# FACTFILE:
# GCE PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS SERVICES

## UNIT A2 2: MANAGING TEAMS

## Learning Outcomes

### Students should be able to:
- evaluate the benefits and problems of team working;
- use the Tuckman team development model to examine the stages of team development that professional business services firms use with client businesses;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the different roles in a team according to the Belbin nine team roles model; and
- explain how a professional business services firm might use the Belbin nine team roles model in a client organisation.

## Performance Management

Performance management (PM) is a business process that consists of a number of people management team working within a business context involves the bringing together of people for a common purpose and the achievement of specified aims and objectives. Individuals normally have clearly defined roles (Belbin, 1998) and contribute to the work of the group. There may also be a degree of interdependence within the group where team members rely on other members to provide advice and support activities. Team members are responsible for their own work and share a collective responsibility for team output and performance. The leadership style of the team leader will influence the level of empowerment afforded to team members.

**Benefits of team working**
The benefits of team working include: increased productivity; provision of emotional security; overview of the big picture; increased ownership of the work; increased motivation; greater learning and development opportunities; enhanced organisational coordination; raised level of problem solving; enhanced decision making; the achievement of the team, department, and business's aims and objectives; better product / service; improved communication; enhanced communication skills; builds trust; encourages risk-taking creation; career development opportunities; the division of labour (specialisation); more flexibility; the fostering of creativity; the facilitation of innovation; the creation of a support network.

**Productivity**
Increased productivity can be generated where the team members work within a production system and the work flow system can be designed to fully utilise the skills and capabilities of the team members. The combination of equipment, team member, and work flows ensures that the optimum use of resources, optimisation of output, and higher team member productivity.

**Emotional security**

Team working helps with the provision of emotional security where a team member may feel unsure about what to do or how to complete a task. The advice, assurance, empathy and support offered by other team members may help the team member to feel safe and secure in the completion of the task or how to deal with a difficult situation.

**Big picture**

The leader of a team can give team members an overview of the big picture in terms of how the team's goals and tasks fit within the business plan and the strategy of the business. This highlights the value of their team work to the business and increases the meaning of their work.

**Engagement**

Through the process of team meetings and the increased engagement with team members, a team member may feel that they have increased ownership of their work. This feeling of ownership may serve as a motivating factor to ensure that quality work is produced.

**Motivation**

Maslow (1943) states that people's motivation levels are influenced by the need for belongingness which fits with being the member of a team. The safety needs which Maslow also refers to fits with the team factor where the team leader and other team members can provide an environment that meets health and safety requirements and employee wellbeing needs.

**Learning and development**

Team membership offers the opportunity for greater learning and development for the team leader and team members. Team leaders may receive training on how to manage people and team members may be offered training on how to work with others. Skills may be acquired and developed in relation to leadership, communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and decision making.

**Coordination**

Organisational coordination may be enhanced as the team leader is able to plan and allocate resources in a timely fashion to ensure that work is completed on schedule. Team meeting enable the leader to map out what needs to be done, by whom and when. All team members are able to see how they fit into this plan and how their work is linked to other team members. Through team meeting the leader is also to monitor the progress of individual and team work.

**Problem solving**

The team leader is able to organise team meeting to address work problems and seek advice and solutions from team members to solve problems. Japanese manufacturing firms are noted for using quality circles (teams) to identify problems and generate solutions which result in increased performance.

**Decision making**

Consulting with team members who are knowledgeable about their work and have a breadth and depth of experience enhances the quality of decision making in relation to changes that may affect their work and the performance of the team and the business.

**Aims and objectives**

Team working helps to ensure that the business's aims and objectives are aligned with departments, teams and individual team members. The alignment of business goals through teams ensure that everyone is undertaking work that fits with the needs of the business.

**Quality**

A better product / service should be produced as team members (empowered) are able to liaise with other team members to quickly address customer requirement / complaints.

