



# THE SECRET OF HIGH PERFORMANCE MANAGERS






*A mix of Belbin's team roles, De Caluwé's colour model, and de Waal's HPO framework*

***This Quick Insight looks at what makes a great manager by combining ideas from Belbin's team roles, De Caluwé's colour model, and De Waal's High-Performance Organization (HPO) framework. Focused on the supermarket sector, the study reveals the specific managerial roles and change styles that are instrumental in establishing and sustaining a High-Performance Organization. It highlights the importance of a balanced leadership approach, emphasizing roles like the Chairman and Resource Investigator, and underscores the value of good relationships between managers and employees. This article is a must-read for entrepreneurs, business leaders, and management professionals interested in optimizing organizational performance through evidence-based managerial practices.***

This article is a management summary of: de Waal, A., van Nierop, E., and Sloot, L. (2020), "The relation between manager type and high-performance achievement", Journal of Advances in Management Research, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 136-151.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

-  **The Value of Management Models:** The study shows how management models such as Belbin's team role model, De Caluwé's colour model, and De Waal's HPO framework can be useful in identifying the most effective management and change styles.
-  **Roles of Managers:** The roles of Chairman and Resource Investigator are crucial for creating and maintaining a High-Performance Organization (HPO). The Chairman coordinates activities, makes decisions, and ensures smooth business operations. The Investigator plays the role of a strong networker, maintains relationships with suppliers, and understands the needs of customers. The role of Innovator, with a strong analytical mind and constantly looking for new products and services, also turns out to be valuable.
-  **Importance of Balance:** A balance between different role types is optimal for creating and maintaining an HPO. A manager who can fulfil both the roles of Chairman and Plant (leadership side) as well as Shaper and Resource Investigator (management side) is seen as the most effective leader.
-  **Change Styles:** The 'red' colour, which stands for a change style emphasizing good relationships between managers and employees, is the only colour that has a significantly positive relationship with four out of the five HPO factors. This emphasizes the importance of good relationships between managers and employees for the transformation into an HPO.
-  **The Need for Adaptation:** The study shows that certain roles, such as the Monitor Evaluator and the Team Worker, may be less important for the financial success of the supermarket, but still need to have a place in the management team. This underscores the importance of adaptability and flexibility in management roles.



## INTRODUCTION

The success of every organization is closely related to the quality of its leadership. But what determines the quality of a manager? Is there a specific 'type' of manager that organizations need? And does this vary by sector? To answer these questions, we have evaluated franchise entrepreneurs in supermarkets, using Belbin's team roles (to identify their roles), the colour model of De Caluwé (to determine their change style), and De Waal's High Performance Organization (HPO) framework to evaluate their performance.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD MANAGEMENT

It is widely known that good management is crucial for the success of an organization. The big question is whether all types of managers are equally valuable, or if certain management styles offer more chance of success, and whether these styles vary between different sectors. In our study, we investigated these questions within the context of the supermarket sector.

Franchise entrepreneurs in supermarkets are often both owner and manager of their store, thus fulfilling two important roles. As owners, they take on a certain business risk, while as managers they are responsible for the day-to-day affairs and decision-making within the supermarket. Our focus was on this latter role, and our research question was: what 'type' of manager ensures a franchisee is successful?

## THE APPLICATION OF MANAGEMENT MODELS: BELBIN, DE CALUWÉ, AND DE WAAL

In our research, the role of the franchisee in the management team was central. This role is determined not only by their personality, expertise, and professional competence, but also by the roles of other team members. To determine the team role, we used Belbin's team role model. To gain more insight into the skills for change management, we used the colour profiles of De Caluwé & Vermaak. The success of a supermarket organization is closely related to the ability to respond to changes in consumer needs and the competitive environment. Finally, we used De Waal's HPO framework, as this model provides insight into the qualities of managers within an organization.



