

How to be a good team player: Tips for becoming the dreamy coworker

Learning how to be a good team player can help you achieve your work goals and get along better with your coworkers. So why do we often find it hard to work with others?

When trying to complete an important project, it's easy to feel like you can only trust yourself to get the job done. You might work long hours, leave your coworkers off of important email threads, or make decisions without input from others. Though seems like the more efficient way to get things done, in the long run, it can harm you and your career.

Even if your coworkers are difficult to be around, you have to learn how to be a good team player. Everyone, from entry-level workers to entrepreneurs, has to work with other people to achieve their goals. You even need teamwork skills in your personal life – have you ever tried to decide where to eat dinner with your friends, only to have one person try to control the discussion?

From networking to emotional support, your “team” is comprised of people who can make or break your goals. Everyone has different strengths, and you can't follow your dreams without the right people by your side. Plus, if you don't work well with others, you could burn out from the effort of trying to do everything alone.

So how can you learn how to be a good team player? Let's dive into what makes a great team member and 10 tips for improving your teamwork skills at work.



The characteristics of a good team member

Being a good collaborator takes more than just being liked by your colleagues. Sometimes it's about making tough decisions for the benefit of the group or being the dissenting voice in a controversial meeting. Above all, a good team player has the following characteristics:

Accountability. Effective team players are accountable to themselves and to others. They take responsibility for their actions or mistakes and understand how their choices impact the team.

Flexibility. Adapting to change is a critical part of a team's success. Strong collaborators are willing to take on new challenges to support their peers and tweak deadlines for the greater good.

Positivity. A positive mental attitude keeps morale high. Teams value people who exude optimism.

Commitment. Successful team players believe in the group's processes and team goals. They stand in solidarity with the rest of their members.

Integrity. The value of integrity is important in a team setting. A good colleague doesn't just say "yes" to everything – they push back on ideas they think go against the team's values.



Why should you learn to be a good team player?

Forbes listed “collaboration” as one of the top 10 skills employers look for in their employees – and with good reason. Collaborative team dynamics, where members feel safe to share ideas and lean on their partners, encourage productivity, efficiency, and innovation.

Teamwork also improves employee morale and overall well-being, as everyone feels valued and knows they can ask for help.

Collaboration is sought-after by employers, so consider expressing how you’re a team player on your resume and when answering interview questions. Bolster your collaboration skills with stats and team accomplishments.

10 tips to be a good team player

People often misunderstand what makes a great team player. They think collaboration means saying yes to everything, not having boundaries, and never pushing back on bad ideas. But in reality, the opposite is true.

You have the ability to be an intelligent and capable member of a team. That means you shouldn’t be afraid of speaking up when needed. In fact, it’s probably expected of you. You need to recognize that you’re a valuable contributor and can participate in decision-making.

Here are 10 tips on how to be a better team player in the workplace:

1. Be a good communicator

Healthy communication skills are vital to your professional development. Actively listening, relaying your ideas clearly, and taking and receiving

feedback effectively will help you advance quicker and connect with your team.

Strong communicators also know how to check in with themselves and others so they're always on the same wavelength. This means being self-aware, practicing empathy, and improving emotional regulation. You can support others better if you understand your biases and triggers and can put yourself in their shoes.



2. Be a problem-solver

Your team will face challenges. Critical thinking and problem-solving are essential to collaborate effectively and overcome these hurdles. Be ready to suggest creative solutions when brainstorming with your colleagues.

3. Know your role (and your limits)

You should know what's expected of you and how your role fits within the team. You should also be realistic about how much you can take on. Others depend on you, so make sure you can deliver.

4. Take initiative

Taking the initiative means helping prevent problems before they happen. It also means addressing them as soon as they appear, if and

when they do. Be ready to spring into action before someone asks you to. Your initiative may inspire others to be more proactive.

5. Stick to your deadlines

Someone is waiting for you to finish your work so they can do theirs. Use your time management skills so you don't let them down. This will make you a valuable and dependable team player.

6. Know your strengths

Most projects go through a planning phase where everyone's assigned tasks. Be transparent about your abilities and help people understand how you can contribute. Ask for jobs that take advantage of your skillset.

7. Support and be supported

High-performing teams feel supported and validated by one another. Motivate your team by sharing positive feedback, expressing gratitude for their hard work, and asking them often if they need help. Just make sure you don't take on more than you can chew.

8. Share information

Found a useful online resource? Send it to your team. Worked on similar projects before? Share your experience. This information exchange will help everyone produce better work and problem-solve difficult challenges easier.

9. Understand your team's objectives

You can easily hinder progress toward shared goals if you don't know about or comprehend them. Make sure you understand overall objectives to gain perspective on your tasks and understand how your work depends on others.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

1. Do I understand the company's overall mission?
2. Does my manager know what I'm prioritizing and why?
3. How do my deadlines affect my teammates' progress?

10. Be open-minded

Teamwork is about bringing together a diverse set of individuals with unique perspectives and skills. Practice mental flexibility by being open to different approaches and techniques. You'll learn something new and encourage your coworkers to share innovative ideas.

With these tips in mind, you're on your way to proving yourself as the ideal team player.

Reference: [BetterUp.com](https://www.betterup.com)