**Communication**

Regular team meeting and management information systems help to improve team communication and ensure that everyone knows what they are required and expected to do. Improved communication reduces the likelihood of conflict occurring.

**Communication skills**

Team working enhances the communication skills level of team members as team members need to be able to accurately convey information to internal team members and external stakeholders.

**Trust**

Working within a team helps to build trust as team members have to rely on other team members to complete their work successfully.

**Risk taking**

Team working may encourage risk taking as it is the team that agrees to take decisions as opposed to the individual. Consequently team members will not feel that they are responsible should a decision and the resulting action does not go well.

**Career development**

More career development opportunities may be available to a team member as they can learn to do jobs that are performed by other team members. This results in the employee becoming multi-skilled and increases the range of jobs that they could apply for.

**Division of labour**

The team leader is able to divide up work and allocate tasks best suited to a team member (specialisation). This process should ensure that team members are fully utilised.

**Flexibility**

If a team member is unavailable for work the team leader may be able to call upon other team members to help. Team working offers the business more flexibility during times of employee absences.

**Creativity and innovation**

Team working may foster creativity and facilitate innovation as team members can share their knowledge and use their experience to address business problems. Furthermore, they can develop and introduce new ways of working that provide a better product or service.

**Support network**

Team working creates an internal support network (intra-team) and it may also have connections with teams inside and outside of the business (inter-teams). These networks provide access to expertise, advice, and possibly additional resources which can be utilised to enhance the work of the team.

## Problems of team working

**Fragmentation**

A problem may occur within a team where it fragments team into subgroups. This fragmentation may cause competition among the subgroups who may fight for resources or not share information or resources with other sub groups. This results in the team underperforming as resources are not utilised effectively or efficiently.

**Dominant team member**

A dominant team member may influence other team members to think and act like them and thus deprive other team members the opportunity to express their own thoughts and views. This can adversely affect the quality of a decision-making process which relies on all team members giving their perspective on a business matter.

**Time and space**

Team working can be impaired if there are long distances separating team member, such as working in different cities or countries. Different time zones (Australia, Scotland, Canada) may also make it difficult to contact other team members.

**Unequal workloads**

Unequal distribution of workloads where team members are given more work to do than other team

members. This can make the over burdened team member feel angry, frustrated, stressed and demotivated. The quality of their work may also fall and they could: become ill; be absent from work; leave their job. All of these possible consequences could adversely affect the performance of the team.

### Unproductive discussions
Teams may engage in unproductive discussions at team meeting which wastes time and may cause some team members to be frustrated and annoyed.

### Social loafing
Team working may enable certain team members to reduce their work effort (social loafing) as their work will be completed by other team members. This can cause resentment among other team members and could result in conflict within the team.

### Disruptive team member
Team members can be disruptive if they do not get their own way or if a change is planned that may affective their work. Disruptive behaviour can cause conflict to occur within the team which can impair the performance of the team.

### Blame culture
A blame culture can develop within a team when things start to go wrong. If the wrong decision is made or a team member makes a mistake, rather than following the collective approach, team members will try to distance themselves from the negative result by blaming other team members.

### Conflict
Conflict among team members can result in dysfunctional behaviour by team members which may adversely affect their performance, the performance of other team members, and team performance. Conflict can occur due to: personality clashes; the perception that they are not being treated fairly; the team member's perception that the rewards offered inadequately reflect their level of performance.

### Self interest
A team member may be more interested in promoting themselves than serving the interests of the team. This self-interest approach may result in the team member not sharing information with other team members or withholding resources. This type of behaviour can be detrimental to the performance of the team.

### Ineffective team leader
The team leader may be ineffective at managing the team. Their ineffectiveness may be due to: a lack of experience; insufficient training; insufficient resources; disruptive team members.

### Ineffective team member
A team member may be ineffective within the team.  Their ineffectiveness may be due to: a lack of experience; insufficient training; insufficient resources; lack of motivation.

