



Your Working Relationships

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Your work and professional relationships are as important to your job satisfaction and productivity as the work you do -- after all, no one wants troubled, stressful interactions with others. Also, managers rate an employee's ability to get along with coworkers and maintain positive work relationships just as important as the quality and quantity of work. Poor work relationships can lead to a variety of problems in the workplace; including absenteeism, unmet goals, missed deadlines, and a negative work environment that makes it difficult to attract and retain high quality employees.

Here are some tips for creating and maintaining positive relationships with your coworkers:

- Take time to acknowledge others. Wishing a coworker a pleasant good morning, or spending a few moments chatting with someone about their hobby, children, pets, or weekend plans creates good will and cooperation.
- Be conscious of shared workspace. Don't let your clutter spill over into someone else's work area, and don't remove or borrow tools or supplies from a coworker's desk without asking first.
- Respond mindfully to others rather than reacting emotionally. Sometimes we react to others based on past relationships rather than on what is taking place in the present. Become aware of your own "hot buttons," and avoid making assumptions about a coworker's motivations or intentions without checking these out with him or her first.
- Be aware of your body language and tone of voice. These often convey more than your spoken words, and can express a message contrary to what you are trying to get across. A pleasant facial expression, relaxed, open posture, and a calm tone of voice help others perceive you as a positive, approachable part of the team.
- If a problem arises with a coworker, speak to him or her honestly about it as soon as is convenient for both of you, and in a private place, making sure the goal for the discussion is to resolve the problem in a way that you both feel good about.



If you supervise others:

- Remember—you need others to be successful. **It IS your job** to develop a good working relationship with **EVERY** team member.
- Discuss your expectations and performance issues more frequently. Monitor progress - not just problems - and give feedback. **Ask your people** for improvement ideas, and show respect by incorporating their input.
- Express concern and be flexible with employees who are going through personal health problems, stresses, or losses.

When you are dealing with those in leadership roles:



- Remember -- you need to respect that leadership is hard work. For complex reasons, leaders must often make decisions that are not popular or always fair.
- Don't let fear keep you from open discussions. Seek to understand your supervisor's expectations and speak up in advance when you anticipate problems with assignments.
- Think of yourself as a scout, because you see things from the front-line perspective. Keep the leader informed on important issues regarding coworkers, customers, and clients. **It IS your job** to make suggestions and efforts that enhance productivity and profitability!

You may call your EAP confidentially for ways to improve your working relationships.