

How to Build Good Working Relationships: A Complete Guide

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Indeed Editorial Team

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Most experienced professionals know how important it is to cultivate and maintain positive workplace relationships. It may not always be clear what a working relationship entails or how to establish one. Learning more about working relationships can help you collaborate with your team more effectively and foster a positive work environment. In this article, we discuss what working relationships are, review how to build good working relationships, explore why they are important, and highlight how to manage challenging relationships at work.

What is a working relationship?

Working relationships are the connections you form in the workplace with colleagues, clients, external vendors, and supervisors. Although your relationships with colleagues and managers may not be as personal as those with family and friends, they are still important. At some point, most jobs require interaction with others. Even if you work solely online as a freelance writer, it's vital that you maintain relationships with your colleagues and supervisors to have a fulfilling work environment and excel at your job consistently.

It's critical to understand the difference between a professional and a personal relationship. A professional relationship is a formal arrangement that can ensure good teamwork and productivity, often involving individuals sharing workspaces. To build a personal relationship, you start by sharing emotions and personal truths, often sharing domestic spaces.

How to build good working relationships

Learning how to build good working relationships takes time and patience, but it can produce rewarding results. While attempting to improve your working relationships, you may consider following these steps:

1. Communicate often

Effective communication, which includes both listening and talking, is one of the most important aspects of building any relationship. This means that when a coworker or manager approaches you, it's important that you actively listen and consider their viewpoint before responding. Take note of nonverbal communication, such as a team member's body language, as it may provide valuable insights that words alone may not be able to convey.

Strive to understand your coworkers' personal circumstances, in addition to carefully considering their opinions. For example, if a coworker is facing challenges in their personal life, it's advisable to listen to them and be considerate in your interactions. Effective communication can help improve teamwork and lead to better project collaboration.

Related: [4 Types Of Communication \(With Examples\)](#)

2. Be consistent and trustworthy

Trust is a crucial element in any relationship. If you promise a team member that you can complete a task or duty within a certain amount of time, make sure you do so. You can attempt to show your trustworthiness by providing support and help to team members who require it. To gain your colleagues' and team members' trust, it's vital to act in a trustworthy and supportive manner.

3. Avoid gossip

It's best to avoid gossip at work if you want to foster positive relationships. If you hear a coworker gossiping about another, refrain from participating in it or try to change the subject. When you have a problem with a coworker, try to talk to them in a polite and honest manner first. If this doesn't produce positive results, you can convene a meeting with a superior and the affected colleague to address the problem in an open and professional manner.

Related: [What Is Workplace Gossip? \(With Tips and How to Handle It\)](#)

4. Support fellow team members

Supporting coworkers is one of the most effective ways to build positive working relationships. If you are in a senior position, do your best to mentor and educate junior employees. Give compliments to your coworkers when they perform well and focus on their accomplishments rather than their setbacks. You can gain your coworkers' respect and support by contributing to the establishment of a workplace culture of mutual support and positivity.

5. Remain positive in interactions

Staying positive when faced with deadlines or a stressful period at work can help keep your team members motivated. Instead of expressing concern, you can motivate yourself and your coworkers by providing positive advice and motivation to keep working. Maintaining a positive attitude can assist you in becoming the team member who others turn to for help or guidance, resulting in excellent working relationships.

Related: [A Comprehensive Guide on How to Be a Positive Thinker](#)

6. Know company guidelines

It's critical to understand the written and unwritten rules and expectations that govern working relationships. These boundaries may vary depending on the company culture. Some companies, for example, may encourage employees to dress more casually, while others

may expect them to dress more formally. Always remember that professional relationships aren't the same as personal relationships. If you are unsure about company policies, always act professionally and ask the human resources department or a trusted mentor or colleague for advice.

7. Deliver quality work on time

When working in a group, the work you do may have a direct impact on the work-life balance of your coworkers. One of the most effective ways to build positive relationships is to deliver high-quality work on time. This shows that you aren't only professional and good at what you do, but also that you respect and think about your coworkers' time and convenience when performing your daily tasks.

Related: [Benefits of Effective Time Management \(With Actionable Tips\)](#)

8. Focus on your emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to your ability to recognize and understand your own feelings and emotions. Understanding how others feel allows you to manage and nurture relationships. You may become more proficient at recognizing and handling the emotions and needs of others as your EI improves.

