

eBooklet

How to improve your CV and interview technique using your Belbin Team Role Report

First impressions count... and the first impression a prospective employer will normally have of you is when they read your CV. From that initial review, they will decide if you're someone who is worth interviewing. So, a great CV is critical if you want to create a good first impression.

A well written CV can give you an edge over other candidates and increase the chance of being invited to interview. If you don't make it to the interview... you probably have no chance of getting the job.

Several factors can reduce your chances of being invited for interview, especially if your CV:

- Doesn't grab the attention of the employer
- Is too general / not targeted at the specific role
- Is more a list of tasks and responsibilities than an effective sales tool
- Doesn't highlight your achievements – it talks about what you have done, not how well you have done it
- Doesn't let the employer see who you are as a person and all you could bring to the role

To stand the best chance of getting an interview, your CV needs to stand out from the crowd - it doesn't just have to be good, it must be great. So...










- How can you increase the chance of your CV ending up in the "yes" pile for interview?
- How can you transform your CV from a list of jobs, tasks and responsibilities, to a document that truly sells your achievements and what you can offer?
- How can you make your personality, not just your skills and knowledge, shine through?

Here's some quick tips to help you...

- Spend quality time putting together the best CV you can – one that really sells you effectively as a candidate
- Make sure the CV is not too generic – much better to align what you say in your CV to what the employer is asking for
- Double-check spelling and grammar – when faced with 10's, 100's or even 1000's of CV's, employers will make tough decisions to whittle the applicants down and will often reject any CV's with basic mistakes
- Don't be too modest – really sell yourself / describe what you've done in as positive way as you can
- Focus on your achievements, skills and the behaviours you can bring to the role – not just your previous responsibilities

Belbin Team Roles – A quick introduction

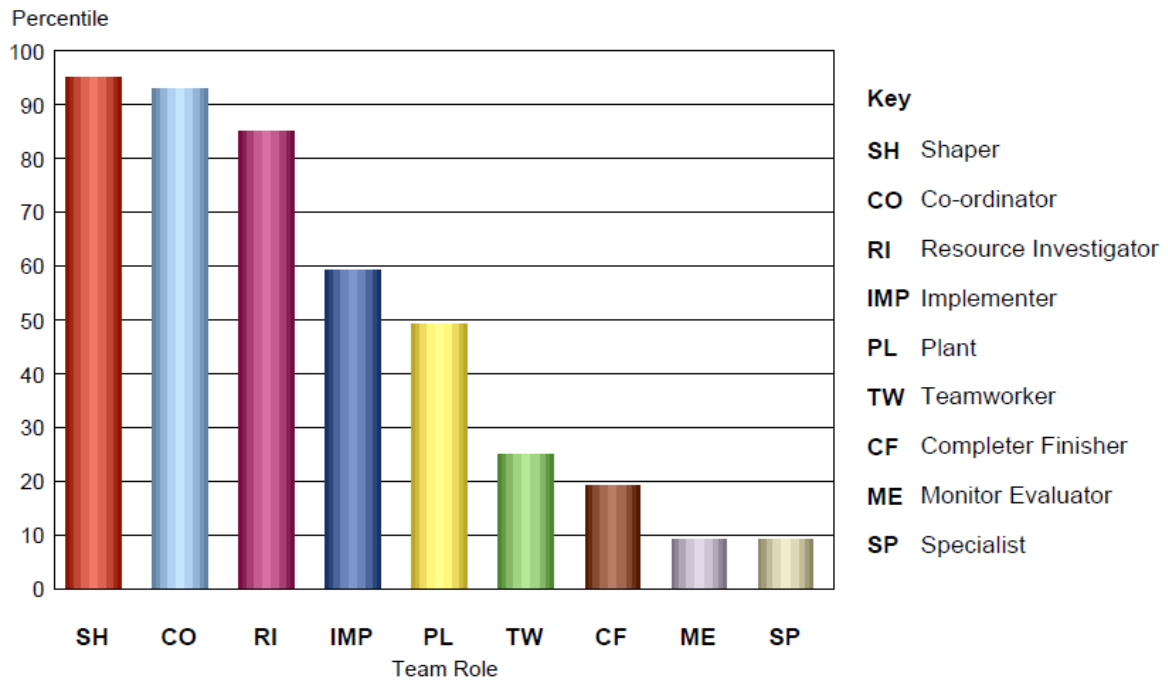
Here is a brief description of the 9 different Belbin Team Roles;

