The benefits of teamwork

Becoming a cohesive, high-performing team that motivates and supports each other helps everyone to perform at a higher level overall and provides a more positive customer experience.

What does it mean to be a good team player? To start, it means being a good communicator, says service expert Renee Evenson. "It's someone who is supportive and helpful to others, who communicates in a positive, constructive manner, and who thinks before they speak. It's a person who is trusting and who seeks to build trusting relationships with others."

Evenson recommends embracing the following seven behaviors in order to become a better team player.

■ **Share credit with coworkers.** A successful team player will take a "we, not me" approach to team members and team communications. "Just speaking in terms of 'we' — 'We did this' or 'We need to do that' — is very important. It shows that you are thinking in terms of the group rather than just thinking of yourself," says Evenson.

■ **Look for opportunities to help others.** And give team members the opportunity to pitch in and help you. In fact, says Evenson, "try adopting a 'how can we help' approach. So that the next time someone needs or asks for your help in solving a problem, you involve the team. Then together, come up with the best solution and give credit to the team."

■ **Show respect.** "When you respect others, they are more likely to respect you, says Evenson. It's that simple. The more respect you give, the more you receive.

■ **Express appreciation.** Offering compliments makes others feel good about themselves, and when people feel good, they respond positively. "And when you make somebody else feel good, you are going to feel good yourself," says Evenson. "So when you see a coworker doing something well, offer a compliment — whether it is something simple or even something not directly work-related."

■ **Share enthusiasm.** If you are motivated and enthusiastic about your work and about helping others, your enthusiasm will rub off on others and your entire team will work better together. But it may take some time. "The important thing is to do all you can to build a positive work environment — one that includes everybody and that involves everyone in team discussions and decisions," says Evenson.

■ **Take time to get to know each other.** Teamwork always comes easier when people know each other and have some level of personal connection. Just as you look to build rapport with your customers, use those same skills to get to know and build solid rapport with the people on your team.

■ **Be honest about your own abilities.** Recognize your own qualities, strengths, and short-comings in terms of teamwork and team support and work on building the strengths and minimizing the shortcomings. "We are all a work in progress throughout our lives," Evenson says, "and it's important to be able to honestly assess who you are, what your goals are, and what you need to do to achieve those goals."

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