Related: [What Is Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace? \(With Helpful Tips\)](#)

9. Establish boundaries

Set aside some time to assist other professionals, but not too much. When a colleague or a superior monopolizes your time, a working relationship can sometimes impair productivity. It's critical to establish boundaries and keep track of how much time you spend on social interactions at work.

10. Appreciate everyone

Everyone, from your boss to a new intern at the firm, likes appreciation for their efforts. When people around you do something well, you can genuinely compliment them. Praise and acknowledgement can foster great working relationships.

Why is building positive working relationships important?

Good working relationships are a critical component for succeeding in any workplace. These are reasons why building strong work relationships is an important aspect of any job:

- **Effective teamwork:** When team members have good working relationships, it can positively impact their work. Better working relationships lead to improved teamwork, which can make you happier, more engaged, and more productive.
- **Improved morale in the workplace:** People who have good working relationships are more likely to handle conflict well and treat one another with mutual respect and goodwill. Employees are typically happier in a work environment that promotes this type of culture.

- **Increased productivity and work satisfaction:** Employees tend to be more productive when they get along in the workplace and work well together as a team. Increased productivity results in increased job satisfaction and motivation.
- **Greater personal growth:** If you have good working relationships with your coworkers, you might spend less time dealing with interpersonal issues and devote more time to professional development. Having good working relationships with senior employees also means you can learn from mentors and benefit from their expertise.
- **Improved communication:** Open and honest communication is the foundation of all successful relationships. The more effectively you communicate with those around you, whether through e-mails or instant messages, face-to-face meetings or video calls, the better you connect with others.

Managing challenging working relationships

There are times when you may work with someone you don't get along very well with. While it's natural to avoid people who cause conflict, it's not always possible in your team's best interests. Here are some tips for mending or maintaining a challenging professional relationship:

- **Reflect on your positive experiences in the past.** If a good relationship has deteriorated as a result of an incident, reflecting on positive experiences can help repair the relationship. Another option is to use an impartial mediator to help involved parties reach a quick agreement.
- **Be compassionate.** Everyone has personal issues to address, and this consideration may explain a coworker's behaviour in the workplace. As you get to know a person better, try to show empathy and compassion for their situation instead of challenging difficult behaviour.
- **Speak to a supervisor.** When a professional starts breaking company policies or has a negative impact on the work culture, it's advisable to talk to a supervisor or the human resources department about it. A supervisor or human resources department is typically responsible for resolving conflicts and ensuring that everyone feels safe and gains respect at work.

What Are Relationship-Building Skills? (With Examples)

Indeed Editorial Team

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Relationships in the workplace can be highly beneficial to the success you achieve in your career. Building strong, professional relationships can help you learn new skills, advance your career, and gain more satisfaction at work. Learning more about how to improve certain soft skills, like communication or empathy, can help you form successful relationships. In this article, we explain what relationship-building skills are, give you a list of types of them, tell you how to improve and highlight them, and offer tips for strengthening your relationships.

What are relationship-building skills?

Relationship-building skills are a combination of soft skills that a person applies to connect with others and form positive relationships. In the workplace, these skills are essential for getting along with coworkers, contributing to a team, and building an understanding between yourself and others. People can improve or develop these skills to become stronger team members and employees.

Types of relationship-building skills

Skills that help you form relationships generally encompass a mixture of different soft skills that can all contribute to the way you interact with others. The following skill sets can typically be considered as essential to developing successful relationships:

Interpersonal skills

Relationships centre around people. To form successful and strong work relationships, it's important to possess effective interpersonal skills. You can attribute try to understand another person's perspective, show respect, or express compassion for your team to developing interpersonal skills.

Related: [Interpersonal Skills: Definitions and Examples](#)

Team-building skills

Building strong relationships with your team members can help you work together more effectively. This allows you to complete your work more efficiently and can make work more enjoyable. There are plenty of ways to develop your team-building skills, such as showing respect for others' ideas, helping your team complete projects successfully, and practising effective communication.

Networking skills

Successful work relationships can also benefit from developing your networking skills. Meeting new people, exchanging ideas with other professionals, and offering assistance to business professionals can all help to improve your networking skills. With effective networking skills, you can increase your professional contacts and form lasting professional relationships.

Related: [Why Is Networking Important? \(With Benefits and Tips\)](#)

Empathy

Empathy is another key aspect of effective relationship building. Having empathy for your friends and coworkers means you seek to understand their feelings and emotions. When you actively practise empathy in the workplace, you can show your teammates and managers your dedication to maintaining your work relationships.

