

Viva Questions

1. You have defined yourself as a combination of Plant and Team Worker. Give examples of how your behaviour on the team confirmed these roles or suggested that other roles would be more of a fit?

During the project, I was able to express behaviours that supported the roles I was given as part of the team: Plant and Team worker.

Plant was demonstrated through my ability to produce ideas. I was able to sit down on my own and create multiple potential pipework routes. I did this independently to the others as I work more efficiently this way. Because of my ability to focus on my own, I was able to sit down and work through each of the potential issues and devise a way to overcome all obstacles. Although, this is the case, I did benefit from listening to the opinions and ideas of others in the team (leaning towards my role as Team Worker). I was also adamant, during the discussions in the team meetings, that one of my potential ideas would be used, another trait of the Plant role.

Team Worker was displayed often. Although sounding contradictory to the above statement of working alone, I was always open to listening to other ideas produced from the team members. However, I would then take feedback and ideas from the others and use them to improve my own ideas to make them the more optimal choice.

Throughout the project I was able to truly show my team worker role when it came to working with others. I often encouraged dialogue between members during meetings and often brought up questions to encourage interaction. This frequent dialogue would help to improve the general team synergy as members became more confident with one another over time.

Although the previously mentioned roles were what I was appointed in the team, there were a couple of others I could easily have been put into.

Completer – Finisher was another role that could have been given to me. My frequent dialogue with the team members would also act to monitor and push the progress of the project. My input in the meetings would often bring up deadlines to remind others of our next checkpoint and the deadline we had set prior.

Since the design idea was my own, my self-ownership of this had me wanting to ensure everything was done correctly. I was determined to have the project done within the time constraints.

Co-ordinator could have easily been one of my roles. Similarly, to some of the points mentioned above, I would often add a lot of dialogue to the meetings. I would often make suggestions for what/how individuals should progress next. This would often come close to Shaper behaviour, but I would always ensure to remember that I was not the project lead.

Some of my Team Worker and Plant role behaviours coincide with the Co-ordinator role. For instance, as a Team Worker, I was always willing to listen to others. As the Plant role suggests, I am also self-disciplined when it comes to meeting set deadlines/check points. Throughout the project, I was always able to use a positive approach to all the tasks. I took this positivity and used it when conversing with team members to hopefully give them positive motivation throughout all tasks.

2. How do the theories learned in class such as CPA help with planning and controlling the project?

During the project, the team were able to implement a couple of methods to improve the planning and co-ordination of the process.

The **Gantt chart's** primary function was to allow the team to list off all the tasks that needed to be completed through the duration of the project. Once the tasks were listed, they were then able to be grouped into phases. These phases benefited us as they broke down the daunting initial list into more manageable chunks. This inadvertently helped to keep moral up through the process as the work never seemed to pile up.

Each phase has its own Gateway task(s). These gateway tasks are set up so that we could not overextend our work into another phase without meeting all the other prior requisites. This helped us to ensure that we did not miss any planned tasks along the way. In missing a task, we could potentially forget a portion of the process, causing a negative effect on subsequent stages of the project, potentially causing us to have to backtrack and possibly restarting certain tasks.

With the project having a completion deadline to meet, it was important that we set reasonable milestones during the project timeline. Each phase of the project was given a deadline to meet. The time between each phase start and finish was then shared out between the tasks within the phase. These micro deadlines gave us short and direct targets through the project. They helped us to keep track and focused on what the current tasks were and what length of time we were expected to spend on them.

The Gantt chart was able to keep track of our progress using the bar chart that travelled along the date row. We used this date row to locate where in the project timeline we should be. This allowed us to quickly discover if we were ahead, on track or behind with our current progress. Using this also allowed us to plan upcoming tasks.

To summarise, the Gantt chart allowed us to become more organised with our tasks, more efficient with our time and made the tasks more manageable for all the members of the team.

The **Critical Path Analysis** (CPA) method was used to decide the level of importance that each task had in the timeline of the project.

To begin with, as with the Gantt chart, the tasks were put into their individual phases to create sub lists. All the tasks were then organised by chronological order. In some cases, tasks could be worked on simultaneously. Although the allotted amount of time given for each task would vary.

Using the timeline created in the CPA, we as a group could work out which tasks were classed as critical. The level of criticality was based on whether there is any flexibility in the start or completion time for a task. This benefited us by allowing us to apply added focus on the critical tasks to ensure the project could not overrun. This also helped us to provide moments of ease when there were fewer critical tasks were being completed. These moments helped to promote a more relaxed environment and prevent any potential burnout.

3. Why is it important to consider personalities and management styles when team-working?

The varying types of personalities and management styles available during team-working projects each bring their own pros and cons that can affect the overall team efficiency level.

People in general have complex personalities that vary greatly from person to person. However, each person has certain dominant traits that help them to thrive in specific scenarios. These dominant traits can be summed up using broad terms.

The Myers Briggs test uses such terms to help categorise people by their dominant traits. Such traits are based on factors such as: how you interact with the world, how you take in information, decision making methods and organisation methods.

From this test and other personality-based research, it is suggested that individuals show that they have natural preferences to certain roles.

In terms of team-working roles, having a mixture of different personalities is essential in encouraging synergy between team members. With each differing personality comes with them their own strengths and weaknesses. A team with no diversity is more likely to have weaknesses in the team structure compared to a diverse group of personalities. With a greater variety of strengths, weaknesses can be negated by other members.

For example: Too many dominant personalities in a team would lead to having too many leader types which could create a lot of clashes during decision making actions. Conversely, having no dominant personalities leave a team working with no clear hierarchy.

Different roles in a team benefit from having individuals who have specific characteristics. All roles can be performed by anyone with varying levels of success. It is important to get the personalities of the individuals to match a role that suits them to get the most value from their work.

For Example:

- Creative personalities tend to work better in roles that requires them to think and develop ideas.
- Social and outgoing personalities thrive in people-based roles that require frequent interactions with others.

Differing management styles have their own pros and cons. It is important to find a healthy mixture of styles and combining them to help to create a management style that balances both work output and worker satisfaction levels.

Management styles can range from being coercive to being affiliative. Each style aims to get results, but they have different approaches on how they will achieve this. They also have differing priorities when it comes to factors such as goals, working relationships and deadlines.

Depending on what the current situation of an organisation, it may require certain tactics to be used. For example:

- If an organisation needs to make big changes to their working methods, management may bring in someone to make the initial push on the workforce to comply with these new changes. This is known as a more coercive method of managing.
- If a team is currently having internal struggles, an affiliative method of management could be implemented to help reconcile any rifts in the team or be used to help console those who are struggling through anything.

Each of the available management styles have traits that can be used to better the team. Just how situations can change in an organisation, a combination of management styles can be used to react to such changes to the betterment of the team.