

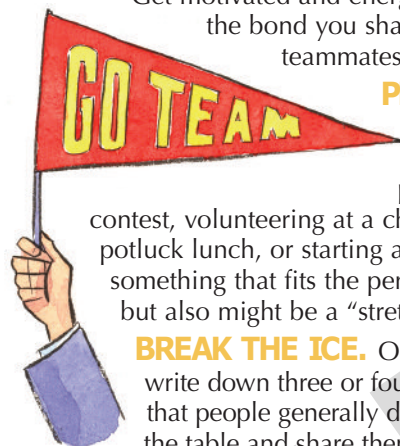
## Make Team Meetings Work

Meetings are a crucial part of teamwork. They're a chance for members to exchange ideas and information, ask and answer questions, update progress, and revisit goals if necessary. However, meetings can also spiral into conflict and power struggles that waste time and energy. **Tips for effective team meetings:**

- **Have a purpose.** Every meeting should have a definite goal and agenda. **Examples:** update progress, make a decision, solve a problem, make a schedule, assign responsibilities.
- **Choose a facilitator.** One person should be in charge of the meeting — setting the agenda, keeping it moving, circulating minutes and reminders, and setting a time limit. The team may wish to rotate facilitators from meeting to meeting.
- **Get everyone involved.** Make sure everyone has a chance to voice their opinions and ideas. Try to keep meetings from being dominated by one or two strong people.
- **Allow disagreement.** Handled respectfully, disagreement can be good for progress. Make meetings a place where team members brainstorm and where all new ideas are considered.
- **Review.** Take a minute for everyone to say what is and is not working. Team meetings are effective only if they work for everyone.
- **Make it regular.** Set up short team meetings as projects demand. Meetings that are too infrequent tend to become lengthy and unwieldy. Meetings held too often can work against other efforts. Strike a good balance that takes workloads into account. Let meetings be the time when your team comes together, shares ideas and truly gains the benefits of working as a team.

## How to Build Team Spirit

Get motivated and energized by strengthening the bond you share with your teammates. **Ideas:**



**PLAY.** Do a fun activity together, such as bowling, playing paintball, having a contest, volunteering at a charity event, hosting a potluck lunch, or starting a walking club. Choose something that fits the personality of your team but also might be a “stretch” for some members.

**BREAK THE ICE.** One popular activity is to write down three or four facts about yourself that people generally don't know. Go around the table and share them. Or have each person write down a little-known tidbit about themselves and collect the slips of paper. Team members draw and try to match the fact with the person.

**TELL A STORY.** Describing team success helps members feel good about being part of the team. Document the team through pictures, videos, a Web site or a newsletter.

**BRAINSTORM.** Even a 10-minute brainstorming session can bring members together and get you out of a rut. **Some keys to effective brainstorming:** Don't judge ideas, set a time limit, keep ideas flowing and don't edit.

**WRITE A MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS.** Let everyone have a voice in the mission, goals and standards. Post the end goal so everyone can feel inspired.

**TAKE TURNS.** Make sure efforts are truly collaborative by giving everyone a chance to pitch in on the hardest tasks. Rotate leadership so each person gets a chance to be at the helm and the team doesn't stagnate.

**CELEBRATE.** For each goal the team attains, have a celebration that allows members to express pride in their accomplishments, let off steam and bond.

**Final thought:** Whether you're on a team of three people or a dozen, give it your best effort and together you'll be able to accomplish more.


# Teamwork

Accomplish More Together



## The Benefits of Working Together

Workplace culture often focuses on competition, winning and personal glory. Cooperation and collaboration can sometimes fall by the wayside.



Striving for personal success is important, but sometimes it takes the combined skills, personalities, strengths and talents of a dedicated group to achieve results.

Working as a team helps you accomplish more, provides support when you need it, solves problems and brings fresh ideas to light. While teamwork doesn't always come naturally, it's a valuable skill you can learn. The tips in this brochure can help.

As part of a team, you...

- ✓ Don't try to get it all done by yourself.
- ✓ Use your strengths to reach a larger goal.
- ✓ Develop valuable relationships.
- ✓ Learn from others and teach too.
- ✓ See your place in the big picture.
- ✓ Take action when you're feeling unmotivated.



## 3 Kinds of Teams

- 1 **Work teams:** People work as a unit on an ongoing basis to get day-to-day jobs accomplished.
- 2 **Problem-solving teams:** Members come together to solve a specific issue, then disband.
- 3 **Project teams:** People work together on a specific project; the team's size and duration depends on the project's scope and deadline.

What helps teams be more effective? People who know how to be good teammates — a team is only as strong as its members.

## Secrets of a Top Team Player

- **Focuses on the goal.** Sometimes individual gain must be sacrificed in order to make progress as a group.
- **Communicates clearly and effectively.** Teams bring together different personalities and communication styles. Learn to listen actively and speak clearly. Get your message across so that others understand it, instead of trying to prove a point or improve your image.
- **Keeps promises.** Team members need to know they can count on each other.
- **Is trustworthy.** Teams can be torn apart by gossip, blame, dishonesty, credit stealing or other underhanded behaviors. Honesty and respect are important to team trust.
- **Shares credit.** A true team player acknowledges the contributions and achievements of others, and celebrates them when things go right.
- **Manages conflicts.** Every team has conflicts from time to time. Don't let them get out of hand. If you feel angry or frustrated, take a walk and some time to cool off before you return to talking about the issue. Negotiate to solve problems.

## What Makes a Team Successful?

By nature, human beings are social and cooperative. We're often at our best when we work together toward a common goal. The best teams keep these points in mind:

- ✓ **Everyone** has a voice. Each team member helps make decisions.
- ✓ **Responsibilities** are defined. Each person knows and understands his or her role.
- ✓ **Disagreements** should be resolved promptly. The team arrives at a solution peacefully. Sometimes the answer is simply to agree to disagree in order to move forward.
- ✓ **Feedback** is constructive and respectful. Critique is based on the work or the problem, not the person.



## THE LIFE OF A TEAM

All teams experience growing pains, times of change and conflicts. It helps to understand the life cycle of a team. *How teams run their course:*

**FORMING:** The team has just been established. Members are anxious and eager to please. Responsibilities have not been defined.

**STORMING:** People talk about the team's purpose, leadership and hierarchy. Members settle into their roles and responsibilities and see the work styles of other team members. Conflict can arise and some teams fail at this point.

**NORMING:** People are comfortable in their team relationships and strengthen their social bonds. Hierarchy is established; people respect leadership, and they ask each other for help.

**PERFORMING:** The team progresses toward common goals.

**ADJOURNING OR MOURNING:** The team disbands because the project has ended, the workplace has reorganized or the team has become ineffective.

Weather changes with your team and you'll be rewarded with a strong, effective group.

