

Overview of Personality and Team Profiling Tools

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Introduction

There are a number of models and profiling tools that we can use with individuals and teams for a variety of purposes, including personal development, leadership development, performance coaching and team building. Overleaf we have provided an overview of our preferred tools.

When used within a team building and development context, these sorts of tools can help with:

- Increasing self-awareness
- Identifying personal areas for development
- Understanding and working with difference in others
- Building team synergy
- Profiling the team – strengths and weaknesses, biases and blindspots

There are four main types of *personality* profiling models and tools:

Horizontal Models of Personality

These tend to profile those aspects of personality that remain relatively unchanged within individuals over time. These models may use polar opposites (e.g. MBPTI/Personality Styles), scale typologies (e.g. Learning Styles, Belbin) or uniqueness typologies (e.g. StrengthFinder).

Vertical Models of Development

These models aim to profile our development, those aspects of ourselves that may change over time. These may focus on a particular aspect of the development (e.g. EQ), or may draw upon an explicit framework of development (e.g. Spiral Dynamics, Leadership Development Framework).

Relational models

Which are more concerned with people's strategies, preferences and tendencies in relationship to others (e.g. Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes, Belbin, Firo-B, etc).

Competency framework models

Which assess an individual against an ideal set of competencies or skills or capabilities (e.g. Personal Mastery and Leadership Effectiveness Assessment).

Below is a table describing the tools that I use most frequently

Model	Description	Cost and method	Pros and cons
Personality Style Inventory	This is similar to the Myers-Briggs MBPTI Test but a lot cheaper. Provides a personality type profile using Jungian types (Introvert-Extrovert, Intuitive-Sensory, Thinking-Feeling, Judging-Perceiving). A team version has additional analysis and questions relating to the team as a whole.	£80 for facilitator guide plus about £8 each Pen and paper test with self marking Takes 30 about minutes.	Pros: • Many people already familiar with it. Provides useful language for basic personality differences. Cons: • Quite complex. Profile needs interpretation.
Belbin – team roles	Provides an individual profile against Belbin's 9 team roles (Plant, Resource Investigator, Co-ordinator, Shaper, Monitor-Evaluator, Teamworker, Implementer, Completer-Finisher, Specialist) along with a variety of interpretation reports.	£25 per person Internet on-line questionnaire Takes about 30 minutes.	Pros: • Supports effective team working by recognising each person's role. Cons: • The 9 roles are can be a bit limiting or stereotyping.
StrengthFinder	This is a relatively new approach to identifying your greatest potential areas of strength, developed by Marcus Buckingham and The Gallup Organisation, drawing upon latest thinking in behavioural psychology and research into neural pathway development. Provides a strengths profile (top five signature themes out a possible 34 – so everyone has a unique profile).	£11 per person Internet on-line time controlled questionnaire Take under an hour. The price includes a copy of the book that explores the strengths based approach.	Pros: • Most people feel very recognised and energised by their profile. Good for sharing with team members. Cons: • Recognises individuality but needs application to roles and teams.
Learning styles	Draws upon Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle to create a profile of your preferred learning styles (Activist, Reflector, Theorist, Pragmatist). Can be applied to the cycle of learning within teams.	The official version costs a lot but we have an alternative version which can be used for a team. Self completion pen and paper test Takes under an hour.	Pros: • Many people already familiar with it. Good at revealing basic blindspots in learning and working style. Cons: • Can be taken too simplistically. Needs good interpretation.
Spiral Dynamics Value Systems Profile	This introduces you to a powerful framework for understanding your own and others development, as well for viewing the collective evolution of cultures within teams, organisations and societies.	£8 per questionnaire. Soft copy by email. Takes about 30-40 minutes.	Pros: • Great at revealing essential differences in motivation and values. Works at individual, team & organisation levels. Cons: • Requires detailed educational explanation.
Leadership Development Framework	There is some similarity in this profile to Spiral Dynamics, however it will provide some additional in depth insight and provides a useful lexicon for leadership development.	£150 per detailed profile. On-line or offline. Involves a sentences completion test for which your responses need to be sent off to a trainer analyst. About 3 weeks to administer.	Pros: • Great at helping understand leadership stage of development and challenges Cons: • Individual rather than team tool. Costly and time consuming.
Personal Mastery and Leadership Effectiveness Assessment	This provides a framework of personal mastery and leadership competencies for you to assess yourself against, and will act as an on-going reference point for the focus of your development. Could include colleague (manager/peer/subordinate) assessment for 360° feedback.	£100 per profile. Pen and paper self completion and 360° This takes longer than most tests and involves effort in enrolling colleagues.	Pros: • Provides detailed blueprint for leadership development. Cons: • Time consuming and needs coaching support.

