

WHEN BELBIN FOUND OUT WHO I WAS

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It was a few years ago, in the entrepreneurship program carried out by [Team Academy Euskadi \(Tecnalia\)](#). Putting it in context: 9 people with different profiles, receive training for a year to create a company together.

There, a group of professionals analyzed our team roles trying to draw the outline of the type of behavior that each one developed within the group. It was long, I remember, a roll. After a few months, someone was walking through the office door carrying green and yellow folders, they were the results of the [Belbin test](#). Like someone who collects grades in high school, I enthusiastically picked up the one with my name on it. A few first introductory pages, graphics and I got to the description of my personality.

A joy overflowed my head when I saw that epigraph BRAIN. And I read it again c-e-r-e-b-r-o. That sounds good (I thought, come on, my mother already says this). With an idiot smile I kept reading (and thinking, is that me?!). Under the headline BRAIN, you expect a string of compliments that you will even have a hard time reading in front of your peers, and that is that a BRAIN cannot harbor anything bad. But you're wrong, it's a Belbin trick to dampen what comes next. Because, BRAIN is not only the one that has great ideas, the one that is creative or decisive, as you thought. Specifically, Belbin admits that they do have very good ideas but also a "Strong sense of ownership of ideas and difficulty in cooperating." So far the smile remains on your face. "They tend to be introverted and react strongly to criticism and praise. Their ideas can often be radical and often lack practical orientation" come on, being creative is valued, but in this life it is not worth having ideas, they must be relevant. Summing up in two words: they don't work. And I continue: "they are critical, with a tendency to question the work of others."

Then came things like authoritarian, impatient and others that my mind has not wanted to remember. But the sentence that puzzled me was: "They are independent, intelligent and original... but they may have difficulties, since they communicate with others on a different wavelength. Different wavelength, am I from another?" planet?

That's when I missed the psychologist who gave us the test because one doesn't prepare for breakfast to be insulted in the name of Belbin.

Now came the decisive moment, in which you share the result with the team, but with what face do you warn your teammates that they are probably in front of a little bitch's apprentice (according to Belbin)? And it is that Belbin does not speak of personality but of behavior, it does not mean that you are (a Z_ _ _ _) but that you act like (a Z_ _ _ _).

I don't remember how the session ended, probably my colleagues at [Manahamana](#) could contribute more here. But I imagine that with the cunning of a fox I would keep the positive points that I could pick out and would deny outright any connection with the animal described there (that would be you, I would think).

What I do remember is that as soon as I got home that day, with a solemn face I handed my mother

the folder (asking myself: what kind of bug have you engendered?). After a few seconds and with the positivity that only a mother can radiate, I got a: Oh! Daughter I am so proud of you. I picked up the green and yellow folder and buried it under a pile of books that I knew for sure I would never read. Goodbye Belbin.

This Christmas the pile of books I was never going to read was too big so I divided it in two, and there at the bottom, with hardly any dust, was Belbin's little folder. It's been over three years, and I've been through quite a few projects, teams, different people, different nationalities, disciplines. But some things stay in my head. I usually lead (as long as people aren't twice my age, which is when my head operates in admiration mode), assume my idea is the best, and defend it tooth and nail. I hate that without arguments someone tries to banish her. Long meetings and the blah-blah-blah of people in them bore me. But at the same time all these years, somehow, I've been very aware of those Belbin lines. And I think that recognizing how we are, although Belbin is initially based on self-perception, stimulates learning. Learning to listen, wanting to understand others, patience, containing anger... that has come later. From the hand of my colleagues, from the talks with my friends, from the experiences, good and bad, from the trips, from the projects: from life.

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