

How to Be an Effective Team Member

Working on teams can be rewarding, but at times it can be difficult and downright frustrating. If there are poor communicators on your team, you may often feel left in the dark, confused or misunderstood. To create a successful team, effective communication methods are necessary for both team members and leaders. Even though some people understand their communication skills need improving, many aren't certain how to improve them. So, in the following article, we've outlined how to avoid some common team blunders as well as some helpful advice on how to be a better teammate or leader overall. Go... team!

If You're a Team Member

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

If you have a problem with someone in your group, talk to him about it. Letting bad feelings brew will only make you sour and want to isolate yourself from the group. Not only does it feel good to get it out, but it will be better for the team in the long run.

Don't Blame Others

People in your group lose respect for you if you're constantly blaming others for not meeting deadlines. You're not fooling anyone, people know who isn't pulling his weight in a group. Pointing the finger will only make you look cowardly. Group members understand if you have a heavy workload and weren't able to meet a deadline. Saying something like, "I'm really sorry, but I'll get it to you by the end of today." will earn you a lot more respect than trying to make it seem like it's everyone else's fault that *you* missed *your* deadline.

Support Group Member's Ideas

If a teammate suggests something, always consider it – even if it's the silliest idea you've ever heard! Considering the group's ideas shows you're interested in other people's ideas, not just your own. And this makes you a good team member. After all, nobody likes a know-it-all.

No Bragging

It's one thing to rejoice in your successes with the group, but don't act like a superstar. Doing this will make others regret your personal successes and may create tension within the group. You don't have to brag to let people know you've done a good job, people will already know. Have faith that people will recognize when good work is being done and that they'll let you know how well you're doing. Your response? Something like "Thanks, that means a lot." is enough.

Listen Actively

Look at the person who's speaking to you, nod, ask probing questions and acknowledge what's said by paraphrasing points that have been made. If you're unclear about something that's been said, ask for more information to clear up any confusion before moving on. Effective communication is a vital part of any team, so the value of good listening skills shouldn't be underestimated.

Get Involved

Share suggestions, ideas, solutions and proposals with your team members. Take the time to help your fellow teammates, no matter the request. You can guarantee there will be a time in the future when you'll need some help or advice. And if you've helped them in past, they'll be more than happy to lend a helping hand.

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