

## Lockdown Lounge #2 – Creating Team You!

On the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020, 20 Loungers (an apt number for the day) convened for the second opening of the Lockdown Lounge curated by the [Guildhall Coaching and Mentoring Faculty](#).

The Lounge was created to help freelance musicians, actors, dancers, technicians, creators, directors – basically anyone in the creative world – to discuss a range of ways to change the lens through which we view the challenges and opportunities of the lockdown.

The concept of the Lounge is to share models and concepts from the world of coaching in order to stimulate discussion and, hopefully, bring insights.

### Welcome to the Lounge...

Standing behind the bar were [Jane](#), [Jo](#), [Chris](#) and [Trevor](#) ready to serve a heady brew of conversation and blend the flavoursome spirits of the Loungers. The lights were low, the temperature warm, the atmosphere frothy.

Chris was in charge of the menu today and started by setting out the expectations of the Lounge. As before, confidentiality and unconditional positive acceptance of each other was the order of the day.

It's now almost two months since the UK went into lockdown. Now, almost all of our interactions are with only a small group of people – our family, a few close friends, a few work colleagues and a very few neighbours.

Forced by social media algorithms into a monoglot mindset, trapped in a bubble of identical opinions, where do you turn to for advice?

### ***Who do you trust, and why?***

### Who's your bubble?

Different animals form different social bubbles. For example:

- Wolves are very territorial and aggressively fight intruders
- Cats (with the exception of lions) are solitary and tend not to interact with other cats
- Elephant herds are led by a dominant female, while male elephants live together as bachelors

- Orangutans live solitary lives but within a group. The only social bonds are mother and offspring
- Starlings flock closely together but randomly change directions, have no real leader and no real sense of direction
- Meerkats all stare in one direction, always on the lookout for threats

Chris invited everyone in the Lounge to think about which animal their social groups most resembled, and then the Lounge went into it's reason for being – the chat.

Four breakout rooms, each with their own barista, went off to explore the questions that Chris had set. There were no rules and certainly no expectation that this lively crowd would stick to their brief.

- ***who is in your bubble?***
- ***is it a bubble, a network or a team? Or...?***
- ***what sort of person are you missing?***
- ***who do you turn to for advice and support?***
- ***what animal grouping does your network resemble?***

Fifteen minutes later the groups reconvened.

The animal grouping discussion had prompted a wide range of opinions, with many of the Loungers saying how much they felt like orangutans!

Many commented on how they were missing real human contact and on how Zoom was causing us to lose the vital but subtle body language cues that oil the wheels of understanding and comprehension.

Some spoke of the sense of fear, both for ourselves and for those we can no longer support.

One Lounger commented that for her, she was in a bubble (her social media world), a network (her extended family) and a team (her work colleagues) simultaneously. Changing between these worlds brought its own challenges.

Time for the next round.

Chris was on hand with the ingredients for the next conversational cocktail.

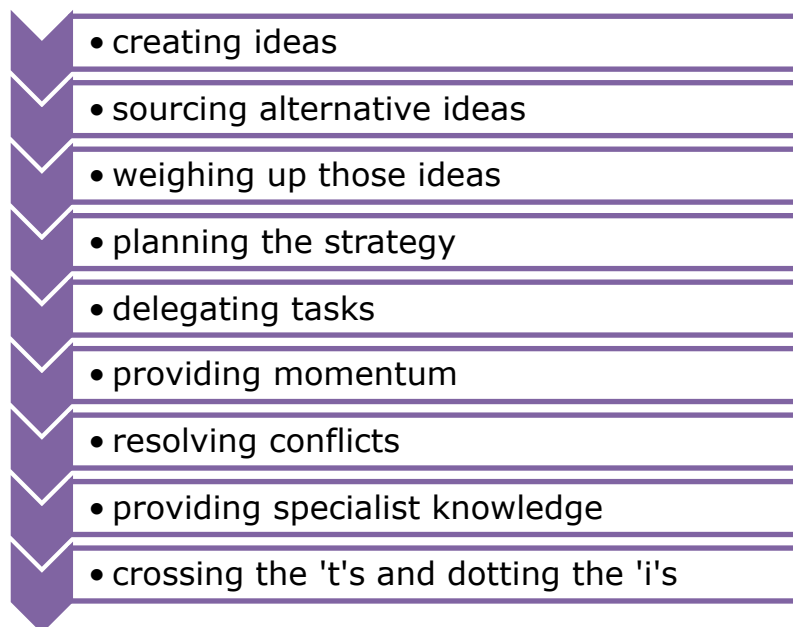
## Who's In Your Team?

In 1969, [Dr Meredith Belbin](#) began a study into teams that was to last for 9 years.

High potential managers attending a training course were put into teams and given a series of business simulation games. Their personalities were profiled in a number of ways and the meetings analysed.

More important than the intelligence of the team members was the way that they interacted. Dr Belbin found that eight roles were needed to make a successful team (a ninth was added later).

In essence, you needed someone who is skilled in:

- 
- creating ideas
  - sourcing alternative ideas
  - weighing up those ideas
  - planning the strategy
  - delegating tasks
  - providing momentum
  - resolving conflicts
  - providing specialist knowledge
  - crossing the 't's and dotting the 'i's

Each of those roles bring something very different to the mix but all have flaws – ‘allowable weaknesses’ as they’re called by Belbin – that need to be moderated by the others in the team.

For example, someone who is good at resolving conflicts will also tend to avoid confrontation and be indecisive in crunch situations. Someone who is good at crossing the ‘t’s and dotting the ‘i’s often worries unduly and might feel discomfort delegating to others.