Active listening skills

Active listening is an essential part of communication, so developing active listening skills can sometimes be more effective than learning how to speak in a meeting. Active listening encompasses making eye contact, being aware of non-verbal cues, and asking questions that show you're invested in the conversation. This not only shows that you respect your team's ideas, but it can also show that you care about everyone's perspectives.

Related: [Active Listening Skills: A Key to Effective Communication in the Workplace](#)

Verbal communication skills

Verbal communication is also essential to building strong relationships. For instance, if you join a meeting with your colleagues, you can practise your verbal communication by finding opportunities to contribute ideas and ask questions. This can show that you're interested and open to hearing your team's ideas and motivated to contribute your thoughts.

Non-verbal communication skills

[Non-verbal communication](#) involves sending or receiving messages without using words, typically through your body language, facial expressions, and eye contact. Knowing how to use non-verbal communication to send and receive messages effectively can help you build stronger relationships. For example, if you can read your team member's body language, you may determine they're stressed, so you can offer to help with their workload.

Related: [How to Become an Effective Communicator](#)

How to improve your relationship-building skills

You can develop effective relationship-building skills by improving key skill sets that you may already rely on in your job. The following information provides some steps you can take to further develop these skills:

1. Develop effective communication skills

One of the most important skills that can help you develop strong, professional relationships is communication. This includes verbal, written, and non-verbal communication as you use these skills daily at work. Effectively communicating with your colleagues can help you create positive interactions to strengthen your relationships. You can do this in a number of ways, such as contributing to team meetings, actively listening to your colleagues, or even talking to them during your breaks.

2. Practise empathy

Another key factor in successful relationship building is empathy. Being empathetic can help you show your colleagues you care about them, their feelings, and their point of view. This can help you build a connection with your team members and positively impact all your future interactions.

3. Develop your emotional intelligence

Similar to empathy, emotional intelligence involves understanding how you and people around you are feeling. This can help you identify when you or your team is struggling with something, such as a large workload, so you can seek or offer help. Doing this can help you build trust and stronger relationships.

4. Ask for feedback

To build trust and a collaborative relationship, you can ask your colleagues or managers for feedback. This helps you identify your strengths and weaknesses so you can determine what areas to develop. It also shows your team that you're open to new perspectives and willing to improve yourself to be a stronger employee and team member.

5. Get involved

Find opportunities to get more involved in activities or events at your workplace. Many workplaces offer regular team-building activities, development opportunities, or fun events you can get involved in to strengthen your relationships in a more informal setting. You can even ask your colleagues to go for coffee or lunch to get to know them better outside of work.

Highlighting your skills

Having soft skills like communication, leadership, and interpersonal skills can help improve your chances of getting a job, so it's important to highlight them to prospective employers. Here are some ways to highlight these skills on your resume, on your cover letter, or during an interview:

On your resume

To highlight the soft skills on your resume, you might consider matching your current skill sets to those outlined in the job requirements. For instance, if the job you're applying for requires working on a team, you might include your communication, teamwork, and

networking skills. Additionally, you might include examples of how these skills helped you succeed in past roles.

Related: [How to Use Resume Adjectives \(With Examples and Tips\)](#)

On your cover letter

A cover letter is an extension of your resume that allows you to discuss your skills and experience in more detail. On your cover letter, you might showcase your soft skills by connecting your skill sets with how you can be an asset to the organization. For instance, if the company you're interested in needs an effective networking expert, discuss on your cover letter how you helped your past company build stronger business networks.

During an interview

During your interview, hiring managers may ask you questions regarding your teamwork skills, your ability to communicate effectively, or how your skill sets contributed to your last company's successes. You might answer with examples of how your skill sets helped you achieve a goal or meet an objective. Try to research potential questions the hiring manager may ask you ahead of time so you can prepare your answers, helping you feel more confident during the interview.

Tips to improve your relationships at work

Strong work relationships can be beneficial to your job. For instance, you can build larger professional networks, find opportunities for advancement, and develop your teamwork skills. You might also consider the following tips to help you apply your skills and improve your relationships at work:

- Contribute to your team as often as you can, including in new projects, team-building exercises, and sharing ideas with your coworkers.
- Deal with conflict openly and professionally with clear communication and empathy so you can solve problems quickly and efficiently.
- Avoid gossip in the workplace by only entertaining professional and work-related conversations.
- Practise positive emotional reactions and seek mentoring opportunities during times you receive constructive criticism from your supervisors.
- Find ways to assist or help your team and coworkers when you see it's necessary.