

# Teamwork advantage and disadvantage



**List and describe three advantages and three disadvantages of teams. From your personal experience, provide an example of one of the advantages and one of the disadvantages.**

“ Although teamwork has many advantages, it also has a number of potential disadvantages.” “ When teams are successful, they improve productivity, creativity, employee involvement, and even job security.” “ At their worst, teams are unproductive and frustrating, and they waste everyone’s time.” (Thill and Bovée, 2008, pgs 40 & 41)

Some advantages include: 1) Increased information and knowledge — By bringing together subject matter experts from several areas of a company gives decision-making team’s access to the most information possible; 2) Increased acceptance of a solution — People who are part of making a decision would most likely be the best in helping support, and effectively encouraging others to accept the decision, and 3) Higher performance levels — Working in teams and brainstorming can actually drive an individual to think out of the box. Teams give one the sense of belonging, of self-worth, dignity and also reduce any stress or tension there may be between workers.

**A personal example of being on a team that had the advantage of increased information and knowledge was in helping the developer of a Customer Relationship Management database by having everyone on the team give specifics as to what was expected out of this database. Within six weeks the database was up and running, with a few tweaks here and there since then, but is still up and running today.**

Some disadvantages include: 1) Groupthink — Groupthink occurs when individuals are intimidated, or pressured, into acting a certain way by thinking their opinions are not worth hearing. When in the end, their opinions may actually have been better than the end decision; 2) Hidden agendas — Some team members may have motives of trying to undermine another

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team member, or that they just simply want to take control of the group; and

3) Free riders — Free riders are individuals who show no enthusiasm and make no contributions to the decision-making process.

**A personal example of being on a team that had the disadvantage of having a free rider was during a two-day class that had various activities as a whole. In one of the activities, we were put in groups of five, were given a topic to discuss and list the reasons/outcomes, and then to present it to the entire group. Since this was not a graded activity, the group chose the free rider to make the presentation. The free rider was not too happy with this group decision, but realized if they would have participated, that someone else may have actually volunteered to make the presentation. The free rider made the presentation with as little enthusiasm as shown during the group activity.**

Whether you're working on an informal team, which the two most popular types are problem-solving and task forces, or on a formal team that is a committee, companies rely heavily on these teams. Teams can help bring about quicker solutions to problems or ideas that can help the company in the marketplace. This is because the members are employees that should have a vested interest in the company.

### **List and define the three types of listening.**

Listening is a primary activity. “ Understanding the nature of listening is the first step toward improving your listening skills. People listen in a variety of ways, which influences what they hear and the meaning they extract. In fact, relying on a single approach to listening limits your effectiveness.” (Thill and Bovée, 2008, pg 53)

Here are three of the major types of listening: 1) Critical listening — Critical listening is analyzing and understanding the speaker's message. There are four factors in determining the speaker's intentions: logic, evidence, conclusion, and implication. If you feel that any important information was

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omitted from the message, ask questions to deter any bias in the way the message is being presented; 2) Empathic listening — Empathic listening is being able to truly understand the emotions behind the speaker’s message, their feelings, their needs, their wants, and their true passion behind their message. Even if you disagree with their perspective, let them know you understand and can appreciate their feelings; and 3) Active listening — Active listening is the ability to turn off your own biases and filters and to show the speaker, by asking questions and also giving supportive feedback, that they truly understand the message the speaker is presenting.

“ The importance of listening in communication is enormous. People often focus on their speaking ability believing that good speaking equals good communication. The ability to speak well is a necessary component to successful communication. The ability to listen is equally as important. Listening takes work and when it comes to improving our communication there is no getting around that.” (<http://EzineArticles.com/210731>)

**Describe two instances in your life when you either used or observed nonverbal communication. Define the type of nonverbal communication using the information in the text and discuss how it affected the conversation.**

“ Paying special attention to nonverbal signals in the workplace will enhance your ability to communicate successfully. Moreover, as you interact with business associates from other backgrounds, you’ll discover that some nonverbal signals don’t necessarily translate across cultures. The range and variety of nonverbal signals are almost endless, but you can grasp the basics by studying six general categories.” (Thill and Bovée, 2008, pg 57) Below are two instances in my life where I’ve used and observed two out of the six categories, “ personal appearance” and “ facial expression”.

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I was interviewing a potential employee to work in my restaurant. This individual had several tattoos and body piercings. Now considering that a front-line employee is the first person a customer sees when they come into a restaurant, this is not the impression I wanted my customers to have. Based on the position that this person was interviewing for and that they are coming to an interview dressed this way, they were non-verbally telling me by their *personal appearance*, that this is what I should expect of them if they were to come to work for me. I truly had a hard time focusing on any of their responses as I couldn't understand how they thought this type of appearance was acceptable to be hired for any type of position in an establishment where they would be dealing with the public. Needless to say, this person was not hired to work at my restaurant.

An instance of observing nonverbal communication was during a mandatory meeting that was called at work and during the meeting one particular individual stood out as you could hear him making little snide remarks about what the speaker was saying, and then used the *facial expression* of rolling his eyes. This individual also would use posture such as slouching in his chair for awhile then he pulled out his cell phone and started to text. The meeting was actually very informative about a new product the company was developing and was asking for everyone's input on ideas for marketing. Since this individual was not listening during the meeting, in the end when we all got back to our desks, he had to go around and ask other co-workers what it was he was supposed to do. Most of the workers told him he would need to go ask his supervisor. Whether he did or not, no one knew, nor did

anyone know if he turned in his idea. He was around for about another 2 months, and then we heard he had found another job and wouldn't be back.

“ Good communication skills can help you in both your personal and professional life. While verbal and written communication skills are important, research has shown that nonverbal behaviors make up a large percentage of our daily interpersonal communication”. (<http://psychology.about.com/od/nonverbalcommunication/tp/nonverbaltips.htm>) Nonverbal communication has the potential of sending out the wrong message, whether it's misinterpreted, or if what you say doesn't match your actions.

**Describe the measures that help team members resolve conflict.**

It is inevitable that at some point in one's professional career they will be on a team where conflict arises. There are numerous reasons for conflict: lack of clarity, decisions have already been made on their own and are unwilling to discuss any further, different values, past history/personalities, or one believes there is competition for some type of resource. There are measures to help team members resolve conflicts — Proaction, communication, openness, research, flexibility, fair play, and alliance.

Here are descriptions of each of the conflict resolutions as mentioned: 1) Proaction is when you work out, deal with, a minor conflict before it erupts into a major conflict; 2) Communication is needed to resolve a conflict. This is accomplished by getting those directly involved to communicate to resolve the conflict; 3) Openness is getting all feelings out in the open, and then the main issue at hand can be dealt with; 4) Research is the need to get the facts for the problem before being able to determine any solutions for the

problem; 5) Flexibility is being able to be open-minded. Don't let anyone's stubbornness get in the way of them being able to consider other solutions to the problem; 6) Fair play is not letting anyone hide behind the rules to avoid getting a fair solution; and 7) Alliance is fighting together as opponents of the outside force, rather than fighting against each other.

In order to achieve a win-win solution, teams must be aware of, and learn how to keep destructive conflict from diverting their focus and energy, and also how both sides can satisfy their goals, at least to an extent.