This table shows the various roles (with the names that Dr Belbin gave them), grouped together according to whether the role was action oriented, people or social oriented, or thought oriented.

Belbin Team Role Summary Descriptions		
	Team Role	Contribution
Action Oriented Roles	<b>Shaper</b>	Provides drive and momentum. Thrives on pressure. Can be challenging.
	<b>Implementer</b>	Turns ideas into action. Practical and efficient. Reliable and good at organising.
	<b>Completer Finisher</b>	Searches out errors. Polishes and perfects. High quality control standards.
People Oriented Roles	<b>Co-ordinator</b>	Focusses on the objectives. Draws out others' talents and good at delegating.
	<b>Teamworker</b>	Diplomatic and versatile. Listens well and avoids friction. Often invisible.
	<b>Resource Investigator</b>	Explores opportunities, develops contacts. Outgoing, inquisitive and enthusiastic.
Thought Oriented Roles	<b>Plant</b>	Creative and imaginative, good at solving problems in unconventional ways.
	<b>Monitor Evaluator</b>	Makes impartial judgements and weighs up all options. Strategic and logical.
	<b>Specialist</b>	Brings in-depth knowledge. Single-minded, self-starting and dedicated.

## But I don't have nine people on my team...

In Belbin's model, each of us have preferred roles and we can still play to our strengths performing any of those roles. If we're in a team where we're forced to play one of our least preferred roles, though, that's where it goes wrong.

### **Good teams cover all the bases.**

For example, on the excellent [official Belbin website](#), there's an analysis of how the Scooby Doo Mystery Machine Team fit into these roles. They're a high performing team (they've cracked every single case that they've found themselves in), they have open and honest engagement and a high level of staff retention (the same team – Scrappy Doo notwithstanding – for 50 years) so they're clearly doing something right! Here's how they fit into the team roles:

Belbin Team Role Summary Descriptions			
	Team Role	Contribution	Who's in your team?
Action Oriented Roles	<b>Shaper</b>	Provides drive and momentum. Thrives on pressure. Can be challenging.	Fred
	<b>Implementer</b>	Turns ideas into action. Practical and efficient. Reliable and good at organising.	Fred
	<b>Completer Finisher</b>	Conscientious. Searches out errors. Polishes and perfects. High quality control standards.	Velma
People Oriented Roles	<b>Co-ordinator</b>	Focuses on the objectives. Draws out others' talents and good at delegating.	Daphne
	<b>Teamworker</b>	Co-operative, diplomatic and versatile. Listens well and avoids friction. Often invisible.	Shaggy
	<b>Resource Investigator</b>	Explores opportunities, develops contacts. Outgoing, inquisitive and enthusiastic.	Daphne
Thought Oriented Roles	<b>Plant</b>	Free-thinking, good at solving problems in unconventional ways. Creative and imaginative.	Scooby-doo
	<b>Monitor Evaluator</b>	Makes impartial judgements and weighs up all options. Strategic and logical.	Velma
	<b>Specialist</b>	Brings in-depth knowledge. Single-minded, self-starting and dedicated.	Scooby-doo

## Creating Team You!

More than ever before, we as creative artists have to be our own production team. We're not having the casual drop in conversations that stimulate ideas, or offer critical balance.

### ***Who do you need to form the optimal Team You?***

Chris asked all the Loungers to consider which of the team roles they might find most comfortable and which would be the most challenging.

Following that, who do you need to fill your skills gap?

Imagine forming a board of directors, or an artistic committee, or perhaps a team of special advisors dedicated purely to developing the best you that you can be. Who would be on that board? How can you make it diverse?

How do you fill those Belbin team roles?

The Loungers retired to their breakout rooms to consider the following questions:

- *who's currently in your team?*
- *who's missing?*
- *is your board sufficiently diverse?*
- *what insights have you gained from the team roles?*
- *what can you do to build your board in the next few weeks?*
- *when in the past have you had to cover a role that was a challenge to you?*

## **On The Board**

A lively chat followed. In the room that I was in, there seemed to be a sense that pinning one's strengths down to only two or three options was a challenge – perhaps as a result of having had to act in all these roles for so long.

Many people picked up on the similarity with music ensembles. Those of us who played a musical instrument were aware of when some ensembles had just gelled, while other groups never really felt cohesive.

However, in sharing the discussions afterwards, the highlight was one of the Loungers sharing their most important decision-making tool:

### ***What would Beyoncé do?***

I think it's fair to say that we all saw different values in that question...

## **Closing Time**

As the Zoom bell rang for last orders, Chris offered the thought that perhaps this idea of a personal team of advisors could be further developed – who would be your head of finance? Who would you turn to for advice on artistic development? If you're only allowed one relative on the board (no nepotism, please), who would it be?

And with that, the Loungers emerged blinking into the warm May sunlight, knowing that the Lockdown Lounge doors will open in another two weeks' time.

Lockdown Lounge is run by the Guildhall Coaching Faculty. To book a place at the third **Lockdown Lounge** meet up on Zoom on June 3<sup>rd</sup> (16:00 to 17:30 UK time), send an email to: [coachingandmentoring@gsmd.ac.uk](mailto:coachingandmentoring@gsmd.ac.uk) headed 'Lockdown Lounge'.

Please note that numbers will be limited.

**Lockdown Lounge** will be offered fortnightly. If you're not available for this session but you'd like to join in next time then please let us know. The third session will be on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.