



CASE STUDY

Based on an interview with Dr. Garry Miller, Director of the Graduate School of Engineering, University of Auckland



How the University of Auckland, Faculty of Engineering use Belbin to lift team effectiveness for project based learning.

By Candice Collier | Belbin NZ & Pacific | 2021

Five years ago, Dr. Garry Miller from the University of Auckland identified a need to help his Post Grad Engineering students be successful in team assignments for their Project Management course. He observed challenges when the teams came together and become effective in a short time scale. This was, in part, due to a number of timing constraints with the assignment briefed in week two and teams required to form in week three. There was a requirement for a safe tool to help with efficient team formation and that was accessible and interactive; giving insights into both self-awareness and interdependence - vital components in team success.

After exploring many options Dr. Miller decided on Belbin GetSet as the best fit to meet the needs and goals of the course. GetSet also offered a lens into the value of people skills i.e. collaboration and communication, that professional success will require of them. Now, fully integrated into the course, each new cohort of students are introduced to Belbin at the beginning of the assignment process to help them move efficiently through the team stages of forming to performing. It also provides the language and insight into developing self awareness which can be applied beyond the course as students look towards their future employment opportunities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- FORMS EFFECTIVE TEAMS QUICKER
- DEVELOPS AWARENESS OF STRENGTHS AND CONTRIBUTION
- PROVIDES A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS
- BUILDS COLLABORATIVE SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

How Belbin is integrated into the course

First, the Belbin GetSet self assessment is completed by each student independently. Their resulting Belbin Team Role Profile Reports are introduced 24hours prior to an interactive 50mins workshop to help them understand their preferred team role behavioural strengths and together they discuss their team contribution using the [Team Wheel](#) exercise. More information about how the sessions are run can be found [here](#).

According to Dr. Miller, introducing Belbin at the start of the team assignment helps to create meaningful connections and has contributed to uplifts in course evaluations. Student feedback is positive and there have been noticeable lifts in teams gelling quickly, with some going on to work together on business plans and continue as friends post the course.

Feedback from students shows they appreciate the following benefits:

- They get an individual report about their team contribution strengths with insights they can directly apply in future employment situations.
- Builds the learning towards the practical things about "doing the assignment".
- Improves their skills and competencies and how to be effective with each other.
- They learn about themselves and the tools help get new teams up to speed quickly.

As Dr. Miller observes *"the world is becoming more multi-disciplinary and most of the work these days is defined in projects in one form or another. Employability is an obvious metric of success – especially engineering which requires communication skills and tools and knowledge that they directly apply in the workforce."* He's found that those doing advanced degrees essentially get a better job and using tools like Belbin help with better preparedness for success in the workforce.



"Most work these days is defined in projects in one form or another. For my students to leave the course with an understanding of who they are and the positive contribution they can make in a team environment will increase their chances of employability greatly."

Dr Garry Miller, University of Auckland, Faculty of Engineering

Belbin GetSet can help with group working, study skills, wellbeing, communication and much more, from school to university. For more information about how GetSet gives young people the edge in an increasingly competitive educational and working environment please contact:

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[Belbin NZ GetSet website](#)