### Inappropriate reward system
The reward system is designed to reward individual performance which is at odds with a team approach. This may cause team members to focus on work that may result in a higher reward for them but negatively impacts on the performance of the team. For example, a production team member may increase their output (reward based on output) but the quality of the product declines. This product may be scrapped, reworked, or returned to the factory after a customer has complained about the product. This situation may have repercussions for the production team and the manufacturing business (dissatisfied customer, possible loss in revenue, reputation damage, cost of rework, over paying production team member).

### Poorly designed management information systems (MIS)
Poorly designed management information systems can affect the performance of the team. Incorrect information or late circulation of information can have a negative impact on team members and the team. For example, electricians working on a construction project may be directed to complete electrical wiring and after they have completed the work they are told to rip it out as the air-conditioning workers have not installed the air-conditioning.

Table 1 provides a summary of the benefits and problems associated with team working.

**Table1. Benefits and problems associated with teamworking**

| Benefits | Problems |
|---|---|
| Increased productivity | Fragmentation into subgroups |
| Provision of emotional security (shared responsibility) | Dominant individual |
| Overview of the big picture | Distance/ time separating team members |
| Increased ownership of the work | Unequal distribution of workloads |
| Increased employee motivation | Unproductive discussions |
| Greater learning and development for all | Social loafing |
| Enhanced organisational coordination | Disruptive team members |
| Raised level of problem solving | Blame culture |
| Enhanced decision making through new perspectives | Intra and inter team conflict |
| Business's aims and objectives achieved | Self interest |
| Better service / product | Ineffective team leader |
| Improved communication | Ineffective team member |
| Enhanced communication skills | Rewarding individual performance |
| Builds trust | Design of management information systems |
| Encourages risk-taking | |
| Career development opportunities | |
| Division of labour (specialisation) | |
| More flexibility | |
| Fosters creativity | |
| Facilitates innovation | |
| Creates a support network | |

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**Evaluation of the benefits and problems of team working.**
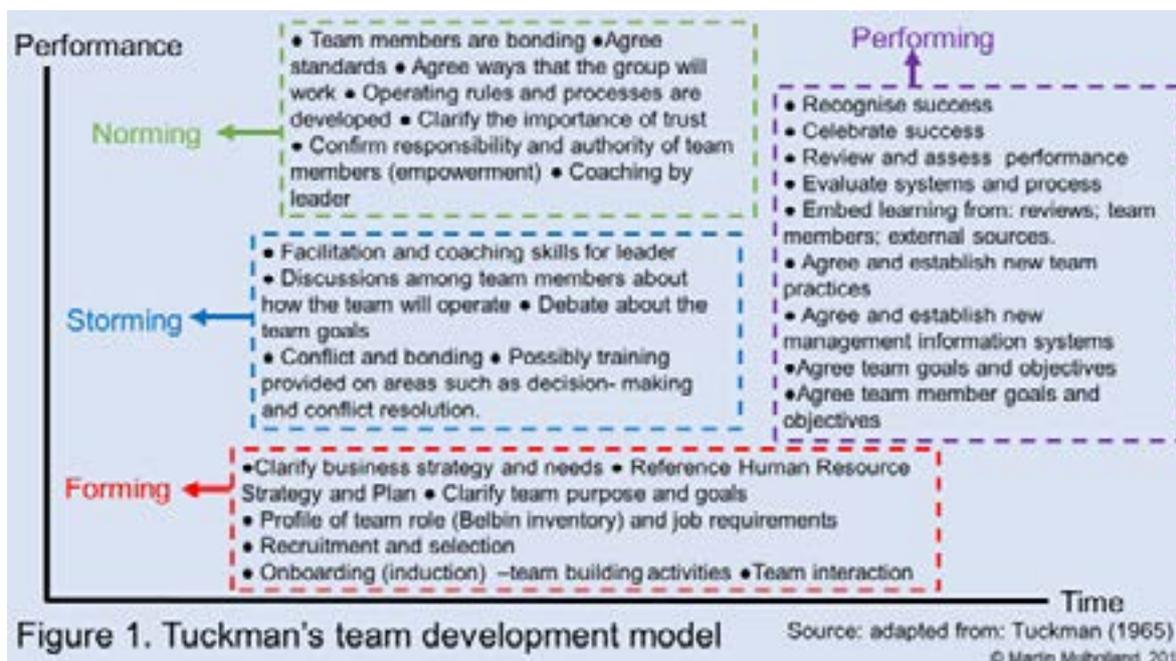Clearly there are a number of benefits that can be derived by a business which employs team working. However, these benefits will probably mean that the business will incur costs. Management and employee time will have to be devoted to decision-making, planning and communication activities. Management and employees will need to be given training in how to work effectively within a team. Budgets will need to be set that support the activities and the performance of teams. Management information systems will need to de designed and employed to ensure that teams and team members receive information and resources.

