

Team Oriented Skills

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Teamwork is a collaborative group effort towards a common goal. Anytime there are a multiple of people attempting to accomplish any goal, they are implementing teamwork in some fashion. Teamwork can be part of a career, a community, or a family. Teamwork is also being successful in the shared goal. In order to form effective teamwork, team members need to have good team skills, good leaders, and often be skilled in negotiation.

A number of skills can allow team members to contribute to effective teamwork. Not all are necessary to be a good teammate, but the more skills a person excels at, the better teammate they are. The ability to listen is one of the most important skills [1]. When working on a team, communication is required or there isn't really a team. Team members need to be able to listen to instructions, suggestions, ideas, problems, or requests for help. Often, people are not listening or paying attention, but are simply waiting for their turn to speak. To counter this, listen the current speaker and then expand on their ideas [1]. If a certain topic is not brought up, a good teammate should wait for their turn to present new ideas. Cutting in on someone else's time is never helpful to the team dynamic.

Keeping ego in check is also very important [1]. This can relate back to listening. A good team member doesn't interrupt just because they believe their idea is better. They respect their fellow teammates and wait their turn. No matter how brilliant someone is, there is always someone better at something [1]. Keeping ego in check can also keep from hurting oneself. This also allows for better collaboration and fosters respect. A good team member is always ready to defer to someone more knowledgeable than themselves [1].

The ability to give and receive criticism is another valuable skill [1]. This goes back to keeping ego in check. A good team member won't lash out at bad ideas or mistakes. They also wouldn't get defensive if receiving constructive criticism. Constructive criticism is meant to make the team better, but it has to be handled correctly. The ability to deliver criticism in a friendly and helpful manner is paramount. A good technique is to use the compliment sandwich. This is where one would first offer praise before noting what needs improvement. Then the process is finished with more praise. A good team member may always be supportive but they must also know how to accept when others disagree with them [1].

Delegation is a teamwork skill that also doubles as a leadership skill [1]. A good team recognizes that certain people on the team have certain strengths. Delegating tasks that relate to individual's strengths creates an efficient team [1]. This is often the role of a leader, if not THE leader, as a leader is not always the person in charge. This can be accomplished by a group effort of team members as well.

As discussed previously, it is important for team members to respect one another. Team members will not always get along outside of the team, but they should push their grudges aside for the sake of the team [1]. Everyone deserves to be respected or the team will fall apart. Working together on a project can even create comradery and friendship where there was only animosity before [1].

Often, there are team members who fail to understand a concept or simply need an extra pair of hands [1]. Being helpful is important. A good teammate does not let their fellow

teammates continue to struggle, especially if the struggling individual specifically asks for help. Good teammates help build one another up. The more help that is given to one individual, the more likely and capable they are to provide help to others down the road. Helping others assures that there are no weak links [1]. It has also been proven that slow learners often become more skilled than others once they learn that particular skill [1].

Supporting ideas is important for teamwork, but so is questioning them [1]. There is no need to attack, but instead ask how the idea works, and how it would be executed [1]. Ask why or if it's the best idea. These types of questions can really help flush out great ideas. Even if the ideas are fully conceptualized, these questions can help the rest of the team understand the process. Of course, as stated earlier, be sure to listen to the person presenting the idea. They may answer all the potential questions before anyone needs to ask. There is no need to interrupt.

The core of teamwork is participation [1]. Everyone needs to pull their own weight [1]. This does not mean they should be left alone if they need help, but they must actively try to perform their jobs or ask for help when needed. Participation also involves helping others and contributing to ideas when appropriate. A good leader will try to get everyone to engage with the team as the quietest people often have the deepest thoughts [1]. Getting these people to contribute could provide much needed ideas to help the project.

Bad ideas are bad for teams, which is why rational debate is very important [1]. A good team member recognizes bad ideas and counters them with rational debate using facts and logic [1]. This goes back to respect in that there can be no bias [1]. The person proven wrong must accept the criticism. Knowing exactly what makes an idea bad can help to move on and form better ideas [1].

