# The HR Leader's Buyer's Guide to Employee & Team Assessments

*HELPING YOU CUT THROUGH THE CLUTTER TO FIND THE TOOL THAT TRULY MOVES THE NEEDLE*

## BELBIN®
### NORTH AMERICA

# The HR Leader's Buyer's Guide to Employee & Team Assessments

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## WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

Let's be honest: The market is saturated with assessments. Some are backed by science. Some are backed by marketing. And some just look pretty in a report. As an HR or L&D leader, your challenge isn't a lack of options—it's figuring out what actually works for your team.

This guide breaks it down: what matters, what to avoid, and how to choose a platform that fits your organization's goals and culture.

## THE PROBLEM WE'RE SOLVING

We built this guide around real challenges faced by HR and L&D leaders:

• Teams that aren't clicking despite good individual performers
• Assessment fatigue from tools that offer insight but no action
• Pressure to show ROI on people development investments
• Struggles integrating tools into real workflows
• Lack of executive buy-in because the tools feel "soft"

If any of this sounds familiar, you're in the right place.

# UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL VS. TEAM ASSESSMENTS

Individual Assessments are typically used to uncover personal strengths, styles, and preferences—great for self-awareness, career development, and leadership coaching. Think MBTI, DISC, or StrengthsFinder.

**Team Assessments**, on the other hand, explore how people interact, collaborate, and perform together. These tools look beyond personality and into dynamics: communication styles, trust, conflict, delegation, and team roles in action.

## USE CASE DIFFERENCES

- *Individual:* Useful for personal development and one-on-one coaching.
- *Team:* Ideal for solving team dysfunction, improving group performance, integrating new teams post-merger, or building high-performing project teams.

**Application Tip:** Want better collaboration, reduced silos, and visible performance lift in shared work groups like HR, finance, operations, or customer service? That's team assessment territory.

## WHEN TO SAY: "WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING MORE"

Trigger events that signal the need for a team-focused assessment:

- You've added new team members and productivity drops.
- A reorg, merger, or leadership change has unsettled the team.
- Interdepartmental friction is stalling progress.
- You've tried individual coaching, but performance hasn't shifted.
- Customer satisfaction or internal NPS is declining.

Any time a business support group isn't running smoothly, it impacts everything: response times, compliance, innovation, and ultimately, profitability.

## WHAT KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD BE USING TEAM ASSESSMENTS?

Team assessments aren't just for the Fortune 500. They benefit:
- Growth-stage companies trying to scale fast without losing cohesion
- Professional services firms that rely on cross-functional teaming
- Manufacturing/industrial operations where shift-based teams impact throughput
- Healthcare teams balancing compliance, care, and cost-efficiency
- Remote or hybrid teams experiencing communication gaps

**Bottom line:** If your business success depends on how people work together, you need a tool that focuses on the team dynamic, not just individual traits.

## BUSINESS IMPACT: WHAT KIND OF LIFT CAN YOU EXPECT?

Team-based assessment strategies have been shown to lead to:
- **10–25% faster decision** making due to better collaboration *(Source: Harvard Business Review)*
- **20–40% improvement** in team engagement and communication *(Source: Gallup State of the Workplace)*
- **Significant drop in friction-related attrition**, especially in hybrid settings *(Source: McKinsey & Company)*
- **Revenue lift** through faster go-to-market execution, improved service delivery, and higher internal productivity *(Source: Deloitte Insights)*

**Case in point:** Companies that implemented Belbin Team Roles into project team workflows reported quicker onboarding, clearer delegation, and noticeable reductions in team conflict—resulting in direct gains in project delivery timelines.

## COMMON CHALLENGES IN TEAM ASSESSMENT SELECTION

Not all assessments are built for teams. Many of the most recognizable names (DISC, MBTI) were designed for individual insights. If you're aiming to build stronger, more collaborative teams, the tool needs to address team dynamics, not just personal preferences.

**Science matters.** Tools that aren't falsifiable (i.e., testable and disprovable) fall into the "pseudoscience" danger zone. They might be fun, but they're not reliable for strategic decisions.

**Look beyond the colors and types.** Just because a tool puts someone in a red or yellow box doesn't mean it's useful. Oversimplification can lead to stereotyping and limit growth.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A TEAM ASSESSMENT

It should:
- Provide insight that's relevant to day-to-day work
- Focus on behaviors, not just personality
- Be falsifiable (yes, that's science-speak, but it matters)
- Promote team-level alignment, not just self-awareness
- Be easy to apply, not just interpret