Profiling tools – more detail

Belbin Team roles

Provides an individual profile against Belbin's 9 team roles (Plant, Resource Investigator, Co-ordinator, Shaper, Monitor-Evaluator, Teamworker, Implementer, Completer-Finisher, Specialist) along with a variety of interpretation reports.

Additional cost: £25 per person. Internet on-line questionnaire. Takes about 30 minutes. Results can be explored within a team building workshop or one-to-one.

StrengthsFinder

Provides a unique profile for each individual based upon their top five strengths from a list of 34 generic strengths or talents. StrengthsFinder has been developed by Marcus Buckingham and The Gallup Organisation and is a relatively new approach that focuses on what people are really good at and how they apply it to their role.

Additional cost: About £10 per person. Internet on-line questionnaire, time controlled responses. Takes about 50 minutes. Results can be explored within a team building workshop or one-to-one.

Personal Styles Inventory (MBTI equivalent)

This is similar to the Myers-Briggs MBPTI Test but a lot cheaper. Provides a personality type profile using Jungian types (Introvert-Extrovert, Intuitive-Sensory, Thinking-Feeling, Judging-Perceiving). A team version has additional analysis and questions relating to the team as a whole.

Additional cost: £80 plus about £8 each. Pen and paper test with self marking. Takes 30 about minutes. Results can be interpreted in a one-to-one coaching session or shared and explored within a team building workshop.

Leadership 360° assessment

Although I have a standard questionnaire for this, it could also be tailored to focus in on specific aspects of leadership or management competence which are of important to you. The tool is intended to provide a profile of the managers leadership style, their perceived strengths and weaknesses, an indication of key problem or developmental areas, and most importantly, an indication of where their self-assessment differs significantly from the view of their colleagues and direct reports. We will devise a simple process (on-line if possible) for obtaining feedback from a manager, 2-3 colleagues and 3 direct reports.

There are six high levels categories in the assessment, (that examines behaviours, skills and competencies, strengths and talents, attitudes and qualities):

- Personal mastery and change leadership
- Business performance and delivery
- People management and motivation
- Culture and team development
- Direction setting, strategic thinking, creativity and innovation
- Customer and market orientation

Other psychometric testing

Depending upon what else you want to evaluate in the team, I could draw upon other specialists to administer any appropriate tools to assess management aptitudes and capabilities. This could provide a harder edge to the overall evaluation process to complement the more descriptive typology tools such as MBTI and Belbin. I also have colleagues who are qualified to use other specific tools such as RPQ and FIRO-B if these are appropriate.

Leadership development framework

For more in-depth assessment I would also use the Leadership Development Framework (a very powerful stages of development model), however this has time and cost implications as sentence completions need to be individually assessed by trained analyst (it can take 2-3 weeks for a profile to be returned). If this is not feasible, I can design a simpler tool which can help evaluate the extent to which managers are activated at the key post-conventional stages of *individualist* and *strategist* within the LDF. We would be looking for at least one member of the team to be operating at these levels, although it is also important that most of the team are operating primarily at the *achiever* stage of development.

Involves a sentences completion test for which your responses need to be sent off to a trainer analyst. Additional cost: £150 per detailed profile. On-line or offline. Results best interpreted in one-to-one session. It may be that this is a tool that we use at a later date as part of an on-going leadership development programme.

Spiral Dynamics

This is culture profiling tool that is extremely useful in showing how compatible the organisational culture of the acquired organisation is with the acquiring organisation. I could use it to highlight potential conflicts between competing value systems and advise on the kind of cultural development needed within an organisation. It involves the use of a self-completion questionnaire which takes participants about 30 minutes to complete I would use the tool in combination with my own qualitative observations from interviews, meetings and being onsite.