

What skills are needed to make an effective team member

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Good communication skills are essential in making an important contribution to a team. Different elements of these are outlined in the following paragraphs.

In our event unit 18 I kept an upright body posture to help me communicate my message in a confident way, for example I avoided crossing my arms in a defensive position when speaking to people, when listening to someone else, I would smile, frown, laugh or be silent at appropriate times to show that I understand and to give feedback when working in a team work situation.

Tact is a very important teamwork skill. During my event unit I respected others and their ideas; I tried not to be consciously abrupt or cut off other people while they are still trying to say something. Everyone in the team is important and deserves respect, so I listened to their ideas and valued their contributions. I was sensitive and tactful in disagreements.

Raising team morale and reducing tension in a team is very important when defusing resolving conflict within a team. Once there was a disagreement between two team members and I resolved this by stepping in and trying to identify the positives in both positions; making it a 'win-win' situation. It is even better if you can anticipate conflict as actions can be taken before hand to avoid it. Conflict generally occurs when people have different ways of working, different characters, or give different values to their own contribution to the team. If one person is likely to try to force their view on others without listening to alternatives - then I would encourage others to put forward their views first.

Earlier in my assignments I have studied that the difference between a group and a team is that a team is all about shared responsibility in achieving goals. We have also studied that there are two main elements of teamwork - concern to complete the task and concern to support the process. Concern for team members is a vital process skill. Tasks are completed better when everyone is pulling in the same direction a united team is a motivated team. A genuine concern should be displayed so team recuperation and performance will increase to a higher level.

Many of us pay little attention to the quality of our listening, leaving a gap between hearing others and really listening to what they have to say. Real listening involves three steps:

1. Hearing - this is listening well enough to catch what the speakers have to say. E. g. if the speaker is talking about team roles and says that it is important to have a leader. You hear just enough to repeat this fact- then you have what was said.
2. Understanding - you absorb what has been said and understand it in your own way. When you heard the speaker say that it is important to have a leader then you understand that the speaker could be suggesting that the team should have a leader.
3. Judging - this is when you understand what the speaker has said and you will want to judge whether it makes sense. To get to stage three you really need to listen carefully.

So attentive listening can create a good team listener- someone who is willing to see that the sum of the team is greater than the individual parts. I have felt this before as I have seen that other people have good ideas which are better than my own.

Questioning is useful, it helps clarify issues in a team and displays awareness for areas that need clearing up. If people don't ask questions they are more likely to make mistakes. I have found in my event unit that by asking a question politely, when you are unsure of something, the chances are that someone else in your team is also not sure but was too polite or scared to ask.

Sincerity is important. Sincere and honest people are preferred to the superficial. One of the main criticisms of team members is that they are 'two faced' or 'insincere'. Teams should be built on trust. In our event unit, all team members put forward their ideas and contributed to the team in a sincere and open way, which is why we created a powerful team.

You need to feel sure that your ideas are worth sharing if you want to speak clearly and confidently. Focusing on the key message that you want to get across and avoid getting sidetracked into irrelevant issues. Long pauses and 'ers' and 'ums' that break up the flow of your message should be avoided. When presenting powerpoints in my event unit or speaking with customers and team members I would take this into account. In one circumstance, I had to speak to a member of the management staff and I was told I speak articulately.

A good team member needs to be organised, areas to work on will include the following:

- * Preparation for meetings - it is important to be effectively prepared for your meetings. Ensure you arrive on time and have done the appropriate background work. E. g. if the meeting is to discuss an action plan, you need to ensure that you have completed all the actions required from the last meeting. If you are being asked to present information you should ensure that it is set out in a summary paper that is clear and easy to understand. Dates of meetings and other important team activities should be put into your diary, you need to monitor that you haven't double booked meetings on your calendar.

- * As a team member it is important to be able to identify key issues facing your team. Consider what these issues are and then about the best ways of presenting them to your team. E. g. an issue we had in our event unit was that we didn't confirm what we were going to sell so we had a team meeting to resolve this issue. Having identified what the root causes of these issues were it was necessary to broach them in a tactful and sensitive way.