According to Belbin's team role model, there are many successful managers with their own unique style. Good results are mainly achieved through effective collaboration, with each team member fulfilling a specific role, based on their individual strengths and competencies. In this context, 'role' does not refer to the functional role in the organization (such as marketing manager or CEO), but to the natural behavioural style of a manager. Belbin argued that teams perform better when they have a balanced mix of natural team roles. The colour model of De Caluwé and Vermaak emphasizes the importance of constant development for organizations to remain competitive. This requires that entrepreneurs can adapt well to changes in their environment. The colour model identifies five different change styles, each characterized by a different colour.

By combining these models, we hope to gain more insight into what 'type' of manager is most successful as a supermarket franchisee. These findings can help organizations make better decisions about their leadership, which can ultimately contribute to their overall success.

## DE WAAL'S HPO FRAMEWORK

De Waal's HPO framework provides a structure consisting of five factors (with underlying 35 characteristics) that are essential for the good performance of an organization:

1. Management quality: Managers in high-performing organizations are characterized by integrity, decisiveness, action orientation, performance orientation, effectiveness, confidence, and an excellent leadership style. They are characterized as high-performance individuals who adopt principles of customer orientation, quality thinking, and constant improvement, inspiring others to collectively deliver exceptional performance.
2. Openness and action-orientation: HPOs promote interactive internal communication among their members, leading to free and continuous information exchange.



THE 5 STRANDS OF SUCCESS



MANAGEMENT QUALITY



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & RENEWAL



LONG-TERM ORIENTATION



EMPLOYEE QUALITY



OPENNESS & ACTION ORIENTATION



3. Long-term orientation: For HPOs, long-term continuity takes precedence over short-term profit.
4. Continuous improvement and renewal: Excellent organizations distinguish themselves by their strategy and are constantly engaged in renewing and improving their processes, products, and services to realize this unique strategy.
5. Employee quality: The employees in an HPO take responsibility for their results and strive for exceptional performance.

An organization can determine its own HPO status by performing the HPO diagnosis. Managers and employees fill in a questionnaire for this, allowing average scores for the five HPO factors (and underlying 35 characteristics) to be calculated and visualized. These results can be used to determine where and what improvements are needed.

## **RESEARCH AMONG 400 SUPERMARKET FRANCHISEES**

In our research, we sent a questionnaire to four hundred supermarket franchisees. The collected information concerns general details about the supermarket and the environment in which it is located, general details about the franchisee; the performance of the franchise, the success factors according to the franchisee; the role and time spent by the franchisee in his/her supermarket activities; the performance level according to the HPO model; the franchisee's preferred team role, and the franchisee's change management approach.

### ***The Findings***

It turns out that there are two specific team roles that significantly contribute to creating and maintaining an HPO. These roles are the Chairperson and the Resource Investigator. The Chairperson plays a critical role by maintaining an overview and preventing problems, coordinating activities for smooth business operations, and making decisions. This role type also sets priorities for the staff about what needs to be done, where it is essential to understand what is happening in the supermarket. The Resource Investigator also plays a key role, primarily as a strong networker. This role has the skills to maintain relationships with suppliers and understand and address customer needs. The Resource Investigator also has a strong connection with the franchisee's head office, which is crucial for the cohesion of the network. Additionally, we discovered that the Plant role is beneficial for franchisees. The Plant, who has a strong analytical mind, is constantly looking for new products, services, and



ways to attractively position the supermarket. This role is correlated with two of the five HPO factors, indicating that it is a valuable addition to the team.

The research also shows that two team roles are less important to the financial success of the supermarket: the Monitor Evaluator and the Team Worker. The Monitor Evaluator is typically cautious and does not make quick decisions, which conflicts with the entrepreneurial nature of a franchisee that requires swift action and decision-making. The Team Worker focuses on creating harmony, which sometimes comes at the expense of striving for exceptional results, a quality that a franchisee should have. However, these roles must still be present within the supermarket's management team, but they should not be fulfilled by the franchisee himself.

