

Alison Jones: I think the most basic requirement is that managers understand about personalities and how they differ. If they haven't got a very sophisticated understanding of personality theory and the types of personalities then they're likely to make decisions based on whether they personally like somebody or not, which obviously is a really, really bad basis for decision. And we all do it, you know, it's the Malcolm Gladwell blink thing, you make the first decision and then everything you think afterwards is justifying that initial impression.

But if you have a really sound understanding of the kind of personality type that you are, and you're able to read the cues and understand what personality type the person you're working with is, your colleague, your line report, your manager, whatever that is, you're going to have a much better chance of managing that relationship on a more professional basis.

So, you, for example, may be an extrovert and you know that about yourself, you might notice somebody else is an introvert and give them just more space and time for their response without that automatic sort of, God, they're so slow, they're so quiet, you know, they're so annoying, whatever it is.

I think it's just about awareness and a respect for different personality types, and the more training you have in that area the more likely you are to be able to recognise those differences and adjust for them. And, of course, it's complementary, you know, it's all very well wanting to recruit people who are like you, who are like us, who fit in, but the danger of that is that you end up with a real group think situation, and you don't end up with a really rounded, balanced team that's got, you know, all those [Belbin] roles in it, and you've got people who can plant the idea and other people who will ask the right questions and ask the difficult questions as well.