



BELBIN®

Case Study

How Oppo Brothers has used Belbin for better staff engagement, harmony and results

About Oppo Brothers

Founded by brothers Harry and Charlie Thuillier in 2011, Oppo Brothers set out on a mission to change the way people eat, by creating amazingly tasty foods without high levels of sugar or the additives. They have grown to provide consumers with a range of healthy ice-creams that do not compromise on health or the planet which are stocked in 6,000 stores across 13 countries within just 12 years.

The story of their successful transition from start-up to established SME in a highly competitive industry sector is inspiring. Along the way they have collected a host of 'Great Taste' awards, supported numerous charitable campaigns, and have developed a highly engaged team.

Harry Thuillier, Director and Co-founder of Oppo Brothers, explains what they attribute their success to, lessons learned along the way, and how they have used Belbin Team Roles to make a difference to their business.



What has been the secret to Oppo's success?

I think Oppo is different and we have achieved success because we have aimed higher – we didn't want to launch a product unless it tasted as good as Haagen-Dazs with a third of the calories and sugar. We were a bit unrealistic and uncompromising at times both in terms of the product and in terms of what us and our team were able to achieve, but having high expectations and a vision of getting our feel-good healthy indulgence in as many stores as possible across Europe was helpful in pushing us.

What have been the main challenges and learning points during your journey?

There have been so many challenges – convincing supermarkets and their customers to buy us is the perennial challenge, as it is for all small premium food brands.

There have also been a lot of learnings around the team – what roles to bring on and when, and how to manage them.

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I've learned to hire for attitude not just skills. Provided they have a growth mindset and are willing to get their hands dirty, we've found that one person with twice as much experience is almost always more useful than two people with half as much. A few years ago, we were 21 people. Now we're 13 and we're getting more done with less.

Why did you start using Belbin Team Roles with your teams?

There were a couple of factors. First, we were looking for something that would give the team greater self-awareness of their strengths (beyond their functional abilities) and awareness of others so that we could continually improve our culture.

The second motivation was to have an entertaining and useful workshop that would bring the team together – people always love learning about themselves.

“Some incredibly useful insights from Belbin pointing to the strengths we have across our whole team and who is best placed to help take on a specific task.”



“Our experience of Belbin has been enlightening – it continues to build confidence in ourselves and our fellow team and has helped to bring the team together with more awareness of themselves and their peers.

On a practical application level, the Belbin Interlace platform requires very little support as it is very intuitive and easy to navigate, but there is also loads of support and knowledge there when needed.”

**Harry Thuillier,
Director & Co-founder of Oppo Brothers**



We chose Belbin as it examines actual behaviour traits rather than your base personality. It seems more accurate as it takes into account other people's view of you rather than assuming that everyone is going to be self-aware enough to generate accurate assessments of themselves. We also liked the idea of team exercises to learn about each other, and there's nothing else out there that can do what Belbin does.

How have you used Belbin at Oppo Brothers?

We use Belbin most years in our offsite team day. It is both useful and interesting to see how as each team member develops in their job role, how their Team Roles also develop. We revisit the Belbin Team Role Circle and use the Team Role Alignment Exercise to reinforce Belbin team language, check team balance and identify if there are any Team Role gaps and what solutions we can explore.

Like any initiative it's important to have an internal champion for Belbin, and I've

enjoyed performing that role, ensuring that the Belbin Team Role language is used, ensuring that we are drawing on the right roles in making and executing decisions.

Belbin has helped bring to our attention when some Team Roles have not been very well covered, and that will shape and influence some of our future recruitment decisions.

Our yearly refresher as well as onboarding new hires who might not know about Belbin helps keep it at the front of people's minds.

What impact have you seen from using Belbin?

I have seen greater self-awareness from each person, and awareness of the strengths and allowable weaknesses of others in the team which has created more harmony and more results.

There have also been 'lightbulb moments' amongst our employees.

“The self-awareness it offers is priceless, helping me leverage my strengths and appreciate diverse contributions.”

What the Oppo Team have to say about Belbin



Megan
(Product)

“Belbin has been invaluable at bringing the conversation of our team dynamics to the forefront and creates an environment where we can collectively discuss our areas of strength and weakness. The self-awareness it offers is priceless, helping me leverage my strengths and appreciate diverse contributions.”



Georgina
(Operations)

“I found the Belbin assessment a brilliant tool for clearly outlining my strengths and weaknesses with so much more clarity than I would ever be able to. This structure is helping with my personal development and knowing how I can better contribute within my team.”



Ben
(Operations)

“The Belbin assessment helped me grow closer to my team, by understanding more about our respective strengths and limitations and how we can support each other with different types of tasks.”



Hannah
(Marketing)

“Unveiling our individual roles with the Belbin assessment felt like discovering our unique superpowers! It gave a greater understanding of strengths to utilise and areas for improvement both personally and within the team.”



One of our team said they realised there is as much, if not more, benefit in working to improve upon your strengths as opposed to always focusing on trying to develop areas which don't come as naturally to you.

I think this helped them see that within a well-balanced team you should know when it's best to lean on others or when everyone will benefit from you bringing your own skillset to the forefront.

Are there any specific business benefits you have seen from embedding Belbin in your company?

Our engagement has increased since we first started using Belbin some five years ago. This has been measured using a platform called engagement multiplier, and we are now in the 'very engaged' category of companies.



And I am sure that it's not just our hiring and management that has helped this. Using Belbin has made us realise what the strengths and weaknesses are in the team so that we can best develop people, and in turn I think this has increased people's sense of autonomy, mastery and purpose as part of Oppo.

From a senior management perspective, how has Belbin helped you?

I've enjoyed my Coordinator and Teamworker role and the awareness that I'm good at bringing people together, creating consensus and delegating work to the right people, and trusting and empowering them to do a great job.

It has made me realise what I knew already at the back of my mind, that I'm not a Shaper or a Resource Investigator, and I need these roles around me to 'crack the whip' sometimes in scenarios where I might be too 'nice' and not realise that the boat can go a little faster. Luckily, we have some strong Shapers and Resource Investigators in the management team!

Discover more about Belbin at www.belbin.com

What the Oppo Team have to say about Belbin



Joe
(Finance)

"Belbin has been a great tool for us as a team to understand how we work together and has also made me more aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a Teamworker.

This was my second time doing the assessment and I found it insightful seeing what had changed in the last few years. We wouldn't otherwise have a chance to do this, so it was very useful!"



Paul
(Sales)

"Some incredibly useful insights from Belbin pointing to the strengths we have across our whole team and who is best placed to help take on a specific task or work through a specific challenge.

What perhaps was most insightful from the Belbin output are the areas as a team that we don't have fully covered and that will shape and influence any recruitment we do, certainly in my team in the future."



Milly
(Sales)

"I found Belbin a really interesting tool to highlight strengths / weaknesses both from self perception and observations. Definitely worth doing as a team!"

"Our engagement has measurably increased since we started using Belbin five years ago – we are now in the 'very engaged' category of companies."