There are also problems that negatively impact on the work and performance of teams and team members. These problems can result in additional costs and a loss of income to the business. It is possible to take action to reduce the likelihood of these problems occurring although this may mean the business will have to spend additional money. As with the benefits, management and employee time should be devoted to decision-making, planning and communication activities. Management and employees should be given training in how to work effectively within a team. Budgets should be set that support the activities and the performance of teams. Management information systems should de designed and employed to ensure that teams and team members receive information and resources as and when required.

The benefits and problems of team working are interlinked by common themes. The benefits are supported by planning, provision of resources, training, and management information systems. The problems are

caused largely by the absence or limited provision of planning, resources, training, and management information systems. If these inadequacies were addressed the benefits, which are unique to each business and teams therein, would outweigh the problems and their associated costs. Furthermore, businesses will be required to use team working due to the structure of their business which is designed on a functional basis. Tuckman (1995) developed a group development model where he showed the different types of interactions that occurred among and between group members. The types of interactions varied depending at which stage of development the group had reached. The model consisted of four stages which were forming, storming, norming, and performing. Figure 1. illustrates Tuckman's Model as applied to a business where the word 'group' is replaced by the word 'team'. The stages of team development are linked to descriptions which cover the areas that professional business services (PBS) firms may cover.

At the Forming stage, the PBS firm may clarify what the relationship is between the team(s) and the business strategy and human resource strategy / plan. The PBS firm could use Belbin's Team role Inventory



Figure 1. Tuckman's team development model     Source: adapted from: Tuckman (1965)
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to assist in the recruitment and selection process of team members. After recruiting team members, an onboarding programme could be employed to help team members to become acclimatised to their team setting.

The PBS firm, at the Storming stage, could develop the coaching capability of the team leader and cover areas such as: conflict resolution; decision-making; managing people. Training could also be provided to team members on conflict resolution, decision-making, and working within a team.

The PBS firm could provide advice and training on setting standards, developing rules and processes, establishing trust (aspect of culture), and empowerment at the Norming stage.

Finally, at the Performing stage, the PBS firm could offer advice and training on dealing with success and failure, reviewing and evaluating performance, and planning for the future.

Belbin's model consists of nine roles which include: Implementer; Completer / Finisher; Shaper; Coordinator; Team Worker; Resource investigator; Monitor evaluator; Plant; Specialist. Detail on each role can be accessed at the Belbin (2018a) website.

Belbin (2014, p3) provides a report which lists how his model could be used. From page three onwards the report details how the listed points can be used. In addition to the Belbin list. IN addition, a PBS firm may use the Belbin model to: help with recruitment within and into the organisation (Determining the Team Roles profiles of particular jobs); the selection of job applicants; Identifying best team membership combinations; on-boarding recruits into an organisation/team; employing a common language; enhancing

the understanding of team roles; resolving conflict; developing leaders; coaching and mentoring team members; career planning.