Team Role	Contribution	Allowable Weaknesses
Plant 	Creative, imaginative, free-thinking. Generates ideas and solves difficult problems.	Ignores incidentals. Too pre-occupied to communicate effectively.
Resource Investigator 	Outgoing, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities and develops contacts.	Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed.
Co-ordinator 	Mature, confident, identifies talent. Clarifies goals. Delegates effectively.	Can be seen as manipulative. Offloads own share of the work.
Shaper 	Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	Prone to provocation. Offends people's feelings.
Monitor Evaluator 	Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options and judges accurately.	Lacks drive and ability to inspire others. Can be overly critical.
Teamworker 	Co-operative, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens and averts friction.	Indecisive in crunch situations. Avoids confrontation.
Implementer 	Practical, reliable, efficient. Turns ideas into actions and organizes work that needs to be done.	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.
Completer Finisher 	Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors. Polishes and perfects.	Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate.
Specialist 	Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in rare supply.	Contributes only on a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities.

Let's look at some practical examples of how you can use Belbin Team Role report to improve your chance of success.

















Jo is looking for a new job and has as completed a Belbin Team Roles Report.

As you can see from the graph below, Jo's top two team roles are Shaper and Co-ordinator, the lowest two are Monitor Evaluator and Specialist.



How can a Belbin Report help me think about the type of role I'm best suited to?

Let's jump ahead a little to page 8 of the Belbin report. This covers work style and, as you will see below, this section highlights the top four team role pairings – Shaper, Co-ordinator, Resource Investigator and Implementer, and looks at the style or contribution of each pairing. This provides a summary of some of the main attributes, and what Jo can bring to a role.

Team Roles				Work Style
1	2	3	4	
				<p>Controlling</p> <p>“ I like taking overall responsibility for ensuring collective goals are met. ”</p>
				<p>Exploiting Opportunities</p> <p>“ I like to be given responsibility for grasping opportunities and driving things forward. ”</p>
				<p>Assigning Tasks</p> <p>“ I am ready to lead from the front when it comes to hard work. ”</p>
				<p>Facilitating</p> <p>“ Networking and enabling people to interact more effectively are what I do best. ”</p>

Having a clear understanding and high level of self-awareness of your core capabilities can help you focus on finding roles which match what you can offer. In Jo's case, a role that would provide the opportunity to manage / lead, explore and exploit new opportunities, allocate and assign tasks and network. Perhaps a Business Development or Sales Management role would suit?

How can a Belbin Report help me to further improve my CV?

Using the information contained in your own Belbin report can help you to add more “colour” and depth to your CV. It can help the prospective employer to better understand your strengths, behavioural attributes and what you could bring to the role. It can help you stand out from the crowd and demonstrate why you would be an excellent fit to the team and company culture. And if you get your CV right, you will improve your chances of being called for interview.

Let’s look at part of the feedback section on page 5 of Jo’s Belbin report. We have highlighted some key phrases;

You appear to have a firm grasp of objectives; an ability to drive both yourself and others, and a readiness to maximise the resources of a team. What could make life complicated, however, is that there are two competing working styles influencing your behavioural approach, which can introduce an element of unpredictability. One is the calm, unflappable style – tolerant and consultative, never losing sight of priorities and with a talent for establishing a consensus. The other is the hard-driving decision-maker who challenges and pushes others to achieve success.

Your natural operating style is one of leading from the front. However, the prime challenge for you is to exercise that propensity with discretion and without cramping the style and ambition of others.

You appear to have the makings of someone who is prepared to help the team develop its understanding of the world outside the organisation. Find occasions to go out and network and then present your findings to the team with enthusiasm. When you encounter promising original ideas within the team, volunteer yourself to find out more about how to exploit the opportunities these ideas present.

By using some of the phrases highlighted in the report, the CV profile can be changed from:

General Manager with 20 years’ experience within the engineering industry. Works well with people at all levels. Used to working to tight timescales in a fast-paced work environment with a wide range of clients and suppliers.

To a much stronger profile:

General Manager with 20 years’ experience within the engineering industry. A natural Leader who leads from the front, with an open and consultative management style and a talent for establishing consensus. Has a thorough understanding and grasp of key business objectives, and is focused on maximising the resources within a team to drive and motivate them towards achieving a high level of performance. Highly experienced in working to tight timescales in a fast-paced work environment, maintaining a calm and unflappable approach. Adept at helping the team to develop external links, building strong and lasting relationships with a wide range of clients and suppliers.

