roles that have the highest scores are most often used by the team members.

The results were communicated via email with a description of the main features of the determined profiles. Later the company manager received a list of all existing profiles within his team and a few recommendations for each employee.

The respondents may use information received to develop those roles that are required to work. Also, if they wish to make a career plan, roles may be of real help because they'll search those jobs that are more appropriate for them.

Also, if a team lacks certain roles, some employees may decide to develop some of their secondary roles to fill the needs of the team, but this situation must not take very long time, in order not to generate the de-motivation. Evaluation team roles can be repeated to determine how personal profiles can change themselves. In a full assessment (own perception and the perception of observers) that person will be helped to correct differences between the two perceptions, either by adjusting the perception by others, or through increased his unnoticed trump cards.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Meredith Belbin believes that we don't have good roles and bad roles in a team; the important thing is to have all the roles for a successful team. For the financial accounting domain, Belbin analysis revealed specific roles (ME, IMP, CF) for these activities, characterized by accuracy and routine.

After applying the test for employees the following results were obtained:

- **C. ILIE**

Current position: Financial Director

Previous position: Financial Director

Main profile: TEAM WORKER (TW)

Side profile: MONITOR EVALUATOR (ME), SHAPER (SH)

TW are those who are most supporting the team. The profile of this employee fits very well with the position of Financial Director. He keeps the team together, helps others, is very loyal and appreciates new ideas. While acting with care, he can be indecisive sometimes when he is placed in stressful situations. But he is important also because he counteract the misunderstandings, although sometimes he may be the source of some problems (he is a SH also).

Being ME, too, he has very good mental skills, the ability to judge carefully and take all factors into consideration, a benefit for the financial department.

In my opinion, it's important the focusing on TW because a leader who generates conflict and also try to settle the conflicts may create confusion for the team. Also, because he is not the only TW from this team he can leave this role to another colleague.

TW can present sometimes a lack of flexibility and responsiveness to the new ideas and even the avoiding of the decisions. The leader of a TW must always expect to competition for the positions or partisan attitudes.

- **D. CRE U**

Current position: Economist

Previous position: –

Main profile: RESOURCE

INVESTIGATOR (RE)

Side profile: PLANT (PL)

In this case, I believe that the PL is the role she should focus because every team needs new ideas. In addition, she acts in an original and radical style, recommended for a team which is facing the company's financial problems and issues. PL is the team member with the highest power of imagination and intelligence. Also, as a RE, she has many relationships and interacts well with all kinds of people.

At the same time, the team leader could encourage more the RE qualities (relaxed, sociable, "good guy", very interested in what happens around him, positive) because the finance domain does not put a high value on socialization. Sometimes the leader can create specific tasks to encourage the profile (is the only RE in this team).

The leader of a RE should expect from him at the loosing of the interest after the "fascination" shots down. Sometimes they are tempted to keep the information for themselves or to underestimate the value of others ideas.

- **VALENTINA H.**

Current position: Accountant

Previous position: Accountant

Main profile: IMPLEMENTER (IMP)

Side profile: COMPLETER-FINISHER (CF), MONITOR EVALUATOR (ME)

Choosing this person for the position of accountant can be considered a successful election. The IMP has developed a very practical sense, a great self-control and he is disciplined. They work hard and address the problems in a systematic manner. IMP is a fair person for the company they work and he is less interested in pursuing own interests.

An entrepreneur is always wishing an accountant dedicated to organization and work. In addition, a good accountant should be honest and fair in the first place which it fits perfect on the IMP's features. He is sincere, honest and trustworthy. He not gets discouraged and for a decision, he will develop an implementation program. For a group of people and a goal, he will develop a viable organization. He works effectively, systematic, methodical, but he can become inflexible.

Furthermore, as CF he has a capacity to complete the work, pays great attention to detail and is always cautious and concerned. The clear and precisely thinking offered by ME it's great for accounting.

The leader of an IMP must take care because sometimes this profile can manifest a lack of loyalty towards the organization and he can be the launcher for some unconstructive critics.

- **DORINA A.**

Current position: Economist

Previous position: –

Main profile: MONITOR EVALUATOR (ME)

Side profile: IMPLEMENTOR (IMP), COORDINATOR (CO), PLANT (PL)

As I mentioned earlier, the domain is influencing the typology of the roles. In other words, if these employees had been worked in other fields, the structure of the roles would look completely different. It is clear that the ME and IMP roles are beneficial for the financial and economic professions.

As in the previous case, the PL should be developed further. It's very possible that this role would have more clout, but because of the job profile (not creativity to the fore) the employee had to develop other roles as required.

For this employee the CO profile could be developed because are useful features for the group: the concerning for the objectives, the manner in which she evaluates the resources and distributes the activities in the team.

The leader of a ME can expect from critics sometimes clumsy, constant negative remarks. In addition, it is known that the ME will compete with a CO or a PL.

- **MIHAI B.**

Current position: Economist

Previous position: –

Main profile: TEAM WORKER (TW)

Side profile: COORDINATOR (CO), IMPLEMENTOR (IMP)

As a team member, TW always tries to support the team and several TW ensure greater cohesion within the group and durability over time. Honesty, integrity and trust from the IMP profile are beneficial for the profession.

It is very possible to appear conflicts between CO and the team, so it is very important to determine exactly who will play this role, because the different visions of the team can create problems.

Just like in the case of the other TW, it's appropriate to mention here the lack of flexibility and receptiveness to new ideas coupled with the decisions avoidance. The competition for position or partisan attitudes also remains valid in this case.

- **MARIA B.**

Current position: Secretary – HR Inspector

Previous position: Referee Database

Main profile: COMPLETER FINISHER (CF)

Side profile: TEAM WORKER (TW), MONITOR EVALUATOR (ME)

CF is sometimes called "the fearful" because he is always afraid of what could go wrong. The settling in the position of Secretary is a pretty good solution for this profile since CF is always caring and concerned for the team, takes care of orders, meeting deadlines and program fulfilling.

The position of Secretary requires attention to details and the CF is focused on them, sometimes ignoring the major objectives. The TW qualities maintain the team spirit, but the ME gives less cheerfulness, warmth and spontaneity, and these characteristics are important for a secretary.

The leader must take care in what activities is involved the CF because its criticisms and concerns will "bulldoze" team morale. In addition, quite often the CF forgets the overlook in favor of all the details.

CONCLUSIONS

The human resources are the most important "wealth" of an organization and the Betty Ice manager known this very well. The importance of team and human resources can be seen every day in the work environment, in the attitude of employees, in the good opinion they have regarding the senior management.

I met in this company a close-knit team, which contains almost all of Meredith Belbin roles, either dominant or secondary. As a matter of fact, each employee has been elected by the general manager and this is one thing to praise.

For team leaders, Belbin's theory may have the following advantages:

- Improve the team performance and assure the success;
- Is a support for recruitment, staff evaluation, personal development, career planning, advice and guidance
- A superior understanding of behavioral factors and interaction at work
- Enriching the knowledge base and its management tools
- Improving the performance of the organization.

The development objectives for team roles can be included in the overall personal development and can be combined with the performance evaluation system. The evaluation of the team roles can be repeated at regular intervals to identify how personal profile evolves over time, if the personal development objectives have been achieved and what's still to be done.

In the future, Belbin's theory will find an increasingly more practical applicability. The Belbin profile may appear in the CV of the candidates and the specialists will be able to make the Belbin profile for different jobs within the company and many others.

A survey at least interesting can involve the establishment of two teams (one based on traditional methods of team building and the other based on Belbin's theory) and comparing the two teams to see in which one the synergy is higher and the work is more efficient.

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