### Recruitment

A PBS firm could use the Belbin model (BM) to help with the recruitment of staff into the client's organisation. Vacant Jobs could be reviewed and the role inventory could be mapped against the jobs. The person specifications for these jobs could contain reference to the required BM role. These person specifications could then be used as part of the recruitment process.

### Selection

The PBS firm could employ the BM roles in the selection of job applicants. An assessment centre could be used to objectively identify the BM roles that relate to each applicant. These assessments could be used in conjunction with interviews to assess the suitability of each applicant and determine who should be recruited.

### Best team membership combinations

After the selection process, the results of the assessment centre can be used to match the individual BM roles to the team roles profile.

### Onboarding recruits into the organisation /team

The PBS firm can develop an onboarding programme that reveals to each recruit their results (report) of the assessment centre. Recruits can be given feedback on how and why the BM was used. This feedback also introduces recruits to a new technical language which over time will become a common language to them. Furthermore, the recruits will form a better understanding of their role and the different roles of other members within their team.

### Resolving conflict

The PBS firm can provide training on conflict resolution to help team members deal with situations where they may be in conflict with other team members. For example, the Implementer may complain to the Completer Finisher that they are taking too long to finish a task. The Comleter Finisher may respond by stating that the Specialist had taken too long to give them support. This conflict situation could be minimised or avoided if the team members were versed with conflict resolution skills.

### Developing leaders

Training could be offered by the PBS firm to develop the team leader's people management skills including decision-making, time management, and conflict resolution.

### Coaching and mentoring team members

The PBS firm can deliver coaching and mentoring services to enhance the BM roles of team members and help them to develop other BM role attributes (multiskilling).

### Career planning

Career planning services can be provided by the PBS firm which helps team members identify roles and jobs that they want to undertake in the future. A skills audit could be undertaken to identify skills gaps and then develop a programme, with the agreement of the team members line manager, to address the skills gaps.

The Belbin Team-Role model is a well-established method for forming groups in the workplace, primarily for management teams. To create a Team Roles profile, each employee is asked to first complete a Self-Perception Inventory and then to collect Observer Assessments from others. Observer Assessments are Belbin's method for obtaining 360-degree feedback - these Observations, combined with an employee's Self Perception, provide the employee with a comprehensive report detailing and ranking their Team Role preferences, strengths and weaknesses, that is, how they typically interact and contribute in teamwork situations and how this might affect the business.

There are a range of advantages and disadvantages associated with the Belbin Team-Role model that can affect the effectiveness of teams.

## Advantages

**Objectivity**
An external, objective perspective of an employee behaviours are observed and their team roles are identified through the Belbin model. The application of an external model reduces the bias that may occur from preconceived views that a manager may have developed about an employee if they were undertaking a standalone assessment of an employee.

**Counter to discrimination**
The potential for discrimination cases being taken against the business by an employee may be reduced as externally validated objective assessments in the form of the Belbin model are being used. This applied model reduces the likelihood that a manager's negative view of an employee would influence their assessment of an employee.

**Selection process**
The effectiveness of team roles that an employee can play within a team are identified and ranked through the combination of the Belbin self-evaluation questionnaire and 360° observation report. This ranking enables managers to decide which people should be selected to be members of a team and the role that they should play within the team. The combination of the team members and the roles they play should enhance the performance of the team. For example, the Belbin model can be employed in assessment centres to assess applicants team role behaviours. The most desired team role behaviour identified in the person specification can be matched against those revealed during the assessment process. This helps the organisation to select and appoint the best applicant and reduce the need for training once the person is in the job.

**Employee development**
The model allows the employee to objectively identify their strengths and weaknesses. The employee is able to understand how they could be effectively employed within a team by utilising their strongest team roles. The employee may also want to address the team roles where they are weaker through learning and development programmes. Engaging in learning and development activities affords the employee the opportunity to enhance their overall work and team competence portfolio which extends their versatility to undertake a wider range of team roles in the future.