How can I make the most of my Achievements?

Achievements can demonstrate how well you have carried out a task / project or overcome challenges or problems.

So, think about what you are most proud of having delivered at work or what you have been praised for doing well. Remember that achievements can be personal or work-based and achieved individually or as part of a team.

When writing achievement statements, it is helpful to use the C.A.R. formula:

- **Challenge** – What was the task, problem or issue you faced?
- **Action** – what did you do to resolve this?
- **Result** – what was the impact or tangible benefit that was gained?

Let's look at an example achievement statement;

"Responsible for achieving a £300k per annum sales target (**The challenge**). After only 3 months in the role, proactively secured the opportunity to tender for work with a large Multi-National Company. Successfully tendered for, and won, a 12-month contract for a training and development programme for over 200 personnel. (**The action**) In year 1, the programme achieved a customer satisfaction rating of 97%, and was extended by a further 2 years. Total contract value over 3 years was £1.2m. (**The result**)"

So, you need to spend time reflecting on your achievements to date and ensuring they are in a prominent position on your CV. Many people don't write about their achievements, but rather list their responsibilities and the tasks they have done.

Getting ready for interview

Once you know the type of role you are suited to and have developed a CV that's perfect for the role you are applying for, you should have a much better chance of making it to interview stage. What's next?

An interview gives the employer a chance to meet you face-to-face and to decide whether they think you'll be able to do the job and whether you are the strongest candidate. They will ask about your strengths and weaknesses, assess your level of motivation and your potential fit within the team / organisation. Doing well at interview is not always as easy as it may seem.

Based on our experience, here are the top mistakes people make when they prepare (or rather when they don't prepare properly) for interview:

1. Turning up late... or in the wrong place!
2. Not reading the job description or advert to fully understand role
3. They forget what have written in their CV
4. They don't do enough research on the organisation to which they are applying
5. They haven't thought about the kind of questions they may be asked so haven't prepared properly and end up "winging it"
6. They don't plan their interview answers in enough detail
7. They don't prepare questions they may want to ask at the end of the interview.
8. They use the same work-related example repeatedly to illustrate all their points

How can you prepare more effectively for an interview in general terms?

- Check and confirm interview details; Who is the interview with, where and when?
- Arrive in plenty of time so you don't feel rushed
- Read the Job Description / Advert thoroughly to understand the role and what the company is looking for
- Think about how you can help the interviewer to see the strengths you offer and how you can persuade them that you're a great match for the role
- Read your CV / application form thoroughly again before the interview
- Do your homework: find out everything you can about the role, the organisation and the culture of the organisation. Read, research, talk to people...
- Have a think about the type of questions you may be asked
- Prepare strong answers to likely interview questions which present you in a positive light
- Have a variety of well-thought through examples to illustrate your achievements, style and skills.
- Prepare questions you may want to ask at the end of the interview; questions which will reinforce your motivation for the position and knowledge of the company.

Using Belbin to give great interview answers

The information in your own Belbin report can help you to:

- Bring your interview answers to life
- Prepare more thoroughly for any questions about your behavioural attributes / personality / motivation etc.
- Understand how to answer the dreaded "What are your weaknesses?" question
- It can also give you an objective view of your strengths and show you how to sell these to the employer

Let's look at another practical example...

Jo's application has been successful. There is an interview next week...

Here is an excerpt from the strengths section on page 6 of Jo's Belbin report:

Strengths

You:

- prefer to lead rather than to support.
- are likely to be a high-profile, dominant person, capable of making your voice heard.
- are dynamic and entrepreneurial: a developer of new ventures.
- are a forthright and a determined individual, with the energy and drive to overcome obstacles.

Jo can use this information to improve the quality of interview preparation and effectiveness of answers.

So, the typical answer to the interview question, "What are your strengths" might be something like, "I'm good at working in a team, get on well with people and think I have good communication skills."

By using the information in the Belbin report, the answer can be transformed into something like this;

"My core behavioural strengths lie in 3 main areas; I'm a natural team leader and work at my best in a role where I can use my strong influencing skills to manage and motivate a team to achieve a high level of performance and results. I thrive in a fast paced, dynamic working environment where I can utilise my entrepreneurial skills to help grow and develop the business. Finally, I'm very results focused and have the drive and energy to overcome obstacles and ensure the required results are delivered."

