

Better Team Skills



Participant Guide

Benefits of Teams

- **Get More Done** – When a team is working well together, many heads and hands get more work done than any one individual can. Each team member can perform different tasks that play to their strengths.
- **Diverse Team members Increase Creativity** – When a team has people with different backgrounds, age-groups, and job titles they are more likely to be more creative and impactful than groups with all similar backgrounds. Every person brings a different perspective to team discussions. Lively discussions spark inspiration.
- **People on Good Teams Are Happier** – When teams are performing at their best, they actually reduce the stress a team member feels, and increases their positivity and morale.
- **Important Job Skills** – The ability to coordinate with others and collaborate successfully in teams are highly valued skills in any job. Also, questions about your ability to work in a team are often asked in interviews.



Four Qualities of Good Team Members



Flexibility

Demonstrate the ability to adapt to changing situations and do not get stressed out when a new path or course is emerging. Be open to new ideas.



Communication

Communicate clearly, honestly, openly, and respectfully. Receive and give feedback constructively.



Respect

Be courteous and considerate. Do not talk negatively about others, or interrupt people when they are speaking. Remember the way you talk about someone else does not define them, it defines you.



Reliability

Be willing to share the workload. Do not make promises that you cannot keep. Have integrity and make personal accountability a core value.

Team Communication Best Practices

Giving Feedback Best Practices

1. **Focus on the behavior, not the person.** Start with a question rather than a statement. For example, “I have left you several phone messages about the information I need from you. Is there something I can do to help so that we can meet our deadlines?”
2. **Be specific.** Avoid generalities. For example: “I have left you two emails and two phone calls regarding the information I need from you this week. Can you tell me why you haven’t been able to follow-up?”
3. **Be realistic.** Focus on what can change. For example, “What is a realistic timeframe that you need so that you can get the information to me?”
4. **Be timely.** When an incident occurs, think about what you want to say, how you want to say it, and when you should say it. Don’t put off addressing the issue for too long.
5. **Be supportive.** Once the issue is identified, provide support and guidance. Maybe the person just did not know how their behavior was impacting you or the team and just needs some help in how to grow and improve.

Receiving Feedback Best Practices

1. **Listen.** Do not interrupt. Hear the person out and try to understand their perspective.
2. **Be aware of body language.** Manage your body language, gestures, and tone of voice. Do not roll your eyes, smirk, or raise your voice.
3. **Be open.** There is more than one way to approach something and we all have different perspectives and opinions.
4. **Understand the message.** Ask questions to ensure you understand the scope of the situation and get other team members’ perspectives, if appropriate.
5. **Decide what to do.** Make a choice of what you plan to do. Understand the consequences of ignoring the feedback and identify the value of using the feedback to improve.

Action Plan

To help you assess your team member qualities, rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 for each one of these areas by circling the most accurate number.

	Never		→		Sometimes		→		Always	
Team Member Qualities										
Flexibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Respect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Identify the three team qualities that you scored yourself the lowest. Now, write a sentence for each low-scoring area describing a specific action to improve your performance in that area in your current job.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