**Management tool**
A team manager can objectively identify and rank an employee's team roles capabilities. This enables a manager to decide which team an employee could be deployed to and the team roles that an employee would perform within the team. The model helps a manager to effectively combine and deploy employees with their respective team roles to a team.

**Learning and development aid**
A manager can ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of an employee which gives them the opportunity to address the employee's weaknesses and build on their strengths. A manager could provide learning and development programmes that remedy an employee's team role weaknesses and enhance their strengths. Employees who successfully completed these learning and development programmes would have a greater range of team role capability and subsequently give the manager more scope and flexibility in deploying employees to teams in the future.

**Conflict resolution**
The applied model helps to reduce conflict between the manager and the team and conflict among team members.  The team role assessments provide evidence to managers and employees about each employee's team role capability. This knowledge informs the discussion as to the team role(s) most suited to an employee within a team and may result in an employee being more accepting and committed to their designated team role. As employees within the team are aware of their team role(s) and that of their team members they will focus on their role and supporting the role of other team members rather than spending time arguing over who is best suited to a particular role.

**Facilitates change**
Employees and managers may be more adaptable to change. The results generated from the assessments

may give the employee and manager a better understanding about behaviour and how it affects, and is affected, by people you interact with. If it is shown that a behaviour is having a negative impact on the employee or other colleagues then there is an opportunity to amend the negative aspects of the behaviour. This revised behaviour may positively affect the employee and other people and possibly result in improved individual and team performance.

**Culture change**
The model can be employed to change business culture and performance. If the business wanted to create a continuous learning culture or high-performance team ethic then the Belbin model enables the team role capabilities of individuals and teams to be assessed. The organisation learns which individual and team weaknesses need to be addressed. The provision of learning and development to address these weaknesses demonstrates that the employee, the team and the organisation are open to learning and take on new learning. The expectation is that this acquired learning will result in improved employee, team, and organisation performance.

## Disadvantages

**Licence fee**
The organisation will have to pay a licence fee if it wishes to use the Belbin assessment processes.

**Assessment costs**
Assessment costs will be incurred. Will a member of staff be trained in the use of the Belbin assessment processes or will external consultants be employed to undertake the assessments.

**Logistic issues**
Time delays and limited flexibility may be encountered in using the model. Consultants may only be available at certain times that may not suit the work needs of the organisation.

**Assessors debate**
Conflict may occur in relation to who is undertaking the assessments. Employees may argue that the 360° observations should be undertaken by a consultant as they are perceived as being objective. Alternatively, employees may argue that 360° observations should be undertaken by a manager as this person is most knowable about the work an employee is required to do.

**Imprisoned role**
Employees may be or become unhappy if they perceive that they are required to perform the same team role(s) on a regular basis. If an employee is consistently undertaking the same roles then they may become frustrated and demotivated. This in turn may cause the employee to underperform or be disruptive.

Belbin identified weaknesses that may be attributed to team roles. These team role weaknesses are detailed on the Belbin (2018b) website.

**Technical skills deficit**
The employee may have the required team role behaviour but not the technical skills and abilities to do the job.

**Frozen in role**
There is the potential that if employees are cast in a certain team role then this will lead to inflexibility or unwillingness to contribute outside of the role over the longer term. This may restrict the capacity of the employee to grow and develop.

**Evaluation**
Belbin's team role model helps managers and employees to appreciate and understand the contribution that the model can bring to the team and organisation environment. The model contributes to an understanding of the dynamics of effective teamworking, to team building and the recruitment of team members, to team training and its transferability to the workplace. If teams are to be formed using team role profiles, then a better understanding is needed regarding: the impact of the interaction of these roles with the business

environment; the task; and experience and skills of team members. Clearly the Belbin model can be useful to a business in terms of improving team performance. However, the model also has limitations in terms of: who should undertake the assessments; the costs involved in managing the assessments; the weaknesses associated with team roles. Ultimately the business needs to compare the costs of using Belbin's team role model to the returns derived from the teams and decide if there is an appropriate return on the investment made.

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