- * Teams should create schedules laying out when activities have to be carried out. Team work activities usually involve targets and deadlines. Scheduling involves identifying the key stages and processes that need to be completed. Dates should be attached to the completion of these activities and team members allocated responsibilities on a clear schedule. Our event unit required us to create schedules.

A crucial element of scheduling activities at the personal level is effective time management. In order to develop this skill it is necessary to allocate time in a well organised way. By focusing on one activity at a time it is possible to maximise attention on that activity before moving onto another prioritised area. In our event unit our teacher advised to us to use a method of allocating time through a value analysis of time called the ABC analysis.

* 'A' activities are those that are ranked as very important. They can be effectively carried out by the person involved or team working with that person.

* 'B' activities are important but can be delegated. E. g. in our event unit it was my job to obtain a game console, I did this by myself but as another team member working in the same department as me, as a backup, so if I could not obtain the game console he would.

* 'C' activities are less important but usually represent the lion's share of the work. They include routine tasks such as paperwork and telephone calls. In our event unit we had to create flyers, leaflets etc to promote our business.

To meet deadlines, we focused on the most important 'A' task and completed one or two 'A' tasks each day then a further two to three 'B' tasks and set aside some time for 'C' marks. This helped us to complete tasks on schedule when new carefully prioritise activities and gave appropriate time to the most important ones.

* Responsibility - allocating responsibility is important in team work. At the end of the day the team needs to take responsibility for getting team tasks completed to a standard on time. But within the team it is vital to allocate responsibilities to individuals. A vital teamwork skill thus involves taking on responsibility. We were all allocated by our manager in our event unit 18. Self management is when we are able to manage ourselves effectively in our interactions with others. This is very important because as people are asked to take on more responsibility in organisations it can lead to increasing levels on stress and frustration if others do not accept their responsibilities. However we were a well managed group in our event unit 18 so this situation did not occur.

* Responsiveness - good team workers are responsive to the needs of their team and to the needs of other team members. They respond to emails, they respond to other forms of communication and they respond to the challenges of creating a great team. A responsive team member rises to any team challenge that comes their way.

* Adaptability - team workers need to be able to adapt to changing situations. Modern organisations are characterised by change, in our event unit 18 team workers are frequently asked to adjust to changing situations by:

* Making decisions for themselves when dealing with customers.

* Taking on more responsibility

- * Dealing with situations they have never faced before

- * Taking on new team roles - perhaps roles that they have not played before
e. g. to chair a meeting.

- * Consideration of options - in most problem solving and decision making situations there are options to choose from. Teams are likely to generate more options than individuals working alone. A good team member will seek to find out as many different options as possible. They will then consider the options and help the team come up with a decision to choose the best option. A poor team worker will only consider one option- their own. For example in our event unit 18 we all had different ideas what to do for the event.

- * Maintaining focus - people tend to be only to concentrate on tasks for a relatively short period of time. Then they lose focus. This means that a team project can get off to a good start before losing momentum. Jus before the deadline date people regain focus- but often it is too late. This happened quite a lot in our event unit 18 as, to be honest, we are teenagers and easily distracted by internet gaming, online shopping, but thanks to our manager and teacher we were motivated to maintain focus and we held a successful event before it was too late.

- * Openness to criticism - we should all be open to criticism in order to improve ourselves, good criticism should focus on processes rather than judgments about people. E. g. when I created a business logo, I went round the group and asked them whether they liked the design or not, from their

feedback, I tweaked my the original logo and created a couple of other logos, from which the whole group, picked one, this brought the group together and made us feel more like a team. 'That didn't work, perhaps we could do it this way' is positive criticism which helps the team move forward. If providing criticism is focused on processes then we should accept it in a good spirit. Process criticism helps us to make improvements to our practice.

I think that these skills were important for my unit 18 event and in general too.