

# Effective Team Bonding

BY CAROL BROOKS, SR/WA

Effective communication is the strength of all relationships, and the key to building a relationship is to spend more time with someone. Time well-spent results in a better understanding of the other person, as well as an understanding of how to communicate with them in an effective way. The workplace would be a strong attraction to harmony and creativity if we all understood one another, but real life doesn't always lean this way.

If there are team members that you'd like to get better acquainted with, then consider spending some time with them. Go out for coffee and get a peek into the windows of your coworker's mind. How do they think? How has their life experience formed who they are today? By getting to the heart of the other person, you'll begin to understand how they process thoughts, how they speak and how vital they are to the team. Keep an open mind and discover the magnitude of your own enrichment for this experience. And through this knowledge, the team can bond in a progressive way instead of wasting time having to mend hurt feelings, misunderstandings and confusion.

## The Effects on Your Team's Dynamics

Team bonding not only improves communication, it also fosters trust between team mates, and this creates an environment for positive professional relationships to take root and grow. When teammates know each other well, they become acquainted with each others' strengths, weaknesses, tendencies and thought processes. This makes it easier to work together toward a common goal.



When you begin to understand each member, you'll recognize that everybody has their own style and you'll be able to identify where respect for your peers flows naturally vs. being forced. Here are other effective communication tips that can cut down on time lost:

### **Greater Efficiency, Better Solutions**

Clear communication includes communicating with teammates when you are not able to complete your tasks. This way, the team can come up with solutions before the situation escalates and the team process breaks down. Communication helps you maintain efficiency under a variety of circumstances. Active participation from everybody spurs ideas where team resources can be used more efficiently and therefore things move faster.



### **Creating a Culture of Celebration**

Good team communication skills are not simply about assigning tasks or troubleshooting problems. Communication is also about creating a culture of celebration in the workplace. Teammates and team leaders who notice the achievements of their peers and employees take the time to communicate and celebrate together. Improvement is noticed, congratulated and encouraged, which creates an environment where employees want to be their best on the job and maintain a growth mindset.

### **Reducing and Diffusing Conflict**

Whenever a group of people work toward a common goal, conflict is likely to arise at one time or another. Whether conflict is due to unfair expectations, irresponsibility or plain misunderstanding, good team communication skills allows everyone to have a voice and feel heard. When it is safe to express thoughts clearly, honestly and tactfully, it is easier to move forward with a solution that has everyone's best interest at heart. Once on the other side of conflict, a team with good communication skills may even feel stronger for overcoming the hurdle.

### **Listening**

A good speaker is a good listener. Good listening skills will help you engage in communication and learn what the other person is speaking about. Learning how to communicate more effectively also means taking more notice. It's important to begin and end any form of communication with listening. This doesn't mean you should ask an endless string of questions, but be sure that you're taking the time to truly understand what other people are saying and what they mean.

### **Say What You Mean**

Situations at work can get emotional, which can influence your clarity. Stay on topic, use the correct words and enunciate. If you're not sure of the meaning of a word, don't use it.

When you use the wrong words, you will not be understood and people will doubt your competency. Make eye contact, which conveys truth and honor, and use intentional gestures. You can send the wrong message through body language or tone, which defeats the purpose of your attempt to communicate. This is especially important when discussing anything emotional.

### **In Summary**

Any problem within a family, big or small, always seems to start with bad communication. In many ways, teams are like families. They need to co-exist, get along and generate outcome. When a team can bond in their relationship with one another, their chances are elevated for their success. Alternatively, bad communication is a huge time waster.

To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others. Positive work relationships add a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction to the job. Communication bridges teams together and it needs to be practiced to ensure a team is working smoothly and efficiently. ★



*Carol Brooks, SR/WA, is owner of Cornerstone Management Skills and a well-known author and lecturer. With 20 years experience in right of way, she is an IRWA CLIMB Certified Lead Instructor and the recipient of the prestigious Lum Award by the R/W International Education Foundation. ©2019 Carol Brooks. Visit [www.CornerstoneManagementSkills.com](http://www.CornerstoneManagementSkills.com)*