Making the Most of Your Work Relationships

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Why Have Good Relationships

1. The better the relationships the happier we are when working.
2. Good relationships give us freedom.
3. It helps us develop our careers.
4. Remember – it's important to have good relationships with providers, central office staff, and consumers.
Characteristics that make up a Good Working Relationship?

- Trust
- Mutual Respect
- Mindfulness
- Welcoming Diversity
- Open Communication
Where should you build good relationships?

- With key stakeholders in your organization
  - Who are some of our stakeholders?
- Stakeholder analysis
  - Identify your stakeholders
  - Prioritize your stakeholders
  - Learn to understand your key stakeholders
Stakeholder Analysis

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Why use this stake-holder approach?
How to Build Good Work Relationships

1. Develop your People Skills
   ▶ How good are your people skills?
Score interpretation

16-36
- Your technical skills may have taken precedence over your people skills in your career to date. You aren’t making the most of the relationships you have at work, and this may be limiting your career growth. It’s time to assess how you can work better with others in the workplace and develop a more collaborative, understanding, and open approach to getting your needs met - while still achieving team and organizational objectives.

37-58
- You recognize that working well with others in the workplace is important; and you are trying to work collaboratively while still making sure your needs are met. There is room for improvement, however, as old habits may creep in during times of stress and pressure. Make a plan to work actively on your people skills so that they form the natural basis for how you approach workplace relationships.

59-80
- Your people skills are good. You understand the give and take involved in complex issues involving people. You might not always approach situations perfectly, however you have a sufficiently good understanding to know when and where you need to take steps to rectify things. Keep working on your people skills, and set an example for the rest of your team.
How to Build Good Work Relationships

1. Identify your relationship needs
   1. Do you know what you need from others?
   2. Do you know what they need from you?

2. Schedule time to Build Relationships
   1. Even if it’s just 20 minutes for the week broken down in segments

3. Focus on your Emotional Intelligence (EI)
   1. This is your ability to recognize your own emotions, and clearly understand what they’re telling you.
   2. High EI also helps you to understand the emotions and needs of others.
What is Emotional Intelligence (EI)?

- EI is the ability to recognize your emotions, understand what they're telling you, and realize how your emotions affect people around you. It also involves your perception of others: when you understand how they feel, this allows you to manage relationships more effectively.
5 Elements of Emotional Intelligence

1. **Self Awareness**
   1. Understanding your own emotions and not letting your feelings rule your decisions. Taking an honest look at yourself and knowing your strengths and weaknesses then being willing to work on those.

2. **Self-Regulation**
   1. The ability to control your emotions and impulses

3. **Motivation**

4. **Empathy**
   1. The ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs, and viewpoints of those around you.

5. **Social Skills**
How do you improve your Emotional Intelligence

- Emotional Intelligence CAN be learned and developed!!
  1. Observe how you react to People
  2. Look at your work environment
  3. Do a self evaluation
  4. Examine how you react to stressful situations
  5. Take responsibility for your actions
  6. Examine how your actions will effect others
How to Build Good Work Relationships

4. Appreciate others
   - Show your appreciation whenever someone helps you. Everyone, from your boss to the office cleaner, wants to feel that their work is appreciated. So, genuinely compliment the people around you when they do something well. This will open the door to great work relationships.

5. Be positive
   - Positivity is attractive and contagious, and it will help strengthen your relationships with your colleagues. No one wants to be around someone who's negative all the time.
     - Are you positive?

6. Manage your boundaries
   - All of us want to have friends at work, but, occasionally, a friendship can start to impact our jobs, especially when a friend or colleague begins to monopolize our time.
How to Build Good Work Relationships

7. Avoid Gossiping
   - Don’t gossip – Office politics and gossip are major relationship killers at work. If you’re experiencing conflict with someone in your group, talk to them directly about the problem. Gossiping about the situation with other colleagues will only exacerbate the situation, and will cause mistrust and animosity between you.

8. Listen Actively
   - People respond to those who truly listen to what they have to say. Focus on listening more than you talk, and you’ll quickly become known as someone who can be trusted.
Active Listening

1. Pay Attention
   - Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly.
   - Look at the speaker directly.
   - Put aside distracting thoughts.
   - Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal!
   - Avoid being distracted by environmental factors. For example, side conversations.
   - "Listen" to the speaker's body language.
Active Listening

2. Show That You're Listening
   - Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention.
   - Nod occasionally.
   - Smile and use other facial expressions.
   - Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.
   - Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and uh huh.
Active Listening

3. Provide Feedback

- Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.

- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is," and "Sounds like you are saying," are great ways to reflect back.

- Ask questions to clarify certain points. "What do you mean when you say." "Is this what you mean?"

- Summarize the speaker's comments periodically.
Active Listening

4. Defer Judgment

- Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.
- Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions.
- Don't interrupt with counter arguments.
5. Respond Appropriately

- Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down.
- Be candid, open, and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Treat the other person in a way that you think he or she would want to be treated.
Occasionally, you'll have to work with someone you don’t like, or someone that you simply can't relate to. But, for the sake of your work, it's essential you maintain a professional relationship with them.

When this happens, make an effort to get to know the person. It's likely that they know full well that the two of you aren't on the best terms, so make the first move to improve the relationship by engaging them in a genuine conversation, or by inviting them out to lunch.

While you're talking, try not to be too guarded. Ask them about their background, interests and past successes. Instead of putting energy into your differences, focus on finding things that you have in common.

Just remember – not all relationships will be great; but you can make sure that they are, at least, workable.
Key points in closing

1. Building and maintain good working relationships will not only make you more engaged and committed to your organization; it can also open doors to key projects, career advancement, and raises.

2. Start by identifying the key stakeholders in your organization. These people, as well as your clients and customers, deserve extra time and attention.

3. Then, devote a portion of your day to laying the foundation of good relationships. Even five minutes a day, if it's genuine, can help to build a bond between you and a colleague. Be honest, avoid gossip, and try to compliment people on a job well done. After all, the more you give in your relationships, the more you'll get back from those around you!