

FAQ's on the Belbin Assessments and Questionnaires

Q Is it compulsory to be accredited or certificated to use Belbin Team Role profiling assessments?

A No, it is not compulsory, because Belbin Team Role assessments are of a behavioural rather than psychological nature and the reports are generated by the Interplace computerised expert system. It is highly recommended however that consultants, trainers, facilitators and others involved in giving advice and feedback attend an approved Belbin accreditation course.

Q In the past I have used a self-scoring Self Perception Inventory can I still use it?

A There is much misunderstanding about this so let me provide you with an extract from a Belbin communication put out in October 2001: *"Many of our telephone calls request information on the copyright of Belbin materials, in particular, the use of the self-scoring Self-Perception Inventory (SPI) or Belbin questionnaire published in Meredith's book Management Teams Why They Succeed Or Fail (1981). To clarify our position, we own the copyright and do not allow this questionnaire to be reproduced in any form. Certainly individuals may purchase the book and complete the SPI for their own personal development, but any wider usage is an infringement of copyright. In fact, we do not recommend the use of this questionnaire anymore, as it is obsolete (no Specialist Role), lacks the balance of Observer input, and most importantly, does not offer responsible advice."* I hope that makes it clear but if you still have any doubt about the copyright of any material you are using do contact me and I shall be pleased to clarify things.

Q I understand computer software is available for producing Belbin profiles, how can I find out more about it?

A Just email me at barrie.watson.cert-uk.info and ask for a free Interplace brochure.

Q How can I obtain the new computer generated reports?

A There are a number of options for obtaining the latest Belbin reports generated by the Belbin Interplace computer system. To find the best option and best price for you use the Reports link on the cert-uk.info website or email me.

Q Where can I get the latest Belbin questionnaire?

A To obtain the latest assessment forms free of charge email me and I shall be pleased to provide copies.

Q I have been told there is a facility for adding 360 degree feedback. Is this true?

A Yes, the facility for adding Observer Assessments to provide feedback on how others see you has been available for a number of years now. This is one of the big advantages of the Belbin Interplace system as it provides a much more robust multi-perspective profile than methods based on self-reporting only. If you would like to see examples of some of the reports based on the feedback of observers do contact me and just ask for "Free Example Reports".

Q What's the name of the book containing the Belbin Self Perception Inventory and information about the Team Role model?

A The original book written by Dr Meredith Belbin describing the development of the Team Role model and containing the self-scoring Self Perception Inventory was called *Management Teams - Why They Succeed or Fail*. The revised edition of the book is

available from Amazon.

Q The original edition of the inventory included 8 team roles and the specialist role was not included. I have recently seen a copy of the inventory where each of the 8 sections contain 10 items. Are there now 10 team roles?

A The Specialist Team Role did not become apparent until the methodology was applied in the business world, a few years after the publication of Management Teams - Why They Succeed or Fail which described the original experiments of Dr Belbin. The current version of the Self Perception Inventory has 10 statements in each section because they include a 'control' element - a statement that is used to provide some indication of the robustness of the results. There are still only 9 Team Roles.

Q Is there a discount available for registered charities to obtain the latest version of the Belbin reports?

A Not officially but if you contact me at barrie.watson@cert-uk.info I shall try and help you in some way as my company, CERT-UK, does have an annual charity support budget.

Q Why is the observer assessment different from the self-assessment?

A The two assessments have a different perspective and purpose. The Observer Assessment is constructed to elicit what behaviours have been observed by work colleagues using a practical evidential approach. This is not so appropriate for use by the self as many people are not able to stand back and realistically assess their qualities in this way. The Self Perception Inventory is therefore designed to provoke people to think how they would naturally behave in given situations as a way of eliciting their Team Role tendencies using a degree of self-reflection.

Q Can you please explain the advantages and disadvantages of Belbin profiling?

A I think the main advantage is in how it provides a non-confrontational and non-hierarchical language to describe a person's natural behavioural tendencies. The fact that it is behavioural based (rather than a psychometric assessment) and easily understood and used by people at all levels in an organisation is of course a big advantage, plus of course the facility for observer feedback.

The main disadvantage is that as behaviour is more open to change the assessments need to be done at reasonably regular intervals. This may however be regarded as an advantage and something that should be encouraged.

Q If I answer the questionnaire again, in a different frame of mind or with different emotions, will my results change significantly?

A Obviously, when a person completes the Belbin Self Perception Inventory it will be influenced by recent events and circumstances but it still provides a useful indicator of their natural workplace behavioural tendencies, providing the person has been honest when completing the inventory.

Generally speaking this behavioural pattern is quite enduring as it is influenced by DNA and genetics and related to a person's established personality and although the way a person manages their behavioural pattern may change the order of their natural behavioural preferences does not normally change that much.

It is not unusual however for people to believe or claim to have changed a lot when in fact they haven't. This is one of the reasons we have provided a facility to add observer feedback using the Observer Assessment which involves work colleagues reporting observed behaviour. This feedback is very powerful and enables a more robust profile and additional reports to be provided by embracing the profound conclusions of

Aristotle: "We are what we repeatedly do."

Q Are the Belbin Team Role assessments available in languages other than English?

A Yes. The latest version of the assessments and reports are available in a number of other languages including: Chinese, Czech, Danish, Estonian, French, German, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish. Other languages are currently being translated and up to date information can be obtained by contacting me at barrie.watson@cert-uk.info or using the CERT website contact form.

Q What is the maximum number of Observer Assessments that can be used?

A The maximum number of observers can be set as high as 20 but my guidance is that it is limited to a number you judge to be appropriate bearing in mind that the observers must know the person well in a work context, which is typically between 4 and 6 people. A useful analogy is to imagine a stone being thrown into water. The ripples near to the point of impact are much more pronounced and while it may be possible to see the ripples a long way from the point of impact they will be much less distinct. In the same way, although it is possible to increase the statistical sample by getting more observers people who are close to the person being observed are likely to provide much more reliable observations. I would therefore tend to opt for quality rather than quantity.

Q With regard to the observer feedback, is it constructive rather than negative as I don't want it to dishearten people?

A Although the Observer Assessment (OA), does make provision for providing feedback on any, what we describe as *allowable weaknesses*, the downside of a person's Team Role strengths. This is an important part of the self-improvement process as without having awareness of the perceptions of others it is quite probable that a person would miss the opportunity to remedy any weaknesses. I would also like to emphasise that the Observer Assessment is based on people reporting what they have seen, whereas the SPI is a reflection of what the individual perceives to be their natural behaviours. The process need not be negative therefore. I see it as helping each other to improve for the benefit of the individual and the team as a whole.

For more information or to raise issues you wish to discuss or clarify please use the *Contact Us* navigation link on the CERT website.

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