

How to avoid confusion between similar Team Role types

Since there are nine separate Team Roles, and each of us may contribute a number of roles, it is not surprising that people can sometimes find it difficult to distinguish between certain roles.

The eight most commonly occurring areas of potential confusion are discussed in this section.



Plant (PL) or



Monitor Evaluator (ME)?

These are both 'thinking' roles, but they think in quite different ways. PLs operate through inspiration and creative intuition and like to form an intellectual overview. MEs are better at diagnosing problems, assessing situations, choosing best options and planning ahead.



Plant or



Resource Investigator (RI)?

These two roles tend to be confused because both are seen as 'creative'. In practice, the distinction between the two is important. PLs are more creative when left alone and kept free from disturbance, whereas RIs seek and need the stimulus of others.

So they thrive under very different conditions. PLs need a sympathetic and appreciative manager, a liberal atmosphere and an unstructured or loosely structured environment. RIs operate well in a fast-moving environment and in coping with the sudden or unexpected crisis.



Resource Investigator or



Co-ordinator (CO)?

Both of these are good at liaising, but again operate in different ways. RIs seek adventure and thrive on the discovery of new contacts. COs prefer the process of pulling together the resources and making sure they work in harmony with the goals of the organisation.



Teamworker (TW) or



Co-ordinator?

Both seek and enjoy consensus, but for TWs, the path lies promoting harmony and through building one-to-one relationships. COs are better at handling groups and projecting the sense of a common purpose. TWs are often skilled at working for difficult people; COs, at managing difficult people.



Co-ordinator or



Shaper (SH)?

These two are both strong leadership roles but they tend to adopt different styles. COs are skilled at getting the best out of people and using their talents to the full. SHs expect to be followed and drive those who work for them to the limit. COs and SHs tend to clash when they work alongside each other at the same status level.



Shaper or



Implementer (IMP)?

Both roles have a desire for action, but this is manifested in different ways. For SHs, the drive to meet the deadline necessitates keeping the team focused on, and challenged by, their goals, without getting involved in the whys and wherefores. IMPs motivate themselves to meet deadlines by planning the most practical way of working and following this method until the work is done.



Implementer or



Completer Finisher (CF)?

These are both regarded as 'action' roles but each takes a different approach to a task. IMPs are effective at building up and executing methodical systems and processes. CFs, however, are more concerned with getting the details right. Whilst an IMP would work to get things done as efficiently as possible, a CF would be more likely to miss deadlines in the quest for perfection.



Completer Finisher or



Specialist (SP)?

Both of these roles seek the highest quality standards in their work; the difference is the impetus behind their behaviour. For CFs, the need to achieve perfection pervades all areas of their work. For SPs, their focus is specifically on one area of expertise, which has standards against which everything else is measured and assessed. SPs become uncomfortable when subject to close supervision from those outside their subject area, whereas CFs are ready to accept this kind of intervention.