# COMPARATIVE TABLE: TEAM ASSESSMENT MODELS

| Feature/Criteria | Belbin Team Roles | DISC | Insights Discovery | CliftonStrengths |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary Focus | Team roles and observable behaviour in a work context | Personality style | Color-based personality typology | Individual talent themes |
| Research Base | Scientifically backed by extensive academic research and decades of empirical validation | Widely used; research quality and validation approaches vary across publishers and models | Based primarily on proprietary internal research, with limited publicly available independent peer-reviewed studies | Gallup's decades of talent and performance research |
| Core Use Case | Team development, team performance, and collaboration | Communication, self-awareness, and interpersonal effectiveness | Communication, self-awareness, and personal effectiveness | Personal development, coaching, and engagement |
| Depth of Behavioral Insight | High — focuses on actual behaviour in a team environment | Moderate — personality framing with behavioural implications | Moderate — personality framing with behavioural implications | Low — focuses on internal talents, not observable behaviour |
| Team-Level Application | Strong — Team Maps, contributions, gaps, and dynamics | Varies by vendor; some team reports available but less behaviour-specific | Moderate — team wheels and color dynamics provide team insight | Moderate — team grids show shared strengths but offer limited guidance for collaboration |
| Integration Into Everyday Workflow | Practical and action-oriented — directly informs task allocation, collaboration, and role clarity | More conceptual — often used to understand preferences | Practical for communication and relationship awareness; less focused on operational teamwork | Useful for 1:1 coaching; less structured for team operations |
| Customization | High — individual, observer and team mapping options | Varies by vendor; generally moderate | Moderate — tailored experiences within the color model | Lower — standardized outputs; more limited team-level tailoring |

This comparison is based on publicly available information, published research, and common use cases. Interpretations may vary by vendor and implementation.

## ABOUT BELBIN NORTH AMERICA

At Belbin North America, we help leaders turn good teams into high-performing ones by improving how people work together. We're not just another assessment tool—we're a practical framework for generating insight into real-world team performance. Built on the proven Belbin Team Roles model and backed by over 35 years of research, our programs are designed to close the "Interaction Gap:" the space between what a group could achieve and what it actually does when collaboration falters.

Through our proprietary Team Collaboration Mapping Program, team-based assessments, and coaching, we give leaders actionable insights that align with everyday work, not just HR theory. Unlike personality tests that pigeonhole people, Belbin focuses on behavior in context—helping teams align strengths, reduce friction, and perform better together. Fortune 500 companies already trust Belbin to unlock untapped performance, and we're here to help teams not just feel better, but do better.

## MAP YOUR TEAM'S IMPACT

**MAP DYNAMICS, MAXIMIZE PERFORMANCE**

**MAP STRENGTHS, MEASURE SUCCESS**

**MAP INTERACTIONS, MANAGE OUTCOMES**

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# *ADDENDUM* | WHAT IS BELBIN'S TEAM MAPPING?

Belbin's Team Mapping, often referred to as a **Belbin Team Map** or **Team Role Map**, is a visual representation of the Belbin Team Roles present within a team. It's a tool used to understand the behavioral strengths and potential weaknesses of a team, identify any role imbalances or gaps, and optimize team performance by leveraging individual contributions effectively.

Here's a breakdown of what it entails:

## 1. Individual Belbin Assessments:

- The foundation of the mapping process is the **Belbin Self-Perception Inventory**, a questionnaire completed by each team member to identify their preferred team roles based on their behavior and interpersonal tendencies.

- Often, this self-assessment is supplemented by **Observer Assessments**, where colleagues provide feedback on an individual's behavior within the team. This provides a more rounded picture of their team role contributions.

- The results of these assessments generate an **Individual Belbin Report** for each team member, highlighting their dominant, secondary, and less preferred team roles, along with their associated strengths and allowable weaknesses.

## 2. Compiling the Team Map:

Once individual reports are generated, the information is compiled into a **Team Map**. The Team Map allows the team and its leader to analyze the team's composition in several key areas:

- **Role Balance:** Does the team have a good mix of all nine Belbin roles (Plant, Resource Investigator, Coordinator, Shaper, Monitor Evaluator, Teamworker, Implementer, Completer Finisher, and Specialist)? A balanced team is generally more effective as it covers different aspects of teamwork, from generating ideas to implementing them and ensuring quality.

- **Role Strengths:** Which roles are strongly represented within the team? The team can leverage these strengths.

- **Role Weaknesses/Gaps:** Which roles are underrepresented or missing entirely? This can highlight potential blind spots or areas where the team might struggle. For example, a lack of a "Completer Finisher" might lead to overlooked details and errors.

- **Role Overlap:** Are there multiple individuals strongly inclined towards the same role? While this can provide strength in that area, it might also lead to conflict or duplication of effort if not managed well.

- **Individual Contributions:** The map helps understand how each individual is likely to contribute to the team based on their preferred roles.

## 3. Using the Team Map for Improvement:

The insights gained from Belbin Team Mapping can be used for:

- **Task Allocation:** Assign tasks and responsibilities to individuals whose preferred roles align with the requirements of the task.

- **Team Formation:** When forming new teams, ensure a balance of necessary roles.

- **Conflict Resolution:** Understand potential behavioral clashes based on role differences and facilitate better communication.

- **Personal and Team Development:** Identify areas where individuals might need to develop skills to cover missing roles or complement existing ones.

- **Improve Communication and Collaboration:** By understanding each other's working styles and contributions, team members can interact more effectively.

In essence, Belbin's Team Mapping is a powerful tool for understanding team dynamics, optimizing team performance, and fostering better collaboration. Team Mapping helps teams to recognize and leverage the diverse behavioral contributions of its individual members, ultimately equipping leaders with the insight they need to build stronger, more aligned teams.

# LET'S FIND TIME TO CONNECT

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**We're eager to share how Belbin can lead to stronger collaboration and higher-performing teams.**

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