An interesting finding is that a balance between different role types is optimal for creating and maintaining an HPO. A manager who can fulfil both the Chairperson and Plant roles on the leadership side, and encompass the Shaper and Resource Investigator roles on the management side, is seen as the most effective leader. This leadership style facilitates the work of others in the organization. In our research, we also looked at the colours of De Caluwé & Vermaak in relation to the HPO framework. It turns out that the colour 'red', which stands for a change style emphasizing good relationships between managers and employees, is the only colour that has a significant positive relationship with four of the five HPO factors. This confirms that this colour of change management plays a primary role during an HPO transformation.

## CONCLUSION

Our research has shown that certain types of managers and certain change styles are more effective in creating and maintaining a well-performing supermarket. While the concept that some types of managers are more effective than others is not new, our research names specific team roles and specific change styles that managers need to adopt to run a successful supermarket. This will help franchisees in the composition of their management team and in determining where they need further reinforcement, both in their own development and in the qualities of the people in their team.








# ARE YOU READY TO TRANSFORM YOUR ORGANIZATION INTO AN HPO?

It all starts with insight, obtained through an **HPO diagnosis**. This diagnosis shows you how your organization—or even just a specific department—scores on the success factors of High Performance Organizations. You will receive development points/improvement themes that can be tackled by managers and employees together. The HPO diagnosis acts as a mirror, in which you honestly look at your organization (or part of it) and yourself: how far are we on the path to becoming an HPO? It helps you identify the 'hard nuts to crack': the focus areas that need to be addressed to realize your strategy and become an HPO. You determine your current level (the starting point) and use this as a basis to measure the effectiveness of the HPO transition. It also strengthens the 'sense of unity' within your organization: by identifying and addressing shared, supported improvement themes.

Achieving or maintaining the status of an HPO comes with a range of financial and strategic benefits for everyone involved: the organization, the customers, and the employees.

 **Customer Focus:** An HPO is invaluable to its customers. The primary goal is to boost customer value and satisfaction.

 **Employee Engagement:** Aiming for high performance re-energizes your team. It leads to increased job satisfaction as HPOs concentrate on what genuinely drives organizational success. It's not a new project; it's a new mindset and approach to work.

 **Adaptability:** An HPO is designed to evolve. It thrives in our ever-changing, competitive world, making your organization more resilient and future-proof. This is achieved through ongoing adjustments, learning, and improvements.

## Our Offer

- ✓ Customized **HPO Diagnoses**
- ✓ Interactive **Lectures and Workshops** on the HPO Framework
- ✓ Comprehensive Interviews, **Articles**, **Books**, and Networking Opportunities
- ✓ Guidance in Implementation Led by our **HPO Experts**



## Why choose the HPO Center?



### Experience & Credibility

With over 15 years of practical experience combined with rigorous scientific research, the HPO Center is at the global forefront of organizational improvement advice.



### Global Knowledge Center

Based in the Netherlands, the HPO Center collaborates with partners, including in emerging markets, with the aim of fulfilling its mission to improve organizations worldwide.



### Unmatched Expertise

HPO doesn't stop at diagnosing organizations. We also explore, investigate, and delve deeply into related topics such as High Performance Leadership, Silo-busting, Futurizing, Social Value Creation, and High Performance Business Ecosystems—evidence of our commitment to continually expand the HPO universe.



### More than Just an Organization

With a passion for inspiring, stimulating, and networking, the HPO Center is not just an organization; it's a movement. Through scientific and professional publications (all freely available at [hpocenter.com](http://hpocenter.com) and [www.hpocenter.nl](http://www.hpocenter.nl)), books, seminars, and roundtables, we continually disseminate the knowledge of the HPO Framework and unite professionals interested in continuous improvement and excellence.

## Considering an HPO transformation?

The HPO Center is ready to support and guide you on your journey toward high performance. Contact us today for an inspiring conversation or to experience an HPO workshop. Together, we'll redefine your performance.



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