



# October 2021: Effective Teamwork

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*A National Business Psychology*



***“It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.” – Charles Darwin***

Welcome to the **October 2021 edition of TotalWellbeing**, your guide to the **8 dimensions of wellbeing**. This month we will be exploring the importance of great teamwork.

Teamwork makes the dream work is probably a saying we have all heard. While it is a cliché, it is still very true! These days with many of us working remotely, creating a good system of teamwork and group engagement can be tough. In order to foster teamwork within a group of friends, co-workers, or any other group you may be a part of or working with, there are several key concepts that you can use to make things flow a bit easier. First off, making sure that you clearly define the roles of each team member and set concise expectations for each role. If all members of a team know what their role is and know what is expected of them, the rest should fall into place. Another key concept is communication. Without good communication, even the best teams can become lost or disorganized. Make sure to communicate clearly and regularly to make sure everyone is on track and any help that is needed can be given. Check out the resource below for more tips and strategies for building successful teams.

Please remember that your EAP is here for you if you need to talk about communication skills, work stress, or just need some coaching around team-oriented goals. You have access to free and confidential counseling, wellness coaching, trainings, and more. Plus, an online resource library full of proactive

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To your total wellbeing,

The MINES Team

## ***Understanding Your Role as a Team Member***

With multiple people involved in accomplishing a project, it's critical that everyone know what is and is not expected from them in their team activities. In most cases their technical contributions are the primary reason they were selected for team membership, and that expertise will form the foundation of their participation. However, there is much more to being an effective team member than knowing how to perform specific tasks. How well you end up working together, and therefore, how well you meet the team's objectives depend on how well you understand your role.

### **You need to:**

- Commit to team goals.
- Ask for clarification if necessary.
- Identify and define related roles.

### **Commit to Team Goals**

Team goals are often established by the person who assembled the team. Generally, the task is identified first, and then the decision is made to form a team to tackle it. But sometimes the team sets its own goals at the beginning of its life cycle. In either case, to be a fully empowered and effective team member, you must clearly understand the team's purpose, goals and objectives, and vision for success and feel that they are yours.

Fully participate in any discussion and encourage the team to spend enough time on decisions that that you feel comfortable committing to those decisions. Whether serving as a member of a team is something you do full-time or an add-on to your usual job, you must feel committed in order to be willing to expend the energy it will take to be effective.

### **Ask for Clarification**

Team members often leave their first meeting with even more questions than they had when they arrived. If there is one word that describes what it takes to be an effective team member, that word may be initiative. From the beginning, you need to take responsibility to clarify anything you don't understand.

Asking clarifying questions is particularly vital in a team setting. The difficulty of communicating effectively increases exponentially with the number of people involved, and a misunderstanding on a team can be very expensive in hard costs and human costs alike.

Asking clarifying questions also helps your team leader overcome the challenges he or she faces. The more you seek and obtain answers, the less the team leader has to worry about whether you understand, are committed, and are on board. So, ask questions, and don't wait for someone else to notice that you need answers!

### **Identify Related Roles**

You are on the team to provide some professional or technical expertise required to accomplish the team's goals. If it's not clear to you why you were included, ask your team leader. If others with related expertise are on the team, identify how you can integrate your efforts to avoid redundancy and ensure that all bases are covered.

You have another role besides a technical one-that of team member. Do you have responsibilities related to getting the team going, helping it function, pulling it back on track, performing administrative tasks? Clarification of roles and responsibilities is an important team process, and if your leader doesn't do it in a formal way, you can request that it be done. Being aware of the roles of others on the team will facilitate smooth working relationships.

Effective teams don't spontaneously occur just because a group of people has been put together in a room and given an assignment. High performing teams start their development process with a shared vision of what it means to be a team and how the team will work together to accomplish its goals.

Remember, if you or a household member are dealing with communication trouble, work stress, burnout, or just need some coaching around teamwork related goals, your employee assistance program is here for you. Resources include free and confidential counseling, wellness coaching, trainings, personal development tools, and more. **If you need additional information or to access services, please call MINES and Associates at 1-800-873-7138 today.** Also, [PersonalAdvantage](#) has a ton of great resources and FREE [webinars](#).

## ***How to Empower Your Team***

When employees don't feel empowered, they tend to isolate themselves and work alone, rather than as a team. They also might be less motivated and not as creative or inspired to achieve. In turn, this lack of empowerment leaves employees and teams unable to perform to their highest ability and productivity. Empowering your team brings success to employees, groups, and companies.

Read the advice below to see how supervisors can build empowered teams:

### **Allow the Team to Plan**

Allow the team to plan for a whole project, rather than small pieces of a project at a time. This way, employees will have to plan their work schedule

accordingly and assign goals for themselves. This will generate team-wide responsibility to get the project done.

#### **Allow the Team to Schedule Projects**

Daily meetings on scheduling can take up precious time rather than fill individuals with a productive spirit. Allow employees to schedule for their tasks, giving them enough work to fill up a week or more. Letting team members schedule projects on their own will help create better planning skills.

#### **Allow the Team to Make Decisions**

When an employee is involved with decision-making, he or she will feel like an essential part of the team. Bring the team together for brainstorming or impromptu meetings so individuals can share in the decision-making process. Encouraging decision-making will make sure the team moves forward quickly toward its goals.

#### **Allow the Team to Assign Work to Its Individuals**

Individuals of a team have insight into their strengths and skills, so allow the team to divide up a large project on their own. Also, this will allow individuals to develop new strengths and skillsets, as a team member may complete a task he or she has not done before. As a result, you will have better trained and more well-rounded employees.

#### **Look at Results Rather Than the Process**

When a team does the work to plan, schedule, make decisions, and assign duties, the supervisor will be able to see if the team was effective or not. By looking at the end result, rather than the process, you'll be able to empower your employees with the ability to govern themselves yet still provide feedback on whether their results were acceptable. This will inspire the team to find new ways to work on other projects and adjust their process if necessary.

***If you or a member of your household needs assistance or guidance on any of these wellbeing topics, please call MINES & Associates, your EAP, today for free, confidential, 24/7 assistance at 800.873.7138.***

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