Sound better?

Here is another example using the Understanding your Belbin profile section on page 6:

Understanding your Contribution

Looking at the results solely from your self-perception, you have highlighted two possible contributions you can make. Below is some advice on how to play to your strengths further in these areas:



To play your Shaper role to better effect, cultivate your image as someone who is ready to speak out on important subjects and can handle controversial issues. If you can do this in a positive manner, you could become a valuable spokesperson for the team.



To play your Co-ordinator role to better effect, take the lead role in bringing others to agreement on important decisions. Aim for a balance between airing different views and moving to a conclusion.

To the question... "What would you say you bring to a team?", you might answer;

"I feel there are 2 main areas that I contribute to a team. First of all, I'd say I have a very collaborative style. I have the ability to take on board the views of the team and I am highly skilled at guiding people towards reaching a conclusion or decision. Secondly, if for any reason the team is unable to reach a consensus, I have no problem in taking a more direct approach and will move from a collaborative style to a more directive approach. I feel comfortable speaking up to share my views and am happy to face any challenges head on."

What about answering a question about my weaknesses?

Perhaps one of the most dreaded interview questions...

"What are your weaknesses?"

The good news is that if you are well prepared, you can make this question work in your favour.

Let's look at the possible weaknesses section from page Jo's report:

Possible Weaknesses

You may:

- risk alienating others as a result of your drive to get things done.
- take a generalist approach and tend not get involved with specifics.
- depend on continuous stimulation and be inclined to lose interest quickly.
- have difficulties thinking through the potential implications of a given action or set of circumstances.

Let's take the first point and work this through as an example; "risk alienating others as a result of your drive to get things done".

Jo's initial answer to the weakness question is:

"I can regularly upset or alienate people at work because as I'm so focused on getting things done that I don't have time to consider about what other people are thinking"

That's clearly not a great answer as it makes the weakness sound negative and may put the employer off.

There are four steps to working up your best answer;

1. Reduce the weakness

A weakness can sound much better if you start your answer by reducing or softening the weakness at the outset;

So instead of "I can regularly upset or alienate people...", much better to start with "I recognise that I can occasionally..." or "Sometimes I can upset people a little bit."

That helps make the weakness sound less of an issue.

2. Switch from talking about the negative to the positive

By definition, talking about a weakness means you will be talking about yourself in a more negative way. The key to a successful weakness answer is to flip from the negative to the positive, part-way through the answer. You can do that by focusing on the opposite of the weakness – or the cause in this case. So, if upsetting people is the weakness, if it's caused by the drive to get things done, then that can be positioned as a strength.



So, start to weave that into the answer;

"I can sometimes upset people a little bit at work as I can become so involved and focused on delivering the task that I'm working on, that I can occasionally overlook the impact on other people."

Again, using the word "occasionally" helps to soften this further.

3. Talk about how you recognise / manage this

It's fair to say that everyone has some weaknesses, but not everyone recognises or manages them. It will sound more positive if you can demonstrate your own self-awareness and show how you are managing this effectively;

"I recognise that I can sometimes upset people a little bit at work as I can become so involved and focused on delivering the task that I'm working on, that I can occasionally overlook the impact on other people. I'm now much more aware when I do this and work much harder to resolve this as soon as I realise this has happened. Also, I always apologise and make sure people are OK if I have been pushing too hard for results."

This starts to demonstrate awareness and how you are proactively managing this and making an improvement.

4. End on a high

The answer is taking shape, but there is one last step – finishing on a very positive note. End your answer with the emphasis fully on the strength; in this example, the drive to get things done

So, the final answer would read something like this;

"I recognise I can sometimes upset people a little bit at work as I can become so involved and focused on delivering the task that I'm working on, that I can occasionally overlook the impact on other people. I'm now much more aware when I do this and work much harder to resolve this as soon as I realise this has happened. Over the last few months, I feel I have really improved in this area and because I am now actively addressing this. I've significantly reduced the number of times there has been an issue, which has allowed me to focus on driving the results of the team in a more positive way. I also now seek regular feedback on my soft skills as well as on my technical ability"

Much more impressive.

We hope you have found this eBooklet helpful. Good luck with your CV development and your interview preparation! If you would like to buy your own Belbin report, visit:

www.whitecubeconsulting.com