The final skill for excellent teamwork is setting the right environment [1]. This is another skill that pertains more to leadership, but in a team, anyone can step up to contribute to these efforts. The workspace should be as comfortable as possible without sacrificing productivity, although a recreation space would can help increase productivity. Team members should be allowed to take periodic breaks to refresh themselves. This can often contribute to increased productivity and allows them to time to let ideas form. While there are certainly more teamwork skills than this, these are some of the most important to possess.

The next thing needed for effective teamwork are leadership skills. Most teamwork skills are also essential leadership skills, especially setting the right environment and delegation. A good leader must do all the things a good team member does in order to help create a successful team. There are some skills that apply directly to leaders.

Somewhat related to setting the right environment, is giving the team what they need to be successful [2]. A good leader provides the necessary equipment and makes sure existing equipment is working and stocked. This applies to more than just physical items. A good leader gives their team breaks, time off, and even emotional support.

A good leader also makes sure the team is focused on a higher purpose [2]. This does not mean that they can't take breaks. The leader has to direct the project, assign tasks, and create a

vision of the bigger picture. The team should feel all their work is meaningful and contributing to a higher goal. This way, even people working on separate parts of the project still feel like there is one team that everyone is a part of.

A good leader will also plan team-building activities [2]. This can be any number of things such as corporate retreats, team-building exercises, office parties, or a group lunch. Any of these can help the team bond [2].

Finally, a good leader leads by example [2]. They work with the team, not just monitor it. They provide assistance and advice. They are the first in to work and the last to leave. Good leaders share experiences with their teams [2]. Good leaders are really just excellent team members. They are not always bosses. Some bosses are terrible leaders. A good leader is anyone on the team who can take initiative to improve the team. There can be multiple leaders in one good team.

The last thing needed for effective teamwork is negotiation skills. The first step in any negotiation is establishing a relationship [3]. A negotiator must get to know the other person or party involved in the negotiation [3]. This allows a negotiator to learn what drives the other party and can help predict that person's wants and needs before the negotiation proceeds. If the negotiator can develop respect, then trust will follow [3]. This will make negotiations much smoother.

When possible, a negotiator should choose honey over vinegar [3]. This should not be forced. Kindness must be sincere or the deception will likely be noticed and set negotiations back [3]. Genuine kindness can help negotiations go the desired direction. This kindness is easier to foster if the relationship was established well previously. Having compassion for the other party can go a long way in negotiations. Sometimes the other party just wants to be heard. There may only need to be small things given up in negotiations to appease them.

Negotiators should focus on win-win scenarios during the negotiation [3]. For obvious reasons, never reject all the demands of the other party. Compromise is key. As long as both parties gain something, the negotiations were successful. It is much more helpful to focus on what everyone gains as opposed to what everyone loses. A negotiator should stay focused on the big picture so everyone feels they are on the same side by the end of negotiations [3].

A good negotiator has to act like an adult [3]. They should never get caught up in childish emotions or use petty words. This will only instigate the behavior in others [3]. The negotiator should be a stable influence [3]. They should keep the discussion rational and dissuade the childish behavior of others.

Last, but not least, a negotiator must respect the rhythm of the negotiations [3]. Negotiations should not be rushed [3]. The other party's complaints, wants, and needs should be heard in full. Pushing forward with a negotiation may give the feeling that the other party is not be heard. A good negotiator should also not be scared of the pauses. Silence can be powerful [3]. Overall, the negotiator must make sure to take the time to let everyone be heard and validated.

Teamwork is a powerful thing. Teamwork skills allow each member of the team to be their best. Leadership skills allow leaders to get the best output from their team. Using the art of negotiation can help solve any problems within the team. When applying teamwork skills, leadership skills, and effective negotiation techniques, a team can thrive.

#### Reference List:

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